

Mystaran Almanac

Bay of Gam

Book I: Atlas

Volume IX, AC 1018



MYSTARAN ALMANAC

AC 1018

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Volume IX, AC 1018

Published by Joshuan Gallidox
Hin Adventurer and Entrepreneur
within the City of Mirros
in the Kingdom of Karamaikos
in the Year After Crowning 1018

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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.

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

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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 means the only people who have shaped this "future" Mystara; many people on the *Mystara Mailing List* have participated, whether they know it or not (unfortunately, we often forget who the source of a given idea was, so the Special Thanks list is far from complete. If we missed you, sorry!).

This product is nothing more than a possible future for Mystara which we call the "*Mystaran Almanac* future" (hence the above expressed desire to keep the title should you change a part of this product). Use its contents or disregard them as you see fit. You are each the DM of YOUR own campaign, so decide what YOU like, keep what interests YOU, or throw out what YOU don't like—and that's the end of it. Do not take these events in your own campaign simply because we say so! There is no such thing as an "official" or "canon" Mystara. Use them because YOU want to.

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

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

The few times that stats are present, describing NPCs, the AD&D 2nd Edition game stats were used, except in the Famous Folk section where we used both 2nd and 3rd Edition rules (with clear marks to identify one from the other and avoid confusion). 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 3rd Edition format.

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!

Version 1.1

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So, if you have any ideas or comments concerning this almanac or events for AC 1019, please, feel free to contact us. For AC 1019, 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.

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Rollodir, King of Icevale.	728
Shaedrik Divotfoot, Sheriff of Leeha.	728
Siaron Lagrius, Queen of Lagrius.	728
Sieger von Duwn, King of Siegeria.	728
Sildreth II, King of Greenspur.	729
Stefan Karamaikos III, King of Karamaikos.	729
Stillian, Queen of Trikelios.	729
Szabo II, King of Brasov.	729
Tamaris, Emperor of Selhomarr.	729
Tanadaleyo, Radiant Princess of Aengmor.	729
Telemon, Radiant King of the Shadow Elves' Territories.	729
Teskilion, King and General of Dawnrim.	729
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Thelekari, Dowager Empress of Thonia.	729
Throfar Strongarm, King of Gråbjerge.	729
Trikard, King of Neatharm.	730
Tristan, King of Ekto, General of Ekto.	730
Trudar, King of the Jennites.	730
Uldis VI, King of Littonia.	730
Verdis Queen/Empress of Thonia.	730
Verothricks, King of Veroth.	730
Villiun, King of Horken.	730
Wulf von Klagendorf, <i>Oberherr</i> of Heldann.	730
Zalmontis, Queen and General of the Kubitts.	730
Zhoher Yezcham, <i>Shah-an-shah</i> of Yezchamenid.	730
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Alexandra Patrizio, Duchess of Lucinius.	731
Allisa Patrician, Countess of the Free Plains.	731
Anaxibius Torion, Count of Redstone.	731
Andian, Tyrant of Sinbay in Minaea.	731
Angus McGregor, Prince of Klantyre in Glantri.	731
Arcadius, Baron of Arcadia.	732
Azartan Cemirtus, <i>Zatrap</i> of Hattas in Yezchamenid.	732
Babrak Biazzan, Count of Biazzan.	732
Baldassare Patrizio, Duke of Lucinius.	732
Balthazar de Montejo y Aranjuez, <i>Barón</i> of Saragón.	732
Bardeen Longwalker, Baron of Nordenhafen.	732
Barkal the Red, Chieftain in Ubla-at-nor.	732
Basileios Zarides, Lord of Krakov.	732
Batu, <i>Khan</i> of the Bortaks in Ethengar.	733
Beriak, Duke of Draken.	733
Bethany Ersenbal, Countess of Ersenbal.	733
Biko M'tala, President of Durhan.	733
Brogahn, Baron of Ubla-at-nor.	733
Callastian Retebius, Duke of Retebius.	733
Carlolina Erewan, Princess of Erewan in Glantri.	733
Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias, Princess of Belcadiz in Glantri.	733
Celia, Marquise of Panteria.	733
Coiger de Mory, Baron of Mory.	733
Coltius Torion, Count of Carytion and Prince in Thyatis.	733
Crístobal "El Barbudo" Bigotillos y Copetez, <i>Señor</i> of Guadalante.	733
Dalia Salieri Actavia, Countess of Actius.	734
Deitica Baralius, Governor-General of Septentriona.	734
Delune Darkeyes, Sheriff of Heartshire in the Five Shires.	734
Demetius Vannopolus, Count of Machetos.	735
Derentarius, Archduke of Terentias.	735
Desel Leafbower, Leafbower Clanmaster in the Foresthomes.	735
Diablerus I, Baron of Redhorn.	735
Dilynne, King of Scovry (a.k.a. Red Fox City) in Elo Goblands.	735
Dimitri Dikhoff, Baron of Dikhoff.	735
Djemun, <i>Nomarch</i> of Menkara in Nithia.	735

Djomel Tirruk, <i>Zatrap</i> of Midan in Yezchamenid.	735
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Dracolish, Gremlish Chief in Stamtral.	736
Drisana Madhar, <i>Rani</i> of Jalawar in Sind.	736
Duriel II, King of Dain-Karak in Minaea.	736
Durifern Widefarer, Clanmaster in Denagoth.	736
Eleya Moonstalker, Horse Clan Chieftainess in Atruaghin.	736
Eratkar Kasusu, <i>Zatrap</i> of Mebirush in Yezchamenid.	736
Eyvind the Odd, <i>Jarl</i> in Vestland.	736
Fergus, Baron of Sonnenfeld.	737
Gallia Biazzan, Countess of Biazzan.	737
Gard Rocktooth, Clanmaster of Kildorkak.	737
Geraldan Actavius, Count of Actius.	737
Gerwen, Mayor and Seneschal in Ersenbal.	737
Ghazan, <i>Khan</i> of the Taijits in Ethengar.	737
Gilla Blyskarats, Countess of Buhrohur.	737
Gulbuddin Marzik, <i>Zatrap</i> of Uvaraz in Yezchamenid.	737
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Hulagu, <i>Khan</i> of the Uighurs in Ethengar.	739
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Janick Essecki, Count of Valeryia in Klagorst.	740
Jemugu, <i>Khan</i> of the Yakkas in Ethengar.	740
Joam Astlar, Sheriff of Seashire in the Five Shires.	740
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Thrainkell Firestorm, <i>Exarch</i> of Westrourke.	750
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Gabronius Torion, Prince in Thyatis.	759
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Larandia Lymianoporus, Lady and Head of the Order of Foresters in Vyalia.	760
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INTRODUCTION



Preface

Dear Reader

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

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

We wanted to make this issue of the almanac as thorough as possible. Those who own previous almanacs will notice that this year's edition is not significantly bigger—we have tried to stabilize the weight of the almanac you are holding in your hands. We have, however, tried to make it easier and more agreeable to read, by using a new font and spacing, and by adding even more awesome illustrations, portraits, and maps. The Mystaran Almanac has been divided into three volumes for easier reading: Book I is the Atlas, Book II is the Events, and Book III is the Adventures.

The volume you are now holding is Book I: the Atlas.

Now, of course you must all be wondering what changes have been made to this year's Mystaran Almanac, that we brag about it. Well, we still have our famous on-site correspondents and letters to describe places and events. I firmly believe that such presentations make the descriptions all the 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—some of our correspondents have actually disappeared, and I don't buy the theory that they had unfortunate accidents—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 does not introduce new and previously unknown portions of our world; although several new nations of the far fringes of the world, that were introduced in previous almanacs, are described in greater detail in this edition. In some cases, various portions of the better known parts of the world are described in greater detail, too. I

hope you'll enjoy reading about 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! We are always eager to reproduce fresh takes on well-known countries, or to hear about new ones!

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the new and improved Mystaran Almanac, AC 1018 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, Karamaikos

Nuwmont, AC 1018

To the reader

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

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

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

Anyway, I've said the important stuff, so it's time to start reading the Mystaran Almanac. If you have anything important to tell us, let us know. Make sure it's important, because with all our correspondents, we don't have time for useless letters. Also, speaking from the previous years' experience, most of you should learn to write in proper Thyatian before sending us any letters!

Dorrik Stonecleaver, Co-Editor

Mystaran Almanac

Mirros, Karamaikos

Nulmont, AC 1018

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 more than often slightly—or not so 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 section, while superstitious PCs will probably know their horoscope, for example.

The timeline section, dealing with events for the year of AC 1018, 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.

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

Nation descriptions will, as before, have a brief intro section from the correspondent, a section on the land and another on the people of the land. Now, many will have already heard these descriptions several times over. What do you expect? There are only so many ways to describe a given place and its cultures. In fact, entries that have been repeated from last or previous years might 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. Often, though, those sections are original, as a new correspondent has joined the almanac and gives us his or her own perspective on a place.

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

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

Artists for the Atlas

Here is our list of artists whose creations you can see in the almanac:

Alle Handro

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

Brendan Corliss

The successful Darokinian businessman, Brendan Corliss, author of the Corliss Guide series, has given us authorization to reproduce the coats of arms of some Norwold dominions.



Christina Marie Alanira

The Queen of Alpha gracefully offered us to use portraits she drew of various lords, heroes and villains of Norwold who occasionally visit her at the court in Alpha.

Greydon Ilbandar

Ten years ago he was orphaned at the age of nine, during one of Baron Ludwig von Hendriks's orced raiding parties. At an orphanage he showed promise in drawing and was brought to Mirros. There he was taken in and apprenticed to Lord Alexius Korrigan in cartography. Greydon grew bored and eventually convinced Lord Korrigan to allow him to begin a volume depicting the different races. He has begun over the last two years to venture further away from Karamaikos to seek out more sources for his drawings. He was very pleased to have been asked to contribute and hopes that maybe someone will see his work and fund him to continue his travels abroad.

Jalinoor Cerrulian

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

Kholep

Kholep is a Thothian artist. The Thothian style is easily recognized.

Anonymous

Various artists, like some correspondents, prefer to remain anonymous. Rumors have it at Joshuan Gallidox that one artist would be an imp that has a special skill of painting little pictures really fast, but this might be a joke that we dare not pass onto you, revered readers.

The Peoples 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

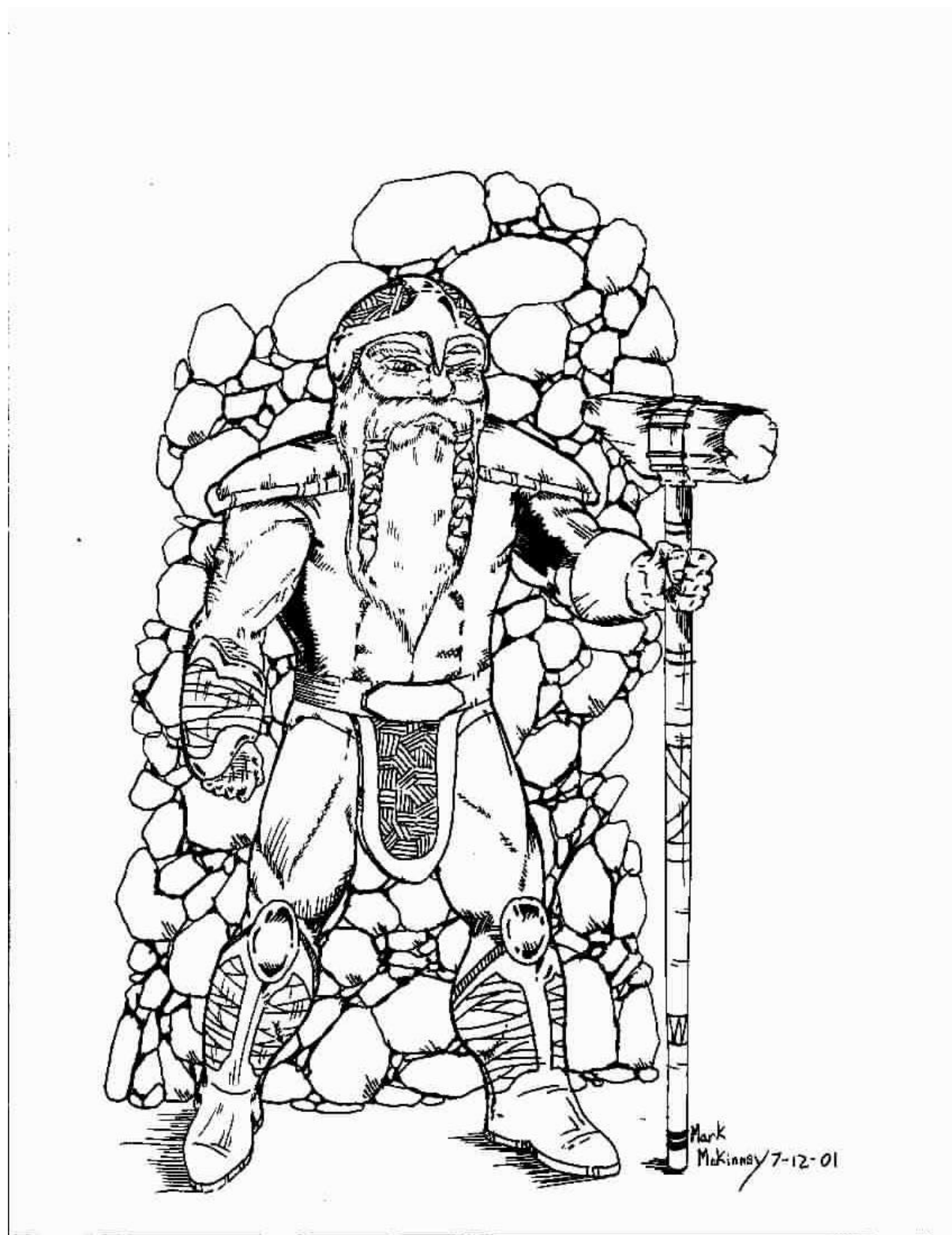
Humans

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 Alphasians, 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 of.

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 Alphasians 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 Alphonatia [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&D2: 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 sylban 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 sylban elves who are named after their legendary homeland, the Sylban Realm. Sylban 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, sylban elves can grow mustaches and beards, a trait that is often noticed on the elves of Belcadiz. Sylban elves are scattered throughout the continents of Brum and Dabania, and almost all the elven clans found in the Old World and the Savage Coast are sylban elves. Sylban 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 sylban elves of the Savage Coast have actually abandoned all elven ways and adopted the lifestyles of the nations they live in. [AD&D2: Sylban 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&D2: Aquarendi are considered to be the sea elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.]

The ee’aar are a rare race of winged elves that inhabit the western end of the Savage Coast and the Arm of the Immortals. They look much as the sylban elves, except appear much more delicate and with more angular facial features. Of course, they also have large feathered wings with a wingspan of at least 10 feet. They usually have white or silver hair, although black and gray are not uncommon. Their wings are the same color as their hair. Eyes tend to be amber, violet, or deep green. [AD&D2: Ee’aar are the abariel, 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 Schattenaltheim in the Hollow World is also composed of shadow elves. [There is no AD&D2 counterpart for the shadow elves. AD&D2 stats are given on TSR’s homepage.]

Finally, the Shiye elves are slightly taller than other elves. When the elves left their ancient homeland, the Shiye elves went with the sylban elves and helped create the Sylban Realm. But the

differences in philosophies, especially the Shive's xenophobia, eventually caused them to leave. Their new migration brought them to the continent of Alphatia where they founded Shive-Lawr, the largest nation of Shive elves. They usually have silver hair and amber eyes, although a few rare Shive 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. Shive elves are found throughout Alphatian territories such as Norwold and Bellissaria. Also, one colony of Shive elves seems to have settled in Eusdria on the Savage Coast. [AD&D2: Shive 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 Karamaikos 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 Dabania.

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

Gnomes stand about 3 feet tall and have rather pronounced noses of which they are quite proud. They have either pale blond or red hair, which often turns white as they age. Their skin ranges from dark tan to woody brown, and they usually have bright blue eyes. [AD&D2: Mystaran gnomes are 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 Hyborean common orc. Several hundred other orc races exist outside the Broken Lands. [AD&D2: Stats for these goblinoids can be found in the Complete Book of Humanoids.]

Half-Elves

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

Half-elves appear like a mix between their human and elven ancestors, hence can have a large variety of appearances. A look through both the human and elven races can give an idea of the possibilities. Despite this, half-elves are 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, sometimes called halflings by other races, are a small folk who enjoy a good life. Hin have no knowledge of their creation or arrival, although historians trace them back to the original elven homeland, leading them to speculate they "appeared" [that is, were created or arrived from another world. Ed.] with the elves. Hin tend to blend in with the surrounding communities rather than create their own. Most hin are therefore found in human nations. The Five Shires of the Old World and the city-state of Leeha in Norwold are the only known true hin communities. On the Savage Coast, they have been completely absorbed into the local nations.

Hin rarely grow larger than 3 feet in height. They have ruddy complexions, sandy to dark-brown hair, and blue or hazel eyes. Their faces are small and childlike when compared to a human. Hin also have thick hair atop each foot. [AD&D2: Hin are 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 ogreish 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 Heldamm 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 Dabania, 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.]

Tortles



Tortles are a race of heavy, turtle-like humanoids who carry shells on their backs. They can be encountered throughout the Savage Coast, notably in or near the free city of Dunwick, and generally lead peaceful lives as farmers or workers.

Lizard Men



Lizard men are an ancient race of reptilian humanoids. They are rarely encountered in the Old World, but tribes can be found just about anywhere on Mystara. They have a whole nation in the Hollow World, in a region called the Malpheggi Swamp (not to be confused with the Malpheggi Swamp lying within Darokin's borders).

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 probe his point. Other mapmakers scoff at his, as they say, "ludicrous" idea.

From more reliable sources (not to say that the previous information is false, just that we do not know where it came from), the world of Mystara is surrounded by a magical bubble known as the skyshield. This skyshield allows objects to enter the world of Mystara, but not to leave. Thanks to this, the air that we breathe remains on Mystara and does not spill out into the empty void that surrounds us.

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

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

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

Now, with the physical description of Mystara 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 Karamaikos 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 Alphantian Confederate Empire will be called the Alphantian Sea. There are also the colonies and the dangerous lands of the southern continent known as Dabania. And of course, there is a whole second world within our own, the mysterious Hollow World. As a bonus, we present you this year with a special focus on the lands of Hule and its neighbors.

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

Belzamith Fingertackles

ATLAS OF THE OLD WORLD

Introduction to the Old World

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

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

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

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

The Old World is a large stretch of land found in the southeastern margin on the continent of Brun. It is bordered by the Sea of Dread to the south, the Sea of Dawn to the east, the Great Waste to the west, and the Mengul Mountain Range to the north. Within this land are two dozen "nations," most of them enlightened, but a few still hold on to barbaric traditions. These nations have influenced every other corner of the world, and just as Mystara is the center of the multiverse, the Old World can honestly be said to be the core or heart of Mystara.

Correspondents for the Old World

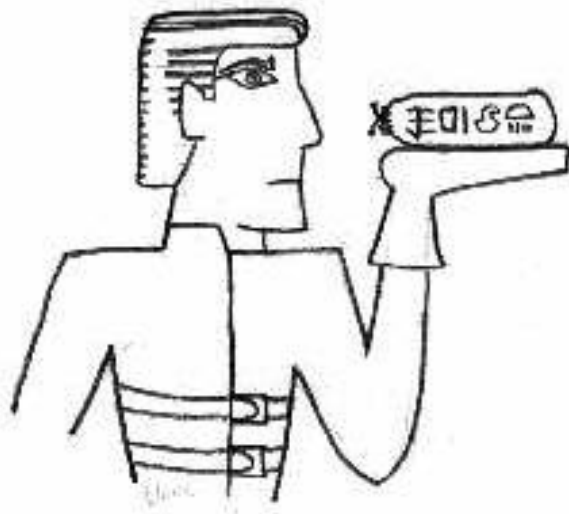
Here is our list of correspondents that give us detailed information on the nations, places, and events of the Old World:

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 Altheim and in the siege of Oentmar, where he was shot down by enemy forces. He is our eyes and ears inside the shadowelf community.



Christopher Dobe



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

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

Wendar and Denagoth for the almanac this year.

Demetius Vannopolus

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



Dromeda the Shadow

Dromeda is a streeter (a merchant who works without a set place of business) in Darokin City, who deals in information as her commodity (some say gossip or blackmail-fodder), acquiring interesting or useful pieces of knowledge about people, places, and companies within Darokin and selling it to whoever meets her price. She used to be a scout in the Darokinian army, and traveled widely throughout the nation in her duties.

Fabonius Viator

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

Fabonius was recently freed from his captivity by the merrow and now describes to us the wondrous places he has seen. He is also the writer for the entries on Minrothad, Vlaruam and the Empire of Thyatis. It has been noted that his recent captivity has given Fabonius a rather cynical outlook on life. We have finally gained access to Fabonius's report on the Twaelar Merrow Empire.

Gilor Rockcrusher

A second-generation dwarf, born in Ostland, Gilor is by his own admission a “young punk” [what his elders would call a “troubled youth;” that is a young, aggressive and violent dwarf, who is resentful of authority. Ed.]. His youthful energy and enthusiasm, as well as his love for fighting, has led to his travels throughout the Northern Reaches, fighting for gold and fame. He has agreed to share his insights on Northern Reaches nations and culture in return for a small correspondent’s fee.

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 position. Though he serves his superiors willingly, von Gultzer possesses about him a slightly irreverent air—one that has got him into trouble in the past. One would think that he entered the order only to profit from the additional privileges it provides him in this land, but he denies this of course. Today, he divides his time between running his estates in Kammin and Landfall, and corresponding for the almanac. In the latter function, he provides us with news from Heldann proper and Heldland.



Joshuan Gallidox

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

Larn Fastbuck

New almanac correspondent Larn Fastbuck is a tailor and merchant from Wereskalot, in Eastshire, where he lives with his wife Lori and three daughters.

Medu

Medu is a member of Clan Abakan of the Pugatai Tribe. He is a bratak who has trained under the auspices of none other than his tribal khan, Temur. He will provide the almanac with reports on the Ethengar peoples, their lands, and their ever-changing political situation.

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



Ryuk-uk Tshaa

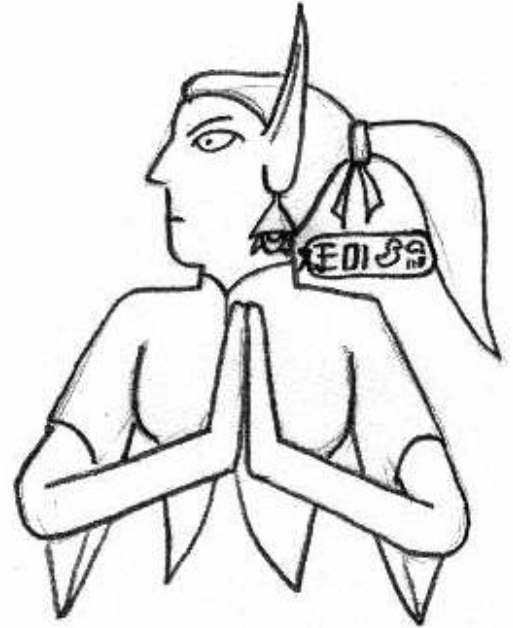


Ryu is a hsiao—an intelligent, owl-like creature—and a scholar in the ways of goblinoids. He hails from the forests of Vestland, and he and his companion Starkad Grimmonson, a warrior from Soderfjord, will be bringing us all the information on the Great Migration.

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 Grunalt 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 Jerendi 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. 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 earned her own general's spurs before he did. Stefania and Anaxibius rule the realm of Redstone. She is continuing her work on a history of her father's life, as well as fighting in defense of Thyatis alongside her brother, the emperor. None the less she fulfilled her commitment to provide reports for publication in the almanac, taking time to provide us with a description of Redstone and some of the surrounding communities, for which we are extremely grateful.

Thurgoood Lodestar

Little is known of Thurgoood, 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.



Vadin Kalidasa

Vadin Kalidasa is a scholar from the Mumlyket of Sindrastan in Sind. He will provide the almanac with inside information on the lands that are often referred to as “the Gateway to the West.”

Vibianna Romanones



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

find her unique insight into the Thyatian mindset interesting. Though her writing is very pronouncedly favorable to the Thyatians, everything we have been able to check seems factually accurate.

Atlas

ACTIUS (County of)

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

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

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

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Da. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Geraldan Actabius (Count), Dalia Salieri Actabia (Countess), Heraclius Actabius (Heir), Comentas Dulcissinius (Magist), Cyril Helladius (Prelate), Xendorian Hydrosius (Commodore).

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

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

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

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

The Land

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

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

The People

The vast majority of Actians are fishermen, seafaring merchants, or shipbuilders. The town of Actius contains 80% of the County's population. The rest are farmers and herdsmen living in the hills around the town, or sea elves living in the waters around the island. Actius has lately been involved in provisioning ships for the war against the Twaelar, and the blockade and reconquest of Hattias. The

sea elven inhabitants have been alert for possible Twaelar incursions into Thyatian waters, but so far none have appeared. Gambling is a popular past time among the Actians, with dice being the favorite. There are many gambling halls in town, and just about every tavern has a table or two where games of chance are being played at all hours of the day and night.

AENG MOR (City of)

Location: Continent of Brum, former Broken Lands. *OW*

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

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

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

Coinage: Shadowelf Standard: 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 Denkmarian 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).

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 "Silberblade" 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 Ratiel 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 Schattenalken 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 Char'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 Char 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 AC 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 selected Aengmor as their stronghold rallying the few scattered humanoids in the area and using them as slaves.

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

Do Miss

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

Fleeing from the City of Aengmor is almost impossible, either on the surface or underground (where, anyway, you will certainly meet shadowelf patrols).

AENG MOR (Colony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, Darokin area. **OW**

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

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

Languages: Elvish (Shadowelf and Alfheim dialects).

Coinage: Shadowelf Standard: bright (gp), shine (sp), glint (cp), kalafi (barnished 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: Tanadalepo (Radiant Princess), Doriath (Former King of Alfheim), Jorodrin Feadiel (Treekeeper), Kanafasti (Court Mage).

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 Streel 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 a lot of Altheim exiles, as they like to be called, returning 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, Gelbalk. 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 forefront) 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 Altheim 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 Altheim, 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 Canadaleyo, reformers against traditionalists, wanderers against shamans. Those were sad days for the shadowelf race.

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

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

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

Don't Miss

If you happen to visit Aengmor (and to do this you should either be an important man or a stupid brigand looking for trouble) do not forget to 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. **OW**

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

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

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

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

Taxes: None.

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

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

Important Figures: Powakuan Sleeps-With-Open Eyes (Bear Clan Chief), Tulabal Shadowfall (Elk Clan Chief), Hobar Duck Watcher (Elk Clan Shaman), Eleya Moonstalker (Horse Clan Chieftainess), Harabipa Dagger Tooth (Tiger Clan King), Celsha Spider's Kiss (Tiger Clan Cleric), Talinguk Rolls-His-Canoe (Turtle Clan Chief).

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 ensure 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.

BIAZZAN (County of)

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

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

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

Languages: Thyatian (Kerendan dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Babrak Biazzan (Count), Gallia Biazzan (Countess), Himerius Biazzan (Heir), Batzas Daphabkarius (Prelate), Damianus Hermongenes (Magist).

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

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

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

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

The Land

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

land and the lands beyond. Many scholars travel with these caravans as well, as Biazzan contains a noted center of learning.

The other portion of Biazzan is the western massif of the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. This is a frontier region, underdeveloped and surveyed. The county gained authority over this region last year, and except for the hills closest to the Greendale itself no settlement has taken place as yet.

The People

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

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

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

BORPDOS (Protectorate of)

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

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

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

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, magic, military, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Johannes Angelikos (Curator), Hermann Veseldorf (Commandant), Euphemia Gundesvinda (Sanctifier).

Flora and Fauna: Sea monsters in the surrounding waters.

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

This island protectorate was recently converted into a naval research station, the former prison closed. Little is known about what goes on here as of yet. The island is still surrounded by dangerous sea monsters.

The Land

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

The People

Naval men, naval architects and engineers and the like are all that live here. Except for official business, travel to Borydos is forbidden. The island is governed by martial law. The only other things that live around Borydos are the sea monsters that were raised here to deter escape attempts.

when the island was a prison. They are kept because it isn't worth the trouble to move or eliminate them, and they still deter efforts to land at Borydos unlawfully.

Do Miss

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

BUHROHUR (County of)

Location: Southeastern continent of Brun, along the southern range of the Altan Tepes Mountains, east of Biazzan and south of Hlaruam. **OW**

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

Population: 30,000 including the town of Makrast (pop. 5,000). About 90% dwarven.

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Gilla Blyskarats (Countess), Thadrik Karstone (High Priest), Magton Blyskarats (General).

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

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

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

The Land

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

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

The People

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

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

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

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

CARYTION (County of)

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

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

Population: 30,000 including the town of Torion (pop. 1,000) and Carytion Naval Fort (pop. 1,250).

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Coltius Torion (Count), Theodorus Metopatus (Fort Commander), Callistita Cataoloia (Magist), Bessarine Hydrosius (Prelate).

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

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

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

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

The Land

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

The People

Carytion is not a tourist island; this is an exclusive retreat for Thyatis's wealthiest families—there are few inns and hostels here. Those who come to Carytion are the owners of the estates and their families, servants, and the like. Other guests are here by invitation only. Here Thyatis's aristocrats, senators, and nobility take a (temporary) break from the intrigues of politics. By custom, all the factional disputes and rivalries of the mainland are set aside here. This allows for a respite, relaxation and atypical friendly interaction between the great families of Thyatis. It also allows them to get away from the mass of common tourists one might find when vacationing at Mositius or in Jerendi.

Carytion is protected by a naval base and by the estate guards. Thyatis's aristocracy spares no expense when it comes to their self-protection. These places are not easy marks for robbery, even when the masters and mistresses are not in residence. Each of the estates on Carytion is the center of a small settlement (the imperial estate at Torion being the largest of these), where those who serve the estate masters live. Many of these communities have served the same family for generations or even centuries, and are fiercely loyal out of a sense of clannish pride (which one might say this loyalty is misplaced, but I only report their attitudes, I do not judge them).

DAROKIN (Republic of, Borderlands)

Location: Central region of southeastern Brun, west and north of the Five Shires, south of Alfheim, north of Karamaikos. **OW**

Area: 68,964 sq. mi. (178,615 sq. km.), not including Orcland, which is only now considered a sovereign nation.

Population: 1,270,000 humans, plus a scattering of elves, dwarves, and hin.

Languages: Thyatian (Darokinian dialect), but many other languages also present, including Elvish and Lalor.

Coinage: Daro (gp), half-daro (sp), 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 Chaumont 1. Every 5 years, a net worth tax is assessed; anyone whose income has increased since the last assessment must pay 5% of the gain in taxes. There is also a 3% sales tax.

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

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, mercantile ability, and diplomacy.

Important Figures: Corwyn Mauntea (Chancellor), Mealidan Mealidil (Mealidil Clanmaster).

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

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

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

Further Reading: **GAZ11** The Republic of Darokin, **CMA9** Legacy of Blood, previous almanacs.

Description by Ursula Bremen.

Following the trend set by my esteemed colleagues, I have been charged to describe another part of the vast and heterogeneous territory of Darokin. In this report I am writing about the borderlands located south of the Forest of Canolbarth, bordering the nation of Aengmor (the former Alfheim), which have now become a bit darker and suspicious of the elven neighbors to the north.

The Land

All of the borderlands located between the Canolbarth Forest and the Darokin Road share one common trait: they are all heavily forested, with the few open fields to raise crops and cattle wrestled away from the woods in the ancient times of the Darokin kings. It is not strange, though, that the inhabitants of these borderlands have not tried to burn and chop down larger areas of the forest, if one

takes into account the former state of things in this region. After all, even if outside the political border of Alfheim, the woods still belong to Canolbarth and as such they were carefully tended and watched by the elves who lived in Alfheim until the invasion of the shadow elves [AC 1007. Ed.]. The first human settlers who came to this part of the country made an arrangement with the elves, and they agreed to cut down only a small number of trees, in order to build their homes and cultivate the soil. The humans and hin who came here all ober the centuries have always (more or less) honored this pact, thus earning the goodwill of the elves. And even now that the Alfheim elves have moved, the people living here do not try to expand the open fields by cutting down trees to avoid angering the forest spirits and the vindictive shadow elves.

Particularly interesting among the five fiefs that occupy this stretch of land [since there is not one central government for the whole area, as many might think, but rather it is divided into five dominions, each ruled by a border magistrate with the hereditary title of baron. U. Bremen.] are the Barony of Fenhold, located on the western tip of the borderlands, near the Magic Points once called Glow Tree and Turnclaw by the Alfheimers, and the Barony of Erkyn, located on the opposite side, near Selenica.

Fenhold is particularly interesting because of its swamp, which engulfs the center of the barony and hosts a group of people, the fenfolk, who know all of the safe tracks inside the Black Swamp and live on its fringes. The Black Swamp is a rather dangerous place, not only for its monstrous inhabitants [which are, however, not to be compared with the creatures roaming in the Malpheggi Swamp, far more feral and deadly. U. Bremen.] but also for its muddy waters and treacherous sands, which have engulfed too many unwary explorers sent during the last decades by the Baron of Fenhold to build a safe road through the swamp. So far, these attempts have all been thwarted and the road [which should link the capital town of Fenhold directly to the Darokin Road. U. Bremen.] still remains a dream for the Baron of Fenhold, Lord Gereint MacFarn, as much as it had been for his father, the former Lord Argyle, who started the plan.

The Barony of Erkyn is similarly interesting for its ancient sacred groves and shrines, which dot the woods and are considered especially sacred by its inhabitants. These places look like normal groves, placid ponds and small circles of white stones set in the earth, but they are all surrounded by a mystical aura of peace and tranquility which can calm even the most furious of the animals. It is believed that the Good People have created these Fairy Rings, and still today [after the Alfheimers and the fairy folk have left Canolbarth, as many wise men say. U. Bremen.] they are revered by the common folk and tended by human and elven druids.

The People

The inhabitants of these borderlands are normally considered (without malice) rather old fashioned and simple minded by the other Darokinians. The fact is that these people have never really been introduced to the new ways of the republic, and in this region time seems not to have passed ever since the days of the Darokin kings. People still hold their lord in high respect, they pay food and monetary tithes to him, and even though there are no serfs in Darokin [not even in the borderlands. U. Bremen.], the life these people lead is the closest thing to serfdom one can find inside the republic. They seldom leave their dominions looking for fortune in other parts of the republic, because they feel they could never have anything more than this and they also feel a strong obligation to remain and serve their lord. As you can see, dear reader, this mentality is really different from the common Darokinian way of the "self-made man," and it is a heritage of the old times, when feudal ties and obligations

restrained heavily the individual freedom. However, those folk don't seem to mind too much, since their lords do not oppress them, so they are content with their situation and are much more worried about the things that go bump in the night, about the evil fairy and above all about the shadow elves' presence.

As I have said before, these people are very traditional, many of them are not even literate and speak only their own Darokinian dialect, knowing but a few words of Thyatian common. But despite their low literacy, they hoard a great deal of legends, ballads and tall tales regarding the old days of the Darokin kings, the deeds of epic heroes and the mysteries of the fey and the elves. These tales are all passed orally and told around hearths or bonfires by very talented bards, who rival the elves and hin in the art of storytelling [the fact that some hin and elves live among these people may have something to do with their ability. U. Bremen.]. It may be for this reason that many scholars and even merchants often stop by at inns in this part of the country, to hear these tales and write them down or spread them to all the corners of the republic.

In particular, Fenhold holds many old legends and tales of heroic knights battling monstrous creatures come out of Dragontree, and it is then a veritable source of folklore for all of the nearby lands. The Barony of Erkyn also has its tales, which mostly revolve around some wars waged against the humanoids of the Orclands in the past and with eerie cults of long-forgotten dark deities that tried to pervert the people. In all these legends, the Knights of the Radiant Heart figure prominently, since this knightly order [originally devoted to Valerias and Ixion, but now affiliated to the Church of Darokin. U. Bremen.] was founded here by the Attleson dynasty to act as the protectors of this part of the country [a task they have always brilliantly accomplished during the last six centuries. U. Bremen.].

Recent History

These borderlands are among the oldest baronies still existing in the Republic of Darokin. They were all created during the reign of King Corwyn VII, at the end of the third century, when he awarded some of his best commanders and nobles these lands in return for their loyalty and bravery shown in extremely difficult military campaigns against goblinoids and other darker foes [the written accounts found are too damaged and in some points too obscure to be more precise on the nature of these enemies, the last serious threat of King Corwyn VII's reign. U. Bremen.].

During the following centuries, they have been more or less tranquil, establishing friendly ties with the elves of Alfheim, who at the time were still rather reclusive. The Elfwar in AC 501-504 greatly hindered the friendly relationships between the humans and the elves, but they were sooner forgotten by the elves than by the humans. Because of the unwise actions of some kings and the corruption of the court, some of these barons began to grow envious of their neighbors and waged brief wars against each other, causing confusion and chaos in the area. The elves promptly intervened before damage and chaos could spread all over Canolbarth, and they pacified the human barons using their wits and strength [after all the humans were still in awe of the mysterious elves and the king couldn't seem to bother too much of their skirmishes. U. Bremen.].

Ever since, the relationship between the elves and the folk living in these lands was one of deep respect and awe on the part of the Darokinians, who respected the peace treaty signed with the elves and avoided threatening the Forest of Canolbarth anymore [although brief and bloodless skirmishes still occurred in the following centuries. U. Bremen.]. The Great Merger didn't change much for this part of the

country: the barons managed to retain their titles and a milder form of independence from the central government, and went on with their life, content enough with the situation.

It was the shadow elves' invasion of Alfheim that really changed things in this part of the country. The pale elves were seen as fiends and dark fey by the folk of the borderlands, and they immediately gave shelter to all of the elven refugees, openly opposing the shadow elves. This obviously caused frictions between Darokin and the new nation of Aengmor, but fortunately the steadfast work of the DDC prevented these verbal and minor physical assaults from escalating into another war. Currently the folk living in the south of Aengmor do not enjoy their life in the bleak woods anymore, and grow more and more resentful with each passing day. They blame both the shadow elves and the Darokinian government for what has happened to the elves of Alfheim, and seem to harbor among them some members of the infamous Alfheim Avengers. There is new hope, however, now that some peace talks and joint collaboration between shadow elves and Alfheimers to save the dying Forest of Canolbarth have started.

DAROKIN (Republic of, Heartlands)

Location: Central region of southeastern Brun, along the banks of the lower Streel River and Lake Amsorak, south of the Broken Lands, north of the Cruth Mountains, east of Sind and west of the Altan Tepes Mountains. *OW*

Area: 68,964 sq. mi. (178,615 sq. km.), not including Orcland which is now considered a sovereign nation.

Population: 1,280,000 (95% human, 2% elven, 2% hin, 1% dwarven and other), including Darokin City (capital, 56,000), Akesoli (17,500), Akorros (23,000), Athenos (15,000), Corunglain (31,000), Selenica (40,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Darokinian dialect), many other languages also present, including Elvish and Lalor.

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 Chaumont 1. Every 5 years, a net worth tax is assessed; anyone whose income has increased since the last assessment must pay 5% of the gain in taxes. There is also a 3% sales tax.

Government Type: Plutocratic republic governed by a mercantile elite. Member of the Western Defense League.

Industries: Agriculture (very high yield), fishing, trade (mostly overland), finance, craft industry (mills along the Streel and other rivers), timber, some mining in the Cruth Mountains, and diplomacy.

Important Figures: Corwyn Mauntea (Chancellor), Corwyn Linton (Master of House Linton), Bertram Hallonica (Master of House Hallonica), Natalie Kalimi (Mistress of House Corum), Elissa Pennydown (Mistress of House Pennydown), Greenleaf Vickers (Master of House Umbarth), Esram al-Azrad (Master of House al-Azrad), Arturo Franich (Master of House Franich), Mendel Callister (Master of House Toney).

Flora and Fauna: Herds of cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and buffaloes. The various mountains around the nation are home to mountain lions and bears. Malpheggi Swamp is known for its crocodiles and giant lizards, as well as being the refuge for roving gangs of bandits and goblinoids. The southern part of Darokin is mostly covered with oak forests, while to the north, evergreens dominate. Around the nation of Aengmor, blight oaks can be encountered within the borders of Darokin. The northeastern section of Darokin is known as Orcland and is completely dominated by bands of goblinoids.

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

Description by Dromeda the Shadow.

The nation of Darokin is a republic, meaning that we don't have to put up with the kind of hereditary royalty found in other nations or wizards elevating themselves to the status of princes simply because they're wizards. We get a say in how we're governed, or some of us do, anyhow. But it's true that most of our rulers have come from the same small circle of families and the grip of the Maunteas on the

chancellorship is virtually hereditary in all but name. These flaws are not as bad as the governments less fortunate nations must suffer under, where they're often governed by the king's drinking buddies or relatives, persons given title regardless of merit, without regard to the people's wishes, but even so there are danger signs that the republic could become nothing more than an oligarchy. How did we gain the system we have and why should we be concerned about its future? Well, I'm not a historian or a scholar, but I know my own mind and I'll try to share what I've learned with the almanac's readers.

History

We Darokinians like to think we ended up with the land no one else wanted, thus making our achievement in becoming so prosperous seem all the greater. But this is just a founding fable, not unlike what they have in other lands, and about as truthful. The reality is both more heroic and less heroic than that, because we had to fight to get our nation, just like everyone else. We don't like to think of ourselves as warring types, but it's not true that no one else wanted these lands. We struggled to get them, and our achievement was in winning.

In distant times the lands of Darokin were overrun by orc bands and by lots of human clans and villages, almost as fractious as the orcs. These were lush lands and almost everyone wanted them, and they weren't interested in sharing. There were also the elves, still in Alfheim in those days, pulling the strings. The ancestors of the Darokinian people could be said to have been the Eastwind clan of humans. They got help from the elves—arms and magical support, in return for fighting the elves' wars for them, mostly against the orcs. But the Eastwind guys also worked to absorb the humans of the region under their control, by negotiation and diplomacy when they could (that's how we probably got that skill, really), but also by knocking heads when they had to. As they say, a kind word and a sword is better than a just kind word at getting people to be agreeable.

Eventually, shortly after the Thyatian revolt against Alphatia and the crowning of their first emperor (whatsis name, you know, the guy that killed all the kings), the leader of the Eastwind Clan made himself the first king of our area. His name was Ansel Darokin, and it is from him that we get our nation's name. Fighting with the orcs continued as both sides sought to expand and expel the other out of the region, first going our way, then the orcs' way, but in the end they were beaten back and the last of the human clans of the area submitted to the new Attleson Dynasty.

Darokin was a large kingdom then, larger than the republic is now. Roads were built through the kingdom, and trade sprang up. Eventually the traders started to get more wealthy than the kings and their nobles, and the kings made blunders (like the Elfwar), and the merchants started to think that they'd do better running the place in the place of guys who got the job by blood rather than merit.

The kings gradually became figureheads as their noble lackeys were replaced bit by bit throughout the kingdom by the merchant lords of the cities. These nobles met various ends, but not too many people missed them so no one looked to closely into how they got removed. Eventually the last king died and his royal house "just happened" to die out as well (some say this didn't happen by accident either, but by this point hardly anyone even noticed they were gone), and the kingdom was at an end. In those days, Darokin stopped being a nation, and became a region of independent city-states, each one governed by merchant lords, usually a council of the most prominent merchant families in the city. Some things change but others don't. These city-states didn't fight much (or at least not so much that it would hurt business), but they weren't friends, either.

The royalty and their nobles were gone, at least, but this new arrangement didn't work so well, either. Glantri took part of our northern lands from us, and when Plaruum was formed by Suleiman al-Kalim, they grabbed some of the eastern country, parts of which had already been invaded by Ethengar nomads anyhow. Orcs and other humanoids began to infest the Cruth Mountains again, and we lost that (nowadays parts of that are in Karamaikos, and they get to deal with the orcs and goblins).

Also, because we weren't unified, every tom jack who lost a fight in one of the neighboring lands ended up here. Now, eventually that would be good for Darokin—we got a lot of vibrant types coming in. And today we celebrate that kind of influx, and like to think of it as being peaceable and agreeable. Well, this is another thing that is half true and half not. It's true that almost always, eventually, accommodations were worked out and everyone ended up getting along and cooperating. But not without friction and strife first, since the people already living here didn't always want to make room for newcomers, and the newcomers, being a bit angry anyhow, usually, since they just got their fundamentals kicked back home, weren't always nice about making room for themselves either, and were pushy about it, especially the warrior-lords who got booted out of Glantri after their "Light of Rad" pronouncement. Those guys were in a foul mood when they got here, I know 'cause my great-great grandpa was one of them. He told me stories that could curl your hair about being forced out of there and making a place for his family here (yah, the old coot was still alive when I was young due to some magical stash he had, and his eyes shown the fire of rage whenever he spoke of the princes of Glantri).

Things had a way of working themselves out, sort of, but with all the monsters and with some of these guys becoming bandits and the like, it was starting to affect trade, and not for the better. The merchant-lords ruling the cities could tolerate a lot, but this was bad for business. So, not quite a century ago, the leaders of the major cities all met to discuss what to do about the fix they were in. Now, these guys were rivals and competitors, but they saw they needed to cooperate to survive. Some of them wanted to create a kingdom again, with themselves as the nobility this time, but others figured that's what got Darokin in the state it was in now, they needed something different. So they created a republic by signing the Great Merger. I'll get back to the republic itself later, but first let me tell you about the land that made up this republic.

The Land

They claimed what was left of the Kingdom of Darokin, minus those bits that other nations had already grabbed in the meantime. We possibly could have got back some of the areas in the Cruth Mountains, but Thyatis had gotten there first and we had no interest in fighting them over monster-infested crags in what was, at the time, the backwater of Traladara.

So our borders were fixed pretty much where they are now. The major area of Darokin is the Streel River basin, a wide plain south of the Broken Lands and north of the Malpheggi Swamp, bounded in the east by the Canolbarth Forest and in the west by the Elstrich Hills. Even then, most Daros lived there. This land isn't just leftover, it's among the most fertile agricultural land in all the continent and, indeed, the world. West of that is Lake Amsorak, a large freshwater lake that drains into the Streel River near Darokin City, which allows for good riverine trade. The lake produces lots of freshwater fish, and allows shipment of goods between Akorros and Akesoli, then into Sind and beyond.

Eastern Darokin is mostly forested, but is also dotted with small farmsteads. This region produces more than enough timber to fill all our needs and then some, with timber being shipped by road or down the Helleck River. South of that are the Five Shires, possibly the best neighbors a nation could have, since the hin are decent folk who don't stir up trouble for their neighbors. Here too is the Cruth Mountain Range, a rugged series of peaks but also not just leftover land, since there is good mining here, and this area produces considerable mineral and metallic resources for Darokin without even digging that deep to get it.

At the far east is the city of Selenica, the gateway to trade with Karamaikos, Plaruum, and beyond. In the north there was the Dwarfgate Mountains, Darokinian until the recent Great Giveaway. While it's true this region was overrun with hostile orcs, that's certainly no cause to have given it away, since the region, like the rest of that mountain range in Rockhome, is full of unexplored mineral reserves, and thus was part of the future of Darokin. Giving away part of our national patrimony to orcs shows the dangers inherent in a government ruled by people who have a short term concern with immediate profit and cost and who want to avoid conflict to such a high degree that they sometimes make decisions that aren't in Darokin's long term interest. This is as good a point as any to discuss that.

The People

The people of Darokin are the finest, most honest and hard-working sorts in the world. It's even hard to say a bad thing about our rulers, as individual people at least, which is more than one can say about rulers in most other places. But Darokin is in many ways a federation of city-states ruled by and for a mercantile elite. If Darokin's government seems small and unobtrusive compared to that of other nations, that's because the great houses prefer to keep real power in their private hands as much as possible, even though they run the government. Looked at properly, it's hard to tell where the government ends and private business begins in Darokin, since the business of Darokin is commerce and commercial interests are in charge, filling the offices with only a few exceptions. To take just one example, in Darokin there are more private security forces employed by the great houses than there are people in Darokin's army.

The government officially may be unobtrusive, but the great houses intrude into everything. The republic is a great idea, and certainly better than being ruled by nobles or people who think just 'cause they can cast spells that makes them better than everyone else. But to a large extent Darokin's republic is just the institutionalization through formal rules of the political influence the wealthy have everywhere. What it does is cement the power of the great houses and create a government devoted to maintaining their interests while giving the impression of popular sovereignty. But I'll bet more folks have a say in things through their vote even in benighted Thyatis, with its backwards system of nobles and its emperor, than in our republic, because the bar for being a voting citizen was placed so high—one has to have 15,000 daros in net wealth just to be allowed to vote—that most people don't qualify. And even if you do, you can't just decide to run for office just because you think you've got something to contribute to the welfare of the nation. You need two more things. First, to hold an office you need even more wealth than you need to vote (or the approval of some bigshot to exempt you from the requirement). Plus, you need to be selected as a candidate by one of the previous officeholders. You can't just run of your own free choice.

Now, some of these guys believe in the integrity of the system and do try to give the voter a choice in who to vote for, so they select persons with different views. But most of the time there's cronyism and

nepotism, virtually fixing things so that the elections are a sham. Politicians select candidates who share their own views, usually from their own family (Maunteanism on a small scale), and many rig the choice they give to the voters by providing only one obvious competent candidate, filling the other slots on the ballot with ciphers, non-entities, incompetent boobies and idiot cousins, insuring that the guy they want to win will win. This threatens to turn Darokin into more of an oligarchy than a republic. It's not an accident that the same faces always end up being chancellor and sitting around the table at Inner Council meetings.

But I'm not down on Darokin, not by any means. I'm a concerned patriot. We just need to reform things to give more people a chance to have their say, and to provide them with a true choice when they vote, to give people the same fair deal in politics that we give them in business. Most countries don't have it nearly this good. In many places there is religious friction and strife, but the people of Darokin are open-minded in religion, there are a variety of beliefs existing side by side without conflict and without the benighted heathenism of Glantri.

This might be because we're prosperous and everyone believes they've got a shot to get ahead if they work hard and play by the rules, so hardly any one in Darokin looks to blame others for things. Our prosperity is based on commerce, the exploitation of internal and external markets. Our merchants excel at overland trade and, to some extent, river trade (especially along the Street), but with the exception of House Linton we don't engage in much sea trade. This handicap by itself shows just how skillful our merchants and traders are, since shipping goods by water is almost always much more efficient than shipping them by land, but still Darokin is the most prosperous nation in the world because of our nation's knack for commerce and reputation for giving folks a fair deal, quality goods at decent prices. But imagine how much more prosperous we could be if the iron grip the oligopoly wields over public affairs and policy could be broken, and with it their increasingly outdated methods, freeing up the nation for a new burst of enterprise and innovation?

I say "iron grip" because since the Great Merger the great houses have been trying to establish themselves in all aspects of Darokin's economy, forming vertical monopolies and collectively operating as an oligopoly, and if they succeed this will result in driving independent operators out of the market. The truly wealthy and powerful can ride out bad luck but most tradesmen don't have that cushion, so the smallest misfortune can put them out of business and even into debt (and with it, indentured servitude, I'll say more on that insidious practice below. I know from personal experience, having just last year gotten out, and only then because of the generosity of a helpful friend who gave me some information I used as leverage to get my freedom back from my "employer"). I bring this up because it is not unheard of for the more powerful to arrange such accidents to befall their less prominent competitors.

This can happen and people look the other way because streeters such as myself have been demonized by the powers that be as being involved in shady deals, selling shoddy goods, and even trafficking in stolen merchandise. But we are the exemplars of the enterprising Darokinian, people struggling to make a go of it on our own terms in the face of the domination of the great houses. We provide goods and services to Copper people [working-class individuals. Ed.] at decent prices, while our cousins, the travelers, go one step beyond this, transporting goods to out of way locales and providing them with stuff that would otherwise be unavailable. Prominent keepers are trying to move into the street market, dumping goods at below cost and besmirching the reputations of honest, hard-working streeters in an effort to squeeze us out of the market. If this happens they will have cut off the bottom rungs of the

economic ladder, harming Darokin in the long run. Most streeters are resilient and feisty, though, and doggedly cling to their way of life. We also adapt, and are creative in coming up with ways to earn a coin. I myself provide my fellow streeters with useful information with which to fight those who want to stack the deck against them. I sell it for a fee, of course, since a gal's got to make a living and we Daros are no charity cases. But it's an important job. Only family members ever wield true power in the great houses, so that means that if the houses succeed in squeezing out the little guy, then opportunity and the chance to make your own life decisions will vanish for the majority of Darokinians. Since Darokinians are naturally enterprising and won't tolerate the kind of stuff that folks in other nations do, that would naturally lead to revolution. Thus, for the good of the nation the power of the merchant houses must be curbed, so this doesn't happen.

But if streeters have low reputations because of being badmouthed, the snakes who broker indentured servants have a low reputation because they deserve it. Let me be frank, these guys are little better than slavers. Now, I know why the powers that be instituted indentured servitude, and they thought they were doing the right thing. A little hard work for a criminal to pay back their debt to society and perhaps learn the good that comes from honest work, plus restitution to the victim, plus it saves money that would be spent on prisons otherwise. Sounds really good in theory. But in practice it's terrible, I can honestly say. Indentured servants are sold to brokers at cut rates, and then the brokers sell the indentured servants to some of the least reputable businesses in Darokin, where they work us like galley slaves and pay us squat. This doesn't teach folks the value of hard work, it just embitters them. Now, I know what you're saying—they don't sell the indentured servants, they sell the services of the indentured servants (so it's not slavery, officially), and the indentured servants are just working off their debts. Well, I tell you, given half a chance to use my true skills rather than the kind of drudgery my master had me doing, I could have paid off what I owed long before I got released. At the rate most indentured servants are paid, many can barely feed themselves, much less set aside some coin to pay their debts. Plus, most employers don't make working conditions what they would have to do if they were using free labor. I've been in mills before, and when they hire employees they make some efforts at safety, 'cause they don't want the workers to leave for better opportunities. But in the mill I worked at as an indentured servant, the owner didn't care about safety 'cause we couldn't leave, we had to work for him. I saw more folks get mangled limbs and die of festering wounds there than I did in the army. If it wasn't for a friend who owed me a favor and slipped me a juicy bit of info on the owner, I'm sure I'd still be there. Even a guy like him didn't want people to know... well, I promised not to say, and for that simple promise he paid my debts for me and I got out of there while I still could. But don't ever buy goods from Quelganic Mills.

Now I do want to say something else about Darokinian culture before I'm done, lest you get the impression that we only care about business and getting ahead in the world. Some folks think that because we don't like tasteless ostentation, that we aren't a very artistic people, we are so busy with business we don't like beauty. Well, I guess it's true that except for the Merchant's Guild Hall we don't have lots of grand buildings and monuments like in other countries, since such things are kind of frivolous if you ask me. But overall, well I'd put a Darokinian house or place of business up against those of any other country, with the possible exception of hin homes. We have nice houses, and everyone works to keep them up, beautifully painted since it's good advertising and it keeps the place from falling apart, which saves money in the long run as well as being pleasing to look at.

So too we like good art as much as the next fellow. But we like art on a human scale, not gargantuan statuary or panoramas run amok; Darokinian art is usually intimate and personal, home scenes or portraits of fields and family. It is true that many merchant lords who commission art like to have faces of themselves and their family plastered over representations of the Immortals or in portrayals of historical dramas in order to inflate their egos, but even those are well executed works of art, and I'll bet they'll stand the test of time. Because that's another thing we keep in mind—good art is also a good investment, as is being a patron of a promising artist. We just don't go in for gauche and extravagant displays like they do in other countries.

Don't Miss

The Darokin Central Market in Darokin City, its one of the biggest markets in the world and probably the best stocked as well. You'll get better deals here, too, and can find just about anything and everything worth having. If it isn't here, you don't really need it anyhow. Plus, if you need the good word or want to get hooked into the grapevine and know what's up, look for me, I'll be around the market. If you say you read about the hardest working woman in Darokin through the almanac, I'll give you a discount.

ETHENGAR KHANATES

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

Area: 57,970 sq. mi. (150,140 sq. km.).

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

Languages: Ethengar.

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

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

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

Industries: Cattle, horse-breeding.

Important Figures: Batu (Khan of the Bortaks), Ghazan (Khan of the Taijits), Huaji (Khan of the Kaeruts), Hulagu (Khan of the Uighurs), Jemugu (Khan of the Pakkas), Manghai (Khan of the Murkits), Temur (Khan of the Dugatais).

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 Medu.

In the times before speaking, The Mischief Maker himself led the Dugatais to the great western edge of the Sea of Grass. The Great Destroyer desired that we should live in this windswept land, that we might temper our blades against the cowardly Gostai, and that we should be first to stand against the heathens from the highlands to the west!

The Land

We of the Dugatai Tribe call our home the westernmost lands of the steppes. The mighty Dol-Anur roars into our lands from the heights of the Colossus Mountains. During the four months of winter, its gelid waters may sometimes freeze solid. At this time, too, Great Cretia sends His mighty winds from the mountains, chilling us to the bone. The tribal clans must migrate towards the eastern edge of our lands, there to graze in the fertile Sea of Purple Grass. Others covet these grasslands, however—the Gostai and our neighbors, the Kaerut Tribe—and we are often forced to fight for grazing rights. Once Tubak the Lawgiver brings summer back to the steppes, we migrate back towards the west. Now, the cold river becomes a boon to our people. The grasses are green and lush, and the Great Destroyer's winds provide cool relief from the sun.

The People

Our dealings with the treacherous Glantrians and the snibeling Gostai have provided we of the Pugatai Tribe with a reserve of judgment not found elsewhere in the khanates. We choose to observe our friends and foes alike, evaluating their deeds and words closely. If engaged, however, we are just as quick to strike—and just as deadly when doing so—as any of the other tribes would be. The Lord of Chaos and Warfare directs our hand at such times. It is no secret that the greatest schools of brataks may be found among the clans of the Pugatai Tribe. Our khan, Temur, has his eyes and ears everywhere—he considers no information unimportant.

It is considered a mark of honor and strength among the Pugatais to wear wolfskins, the trappings of our foes the Gostai. A warrior may often be judged by the number and quality of the skins he wears, and that he provides for his family and clan. Some warriors even adorn themselves with mementos of their victories against goblinkind—finger bones, skulls, jawbones.

Recent History

Other tribes sometimes dismiss us for being the last to join with the Golden Khan, Moglai, when he unified the tribes. They are merely jealous of our influence and might, for did Moglai not find it necessary to have the backing of the other tribes before he could confront us?

We once enjoyed a close alliance with the Kaeruts, with whom we would share in the hunting of the Gostai goblins. Since the end of the recent war with the heathen principalities of the west, Quaji Khan seems far more interested in attacking the northern Heldomers. As such, ties with the Kaeruts have dwindled.

Messengers of all the tribes have come calling upon Temur Khan, but none more so than those of Ghazan, Khan of the Taijits. Well does my lord recall the treachery of Ghazan's father, Oktai, who had long been harboring Glantrian spies in his camp. Before my lord will consider allying himself with the Taijits, he must assure himself of Ghazan's motives.

Temur Khan's hatred of the Glantrians runs deep, ever since his father and elder brother were murdered by one of their wizards many seasons ago. Like the Golden Khan before him, Temur realizes that only by maintaining unity among the tribes, and fomenting discord among the princes, can Ethengar defeat our western enemies. For now, though, the tribes are once more involved in a war of succession, and so we must bide our time until we can strike against Glantri. In the meanwhile, we of the Pugatais trade with settlements along the western edge of the Dol-Anur, particularly Bramyra.

Don't Miss

The trading post of Chensi was founded a handful of years ago opposite the Dol-Anur from Bramyra, and is one of the few settlements in Pugatai land that is inhabited year round. Several wooden houses and stables stand along the banks of the river, and during the summer months, anywhere from dozens to hundreds of yurts may be encamped around Chensi. Noghai, a bratak and close friend of Temur Khan, controls the distribution of goods through Chensi, and handles information coming in from the west. The Glantrians in Bramyra seem not quite like those elsewhere in the highlands. Many among them speak with distaste about the ruling wizards of that land. Their prince, Urmahid Krinagar, is even said to have earned the respect of my lord Temur Khan. Another trading post—Urga, in the north near Estoniarsk—has not been quite as successful.

FIVE SHIRES (The)

Location: Along the southern coast of Brum, west of Karamaikos, east of Atruaghin territories.
OW

Area: 10,660 sq. mi. (27,610 sq. km.).

Population: 210,000 hin, 9,500 demihumans and humans (elves and humans being the most common, with gnomes and dwarves more rarely).

Languages: Thyatian (Darokinian dialect). The ancient tongue of Lalor is now typically only spoken by hin masters and a few sages.

Coinage: Pellow (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 typically 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, although much of the day-to-day affairs of individual shires are handled by the clanmasters. Sheriffs are voted upon by the 100 clanmasters of the shires, although they operate with relative autonomy thereafter. The sheriffs appoint local deputies (krondar) to handle day-to-day law enforcement and military matters. Member of the Western Defense League.

Industries: Agriculture, including tobacco, alcohol, vegetables (peas, beans, radishes, mushrooms, carrots, onions, and asparagus) and some fruit (apples, cherries, grapes, watermelons, cucumbers).

Important Figures: Joam Astlar (Sheriff of Seashire), Tarisco Highnose (Sheriff of Highshire), Maeragh Littlelaughs (Sheriff of Eastshire) Delune Darkeyes (Sheriff of Heartshire), Sildil Seaeyes (Sheriff of Southshire).

Flora and Fauna: As well as all the normal flora and fauna usually found in the Five Shires' climate and terrain, the shires are home to a number of fairy creatures, including dryads and wooddrakes, and the more wild areas sometimes hide lycanthropes, a few undead and other unnatural creatures, including a number unique to the shires. Goblinoids can also be found in the northern Cruth Mountains.

Further Reading: GAZS The Five Shires, previous almanacs.

Description by Larn Fastbuck.

Hail and well met! I am Larn Fastbuck, tailor and merchant of Mereskalot in Eastshire, or as I like to call it, the Gateway to Karamaikos!

I am new to this sort of work, so you'll forgive an honest merchant's missteps as I tell you moneyed outlanders just what sort of things you're missing here in the homeland of the hindul—whom men sometimes call “halflings”—the bounteous Five Shires!

Even as a lad, I was never struck by the need to go yallaren, at least not beyond the bounds of my great homeland, and so when previous almanac writer—and sometime owner, showing a remarkable lack of hin-ish business sense, if I may say so—Joshuan Gallidox decided to wander farther afield once more, I ended up with this task.

I was tricked into it, you might say; not that I'm complaining. Some adventurers of a shabby demeanor and well-traveled nature were at The Maiden's Kiss in Mereskalot a few months ago, expounding on their recent adventures in Karamaikos and the lands north and east of there. While they made all that seem exotic and exciting, they turned disparaging when discussing life in the Five Shires—as though anyone other than a fool would arrange his nation to be the sort of place that would need adventurers traipsing about—saying that it was a sleepy backwater and that “nothing ever happens here.” And this, in the Year of Going Out!

I admit to having perhaps a bit too much cherry wine in my belly—my wife Lori says the events that followed could have no other explanation—but I took this as an insult to the hindul and proceeded to lecture these ruffians at length on all that the Five Shires has to offer, including leading The Maiden's Kiss in rounds of “Halfling High,” “We Go Out” and “The Thousand Ponies,” and telling the story of the invasion of Loktal Ironshield.

Several hours later, as we were being exhorted to go home and sleep it off, a grinning rogue in their band explained to me that he represented the Mystara Almanac, and would like very much if I could write this year's entry. Apparently—my memories are a bit hazy on this point to this day—I agreed.

The Land

It is an old saying amongst the Hundred Clans of the hin that “the land is the people and the people are the land.” This may not be true of the rootless men on our borders, and such a truth may not comfort the elves who seem determined to spill endless blood over the same forest that they are destroying in their zeal, but it is absolutely true of the Five Shires and the hin.

The Five Shires are a lush and green land, and serve as the breadbasket of the Old World—a fact that has meant we've had to battle invaders of all sorts, orricish, dwarven and human, over the years. While it can be rainy in winter months, snow is rarely seen below the Cruth Mountains that shield us from the northern realms. The winds off the Sea of Dread are temperate and mild, and travelers from throughout the world often choose to vacation along the seacoast, where quiet visitors with lots of foreign coin in their pockets are always welcome!

While we have a few settlements on outlying islands, and the city of Shireton in Seashire is almost a shire unto itself, our nation is most cleanly divided into the Five Shires themselves:

Eastshire, the Gateway to Karamaikos, is the shire most familiar to outsiders, lying as it does along the seacoast of Karamaikos, bordering the Blight Swamp and Achelos Woods. Split in twain by the Wardle River, much trade with Karamaikos passes through here, and this is a rich farming land, with melons, cucumbers, sweet corn and tomatoes among its chief products. This was also where the war against the Black Eagle Baron was launched, and it was partisans of Eastshire who stood victorious on the ramparts of Fort Doom that great day when a shadow was lifted from Karamaikos and the Five Shires.

Highshire, to the west and north of Eastshire, lies in the shadow of the Black Spires Range of the Cruth Mountains, and is rich in mining and timber resources. The vibrancy of the land is such that less-than-welcome creatures sometimes can find a lair here, and pallaren and agents of the clans and sheriffs seem to be forever rooting out goblinoids, lycanthropes and other fell sorts, and a wise hin carries his sling and a stout walking stick while traveling these roads alone. Still, it is a pleasant land, and few things are as pleasant as standing on the balcony of the inn in Ringrise, watching the

morning mists curl over the hills. Rumors of Loktal's Vault have brought thrill-seekers and fortune hunters here in recent months.

Heartshire, the contented—some outland adventurers would even say “sleepy”—heart of the hindul, lies further west and south along the Cruth Mountains from Highshire. The area has been well mined, and most of the shire is now concerned with life on their small farms, in the hilly lands overlooking the Flur and Ithypool Rivers. I spent my pallaren years in the hustling and bustling town of Fishtickle Bridge, where I honed my business acumen, working as an accountant for one of the great mills there. It was also where I saw elves for the first time: Although the Gentle Folk who loved this land before us are long gone, their successors remain in the quiet dark woods in the Five Shires, most notably in the town of Shadowgate.

Southshire, naturally enough, lies south of Heartshire and sticks out into the Sea of Dread. It was here our long-ago ancestors reached the Old World, and it is here, in this well-settled land, which has known the footsteps of the hin for almost two and a half millennia, that the recent interest in the origins of our species has become something of a sensation. This is otherwise our quietest shire, concerned with shipbuilding, shipping and overland commerce with the interior. Although I am happily married—and a big hello to my wife, Lori, who is proofreading this before I send it off by courier to the folks at the almanac—I would be remiss if I did not mention to young pallaren reading this that Bramblerose has, bar none, the most beautiful girls in the Five Shires.

Finally, Seashire, up the coast from Southshire, and bordering all four other shires, is the modern heart of the nation. More than half of all hin live here, either in the capital city of Shireton, the pasturelands inland, or in the fishing and farming villages throughout the shire. Things move more quickly here, with the expedition to discover the origins of the hin launching from Shireton and the outlying communities, the recent unpleasantness as the Seashire Summer Fair and the discoveries below Wit's End. While my heart will always belong to Mereskalot, I have spent many a pleasant hour in Leafkindle when on the road about my business. Fern Mouldwalk, barmaid at the Duskmoot in Leafkindle, has become somewhat famous for her collection of riddles and knock-knock jokes in recent years, which she has a habit of springing on strangers and friends alike without warning.

Shireton, the capital of the Five Shires, is a beautiful, boisterous town, one which prizes inventive architecture, quick wits and good humor. Commerce, politics and culture all mix here, along with the sights and sounds of nations far-flung. If you can't find it in Shireton—even if you have to ask quietly in some darkened corners of taverns they prefer I not name here—it's simply not worth having.

The People

We are a people famously both in love with our homeland and stricken with a wanderlust, which we call pallara. It is typically our youth who are struck with this “wild time,” and pallaren can be found throughout the Old World and even in the distant points beyond. During this period, we explore who we are and will try all sorts of things, whether it's hunting fell beasts, becoming the chef for a great noble in the icy lands of Wendar, or living amongst the Tortles in the little-known lands far to the west. Not surprisingly, a number of the hin setting out to discover from whence came the seeds that grew roots as the hindul of the Five Shires are pallaren. This period lasts until a hin discovers their true calling in life, and can range from a handful of seasons, as it did for myself, or for those like Joshuan Gallidox, it can last half a lifetime.

Back home, life revolves around the hundred clans of the Five Shires, into which we are all born and after which most of us are named. Clan holdings form the basis for each of the towns and cities in the Five Shires, although it is not unknown for an adult hin to live elsewhere when serving the interests of clan and shire. Even so, it is a rare hin who is not well-prepared with a warm fireplace, a full pipe and all the creature comforts, wherever they roam.

As a folk, we tend towards good will and good humor, and a community spirit that is notably lacking in members of other races, possibly excepting the elves. Most issues are solved without rancor or strife, although that's not always obvious to outsiders, who may mistake centuries-long prank wars between clans as something more serious. Even the hin pirates, the scourge of the Sea of Dread, approach their work with the sort of good spirits and cheerful perspective that others would do well to emulate.

We are a self-reliant sort, as a rule, neither needing nor seeking out the meddlesome attentions of the Immortals. That isn't to say, of course, that great hin heroes have not gained the prize of immortality for themselves; these High Heroes, though, know that we can take care of ourselves for the most part. Even their agents here in the Five Shires, the secretive hin masters, are more concerned with tending to the physical well-being of the woods and hills and streams of the land than they are in advancing any particular agenda—which isn't to say that their powers aren't as just as mighty as those of the clerics and druids of other nations! I can almost feel sorry for the dark clerics of the Black Eagle who found this out the hard way a few scant years ago. Almost.

Recent History

As I have alluded to, in recent years, we finally broke the Black Eagle Baron, Baron Ludwig von Hendriks of Karameikos. A bandit with connections, he or perhaps his wizard, Bargle the Infamous, had somehow bewitched Stephen Karameikos, ruler of that land, into remaining unaware of his depredations into our easternmost lands, which ranged from banditry to kidnap and worse. But it was nothing stuffing Stephan into a sack and taking him on a tour of the Black Eagle Barony incognito couldn't solve and it did, in AC 1010. Both the Black Eagle himself and Bargle escaped execution by the hin, with the Black Eagle going on to become the toast of Glantri—a bandit and a nation that deserve each other, and may they both get what they so richly deserve—and reports of Bargle cropping up from all over the Old World, including a disturbing few close to home. A recent rumor has him transformed into the shape of a hin, unable to regain his form or magic, and wandering lost, with only scraps of his memory, throughout the Five Shires. If only this were true...

Of happier and more recent news, an expedition of hin from the far-flung outpost of Leeshashire in Norwold to the Five Shires has kindled an interest in the history of the hin, in particular their origins. A lecture tour by the Leeshashire hin has whipped the yallaren—young and old—into a veritable frenzy, and their term for the year they left Leeshashire, the Year of Going Out, is now being applied to our current year, as the excitement in the nation has led to a great exodus. Late this year, the great ship the Blue Turtle will set sail for Jerendi, and from there the Serpent Peninsula and points beyond, to discover the origins of the hin and reopen communications between communities we hope still exist throughout the world. Over 1,000 hin (and perhaps a tenth that many men, elves, gnomes and even a dwarf or two) currently have signed up on the great rolls circulated throughout the clan halls of the Five Shires. Among those who have stated their intentions of going are the infamously unlucky Leafkindle merchant Baltho Proudstride, the hero of the siege of Fort Doom Ringo Trundlestump of

Wardlystone and the reputed bandit Gormadoc Foxfollow. (Joshuan Gallidox has also been seen at many of the Leehashire lectures. Whether or not he intends to sail on the Blue Turtle, I do not know.) “We Go Out” has gone from being the song of yallaren far from the Five Shires to being the most popular tune heard in many an inn. There have been nights where I have stood on the roof of my home and could hear it echoing through the hills, and it made my heart light to hear it.

Closer to home, the Seashire Summer Fair this Fyrtal in Stillpool—each shire has its own summer fair, set two weeks apart from the previous one—was marked by livestock killings and intrigue. Most of the fair—which I attended, being there to see the wares my counterparts in Seashire had for sale, as well as imported goods from Darokin—was concerned with the spectacle of a gnomish adventurer and his friends trying to convince the fair that his riding dogs were going to be the next great advance in travel for the inn (although the shaggy ponies from the Ethengar lands seemed to be much more of a success with those in attendance). The Glantrian wizard Sombras tried peddling something called “Wonder Feed,” which was alleged to cause poultry to grow to more than double their size. His ruse—based around Stupendia, the “dire duck” he brought with him to the fair—would have been merely amusing if it hadn’t been for the “Phantom of the Fair” steadily killing off all the ducks in contention for the Best in Show prize. The resolution of the mystery, by adventurers passing through the area, was murky at best (blame cast on noted duck farmer and the oldest inn currently living in the Five Shires, Ashmore “Old Inn” Battlebur, has been disputed by the Krondar of Stillpool, Kip Littleglade), but the killings did come to an end and the fair was able to conclude peaceably.

An ancient fortress from the era of dwarven invader Loktal Ironshield has also been discovered in the sea caves east of Burny in Seashire. Recently used by a particularly unpleasant group of pirates on the Sea of Dread and secretly discovered by a band of dwarven criminals from Rockhome (who have been exploring the artifacts left behind from Loktal’s time, as well as practicing banditry in the surrounding area), the complex was hidden under the famous estate of Wit’s End. Wit—or Wittlewig “Wit” Belnose to the non-inn readers of the almanac—was a famous prankster and adventuring inn some centuries ago. A famous friend of the Highforge gnomes, Wit is reputed to both have ascended to the ranks of the High Heroes and actually been able to practice magic during life here on Mystara as well. Reports out of Burny say that his run-down estate—little more than a stone cabin in a scrub of woods overlooking the sea—was actually built atop the half-completed sea fortress of Duncin the Bloody Ax or “Duncanthrax” which Loktal’s lieutenant apparently hoped to use to raid up and down the Dread Coast. Reports from adventurers state that the underground fortress seems to have been extensively upgraded with gnomish engineering, and that the pirates were never able to penetrate past the tricks and traps of the deepest recesses of the caves. Neither, reportedly, could the Braken dwarves, which meant that they failed to stumble on records that apparently show the location of Loktal’s Vault, where the King of the Glittering Realm allegedly secreted his wealth somewhere within the Cruth Mountains. Not surprisingly, the adventurers aren’t commenting on any of the rumors now running rampant through the Five Shires.

Finally, a great gold dragon has been sighted repeatedly in the skies over Eastshire, Highshire and Seashire this year. There have been reports of such a creature on and off for over a century, but these are the most numerous sightings in the shortest time ever reported. What this means is unknown. The ways of dragons are subtle and mysterious.

Don’t Miss

I could fill an almanac with all that is to be seen in the Five Shires, but for a visitor to our great nation, I have one simple recommendation, the summer fairs. Each summer, we hold a fair in each shire, two weeks after the previous one (the order is worked out each year by the various clan leaders). Everything from the best of each shire's agriculture, livestock and crafts are on display; these are also popular events due to the foreign merchants who arrive, the entertainers from around the Old World and the presence of tourists, who are themselves a show. Adventurers are usually sought at these events, and some have made their fortunes simply by making contacts with patrons at the fairs each summer.

And trust me about the girls of Bramblerose.

"WE GO OUT"

Go out.

Go out to the rivers,

Go out to the sea,

Go out to the roads,

To see what's waiting for me.

We go out.

Go out.

Go out to the forests,

Go out to the wood,

Go learn the things

That only a traveler could.

We go out.

I'll always love my home,

And my own snug bed.

But no hin can see it all while alive,

And they sure can't see it when they're dead!

We go out.

(Chorus)

It was in Jerendi,

Where I met an island lass.

I'll never forget her scent, the sunset,

Or how it feels to swing a pirate's cutlass!

We go out.

(Chorus)

Gambling in Darokin,

I played against a cagey thief.

He upped the stakes to all I had,

In the end I won his teeth.

We go out.

(Chorus)

I know one day I'll come home,

Return to hearth and to clan.

But first I have to see the world,

And learn and do all that I can.

We go out.

(Chorus)

My brother (sister) died in (fill in location),

In lands foreign and wild.

But as he (she) lay dying,

His (her) lips wore a smile:

HE (SHE) WENT OUT!

(Chorus)

GLANTRI (Principalities of)

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

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

Population: 590,000 humans and elves, plus approximately 14,000 humanoids living in and around the Great Crater.

Languages: Thyatian (Glantrian, Albanese, and Caurenzan dialects), Alphetian (Flemish dialect), Elvish (Belcadiz and Erewan dialects), Sylaire (a.k.a. Aberoignian), Kaelic (a.k.a. Klantyre), Fenswick (a.k.a. Anglais), Traladaran (Boldavian dialect), Ethengar (Krondaharan dialect), and numerous humanoid 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: Jaggat von Drachenfels (Prince of Alban), Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias (Princess of Belcadiz), Juliana Vlaardoen (Princess of Bergdhoven), Morphail Gorevitch-Woszlany (Prince of Boldavia), Urmahid Krimagar (Prince of Bramyra), Carlolina Erewan (Princess of Erewan), Dolores Hillsbury (Princess of Fenswick), Angus McGregor (Prince of Klantyre), Kalindi Viravana (Prince of Krondahar), Kol (Prince of New Kolland), Isidore d'Ambreville (Princess of Nouvelle Aberoigne), Malachie du Marais (Prince of Morlay-Malinbois), Harald of Haaskinz (Prince of Sablestone and Grand Master of the School of Magic).

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.

Next up in our spotlight of the principalities is a place jus' a li'l north o' Glantri City, a li'l known terr'tory called Fenswick. It ain't much ta boast about, sure, an' it's only recently placed on the map, in a matter of speakin'. But this bit o' Glantrian countryside is a special place ta me an' me folks: Fenswick's a place I call home!

The Land

Jus' north o' Glantri City an' south o' the Vesubia an' Fen Rivers is the beautiful land o' Fenswick. Gentle hills, lush forests, fertile plains an' pastures—alright, maybe it ain't that beautiful. Maybe even a bit dull ta yeh city folks. But one thin' I call tell yeh, the weather in Fenswick is perfect all year 'round!

How's that, yeh ask? Well, we reckon it's the doin' of the local mages, partic'larly one family called the Merryweathers. Dep, they're good folks, casting their weather magic ta stop storms an' rains from cloudin' the skies—altho' sometimes they themselves get carried away with their magic! Nothin' comes worse ta a magical lightnin' storm, I tell yeh!

But as luck would have it, the land around the Fen ain't that fertile. The farmers can't grow much but potatoes an' beets an' other tubers. Most folk resort ta fishin' in the river o' herdin' sheep. Cattle ain't good here. Some folk e'en resort ta lumberjackin' an' minin' for ores.

But because o' our proximity ta the capital, it's always been easy shippin' goods ta market there. Now I won't say the Fen folks are rich, but their lives are getting' more comfortable since Fenswick became recognized as a principality. An' I thinks more's ta come with the nearby Fen village o' Taterhill elevated ta the status o' duchy!

The People

The Fenswick, o' as we like ta call ourselves, the Fen, are actually a minority in Glantri. Many folk think that we're the same as the Kaelic o' Klantyre up north. We're actually closely related, but quite different. Legend has it the first Fen settlers came over ta this world through the same magical gate as the McGregors an' the other Kaelics. Our ancestors were all wizards an' sorcerers, an' in that old world, they were persecuted by some inquisition—maybe the way we Glantrians now go after clerics an' religion. The Kaelics escaped into this world, an' some o' the Fen came along.

Those early Fen were known as the Fen Witches—maybe because they weren't as powerful in magic as the Flaemish wizards o' the McGregor necromancers—but that's how Fenswick got its name. We Fen have always been a small quiet lot o' people, ne'er really a force ta reckon with in Glantri. But over the years, I can say one thing the Fens got good at was politics. Quite a number o' Fens have risen out o' obscurity an' become nobles! The Batrils, the Spriggs, the Bluebeards, the Beaumarys-Moorkrofts, an' o' course, the most famous name ta emerge from Fenswick, the Hillsburys!

Recent History

Ol' Duke Edward Hillsbury was the first Fenswick nobleman ta rise ta the positions o' duke, an' ta rule his own people! (Previous ta him, Fenswick was ruled by lots o' powermongerin' nobles from the Flaems, or worse, the Kaelics! Nightmarish years!) His daughter, Lady Margaret, was a brilliant politician an' bureaucrat, I hear, an' the Ol' Dragon o' Fenswick ruled with an iron fist. Laws, rules, legislation, taxes, levies, tolls, licenses, permits, papers, forms, warrants—she knew ev'ry bit o' them, how ta get into trouble with them, an' how ta get out! The only time she e'er softened up, I reckon, was when she was with that Alphatian Prince o' Blackhill, Prince Volospin Aendyr—who, o' course, was married with children!

Well, in back in '11 [AC 1011. Ed.] after the Great War, Duchess Margaret was killed by a black dragon—how these wizards get into one-on-one fights with dragons, I'll ne'er figure!—an' the Fen folk were worried that we'd be passed around again in a game o' musical dominions. But lo an' behold, Lady Dolores Hillsbury shows up, the daughter o' the Duchess Margaret an' the now dead Prince o' Blackhill! (Turns out the rumors that ol' Maggie was infertile wasn't true after all!) An' not only that, but she's bringin' with her the very dragon that slew the Ol' Dragon! The Council o' Princes confirms Lady Dolores as her mother's rightful heir an' also enteoff Fenswick as a honest-ta-goodness principality!

O' course, nothin' much else has been excitin' since then. Princess Dolores doesn't care for ruling her principality o' sheepherders an' potato farmers much. The few times she goes ta Fenswick Keep, she doesn't even stay long enough for crumpets ta get soggy in yer tea. Then again, things are a bit easier for the Fen folk nowadays, especially without the Ol' Dragon breathing down our backs ebery minute anymore.

Don't Miss

There ain't much ta see in Fenswick beyond the hills an' pastures an' fields o' bright county flowers. There is one place o' interest, partic'larly to those inta arcane mysteries. If yeh follow the Fen River northward ta where the nettle grows thick an' deep, yeh can find a clearin' with strange stone formations. This Stonehenge is said to be magical, and a replica of the gate that the first Fen Witches used to travel to this world. Some say it opens to a fairy realm. Some say it's used by druids practicing some ol' pagan religion o' earth worship. Scariest o' all, some say it's guarded by an evil vulture-headed humanoid—or a flock o' them, some say—whose very touch rots an' corrupts objects. No one can tell for sure, an' I haven't been to the Stonehenge myself.

GRÄBJERGE (Dwarf-Kingdom of)

Location: Beneath the Gråbjerge Mountains, Noslo Island, Kingdom of Ostland. **OW**

Area: The tunnel systems are impossible to measure, but Gråbjerge covers 350 sq. miles (905 sq. km.).

Population: Estimated at 8,000 dwarves.

Languages: Dwarvish (Archaic dialect). Some individuals may also know giantish languages or Heldannic.

Coinage: Glitter (5 gp), shine (10 sp), rock (1 cp). Trade in gems and jewelry as well as barter is widespread.

Taxes: Unknown.

Government Type: Monarchy.

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

Important Figures: Throfar Strongarm (King), Gilis Shadowborn (Princess).

Flora and Fauna: Cabern creatures, such as lizards, bats, giant beetles and spiders, as well as the occasional hook beast or rust monster, can be found throughout the tunnel system. Many exotic varieties of fungi grow all over the caberns.

Further Reading: GAZ7 The Northern Reaches.

Description by Gilor Rockcrusher.

As part of Jarl Oda Elsasdottir of Vithesford's mercenary force, I was admitted to the cabernous Kingdom of Gråbjerge, home of a clan of the infamous Mlodrigswerg or moulder dwarves. I may well have been the first outsider dwarf to set foot in their ancient realm, so surely my report will be of interest to a great number of people, maybe making it worth some additional gold pieces?

The Mlodrigswerg are well known for having been expelled from Rockhome in ages past, accused of wielding sorcery and trafficking with evil creatures, particularly the Father of Demons. After their banishment they settled the mountain ranges of the Northern Reaches, and now I was about to enter one such settlement, right here in my native Ostland.

The Land

Entering the caberns and tunnels beneath Gråbjerge was a stark contrast to the cold winter outside. In the dampness of the caves close to the surface, all manner of rodents and eerie animal calls could be heard. Had it not been for the torches carried by my human comrades, I'm sure I would have soon picked up plenty of life with my superior dwarven vision.

We were met well inside the tunnels by a dwarven fellow, completely swathed in thick, dusty clothes, who suddenly appeared from the shadows. Surely this was one of the Mlodrigswerg come to guide us into their hidden kingdom. The fellow was impossible to identify due to all the scarves and heavy clothes he wore. As we were led further downwards, our guide occasionally stopped to tap strange pipes that were found along the tunnel walls. Faint replies could be heard further down the corridors.

Finally we came to a huge slab of a door that sealed us from further progress. Our guide tapped a code of some sorts on the eber-present pipes, and then proceeded to manipulate some strange device built into the door, resembling a disc marked with unfamiliar runes. Noiselessly the door swung open before us and revealed a huge cavern.

The entire cavern was lit by a dusky glow, which emanated from strange mushrooms that grew all over the floor and up the sloping walls. Crawling around these mushrooms, and apparently harvesting some of them, were a number of dwarves, the Modrigswerg!

The People

Our guide led us into the cavern, and work stopped momentarily as the Modrigswerg looked up to observe us warily. They were dwarves like me, but also unlike me. Many dwarves are similar to each other, but none of these Modrigswerg were alike. One of them carried an uncountable number of bracelets up both arms, another trailed a long beard behind him, while a third had tattoos covering her entire face and bald head. It seemed that the Modrigswerg liked to distinguish themselves.

As we crossed the cavern I spied other tunnels leading further downwards; some had rails for use by mining carts, others were sealed shut with doors similar to the one we had entered through. At the far end of the cavern we were led down a flight of stairs before emerging in what appeared to be a feast hall. Tables had been carved from the rock and low stone benches circled them. Only a few dwarves could be seen in the hall, sitting far apart. Opposite the entrance stood a large throne, by dwarven standards. The throne was covered in gold plates and had gems imbedded throughout it. On the throne sat the Modrigswerg King.

The king was a dwarf in his late prime, muscular and powerful in posture and appearance. He wore a colorful robe, covered in jewelry, and on his head sat a simple, but extremely elegant crown. His hair and beard were black and braided, long enough to reach his waist. We were led to his table and offered a place before him. When the king spied me, he appeared surprised, but quickly adopted a sly look. He asked me in Dwarvish to sit close to him, as he would hear of news from dwarves outside his kingdom. I initially had some trouble understanding him as his speech was highly archaic, as I imagine we dwarves spoke many centuries ago.

We were treated to a meal, a feast if you will, though most of the dishes were less than delicious. Smoked bat, giant beetles boiled in their shells, and strange meat that I did not dare inquire about were among the food we were offered. And to every dish were served mushrooms of all kinds and varieties. Throughout this meal, the king questioned me about life outside these caverns, apparently pleased that I spoke his language. I tried getting information from him, but he was skilled at using words to his advantage, and I fear he learned much more from me, than I did from him.

At the end of the meal, the king took me aside and introduced me to our guide, who turned out to be one of his daughters. Without her scarves covering her, I could see that she was a very attractive dwarf, but there was something sinister about her. She seemed to be sizing me up as one would a piece of meat or a farm animal. The king asked her to show me around some of the mines and forges, since they would surely be of interest to a dwarf like me, and my protests that I should get back to my comrades fell on deaf ears.

My tour was interesting, but I was constantly on guard as my guide walked beside me, occasionally grabbing my arm or leaning close to whisper some public secret about this or that dwarf, or sharing

some tale of the underworld. Had she not been so menacing, I would have enjoyed the attention, but as it was, I was both polite and as distant as I could be. On the tour I saw Modrigswerg carefully mining the tunnels for gems and precious metals, and I observed several dwarves at work in small chambers, carefully crafting weapons and jewelry. I saw no evidence of sorcery or deals with evil forces, but I would likely have been kept away from such endeavors.

When we finally got back from the tour, the princess reluctantly let go of my arm and retreated from the sight of my human companions; apparently she was loath at being seen by them. Another guide was waiting to lead us back out through the tunnels, and we left with the king asking that I please return soon to further exchange knowledge, something I'm hesitant to do at present. I shudder to think what my father would say, had he known that I'd end up visiting the moulder dwarves and being alone with a Modrigswerg princess.

Recent Events

Most of the history of the moulder dwarves consists of legends and rumors, but I will try to repeat both these, and what I picked up from my visit. It was many centuries ago that the Modrigswerg were a clan of dwarves in Rockhome. This particular clan had become adept at binding the souls and life forces of living creatures into their devices and works. How they gained these abilities is uncertain, but there are rumors of an alliance with evil elves and a cult devoted to the Father of Demons.

When their practices were discovered by the other clans of Rockhome, the Modrigswerg Clan was expelled from Rockhome, their leaders slain, and their name forgotten and erased from dwarven records. From this day the Rockhome dwarves knew them as moulder dwarves or rotten dwarves.

Apparently the clan split into smaller family groups and settled throughout the mountain regions of the Northern Reaches, near their old dwellings of Rockhome. For reasons that are not apparent, the moulder dwarves became very solitary and only banded loosely, with even some family members living far apart. In some areas, such as under Gråbjerg, the dwarves banded together under a particularly charismatic individual, who would claim the throne for life, or until betrayed.

Betrayal seems to run in the blood of the rotten dwarves. Tales say that they were cursed by the dark powers they had allied with, when their plots were foiled; the truth of this matter is not known. Still, it is known that these dwarves have regularly betrayed not only each other, but also the people that have employed them.

Such was also the case with the current King of Gråbjerg, Throfar Strongarm, as he gleefully explained to me. The former king was a ruthless, greedy slave-driver, who had taken Throfar as his apprentice and thrall. Throfar was treated to daily beatings and abuse for the simplest faults, and grew to hate the king as much as anyone else in the community. Eventually Throfar promised the king a beautiful gem that he had stolen from another dwarf. The king was lured to his doom in a small remote cave, populated by hook beasts, where he was torn to pieces. Throfar returned with a rescue team well after the king was dead, and slew the monsters.

Since Throfar had access to most of the old king's secrets, he was suddenly a very wealthy and influential dwarf. He took the former queen as his wife, and managed to buy and talk his way to the throne. Throfar Strongarm has ruled the Gråbjerg Clan since that day, some 80 years ago. He has fathered three daughters by his wife, who died 11 years ago, apparently succumbing to madness.

Recently, within the last 20 years, he has begun to trade more openly with the humans of Ostland, growing rich through trade with the jarls of Vithesford. This alliance seems to be merely a stepping-stone for him on his way to open up trade with more domains, and perhaps even other countries.

Don't Miss

Despite the oppressive nature of the place, the forges of the Modrigsberg are truly beautiful and magnificent works of art as well as superior tools for craftsmanship. Any dwarf worth his salt would be able to craft excellent pieces with tools such as these. Just looking at all the heirlooms and displayed works could take a dwarf several weeks of enjoyable recreation.

Do Miss

The Modrigsberg have no culinary skills to boast of. As awful as their so-called feast was, we were dismayed to discover that they had even worse foodstuffs. For our return journey we were given what the Modrigsberg call "canned" food, a strange mixture of unknown ingredients boiled together and sealed in metal canisters. This food was surely the blandest I've ever tasted, and we got rid of most of it, relying on food from local homesteads on our way home. I kept a single can as a souvenir, though.

HALATHIUS (County of)

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

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

Population: 30,000 including the town of Goldleaf (pop. 6,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Sabrina Andreana (Countess), Anthemus Adreanus (Heir), Maximillian von Hauptstein (Guard Commander), Brackularus Lactanius (Prelate), Mercurius Praesentinus (Magist).

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

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

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

The Land

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

Numerous small villages and mining communities are scattered throughout Halathius, but its most significant settlement (and the county's capital) is Goldleaf. This town is located near the source of the

Polithius River, at the highest point that it can be used by raft and barge traffic. The town itself is built around the river valley, with trails leading out to the nearby gold mines. The slopes around the river itself are fairly steep, except in the vale of Goldleaf around the town, which is broader. The narrows leading into the vale are heavily protected with fortified artillery positions overlooking the river and the trail alongside it. This is also true for the pathway west leading to the Mesonian River.

The People

The lives of the people of Halathius focus around one of two things. The first and foremost thing is mining: either working in the mines, in mine-related industries (like smelting), or serving the needs of the mining industry (taberns catering to miners, for example). Running a distant second is a tourist industry providing for hikers and mountain climbers who visit the area. The town of Goldleaf is known for its goldsmiths in particular, but there are smiths of all sorts living in this settlement. Goldleaf's gates close at dusk and aren't opened again till dawn.

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

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

HATTIAS (Duchy of)

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

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

Population: 400,000 including the city of Hattias (pop. 30,000) and the towns of Port Hatti (pop. 10,000), Vinton (pop. 5,000), Pilon (pop. 10,000), and Gray Bay (pop. 7,500) and Fort Southpoint (pop. 1,250). Population change due to emigration of Hattians to Heldannic lands and resettlement of Milenian refugees from Dabania, as well as some Thyatians from elsewhere within the empire.

Languages: Thyatian (Hattian dialect), dialects of Milenian spoken as well..

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Thyarius Palykratidius (Duke.), Eugenos (Lord).

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

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

Description by Viviana Romanones.

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

The Land

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

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

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

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

Pilion, the town at the mouth of the Pilon River, serves as Hattias City's main port. Hattias itself is an unwallled town at the confluence of the Stegger and Pilon rivers. About half way down the coast is the town of Grey Bay, a fishing and mining community, producing iron from ore in the nearby hills. At the southern tip of Hattias is the imaginatively named Fort Southpoint, a garrison and way station for imperial fleets patrolling the Sea of Dread. A dozen or so miles to the south is a small island, no more than a few square miles in area, that forms the Hold of Eugenos. The mage who lives here has long maintained his tower as a lighthouse, and is a helpful friend to sailors in need of aid. Eugenos retired here from Thyatis City many years ago, but entered imperial service against the Alphatians and has more recently helped the resistance to the Count of Hattias during the War of the Crown rebellion.

The People

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

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

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

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

Recent Events

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

The count and his pretender mobilized forces on Hattias, as well as encouraged dissidents to emigrate. He persuaded many nobles to support his cause, most notably the dukes of Kerendas, Kantrium, and Machelos. Count Oesterhaus called upon the forces of darkness to aid his cause, opening vile temples on Hattias (and closing the temples to beneficent Immortals). He had priests of the cult of Thanatos conduct bloody sacrifices in these temples, usually using foreigners who were unlucky enough to be caught on the island when the rebellion began, but also turning against despised citizens of Hattias itself. As word leaked out, many Hattians were sickened by this practice, even those who had supported the dream of a Hattian-led imperium. Soon a resistance movement sprang up, centered in the hills and forests of the interior.

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

There remains one dark spot on Hattias—the cancerous pit beneath the main temple of Thanatos. Though the temple itself has been captured (and was largely destroyed in the battle to root out the

Thanatons), the tunnels beneath it remain in the hands of the Storm Soldiers, Thanatons, and their minions (which include many undead and other foul monsters). These tunnels seem also to snake their way under the count's palace and indeed much of the city itself. The entrances have been warded by magic and are heavily guarded by constructs created by Eugenos, but no effort has been made to engage the evil creatures that occupy this hive of villainy. The emperor would welcome brave individuals who sought to clear these caverns of his enemies, and who knows what treasures lie in these vast dungeons.

In recognition of the victory of imperial forces over the rebels and their foul allies, Hattias was elevated late in AC 1017 to its ancient status of duchy, with Thyrius Palykratidius as its first duke.

More recently, Hattias has undergone further changes, as the first of many refugees from the conflicts taking place in northern Dabania arrived in Pilion. Initially, these people [formerly denizens of the various Milenian city-states of the Meghala Kimata Plains. Ed.] sought shelter in the Thyatian Hinterlands, but the various governments there could not handle the influx. Fortunately, Emperor Eusebius took it upon himself to kill two birds with one stone: reduce the burden faced by the authorities in Raven Scarp and other locales in the Hinterlands, while at the same time addressing the considerable loss of population in Hattias due to the Hattian emigration to Heldann in AC 1016 and 1017. Since the end of AC 1017, ships have been tasked to ferry large numbers of refugees for resettlement in Hattias, where, it is hoped, they will rebuild their lives as productive citizens. Only time will tell whether this plan will bear fruit.

HELDANN (Territory of)

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

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

Population: 285,000. The bulk of this increase over last year was derived from the Hattian migration to Heldann. Final census has yet to be tallied.

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

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

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

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

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

Important Figures: Wulf von Klagendorf (Oberherr), Geoffrey of Grunturm (Rebel Leader), Heinrich Straßburger (Would-be Usurper).

Flora and Fauna: One can commonly encounter sheep and elk herds, bears, boars, wolbes 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 Alphonian 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 Heldannic Territories 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 Dabanian 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.

On our own, we are a formidable army, yet we also have the blessing of the Lady Vanya. Admittedly, 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 mistreated 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?

Similarly, the tales of threats to our Dabanian territories are fallacious; we have successfully repulsed the assaults mounted by the savage Meghaddara and the uncouth Mibosians, with little loss of life. Thus proving again our unity and strength in the face of adversity.

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

stay in Heldann. Much to our surprise, every one of the refugees from Hattias decided to stay—a miraculous testament to the integrity of the Heldannic Order, and the inherent goodness of Vanya's principles.

The Heldannic Knights have continued with their tradition of conquest in AC 1016, conquering large swaths of lands in the north up to Oceansend, expanding their dominions in the southern continent of Dabania, and probing their mettle through the temporary seizure of Helskir, which we then surrendered in good faith. Since then, a number of malcontents, led by a traitor named Heinrich Straßburger, have complained about the path the order is taking in its quest to propagate the faith of Vanya. Rest assured that they will be dealt with in an expeditious manner.

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 Oberherr 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.

Visitors are also encouraged to visit the small, but pleasant, port town of Kammin. Far cleaner than its northern counterpart, the disgusting town of Landfall, Kammin is a place where local sea traders may sell their wares—such as whale oil, walrus tusks, and cold-water fish, though even the more exotic goods of the south sometimes find their way here—and relax between journeys. Compared to the bustle of Freiburg, Kammin presents to the visitor an air of calmness.

Do Miss

Although Heldann is a safe, orderly realm, one should always exercise caution when venturing near the borders with Ethengar and Denagoth. Of the former, little need be said, as the reputation of those barbarians is well known to civilized folk, but Denagoth is less known. It is a dark, forbidding land—certainly no place for righteous followers of Vanya, or any other wholesome Immortal, I will admit—whose humanoid inhabitants are under the sway of the foul Shadow Lord. Little is known of him—and the less said, the better—or his legions, but the aura of decay emanating from that evil place carries over the Mengul Mountains themselves. It is more pronounced in Heldland, where the land itself becomes blighted as one approaches Denagoth, but even in fair Heldann the air is colder, the forests are darker, and even the sun is seemingly dimmer, as one traverses the eastern foothills of those brooding mountains. Suffice it to say you have been warned.

IERENDI (Kingdom of)

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

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

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

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

Coinage: Pali (10 gp), geleba (gp), sana (sp), ckip (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).

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 Gallidox.

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

The Land

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

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

The People

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

Recent History

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

JALAWAR (Mumlyket of)

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

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

Population: 63,000.

Languages: Sindhi, some Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Coinage: Sindhi Standard: 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 Nerbi.

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

Important Figures: Drisana Madhar (Rani), Inay Paramesh (Former Rajah).

Flora and Fauna: See Sind.

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

Description by Ryuk-uk Tshaa.

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—Jerendis, Minrothaddans, Darokinians, Paddlom; 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 Nerbi, deposing his distant cousin Drisana Madhar. Drisana, one of the few rajahs to maintain their loyalty to Chandra ul Nerbi in the face of the Master’s invasion, retreated to the Paddlom Divinarchy, where she helped rally Chandra to return to Sind.

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

Don’t Miss

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

KADESH (Rajahstan of)

Location: South of the Adri Varma Plateau, southwest of Peshmir, north of Baratkand. **OW**

Area: 20,500 sq. mi. (53,095 sq. km.).

Population: 30,000.

Languages: Sindhi, some Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Coinage: Sindhi Standard: 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 Kadesh 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-barna) must pay a poll tax of one khundar per person.

Government Type: Independent feudal monarchy. The ruler of Kadesh is allied to the Master of Hule.

Industries: Agriculture, logging, trapping, trade (fur).

Important Figures: Kabir Rudraksha (Maharajah), Salmalin Mahavir (Cult Leader).

Flora and Fauna: Monsters that are found in this 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, previous almanacs.

Description by Vadin Kalidasa.

Kadesh, the most rebellious of all of Sind's mumlykets. The warriors of Kadesh have won their freedom from the ul Nervi dynasty at last, but has their victory only placed them under the reign of the Master of Hule? Only time may tell.

The Land

Heavily forested mountains make up the majority of the terrain of this northern nation. Loggers work, day and night, to harvest the valuable woods that are the backbone of Kadesh's economy. Given the scarcity of forests in the southern mumlykets, Kadesh has long cornered the market as a lumber supplier. The opening of trade ties with the Turtle Clan of the Atruaghin region may threaten to cut into this trade, however. Fortunately, several silver mines in the mountains provide a secondary means of income to the nation. In the north of Kadesh, the River Gangis nurtures some fertile farmlands as it winds its way down to Lake Hast. Many small hamlets can be found in this region, sending foodstuffs down to the logging settlements in the south.

The People

The concept of karma is revered among the people of Kadesh more so than anywhere else in Sind. They firmly believe that deeds performed in life will affect how they are reincarnated by the Immortals

after their deaths. Every act they do is undertaken with a preconceived idea of how they want to come back into the world. It should come as little surprise, then, that Aksyri and Kala, both Immortals concerned with rebirth, are the most highly honored in Kadesh.

Why the Kadeshi are so concerned with reincarnation is a matter of academic debate and study. The most prevalent theory is that they look forward to their next life because their current ones are so unrewarding. Whether this belief is true or not, there is little disputing that the prajaya (farmers and craftsmen) and kulipa (servants) castes are treated very poorly in Kadesh. The maharajahs have long taxed them heavily, and are even rumored to kidnap their own people and force them to work in the silver mines.

The himaya (warriors) of Kadesh are among the most capable and gifted of all in Sind—perhaps the world. They train hard and regularly, waging war on the humanoids of the mountains and even raiding neighboring mumlykets. The Kadeshi claim that their himaya are continually being reincarnated by the Immortals, bringing with them the experiences and strategic knowledge of many lifetimes.

Recent History

Kadesh was the last mumlyket to capitulate to the unification of Sind, only reluctantly agreeing to join Rajadhiraja Narendra ul Herbi after neighboring Gunjab was conquered. The Kadeshi still proudly proclaim that they were never defeated by outsiders, and there is little doubt that a war with the himaya of Kadesh would be costly to any invader. Kadesh always chafed under the unification, however, and they were the first to side with the invading forces of the Master of Hule. Indeed, without the assistance of Kadesh, the Master's forces would have been hardpressed in their bid to conquer Sind. Last year, in negotiations between the Master of Hule and Sind, Kadesh was granted its independence once more. Now, the nation is currently at war with Peshmir, to the north, over differences between the ruling maharajahs (who happen to be father and son). The rest of Sind remains neutral, as does Hule (officially), for fear that hostilities might erupt once more with the lands to the far west.

Rumors

The notorious cult of assassins, the Buraiya, has long been believed to have been centered in the nation of Kadesh. Their ties with the Immortal Kala and their supposed powers over the karmic cycle are often linked to the despotic rulership of the nation's maharajahs and lesser leaders. If they are, indeed, reincarnated from lifetime to lifetime as some say, it is little wonder the people of Kadesh have suffered so long as they have.

KANTRIUM (Duchy of)

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

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

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

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Leonidas Ruggiero (Duke).

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

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

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

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

The Land

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

Bloody battles took place in Kantrium during the Wrath War [like most Thyatians, our correspondent speaks of the "Wrath War," rather than "Great War." Ed.]. Thyatian forces managed to defeat and throw back the main Alphatian army at the outskirts of the town, but the Alphatians had sent a force through the hills to the north, which threatened to outflank the imperial

army as Alphatia brought up fresh troops. The imperial army was thus forced to withdraw across the Kantridae River, where they made another stand.

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

The People

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

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

KARAMEIKOS (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 43,950 sq. mi. (113,830 sq. km.).

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

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

Coinage: Royal (gp), cron (sp), kopet (cp).

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

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

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

Important Figures: Stefan Karameikos III (King), Olivia Karameikos (Queen).

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.

The Barony of Verge was a once quiet logging community located just a few miles away from the Barony of Threshold. Since the discovery of the so-called Lost Valley of Hutaaka, Verge has found itself to be a hotbed of largely unwanted activity.

The Land

Verge is located at the entrance to a forested valley, on the western side of the Foamfire River. To the northeast of the village lie the town and Barony of Threshold. Numerous logging camps can be found in the forested hills of the western valley, sending their lumber to Verge. From there, the wood is bundled and processed by the villagers and shipped downriver to the capitol. Ambitious prospectors, drawn to the north in the flurry of activity of recent years, have been searching the mountains and hills around the village for ore deposits. Thus far their efforts have yielded nothing.

The People

The village of Verge itself is home to less than a hundred permanent residents, consisting of just over a half-dozen large families and individuals. They fish in and farm the lands around the Foamfire River, and they are responsible for handling the lumber coming in from the western valley. The close-knit community is almost exclusively Traladaran, and tends to be distrustful of outsiders.

The discovery of the Lost Valley has brought a lot of attention to the Foamfire Valley, and the residents of Verge find themselves in the center of things. Outsiders—adventurers and scholars—have been exploring the valley region, searching for ancient ruins and treasures. Though most of this activity is based out of nearby Threshold—the larger community being more suited to such individuals

as a base of operations—the seedier and poorer elements often come prying around Verge as a possible alternative. Such individuals are usually quickly driven off by poor reception or the strong military presence, but often not before causing trouble in the village.

The aforementioned military presence carries with it its own stigma. Since the opening of relations with the residents of the Lost Valley, King Karamaikos has ordered a new fortress built in the Foamfire Valley. Until it is completed, his troops have been operating out of the fortress of Baron Antonic, with that lord's permission. The baron's fortress is the most suitable temporary base for them, but residents of Verge look with distrust on what they view as a Thyatian military in their hometown. The fact that the troops are most often on patrol against the Death's Head gnolls of the northern valley helps a little to allay villagers' fears.

Recent History

Ketameron Antonic was born in the city of Specularum, son of a Thyatian father and Traladaran mother. He began embarking upon an adventuring career at the early age of 18, basing himself out of the town of Threshold. Antonic quickly grew to popularity among the rural population in the Foamfire Valley, particularly in the village of Verge, where he eventually made his home. His exploits brought him to the attention of the duke, who awarded him the fief of Verge shortly after the turn of the millennium. Later that same year, Baron Antonic and his wife, Halia, played a key role in saving Duke Stefan from an ambitious wizard named Skarda.

After Duke Karamaikos formally adopted the title of king, he rewarded the Antonics' years of service with a baronial title. More recently, Baron Antonic succeeded Admiral Lucius Hyraksos as Karamaikan Minister of War, following Hyraksos's death in AC 1010. Though not interested in holding the title permanently, he did agree to fill in for a few months until a suitable successor (the paladin Zandra Sulanob) could be found to fill the role.

Don't Miss

Baron Ketameron's fortress is located on the edge of the village. It is an unusual sight in the rural north of Karamaikos, being built entirely of stone, rather than wood. Strategically situated atop a hill overlooking Verge, it is fortified by both a moat and a wooden palisade. It is here that the baron, his wife, and their retainers make their home. Currently, it houses one company of the king's fifth division. Formerly stationed at Riverfork Keep, the company will be relocated to the Foamfire keep currently under construction north of Verge.

Do Miss

The hills north of Verge are home to the deadly Death's Head gnolls and their allies. Worshipers of Entropy, the Death's Head gnolls are known for their fanaticism in defending their territory. Since the discovery of the Lost Valley and the increasing traffic in the region, the gnolls have been particularly active. I recommend avoiding them at all costs.

KERENDAS (Duchy of)

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

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

Population: 500,000 including the city of Kerendas (pop. 100,000; 95% human, 4% elven, 1% dwarven and hin), the towns of Bayville (pop. 5,000) and Bridleton (pop. 10,000) and the Kerendas Outpost (pop. 1,250). Some Kerendans re-settled elsewhere in Thyatis last year.

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Maldinius Kerendas (Duke), Vincentius Hallicarnasas (Magist), Cyril Christophorus (High Priest).

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

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

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

The Land

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

The northern hills are recent additions to the Duchy of Kerendas, and except for a few herdsman they have not been put to much use yet. These hills are the wildest areas of Kerendas, but still cannot be considered dangerous by any stretch of the imagination.

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

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

To the south of Bridleton, on the coast, is Kerendas Outpost, a military base and citadel. Though the Duke of Kerendas joined the rebellion, the soldiers of the outpost remained loyal to Eusebius. This gave the emperor a small outpost deep in enemy territory, supplied by sea.

In the east is the town of Bayville, a community of fishermen and country villas of the wealthy. It was on the outskirts of this town that the first major clash of the War of the Crown rebellion took place. The imperial forces were defeated not so much by the force of the rebels' arms as by the unusually effective magics the enemy used.

The People

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

This may make it seem odd that the Kerendans joined in the rebellion alongside the Hattians, but Kerendas saw less need for reforms to shake up the empire precisely because they were less affected by the trends that Eusebius hopes to reverse. Also, they tend to see themselves as guardians of Thyatis's ancient traditions and virtues, and this was another reason for their support of the rebellion. Still, many Kerendans grew less and less supportive of the rebel cause, especially as some of its darker natures came to the fore. The screening force outside Kerendas Outpost became more and more lax, and there were even friendly exchanges between the troops in the outpost and those outside it. On one day late in AC 1016 they held a polo match against each other, with the losing side providing a feast that both groups attended. Not a sign one would expect of a people at war with each other.

One of the customs of Kerendas is that the duke, whatever his own family background might be, always takes the name of the duchy for his own, replacing his own last name. While a curious custom,

this is at least better than is found in some other lands, where the ruler makes the people take his name for their national name, rather than adopting theirs.

LUCINIUS (Duchy of)

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

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

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

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Baldassare Patrizio (Duke), Alexandra Patrizio (Duchess), Philippicus Patrizio (Heir), Satabus Lucasian (Fleet Admiral), Pelagius Daphnorakenzes (Prelate), Theomisticus Chrysemion (Magist).

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

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

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

The Land

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

Port Lucinius lies at the eastern edge of the vast Thyatian plain, and is the third largest city in Thyatis. It is built around a broad, sheltered bay near the widest part of Vanya's Girdle. This port

serves as capital of the county, and as one of the empire's most important naval bases and fisheries. The grassy plains nearby are used for growing all sorts of grains, vegetables, and even orchards for fruits.

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

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

The People

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

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

MACHETOS (County of)

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

Area: 1,800 sq. mi. (4,050 sq. km.).

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

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Demetius Vannopolus (Count), Michaelius Vaanes (Prelate).

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

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

A small but rich farming county that is now, with Kerendas, a main source of food for the empire. It has only recently regained its agricultural state after being severely taxed over 30 years ago by the emperor. At the time Thyatis was in great need of extra money, still recovering from the recent invasion by Alphatia. The Karamaikos family once held this duchy, but the duke exchanged his birthright with the emperor for rulership of the Grand Duchy of Traladara (which he humbly renamed after himself). More recently, the Duke of Machetos joined the rebels, and Eusebius reduced its status to county, which would be more appropriate given its size and population. The emperor also appointed his eldest son, Prince Coltius, to be Count of Machetos in Flaurmont, AC 1017, as a means of training the young man in the arts of governance, but soon switched him to Carytion after appointing Demetius Vannopolus as Machetos's Count late in the year.

The Land

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

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

The People

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

MINROTHAD (Exarchate of)

Location: Island chain in the Sea of Dread, off the coast of Karamaikos, west of Hattias; southeastern Brum. **OW**

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

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

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Da. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually. In addition, all imports (goods or services) have an 18% tariff, though all Thyatian dominions are exempted from this, paying only the commercial.

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

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

Important Figures: Oran Meditor (Exarch and Guild Master), Nosmo Beldan (Merchant-Prince), Ormun Corser (Priest of Minroth), Saroso Elsan (Merchant-Prince), Ulard Forester (Guild Master), Murl of Vlaardoen (Wizard).

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

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

Further Reading: GAZ9 The Minrothad Guilds, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus.

Minrothad is an archipelago of moderate-sized islands. It is home to crafty, enterprising traders who are also somewhat insular. How the people of Minrothad are able to combine these two features—their traditional parochialism and their obvious success as cosmopolitan merchants—is beyond me. Until recently, the people of Minrothad had largely cut themselves off from external contact. Even

now they hold themselves somewhat aloof from foreigners. None the less, their merchants can be found in almost every port in the region.

The Land

The nation of Minrothad consists of two large islands (though nowhere near the size of Ochalea or Nuar), three medium-sized islands, two small but still noteworthy islands, and countless scattered islets which are only a few square miles in size. The seas around Minrothad are often fog-shrouded, and only the best maps accurately mark the location of the tiny islands, various rock formations, and reefs. This makes the waters of Minrothad somewhat dangerous for inexperienced navigators, and in part explains the skilled seamanship that is common among the people of Minrothad themselves. The seas here are teeming with fish of all sorts, providing much of the diet for the inhabitants.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The People

As I mentioned, the people of Minrothad somehow manage to combine the cosmopolitan spirit of international traders with a strong streak of parochialism and isolationism. By and large the people of

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

The main method of enforcing cooperation has been through the various guilds of Minrothad. In Minrothad these are not just associations of craftsmen, like the guilds of other countries. In Minrothad the guilds combine the aspects typical of guilds in Thyatis, for example, with the functions typical of merchant houses in Darokin (or Thyatis City). In addition, there is a strong racial component to these guilds. Thus, each faction, political and racial, in Minrothaddan society is given a piece of the action. By dividing responsibilities in this fashion, and giving each race, through its guild, monopolistic control over aspects of Minrothad's economy, rivalries were reduced (but not eliminated). Note that these guilds are not exclusively made up of one race or clan. But the dominant race or clan controls access into the various trades under their authority, and can prevent people from practicing a craft if they choose. Most citizens of Minrothad belong to one of these guilds. Career changes are almost unknown, because of the nature of the guilds as being not only craft associations but also expressions of clan allegiance.

The recent adhesion of Minrothad to Thyatis has, so far, had little impact on Minrothad's social order. The center of Thyatian influence is on Trader's Island—this is the exarchate's administrative hub, and the location of the small Thyatian garrison. On most of the islands Thyatian influence is represented by a consular liaison—a single official with a small staff (usually fewer than ten persons total). The guild masters form an advisory council, and for the most part there has been as little change as possible from the way the previous government handled things. Each island is semi-autonomous, with strong local governments in any case. The affiliation with Thyatis, for now, is more akin to a strong alliance or a patron-client state relationship than to absorption. If I may say, the good relations so far have been in no small part due to my own policies, deliberately aimed at changing as little as possible. This has made the transition as smooth as possible, with minimal impact on the daily life of the average citizen of Minrothad. The biggest impacts, in my opinion, have been positive, like the extension of Thyatian law and the rights of Thyatian citizenship to the people of Minrothad. Shortly after Minrothad joined the imperium, envoys were dispatched to Seahome to discuss strategies to defeat the Twaelar. In winter one unit of Home Guards, consisting mostly of volunteers, was dispatched to Thyatis City to help the emperor defeat the rebels. Minrothad also elected senators to send to Thyatis City in AC 1017, further cementing the bonds between us.

The biggest impact, however, has been the spread of people from Minrothad throughout the empire. After the problems of AC 1016, numerous leaders of Minrothad were found complicit of various crimes, most notably the assassination plot against Darokin's House Linton. These were exiled to various parts of the Thyatian Empire, taking with them their families and followers. More people followed, and small settlements of Minrothaddan people were established in many of Thyatis's cities (including Thyatis City, where several hundred moved to River Guard Town, and a similar number live in the trading quarters of the city). These emigrants have established a strong trading network throughout Thyatis, both competing with and complementary to that of other Thyatian merchants. This has expanded trade throughout the empire's colonies greatly. Though there have been some frictions as a

result, especially as relates to the emperor's policies on the expansion of trade in Thyatis through programs favoring Thyatian merchants. Still, this relationship has benefited both parties, and the merchants of Minrothad, alongside those of Thyatis proper, sail the trade lanes as far east as Bellissaria, as far west as the Savage Coast baronies, and as far south as Dabania.

MOSITIUS (Duchy of)

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

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

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

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Da. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Triella Tien-Tang (Duchess), Allatine Proadvistes (Lord), Frederick Beckman (Probst Marshal), Dong Luc-Chu (Priest).

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

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

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

The Land

Mositius is a long, gently curved island with beautiful beaches and exceptionally good weather. The island is good vine-growing country, and Mositius is known for its wineries. The northern head of the island is hilly, leading up to a semi-active volcano that sits at the center of the island. Mood-altering mists periodically pour forth from the volcano and cover much of the island. When the mist hits the residents, the whole island seems to fall under the sway of the emotion brought on by the mist. Duchess Triella Tien-Tang insures that only positive emotions are allowed to escape from the volcano's core, so a fun time is had by all that are affected.

The rest of the island consists of beaches surrounding verdant plains. The plains are given over to vineyards or recreation facilities (riding fields, polo grounds, parks for romantic walks, and the like). Interspersed along the length of the island's coasts, from tip to tip, are hostels, resorts, inns, villas,

taberns, and the like, all catering to Mositius's tourist trade. The main community, Argebin, is built at the foot of the volcano. Argebin is full of taberns, dance halls, casinos, and a variety of other entertainment establishments.

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

The People

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

The inhabitants of Mositius work at one of two trades: either in the vineyards and wineries, or serving the tourist trade. Though the island's vineyards are small by mainland standards, they produce wines of excellent vintage. Some say the mists are responsible for imbuing these wines with their special qualities, which consist not only of excellent taste but (reputedly) bringing emotions closer to the surface of the drinker. Recently a community of sea elves from Actius moved nearby, and opened up a new tourist concession—for a reasonable fee they will equip patrons with equipment that allows them to breathe underwater, and take them for a tour of the nearby reefs and submerged grottos. The views are spectacular, along with schools of multi-colored fish that shimmer in the diffused light of the sea.

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

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

Crime is kept under control partly by the strong weapons regulations the duchess put in place. No weapon larger than a dagger is permitted on Mositius, nor is the wearing of armor allowed. The Island Guard is particularly well trained, consisting not only of uniformed guardsmen but men wearing regular garments as well, to appear inconspicuous. Both the uniformed guards and the undercover operatives operate in teams, well-supported by magic (including magical equipment enchanted by Triella and her apprentices, and spellcasting clerics and mages). This ensures that the relaxation of the

island's guests is not disturbed. The Island Guard has a seemingly uncanny ability to sniff out criminal intent before it even occurs, and is known for being at the right place at the right time. Some suspect the heavy use of divinatoric magics, but more likely the guard is simply very well trained. As mentioned, though, they either permit or aren't as well able to deal with con men and petty pickpockets. Do not think that you're going to be swindled or have your money pouch stolen when visiting Mositius (such events are actually fairly uncommon), but do be aware of the possibility.

Don't Miss

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

Do Miss

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

ORCLAND

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

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

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

Languages: Most goblinoid tongues; Orcish is most common.

Coinage: Any (mostly stolen).

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

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

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

Important Figures: Moghul Khan (Khan of Dast), Tlatepetl (Governor-General of Tlazepetec), Khordarg. General Tlatepetl has annexed the settlements of Korg and New Hobgobland, territories formerly under the command of Butai Khan and Alebane. The two goblinoid leaders both left Orcland in AC 1016 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 Putwont 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 Korg by an envoy sent by the governor-general, who escorted us the rest of the way through the hills and into the mountain valley.

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

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

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

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

After our meal, the commander bid us farewell and put us in the care of one of his lieutenants—an Denkmarian, 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 Denkmarian title.) We had been brought to the surface several miles from the valley where the settlement lay, rather than continuing underground. When questioned about this, our escort gave a non-committal shrug. There are obviously secrets that lay beneath Tlazepetec that must remain hidden from us at this time.

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

Klarmont 8: After an evening’s rest, we were finally taken to meet the governor-general himself. Rather than greeting us in the opulent palace he was building, he broke fast with us in his tent. When I had the chance to ask him about this observation, he didn’t seem to see the contradiction in it. Tlatepetl was quite apparently more general than governor.

He showed us around the settlement, taking great pride in demonstrating his achievements. He even allowed us to observe a game of tlachtli, on a ball court outside the pyramid. The ball game (which seemed quite similar to the Alphetian 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 tlachtli player in the old city of Denkmar.

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 Denkmarians (in similar manner to the annexation of

Xorg). The governor-general feigned ignorance as to the whereabouts of Hutaï 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 Denkmarian overlords of Tlazepetec seem to discourage this. I gather that the military and the priesthood of Denkmar 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 Denkmarians. 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 Denkmar. These Denkmarian 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. Tequima 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 Denkmarian lieutenants seem more or less sincere in their effort to civilize the other humanoids of Orcland, and seem capable of doing so. Yet all the obvious military activity worries me. It might be best to cooperate with the Orclanders, and keep our ties close.

OSTLAND (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 8,920 sq. mi. (23,105 sq. km.).

Population: 129,000. Population dropped as a result of the recent civil war in AC 1015.

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: Fimm Hordson (King), Þrsa Svalasdottir (Queen-Mother), Asgrim the Bowed (Royal Adviser), Oda Elsasdottir (Jarl).

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, The Domains of Ostland by Jacob Skytte, previous almanacs.

Description by Gilor Rockcrusher.

Ahh, Ostland. Beautiful but harsh islands of the cold Sea of Dawn. Home to the traditional warrior, to the true hero, Ostland is my home. Ostland isn't plagued by the trappings of so-called civilization, here you can speak your mind as long as you're prepared to back up your words with force. And there are no hard feelings between men of might. In Ostland you can truly make a name for yourself, as I have.

Ostlanders traditionally prefer the noble trade of the raider [what others would call piracy. Ed.]. This custom consists of hard-fighting men and women sailing the famous Northman longships to foreign coasts to prove their worth by fighting the greatest warriors of those lands for the rights to plunder their riches. If a man cannot defend his belongings, he is not worthy of possessing them, and they would be better off in the hands of a true fighter.

Foreigners think that all of Ostland is the same, dreary, wind-swept wastes of hostile Northmen. Rubbish! While I have certainly seen my share of dreariness in the long winter months, and a good amount of hostility as well, the truth is that every domain of Ostland is different from the rest. The jarls, while subservient to young King Fimm Hordson, dictate how life is lived in their respective domains, and they are as varied as the people of any country are. My recent employ as a warrior of Jarl Oda Elsasdottir of Clan Vithesford illustrates this point perfectly.

The Land

If there is such a thing as a desolate place in Ostland, it is certainly Vithesford. Located in the far northeastern corner of Noslo Island, the largest isle of the four major islands comprising Ostland, Vithesford is mainly made up of mountains and foothills. It is a cold, wind-swept place, as implied by the name of both the jarl's great hall and the nearby waters of Storm Bay. In the winters

snowstorms make travel nearly impossible, and only the most robust of warriors and fishermen can ply their trades during these months.

The lands of Clan Vithesford contain part of Gråbjerge, particularly inhospitable mountains that contain caverns, which are home to the infamous Modrigswerg, the cursed moulder dwarves, driven from Rockhome in ages past.

The People

The inhabitants of Vithesford are among the toughest of Northmen, and they would have to be to survive in this inhospitable region. Their daily hardships have not quenched their spirits, and these 1,500 people truly know how to live. Every catch is a bounty for a fisherman, and is shared among the villagers of his local homestead. And every capable warrior can bring back great riches from raiding, which is often shared with family and friends.

Like all other Northmen, the Vithesford Clan are a reverent people, respecting all the traditions of Odin and Thor, the almighty Gods [Northmen call their Immortals Gods. Ed.] of kingship and war. Godar [what the Northmen call their priests. Ed.] are honored and live good lives in these lands. Skalds who tell roaring tales of both ancient heroes and of the fantastical lives of the Gods will always be able to find a hospitable homestead, where they can get food and shelter.

Oda Elsasdottir, 36 year-old Jarl of Vithesford, is a great leader of raiding parties, and she often brings back plentiful goods, and throws parties in honor of her valiant men and their fighting prowess. While she is rumored to be cruel and vengeful, she is well within her rights to punish any who speak against her or her rule. The jarl and her husband, Eldgrim the Killer, rule the domain cautiously but justly, swiftly striking down rebel sentiments and dealing with criminals harshly.

Recent Events

Jarl Oda Elsasdottir, formerly of Clan Noslosford, whose lands are located to the west of Vithesford, married into Clan Vithesford in AC 1000, when she was wed to the former jarl, Ragnar Solmundson. Ragnar protected Oda during the Noslosford clan war, where her brother, Bue Geirsteinson, deposed their father, Geirstein Thorgelson, as jarl of the clan. There is little love between the siblings now, and I am unable to confirm the rumors that Oda gives shelter to her other brother, the exiled Lot Geirsteinson. It was also during this clan strife that Clan Vithesford lost the forested lands south of Gråbjerge, which contained the thriving village of Skobstad.

In the year 1003, Ragnar Solmundson met his end at the hands of Katla Thorunnisdottir of clan Thorholm, south of Vithesford. Katla's family had been killed by Ragnar, and she had herself been disfigured during the battle. She had been planning just revenge for years, and finally managed to lure Ragnar to his doom during a casual visit. Katla and Oda are said to be allies, if not friends, and rumors have been floating around for years that the two women planned Ragnar's demise together.

After a period of mourning, Oda Elsasdottir married the sinister Eldgrim Hrappson, also known as "the Killer" in 1005. Eldgrim is well known for his foul temper, and his disturbing fashion of spitting in the eyes of the men he's killed. His fighting ability is eminent, though, and he's devoted to the jarl.

Ragnar Solmundson had dealings with the mysterious Modrigswerg of Gråbjerge, and Oda continued these dealings in the years following Ragnar's death. In return for treasure and goods gained from raiding, the Modrigswerg traded some artifacts to Oda, artifacts which she has used to ensure her position, and which are helpful in raids. This unique relationship has certainly been

instrumental in drawing out the Modrigsberg from their caverns, and even leaving them occasionally for the first time in centuries.

When Finn Hordson succeeded his father, the late King Hord Dark-Eye, as King of Ostland, Oda swore fealty to the new king along with most other jarls of Ostland. She also stood by the king during the recent civil war in 1015, where both she and her fierce warriors won great respect from both allies and foes in the war.

Last year Clan Vithesford was asked to accompany the small fleet sent to far-away Qeodhar to aid their ancient brethren of Ostmarhavn. Several warriors of Clan Vithesford joined this fleet in the hopes of bettering their standings. The vacuum they left behind has been filled with mercenaries such as myself, ready to fight for Jarl Oda Elsasdottir and join her raiders on their expeditions.

Don't Miss

Spending a winter here among these brave souls, huddled around campfires, telling tales of ancient heroes, and boasting of your prowess during recent raids, is not an experience to be missed! Outside the wind is howling, snow falling all around you, while mead is brought forth, and a few arguments are settled by the traditional fistfight of the holmgang. You haven't truly enjoyed life till you've tried this.

Do Miss

Getting caught on a longship out in the Storm Bay during a snowstorm is, on the other hand, one of the most terrifying events you'll ever experience. While the longboats of the Northmen are sturdily built, and are crafted to withstand weather such as this, hurling water from the ship with a bucket in the freezing cold, icicles hanging from your beard, can be very sobering. I pray I won't have to try it again anytime soon.

PESHMIR (Rajahstan of)

Location: South of the Adri Varma Plateau, southwest of Glantri, northeast of Peshmir. **OW**

Area: 12,000 sq. mi. (31,080 sq. km.).

Population: 35,000.

Languages: Sindhi, Thyatian (Glantrian dialect).

Coinage: Sindhi Standard: 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 Kadesh 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-barna) must pay a poll tax of one khundar per person.

Government Type: Independent feudal monarchy. The ruler of Peshmir is loosely allied to the Rajadhiraja (King) of Sind, Chandra ul Nerbi.

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

Important Figures: Hara Rudraksha (Maharajah).

Flora and Fauna: Monsters that are found in this 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, previous almanacs.

Description by Vadin Kalidasa.

Like the other remote northern mumlykets of Sind, Peshmir has long been opposed to the concept of unification. The notorious wealth of its rulers has provided its people with a strong sense of independence from the rest of the nation. Now that the land is no longer a part of the Rajahstan of Sind for the first time in 300 years, it will soon become clear if Peshmir is truly able to provide for itself or not.

The Land

The southern expanses of Peshmir consist of rolling hills and rocky mountains. Most of the populace make their homes in the fertile lands in the north of the province, around Lake Hast. There they farm and fish the clear depths of the lake, which is renowned for its enormous, tasty fish. Farmers in the southern regions grow their crops terraced along the hills. The ash-lined slopes of the volcanic Mount Urapurda in particular are very fertile in soil, though there is a high risk that crops might be lost during one of the its sporadic eruptions. An obsidian mine in the mountains east of the capital city of Karakandar provides much of the nation's legendary wealth.

The People

All around the city of Karakandar can be seen evidence of the wealth of Peshmir. From the elaborate palace of the maharajah to the numerous temples, even the cobbled streets, luxury is in abundance. Merchants from Glantri and distant Wendar commonly ply their trades in the markets, bringing exotic goods from their native lands. The rulers of Peshmir have long held to a policy of civic improvement, believing that if they put their wealth back into their holdings, the people will work all the harder to generate more surplus. This policy seems to have changed somewhat under the current regime, as the frugal Maharajah Hara Rudraksha, appears to direct more funds to his own coffers than to the people. Even more recently, the maharajah's wealth has gone to the purchasing of mercenary forces, to combat the crack troops of neighboring Kadesh. The faces of Gunjabi warriors and Glantrian sellswords from Sablestone are becoming ever more common sights.

Recent History

The current maharajah, Hara Rudraksha, came to power in AC 1006. When the Master of Hule and his armies arrived from the west, Hara and his father Maharajah Kabir Rudrakshah of Kadesh invaded Peshmir. They proceeded to depose and arrest the former maharajah, Kami Valin, and married Hara to his only daughter. Kabir had reportedly hoped to assassinate his son and take over rulership of both countries, but Hara had other plans, and managed to retain his throne. Though a cruel and oftentimes despotic man, age and children seem to have curbed his ambitions. He arranged for the rescue of the priestess Sitara Rohini when she and her child were kidnapped by his father in AC 1016, and has set his forces against those of Kadesh. Currently, Peshmir and Kadesh are in a state of war.

Rumors

There is rumored to be a gold mine in the volcano, which could account for Peshmir's legendary wealth. As yet, there has been no proof of such a mine.

The maharajah is said to be courting the Cult of Kirtanta to his side to provide a means to counter the assassin cult of the Buraiya. The Kirtanta appear to be a relatively new organization, reportedly having dealings with shapeshifters and assassins both. Their goals and beliefs are as yet unknown, as are the extent of the maharajah's interactions with them.

RETEBIUS (Duchy of)

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

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

Population: 200,000 including the city of Retebius (pop. 20,000).

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Callastian Retebius (Duke), Mitasula Retebius (Duchess), Desdemona Retebius (Heir), Alexandrus Maxentinos (Air Fleet Academy Commandant), Marcus Kelephius (Prelate), Phillipia Caeseria (Magist), Sabattius Laskaris (Lord Knight Commander of the Knights of the Air).

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

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

Description by Viviana Romanones.

The capital city of this duchy (pop. 20,000) is home of the Retebius Air Cavalry Training Academy, a flying-mount cavalry renowned throughout the world. The Retebius Air Fleet suffered tremendous casualties during the Wrath of the Immortals War, but is beginning to recover from the losses. Eusebius is considering renaming the air fleet as the Retebius Air Cavalry to differentiate it from Thyatis's growing fleet of air ships, but it is likely to remain the Retebius Air Fleet in the hearts of many. The duchy was one of those recently enlarged, receiving additional land all the way to the Trebanion River, to help provide land grants to air knights.

The Land

For centuries Retebius was a small duchy, bounded in the west by the Mesoman River. In AC 1016 its borders were extended westward as far as the Trebanion River (though at the same time

administration of the town of Hillfork was transferred to the Duchy of Thyatis). Retebius is, geographically, divided into two parts: the coastal lowlands that the Polithius River drains into from the Altan Tepes and the interior hill country around the Mesonian River. Both these areas are excellent pasturage for beef cattle, which is then driven to Retebius City or Thyatis City for sale in the markets there. The grasslands of Retebius are rich and plentiful, used to feed cattle, horses, and other creatures (the mounts of the air fleet).

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

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

The People

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

The people of Retebius City make their living, for the most part, provisioning the air base, and in fisheries in the gulf itself. The city's population actually grew after the war, as many came here to help in the rebuilding effort and then stayed afterwards finding work as craftsmen or with the fishing fleet. Others, folk skilled in training animals, were enticed to move here and assist in replacing the losses the air knights suffered in the war. This makes Retebius City busier than any time in recent memory, since so many new "pilots" and their mounts are being trained at one time. In fact, the duke's fields are so busy he was forced to turn down the offer of creating a skyship construction yard here. Callastian does

not actually seem that upset about this missed opportunity, however—he prefers his men and their mounts to such ships in any case.

Don't Miss

People come to Retebius to see one thing—the air fields, the bewildering diversity of mounts flying overhead, the large training exercises which bring together more flying creatures of more varieties in one place than can be seen anywhere else. Air shows are frequently put on for the public.

ROCKHOME (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 41,140 sq. mi. (106,555 sq. km.).

Population: 980,000 dwarves (population is down from many recent wars), plus a very few humans who have been permitted to stay.

Languages: Dwarvish (Rockhome dialect), 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: Eberast XVI (King).

Flora and Fauna: Wild horses, deer, mountain lions, wolves, and yetis. Rampaging goblinoids found throughout Rockhome in recent years have been mostly killed or driven out, though the occasional small tribe or marauding band can still make travel unsafe.

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 Gilor Rockcrusher.

The ancient dwarven homeland of Rockhome holds a place in any dwarven heart. I must have heard this saying a thousand times from my father. I used to think this was sentimental rubbish, after all I didn't think much about it. And if it was so wonderful, why had he left it?

Still, back in AC 1016, when the beleaguered dwarves of Ebekarr Fort sent a plea in to their Vestland allies, I heard of their plight and figured I might as well see the homeland for myself, while earning me some gold and fighting some orcs.

The Land

I must admit that when our small unit started climbing the Ebekarr Pass, and we were surrounded by tall, obtrusive mountains, I felt a chill going down my spine. I simply couldn't wait to see what lay beyond the pass. Somehow the ground of Rockhome felt more solid, the water clearer and the air lighter. I couldn't help but imagine what the caves deep beneath the mountains must look like. It must have been my father's stories that had imprinted themselves on me.

Finally between two of the greatest, most imposing mountains, I laid eyes on a dwarven construction, the fort that dutifully protected Rockhome from any invaders passing through the pass, Ebekarr Fort. Amazingly well constructed, the fort completely obstructed passage through the pass, its walls being

built into the mountainsides. No invader would be entering Rockhome this way, unless they could fly well out of ballista range.

As we approached, we were greeted by the garrison stationed at the fort, who swung open the massive doors to let us through. Most of the Vestland warriors were exhausted by the climb, and were thankful for the respite from the cold gloom, being offered a meal at the fires of the garrison, which was actually built into the mountain. I felt invigorated by being here among my fellow dwarves, and had little need for rest.

The People

The dwarves of the Ebekarr garrison were happy to find a dwarf in our unit, and I was asked to accompany our leader to dine with their commandant. At his table I inspected the dwarves of Rockhome, and listened to their conversation. The dwarves were of course like me: shorter than humans, but powerfully built, and the equal of any man in a fight. They were in good spirits, looking forward to be on the move, and furious that the goblinoids would dare invade their lands.

Most of the dwarves had little interest in eating and were sharpening their already quite impressive weapons, while discussing how best to gut an orc and how a proper weapon should be crafted. Others talked of their homes and loved ones, and worked themselves into a rage, thinking of what the goblinoids might have done to them.

Recent History

During our spartan meal I exchanged stories with their commandant, a famous hero of the Torkrest Clan, and learned of the recent events in Rockhome. During the great war of empires, Rockhome had closed its borders, and wisely chose to let the humans settle their own affairs. Unfortunately trouble came from within, as the crazed Denwarf returned from his millennia of absence and threw Rockhome into a civil war, which led to the death of the former King Everast XV.

Trouble led to more trouble, and while the clans were still arguing amongst themselves, Rockhome was spurred into a war against the sinister shadow elves. Taking advantage of its weakened state, goblinoids then entered Rockhome, led by the infamous Char, the crafty Psa'gh, and the exiled former dwarven heads of Clan Hurwarf, Duric and Bifia. It was these dark forces that we were going to help annihilate. I could hardly wait.

We left the fort early the next morning and as soon as we had entered the lowland valley of Klintest, we saw fighting against bands of orcs, kobolds, gnolls, and even occasional frost giants. It took many weeks of fighting, but through clever use of guerrilla warfare, we managed to stay ahead of our opponents, until the day we met up with other forces for the final assault on Kirdal, base of Char, the last of our enemies.

The forces we met up with were among the strangest groups of warriors I have ever seen. Men from far-away nations had banded together with the dwarves, and were aided by the small folk calling themselves hin, and even by some rogue orcs! There was a tense atmosphere among these forces, but as the assault began, we were all forced to depend on each other.

The fighting was fierce; Char's forces had had too much time to prepare for the assault. Still, the combined might of our different forces were winning the day. Suddenly a white dragon took to the air and spread terror among our soldiers. Our orc allies turned out to actually win the day for us, as they took to the air on strange, featherless birds [skinwings. Ed.], and managed to drive off the dragon.

That's forces, seeing how the battle was going, were already fleeing, and we pursued them, and killed off as many as we were able to.

Unfortunately, I was hit by a stray boulder, thrown by a fleeing frost giant, and had to spend some time in an infirmary. I got a lot of attention from a particular female dwarf, and this time spent immobile, while she fussed over me, was far worse than the weeks of desperate fighting, surviving on low rations, and facing death every day. As soon as I was able to get up, I left Rockhome before she could introduce me to her family.

Don't Miss

I find now that I have actually been to my ancestral homeland that I actually think of it quite often. I guess it must be true that Rockhome holds a place in any dwarven heart. For that reason alone, I encourage you to visit Rockhome at least once. When you gain the final pass before entering the valleys, try standing absolutely still, be completely quiet, and just absorb the splendid view and feel of the ancient lands lying before you.

Do Miss

Avoid being caught up in Rockhome politics. With the current hard feelings between the clans, you should strive to stay neutral, and not offer opinions one way or the other. The hard feelings run deep, and if you offend a dwarf of Rockhome, you risk offending an entire clan.

SCIARAS (Protectorate of)

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

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

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

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Pa. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Demetron Karagenteropolus (Magist), Triella (Duchess of Mositius), Sarapanmon (Magist), Athanasia Romanones (Proctor of the Collegium Arcanum), Philoxenus Scholasticus (Curator of the Great Library), Irene Trenzantenbia Tatriokanita Isaurica (Former Empress), among many others.

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

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

Description by Viviana Romanones.

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

The Land

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

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

The People

For as long as anyone can remember, the Protectorate of Sclaras has been the abode of the most powerful wizards of Thyatis. It is said that Empress Valentia herself was the first to establish an estate here. Only the most powerful of arch-mages are permitted a domain on Sclaras, and even so there is a waiting list. Though many (if not most) are active in Thyatian affairs more generally, participating in social and political affairs, here they have absolute privacy. It is here that they may retire to conduct their arcane studies and researches in peace, away from prying eyes. There is one law on Sclaras and that one simply states that no one may enter the estate of a wizard without his permission. Flying at an altitude of a thousand feet or more is not considered entering the estate, but the airspace below that is likewise sacrosanct, as is the ground under it down to a similar depth. Despite this law that allows privacy and isolation, the mages of Sclaras are usually professionally cooperative when they do encounter each other.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

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

SERRAINE (Flying City of)

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

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

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

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

Coinage: Any.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Oligarchy.

Industries: Slavery.

Important Figures: Bargle the Infamous (Mercenary), Branwys Skyratchet (Leader of Revolutionaries), Erik Helsing (Blackmailed Wizard), Horrobin (Leader of the Grey Front).

Flora and Fauna: In addition to the population above, there are hordes of undead servants to the naggas—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 naggas and their minions seem uncomfortable delving past the [CENSORED] level, but their mindless legions of undead have no such qualms. Fortunately, moving too far out of their masters’ control range makes them largely ineffectual. I maintain my fears about venturing too far below surface level, however. Perhaps the Grey Front knows something that we don’t about the Undercity’s inhabitants?”

SHADOW ELVES (Kingdom of the)

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

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

Population: Roughly 400,000 elves.

Languages: Elvish (Shadowelf dialect).

Coinage: Shadowelf Standard: 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), Porphyriel (Radiant Shaman).

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, Almyr, 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 hair and very clear eyes (usually sparking blue or gray in color). Shorter 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

In AC 1016 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 Cabern, in an area where gravity works very oddly, was under siege. Those were sad days for our race, for many of our kin lost their lives fighting bravely to defend the city, the king and the temple.

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

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

Don't Miss

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

Do Miss

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

SHAJARKAND (Mumlyket of)

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

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

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

Languages: Sindhi.

Coinage: Sindhi Standard: 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 Nerbi.

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).

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

SIND (Rajahstan of)

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

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

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

Languages: Sindhi, some Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Coinage: Sindhi Standard: 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-barna) 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).

Important Figures: Chandra ul Nerbi (Rajadhiraja).

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 more information about Sind. **Ed.**]

SODERTJORD (Kingdom of)

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

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

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

Languages: Heldommic.

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), Guthorm Brittle-Bone (Jarl).

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 Gilor Rockcrusher.

The Soderfjord Jarldoms, as they used to be called, are a collection of small domains led by jarls, under the rule of a king, much like Ostland is, but they are very loosely united under the new king, Ragnar the Stout. Centuries of feuds and independent rule make it almost impossible for a single man to hold rulership of this territory. King Ragnar has managed to do so for five years now, but he is watched closely by the other jarls for any sign of weakness, especially by his close rival, Jarl Guthorm Brittle-Bone of Clan Boddergard.

Since the men of Soderfjord have always been at each others' throats, this land is the perfect place for an aspiring mercenary to make not only a name for himself, but also fill his pockets with gold from a grateful employer. You just need to be sure that you can defend your hard-earned gold from jealous rivals, since nobody will come to your aid if you haven't proven yourself superior to them.

I started out my mercenary career fighting for the jarls of Soderfjord, and I have returned there every once in a while, when my purse was empty, and I had trouble finding decent work in Ostland. In Soderfjord you're always sure to find employment if you know how to wield a weapon skillfully. This fall I returned to Boddergard for a month's employ by Jarl Guthorm Brittle-Bone.

The Land

The Jarldom of Boddergard lies at the border to Vestland, north of the overland trade route and southeast of Landersfjord. The domain is covered by tight coniferous forest. Walking through these oppressive woodlands, with tall trees hanging over you everywhere, can be a gloomy experience. The deep woods are home to varied wildlife, such as cannot be found on the islands of Ostland. Wolves

are common and compete with the human occupants for deer and elks, but also plague the sheep and goats kept by the local populace.

Throughout these woods you find small homesteads with large families living out their lives peacefully. In places a number of homesteads have gathered together for the added protection offered by a small village. Some of these villages may have wooden palisades to protect them from wolves and bandits. They are cozy places with honest, hardworking folks.

Ranwood is the great hall of Jarl Guthorm Brittle-Bone. It is a small town of 1,000 inhabitants, located at the base of the hilly country just north of the overland trade route. Ranwood is built of wood from the surrounding forest, and the great hall itself lies on top of a low hill, where, from the top of three-story towers, the jarl's men can see for about a mile around the city, an area that has been cleared of trees. The great hall is circled by a wooden palisade at the base of the hill, and a low moat has been dug around it. There are only two entry points, both easily defensible by 20 men.

The rest of the town consists mostly of farms, with small fields and plentiful livestock. The town is also home to two different smiths, one of them a dwarf, a tailor and an excellent bakery. A large mill is constantly at work providing flour for the local populace. Vermund the Ghostly, the local miller, is one of the richest men in town, and he employs his own small mercenary guard, with the permission of the jarl.

The People

The folk of Boddergard are a hardworking bunch, who carve out their simple lives from the fertile lands, with which they have been blessed. They are fiercely independent, and if asked what they think of King Ragnar, will often respond indifferently or with outright hostility. The king is seen as a man who's too ambitious for his own good, and who has unrightfully usurped the throne. They feel sure that honest men, such as their own jarl, will be sure to put the king in his rightful place one of these days.

Jarl Guthorm Brittle-Bone is the undisputed ruler of the domain. He is an aging warrior, who has seen many a campaign in his time, and who is a respected leader of men and a capable ruler. During his reign, he has secured Boddergard from outside raids and has also conquered the neighboring domain of Hodderland, which is managed by his son, Aske Guthormson. The jarl won his nickname when he blocked a blow from a frost giant, a blow so mighty that it broke his shield-arm.

Recent Events

The reign of Guthorm Brittle-Bone has been fairly safe from outside raids, so the domain has been prosperous. So prosperous in fact, that the jarl began considering expanding his domain. He managed to conquer the neighboring domain of Hodderland in AC 998, and spent some years making sure that he could hold onto it. War leader Ragnar the Stout wished to punish him, but Guthorm managed to ally with the neighboring clans of Haltford and Hillgard. In the face of this alliance, Ragnar backed down.

Eventually Ragnar the Stout managed to gather enough support to proclaim himself king. Though Guthorm was opposed to this, Ragnar had bought or extorted the support of most other clans. Guthorm has been watching Ragnar for any opportunity to depose him, and has been quick to criticize him during the campaign against the kobolds of the Falun Caverns started in AC 1012. When Ragnar failed to side with winning faction in the Ostland civil war of AC 1015, Guthorm was also sure to have

men ridiculing him. In both of these ventures, Guthorm made sure to only send old or inexperienced warriors, while saving his able men for his own plans.

During my employment this fall, Guthorm convinced his neighbors and sometime allies to raid the neighboring Vestlandic domain of Clan Bornbank. The lands of Bornbank provide access to Landerstjord, and would allow Guthorm a safe place from which to launch longships, ensuring him greater power and riches. Jarl Ceowulf Rotolfson of Clan Bornbank is a young and inexperienced warrior, whom Guthorm feels assured that he can defeat. The raid served both to test clan Bornbank's defenses, Vestland's resolve to punish such raids, and Ragnar's current power among the jarls of Soderstjord.

The raid was a roaring success, as we fought all the way to the town of Vanger before meeting serious resistance. Since the raid was merely a test, we turned back, loaded with plunder, before a real war broke out. Though Vestland issued protests, Ragnar could not gain enough support to punish Guthorm, and was forced to send idle threats. I predict that the rule of Ragnar will soon be over.

Don't Miss

If you find yourself in Ranwood make sure to visit Arnora Grimadottir's bakery and tell her that Gilor sends his best and misses her pastry. Make sure that you try it out yourself! Also mention my name to Gorur the smith, and he just might give you a discount. I still fight with the ax I bought from him.

Do Miss

Being caught in the woods at night is not recommended. The wolves can be driven off with a nice fire, but you'll likely be kept awake most of the night, listening to their howls, and watching for their shining eyes at the edge of your vision. In the winters, when food grows scarce, the wolves are said to become so bold as to even attack men wielding torches. A hungry wolf is a dangerous opponent!

TAMERONIKAS (Emirate of)

Location: Southeastern Brun, west of the Western Sea of Dawn, east of the southern Altan Tepes Mountains, north of Thyatis. *OW*

Area: 1,050 sq. miles (2,680 sq. km).

Population: 30,000, including Tameronikas (pop. 5,000).

Languages: Alasiyan (Nicosstenian dialect). Thyatian also spoken among traders and townsfolk.

Coinage: Plari Standard: dinar (gp), dirham (sp), fal (cp). Thyatian Standard also common: emperor (5 gp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (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). Infidels (those who refuse to follow the edicts of the Eternal Truth) pay double the monthly head tax. Foreigners pay the same rate as infidels.

Government Type: Theocratic emirate, generally considered a client-state of Thyatis.

Industries: Animal husbandry, agriculture, horse breeding, trade, shipbuilding, theological study.

Important Figures: Omar al-Kalim (Emir).

Flora and Fauna: Grasses, cedar trees, coffee, tea, pepper plants and sugar cane. Horses, sheep, goats, camels, cattle, plus in the uplands kobolds, trolls, giants, ogres, orcs, and goblins.

Further Reading: GAZ2 The Emirates of Plaruam, previous almanacs.

Description by unknown.

Hear, oh traveler, the tale of my people. We follow the true precepts of al-Kalim of holy memory, "as faithful unto honor as a dutiful wife."

The Land

Tameronikas is a land of Plaruam, and from here we will lead the reunification of both hazar and nomad as al-Kalim of holy memory did. It consists of the capital and southern half of the former Emirate of Nicosstenia, a lush coastal strip plus the uplands to where the "mountains rise like cresting waves, crashing against the lands of the southern infidels." Of all Plari lands, it is most blessed of the Immortals, second only to the oasis of Sacred Plaruam itself.

The upland plateau, rugged and unsettled though it be, contains therein the only source of timber in all the emirates, and thus Tameronikas became the shipbuilding center of Plaruam. Here live also herdsmen, keeping their flocks in watchful vigil, and as vigilant against invasion. Between sea and upland lies the coastal plain, the "bountiful dowry, gift of Protius to His daughter, Tameronikas." Here farmers grow vegetables, fruits and grain and raise sheep and fowl. Coffee, tea, spices, sugar, and wine are all cultivated for trade (though taxed heavily).

Amid this region are sprinkled large villages, many of them ports for both trade and seafaring. Fishermen ply the seas, grateful for the bounty Protius provides. By the true word of al-Kalim, we are "open to the ideas and markets of the world but abjuring its vices," something our brethren in Abbashan have forgotten. At the center of this crown is the jewel of Tameronikas. It has almost completely recovered from the attack in AC 1008 by Alphatia's ravaging hordes, the former colonial

overlords, “scheming twisted wizards of dark magics, as flighty and vacuous as clouds, came to enslave both hazar and nomad alike,” but were again driven forth, praise be the Immortal Guardians! The uses to which they put both women and boys alike during the months they abode here are so unspeakable I will pass over them in modest silence. The town’s population has been swollen by the arrival of many Preceptors, making the palace here their capital until Sacred Plarum can be restored to our rightful control. Also here are a number of infidel Thyatian traders. Though they are not foreign “devils” as the Abbashan Kin claim, we know the depths of their capacity for treachery and deceit. For they are avaricious and greedy, as “grasping and as devious as the efreet.” Still, many of Thyatian heritage have long lived in this region and, under the teachings of al-Kalim, became virtuous and faithful inhabitants of the emirates. But still we watch them, and do not forget that when their emperor came “with his troops as numerous as the sands of the desert,” their aim was not to help us, as they now pretend, but to seize the city for themselves, “as covetous of land as they are of gold.”

Still, the port of Tameronikas is cosmopolitan and profits by trade, with silk and other cloth, fine paper, porcelain, and precious woods being imported from the south and shipped all over the emirates. Plus, as long as we do not trouble the Thyatians they deter the Abbashani Kin from attacking us. They wish to make us their pawns, sending envoys to watch us, but we watch them as well, and are patient. When we are restored to power over the emirates, we shall settle accounts with them.

The People

The people of Tameronikas are enterprising, but virtuous and pious. We toil diligently and are known throughout the emirates for our skill at both trade and arms, and our fidelity to the teachings of al-Kalim. The population is mixed, with the inhabitants being of both Alasiyan and Thyatian heritages. Nearly all follow the word of the Nahmeh, though infidels (especially southerners) are present in the settlements of the hazar, in addition to those who come briefly to trade.

The mixed population gives us strength. From the Alasiyans we derive our moral fiber and our steadfastness, from the Thyatians our skill at administration and trade. These traits, derived from each, are now blended in each to the benefit of all and the strength of the emirates, as al-Kalim foresaw.

It is true, however, that recent events have made Tameronikas a center of intrigues, with not only Thyatians but agents of the Abbashani Kin and envoys of Darokin and Karameikos hoping to influence things. This has meant we had to take certain measures to preserve our independence, “as a maiden must struggle and fend off seduction to preserve her virtue,” which we would otherwise see as dishonorable. But since many of these are not honorable Plari, but infidel foreigners “with their insidious ways,” it is not always possible to treat things the way we would in our dealings with each other. Just as it is said that the pious and holy al-Kalim had to resort to well-poisoning and treacherous intrigue in recovering Cubia and Tameronikas from the Thyatian invaders. These things we would never normally do in our fights against each other, and al-Kalim instructed us that “this path is not to follow, for water is like unto gold and your honor is as precious as your sister’s virtue, but the greater good sometimes forces a lesser evil. We do what we need to preserve the good, but remember to atone for our actions later, as piety and honor both demands. For though necessary evil may be necessary to the good of all, it is likewise evil, not made righteous by its necessity.” Following that, it is said he undertook a sojourn of atonement in the desert, and with him his closest followers. They celebrated the liberation, but beseeched the Immortal Guardians forgiveness. This teaches us how to live, and we will follow the path of the holy al-Kalim. Mere necessity does not purge an evil act of its

wickedness, one must still see it as sin and find redemption. Thus we were all freed not only from the yoke of foreign tyranny, but from impiety and false excuses.

Thereby it is for this reason that one will find among our people the most pious and honorable in all the world. For we do not seek self-justification and exculpation for wickedness, or ever feel it just and good to behave badly. For this reason, we tremble before undertaking such things, which even well-regarded and respected foreigners often do without thought. We pray long and hard, and seek every other option before taking the low but easy path. For we understand, but do not excuse, such a thing. This understanding keeps us from falling into the darkness that swallowed up and corrupted many other nations, and into which expedience both the Alphatians and Thyatians descended, and both thereby earned the tribulations that have beset their people. They set for us an example to not follow, as did those who came before. "For those who sow the wind reap the desert devil."

Recent History

All know of the Great War, and the coming of the Alphatian hordes "fearsome in their magic but like a base which appears strong but once cracked shatters easily and proves hollow." They landed in Cubia, and marched south to attack their hated Thyatian rivals "for the two make war with animosity found only among brothers who see what they dislike about themselves in the other, and thus hope by killing their brother they will kill what is distasteful in themselves with him." They marched to Tameronikas on their way south; we held them off for a time but in their numbers we could not prevent them from seizing our town. While they built up forces for their attack on Thyatis, they treated us "like unto the captive maiden that is used as a whore by bandits," but as the year passed so too did they. Their lands were sunk soon after, "for the Immortal Guardians repay tenfold any act of wickedness for which one does not sincerely repent," and their repayment was long coming. So too their counterparts, the Thyatians "surpassing all in wealth and vice" received theirs, being at long last humbled. As al-Kalim foresaw "their emperor will sicken and weaken and with it their country, in the aftermath of the time of great upheavals." The holy al-Kalim cautioned us against exuberance, advising "stay strong and vigilant, for a wounded lion will strike out." We thought this meant that we should take advantage of this time to carefully undermine this nemesis by raids and attacks, to keep it off balance. But we did not hear al-Kalim's words, as he again foresaw: "for even the most pious do not always hear the Word". Plague ravaged the Thyatians, but while we watched them, we did not watch ourselves. Devilish fiends from beyond the pale came, unleashed to prey upon the faithful. The Kin seized power during this crisis, and managed at least to eliminate this threat. We would have done so as well, but the people gave the Kin of Abbashan credit for the victory, cementing their power in Plaruum.

Then came the new Thyatian Emperor, "whose eyes shine with the dead gleam of the shark that preys upon the seafarers," hoping to cement his authority and prestige with a conquest wrested from our people. Though his aims were thwarted, compromises were necessary. The followers of the true path of al-Kalim thus gained a foothold from which we will recover the emirates, which is our first step on the path back to restoring the people's confidence in our leadership. We have reopened the doors to trade and travel, and eliminated the repression instituted by the Kin, while simultaneously guarding against the importation of vices. For we know, as al-Kalim taught, that the two can be done in tandem.

Don't Miss

The port of Tameronikas is once again vibrant with trade, its markets teeming with activity and goods from throughout the emirates and the world. Here too gardens are cultivated, and amidst the groves pious imams discuss theology, ever willing to teach infidels the word of the Nahmeh, "for all can find wisdom and faith, and none should be denied knowledge of the good."

Do Miss

The Palace of Kazimayn. This area of the town of Tameronikas has been given over to the Thyatian Consulate and is full of their machinations. Lamentably, some men and women of the emirates have entered their service in exchange for coin, but most of us keep our distance. We deal with them as we must, but honest men do not frequent this zone. It is said, however, that those looking for opportunities for adventure and wealth can find patrons here.

TEL AKBIR (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, south of Plaruum, east of the Altan Tepes Mountains, along the shores of the Sea of Dawn. **OW**

Area: 3,840 sq. mi. (8,640 sq. km.).

Population: 150,000 including the city of Tel Akbir (pop. 20,000), the town of Dawnpoint (pop. 10,000) and the fortress of Zendrol (pop. 3,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Alasiyan (Akbiran dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Jamila ben Nadir (Duchess), Sarapanmon (Magist), Kalak Ahman al-Mustafa (Priest).

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

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

Description by Viviana Romanones.

This is a grassy duchy inhabited by Thyatians of Alasiyan descent untainted by the cult of the Plari brigand al-Kalim. The legion keeps a close eye out for Plari raiders in the area.

The Land

The Duchy of Tel Akbir forms the northern arm sheltering the Gulf of Kantrium, its northern shores an arc sweeping into the waters of the Sea of Dawn. Its frontier with Plaruum is strongly protected, as raiders and brigands from that land have frequently crossed over the border on forays seeking plunder and rapine. This area is somewhat hilly, but the bulk of the peninsula of Tel Akbir consists of plains and grasslands. Farmsteads line the coastal areas, but most of the interior is given over to pasturage for herds of sheep and goats. Though arid, it is not nearly as dry as the wastes of Plaruum, receiving rainfall from the gulf and the Sea of Dawn to water its surface.

The city of Tel Akbir itself is strategically located at the tip of the peninsula as it arcs westward, forming the mouth of the Gulf of Kantrium. At its backside, northeast, is a large hill or tel. The city

is only easily approached by sea or by the coastal roads. Atop the hill itself is a large citadel containing the palace of the duke. This elegant city functions as a seaport, military base, and entrepôt for the agriculture of the region. Here markets bustle with activities while fishermen and traders ply their trades on the seas. Many orchards and gardens lay within its walls. Tel Akbir's architecture is a blend of Thyatian and traditional Alasiyan—delicate, onion-domed towers soar over many-pillared halls. The common houses are usually of pristine white stucco, box-like but very well maintained. The sight of them covering a hillside is beautiful—despite their simplicity of design, or perhaps because of it, they are very lovely in aspect.

The town of Dawnpoint sits at the eastern tip of the Tel Akbir peninsula, jutting into the Sea of Dawn. Dawnpoint is a smaller replica of Tel Akbir, and sits at the end of a causeway; the town itself is almost surrounded by the sea, with its anchorage sheltered by the bulk of the town itself. It is said that in the past Dawnpoint was built upon a pair of islands, but later became attached to the mainland when silt built up between the coast and the shores of the islands. This small port saw much activity during the Wrath War, as the empire based many of its ships here in its efforts to repel Alphatia's aggression against Glantri. It should be remembered that these fleets repeatedly defeated the Alphatian invasion armadas, forcing them to resort to violating the borders of Plaruum (though, to be fair, the Plari show no respect for the sovereignty of other nations either, so one could say they had it coming. Still, this was yet another example of why Alphatia needed to be opposed though most of the world still does not recognize this). Several miles southeast, off the shores of Dawnpoint, are several small, rocky islands. Here stands the lighthouse of Abukir Watch, built to warn ships away from the dangerous shoals of this area, which can rip the bottom out of unwary ships. Numerous old wrecks are found sunken beneath these waters, and enterprising divers still occasionally find treasure in their wrecked hulls.

The People

In Tel Akbir the people of Thyatis and Alasiya have intermingled. Notice that I referred to Alasiyans and not Plari—the people here are not followers of al-Kalim's cult of personality, and many feel insulted if called “Plari” by ignorant foreigners. Alasiyan and Thyatian customs are both respected here, an example of multiethnic harmony. Thyatian is the official tongue, but the Alasiyan language is also commonly spoken.

The former duke (or, in Alasiyan, sheik—or, even more properly, shaikh), Tarik ben Nadir, was himself both Alasiyan and loyal to the emperor—notably, he did not join the rebellion. Even more significantly, since there are those who believe Thyatian rule is unwelcome here, he was exceptionally vigilant in protecting the border against Plari raids during the time of troubles. Crossing him brought harsh and inevitable vengeance, even if he had to wait years to spring it. This made him both much feared and much respected as a man who could be taken advantage of or crossed without consequences. In many ways a traditionalist, Tarik was resistant to the idea of women leading their own lives—he did not speak with his sister or his daughter for many years. The fact that both of these women have shown independence of mind does prove, in my opinion, that Alasiyan (and Thyatian!) culture is changing in this area, and people are becoming more open to such things than in the past. Though tradition should be preserved, in some cases it is best preserved by enlightened modification, and should not be too rigid to evolve.

Still, many people in Tel Akbir are commonly aloof to strangers, but should you win their friendship you will never find a more stalwart friend in the entire world. If you cross them or betray their trust, they will remember and exact punishment. On the other hand, some of them speak of honor but are as crafty at circumventing it when it suits them, while still putting on a mask of virtue, as their northern cousins in Vlaruam. As a whole they are legendary storytellers, and one of their customs is that a guest should share a tale of his exploits or travels with his hosts. Tel Akbirans are also very devout folk, even for Thyatians. Proper reverence towards the virtuous (non-entropic) Immortals is not only common, but also expected. Infidelity (unfaithfulness and lack of faith) is frowned upon severely.

In Tel Akbir there are no nomads as in the north. Oh, to be sure much of Tel Akbir is given over to pastoral use; many people make their livelihoods herding sheep and goats. But their way of life is not nomadic, it is centered around ranches. People also grow crops and orchards. Thus, in Tel Akbir there isn't the division between nomads and city folk as in Vlaruam—the situation is more akin to other Thyatian regions.

Don't Miss

The bustling souk (marketplace) of Tel Akbir City, with its maze of merchant stalls and energetic bartering, is the best place in Tel Akbir to exchange not only goods, but also rumors. Many caravans full of goods find their way here, and the wares of Tel Akbir then find their way throughout the region.

Of special interest to scholars and would-be students is the recently-founded university. Though only a few years old, special efforts have been made to attract professors and build up its reputation. It is well funded by the wealthy merchants of Tel Akbir, and with the recent addition of a department of antiquities due to the generosity of the emperor, it is well on its way to becoming one of the world's great centers of higher learning. Tel Akbirans have always been a studious and learned people, but in the past had to travel to Thyatis City or other locations to gain a university-level education, but now with their own local institution academics can flourish even more.

TERENTIAS (Grand Duchy of)

Location: Island off the southern coast of Thyatis, south of Kerendas and north of Minrothad. 

Area: 520 sq. mi. (1,345 sq. km.).

Population: 30,000 (60% human, 40% elven, some hin) including the town of Crossbones (pop. 6,000).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Elvish (Meditor/Verdier dialect).

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, crafts, fishing, oil, magic, privateering, shipbuilding, trade.

Important Figures: Derentarius (Archduke), Vaanes Ornogorius (Commodore), Phoebammon (Magist), Zemarchus Raetelarius (Priest).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, cedar, teak and mahogany cultivated for woodwork, sheep and goats. Bees kept for honey. Sea creatures off the shores of the island.

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

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

This island was hotly contested between Thyatis and Minrothad in the past. The elven inhabitants seem to prefer the empire, and focus their lives on pirating and sailing, and many Thyatians have immigrated here. So far, Terentias has remained a dominion of Thyatis for over 200 years.

The Land

This moderately-sized island is the northernmost isle of the Minrothad archipelago. The town of Crossbones sits in a sheltered cove on the northern coast of the island, facing away from major storms that occasionally sweep through this part of the Sea of Dread. Much of the island is ringed with coral reefs, home to a multiplicity of fish. These reefs do make the currents and tides around Terentias somewhat unpredictable, however, so only experienced navigators should sail here.

The isle itself is very beautiful, with wide beaches of white sand. Bluffs rise up from these coasts, and much of these uplands are densely forested. Only the area right around Crossbones itself is not forested, consisting instead of fields and plains.

The People

The inhabitants of Terentias consist in roughly equal parts of elves related to the clans of Minrothad and Thyatian humans. The citizens of Terentias, human and elven alike, are a seafaring folk, world renowned as both traders and corsairs. They welcome the presence of fellow seamen and swashbucklers. Anyone with a good tale of raucous adventure on the high seas is likely to be treated to a round of drinks and then learn the latest exploits of the captains of Terentias—these nights of revelry are excellent places to get information. The folk of Terentias are strongly connected to the Sea of Dread's rumor mill, and as such a good place to go for those seeking lore and tips of goings on in the area. Crossbones is also a port of call for smugglers, and the empire tends to look the other way when it comes to activities directed at moving goods past the borders of unfriendly neighbors.

During the Wrath War the folk of Terentias were the empire's foremost privateers, striking at Alphatia's shipping lanes. Though this did not alter the fundamental course of the war, they did make a good account of themselves, seizing hundreds of Alphatian vessels and plundering their cargoes. Now, as the empire turns more towards commerce, the seafarers of Terentias are being encouraged to shift their attentions towards merchant activities, something the recent accession of Minrothad into the imperial orbit as an exarchate should spur.

Added to this mix last summer were a different sort of "sailors"—members of the ancient Thyatian Air Fleet, skyships and their crew. There is a rivalry between them and the true seamen of Terentias, which has remained friendly so far. Trainees at the Air Force Academy often come to town when they have leave, and it is arguable that they pick up more practical knowledge from the mariners of Terentias than they do in class.

Don't Miss

Crossbones is a freebooter's paradise. It is a town of high spirits, full of shady warehouses, busy docks, rowdy taverns full of lively gamblers, and bawdy inns. It's the sort of place adventurous travelers generally cannot get enough of. It is also a good place to buy a ship, as its yards build them sleek, strong and fast.

Do Miss

The same place is full of shady characters, sharpers who are quick to swindle the naive and unwary of every last copper they have and press-gang them into service as a swabby on a disreputable vessel. Many, if not most, Terentians are friendly, good-natured folk. But some of those friendly smiles mask dark intentions, people who are happy because they know they are robbing you blind and you are unlikely to know it until it is too late. Be careful, and you will have a wonderful time. If you're a sucker, you're likely to find yourself floating home in a barrel with a terrible headache and no possessions—not even the shirt on your back.

The Terentias Air Shipyards were built here recently, just inland of Crossbones. Access is restricted to authorized persons only, and the yards are under martial law so intruders can expect harsh punishment.

THYATIS (Duchy of)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, north of Vanya's Girdle spanning the banks of the Mesonian River in Thyatis. *OW*

Area: 4,000 sq. mi. (10,360 sq. km.).

Population: 600,000 including the towns of Julinius (pop. 12,000) and Hillfork (pop. 10,000). Other communities include Arcadiapolis (pop. 5,000), Raedestos (pop. 5,000), Selymbria (pop. 5,000), Mesembria (pop. 5,000) and countless other villages and communities.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Haldann, Kerendan, and Tel Akbiran dialects). Many other languages are spoken within Thyatis City.

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Da. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion administered by civic officials and elected representatives on behalf of the Emperor of Thyatis, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially metalworking, tanning), fishing, military, mounts, raw silk, shipbuilding, trade, wine.

Important Figures: Eusebius Torion (Emperor).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture) along the Mesonian River, grape vines, olive trees, cherry peach, pear and orange tree orchards. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, and mules. Bees kept for honey. Lycanthropes, wild cats and dogs, giant rats, goblinoids. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold, and white dragons as well as other aerial creatures are used as mounts. Currently, undead outside Thyatis City itself, as well as other unknown varieties of monsters in the catacombs underneath The City.

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

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

One of the smaller duchies in terms of size, but the heaviest populated, the Duchy of Thyatis is the core of the empire's mainland, just as Thyatis City is the heart of the empire.

The Land

The lands of Thyatis (Duchy) are incredibly fertile and wealthy, outmatching even Darokin's famous Streel River valley in population density. Just as the Streel River irrigates that valley, so too are the lands of the duchy irrigated by the mighty Mesonian River, shorter in length but no less important for that. The southern coast of the duchy consists of bluffs and beaches overlooking the sparkling waters of Vanya's Girdle. Yachting races are often seen.

Rich estates and palaces line the shores of the girdle and the banks of the Mesonian River, amid the hills and woodlands. More towns than can be conveniently shown on any map dot this domain, each with a unique charm. The most important of these are Iulinius and Hillfork. Iulinius is a port on the western coast of the duchy, a well-armed naval base protecting Thyatis City from invaders from the Sea of Dread. The waters in this area can be treacherous, so the area features a much-needed and famous lighthouse, the beacon of Iulin's Torch. South of Iulinius, at the western mouth of Vanya's Girdle, is the lighthouse known as the Tower of Aes, which has its own community nearby. North of Iulinius is the Crisaeen Gulf, a region of calm waters and excellent fishing.

The town of Hillfork lies on the western bank of the Mesonian River at the northern border of the duchy. It sits atop hills amid a forested area, carefully maintained and grown woodlands. These woods are used for silkworms, vital in the silk industry of Thyatis City, and harvested for shipbuilding materials. Replanting and magically-induced growth insure that this area is not deforested. Until recently the Duchy of Retebius administered Hillfork, but it was transferred to the Duchy of Thyatis last year when the emperor and senate made a number of frontier adjustments in Thyatis proper.

It should not be forgotten that many other communities dot the almost manicured countryside of the duchy. Halfway upriver between Thyatis City and Hillfork is the town of Arcadiapolis, which is often the site of military exercises. East of Thyatis City near the border of the County of Lucinius is the town of Raedestos, while to the west on the road to the Tower of Aes the town of Selymbria can be found.

Often ignored is the fact that the duchy shares the shores of the Gulf of Kantrium as well. Several communities of fishermen line the shores of this gulf, the most significant being the town of Mesembria, located at the tip of a peninsula that juts into the gulf. The area in between the shores of the girdle and the gulf contains the empire's richest farmlands and vineyards, estates of wealthy magnates and farmsteads of hardy peasants both.

The People

This region has been a center of trade and military recruits for over a millennium, and will likely be so for a millennium more or longer. The Duchy of Thyatis is home to typical Thyatians: olive-skinned folk with dark hair and eyes, and sophisticated civilized ways. Though the duchy is rural in nature, the people who live here are almost as cosmopolitan as those of The City—they see much foreign commerce, most sell their wares in the markets of Thyatis City and visit it often, and town life is typical. Those who live outside towns and cities live comfortably on estates or in fairly prosperous farmsteads, and likewise are in easy reach of the amenities of town life.

The exception to this are the slaves; they are limited to the activities their masters permit, and work as servants and in some cases as agricultural labor, though this is frowned upon because it is thought that free farmers make the best soldiers, while slaves are poor troops at best. Still, slavery is unwarrantedly common here despite opposition by some who see it as an anachronistic and wasteful institution. The good thing is that the slaves of the duchy are closest to the imperial eye, and the legal protections accorded to Thyatian slaves are more often enforced here than elsewhere.

Don't Miss

The villas and palaces of the wealthy, which line Vanya's Girdle and the Mesonian River, are wonders of architecture, displays of wealth and engineering artistry. Getting inside is often tricky, as

the owners can afford the best protections (magical and mundane) against thievery. They are always looking for good servants and clients, however, and if you have a good reputation and solid references you can find highly-paid employment. The various lighthouses are also worth seeing, as are the mills along the river.

THYATIS (Empire of)

Location: Southeastern peninsula on the continent of Brun, east of Karameikos, north of the Sea of Dread and south of Plaruum along the Mesonian and Kerenda rivers. **OW**

Area: 62,300 sq. mi. (161,350 sq. km.), plus 797,678 sq. mi. (2,065,985 sq. km.) of overseas colonies (973,143 sq. mi. (2,520,440 sq. km.) if Heldun is included).

Population: 2,900,000 of various races (95% human, 3% elven, 2% other), plus 815,000 in overseas colonies (935,000 if Heldun is included).

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Hattian, and Kerendan dialects), Alasiyan (Akbiran dialect) is also common around Tel Akbir. Many other languages are spoken within the empire, especially in Thyatis City.

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Parliamentary imperium: monarchy heavily influenced by elective senate overseeing vassal domains.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially metalworking, glassworks, tanning, cloth), fishing, herding (cattle, sheep, goats), horse breeding (Kerendas mainly), magic (Sclaras and Thyatis City), military, mining (gold and other minerals in the Altan Tepes), shipbuilding (Thyatis City, Lucinius, and Actius), textiles (Thyatis City especially), trade, wine.

Important Figures: Eusebius Torion (Emperor), Lucianna Torion (Empress), Coltius Torion (Prince), Sabronius Torion (Prince), Demetrios Karagenteropolus (Imperial Magist), Manfred Torion Dörfer (Former Usurper).

Flora and Fauna: Mulberry trees (for sericulture), grape vines, olive trees, date palms, peach, pear, orange, and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards, maple, birch, and oak trees, pine and aspens in the Southern Altan Tepes Mountains. Herds of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, swine, and mules. Bees kept for honey. Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, foxes, dryads, wolves, unicorns and goblinoids can be found in the wilds of the empire. Hill giants and ogres in the hills. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold, and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are common near Retebius, sea monsters around Borydos, while absolutely anything can be found near the magical estates of Sclaras. Unknown varieties of monsters in the catacombs underneath The City.

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

No one could possibly do justice to the imposing and glorious Thyatian Imperium within the scope of an entry in the Mystaran Almanac. None the less, following in the footsteps of my illustrious predecessors as almanac correspondent, I shall endeavor to describe Thyatis as fully as possible to the best of my abilities. I do this in the hope that you may learn of this remarkable country, the triumphs and the tribulations of its citizens and our contributions to Mystaran civilization, and perhaps impart to you a new perspective so that you may view it in a fresh light. Thyatis, once merely a spur of land on Brun, began its rise from obscurity over a millennium ago to become the dominant power of the western world. In this imperium races blend freely, organization and efficiency are the hallmarks of national character, trade and negotiations are taught to children on their mothers' knees, and anyone from any part of the empire can become a warrior-knight. Due to the character of its people, Thyatis has always persevered through periods of trial and tribulation to return to greatness. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the civilization of the Old World is a byproduct of the will of the Thyatian Empire to survive and the simple feat of endurance it has performed, the historic function of Thyatis as a barrier against the invading hordes of Alphatia. Under the shelter of Thyatis's defense of its own eastern frontier, the rest of Brun could fashion its own life.

This entry describes the COUNTRY of Thyatis, which is the heart of the EMPIRE of Thyatis. Thyatis is a state surpassing all nations in wealth and might, small in size though great in influence. What allows the Thyatians to call their state an empire is the fact that it includes several other nations elsewhere in the world as members. These nations are called provinces, and at the moment there are: the Provinces of the Isle of Dawn; the Thyatian Hinterland Provinces on Dabania; Eusebius recently emulated Valentia and returned Ochalea and the Pearl Islands to the imperial fold, and Minrothad has voluntarily incorporated itself into the empire. This entry will deal solely with the imperial heartland on the continent of Brun. The other regions will receive full attention elsewhere.

The Thyatian language is the common tongue of many nations throughout the area, even those which have never been part of the empire. Within Thyatis itself there are three main dialects, all mutually intelligible. The first is the clip dialect of the City of Thyatis, which is found throughout much of the empire. The other two are the drawling Kerendan dialect spoken in western Thyatis, and the abrupt Hattian dialect spoken on Hattias.

The Land

The country of Thyatis is mainly composed of rich farmlands, with hills and mountains filled with mineral wealth to the north. Still, much variety exists, and only a brief overview will be given here, with each region covered in complete detail elsewhere. Thyatis is composed of eighteen dominions, called counties or duchies (baronies are no longer found in the Thyatian heartland as official imperial domains, though many of the dukes have made barons in their duchies, but at the imperial level such domains are found only among the colonies now). These dominions will be discussed separately elsewhere, as I mentioned.

Alert readers will notice that the area given above is slightly higher than the total of the areas of its constituent dominions. This is because, in addition to the four large islands that have their own entries, there are many small islands within Thyatian waters. The islands discussed here do not include the scattered outposts being developed in the vast reaches of the Sea of Dread or which are a part of some dominion or colony (like the Pearl Islands), but only those nearest the heart of Thyatis itself. Some of these little islets lay near Terentias, but most are scattered in the same chain that forms the larger

islands of Carytion, Borydos, Actius, and Sclaras. These are not marked on most maps, and many of them are not part of a dominion. Instead, the imperial government directly administers them. A few of these hold secret facilities, or are used as private retreats. But most of them are not very significant, though they might hold some reclusive residents, and pirates have been known to use them as bases. All are very small (none approach even tiny Sclaras in size). Some of them are very beautiful, however.

The People

Thyatians are a justly proud people, the possessors of a long tradition of civilization and imperial might. Most Thyatians have olive complexions and dark hair, although since any member ethnicity becomes a part of the empire, equal to any other citizen, absolutely any characteristic can be found among the Thyatian people. This is because the Thyatian people are not a race as such; anyone of any ethnicity can be a citizen of Thyatis, providing they are loyal to the empire, speak Thyatian, and adopt Thyatian mores. Because of this openness, Thyatis has produced a vibrant, multiethnic culture and civilization. In Thyatis there are Thyatians, Kerendans, Hattians, Alasipans, Ochaleans, Nuari, Alphatians, Thratians, elves, dwarves, hin, even Antaliens, Traladarans, Milenians and persons from many other nations—but all are Thyatian citizens first and foremost.

Thyatians are efficient, disciplined, and practical. They believe in doing whatever it takes to succeed when all else fails. Others view this as treacherous, even while excusing similar behavior in their own nations and friends, but Thyatians simply do what is needed to do to achieve their goals and preserve their nation, resorting to expediency only if other means falter. To do otherwise would not only be wasteful and inefficient, but potentially ruinous to a people who have always faced threats on every frontier. Most Thyatians are cosmopolitan, quick to embrace new cultures and customs. Thyatian scholars eagerly rush to learn more about them, writing treatises about their history and lore that are widely read by Thyatians, who learn and absorb much. This makes Thyatian culture rich and robust, strengthened by the best ideas, techniques, and philosophies of many lands.

If there is one thing Thyatians respect, it is fighting prowess. Coliseums can be found in almost every Thyatian city, and gladiatorial combats draw in crowds like never seen in other nations. When a Thyatian feels himself slighted by another, a duel will usually be arranged. The challenged party is permitted to set the terms of the duel, after which the challenger may withdraw or reaffirm the challenge. Duels between well-known, skilled participants are very popular, attracting large audiences and at times even larger wagers. Indeed, with the liberation of most gladiators by the senate and emperor last year, some thought has been given to supplementing the voluntary gladiatorial matches in the arenas with duels held there. Such duel-matches would “book” the highest profile of arranged duels.

In Darokin they have a saying, “he who has the gold makes the rules.” In Thyatis, the saying is “he who makes the rules wins the gold.” Thyatians respect sound laws and good order in their behavior, knowing that prosperity is the product of virtue, not the other way around. The virtues Thyatians hold most dear are dignity, duty, efficiency, self-discipline, loyalty, respect, honor, and piety [some would say in that order. Ed.] But, ironically, while those who discipline themselves and follow the code of virtues are respected, Thyatians tend to reserve their adoration for the self-reliant person who achieves greatness in preserving the empire but who do not surrender their individuality to it. It is the insolent but worthy rogue who receives the accolades of the crowd, if not their respect.

There are fewer Thyatians than there once were—enough fewer that the dead would equal the population of Karamaikos and then some. Many of these fell during the Final Alphatian War, others were laid low by the dark, necromantic magics of mummy rot that Thothia unleashed on the civilian, non-combatant population of Thyatis, a true crime against sentient creation. This demographic change has impacted Thyatian society. Though any waste of life is tragic, and some will think me callous for even saying what I shall say next, it is true that even in the darkest of clouds there are silver linings. The deaths, especially those caused by the Thothian mummy rot, largely fell on the indolent poor and the slave population. Fewer idle hands makes Thyatis more efficient, with less resources going to a non-productive segment of the population. Similarly, I hold that slavery, as a national institution, is retrograde and inefficient. Anything that reduces the proportion of slaves in Thyatian society, or which culls out the weak and unfit making room for the strong and capable to prosper and restore vitality to the empire cannot be all bad. [Pretty cold-hearted if you remember she's talking about death on a massive scale here. Ed.]. Though I must admit that Eusebius's enlightened policies of freeing many slaves in exchange for service to the empire, and making them Thyatian citizens is far to be preferred over the wicked and nefarious Thothian-caused method of killing hundreds of thousands of people. Many of their sympathizers might want you to forget who committed this foul and barbarous deed. Similarly, sending idle hands out to colonize the distant lands of the empire, and thus strengthen it, is certainly better as well. Still, these things, bad as they were, have compelled those who formerly relied on slave labor to innovate, and adopt innovative labor-saving devices that are already commonplace in areas like Darokin, and it has begun to sink in that slavery is the wave of the past, not the future. Perhaps some day this pernicious, inefficient institution will go the way of the Alphatian Empire and other obsolete artifacts. It would be ironic if we had the moribund, stagnant Thothians to thank for shaking us out of our complacency regarding these matters, even while they cling to the past.

Also, these demographic and social realities, which we have been forced to face, have compelled policy re-evaluations with regard to land use and pattern of settlement. Already before the Crown War rebellion broke out, Eusebius was fostering resettlement. Not only in the distant colonies, but here in the heartlands as well. There is a recognition among most Thyatians that a more efficient, productive use of Thyatian lands and resources is necessary for long-term success and recovery. Thus, you can be sure that many positive changes will be initiated, putting people and land to work and giving them a stake in making the most productive use of their opportunities.

Recent History

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

The people now known as Thyatians had their origin on the distant shores of the Dabanian continent. Some sixteen centuries ago the tribes, Thyatian, Kerendan, and Hattian, departed from Dabania settling on the small southeastern spur of the continent of Brun, a continent some scholars believe they came from originally. The tribes were warrior people, hardy and unafraid of death. Upon their migration to Brun they fought against a nation, forgotten by time, that it is believed held in them bondage in the murky past and sent them to Dabania, fighting them until even the very name of this nation was forgotten. For four centuries they lived free, eventually coming into contact with the ruthlessly expansionistic and despotic Alphatian Empire, a nation that dominated others through fear and intimidation. The Thyatians resisted the Alphatians' drive for conquest with raids (which

Alphatian histories depict as piracy) and maritime strength. 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 Alphatia's magical power at the time.

For two centuries the Thyatians lived under the cruel and despotic yoke 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, who took what they learned and improved it, and also learned what not to do. Hardened by their experience after two centuries of Alphatian rule, the Thyatians led a grand revolt against the Alphatian despotism. The Alphatian regime crumbled, and only their timely surrender prevented their collapse. In exchange for peace, the Alphatians ceded much of the lands they had occupied for so long. Thus, the Thyatian Imperium was born.

For a 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 in its own way. The modern world owes its shape and its culture to Thyatis in more ways than one. Many nations never ruled by it speak Thyatian and have derived elements of their civilization from its own. Empress Valentia's enlightened Citizen's Proclamation twenty years after the empire's foundation made all the people of the Thyatian Empire full participants in the empire, unlike Alphatia's tradition of subjugation and oppression of conquered people. She took the further step of granting independence to both the Pearl Islands and Ochalea, then formally inviting them back into the empire under the terms of her proclamation, and they accepted. This made Thyatis strong in ways that Alphatia could not replicate without changing its society, something the Alphatians would not do. So while Alphatia was larger and ostensibly more powerful than Thyatis, Thyatis made more efficient use of its strength.

In the last century, the Alphatians once again attacked Thyatis, which was ruled by a kind, artistic but unmilitary emperor, Gabrionus V. Emperor Gabrionus V had forgotten that the first duty a ruler has is war, and had let the Thyatian military and fleets decline while he shifted funds to artistic pursuits and grand building projects, like the theater in Thyatis which still bears his name. The Alphatian Spike Assault was initially successful, and many Alphatians to this day insist that this war was a great victory for them. However, though their "Grand Imperial Army" managed briefly to pierce the walls of The Queen of Cities, and they went on a bloodthirsty rampage, believing they had won, the Alphatians had once again miscalculated the Thyatian spirit and the resiliency of its people. The Alphatian invaders were defeated so utterly, their fleets crushed so decisively, that they were unable to hold back the Thyatian tide even enough to retain their gains on the Isle of Dawn. Within two years' time, the Alphatians had suffered crushing a defeat not only in Thyatis but on the Isle of Dawn as well. This debacle was so humiliating to them that they forced their reigning emperor, Tylion IV, to abdicate as a result. His successor, Criadna, knew the only wise choice she had was to sue for peace with the new Thyatian Emperor, Thincol Torion, before our soldiers advanced into Alphatia's territory. So, rather than being an example of Alphatian supremacy, as they often claim, the Spike Assault is an emblematic example of the indomitable spirit of the Thyatian people, our refusal to be defeated, and our ability to overcome great odds.

More recently, and Immortals willing for the last time, Thyatis again used its strength to shield the world from the advance of the bloodthirsty Alphatian hordes. This Final War between Thyatis and Alphatia lasted from AC 1005 to AC 1009. It was a war Thyatis fought on behalf of Glantri and by

extension all the nations, against the threat of Alphantian dominance. The Alphantians sought to conquer and destroy Glantri, while we sought to prevent their expansionist aims, hoping to curb their appetite for destruction. We also fought because it would not have been in our interest to see Alphantia expand in Brum, flanking us by conquering Glantri. These antagonisms set the stage for a horrific war like none other. The war is often called the Wrath of the Immortals because the Immortals punished Alphantia for attempting to impose their regime on the world, sundering the Alphantian Empire, while some call it the Great War, but I call it the Final Alphantian War in an expression of optimism. Thus it is poetic justice that the Alphantians, while seeking to destroy Glantri, were instead destroyed themselves. Also, this war was an echo of history, as Glantri is named such because it was a Thyatian, Alexander Glantri, who foiled the Alphantians the last time they tried to impose themselves on that nation.

During this war the Alphantian attackers caused much death and destruction in the empire, only to be thwarted in the end, just as during the earlier Spike Assault. During the course of the war, Thyatis suffered numerous setbacks and defeats, though we did succeed in throwing Norwold into a series of disruptive wars, thus preventing the Alphantians from marching south from Landfall through Heldann and Ethengar and right into Glantri. My friend, Knight of the Air Carolianus Ellarius, summed it up best when he said "All throughout the war we had a strange, surreal feeling, as if we were an audience in a theater, watching the events of our own struggle and yet powerless to affect it. After awhile, it was clear they could not be stopped." As fate unfolded, the Alphantians overran much of the Isle of Dawn. After early reverses the situation seemed to stabilize as we held them off in the northern head of the Isle of Dawn. It seemed for a time that the course of the war might turn in our favor, but our supposed allies, the Heldannic Knights, sent no aid but rather engaged in a series of reckless and unnecessary campaigns which were only distractions. But far more ominously, Cruul Zaar treacherously betrayed the empire to Alphantia, turning traitor in exchange for the title of king and the hand of Asteriela. His betrayal allowed the Alphantian hordes to occupy this strategic position on the Isle of Dawn, giving their fleets an opening to invade Brum.

But our forces were ready to intercept them, and finally free of the debilitating weaknesses that undermined their effectiveness in the early stages of the war, they finally showed what they were capable of doing. In a mighty clash in the Eastern Sea of Dawn in the summer of AC 1008, our Retebius Air Fleet, with the vaunted Spitfire and Hurricane squadrons in the vanguard, defeated their dread skynavy, while our imperial navy repulsed their fleet, sinking many transports and forcing the enemy back to the Isle of Dawn, though at heavy cost to our valiant troops. It took the Alphantians nearly six months to recover from this blow, licking their wounds and rebuilding their fleets. Then, thwarted in their effort to invade Thyatis directly, the Alphantians once again turned to disreputable methods to achieve their goal. Pinning down our forces and those of Heldann with diversionary feints, the Alphantians sneaked into Plarum at Cubia in the dead of winter, invading it without a proper declaration of war. Though the locals resisted, the Plari could not hold off the Alphantian onslaught. The enemy dispatched them, and marched down into Thyatis.

The Alphantian war machine pushed through Thyatis throughout AC 1009, slowly but inexorably, despite a valiant and desperate defense. The emperor brought our fleet around to cover Vanya's Girdle, thwarting their fleet's effort to push up the channel and attack The City directly, but their armies continued to march through Thyatis, wave after wave their hordes came. [I believe that by this time the Thyatians knew they were doomed. But where another people might have given in to despair, the

Thyatians strove with even greater determination. They made the Alphasians pay dearly for every inch of ground. No one who saw them fighting against the inevitable could help but be moved by their stubborn bravery. Dorrik Stonecleaver.]. Many battles and skirmishes took place as we fought fiercely to defend our homes, but I will limit myself to a brief description of only the most significant of these. Our defenders repulsed their attack at Kantridae, but they were able to bring up reinforcements to outflank our positions, forcing us to withdraw because we did not have sufficient troops to prevent this maneuver. Again we beat back their first attempts to cross the Kantridae River, but again they brought up more men to cross upriver while the Alphasian general formed his army into a large square to ford the river in the teeth of our forces. Though we inflicted severe casualties on them, there seemed to be endless numbers of them, always coming, and they forced us to withdraw again. Our main forces managed an orderly withdrawal to the City of Thyatis while a cadre of volunteers and local defenders bravely held Retebius and fended off the Alphasian war machine for over a month. They finally managed to take that city in a furious assault, overrunning and slaughtering the defenders, though their own casualties were so horrid they were stalled again, forced to bring up additional fresh troops from their lands. Which, in the end, seemed to be our undoing, as by this point our reinforcements consisted largely of youths and old men, plus a very few Haldannic Knights and Glantrian wizards who finally came to support us, their allies in this war. But still the Alphasians came on, disregarding and ignoring their own severe casualties. Though we picked off their elite forces with surgical strikes, and valiant charges by forces formed late in the war, such as the Order of the Silver Shield, whittled them down and made them pay dearly for every advance. This bought precious time for Thincol to prepare the defenses of the capital and for our Glantrian allies to complete their own preparations. But the Alphasians always seemed to have more common troops whose lives they sacrificed unsparingly in their drive for conquest, and no method was too despicable for them to resort to in their efforts to terrorize the people into submission. They then managed to ford the Retebius River, again in the face of our resistance, but using their numbers to cross in multiple places so we were forced to withdraw, and they marched into the Duchy of Thyatis.

The Alphasian forces at length pushed forward to the eastern bank of the Mesonian River, where we drew up our forces to oppose them. With us at last were strong contingents from Haldann and Glantri, as well as some northerners sent as “mercenaries” by our allies in Ostland to fight by our side. A skillful battle plan had been drawn up, but a body of Haldannic Knights charged prematurely, and was slain by the Alphasians. Though these men went down in Haldannic lore as heroes, for us it seemed like a senseless waste that, worst of all, threw things into disorder. Seeing this, the imperial generals withdrew the remaining troops into River Guard Town, with the Order of the Silver Shield covering their withdrawal, and boarded them on ships, where they crossed over to The City, to defend behind its stout walls, with the Retebius Air Fleet controlling the airspace above. With our ships patrolling the river and girdle, the Alphasians were faced with the difficulty of crossing over in the face of this. Though they could have landed some troops by skyship to attempt to make a beachhead on the west side, they knew that we would then be able to strike at these forces before more troops could be brought over to swell their numbers, and that thus such efforts were likely to be defeated piecemeal. They were facing this challenge when Thincol’s envoys submitted a peace proposal to Eriadna, reminding her of the difficulties the Alphasians would face if they tried to assault the Queen of Cities again, and also what Thyatis’s response would be. Though many uncomprehending Alphasians believe to this day that Eriadna made a mistake in not attacking the City of Thyatis, and believe they would have won, Eriadna knew better the capabilities of Thyatis. Because she knew what Thyatis would do if

cornered, in the treaty she agreed to a staged withdrawal not just from the Thyatian mainland, but from all the areas of the empire the Alphasians had occupied during the war. Many Alphasians will try to persuade you, as they have in past almanacs, that Alphasia defeated Thyatis, just as they try to claim the Spike Assault was a victory for them. But in the end, Thyatis achieved its war aim, while Alphasia was foiled in their goal of destroying Glantri. In the end, only one empire was destroyed by the war, and it was not the Thyatian Empire, which persevered, as it always has, due to the character of the Thyatian people. Next the Alphasians planned on trampling on the sovereignty of the Five Shires and Darokin in their effort to invade and destroy Glantri, just as they had trampled upon Maruam in their effort to invade Thyatis. They commandeered many ships for this purpose, to replace the ones we had sunk during the fighting.

But they didn't last long enough to carry this out, because the legacy of this Final Alphasian War was not be the triumph of Alphasian despotism, nor will it be the irrevocable exhaustion of Thyatis.

Emperor Thincol became gravely ill towards the end of the war, as the Alphasian onslaught entered Thyatis itself, for the first time showing his age, so great was the burden he bore on behalf of the Thyatian people. The Week Without Magic took place while the Alphasians were marching across Thyatis and into Karameikos. Many Thyatians took advantage of the confusion this caused among the Alphasian forces to exact retribution for atrocities visited upon their families during the Alphasian invasion. [These actions possibly explain why, in the aftermath of the war, the surviving Alphasian forces, including those who settled in Karameikos as refugees, those who withdrew to the Isle of Dawn, and those who took service with Thyatis, were considerably fewer than one might have expected. Ed.]. Shortly after the continent of Alphasia sank and the Alphasian Empire was destroyed, the tides of war turned. Imperial authorities impounded the wreckage of the Alphasian skyships which had crashed on imperial soil during the Week Without Magic, for study and because some of them might prove repairable. The empire also, mercifully in a gesture of benevolence, took into its service those Alphasians who were willing to put past differences behind us and work together with Thyatis in post-war recovery efforts. Some, more spiteful and uncooperative ones, withdrew to the Isle of Dawn however, where they indicated they would attempt to carry on the cause of their destructive and yet destroyed empire.

Emperor Thincol scrupulously remained true to his word and observed the terms of the treaty he had signed with Eriadna at the close of the Final Alphasian War, even though a treaty with a dead nation is not binding. This treaty stipulated that the Thyatians would not attack Karameikos, Helskir, Ochalea, or the Pearl Islands, and we did not. But the Alphasians once again let their sense of racial superiority get the better of them, never believing that others would treat their lands the same way they had treated the lands of so many other peoples before. Thus they had left a welcome loophole in the treaty, which Thincol promptly (but prematurely, as it turned out) exploited to our advantage.

In AC 1010, the emperor tried to absorb the remaining Alphasian 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 Thothia's undead minions defeated the legions on the Isle of Dawn using dark necromancy, and spread a plague of mummy rot throughout Thyatis. The old Thincol would have known how to deal with the Thothian threat, dispatching Thyatian clerical orders and members of the Retebius Air Fleet to vanquish Thothia's dark magics, causing upheaval and civil strife. But by this time Thincol was a shadow of his former self, senile and decrepit. These battles ended in AC 1012 when Thincol died and

was replaced by his son Eusebius. Eusebius restored order to Thyatis, taking steps to end the plague and famine the Thothians had spread into Thyatis. Thothia requested a truce and signed the Treaty of Dawn with the empire insuring peace on the Isle of Dawn. This treaty cost the empire the cities of Ekto and Trikelios and a few minor Alatian Islands, but the empire has now recovered almost fully, and continues to hold a position which allows us to keep an eye on the machinations of the surviving Alphatians.

It was recently revealed that the Immortals, for mysterious reasons of their own, had restored the Alphatian continent and many of its people in the Hollow World. But they wisely placed it in isolation from the remnants of their surface empire, and indeed in isolation from the rest of the Hollow World, so that the Alphatians' passion for destruction can no longer threaten others. The Alphatians now hope to build another new version of their empire, but the truth remains that the Alphatian Empire that made the world tremble was destroyed, and is gone forever. In Thyatis, Eusebius is now looking at Dabania and plans on expanding the empire into the unclaimed jungles of the southern continent, so that we will remain strong and vigilant should the surviving Alphatians plot once again in the future.

Since then Eusebius initiated a number of long overdue reforms intended to restore the empire to its former glory, doing what Thincol perhaps should have done after the Great War. His critics said he was pushing things too far, too fast, and that some of his changes threatened Thyatian traditions. Eusebius pressed ahead though, pushing his plans through and working in concert with a senate friendly to these ideas [a senate made friendly by his previous ruthless purges. Ed.]. Though these reforms were greatly needed and will strengthen Thyatis in the long run, Eusebius's critics may have been right in one sense. The rapidity of his innovations vexed many, and his precipitous actions may have sparked the seriousness of the War of the Crown that plagued Thyatis.

Don't Miss

There are many things to see in Thyatis, notably the various gladiatorial games—especially during holidays when they are spectacularly bloody. Thyatis also boasts fine theaters and plays and many well-stocked libraries and noted universities. Many nobles throw lavish galas in their estates throughout The City. Thyatis is a center of theology, with large temples and clerical orders dedicated to many of the virtuous Immortals.

Of particular note, I would recommend a trip to Argebin 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.

If you wish to visit the Queen of Cities, doing so by water is by far the preferred method. Sailing up the sparkling sound of Vanya's Girdle to approach the capital by sea will give you a fine panoramic impression of its greatness, the glittering domes of its temples rising above the strong walls, the magnificence of its palaces and public buildings.

THYATIS (The City)

Location: Southeastern coast of the continent of Brun, at the midway point of Vanya's Girdle on the banks of the Mesonian River in Thyatis. **OW**

Area: 50 sq. mi. (130 sq. km.).

Population: 600,000.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian, Heldann, Kerendan, and Tel Akbiran dialects). Many other languages are spoken within Thyatis City, including Milenian spoken by refugees from Dabania, some of whom were settled here.

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Municipality administered by civic officials and elected representatives on behalf of the Emperor of Thyatis, imperial capital of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Arts (especially mosaic, sculpture, stonemasonry, theater), crafts (especially metalworking, glassworks, tanning, cloth—including brocade, cotton, linen, satin, velvet, wool), fishing, finance, magic, military, services (including finance, insurance), scholarship, shipbuilding, silk (including spider silk), textiles, trade.

Important Figures: Belissarian Strategius (Imperial Marshal and Chief of the General Staff), Constantine Lecapenus (First Sea Lord and Grand Admiral of the Imperial Admiralty), Antonina Alessandrasia (Lady Knight Commander of the Air Guard), Marcian Lactanius (Commander of the Sacred Guard), Andronicus Ducatzes (Commander of the Hetaereia), Tredorian (Prince of Alphatia), Maximius Colophorius (Lord Knight and Grand Master of the Glorious Wings of Vanya), Nikephorus Logotharion (Praefect of Thyatis), Julius Sartorius (High Priest of the Endless Seas of Protius), Regino Helioprobus (Patriarch of Solarios), Helena Daphnotarthius (Priestess of Valerias's House of Passions), Theophylact Cerularius (Chief Priest of Tarastia), Trasarius Theophilus (High Priest of Asterius), Palag (ex-Gladiator), Carolus Anthemion (Gladiator), Phaedra Daphnorakenzes (Priestess of Vanya), Theodosius Kantinomeiros (Con Man), Tanobari Nuar (Pearl Islander Consul), Dylan son of Penn (Thyatian Consul), Athanasia Romanones (Proctor of the Collegium Arcanum), Philoxenus Scholasticus (Curator of the Great Library), Methodius Armorakius (Dean of the Imperial Academy), Elektra Sharpblade (Gladiator), Hukkt (Gladiator), Stult Bearclaw (Gladiator), Sperioptis Melanikas (Gladiator), Valnor Acidelyprobius (Master of the Shadow Hand). A multitude of other characters of all levels also inhabit the City of Thyatis.

Flora and Fauna: Lycanthropes (especially wererats under the city), wild cats and dogs, giant rats, goblinoids. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold, and white dragons as well as other aerial mounts are used as mounts. Many other unknown varieties of monsters live in the catacombs underneath The City.

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

Note: The scale of the map for Thyatis City (and Sundsball, although the city is now in ruins) has been semi-officially re-designated. Instead of 1" = 1,000' use the scale 1" = 1,000 yards. This works better given the size of the Coliseum as depicted in DDA1 anyhow, as anyone who has tried to fit it into the 1,000' scale will have noticed. In addition, the floor plan of that map should have a scale of 1 square = 15' rather than 1 square = 25'. It will then fit with the map of the upper basement, as it should, and will precisely fit within the area allocated for the Coliseum on the main city map with its scale revised at 1" = 1,000 yards.

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

At the center of the Duchy of Thyatis lays the Queen of Cities, the wealthiest, grandest, and most powerful city of Mystara, from which all things are measured. It has been called the foremost city of luxury, fashion, and culture, but also the city of vice, corruption, and material temptation. What is certainly true is that the survival and prosperity of Thyatis City is crucial to the survival and prosperity of the Thyatian Empire. As the first settlement founded when the Thyatians migrated here from the south, it is over sixteen hundred years old and perhaps the oldest continuously inhabited city on the continent. Though most people use the calendar that dates from the crowning of the first emperor, some scholars and pedants still use the traditional calendar, dating from the foundation of the city in BC 600 (this is AUC 0, thus this year is AUC 1618 in this ancient calendar of Thyatis). This is a city that surpasses all in wealth and might; its motto ("Gold in Peace—Steel in War") sums up the attitudes of its people, which can shift from an obsession with commerce and wealth to martial stoicism in the blink of an eye. [Some in other countries say the motto should be "greed in peace—steal in war." Ed.] More people live in the city of Thyatis than live in many entire nations of the Old World or in the whole continent of Bellissaria. Normally, half a million people live within its walls with another hundred thousand in the immediate exurbs surrounding the city (not including Port Hatti, which itself could be seen as a suburb of the city).

From here, Emperor Eusebius Torion and the Imperial Senate govern the Empire of Thyatis. People of all races and cultures can be found in the city of Thyatis, as it boasts trade from around the world. Glorious temples and magnificent palaces share space with humble residences. The city's emporiums and harbors bustle with activity; merchants from every nation can be seen here as Thyatis lies at the hub of the world's trade routes. The city of Thyatis is not only the financial and governmental capital of the empire, but also its military capital. The city is headquarters of many Thyatian fighting orders, from older ones like the Order of the Grey Lady to newer ones, like the Order of the Silver Shield, which was formed during the recent Final Alphatian War. Since the foundation of the empire, the city of Thyatis has never fallen to an outside force, and only once have its walls been breached. That time, some fifty years ago, was when an Alphatian strike force managed to enter the city, powering their way to the imperial palace to kill then-Emperor Gabrionus V before being defeated and expelled. The city and its immediate hinterland, roughly 4 miles in every direction from the center of The City (around 50 square miles) was recently given a special status of its own, further highlighting its pivotal nature as the hub of the empire.

The Land

Built where the Mesonian River flows into Vanya's Girdle, the city of Thyatis is strategically situated for both war and commerce. Its site at the midpoint of the great channel separating Hattias from the mainland, Vanya's Girdle, and alongside the empire's main river, is a major asset. As such the city is sheltered from attack while laying astride the main trade lanes between northeastern Brun and the Isle of Dawn on the one hand and southwestern Brun and the Sea of Dread on the other.

The city itself is built on a series of hills, the most prominent being at the Zendrolium overlooking Vanya's Girdle and the massive Emperor's Hill which overlooks the entire city. Part of the city, River Guard Town, is located across the Mesonian River. River Guard Town (Riobigila in classical Thyatian) also functions as a sort of foreign quarter, though in reality people of all nations can be found almost anywhere in The City.

The most important harborages of Thyatis City are not those of the Mesonian River, however. The Great Harbor, a deepwater anchorage seemingly carved out of the city and sheltered behind its walls is the greatest trading port in Brun, and perhaps the world. A veritable forest of masts fills it at any given time; ships of all nations come to Thyatis to sell their wares and buy the products of the empire. Jutting off the southern end of the Great Harbor is the Lesser Harbor, a port that would be considered large in many a city. This is the anchorage for the imperial fleet, located in the Zendrolium district of the city, where most of the soldiers based in the area have their barracks; this district is separated from the bulk of Thyatis City itself, and is a miniature city in its own right.

A huge double wall that is studded with towers protects the city of Thyatis. Outside the wall lay a pair of ditches or moats, preventing our enemies from easily approaching its defenses. Aqueducts crossing through bring fresh water to the city, which are deposited in a series of cisterns from which water is then diverted through pipes to individual buildings. Beyond are military training fields, and the city's immediate exurbs; some pleasant regions where the wealthy repose when not in the walls, others used for crafts not suitable for conducting within the walls. None of the exurbs are built closer than a thousand yards from the walls of Thyatis, with the exception of River Guard Town. In this zone is only fields, parklands, and some livestock pens for animals driven to the city, where they are kept before slaughter. This empty zone is maintained so that in time of war, the defenders have a clean line of fire and attackers cannot sneak close to the walls, but the exurbs are still close enough to the city for convenience in normal times.

The area outside River Guard Town (or Riobigila), is known as the Xenos, and is home to many slaughterhouses and tanneries serving The City. Outside the city walls along Vanya's Girdle the city is known as Reginas, and is in normal times where homes of military officers, desiring to live close to the Zendrolion but in a pleasant countryside, reside. Along the banks of the Mesonian River outside the walls is the district of Abydos, which itself is lined with mills and docks, including quays where many of the wealthy keep their yachts. Counting the city itself along with the exurbs of Riobigila, Reginas, Abydos, and the Xenos there are five boroughs of Thyatis administered by the prefecture, with Port Hatti being part of Hattias instead. Also found outside the walls are the graveyards and mausoleums of over sixteen centuries of habitation.

But the bulk of the city's population and main points of interest are sheltered inside the walls. Its structures range from the marble halls and gilded-roofed palaces of The Estates and Emperor's Hill to the brownstones of recently rebuilt Axetown. In the renovation and rebuilding performed in the aftermath of the great fire of AC 1013, the squalid, rickety tenements were replaced with well-built three

to five story brownstone residences on the insulae (blocks). Other buildings built in the aftermath of the great fire, also of stone, frequently have small shops fronting the street on the ground floor, which not only provide services to local residents, but jobs as well, with apartments on the upper floors. Overcrowding was significantly reduced around the same time. Flagstone-paved forums see debate between the city's fractious factions. Colonnaded porticos line its main avenues, where merchants set up their shops. At night these boulevards are lighted by lamps enchanted with continual light. The roadways are paved, and by law must be at least 12 feet wide, thus the dark, narrow, mud-drenched twisting alleys of other cities are not found here. All streets are lined with pedestrian sidewalks, sheltered from inclement weather by colonnaded arcades. At the very center of Thyatis is the Heart, the great merchant district where goods from throughout the world are traded. Here grand emporiums throng with traders and their customers. Along with the Imperial Palace, the Curia (Senate House), and Coliseum, which are the structures which come to mind when most people think of Thyatis City, there are numerous other examples of monumental architecture. It is said that seven wonders reside within the walls of this one city.

In addition to the ones mentioned there is the Liberty Pharos, which overlooks Vanya's Girdle from the northern mouth of the Great Harbor. This is a lighthouse in the form of a gargantuan statue of a woman, robed in the classical style, holding the torch of Thyatian freedom aloft with one hand, with the other held forward as if to ward off enemies. Sheathed in copper and several hundred feet high (if you count its pedestal), the statue was constructed after the reign of Empress Valentia, and some say its face uses hers as its model. Another monumental structure is the Great Imperial Library. Though only three stories high, the stories themselves are each 30' in height, the building constructed out of marble. In the interior, tiered balconies line the walls of each floor, giving access to the huge store of books held here. Then there are the Imperial Bakeries, which supply food to the city's needy, and the orphanages and poor houses that care for the indigent. These too are grand buildings, not only in architecture but also a monument to Thyatis's generosity. The Imperial Bakeries were built many centuries ago in the early days of the empire, while the poor house was endowed by Emperor Gabrionus V, who also refurbished the orphanage as well. Similar foundations exist in many of the empire's cities, in emulation of its megalopolis. Many of these were also the creation of Emperor Gabrionus V, who believed in good will towards men. And we haven't even discussed the High Temple of Vanya and other religious structures that can be found here, the many colleges and other places of learning, the baths and theaters, the parks and gardens, the clubs, bistros, inns, taverns, and other establishments catering to every sort of taste. The latter are centered in the Long Portico that runs between the district of The Heart and Emperor's Hill, but can be found almost anywhere in The City. If you can name it, it can probably be found here in this City That Never Sleeps.

In AC 1013 a conflagration swept through Axetown and the Blocks, Thyatis City's poorer sections. This caused widespread hardship at the time, but proved to be a long-term boon for the city. Axetown had long been scheduled for renovation, but various impediments resulted in it being put off time and again, and the region became the worst slum in Thyatis. For all the damage it caused at the time, the fire finally forced Thyatis to face the problem of Axetown, and renovate it while rebuilding the burned out portions of the city. Two fifths of Thyatis, the area most in need of it, was rebuilt. The new brownstones built on the insulae (blocks) were constructed of solid stone and brick rather than wood, with bistros, taverns, bodegas and other establishments on the ground floor and residences built on upper levels. Much of the land was given over to parks, hospices, hospitals, and other public works. Streets were widened and straightened in many cases, and lamps lit by magic set up on every block to

cut down on crime. A few months later, several sewers in Axetown exploded due to a build up of gasses (some say this was caused by the Shadow Hand's machinations), but the affected area was rebuilt better than before, as a market district surrounding a broad plaza. A new aqueduct was begun (completed in AC 1015) to bring more water into this area of Thyatis as well. This is still the poor section of town, but it is far less crowded, filthy, and run down than it was previously, with the squalid tenements almost entirely absent.

In Vanya's Girdle, within a few miles of the city, are about a dozen small islets, known as the Princess Isles. Lore has it that Empress Valentia herself raised these from the rock of the floor of the girdle. None of the isles are more than a few acres in area. Most of these are pretty, home of estates of some of Thyatis's wealthiest families. The emperor himself has one of these islands for his own use, with a palace used whenever he or his family wants to get away from the city's politics, but does not want to go all the way to Carytion. Two of the islets are exceptional, however. One, a relatively barren islet known as the Isle of Pelicans or just simply The Key, is home to a fortified imperial naval and marine facility, which bars the seaward door to Thyatis. The other, known as the Isle of Seahawks, formerly known as Treasure Island, was at times an emporium for a world-renowned fair, but is now the docking base for the imperial airships whose crew are stationed at the Queen of Cities. It will likely be a future site for repair and construction facilities for such vessels as well. It was here where the Alphatian skyships that crashed on Thyatian soil during the Week Without Magic were taken after their impoundment by the empire for study, and it may be possible to repair a few and put them into Thyatian service.

The People

The Queen of Cities is a microcosm of the empire, or if you prefer, the empire is The City writ large, as some say Thyatis is the largest city-state in the world. People swarm everywhere in Thyatis City, talking of incomprehensible theological and philosophical matters, in hovels and mansions, streets and squares, marketplaces and crossroads. Though most of the people are native Thyatians, the trading districts swarm with a cosmopolitan crowd, as if the whole world had arranged to meet here. Dwarves with pointed beards and black hair falling to the shoulder; turbaned traders from Nicostenia and Abbashan, shaven, dirty Haldanners wearing an iron chain around their waists as a belt; Traladarans with long, drooping mustaches, dressed all in furs; Ethengars and Alasipans with outlandish accents; caravan drobers from Athenos and Selenica; and merchants from Minrothad and Jerendi. All races, languages, and religions meet and mingle here.

The citizens themselves are a clever and crafty lot, sharp and perhaps even sometimes cynical. Though the wealthy senatorial families can be haughty and snobbish, the common folk of Thyatis City tend to be friendly and egalitarian. Most merchants are organized into guilds, which are regulated by the government through the office of the Civil Praefect of Thyatis. Anyone who's dealt with a government ministry knows how irksome dealing with supercilious bureaucrats can be. The good news is that, thanks to Eusebius's reforms, they are more efficient now than they have been in recent memory, and corruption has been tempered. Likewise, due to the charter issued to Thyatis City by Eusebius last year, there are very few slaves in the city; almost all its inhabitants are now free citizens with all the rights thereof, able to participate in civic life.

Not all is wondrous, though. Although there is a renewed sense of civic spirit, the city is not without its poverty and squalor. Thieves and reprobates of all sorts can be found here preying upon the

productive but gullible members of society, happy to swindle the unwitting visitor (or native!). The criminals of the Shadow Hand have their base here and an untold number of hidden cabals and conspiracies are afoot at any one time. Intrigue is a way of life to many inhabitants, and a vengeful senator can be as fearsome as an angry dragon, if subtler in his schemes than a gout of fiery breath, no less dangerous for that.

Don't Miss

You cannot see all that is worthy in one visit to the city any more than one can see all that should be seen in Glantri in one visit. There is always a new theatrical production opening, some of which are truly works of art, which should not be missed. The city's many monuments; its triumphal arches, statues of famous emperors and heroes, museums housing ancient works of art. All have their virtues. Scholars should not miss the Great Imperial Library or the Imperial Academy. But of note to spellcasters will be the Collegium Arcanum, Thyatis's main college for the schooling of wizards. Though small by former Alphatian standards, its quality can be surmised by noting that most of the mages with estates on Sclaras first learned magic here, and many now serve in its faculty. In recent years much attention has been given to schools of magic of much more recent foundation, but I believe that a college's reputation should be based on what it has achieved over time. And by this measure the Collegium Arcanum compares favorably with the other such universities on the continent. Arguably not even the Great School of Magic in Glantri can claim so many students who have reached such a high level of skill as the collegium, though for sure the quality of the Great School cannot be slighted.

If you are lucky enough to receive an audience with the emperor, the Golden Throne Room (Chrysotriclinos) is another sight that will remain with you for the rest of your life. To get to the throne room one passes through a series of marble corridors and chambers, rich with mosaics and cloth of gold, through long lines of palace guards in white uniforms, through great crowds of patricians, prelates, senators, and all of this to the music of organs and choirs, escorted by palace functionaries on either side of you. At last you enter an octagonal room, the Golden Throne Room itself. This awe-inspiring chamber's ceiling vaults skyward, roofed over in alabaster cut so delicately that the light of the sun filters through. The floor is all in porphyry, with a cloth of gold carpet leading up to the marble dais. Columns of rich marble soar upwards, capped in capitals that are carved into golden filigree, creating images of religious significance. The walls are done over entirely in mosaics, with gilded tiles surrounding images of the empire's greatest leaders and patron Immortals. The throne itself is of gold, with deep crimson upholstery beyond a veil of purple. A pair of golden lions flanks it, and golden griffons, and beside the lions and griffons are pillars in the shape of golden trees, with golden branches and leaves, upon which sit enameled golden birds. When the petitioner approaches, the lions can be made to roar and thrash their tails, the birds sing forth, the griffons whistle. As the petitioner bows to the emperor, the throne rises, and when the envoy looks up again, he is likely to see the emperor apparently clad in new garments. All this might seem like magic, but it is actually an example of Thyatian engineering—fine clockworks and steam power everything.

Do Miss

Avoid the catacombs under the city itself, a teeming warren of tunnels, some connected to the sewers and others to half-forgotten dungeons and crypts. These twisting passages and caverns are seemingly endless, and some say they pass all the way through to the Hollow World. If you decide to ignore my warning, be sure to pack your best weapons and bring plenty of provisions; many have become lost in

the maze-like catacombs, and if you run short of supplies eating the creatures you find there is not recommended.

TWAEJAR (Merrow Empire)

Location: Seabed around the Thanegioth Archipelago. **OW**

Area: Approx. 250,000 sq. mi. (647,500 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000,000 (including 200,000 in the capital of Twaeloporis). Roughly 50% merrow, 15% aquatic ogre, 10% triton, 10% locathah, 10% sahuagin, 5% aquatic elves.

Language: Merrow (Twaelar dialect).

Coinage: Black pearl (5 gp), pearl (gp), seed pearl (sp), coral (cp). Merrow coins consist of mother-of-pearl into which seed pearls are embedded; none for the coral, one for the seed pearl, five for a pearl coin, and five black seed pearls for the black pearl.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected biannually, 5% sales tax on all goods except food, plus in-kind exactions and corvée labor on behalf of the empire.

Government Type: Monarchy advised by a council of priests.

Industries: Fishing, kelp-raising, pearl-harvesting.

Important Figures: Diviloplop (Emperor), Igilbolb (Empress), Goblopob (High Priest of Protius).

Flora and Fauna: Kelp forests, coral, whales, dolphins, seahorses, hippocampi, narwhals, giant leeches, electric eels, lacedons, dragonfish, dragon turtles, giant lampreys, jellyfish (man o' war), water naga, piranhas, giant squid, ixitxachitl, giant sharks, marids, urchins, school fish, giant clams, nereids, eyes of the deep, krakens, giant octopi, aquatic jellies, giant sea snakes, giant lobsters, scraggs, sirines, giant sea spiders, kelpies, aquatic dinosaurs, and in hidden areas, kopru.

Description by Fabonius Viator.

[We are pleased that imperial officials have finally released this information for publication. We requested access to reports on the Twaelar Merrow Empire earlier, but with the exception of Fabonius's heavily censored account of his imprisonment, we were refused. We are glad we can now bring this information to our readers. Ed.]

The Twaelar Merrow Empire consists of the nation of the merrow and members of other aquatic races that are subject to it as a result of the efforts of the Twaelar to expand and subdue their enemies and potential enemies.

The Land

The Twaelar don't rule land, they rule the space below the ocean surface. This is a span of territory roughly twice the size of Darokin around the Thanegioth Archipelago. Borders are rather indistinct, and there seem to be some zones that the Twaelar don't completely control within this area (mainly mysterious submarine canyons, which are feared and the subject of superstitions, supposedly some old master race is said to lurk therein). But they also have some enclaves beyond their core areas as well, colonies if you will. The seas here are relatively warm, and because of the Thanegioth Shelf are not exceptionally deep.

The People

The Twaelar merrow dominate the merrow empire. These are merrow akin to most others, but more militant, aggressive, and organized than those you might be familiar with. They have succeeded in either wiping out or subjugating and absorbing the other aquatic races of the area, creating a powerful empire. The sahuagin are supposedly restive, and form a despised underclass. They were supposedly the merrow's greatest rivals for power in the area until they were crushed in a series of major, and bloody, wars. The aquatic ogres form a menial caste, and also serve as shock troops for the merrow empire. They seem to be almost blindly and fanatically loyal to their merrow leaders. The rest of the races are second-class citizens within the empire, denied positions of authority and rulership but otherwise able to pursue most careers. This is, however, not so much a race-conscious attitude but rather the relationship between a conqueror and a defeated population. Only the aquatic ogres (which have the status of, as the Hattians might put it, *Untermenschen* within the empire, menials and expendable soldiers) and the sahuagin (who are considered potentially dangerous and threatening) are discriminated against. The others are excluded from power not because of their race, but simply because they are the vanquished and the merrow are the victors, and naturally rule over those they defeated. Oddly, however, none of the aquatic ogres are officially classed as slaves, but some of the members of the other aquatic races are enslaved. Approximately a third of each, with some variation—a little less than half of the sahuagin are enslaved, but less than a fifth of the aquatic elves are slaves.

The merrow of the empire are highly religious, and the priest caste devoted to Protius is very influential. Indeed, it would almost be proper to characterize the empire as a theocratic state. These priests gained power, supposedly, during the days when the Twaelar were subjugated to the mysterious previous rulers of the area, as a quasi liberation movement. They then led the Twaelar in the wars against the other aquatic races, cementing their authority over the merrow themselves.

The Twaelar warrior caste forms the second-most respected rung of society (war-wizards included), due to the support they provide to the maintenance of the empire and its authority over the subject races. Note that the aquatic ogre shock troops, which are often used in war, while commanded by the Twaelar warrior caste, are not considered part of it. How the Twaelar keep the aquatic ogres so blindly loyal to them while treating them as servile minions is something I was not able to discover. Some of the guards who kept me imprisoned were aquatic ogres, but I could never even get them to speak to me without permission from their merrow overseers.

I have some familiarity with the greatest city and capital of the Twaelar, Twaeloporis, since this is where I was kept during my imprisonment. It is a large city in size, covering as much area as the great city of Thyatis. The buildings are farther apart, though, to make it easier to swim through. Though many of these buildings (actually rock formations with chambers carved into them) are a couple dozen stories high, a comparatively small proportion of each consist of rooms, since carving out too much of the stone would weaken the structure and cause it to collapse. Thus, though it covers a wide area, I estimate its actual population is around 200,000. Still a larger population than in virtually any surface city. Around two thirds of its inhabitants, or perhaps even more, are merrow, as this is the center of their culture. Most of the rest of those who live here are their aquatic ogre servants, with some aquatic elves as well (perhaps 1% of the population). Few, if any, sahuagin are permitted to live in Twaeloporis.

Their capital is a majestic, eerily beautiful but foreboding place, with schools of shimmering fish swimming between the spires that form the city's buildings. There is a huge palace-temple in the center of the city, which is seemingly carved out of multicolored coral, akin to the palace of Jerendi but several

times larger. This palace is perched atop an ocean mesa, looming over the rest of the city, except for some of the taller spires. A sunken vessel damaged its upper stories, much to the anger of the Twaelar, who launched their war against all the surface peoples over this. Recent evidence may be that sahuagin saboteurs, rebels against the Twaelar, were responsible for this, in the hope of provoking just such a war that might weaken the Twaelar Empire, and thus its grip on subject races (such as the insurrectionist sahuagin).

Twaeloporis is a heavily militarized city, with heavily-armed troops, aquatic cavalry, and regiments of aquatic ogre shock troops. It would be difficult to invade and conquer, especially by a surface (air-breathing) power. Many of these troops are used to keep the rest of their empire under control, but additional forces have been mobilized for the war against the surface races. The Twaelar have some highly innovative artisans and enchanter, who are said to be working on developing weapons to permit them to expand their operations to the surface lands themselves.

There are also several dozen major temples in Twaeloporis, heavily patronized by the merrow, who seem to conduct religious ceremonies daily. The other races of the Twaelar Dominate worship their own Immortals, but all are required to give at least some veneration to Protius and obeisance to the Twaelar's version of His faith.

The Twaelar can be cruel, and don't mind using torture on captives or corporal punishment on their subordinates. They have developed several ingenious methods, and could possibly have taught the Arogansans a trick or two. Though sometimes they hit them with a rod to get their attention, they never need to inflict punishment on the aquatic ogres to get their obedience. This is just another mystery I was unable to solve during my captivity.

Recent History

I have learned little of Twaelar history. They seem to have had a small nation centuries ago, which was dominated by some other race that was said to have ruled over the Chanegioth region, an aquatic race that dominated both the sea peoples and the air-breathing people. This race was defeated or overthrown somehow. Following this, the merrow re-established an independent kingdom, but were in conflict with their neighbors. Out of these wars, the merrow managed to subdue their rivals to create the Twaelar Merrow Empire, which has dominated the undersea region in this area of the Sea of Dread for about a century. I admit this is very sketchy, but it is all I was able to pick up during my captivity.

VESTLAND (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 21,065 sq. mi. (54,558 sq. km.).

Population: 157,000, including the capital city of Norrbik (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), guldán (gp), hellar (cp), 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. Member of the Western Defense League.

Industries: Agriculture (potatoes, barley, and beets), logging, fur trading, crafts (with an increasing dwarven presence), trade.

Important Figures: Bergthor Haraldson (King), Harald Gudmundson (Former King), Eyvind the Odd (Jarl).

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 Gilor Rockcrusher.

As you must all have heard by now, Vestland has taken to declaring itself a “civilized,” “progressive” nation. The days where a man settled his disputes by force of arms are past. Now men hide themselves behind words, and depend on those who are good at twisting those words in their favor to not only defend them, but to deprive others of their homes and livelihoods. It is a strange state of affairs.

Still, when it comes to times of trouble the Vestlanders prove that they have not all forgotten how to plant a spear in their opponent’s chest, and they have not forgotten how to appreciate a strong arm and an ax, when it is needed; appreciate it with golden schilder that is. I can relate many a tale of beleaguered jarls, beset colonists, and punitive war parties that had need of a skilled ax and a strong back.

When I took this assignment as scribe for the Mystaran Almanac, Dorrik Stonecleaver asked me to relate the improbable tales of humans of elven ancestry living in Vestland. He was, of course, referring to the Namahed Clan, a powerful family of Vestland that has ruled and expanded its lands for many centuries. I have often visited their great hall of Tromso, getting outfitted for travel in the troll-infested hills of Trollheim, so I have made my observations.

The Land

The lands of Clan Namahed lie far to the north, with easy access to Nordesfjord. Towards the ocean, steep cliffs prevent men from entering the land, but as you near the fjord, you find that the land suddenly levels with the sea. Atop the high cliffs are coniferous forests, home to varied wildlife that is often on the menu in Tromso inns.

Tromso is built from the plentiful lumber found throughout the lands of Clan Namahed, and is a small, but thriving, town of 2,000. If you watch the old buildings closely, you will quickly find that something is strange about them. It seems that those houses built in times long past are of a different design than the newly erected ones, with gentle curves and fancy carvings. While any Northman is proud to display his woodworking skills, no sane Northman would work wood this way, if you ask me.

Contrary to claims of elven ancestry, the heads of Clan Namahed have chosen to move from just such a wooden building to a clan hall made of stone, set into the cliff-side, and rumored to have many hidden tunnels leading into the very cliffs themselves. Some are even said to lead into the neighboring domain of Jamtfjord. This new workmanship is naturally dwarven, and, from what I know of them, it would be very un-elf-like to live in a place such as this.

The People

Taking a stroll around Tromso, you will see that there are several distinguishable types of body builds evident among the populace. A fair amount of the inhabitants are of the regular Northman stock, heavily-built, well-muscled folk. Some are dwarves come to live and work here, away from the oftentimes harsh rule of their elders. The remainder, a not insignificant number of people, are slighter of frame and finer of feature than the rest. These are supposedly the infamous “half”-elves of Clan Namahed, and, as others are quick to point out, they are all from families long settled here, and members of the ruling clan.

Foremost among these men of mixed heritage is the jarl, Eyvind the Odd. He has, by all accounts, held the position of jarl for close to 50 years now, and he still appears to have many years left in him, lending support to the claims that he carries long-lived elven blood. Eyvind is a well-known priest of Odin, who has been gifted (or cursed according to some) with the Sight, apparently seeing visions of a prophetic nature during strange fits and trances that overcome him. Creepy, if you ask me.

So are the members of Clan Namahed truly half elven, half human? As much as the thought of these two different races intermingling seems repulsive to me (imagine a human and a dwarf getting together!), the tall races are rarely known for their restraint, and it may well be that an ancestor of Jarl Eyvind the Odd took an elven thrall many centuries ago, when this practice was also common in Vestland, and forced himself on her. Children might even have sprung from this coupling, children whose features are seen even to this day, a testament to the weak will and bad taste of the human race. The truth is not known to me, but this scenario seems likely.

Neighbors have at times accused Clan Namahed of actually harboring elves in their forests (now they’ve hidden them in their caves, of course), and mating with them in unholy rituals. The jarl’s strange fits are seen as the High Lord Odin’s punishment for his unnatural ways, and the entire clan should just be run out of Vestland. Needless to say these neighbors look to the lands of Clan Namahed with a greedy eye, and would use words to obtain them, rather than risk their worthless hides in true battle.

Recent History

Clan Namahed has had centuries to consolidate its hold on the region, and today controls three domains, those of Namahed, Vertfjord, and Jamtfjord. They would likely have spread further, were it not for the trolls infesting the region, and the constant threat of raids from their neighbors. In the new, more unified Vestland, the clan thrives in its position as a last stop before approaching the lands of Trollheim from the sea.

Many a colonist or mercenary wishes to send what might be his last words or gifts to family waiting for news at home. And many are those who fear for their lives and blow their funds on a last binge before heading into deadly troll lands. So it has been in recent years, and Tromso merchants grow fat from these fools.

The coronation of a new King of Vestland, Bergthor Haraldson, in AC 1016 will likely bring little change to this area. King Bergthor is by all accounts an open-minded man, who spent years adventuring throughout the old world, a man who will maintain the traditional rule of Vestland, as he was brought up to do, and will do little to endanger the current stability of his nation. His rule has yet to be seriously challenged, and it remains to be seen what he will do when faced with troubles of a more serious nature. The recent border raids by Soderfjord raiders (in which I was a participant, I might add) may become the first challenge for this new king to overcome.

Don't Miss

If you're in Tromso during a stopover of colonists heading for Trollheim, don't miss a night out in town. It will be filled with drunken fools, who suddenly wish to be your best friend, and if you can put up with their pathetic whining, you can easily get yourself free mead, and perhaps win some gold, gambling. Or if you're in need of work, you might sign on as a mercenary to protect these same fools, but make sure you get them to sign your contract, so they won't go back on their word in the morning.

Do Miss

There's little to see or do in Tromso outside of colonist stopovers. Sure, the people are mostly friendly, there's basic back-breaking (your own, unfortunately) work to be done, and there's even dwarves, but you will find little to keep you entertained, and no promise of quick riches to be found anywhere.

VYALIA (County of)

Location: Southeastern corner of the continent of Brun, along the eastern border of Karameikos and the Kerenda River, north of Machtetos and south of the Altan Tepes Mountains. **OW**

Area: 5,268 sq. mi. (11,853 sq. km.).

Population: 30,000 (60% human, 40% elven, some hin) including the towns of Foreston (pop. 5,000) and Greenheight (pop. 1,000).

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

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

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly on the aristocracy, nobility, and wealthy; 15% income tax collected quarterly on everyone else (Va. 1, Pa. 1, Fy. 3, and Ci. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets; levied on imports, rebated on exports. Tax on slave owning equal to 50% of the slave's value annually. Property tax levied based on quality of land, roughly 6% of its value annually.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Light agriculture, crafts (especially woodworking, carving), fishing, magic, military, shipbuilding, textiles

Important Figures: Eldysyl Greenheight (Count), Larandia Lymianoporus (Lady, Head of the Order of Foresters), Alexiana Hierydyl (Loremistress), Formosos Treeshield (Warden Marshal).

Flora and Fauna: The majority of Vyalia's territory consists of rolling hills, but the southern, settled portion is based in the forested valley around the Kerenda River. These consist mainly of immense, ancient redwood groves, but also of cedar, mahogany, and teak carefully cultivated for woodworking use, and peach, pear, orange, and cherry fruit trees in cultivated orchards. The woods are filled with many animal species, both game and predators; wolves, boars, deer, elk, and other forest creatures roam the area. Pegasi, griffons, rocs, ruby, gold, and white dragons as well as other aerial creatures are used as mounts occasionally.

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

Description by Viviana Romanones.

This county was enlarged by the emperor last year and is known for its elven population. With the recent arrival of some Altheim refugees (some early last year came to work on the reforestation project and more arrived when they fled Mendar), Vyalia's population is now 40% elven. Many Vyalia elves live across the ostensible border, within the Dymrak Forest of Karameikos. Few Vyalia elves obey the rulings of their king, however, looking instead to their Clan Leader, Eldysyl Greenheight, the Count of Vyalia, for guidance. It originally became a county in the early 3rd century AC, when the Vyalia elves agreed to teach the Thyatians their arts, and sponsor the Order of the Foresters.

The Land

The most densely settled portion of Vyalia consists of ancient and dense old growth forests, part of the Dymrak Forest. Nestled alongside the glittering Kerenda River, this area preserves the untamed beauty of the wilderness. Tall trees loom overhead, spreading a canopy of branches and leaves sheltering the scattered communities of elves, humans, and hin who live here. Though one may hunt here (for food, not sport), tree-cutting is forbidden except by permission. Most wood gathered for fuel is deadwood, or culled from dying trees.

The northern portion of the county, and actually the largest portion, are the recently-added foothills of the Altan Tepes Mountains, granted to Vyalia in Eusebius's restructuring of the empire. These are sparsely inhabited, though the southernmost region (along the Kerenda River and adjacent to the area already settled) is the site of the Vyalian reforestation project. Here elves, and elf-friends, can be found planting seedlings and using plant growth and other magics to extend the Dymrak Forest northwards. This effort will no doubt take several years to complete, but those involved are patient.

North of this area lie the foothills proper. For the moment no plans have been adopted for this region; since they lack a ready water source such as the Kerenda River, it is considered less practical to grow forests here, at least for now. Many of the county's hin are considering making this area home, though. Open immigration is not considered a viable option for colonizing this area, however, since the inhabitants of Vyalia are very selective about who they think should live here (though they welcome many sorts of visitors), and the kind of activities they should pursue, which is roughly speaking the elven lifestyle.

The People

The inhabitants of Vyalia are almost exclusively elves and elf-friends. The area is named after the elves that live here, those of the Vyalia branch of the elven family tree. Though much of the lands they reside in lay across the official border with Karameikos, the Vyalia don't pay much attention to this boundary, and frequently cross it back and forth. In case of disputes, those living in Karameikos are more likely to come to the elven court of Eldysyl Greenheight for redress than to seek out the authorities of the King of Karameikos. The Vyalians have long been friends and vassals of the empire, and see no need to change this now because of some recent, fleeting change in control of Traladara.

The Vyalia are divided into several clans. These include the Blueleaf, Diamarak, Etheredyl, Greenheight, Hierydyl, and Treeshield. The Blueleaf clan is known for its artisans—jewelers, painters, sculptors, and the like. The Diamaraks prefer to reside in the deep forests and wilderness of Vyalia, and serve as its protectors. They are ever vigilant against poachers and others who would despoil their woodlands. They are experts in the use of botanical magics, and are at the forefront of the reforestation efforts. Many of the Diamaraks are adventurers, and others tutor the foresters. The Etheredyls are a philosophic and mystic-minded clan, which largely keeps to itself and avoids contact with outsiders. The Greenheights are more outgoing and gregarious. They are even hospitable to dwarves. It is they who built the town of Greenheight, and who first agreed to sponsor the foresters. They also perform most of the few administrative functions that are required, and liaison with the imperial government in Thyatis City. The Hierydyls are the scholars of the Vyalia, knowledgeable in elven lore and magic. Many travel abroad, conducting their studies, and are among the more likely Vyalians to be encountered by travelers. One seeking the knowledge of a sage should go to the Hierydyls. The Treeshields are a clan of warriors. Many serve in the Thyatian military, usually in elite units.

Though Vyalia is considered the elven county, it should not be forgotten that the majority of its inhabitants are actually humans and that most Thyatian elves do not happen to live here. The human inhabitants of Vyalia are Thyatians who settled here, being attracted to elven ways and desirous of living in harmony with nature. If anything, they are even more fanatical in defending the wilderness than the elves are. Many of them live in the town of Foreston, but others live as the elves do, or as mountain men in the woods themselves or, increasingly, in the northern hills. They sell their wares in town, but are careful to avoid despoiling the natural order. One will find few indiscriminate trappers and hunters in their number, and those few usually do not last long—hunted and killed for their crimes by the other citizens of Vyalia, elf and non-elf alike.

Foreston is also home to a small community of hin, who find it more congenial here than elsewhere in Thyatis; the citizens of Vyalia do not tend to treat them as children. More might move in to explore and settle the dales and hillocks of northern Vyalia, but as of yet they form less than 10% of the county's population.

In greater numbers are the Altheim elves. Though not as many Altheim refugees settled here as moved to Karameikos or Wendar, and then, following the increasing strife there, on to other nations. In fact most of the Altheim elves that settled here did so after being expelled from Wendar, but still fewer moved here than went to other areas. Those that did come here came in no small part because the reforestation project offered them the possibility of a positive project to undertake, all the more welcome after the disappointments of their previous travels and the failure of the crusade to Denagoth.

Don't Miss

Foreston is a beautiful community blending elven and human architecture in a way not seen even in Wendar (where the two races tend to form distinct communities instead of intermingling). Greenheight is the largest elven settlement in Vyalia, and home to some of their most breathtaking artistry, homes nestled in the branches of grand redwoods, statuary of the Blueleaf clan forming dioramas of wondrous nature scenes, and other visions which must be seen to be believed.

But the most spectacular sight is one most of you will never see—the ceremony of adoption, where a trainee becomes a forester. The candidate is taken by his sponsors to their Tree of Life, deep in the forest, far off the beaten path. There the trainee is formally accepted into the clan as one of their own, and visited by the Arm of Ilsundal, filling her with vitality. It is one of the most touching ceremonies on all of Mystara, a living demonstration of the kinship of races. Only clan members and candidates are allowed to attend, however, so as not to expose the location of the Tree of Life to outsiders.

Do Miss

Or, rather, what to avoid doing when traveling here. Do not come as a poacher, logger, miner, or trapper. Don't do anything the residents would consider a desecration of the wilderness. Doing that invites a death sentence. Otherwise, this is one of the more pleasant areas of Mystara, with few rampaging beasts, kind and honest inhabitants, a true sanctuary. Don't cause trouble and you'll be welcomed here.

WENDAR (Elven Kingdom of)

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

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

Population: 370,000, roughly 45% humans and 55% elves.

Languages: Elvish (Genalleth dialect), Heldannic.

Coinage: Di (gp), on (sp), teci (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Logging, agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use).

Important Figures: Bensarian of Kebar (Prince-Regent).

Flora and Fauna: The region boasts tall ancient sequoias and pines, along with other evergreen trees that make the logging industry most profitable. Throughout the whole region the terrain is rocky and difficult to cultivate, hence only the most resistant and healthiest plants and crops can grow here. Animals commonly encountered in Wendar are moose, elks, bears, wolves (in forests), horses, boars, snakes (in open fields and hills) and even mountain lions. The land is far from being tamed, and the monstrous species abound, especially near the Mengul Mountains and the Wendarian Range, including snow apes, white apes, giant bats, dragons (white and green), giant ferrets, sasquatches and unicorns. Tribes of ogres and trolls have been reported living in the Mengul Mountains, while actaeons, centaurs, dryads, fairies, fairy folk, gremlins, treants and wooddrakes can be encountered in the forests.

Further Reading: All Saga of the Shadow Lord, previous almanacs.

Description by Christopher Dobe.

Wendar, a land where Mother Nature dances cheek to cheek with Father Time and the Fairy Folk. Wendar, a land of mysteries to discover and monsters to slay. So similar to a frontier land, yet so overflowing with ancient traditions and customs that are all but barbaric. It is a nation of proud men and stout elves, of sages and fearless rangers, of monster hunters and heroes. It is a country not so different from the so-called civilized ones. Yet the traveler that arrives here for the first time can almost breathe the feeling of bravery and of steadfastness that fills the heart of the Wendarians.

The Land

Nestled among two plateaus and two mountain ranges, Wendar—or Genalleth, as the elven race calls it—is a secluded and ancient land that still holds many secrets and marvels even for its inhabitants. Thick evergreen forests blanket more than half of this region, their beauty and stateliness mirroring the Canolbarth Forest in its glory days. There are four major reserves—this is the best translation of the term the elves use—in Wendar, all closely guarded and tended by Genalleth elves.

The first and most important one, the Korrigan Forest, lies in the western part of the nation, touching Wendar City and Sylbair, the two most thriving Wendarian cities. It is renowned for the beauty of its sequoias and for the many shrines sacred to the Korrigans, the Nine Elven Protectors that

watch upon Genalleth. The legend says that they drew their name from the mythical (and believed extinct) korrigan, a woodland animal that once lived here.

The Forest of Bounty, renamed Forest of the Curse after the events of AC 1013 and 1014, lies in the southwestern corner of the nation and is currently inhabited by Alfheim refugees. Mighty and sturdy oaks grow here, protected by a small group of treants simply called The Elders. Woodgate and Oakwall, the other two large towns, lie at the easternmost border of this forest, and use its wood to boost their logging industry.

Right in the center of the Genalleth Valley we find the Enchanted Forest, a mysterious patch of trees that the elves hold as sacred. According to the legends, here live the fairies with their friends, the centaurs and actaeons, and those who dare trespass against Nature in this place are bound to be abducted by actaeons and serve the fairies for the rest of their lives. Tales of missing wanderers abound in this region.

The last important reserve lies at the northwestern border and is referred to as the Dark Woods of Baamor. The Wendarians tell frightening tales about this area, whose trees are strangely darker and more twisted than the common trees of the region, and whose fauna is made up of deformed and evil parodies of the common woodland animals. The elven sages blame all this to a mysterious being (or race, this is not really defined) called Baamor, who tried to poison the entire continent in the ancient days to appease the Dark Immortals. However, the Korrigans rebelled against Baamor and ultimately defeated him/them, imprisoning the evil Baamor inside one of the blighted trees of this forest. So, in order to avoid freeing him/them, it is strictly prohibited to cut down any tree in this region. In fact, few people venture there, for it is said that Baamor tries to possess anyone who walks into the forest, and use them to achieve freedom.

The rest of the region consists of rolling rocky hills to the east and to the south, where the few herders raise their cattle (horses and sheep mostly), protecting them from predators. In the central plains and moors the humans raise their crops, fighting against the elements. Wendar is indeed a harsh land, and only the fittest can survive here. The valleys and plains are usually safe and free of monsters, but the nearer one gets to the mountain ranges, the more the trip becomes dangerous.

The Wendarian Range to the south and the Mengul Mountains to the north are renowned for their snowcapped peaks and for the fierceness of their inhabitants. The Wendarian Range, whose peaks average 11,000 feet in height, is home to many tribes of yeti, sasquatches and even a few white dragons, and the few passes known are so unreliable that nobody ever tries to enter Wendar from the northern Glantrian region. The only two southern passes maintained and guarded actively by the Wendarians are the Elven Pass to the southeast, which leads directly to Oakwall, and the Kebar 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 was 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 Altheim cousins. The humans, all descended from the Antalian stock, are used to the cold and humid weather so common here—it snows and rains seven months a year—and the elves, who have been dwelling here for a longer time, are no less tough than their human countrymen. But even though the Wendarians could seem at first a united and peaceful folk, there are many differences and problems that still divide this people.

Just an example: the name of the country is different for each race. The elves call it Genalleth after a mighty figure of their obscure past, while it is Wendar for the humans, in honor of the man who created the Wendarian League at the beginning of the millennium. Even the label “elben” near the word “kingdom” in the entry for Wendar in every Thyatian almanac would be considered questionable by the majority of the humans living here; but there’s more. Every major town has its name translated into both Heldannic and Elvish [the ones written on the map given in the almanac for AC 1010 are the human terms. Ed.] and the proclamations and laws must equally be issued and written in these two languages. Also, every town with a mixed population has two *bürgermeisters*, one for each race, and they both must cooperate and agree before issuing anything, from a simple announcement to a legal document. The Wendarian militia is composed 50% of elves and 50% of humans, and each division is either made up of humans or of elves only. It seems that in the ancient days things didn’t go this way, but in the last decades many small frictions have arisen and the wizard-king deemed it right to reshape the political and military system this way to avoid bigger problems.

As for the Altheim 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 Altheim. Now, eight years after what they call The Expulsion from Altheim, 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 AC 1014 and 1015 [see Recent History section below. Ed.] caused an uproar of the human population of Wendar against the Altheimers, and the elves have not reacted very wisely. The so-called Altheim Avengers have indeed undertaken retaliatory acts against some minor provocations by the humans, and now the situation is escalating in a very unpredictable way. I fear that if King Sylharen is not able to contain these acts of violence, we will soon have another nation in turmoil after the cases of the Heldannic Territories, Plaruum and Ethengar [this report doesn’t factor in the rumor that King Sylharen is reportedly dead. Ed.]. 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 ones for the Wendarians. First of all, a plague originated by the magical healing fruits found in AC 1013 in the Forest of the Bounty (the Altheimers’ territory) killed over 40,000 humans during AC 1014, and only the intervention of King Sylharen with the use of the Elvenstar has prevented the disease from claiming more souls. However, this plague caused the humans to loathe and mistrust the Altheimers, who were held responsible for not testing—or even for creating—the malignant fruits on purpose [because they only killed humans, merely draining the elves of their strengths for a while. Ed.]. The situation degenerated in a matter of months, despite the king’s

attempts at lowering the tension, and this caused a few minor skirmishes between Alfheim Avengers and human purists, with casualties on both sides. King Gylharen was forced to issue a decree confining the Alfheimers in the southern part of their forest and repeatedly suggested to their clanmasters either to stop the Alfheim Avengers' activity or to relocate to another country.

Since the situation was becoming too dangerous in Wendar, some of the Alfheim clans decided to find another land to live in, and they sent explorers up to Denagoth, where, according to historical evidence, another clan of elves had lived. Unfortunately, the returning explorers reported of the extermination of that clan by the minions of the Shadow Lord, a mysterious being that is said to live in a fortress called Drax Tallen, where now the remaining Gelfronell elves (this is the name of the clan) were held prisoner along with some members of the exploratory party. The clanmasters of the Grunalf and Long Runner clans thus decided to go on a crusade to reclaim the lost Forest of Gelfron and to avenge (and possibly rescue) their brethren. The elven army made up of representatives of these two clans and some others (including Senalleth elves) marched towards Denagoth to battle against the Shadow Army in AC 1015.

[We still lack actual reports about Wendar's current state. However, word has reached our almanac that the Alfheim elves living there have all been dislodged by the current Wendarian government and forced to leave the country. Also, rumors tell that the former Wizard King Gylharen is now dead, killed by a coup staged by Beasthunter of clan Long Runner (now in hiding), and that the sage Bensarian of Kebar now rules in his place, until elves and humans find a better accommodation. As for the fate of the elven crusade in Denagoth, according to Professor Dobe's accounts, the elves have suffered a total defeat at the hands of the Shadow Army and have been totally vanquished. Our correspondent from Denagoth is currently under the merciful protection of the Most High Priest of Idris. Ed.]

Don't Miss

All the reserves are worth paying a visit, with the obvious exception of the Dark Woods of Baamor. In particular, the Enchanted Forest is the place to go if you want to relax and receive "inspiration." But beware: only those who don't trespass against the laws of Mother Nature will be allowed to see the realm of the fairy folk. However, even if you don't meet the fairies face to face, you will remain enthralled by the beauty of the plants, the purity of the air and the gentleness of the landscape. To many Alfheimers this place seems the perfect copy of what they called the Dreamlands back in Alfheim, and many like to visit it two or three times a year to forget their fears, attaining peace of mind and soul.

And talking about legends and mysterious places, I've heard of a shrine called Shadowmere that lies somewhere south of Wendar, near the mountains. According to the elven sages, this wood is an ancient sanctuary sacred to the very father of all the dragons! Could you have ever imagined: the dragons worship something other than themselves! However, nobody has ever found it—or rather, never found it and lived to report this discovery, according to the elves. Rumors hold it to be guarded by the spirits of dead dragons and by a clan of elves that has sworn fealty to this Great Old Dragon instead of the normal elven Immortals. I've always thought the elves have no rival to spin tall tales... besides him, of course.

Also, in the western part of Wendar, near the small hamlet of Kebar, lives a wise old sage known as Bensarian, respected by both elves and humans [if the rumors about Wendar's current political state are true, then Bensarian is the new leader of the country and may likely be found in Wendar City, the

capital of the nation. Ed.]. I had the pleasure to have a nice and scholarly talk with him, and I have to say that all the rumors about his great knowledge and quickness of mind are well earned. He looks like an old wizened man in his eighties, but there are slight physical traits that reveal a bit of elven blood in his veins (he is probably one of the half-elves hiding in the forests of Wendar). He is undoubtedly the greatest living expert about the history and the races of Wendar, and I suspect from the conversation we had that he's well-versed in the history of the region known as Denagoth, too. Strangely enough however, he seemed a lot less talkative about this topic. However, Bensarian of Kebar is a trustworthy and friendly sage, and I advise any of the readers who have problems and travel through Wendar to pay him a visit.

The last important feature of Wendar is the Korrigan Forest, the biggest forested area of the country. It is dotted with shrines dedicated to the Nine Elves, the Korrigans, the Immortals who according to legend saved not only the Genalleth Valley, but also the whole of Norwold from the Great Rain of Fire. According to the Altheimers, 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 Dainpàs [The Land Reborn. Ed.]. This celebration usually takes place around the first two weeks of Fyrmont, when the temperatures and the climatic conditions are the most pleasant in these lands. The sacred festival begins at noon of the first day of the week and ends at dusk of the 9th day, going on unbroken for the whole time. Each day at noon the holy keeper of one of the Nine Sacred Shrines "lights up" the shrine dedicated to one of the Korrigans, using some herbs and minerals that provoke an alchemical reaction that makes the whole area glitter. Each of the nine shrines has a different color, mirroring those of the rainbow plus pink and gray, and the hue slowly extends to the forest around the shrine during the following days. At the end of the ceremony the forest is divided into nine zones of different colors, and it is said that each one color is somehow magical and related to 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 impressed me most is the faint greenish haze that envelops all the trees like a foul cape. It's not just the bright green of the evergreen forest so common in this land, but it's a more sick and disgusting color, like that of the mould on a badly-preserved cheese. I am neither an emotional nor a superstitious person, but I can assure you, dear reader, that even looking at these woods from over a mile's distance made me shiver. This forest is alive with an evil far older than the oldest dragon living on this planet, but I am sure that 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.

VLARUAM (Emirates of)

Location: North of Thyatis, west of Rockhome and Darokin, south of Soderfjord. **OW**

Area: 53,130 sq. mi. (137,606 sq. km.).

Population: 208,000 (recent losses due to civil wars within the emirates).

Languages: Vlari (also known as Alasiyan), Thyatian, Alphatian.

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) and foreigners pay double the monthly head tax.

Government Type: Bureaucracy with administrative departments called voucheries (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), Khalid-al-Sharif “the Tale Teller” (Grand Vizier).

Flora and Fauna: Horses, camels and cattle are by far the most common animals found, followed by sheep and goats. In the wilderness of the desert, djinn, chimerae, dragons, undead, giant lizards, sphinxes, and manscorpions are all rumored to be present. Demons recently released into the Prime Plane near the Emirate of Nithia are also a rare sight.

Further Reading: GAZ2 The Emirates of Vlaruam, previous almanacs.

Description by Omar-ibn-Chukri.

The Land

The western Ust-Urt Valley is a veritable oasis in the harsh deserts of the Alasiyan Basin. The Altan Tepes and Makkres Mountain Ranges provide the valley with cool temperatures, as well as several small rivers and runoff waters that give it rich soil. It is here that the vast majority of the Makistani make their homes, as opposed to the desert regions to the east of the valley.

The People

The people of the Emirate of Makistan are mostly of Ethengar descent—the Makistani having been a clan of that nation at one time. They are a short, dark-skinned people, fond of riding and raising horses. A very open and oftentimes brutally honest people, they have blended in well with the Alasiyan peoples of the deserts. Their candor and openness makes them more trustful than many in the emirates, perhaps even than their Ethengar relatives. Non-believers and sorcerers are less likely to be subject to discrimination in Makistan than elsewhere in the emirates. The Makistani are primarily herdsmen, though their fertile homeland yields a fair number of farmers as well. As befits their heritage as nomads, they live in tents and sod huts, rather than more permanent structures. Their villages lack fortifications, and the largest structures one is likely to find are the enormous stables that accommodate their herds.

Recent History

The Makistani were a minor tribe residing in the northern plains of Ethengar as recently as nine centuries ago. During the reign of Muhuli, a particularly vicious tribal khan, the Makistani were driven out of the steppes and into the dwarven Kingdom of Rockhome. Though not ill-disposed towards the Ethengar tribe, the dwarves were not inclined to allow them to remain in their mountainous home, and ushered them southwards, depositing the Makistani in the sparsely-occupied Ust-Urt Valley. There they settled, gradually trading in their nomadic ways for a more sedentary lifestyle. They never quite forgot their Ethengar roots, and remain some of the best horsemen and archers around. Their prowess was so legendary that Al-Kalim himself sought their aid in AC 826 in his crusades against the Alphatian and Thyatian invaders. Their warriors were an invaluable aid to his army.

The Emirate of Makistan has remained relatively untouched by the recent troubles in Vlaruam. In many ways, they have prospered. Though trade suffered during Vlaruam's isolation (in AC 1015-1016), their agricultural output was vital to the rest of the country. Since the reopening of ties with the outside world, it may be that Makistan will come to replace the beleaguered Emirate of Alasiya as the center for trade and wealth in the nation. I hear tell that the sultan is keeping a close watch on the Khan of Makistan.

ATLAS OF THE ALPHATIAN SEA

Introduction to the Alphatian Sea

The once mighty Alphatian Empire has sunk beneath the ocean, and in its place now sits the Alphatian Sea. Dotted with several hundred isles representing the peaks of drowned mountains, the Alphatian Sea is rich with pirates and island fortresses.

The Alphatian Sea is also the place to be to search for magical treasures. The ocean floor is littered with thousands upon thousands of magical items from the former empire, and many adventurers are doing their best to try and acquire them. Several hundred have been found already, and most now reside in the hands of the pirates who then plundered the treasure-seekers. Those who manage to acquire an Alphatian Artifact always find fame and glory with it.

The people of the Alphatian Sea are mostly free subjects, most belonging to the New Alphatian Confederate Empire (annoyingly called *Nayce* by most of the commoners [the *Mystaran Almanac* now makes use of the spelling popularized by Minrothaddan merchants. Ed.]). They are well educated, mainly literate, and boast a larger percent of mages than most of the world. Some are also slaves, which is still legal and acceptable in most kingdoms. Slaves are only very rarely able to read or write.

Only a few nations of the area do not belong to *Nayce*, although ships from around the world sail here. *Nayce* would prefer to keep the area clear from foreign treasure seekers, but they have far too few ships and skyships to patrol everywhere, hence pirates are able to roam freely and do almost anything they please.

Adventurers come to seek fame for defeating some of the most notorious pirates of the world, while others come in search of sunken treasure. Reputation and glory is more important than anything else, and insults rarely go unchallenged. All in all, it is a swashbuckling place with endless adventures on the high seas. On the Alphatian Sea, fame and glory mean everything!

The Alphatian Sea has one minor continent known as *Bellissaria* on its southeastern margin. This is where most of *Naycese* forces are concentrated, and one of the few places where the law is effectively maintained. To the west, *Norwold* and the *Isle of Dawn* mark the end of the Alphatian Sea, while the continent of *Skothar* indicates its eastern limits. The north is bordered only by the glaciers marking the north pole and the entrance to the *Hollow World*. The southern waters eventually turn into the *Sea of Dawn* and the *Bellissarian Sea*.

Correspondents for the Alphatian Sea

This year, pending the result of the census, the same reports as you could read last are recopied almost verbatim, with only a few minor modifications where necessary. Next year should prove a good opportunity to offer you brand new correspondences.

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

Adoramar

Adoramar is a young man, little more than a boy, from Horken on Bellissaria. His parents are commoners working in the farmlands north of the town of Wymar, and none of their family are aristocrats. One day when he was with his father, a mage passing through the area noticed Adoramar's almost innate ability to write and keep records for his family, and the mage told Adoramar's father that the boy might have potential for magic. Adoramar's father asked the mage to confirm this and a few simple spells seemed to confirm the suspicions of the wandering wizard. When Adoramar's father asked the mage to take the boy as his apprentice, the mage merely laughed and said he should consult the Evaluation Guild, since they could pass judgment on the boy's potential abilities. Adoramar's father then took the boy all the way to the capital of Horken to have the boy's magical potential confirmed, which it was. However, Adoramar's parents could never afford to pay for Adoramar's private apprenticeship, so Adoramar instead accepted a free scholarship [apparently such scholarships are given freely to all Alphatians with the potential for magic. Ed.], but was required to travel to the university in Alchemos in the Kingdom of Meriander. On his way there, correspondents from the Mystaran Almanac met the young man and asked him to describe the Bellissarian nations he had knowledge of, Horken and Meriander. Though Adoramar is an apprentice to become a wizard, he is still only fourteen years old [though some claim this is actually not uncommon in Alphatia at all... Ed.].

Allstrick

For those not privy to the man that is Allstrick, he is a half-breed. Born to a Shive mother and Alphatian father, Allstrick has lived a long life as an adventurer both inside and outside of the Alphatian Empire. He outlived the dangers and retired from the profession, ironically enough taking up residence in Glantri. During the war, Allstrick sent his son back to mainland Alphatia where he hoped he would be safe. He himself moved the rest of his household to a residence in Mirros to wait out the war.

With Alphatia's sinking Allstrick naturally assumed his son had perished. With the divulgence of Alphatia's survival in Hollow World, he began planning a venture to visit the Naycese lands. Rumors persist that he wishes to reassert his prestige upon his countrymen to gain access to the Hollow World. We took advantage of this trip and approached Allstrick on reporting what he saw during his travels; he readily agreed and we look forward to his reports.

Daralann

Daralann, a lifelong resident of Spearpoint, is a shipbuilder by profession. Initially prosperous, as demand for ships has been on the increase for a number of years, Daralann's business has hit a rough spot, as many purchasers can no longer afford to buy his vessels, and the number of orders has begun to fall. Finding himself with some unanticipated free time, Daralann has consented to share with us his view of Surshield.

Dariyana

Dariyana is not one of our correspondents, but we have published parts of her diary in the almanac. From what we have gathered, Dariyana is a teenage student from the Floating Continent of Alphatia, not yet part of the Alphatian aristocracy but probably gentry (her father seems to be an aristocrat). She records events of her life in her magical journal (the words appear on the pages as she thinks them—we surmise this was a gift from her father). Dariyana was sent to the school on the surface world in AC 1017, and spent her academic year there, and then she disappeared. Her diary was found, though, and we reprint passages from it here.

Feldimur

Well known in Aslin as a jovial fellow, Feldimur is a wealthy aristocrat of Notrion, who sat out the Great War on his estate. More recently, he has been aiding the Naycese effort directed at enchanting the domes that will form part of the growing underwater settlement of Torenal. He brings us his view of Notrion, and recent events within it.

Graltarnim, Captain of the Wabe Turtle

Graltarnim is an Alphatian commoner and former soldier who has become a sea merchant from Dawnrim since the Great War. He acquired his Horken-built ship, the Wabe Turtle, several years back. Since then he has specialized in bringing grain and other foodstuffs from Dawnrim to other nations of Nayce. With the recent division of Surshield, he has added the city of Spearpoint to the ports of call on his list of destinations, because the new Surshield has very little farmland.

Myloptarq

Myloptarq is an aristocrat native to Ambur, who was visiting relatives in Floating Arkan when the continent sank. In AC 1016 he was one of the passengers of the Dallyant when the submersible took him and his fellow travelers to the submerged town of birth of their captain. Myloptarq tells us about the sunken continent of Alphatia, a unique—and gloomy—experience.

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.



Trastamar

A captain in the Verothian army, Trastamar is part of the large force of Randel soldiers who were stranded in Bellissaria following the sinking of Alphonat in AC 1009. Since that time, the soldiers managed to establish a number of strongholds in the wilderness of southern Notrion—unbeknownst to the authorities of that kingdom, as it turns out. It was only in AC 1016 that the Randel soldiers were discovered, and their claimed territory recognized as the Kingdom of Veroth. Captain Trastamar was kind enough to forward this briefing to us.

Atlas

AQUAS (Kingdom of)

Location: Sea of Dawn, northwest of Bellissaria. AS

Area: 498 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.); only 2 sq. mi. are covered by domes.

Population: 41,000 (30,000 in Seashield; 11,000 in outlying domes). Numerous sea peoples present not included in census. [Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]

Language: Alphatian (Aquan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Fish breeding, pearl harvesting, jewelry making (chiefly from local materials), engineering of undersea related items (submersibles, diving suits, waters pumps, drilling machines).

Important Figures: Zymia (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: Aside from its official human (95 percent) and demihuman (5 percent) population, one may find the kingdom frequented by numerous sea creatures. The more intelligent ones are mermen, tritons, sea elves, nixies, and storm giants.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

I have seen much as we travel the lands of Nayce, however Aquas proved most astounding. Despite Allstrick's early tales and descriptions of the submerged city, they did little to prepare me for what was to be our visit to Aquas. With its watery nature, getting to Aquas is difficult. Fortunately, Allstrick had arranged for a submersible to meet and transfer us down to the kingdom.

The Land

For those not aware, Aquas is a kingdom built upon the very seafloor, off 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 Wabedasher. 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 of seeing Queen Zynnica. Allstrick and she spoke for some time. With my limited grasp of the Alphatian language I really have no idea what was said. What I did recognize were references to her father and discussions on the current situation of Karamikos and the kingdoms that we had visited.

Recent History

Aquas is a fairly new kingdom. In AY 1949 [AC 949. Ed.], Queen Zynnica's father petitioned Empress Criadna for permission to establish Aquas. King Zyndryl and the empress had a well-known affair, resulting in two children: Eldrethila and Zandor. Zynnica was the product of another affair with the mermaid, Lynnica.

When Alphatia sank, Aquas was assaulted by seismic tremors. King Zyndryl perished as his people worked to preserve the integrity of the domes against the sea. Zyndryl's death opened the door for Zandor, who made his claim to the Alphatian imperial throne and ruled from Aquas.

In AY 2013 [AC 1013. Ed.], Zynnica, Prince Haldemar, Commander Broderick, and Queen Gratia ousted Zandor and captured him for a return to Alphatia in the Hollow World. Zynnica claimed the throne of Aquas and has ruled ever since. Soon after, Aquas became a member of Nayce.

Aquas has since been a central member of Nayce, especially militarily. Aquas has made a lot of efforts to explore and colonize the sunken continent of Alphatia, with projects to build new undersea domes.

Don't Miss

When in Aquas, one 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 Alphantian Trench is a beacon, drawing the attentions of many a would-be adventurer. However, the trench is off-limits, at least to those without authorization.

ARKAN (Kingdom of, a.k.a. Ar)

Location: New Alphatian Sea, then above the Dannibey Islands. AS

Area: 100 sq. mi. (259 sq. km.), plus the 33,920 sq. mi. (87,853 sq. km.) of the Dannibey Islands.

Population: 50,000 (25,000 in Skyreach), plus 5,000 of the Dannibey Islands. [Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Military, air magics, ocean harvesting.

Important Figures: Qissling (King), Qirclin (Prince).

Flora and Fauna: With their aerial nature, the islands of Floating Arkan see an abundance of flying creatures. Dragons, djinn, efreet, air elementals, griffons, hippogriffs, pegasi, and pegataurs are but a few of the more spectacular flying creatures. Other, land-bound creatures include bears, big cats, boars, sheep, and horses. Down on the Dannibey 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 Arkan. However, it is a wondrous place, and I just had to show Thalia. To speed up our travels, we utilized magic to teleport in. In this we had some minor trouble. With its new location we did not materialize exactly where I had expected. Luckily, I had taken precautions and we were no worse for wear. Of course it did shake Thalia up a bit. I shall go ahead and say that I am glad we ventured to Arkan.

The Land

How can I begin such a description without mentioning Palart Arkan's aerial nature first? For those not aware, the kingdom is comprised of numerous landmasses enchanted with magics, affording them lift. Essentially, the kingdom is a grouping of floating islands. Thalia was full of questions about how and why Arkan was so lofty. I could tell her only what I knew. Still, I think the place did much to overwhelm her about Alphatia's pre-war magical might.

Upper Arkan is now a much different place. Aside from the different location, the isles themselves have changed. Gone are many of the old parks and such. In their place are crop fields, nestled in any

free portions of land available. Seems that the old land below had been the key source of food for those living on the floating isles. With the mainland gone and subsequently replaced by the Dannibey Islands, an intermediate source of food is needed.

Below Floating Arkan are the Dannibey Islands. Becoming part of Arkan has changed the islands. Several of the old known villages are gone, their inhabitants scattered and displaced. Several tracts of land have been cleared for cultivation. In general, the Arkans are intent upon molding the islands to fit their needs. They have begun establishing farms among the islands to provide food... and I suspect... to allow the former parks and gardens to be relieved of their burdens of food cultivation.

During our week-long stay, we operated out of Skyreach. The capital has lost very little of its pre-war charm and elegance. The main difference that I can see is the food. Prices for food are rather high and variety is limited. Even I, so familiar with Alphatian magical potential, am impressed by the deed no matter how many times I see it. As such, I can appreciate Thalia's amazement at the kingdom.

The skyship fleet is easily seen operating in and around the islands. This is quite a surprise as portions of the fleet are said to be serving abroad. However, I recognized that several of the skyships are, or were, privately owned vessels. Strangely enough a proportion of these skyships are not militarily oriented. Some are used to aid in fishing and transport between the floating islands and the Dannibey below. Skyship construction is a priority at the facilities in Skyreach, so I expect this traffic will but increase.

The People

The people of Arkan are predominantly Alphatian. 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 Upper Arkans are still quite the charmers. Enough notables remembered me to make our stay very comfortable. I can think of not a single night that we were not invited to a party or some other social event. Though I had feared for Thalia's safety in other kingdoms, the Arkans seemed quite open to her. Her spellcasting ability, ethnic background, and personal charm outweighing the stigma of her dependence upon the Thyatian language.

At one such party, we met with Prince 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 Shipe 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 Shipe elves has helped their standing.

One person that I had hoped to see was Haldemar of Haaken. We had previously crossed paths, and were acquaintances of sorts. Mainly, I wanted to hear of his travels to this Hollow World and

the status of Alphatia. Unfortunately, Haldemar was absent from his family's estate and had not been seen around here in some time. Most spoke of his still being away, serving the empress.

Recent History

Prior to the war, Upper Arkan was part of Arkan, a kingdom on the Alphatian mainland. When the mainland sank, the islands remained in their lofty altitudes. With the mainland gone, the kingdom was moved to its present location above the Hannibey Islands. You see, before the war Upper Arkan had been the residences of the ruling class [spellcasters. Ed.], while the lands of Arkan served as the agricultural base. With Arkan gone, new food sources were needed. Such a movement was a major undertaking, taking six months to travel the 350 odd miles to their present location.

The Floating Arkans quickly set about occupying the Hannibey Chain to meld it to its needs. The Hannibey fared little better than their Hanifey forebears. The fate of the Hanifey tribesmen is uncertain and still under debate. The good news is that much of the criminal aspect of the chain was destroyed. All in all things are on an upswing for Arkan. The coming years should be very interesting.

Don't Miss

Floating Arkan is a wondrous place. Each lofty piece of real estate offers the opportunity to amaze the average visitor. Just the way that the Floating Arkans have incorporated the aerial nature of the kingdom into everyday life is quite fascinating. One may also want to visit the Hannibey Islands to partake of the natural beauty. This visit could be an interesting conversation piece.

DAWNRIIM (Kingdom of)

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

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

Population: 28,000 (5,000 in Alinquin). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, and herding.

Important Figures: Teskilion (King and General).

Flora and Fauna: With few indigenous monsters, Dawnrim benefits as most of its animal life is of the domesticated type. Even the bulk of its wildlife was brought in from elsewhere.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Thalia.

The kingdom of Dawnrim came as a complete surprise to me. Whereas most of the Naycese kingdoms are rather flashy, this one tended to be... well... 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 Karamaikos. 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 first 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.

GREY ISLANDS (Dominion of the)

Location: In the center of the New Alphatian Sea, east of Ionace, north of Aquas, southeast of the Sundsball Maelstrom. AS

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

Population: 200 scattered on the various islands opened for colonization, plus stationed soldiers (100) guarding the area (notably the close-by Sundsball Maelstrom), and students and faculty from Alphatia during the academic year (currently about 200).

Language: Alphatian (various dialects).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Nayce collects taxes from its subjects, Alphatia that of its own (school faculty).

Government Type: Military dictatorship, member of Nayce.

Industries: Magical research, teaching of magic.

Important Figures: Dariyana (Student).

Flora and Fauna: All flora and fauna from the Grey Mountains has died because of the brutal climactic change brought by the new position of the land, i.e. oceanic instead of mountainous. Only some underground species have survived (mostly fungi and small insects). Hardy mosses are the vanguard of the future ecosystem that will eventually emerge. On the islands that have seen a small influx of settlers, vegetables and farm animals (mostly chickens) have been brought.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Dariyana.

[Continued from Sundsball Maelstrom entry.]

Alphamir 16: The priestess awakens me. She says we are there. I sheepishly follow her. My mind is still clouded, I can't think clearly. I just go along.

There is a new yellow sun. Was the death of the old one only a hallucination as I was on the verge of dying? It's too hard to think about that right now, speculating, so let's just drop it.

There's an island, too. It seems rather small, but I'm not used to the scales of that water world. Maybe here it's what they consider a continent. I wonder if it's the only land of that forsaken world. I'm glad to be on land, anyway. I swear, I will never sail again, much less swim.

We are gathered at the small harbor, and led to the school. It's a small school. I'm shown to my quarters. I think I'm gonna sleep for two or three straight sleeps.

Alphamir 17: My diary is still working, apparently it was waterproof. It has recorded the events of—I prefer not to reminisce about them. I wasn't dreaming, then. I may still have hallucinated, though, that wouldn't have prevented the diary from recording what I told it, I think. I am confused, though, things swirl in my head. Is it like that to be feeble-minded? There's something odd with the diary, though, it has skipped several sleeps. It seems to have happened right when I was passing from

one maelstrom to the other. I'll ask to have the day confirmed; maybe the water did damage my diary after all.

I get up, since I'm awake anyway. I have no idea what time of the sleep it is, my diary only marks the days. There is something wrong—again. It is dark when I look out the window. The sun is gone, again, and there are tiny lights in the sky. This is a strange plane: flat, engulfed in water, with suns that die—and are born?—and are replaced by tiny dots of light. At least magic works. I think.

That's amazing. The birth of a sun! The water spits it red-hot, then it cools off and becomes that dull yellow characteristic of the suns of this world. That's beautiful, indeed.

A bell rings, same sound as at the university at Andaire, meaning we are to gather for class. I'd like to keep watching for the sun going up and up away from the water into the sky. Maybe I'll get some answers if I go to class, though. Okay, let's attend.

Our teacher is wrapped in spider-silk. An Alphatian spellcaster, an anchor amid all that craziness. Good, he's asking for questions rather than starting a lecture, at least he knows what we're interested in—a quality not so common among the faculty, I noticed over the years. The sun rises and sets every sleep, in a succession of "days" and "nights." At "night" there are "stars" in the sky, and the "moon" is more visible. The large body of water that surrounds our island is a "sea." All of this seems unnatural to me. Some simpletons call simple things like a skyship, or magical healing, or turning into a bird a soaring into the sky, unnatural things, but obviously they have not seen a "sea," or a "night" with no suns but "stars" and "moon."

Incidentally, I notice that we are not all present. Maybe some decided to skip class, but I think something much bleaker happened to them on their way to the island. I know all too well what almost happened to me. I shudder just thinking about it.

I go watch the sun set. It is beautiful, and so sad, to see a sun die. A sun is born every sleep, lives for a few hours, then dies. I wonder if twins can be born, sometimes.

Alphamir 18: Classes actually start. I have a feeling we have rather intensive classes, aimed at making spellcasters out of us, nothing else. I didn't think I'd ever say that, but I think I'm gonna miss the other classes—history of Alphatia, geography, philosophy, arts, etc. At Andaire I used to dismiss them as lesser classes, and listen—well, sometimes anyway—only for spellcasting classes (and sometimes, basic alchemy or basic necromancy or such, as well), but practicing only spellcasting isn't that much fun. Oddly enough, I long for an introduction to air magics class, or some such.

Alphamir 25: I've watched the sun rise and set several times now, so I decide to tour the school in my free time instead this sleep. The school's small, with few facilities. There is a library, and assorted laboratories, but nothing like a map room, or arts rooms. Some commoners are working on expanding the buildings.

Sulamir 13: Empress Eriadna's Birthday. There are no beggars on the island, so we are given the sleep off instead. I decide to explore the island for myself. It is an island all right, there is water on all sides. I don't walk around its perimeter—it is a small island, but not that small, and hilly, and I'm not good at walking—but enough to confirm that there is water all around. I go back, the sight of all that water is oppressive.

Sulamir 17: But if I am trapped on an island, how am I going to leave it? How will I return to Alphatia? This is not a school, it's a prison.

Sulamir 19: I just realized something. When the academic year is over, we'll leave the prison-school, and return to Alphatia, like the students last year. Okay. But how many ways do they have to send us back? I am not going through the whirlpool again, I'm not. I'm not even boarding a ship. I will be an aristocrat when I graduate, so they can't just order me around and send me to my death.

Sulamir 24: If there was another way home to Alphatia, I think they'd use it for both trips. I made some inquiries, and a gate that goes one way can be made two-ways. The more I think about it, the more I'm convinced the only two-way gate between Alphatia and this plane is the maelstrom. I can't fathom why they can't create a safer gate, but I think they can't. I can't resolve to follow this suicidal plan. I don't think they'll leave me much choice, though, so there's no avoiding it. I'll have to kill myself, it's the only way. I'll die anyway, so I might as well die the way I choose, and not suffer all the water-going, swimming, drowning, and freezing.

Sudmir 13: I think I've seen something. I'm not sure because it was only a black dot on the horizon, but it may be another island. Even on the clearest day from a hilltop on the southern side of the island, I don't think I could see well enough to make it out with certainty. What I'd need is a spyglass.

Vertmir 25: Impossible to find a spyglass anywhere, but fortunately I remembered enough of my astronomy class to devise a crude magnifying glass out of stolen material over the past few weeks.

Yes, yes, it's land. Another island. That's another island! I have to get there. Yes, I will go there, even if there's nothing but death to be found. I don't know how, but I will go there—even if I have to swim my way there, and I'm terrified of swimming.

Tslamir 8: Commoners are my salvation! Well, I hope. Those Alphatians that work here on the island, to expand the school, they don't seem to be Alphatian. I mean, they seem Alphatian, but I think they are full-time residents of this plane. The ship that rescued me from—well—it had a second flag that I could not identify, I think it is the flag of a kingdom or dominion we have here. Yeah, those marines didn't look quite like imperial marines. Neither does the garrison here. I think the workers are also residents of this colony. Since I'm not sure what the garrison is watching but us, I think that, when trying to escape, it's not so much of an idea to ask them for assistance. I stand a better chance with the workers.

Tslamir 10: I hober near the workers. Laborers, probably slaves and servants, I'm not sure they will be of much help. They speak some local dialect of common Alphatian. I'll just take one at random. They stop talking as I approach and avoid looking at me, they probably think I'm aristocracy.

They are grossly uncooperative. If I didn't think they might be useful, I'd bully them into answering me. Since we're kept prisoners here, maybe they're even instructed to avoid us. I've got to find someone more cooperative—smarter would help, too—, maybe a craftsman or some overseer. They don't seem to have wizardly supervision, so there must some freeman with some empowerment somewhere.

I'm finally shown to the boss. Nice-looking fellow, with a twinkle in his eyes. Intelligence, maybe. He looks up from his papers, reclines in his chair with a wicked smile on his lips. He appraises me up and down, asks my name—how rude, but if I am to get his cooperation... I'm uncomfortable in his presence, I'm clumsy, I can't use my girlish charm effectively on him. I must get him in my pocket,

though, he may be my only chance to get away. I'd better end this meeting for today, and get myself prepared to come back to deal with that fellow some other time.

Tslamir 28: I know more about that freeman. I think it's time that I meet again, it's been half of the academic year already. I prepped for this second encounter, prettied myself so I could charm my way.

He doesn't appear surprised to see me. I am friendly and flirty, he is charming and—I hate that—superior. I think he knows very well what the real purpose of my coming is, but intends to take advantage of it so he plays along with me. That's not so bad, though, because if I'm not wrong it means that he might help me, at least.

He announces unblinkingly that he hails from the Kingdom of Horken. I don't know that kingdom, and I bet he knew exactly what he was doing when he dropped that clue that there is some other land somewhere. He's thrown me the ball, now he's waiting for me to throw it back. Very well, smarty, I'd love to visit you in your kingdom someday. That's it for today, to be continued on next round.

Andrumir 9: So, when can I come to visit you, dear friend, you know I'd love to. Of course, he'd be happy to receive me after the academic period, or, with a broad grin, earlier if I wish to. I'll think about it, friend.

That was round two. Real business coming next.

Andrumir 18: We meet in secret, 'cause I don't want the other workers to become suspicious and report my visits to the faculty. We talk and flirt, and I give him what he wants.

Horror, there are no ships at all that come or leave the island during the whole academic period—all traffic takes place during the break only. The only way to leave the island is by way of magic, then. All for nothing. I feel crushed, I weep like a baby. I feel like an abandoned baby, I am so alone and desperate. What will become of me?

He tries to comfort me, I keep sobbing.

What? Maybe there's a way. What, what, please tell me. I'll do anything.

I can't build a crude boat. Yes, I prefer if you do it for me. Hmm, I must clear my mind, listen to what he says. Stop crying, girl. Well, without supervision using some building material to build a raft may work. A raft, yes. No. I can't row across all that water. I would die at sea, that's even worse.

Cyprimir 20: The raft is taking shape. I didn't mention my fear of water. I don't think I can resolve to taking to sea on that hazardous collection of logs. This is no good.

Hastmir 3: The Kingdom of Horken is far to the south, the island I've seen is just another island. It's probably deserted, too. I didn't realize this world was so vast. And all of these lands are separated by large bodies of water, sigh. It is indeed probably not realistic to try to go all the way to Horken, so I'll just try for the next island. It will be hard enough to cross all the way to it already. I hope I won't chicken at the last minute. All that water, brrr!

Hastmir 15: The raft is not seaworthy yet, not safe enough for me, apparently. Frankly I don't see how it can ever be safe, anyway.

Cimir 6: The raft is ready and hidden. I got a look at it, and it doesn't appear any safer to me. I'll have to trust my life to that. That's a gloomy perspective.

Cimir 15: Only one month left before the end of the academic year. The teachers are pushing us so we all cast our first spell by then, and graduate. My mind is set on other things, though. I am secretly learning how to row that floating casket of mine and how to survive at sea. It's very unpleasant, but I grimly train anyway.

Cimir 19: It's my birthday today. I try to act normally, but I am actually completely frightened, because tonight I leave the school island, when the sun is down. I have chosen that day because my friends won't be surprised when I leave my room to sleep over at my lover's, and they'll cover for me when I'm not back in the morning. That'll give me some time before they start looking for me.

My diary will stop functioning in a few minutes, at the exact moment of my birth. Daddy made it to work for one year only. I'll miss dictating my thoughts into my diary. In a few hours I'll board that makeshift boat, and my life is gonna change forever. Good bye, diary, good bye, daddy.

HORKEN (Kingdom of)

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

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

Population: 30,000 (5,000 in Horken).

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Haycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Haycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Hayce.

Industries: Agriculture, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Villium (King).

Flora and Fauna: The grasslands common to northern Bellissaria can be found here. To the south the land has more hills and the far south contains mountains of the Surkarian Mountain Range. Most creatures found in Bellissaria can naturally also be found here, though the chance to meet beings summoned by magic, though still possible, is not great, since Horken has relatively few spellcasters. Other animals and plants are fairly common for the type of land.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Adoramar.

My homeland is a pleasant, orderly land with friendly people and peaceful areas. While it may not appear to be as lavish or interesting a place as some nations of Bellissaria, nobody could have anything bad to say about Horken. It is a tranquil and stable land.

The Land

On a map, Horken will seem to be almost circular, although the major settlements are not really at the center of that circle. The capital of Horken is famed for its shipyards, though the actual wood for the ships must be transported from Blueside in the nearby Kingdom of Lagrius. Even so, most of Horken's economy is based on agriculture in the grasslands outside the capital, such as my own home north of the fair town of Wymar. Trade is also a major source of income for Horken, and some of the merchant families seem to have more local power than even King Villium, though I guess appearances are deceiving. South of Wymar are parts of the Surkarian Mountain Range where all sorts of horrible creatures are said to lurk... or so my mother always told me.

The People

Only Alphatians live in Horken. If any other folk have their homes here, I've never seen or heard of them, at least. My people are proud of what they do, though the farmers outside the city of Horken have to put up with a certain "elitist" pride from the shipbuilders of my country—they are good at what they do, but they also know and never miss an opportunity to point that out. In truth, the real work in

Horken is done by the farmers, or the shipbuilders would all starve. Still, I suppose the shipbuilders should be proud of their work, as I'm told the Horken navy was used extensively during the war with Thyatis and afterwards.

Recent History

While Horken is not one of the more prominent kingdoms of Bellissaria, it is one of the oldest. For centuries Horken was considered an unimportant place, but after the sinking of the Alphetian continent, Horken enjoyed a period of progress, because there suddenly was a great need for ships to replace those lost in the war with Thyatis and the sinking of Alphetia, particularly in the face of the presumed Thyatian offensive that followed the Great War.

During the reign of mad Emperor Zandor, King Villium supported him, for which he has since been heavily criticized. This criticism does seem to ignore just how bad a time this was for everyone, though, and King Villium was scarcely the only one that could be criticized in this matter. What many tend to forget is that King Villium had to make a decision to protect his kingdom and his people from Zandor's madness! The growth of Horken's economy that was achieved in this way was incidental. Still, while the economy has settled down a little since then, Horken has remained the primary source for new ships in Nayce nonetheless.

Don't Miss

The place most foreigners go to see in Horken are the shipyards in the capital. Sadly, most mistake the placid and tranquil countryside of Horken for a boring and uninteresting place. Just because mostly commoners, such as my own family, live and toil there, it doesn't mean the area is without its own charm. My home in the grasslands north of Wymar makes for as peaceful and enjoyable a place as anyone could wish for.

Do Miss

A visit in Horken is not something to be feared, as there is little here a traveler would have to worry about. Yes, there are ogres and giants in the southern hills, some even talk of dragons in the Surkarian Mountain Range region, but you won't find trouble unless you go out and look for it.

IONACE (a.k.a. the Isle of Nayce)

Location: Sea of Dawn, where western Alphonatia used to be. **AS**

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

Population: 3,000, and many monsters (2,200 in Ionace City). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]

Language: Alphonatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphonatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). An additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Center of the New Alphonatian Confederate Empire, member of the Alphonatian Empire.

Industries: Bureaucratic hub of Nayce, mining.

Important Figures: Broderick (Commander in Chief).

Flora and Fauna: Though most of these are content to remain outside of the city, large numbers of wandering monsters beset Ionace.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

I was most interested in seeing Ionace for myself. Truthfully I had prejudiced myself against the new capital before I even saw it. I knew too well the old capital of Sundsboll and felt that nothing could live up to it. Upon leaving, I had changed my opinion. Though Ionace cannot live up to Sundsboll 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 Nayce. Ionace is a growing town based upon the ruins of the former city of Dentwarf-Hurgon. The old stout dwarven constructs contrast greatly with the newer buildings erected under the Naycese standard. Still, the symbolism between the old and new is readily apparent. The buildings in Ionace are either newly built or have been remodeled. Ionace definitely lacks the almost mystical flash and theatrics of Sundsboll. 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 Nayce can be seen there. Also, there is a contingent of foreigners, mostly

ambassadors from other lands. The military personnel are as equally diverse. Previously, defense of the island fell to the 6th Army of Aquas. However, now units from other Alphatian lands can be seen.

Jonace is a fast-paced place. The populace seems to be forever heading for some appointment or just returning from one. The council hall is the focal point for this pedestrian traffic. Sitting out front, I witnessed a veritable “who’s who” of Alphatian elite passing through its portals. I knew many of these faces. Others had to be identified. The sinking has altered the structure of the ruling elite class and opened the door for a new generation of nobles. A good example of this change is Commander Broderick. When I knew him, he was but a minor officer in Aquas’s military machine. However, now he is one of the Nayce’s most powerful entities. Truthfully, I am not a fan of Broderick and it’s not his being a non-spellcaster. It is his conduct under Zandor’s rule that I find atrocious.

Recent History

When 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 Nayce. On Amphimir 15, AY 2014 [Watermont 15, AC 1014. Ed.], the island was officially renamed Jonace. Jonace is under the direct jurisdiction of the ruling council. It is here where the Nayce Council meets to administer the new empire.

Nayce is beginning to stabilize. As a testament to this Jonace 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 prebailing. I observed the tourney from Mirros and all said I came out about even in my bets.

Don’t Miss

One really should see the city of Jonace. 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 Jonace.

Do Miss

One really should avoid the rural parts of the island of Jonace. Many an unwary person has perished within sight of the city. Monsters abound out in the wilds and unless you are adept at such things, you need to stay in the safe confines of the city.

LAGRIUS (Kingdom of)

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

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

Population: 150,000 (15,000 in Blueside). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. Ed.]

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Timber cutting, fishing.

Important Figures: Elenitsa (Former Queen), Siaron Lagrius (Queen).

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 for my man. Fortunately for them, word of Allstrick's reputation reached them before a challenge to duel was issued. Fortunately for Allstrick he behaved himself.

Recent History

Lagrius is one of the empire's oldest kingdoms. Founded by Siaron Lagrius's ancestors, it came as quite a shock that Zandor ordered her to abdicate her throne. The transition from her rule to that of her friend Elenitsa was quite peaceful. It is well known that Siaron is active in ruling behind the scenes, with both her and Elenitsa effectively being co-rulers. This arrangement seems to work for Siaron for now, for she has left Elenitsa in the position as the official queen and kept the official title of council representative for herself.

Though it was feared that Thyatis would launch its assaults upon Bellissaria, the kingdom has flourished since the war thanks to the need for timber by Horken. With fears of Thyatian aggression gone, work on the kingdom's defenses has long since halted. Unlike other Bellissarian kingdoms, Lagrius seems more open to its growing prominence within Nayce. And with its pleasant character, 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. AS

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

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

Language: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, alchemy, education.

Important Figures: Hubertek (King and General).

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 Adoramar.

I've only just arrived in Meriander to begin my apprenticeship to become a mage in Alchemos, but some correspondents asked me to describe my first-hand impressions of Meriander anyway. First of all, Meriander is one of the more prominent kingdoms of Bellissaria, even before the main continent of Alphatia sank, because of the very object of my own journey here—the University of Alchemos. Even before the war, the university was noted in the Alphatian Empire, which is unusual for Bellissaria where most people just want to be left alone, and it says a lot about the respect it had earned. The rest of Meriander is much more common for Bellissaria.

The Land

From what I've seen myself and learned from Mellideris, a fellow student native to Meriander, the kingdom is largely covered by grasslands, but there are apparently also forested areas south of the town of Cairnport as well as in the central hills. To the far east lies the port town of Seahaven, which is Meriander's gate to the east to places like Minaea. Generally, the land is placid and peaceful.

The main object of interest is clearly the capital of Alchemos, where the university lies. Generally, people assume only alchemy is taught here, which is very incorrect, although it is true that alchemical endeavors are indeed the specialty of many mages who live here. Experimentation is fairly common here, and some claim that parts of the city are routinely damaged or even ruined by failed experiments. I'm not sure if that is accurate, but when Master Konterm took some of us on a trip to a local alchemist, an explosion suddenly shook the tower we were in and flames were suddenly all around us! Master Konterm ignored them completely, but Brandenrul and I had to jump out the window!

Fortunately, Brandenrul, a senior student, took his Basic Aerial Magics course last year, so when we jumped out the window, he cast his featherfall spell, and we floated harmlessly to the ground. Master Ronterm later told us that we had never been in any real danger because he was with us, but it was still an unsettling experience I would prefer not to repeat...

The People

Outside of Alchemos, most people in Meriander are commoners. Yet I know from Mellideris, Brandenrul, and others that the university is far more than merely a respected institution here; it is rather an object of national pride throughout the Kingdom of Meriander, so even in the south, in places such as Seahaven, or so Mellideris and Lomatax tell me, people think the “northerners in Alchemos” are aloof and patronizing, yet they still seem to think of the university as “their pride” and “their achievement.”

In Alchemos itself, this pride is obviously even more pronounced. By imperial law, the university must accept any potential student wishing apprenticeship and deemed fit to receive it by the Evaluation Guild. Because of their pride over the university, one might think the people of Meriander would be reluctant to share their university with students of magic from other Bellissarian nations. This is far from the case, quite the contrary. More than once did I hear someone mention to me, “Ah, so you’re one of those outlanders we’re going to teach magic...” Sometimes this was spoken with a humorous tone, but sometimes people meant it exactly as it was said. I protested this, but Lomatax, a fellow student, told me not to take it too seriously, because those who would say so and mean it would usually be wizards who learned magic, yet failed to distinguish themselves among the mages of Meriander. The real problem with that is that such people are frequently the ones, as I soon learned, who end up teaching at the university, so foreign students should be prepared for a certain condescending attitude from their teachers. This is not common, though, and there are certainly also teachers who are very fair in their treatment of students.

Apart from the university itself, Alchemos is still a city steeped in magic and the pursuit of it, and as one might guess, the creation of potions is a particular specialty here, so it is possible to get some very nice magical potions, concoctions, elixirs, oils, or other mystical liquids at a reasonable price, and due to the national pride, it is virtually guaranteed that such items will be genuine—Alchemos, and Meriander in general, are very particular about their magical heritage, so they take a dim view of frauds and charlatans in this matter. I witnessed an example of this first hand—a man was trying to sell some items in the marketplace which he claimed were magical and spoken very highly of. He was clearly a foreigner, so few took notice of him at first, but after a little time, he gathered quite a crowd around him, as he continued to praise his wonderful goods, such as a broom that would sweep by itself and a robe that repelled dirt by itself, which he demonstrated by throwing dirt at the robe and making the broom sweep. Some people took interest in this, which turned out to be very unfortunate for the foreigner, because one of the potential buyers cast a spell and then loudly declared that the man was a charlatan having cast undetectable auras on his items and then used cantrips to “demonstrate” their value! The crowd was furious and for a moment I feared what they would do, but one cast a spell that left the fraud rigid while the rest took rotten fruit and other ruined foodstuffs from merchants on the market who were only too happy to participate themselves, and they then threw these at the helpless man. The city guard soon stopped by and after some people in the crowd explained what had happened, they took the charlatan into custody...

Recent History

Most of Meriander's history is no different from that of the rest of Bellissaria until the Great War ended. During the reign of the mad Emperor Zandor, Queen Drulibia was forced to abdicate and leave the throne to Hubertek, a commoner in command of the armed forces, but it seems that little changed for the people of Meriander. Hubertek has retained his position, which may actually appear a little peculiar in a kingdom of mages, especially since many here feel that Alchemos is the true successor to Sundsvall as the primary site of magical pursuit in the empire now. Still, Hubertek has done well, though from what I hear his dedication to do away with the traditional Alphetian laws that permit only spellcasters to be aristocrats has earned him some political enemies among the more conservative wizards.

Don't Miss

Alchemos, and especially the university, are definitely the places to see in Meriander. Much of Alphetia's greatness was lost when the main continent sank beneath the waves, but here one can practically taste what the Alphetian pursuit of magic is really all about, and the city is even more receptive to travelers than most places in Bellissaria because the locals love to demonstrate their skills and achievements where magic is concerned.

Do Miss

Not much... Beyond Alchemos, or so Pellideris tells me, the rest of Meriander is more Bellissarian in the sense that it is very similar to what one would typically find in more common regions or kingdoms of Bellissaria. At least, from how Pellideris describes it to me, it sounds very much like my own native Horken, so there shouldn't be much to worry about. In Alchemos, I suppose you might want to watch out for mages, especially if you're a commoner. Not all of them are benevolent or even above mistreating people for the sake of their magical experiments, I fear. If you sail from Seahaven, be wary of Minaean pirates—I've heard some very nasty rumors about some of those.

NOTRION (Kingdom of)

Location: Northern Bellissaria, south of the Alphatian Sea, west of Meriander, northeast of Veroth. AS

Area: Approx. 214,000 sq. miles (554,000 sq. km). Area is approximate as there is still dispute with Veroth as to where exactly to place the borders.

Population: 50,000, including Aaslin (pop. 10,000).

Languages: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture.

Important Figures: Corydon (King).

Flora and Fauna: Like its neighboring Bellissarian kingdoms Notrion boasts little indigenous animal life, aside from fairly common animals like foxes, deer, rabbits, rodents of many types, and various species of bird. The seas abound in many types of fish, and sea serpents are not unknown.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Feldimur.

The Land

Notrion, once the largest kingdom on Bellissaria, and prosperous due to its proximity to the Alphatian continent, is shorn! When the mainland sank beneath the waves, we lost our best market for our agricultural produce and cattle. Then, along came the arrogant Randel folk, who seized half our kingdom out from under us. We quietly asked, nay, begged the other Nayce members to back us up in resisting this land-grab, but they declined to help us (and what is Nayce for if not to protect its members?). Thus we submitted to our fate, quietly but sullenly, knowing we could not fight these deadly warriors on our own and would likely lose our entire kingdom to their avariciousness if we tried.

Many of our fellow Alphatians from other kingdoms, including correspondents in previous almanacs, describe Notrion as boring and unremarkable. But they like to eat, don't they? And our kingdom may not have exotic buildings, but we have vast plantations and ranches, dotted with beautiful mansions in out of the way locales (we like our privacy, and thus build in secluded areas), in addition to the more humble abodes that make up the communities for the servants and slaves who work under our direction and guidance.

The town of Aaslin may be small by mainland standards, but it is a good port city frequented by merchants and traders from many lands. They bring their goods for our use and ship out the grain and other produce we sell them. Vast shipments of grain were transported by sea from here to Randel,

Vertiloch, Stonewall, and even Haven in years past, but this is all gone now. Aslin may not have soaring towers, but most of our best families have fine residences there, though I would recommend avoiding the areas where the dockworkers and other lower-class people live and the taverns they frequent. Why is it that the poor insist upon living in filth and letting their homes get run-down? No one is too poor to clean up after themselves, as my mother always said.

There are many fine forests where hunts and other activities are conducted, though some of these were grabbed by the Randel folk when they wrested half our country from us. They are now quibbling over the border, insisting upon still more land, more than they need, in their grasping aggressiveness.

The People

The Randel land-grab stripped many of our finest, oldest families of much of their wealth, as the lands they had owned for generations were wrested from them. The cunning Randel folk claimed the lands were little used, but they were ours; we occasionally grazed cattle there, and the lands were a carefully husbanded resource as well as collateral on many loans (which the sinking of Alphatia and resulting loss of revenue from grain sales created the need for). The Randel folk said that in exchange they would buy our grain, but they refuse to pay a reasonable price for it, claiming a lack of ready cash and still more arrogantly claiming that we should be happy to serve as their suppliers in exchange for the protection they provide. Such protection we can do without, it is more like the rackets run by Thyatian thieves than duty-bound soldiers serving their magocratic lords. As a result of these conditions, and the burden we bear in the enchanting of dome sections for the city of Corenal, in the last couple years we have had to sell our grain to the Thyatians! At least they have the mouths to feed, but some landowners are worried because already the purchase orders they place are declining, something about their own agricultural capacity recovering and their development of colonial lands in their so-called empire. But if we don't sell our grain to them, I don't know where we will get money to support the aristocrats of Notrion in the lifestyle which we deserve.

On top of all this is the burden we bear in constructing the underwater city of Corenal. When initially proposed, this project was described to us as a means of helping us out of our financial difficulties. But neither Nayce as a whole nor Aquas have kept up with the payments. They're now claiming that the dome sections we produce should be considered in-kind contributions to Nayce's welfare, and that we should accept that because cash taxes are kept low. But this has just meant that the burden is ill-distributed. At least they have enacted a supplementary enchanting surtax on commoners to generate some additional revenues with which to pay the aristocrats involved in the project. The lower orders have whined and moaned about this burden, but I can only say it is a step in the right direction, as the common classes' role is to provide for the needs of their betters. After all, we are enchanting a city that they will also benefit from, so if we are made to bear that burden they have no cause to complain about theirs.

There are few mages here compared to what there was on the mainland, so we are all over-burdened by the requirement to enchant for Corenal. But, on the other hand, this does mean that there are more than enough servants at our beck and call, even with a sparse population (also good for privacy). This means that if anyone gets uppity they can be quickly replaced by a more respectful servant. They all know this, so we don't have the kind of social problems found in, say, Dunadale or (Immortals forbid!) Esterhold.

Don't Miss

As I mentioned, most of us like our privacy and don't want strangers wandering around on our lands without an invitation or permission. But an appointment can be made through each family's major-domos in Aaslin, and traders are always welcomed to serve our needs in buying produce and providing import goods we desire, transactions can be arranged in that town through our sales agents.

Do Miss

The border near the Randel folk of Veroth is filled with tension, an explosive situation that could come to conflict at the slightest provocation. Therefore, I would recommend avoiding this area lest you accidentally spark a fight with these violent men. Also, the forest areas are maintained as hunting preserves for the aristocrats of Notrion, and you should not enter them as that is considered proof of an intent to poach. As always, you should also stay off private property if you do not have the owner's permission or are an invited guest.

QEOÐHAR (Kingdom of)

Location: Northern Alphatian Sea, northeast of Norwold and west of the Danniþey Islands. **AS**

Area: 83,304 sq. mi. (215,755 sq. km.), Qeodhar Island 82,307 sq. mi. (213,175 sq. km.), Whaler's Island 997 sq. mi. (2,580 sq. km.). Icehop Island 5,487 sq. mi. (14,210 sq. km.) is no longer under King Norlan's control, as is a portion of the eastern coastal region, the size of which is unknown.

Population: 15,000, including Farend (pop. 5,800). Many refugees have fled to Farend due to the continuing hostilities further east, while the overall population decline is attributed to the removal of the "Þstmarhabners" from the populace owing fealty to King Norlan—this number is not yet definite.

Languages: Alphatian (Frisian dialect), Þeldannic (Þstmar dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Þaycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Þaycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation. The "baron" has been known to levy additional surtaxes on occasion, which are used to support his unusually large fleet.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Þayce.

Industries: Fishing, trade, raiding, whaling, seal-trapping.

Important Figures: Norlan (King).

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). Plant life consists of shrubs and bushes (such as juniper), while trees are coniferous—such as evergreens. Elsewhere, grasses predominate.

Further Reading: *All Into the Maelstrom*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Allstrick.

Þanifey and disreputable types that were no longer welcomed on Alphatia proper settled this cold, barren island. Despite several attempts to achieve respectability, King 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 Norlan, despite his protestations of loyalty, has caused the Þaycese Council no end of trouble.

The Land

If there was ever a place some vengeful Immortal would allot to those people He or She disliked, Qeodhar would be a likely candidate. This remote island lies north of what was once the continent of Alphatia, surrounded by the cold currents of the northern seas. The skies are always filled with leaden

clouds, and cool winds blow south from the mountains running along the northern coast of this island. That, and the presence of the sea, makes this a cool and damp place.

Towards the north, the land is mountainous, with one range stretching from west to east along the northern coast. On the north side of this range are numerous fjords, while towards the south the mountains give way to lightly forested hills, which then flatten into plains towards the sea. In the lowlands, there are scattered forests—especially towards the interior and the central portions of the southern coast—but otherwise Qeodhar Island is primarily steppes, dotted with hardy grasses and the occasional hill, and broken here and there by rivers winding their way from the mountains to the sea. Were this island a few hundred miles further south, it would truly have been a pleasant place.

The other islands which comprise this kingdom—Icehop Island and Whaler's Island—are not nearly so hospitable. Whaler's Island is in many ways little more than a jagged rock thrusting upwards from the sea floor; the coasts are rugged, and the interior is extremely hilly, verging on mountainous. A handful of isolated valleys can be found along the coasts, however, in which whalers shelter during their hunts. During the height of summer, large camps are set up in these valleys, and the inhabitants manage to sustain themselves by fishing in nearby streams, and gathering the hardy blueberries that grow on stunted shrubs nearby. Icehop Island, which lies just east of Qeodhar Island, is a barren place, populated by whalers when the season is right, and left to the elements otherwise. Only the southern portion of the island has any vegetation to speak of; the northern half of the island is bleak, windswept plains, covered with only those grasses that can survive in such a harsh climate.

The People

For many years, the people of Qeodhar were viewed in much the same way as one views Northmen in general: rustic, quick-tempered, warlike, and tough. Even King Norlan, who titled himself *kjabik* (meaning “war leader”) played upon this perception, styling himself a fighter of incredible skill and strength. It seems, however, that the Qeodharans are more complicated than one would normally assume—though on second thought this would not be overly difficult, given what sort of people they are.

It seems that there are in fact two peoples living in Qeodhar: those common Alphasians and mixed-blooded folk who populate most of the towns and villages of the island, and the fair-haired people—apparently of Northman stock—who eke out an existence in the northern and eastern reaches. While there has been some interbreeding between the two peoples over the centuries, such that Qeodharans of all types tend to be fairer in complexion than the peoples of other Naysese kingdoms, the Northmen, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the island, are shunned by many, and so retain some distinctive features. The northerners are slightly taller on average, and blond hair is very common among them, as are blue or gray eyes. Most of the men are bearded, while the women leave their hair long and unbound. Truly, I think these folk would be more at home in the Northern Reaches.

I have said that the Northmen are shunned, and that is true. Seldom are such people found in prominent positions in Qeodharan society; often they live as fishermen, whalers, simple subsistence farmers, and sometimes miners. It appears that the bulk of the prestigious trades are controlled by those of Alphasian stock, and the guilds (such that they are in Qeodhar) do not count many Northmen among their members. It is not that difficult to see that there is little love lost between the two groups.

Regardless of which group one meets, both are, by most Naycese standards, rather coarse people. Among them, you will find enjoyment of music, ale, and hearty food. It seems, though, that the northerners have a special affection for the land, more so than other Qeodharans.

Recent History

As I mentioned above, Qeodhar has long been home to the rough-cut northerners who now make the place their home; it was only in recent centuries that the island had formally become a part of the Alphatian Empire. The history of the island before that time is unremarkable, though to be honest little is known for certain, as the people of that realm did not keep written records of their early history, preserving their lore orally. Little more need be said on this matter. Of more importance, and interest, to our readers will no doubt be the antics of King Norlan.

Readers will, I am sure, remember his ill-conceived plan in recent years to involve himself in the affairs of Norwold. Needless to say, those plans backfired, costing Norlan many of his best soldiers, and forcing him to retreat to Qeodhar in disgrace. Even so, his troubles did not end, for large numbers of the indigenous fair-haired Northmen began to protest what they saw as years of discrimination and oppression—no doubt their king's loss of power and prestige strengthened their resolve. Norlan reacted predictably, putting down open rebellion with force, and purportedly encouraging the authorities to expel the "Þstmarhabners" (as the Northmen call themselves) from their homes, forcing them to live in the far north and east of the island. One need not be a seer to figure out that the Þstmarhabners would not take this lightly, and so, during the past year, civil war has bloodied the fields of eastern Qeodhar. For a time, it seemed that Norlan would prevail, for he had the backing of a number of Naycese kingdoms—which contributed an expeditionary force to aid the king. These troops, it seems, were even worse than Norlan's own men, and they soon returned to more civilized Naycese lands, once the fighting became overly vicious. Of course, the aid of a couple hundred Ostlander reavers may have had something to do with it.

Even as I write this, ensconced in the relative comfort of Farend, the battles continue. It seems as though a reversal of Norlan's fortunes may be in the offing. Should that come to pass, Nayce may have to reconsider its policies regarding the north.

Don't Miss

Should you find yourself on Qeodhar Island, the one place you should not miss is Farend, which is, without a doubt, one of the most remote settlements I have ever encountered. Here, you will see how people survive on the very edge of civilization. Farend may not compare with the more illustrious cities of the south, but considering what would otherwise be available on the island, spending the night in a rustic town inn is not that bad. At least you will have decent stone walls to protect you from the hostilities, and decent ale should that be your pleasure.

Do Miss

Unless you plan to have an armed escort, or are part of one yourself, do not venture far from Farend. The eastern regions of Qeodhar Island, especially, are rife with banditry and other turmoil, so unless you fancy getting your skull split by a Northman's ax, I would suggest you conduct your business in Farend, and then leave as soon as possible.

SUNDSVALL MAELSTROM

Location: In the center of the New Alphatian Sea, east of Ionace, north of Aquas. AS

Area: The pull of the maelstrom can be felt for miles away from its central point; the dangerous area is generally considered to be equal to that of former Sundsvall, though this may be myth rather than reality.

Population: None.

Language: None.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Controlled by the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Two-way transportation between the Floating Continent of Alphatia in the Hollow World and the Alphatian Sea on the outer world.

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: Some sea creatures venture near the maelstrom, but most avoid it.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Dariyana.

Amphimir 15: I had heard that rumor last year already. I was a freshman at the Andaire Imperial University of Magic then. I hated everyone—I still do—especially those sophomores concerned by that particular rumor. Sophomores are so mean to us—because they will become graduates at the end of the year. They are months from casting their first spell, but they let us know we're even further from it, all right. Now, I'm the sophomore this year, so it's my turn to mock those silly freshmen. That'll be fun. It'll be even more fun next year when I'm an actual aristocrat and I can bully all those undergraduates. Yeah, I know, I can't yet, but soon I'll be proficient, I'm certain of that.

Anyway, the rumor was that a group of sophomores had been recalled to the uni one month before the normal start of the academic year. [A previous Mystaran Almanac stated that freshmen were sent to the school, we don't know as yet which report is correct. Ed.] And that they weren't part of the classes for the whole year. But they graduated anyway, it was said, because they came to post-graduation classes the next year. Of course it wouldn't have been much of a story if they didn't say they spent the year in a special school for bright students—yeah right—on another plane, nothing less. Though they were aristos now, we didn't believe them—they were just trying to frighten us, or show off, depending on what rumor you heard. We're used to graduates using us as their playthings.

Yet here I am today, one month in advance, at the uni in Andaire, with about a hundred others, wondering. Hello, what's going on here? We're not mere commoners, well sorta, we're the future elite of mighty Alphatia, they could tell us. Hmm, we're not the worst of students, though, so I don't think they intend to use us as experimentation material. Okay, we're not the best either, so I doubt they're sending us to a better school—in fact the uni at the capital of Andaire is the best magic school in the world, unless its relocation from the earthquake leveled former capital at Sundsvall a few years before I became a student there damaged more than its buildings (but it didn't make a dent into its reputation, for

sure). So, another school, I don't think so. In fact it seems most of the students among those here with me that I know are rather average. Alright, including me, I suppose. It still doesn't explain anything.

I wish I had paid more attention to that rumor now.

Amphimir 16: An imperial escort. What an honor. I'd be positively thrilled if it weren't for the fact that they embark us on ships bound southward. The joke among us is that they're sneaking us out of the city under heavy guard to send us to a prison camp. Well, it sure looks like it, at any rate.

Amphimir 17: Shit, sea-sick. River-sick, really. Why's my stomach so fragile? Now, where's my stash of zonga? I know I stole some from daddy's reserve. It won't stop the throwing up, but at least I won't notice it. Some servant can clean up after me while I'm high.

Amphimir 24: Okay, Sundsvall. Gloomy, I love that. The ruins smell of death. The City Built by Magic, destroyed in the blink of an eye. There must be vampires hiding out there, away from the sun. I wonder if I could convince a handsome prince of the dark to embrace me.

What are we doing in Sundsvall?

Those quarters stink. It may have been a cozy wizard estate, but hello, it's not standing anymore. The walls of that one estate didn't crumble, true, but the place is a wreck anyway. The rubble has been cleared, and they've put a new rooftop, but that's all. Our beds are mattresses cast on the floor, and we're all bundled together. Hey, daddy pays for a private room. I want privacy. And a real bed. And a mirror. And a controlled climate, it's freaking cold here. Now I have to crowd by the fireplace, how crude.

Amphimir 25: Now we have to walk. The streets haven't been cleared to allow a carriage passage. So we walk among the debris. We move away from the harbor, into the ruined city, still in what used to be grand noble estates before the disaster, I think. We pass through and around ruined estates, bound for some destination I can't guess, circling around so much that I finally lost track of our path. I tried to memorize the way, just in case, but with all the turning and swerving I'm lost. Judging from the position of the Red Sun we're waddling in a general western direction, or maybe southwestern, toward the center of the city, I think. The imperial guards seem to know their way, though, so we kinda have to follow along.

All that walking is exhausting. I've ruined two pairs of fine shoes already with all those boulders and rocks that litter the streets—if you can still call them streets. We even have to occasionally escalate some tumbled structures. I complain to the guards, and ask for more frequent stops, but they refuse to obey me. The captain, a bored-looking noble who seems to not enjoy that assignment, has forbidden us to address him (I think he did the same with his men, too), and I'm not tempted to try and disobey. I flutter my eyelashes at his second-in-command, a sturdy fighter with dark eyes, but my sore feet and the sweat from the exertion (and I don't want to think about the condition my hair must be in) seem to have made me lose my usual charm, as the moron seems unmoved. The others aren't successful at getting us additional pauses either. After I ruin my third pair of shoes, I sit on a boulder and pout. This time I get the second's attention, and we get an unscheduled temporary halt. Most welcome. He comes next to me, I smile and am generous with my cleavage, but the worm can only lecture me about the necessity of pressing on. I get enough lecturing already, thank you, and I don't need you to tell me

what I should or shouldn't do. I'll have daddy teach you a lesson, rancid commoner, or better yet I'll do it myself, soon.

Amphimir 26: Two sleeps in a row of that treatment! Without sleep. Inadmissible. I'm dead. I'm starting to believe they're trying to kill us. If we were going someplace, they would have put commoners to work on clearing us a path. One we could ride, or sail—or they could have put a skyship at our disposal so we could have flown over all that rubble. But no, nothing of that, we are forced to sweat like slaves. Something's wrong here.

At last we arrive at our destination—or, I fear, to a stopover in our forced journey to the unknown. It probably was a pretty estate some time ago. Now, most of the extensive array of buildings are collapsed, with only a portion put back into usable condition—if you can call living in those rough, half-repaired buildings living. In the center of the estates a large pond or pool—I'd call it a lake, but within a city that seems inappropriate—is surrounded by what used to be a park and a garden, now all in disarray, with most trees fallen and the flowers replaced by wild weed. The whole estate is guarded by more imperial guards.

I'm beat, I go to sleep.

Amphimir 27: Slept like a baby. My feet are still sore, though. Actually my whole body aches. I didn't know effort could be so painful. I'm not gonna walk again ever, I tell you, I'll learn how to fly or better yet, teleport. Oh, I'll ask daddy to give me a flying carpet for my next birthday, so I can sit and fly and never walk again.

We are herded like a slave team again, and led to the lake. I guess I like to call it lake after all. I hadn't noticed yesterday, there is a whirlpool in the middle of the lake. There is a boat waiting for us, and we board it. Seems dangerous to me, to sail near that maelstrom just to reach the other side. Now I almost regret we didn't march on this one.

Hey no! I don't want to do that. That's suicide, pure and simple. If they want us dead, there are simpler ways. They say we have to plunge into the water, and swim into the maelstrom. That's pure folly! I don't want to do that, even with their breathe water spell. They say it's not dangerous, that we will be transported to another plane, and that we'll be picked up on the other side. I know better than to believe them. Unfortunately, there's no way to flee from a boat, not without magic, and I have none.

Some dolts follow the instructions blindly, so they receive a breathe water spell, plunge, swim with the maelstrom's pull, and disappear. Well, they are dead, in my opinion. The demonstration didn't do anything to convince me to follow them—more like the contrary, actually. I argue that I can't swim, but they retort I don't need to, I just have to let the maelstrom carry me to its center. There is no convincing these idiots. Desperately, I run away, but there's no place to run to—I'd already noticed that, but I ran anyway—so they captured me. They cast their spell on me, and as I order the two fellows that have seized me to let go of me they do that—only they do it above the water.

Ahh, the water is cold! They didn't provide me with a spell to protect me from the coldness of the water. I flap my arms, I scream, but that doesn't help with the swimming. The pull of the maelstrom drags me away from the safety of the ship. I keep flapping and kicking, rather than let go as they advised, as I'd rather try out the efficacy of their spell only when I have no other choice—being helplessly lost in the water is one thing, trying to breathe it is another one entirely! The center of the

whirlpool is closing fast! As much as I'd want it to be otherwise, that's where I'm headed. That's where I'm gonna die. I love you daddy.

I've reached the center, and the maelstrom pulls me under. I try to hold my breath as long as possible, but with all the flapping it doesn't last long. Must hold. Must hold. Must hold. Can't hold. I breathe water. Oh, the spell's working, I'm not drowning! I was so convinced I was gonna die that I didn't expect the spell to actually keep me alive. I keep flapping—that keeps me somewhat warm, and busy too—and go down, down, crushed by all the water around me.

Alphamir 15: The maelstrom seems to be driving me up now. Or maybe I'm so lost and confused that I can't distinguish exactly what's happening to me. I fear I've completely lost my senses.

Light! I have emerged! I'm alive! Well, I think. Where am I? That's not the lake in Sundsvall. It's a much larger lake, I can't see any shore. Great, of all the planes they sent me to the Plane of Water. I wonder what I'm supposed to do now. They said there would be someone to retrieve me, but I see no one. There's another maelstrom, am I supposed to swim toward it, and hop to yet another plane? Well, that's not what I'm gonna do, anyway—all things considered, I prefer to use my lame flapping to move away from the maelstrom, if I have the choice.

What's that sun doing? First, it's yellow. Not that I want to complain, but yellow's not the best color for a sun. I've seen the Moving Sun that color, and it's not terrible. Anyway, that's not the biggest problem. No, what I'm worried about is that it's moving. Not moving like the Moving Sun does, but moving in the sky. Where's it going like that? Oh, I see what's wrong. That's not a real world. There's nothing at the end of the horizon, just water and sky. There's nothing across the sun either. It's a flat world of water, with a sun moving in the sky according to some pattern I don't recognize yet. Great. A flat water world. Just great. I don't want to freeze to death, I don't want to drown. I want to go back to Alphatia, to daddy's. Daddy, I'm dying here, come rescue me! Daddy!

The sun is falling into the water! Sun's drowning! I think I'll follow him into that path soon. At least it's turned red, I think it's its desperate last effort before it dies. My limbs are numb, I'm so cold. I barely have the strength to flap them anymore, only shivering. I'm turning blue in my last moment, not red, so I guess I'm not a sun. I wish I were, at least I'd be warm. Maybe if that sun had fallen nearer to me it would have passed me some of its warmth.

The sun is dead now. I don't think I'll ever be able to recount the death of the sun of this water world. It's all dark now. I see dots of light in the sky, I don't know what they are. Maybe that's just me hallucinating in my last moments. I should have swum toward the maelstrom. Too late now.

I'm pulled out of the water! Lifted onto a ship. Didn't see it approach. I think it's a dream, it doesn't feel real. They hurry me inside. I have time to catch a glimpse of the ship, looks Alphatian. It's got an imperial flag. There's another flag I don't recognize, though. The men seem to be imperial marines. They speak Alphatian.

A woman attends to me. She mumbles things I don't understand, and touches me with her hand. Warmth runs through my body, and I feel better. She strips me of my wet clothes, and dresses me with dry ones. She tells me I was lucky they finally found me despite the "night," as I had been thrown out of the maelstrom in a different place than most of the others. She says I need to rest. I do.

[Continued on Grey Islands entry.]

SUNKEN ALPHATIAN MAINLAND

Location: Bottom of the Alphetian Sea, where the continent of Alphetia used to be but submerged.
AS

Area: Approx. 1,839,000 sq. mi. (4,763,010 sq. km.); the continent has been deformed in some places during the sinking, so its exact submerged size is only an estimate.

Population: None; unknown number of undead and sea denizens.

Language: None.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: None, claimed by the Alphetian Empire.

Industries: Lost artifacts, lost lore.

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: Some sea creatures venture in or near the sunken continent, and some probably inhabit it. Undead abound. Remnants of surface flora and fauna are decaying, and are gradually replaced by their sea counterparts: algae, fish, squids, aquatic beholders.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Myloptarg.

Alphetia, the lost treasure. The core of the most glorious empire, the center of civilization, now rests below the waves, shattered by the dark magics of the Glantrians. For the second time in the history of the glorious Alphetian Empire, the acts of the Followers of Fire have led to the dreadful destruction of our homeland. Without hesitation, the evil wizards that are our loathed brothers unleashed their most powerful spell upon our land, cracking it asunder, and without remorse slew millions. Were it not for the merciful Immortals that protect Alphetia, who strove to restore Alphetia in the Hollow World, and destroy the Glantrians' demoniac weapon, their misdeed would have remain unsanctioned, and in their arrogance certainly they would have destroyed the rest of the world as well. Anyway, now the remnants of beloved Alphetia lie at the bottom of the sea, albeit its highest peaks jut out as desolate reminders of past glory.

The Land

I expected to see Alphetia again, with its majestic cities stretching for miles, its lonely towers soaring toward the surface, and its many forests, plains, hills, and other landscapes alternating delightfully. But Alphetia, like its wizards, feeds on air, while water—like fire—is but a source of corruption that slowly poisons it. The deep water prevents the sun from reaching deep, and visibility is severely limited—a blessing, actually, for the blight is so widespread that seeing more than one bit of it at a time would surely have been unbearable.

The majestic cities are in ruin, as are the soaring towers, toppled by the earthquakes that shook the land during the agonizing process of the sinking, or by the infiltration of sea water into the packed earth

upon which buildings rested. Only a few structures remain standing, built directly upon solid rock, until erosion and strong currents do their work and bring them down as well.

Gone too are the forests and fields, meadows and beaches, vineyards and orchards, woods and swamps. Rivers and lakes have swelled until they engulfed everything and everyone, forming the New Alphatian Sea that covers the now sunken continent. Everything is in tatters, lifeless mementos of the wanton annihilation of the magnificent empire by its despised foes, incapable they were of achieving greatness.

The People

No one is left in sunken Alphatia; everybody has either died, moved away, or was transported to the Hollow World by the Immortals. It is possible that some wizards remained in safe places when the continent sunk, but due to the yearly failure of magic they must be protected from the sea by mundane means. Such pockets of air might exist, and indeed there are bubbles of air rising to surface, but I have seen no living Alphatian hidden or trapped in them during my explorations.

Although the continent is devoid of the living, undead abound. Our once fair continent is infested with bands of roving undead, horrible creatures that most certainly feed upon the numerous dead. The ruined streets of once majestic cities are writhing with malevolent undead. I certainly would have liked to blast some of them, but they were just too numerous. I have two contradicting theories concerning their origin: either they were raised from the dead by the entropic magics the Glantrians unleashed upon Alphatia, in which case their frenzy is temporary and they will soon wither from lack of living flesh to feed upon (most of them, anyway—unfortunately, some varieties of undead don't need flesh or blood for sustenance, and will continue to haunt Alphatia), or they are brave Alphatians who died violently by the hand of the Glantrians and were not raised by the benevolent Immortals, and returned from the dead to hunt the evil Glantrians that were the cause for this unwholesome slaughtering, their souls not at peace until their task is finished and their murderers are punished for their dark deed.

Recent History

Alphatia stood proud and glorious at the center of the civilized world, until it was suddenly hit by the dark magic of our foes, the Glantrians, who, despite our warnings against their using dark and forbidden magic, grew so desperate in the face of our righteous might that they ignored our warnings and unleashed all the power of their sorcery, gained through dark pacts with entropic forces, upon our mainland. The first blast razed our imperial capital at Sundsball, the City Built by Magic, largest city in the world and uncontested center of knowledge, instantly slaying hundreds of thousands, including our a large part of our elite, and our beloved empress. The second blast followed shortly, and it struck the entirety of Alphatia, cracking the land, which then sank beneath the sea.

Though a replica of Alphatia has been created in the Hollow World, the original continent still lies under the sea on the surface world. Many are eager to plunder the fabled continent of its riches. Some treasure-seekers are after gold and jewels, or even works of art, but the greatest of all riches are magical in nature, as many magical items, swept by the sea but kept whole by the magics that were infused into them, can be picked by the dozens. These Alphatian treasures should not be left to be pillaged by greedy barbarians, though, but be returned to their rightful owners or their heirs. Because Alphatia was such an advanced civilization compared to its puny neighbors, many also seek to wrestle knowledge beyond their grasp out of books and other scrolls they shamelessly pilfer from our sunken universities and libraries.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

As I have visited the sunken continent, I can tell you: there is nothing there that you shouldn't miss. Everything is devastated. Alphatia is now in the Hollow World, and that is where you should go instead. I am, however, curious about the new cities they are building on the sunken continent.

SURSHIELD (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeastern Bellissaria, west of the Straits of Minaea, east of Horken and Turmoil.
AS

Area: Approx. 150,000 sq. miles (382,500 sq. km).

Population: 50,000, including Spearpoint (pop. 30,000), Fort Ballarat (pop. 2,000) and Fort Merrelin (pop. 2,000).

Languages: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Military, agriculture, fishing.

Important Figures: Gratia (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: Like its neighboring Bellissarian kingdoms Surshield 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 Daralann.

The Land

Surshield was once a much larger kingdom, but was divided into two societies. Eastern Surshield consisted largely of the navy and army that protected Bellissaria from attack from the east and its dependents and suppliers, and lived under military discipline. The rest of Surshield was an anarchy, undisciplined and chaotic. The separation of these areas and creation of new kingdoms was thus an appropriate and wise measure. This has allowed the unruly peoples their own region while giving us the chance to establish proper arrangements in the new, smaller but more governable Surshield. Our new borders end just west of Fort Ballarat and Fort Merrelin, combined castles, ports, and frontier towns. At the opposite end of the kingdom is the city of Spearpoint, which is not only the largest city on Bellissaria but is the only true city on the island continent.

In between lies a vast stretch of rugged but beautiful countryside, with forests for use in shipbuilding and mines that produce iron used in forging the weapons we use. Thus even the remnant of Surshield is enough to suit our needs, and any resources or products we lack at home can, in theory at least, be imported from abroad. For example, in addition to the ships we build ourselves, we acquire some from nearby Horken.

Indeed, in concept the port city of Spearpoint could develop into a commercial, trading, and craft center for not only Surshield but all of Bellissaria and the Nayce. But the central government of

Nayce has decided that, at least for now, we should continue to devote our resources and manpower to military matters and the protection of the new empire, which is prudent but prevents us from developing other spheres of activity. Trade is thus carried out largely by itinerant Minaeans and even Minrothaddans and Thyatians from the distant west. But the region is well defended and only the most major of attacks could threaten Bellissaria. A new source of contention, however, is the withdrawal of funding Nayce once granted us. They claim they can no longer afford such largesse as they need the money to finance costly projects, and funds needed to be sent to the Randel of Veroth as well. But this was a bitter pill for the queen, as Surshield is still expected to provide for most of the defense of Bellissaria, especially by sea, so we have had our tax burden increased but no lessening of our other responsibilities.

The People

While most of the inhabitants of Bellissaria have a reputation for being both rustic and closed-mouthed around strangers (and they used to have a saying on the mainland of Alphatia that Bellissaria “was a good place to get thrown out of”), the people of Spearpoint and modern Surshield always had more in common with continental Alphatians. Sure, the anarchists were typical Bellissarians, but the part of the kingdom that forms Surshield now has always been inhabited by more gregarious folk. Perhaps it is our military and seafaring traditions, which make us more outward looking and open by nature.

We have a reputation as Bellissaria’s military kingdom, and it is true that our ships are always in top fighting shape and our soldiers well trained and alert, watchful for any attack. But we’re not just militarists. We fish and hunt, and Spearpoint is the most cosmopolitan place on all of Bellissaria, conducting commerce not only with Alphatian kingdoms but also with nearby Minaea (their pirates try to raid our shipping, piracy only happens when there’s trade to attack) and even some of the nations of Tangor. Of all of Bellissaria, Spearpoint was probably the most strongly influenced by Myletendal’s aesthetic philosophies. Sure, much of our art has a military or nautical theme, but it fits with our outlook. We also tend to have a positive outlook on life, when many other Bellissarians can be gruff and taciturn. For example, some might look on the fact that our kingdom was divided as a negative, but we tend to see it as a positive—an opportunity rather than a loss. Let those new kingdoms go their way, we’ll go ours, and everyone will benefit in the end, I say. If our attitude can rub off on the other Bellissarian kingdoms, then the island continent will become the heartland of a new and vibrant Alphatia. Here’s hoping they won’t remain set in their ways.

Don’t Miss

The city of Surshield, especially its bast fortifications and the battlements of its sea walls, which encompass not only the city itself but the port which serves both the navy and traders. The queen’s palace is a massively towering citadel, which rises twenty stories—a height reminiscent of the tallest structures of the former continent of Alphatia, and no less splendid. It is studded not only with artillery emplacements but docking terraces for skyships and artistic frescoes reflecting a military and regal theme, and is made entirely out of stunning black basalt. Its base juts out from a promontory in the bay that forms Surshield’s harbor, and many naval vessels are able to dock in its ground level.

Do Miss

Somewhere in the mountains of the interior is a hidden military base, in secret chambers that honeycomb one of the peaks. This facility was warded by powerful magics and intended as both a final

refuge in time of attack and as a research facility. When the Week Without Magic afflicted the world back in AD 2009 [AC 1009. Ed.], the wards failed. A horde of monsters from the depths of the earth swarmed up from the tunnels below and seized control of this stronghold and held it ever since. Numerous strike forces have been sent to recover it, but all efforts at dislodging the monsters—which seem to consist of an alliance of humanoids led by a council of three red dragons—have failed. The area has since been quarantined, with base camps established around the mountains to contain this menace. Tribes of vile tasloi infest the forests as well, attacking unwary travelers but cravenly avoiding battle with the military forces sent to clear them from the area.

TURMOIL (Territory of)

Location: Southern Bellissaria, between Cirundrynn to the west and Surshield to the east (Turmoil used to be part of Surshield). **AS**

Area: Approximately 47,138 sq. mi. (122,087 sq. km.).

Population: 35,000.

Languages: Alphatian (Bellissarian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: None since Turmoil is an anarchy.

Government Type: Anarchy, though technically considered a kingdom of Nayce.

Industries: Presumably agriculture and crafts, but otherwise unknown. A lot of people probably steal or take what they need from those less skilled or less powerful than themselves.

Important Figures: Jeremol the Deceptive (Leader of the Traders' Guild—a thieves' guild), Rorterm the Stern (Leader of the Security Guards—a group of brigands who take payment for not attacking people), Darkcloak (Newly-settled Foreign Alphatian Wizard).

Flora and Fauna: Turmoil consists mostly of farmlands and hills. There are a few sparse forests, but little else, except for the mountains of the Surshield Wall mountain range itself. A few tasloi may be found in the forests, but these are more numerous in Cirundrynn. On the other hand, there are a fair amount of wolves, hill giants in the northern hills, and even a few dragons are rumored to abound here.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Graltarnim.

I've been asked by the editors of this "almanac" thing to describe what I know of the new Naycese "kingdom" known as Turmoil.

Well, first of all, let me say that I never sought to go there in the first place. I had actually considered going the long way around Bellissaria through the Sea of Zamara to Spearpoint, but decided against it due to the Jennite uprisings on the Esterhold Peninsula and the possibility of Minaeen pirates. Instead, the Wabe Turtle went south after I had collected my shipment of grain in Alinquim in my fair homeland of Dawnrim. I intended to sail along the Bellissarian coast, straight to Spearpoint without stops, but during the journey, we were hit by a massive storm. We lost Tonarkas and Melliran, two of my most experienced hands, and were forced to seek shelter in a port where we could also repair the ship. South Harbor in Turmoil had a bad reputation, but there was no alternative—it was the closest port and we would have trouble just getting there in one piece.

We did make it there, but the reception was hardly welcoming. As soon as we had docked, without help I might add, an odd-looking character walked unto the ship and informed us that we had to pay him a toll for staying here. This surprised me because Turmoil is an anarchy, so I didn't expect it. As we debated, a group of seven soldiers suddenly walked aboard as well and informed us that the fellow was trying to swindle us out of money. Apparently they were correct because he chose to jump over the side rather than face the accusations. As I was about to thank the leader of the soldiers, he informed us that

they were harbor guards who would loyally protect our interests while we were here... for a price. I might have suspected—mercenaries.

Paying these soldiers-for-hire would severely cut our earnings, but it was clear that there was little choice—if we didn't, they might have tipped off someone that an unprotected ship was in the harbor. I guess we were lucky that our cargo was more valuable than the money we paid them! It is clear to me that all the rumors of the people here are true. They claim they value their complete freedom and independence above all else. All I can say to that is that if this is what "complete freedom and independence" is, they can keep it for all I care! When I asked if no one was in control of South Harbor, I was told that there were several leaders of local "organizations" who pulled a lot of weight in the city, but it was best not to get their attention. The way these were described, they sounded more like guilds of thieves and other criminal organizations than genuine city representatives, though. There are apparently several smaller organizations, such as the City Watch, to whom our mercenaries belonged, but the primary players seemed to be the Traders' Guild, a guild of thieves led by Jeremol the Deceptive, masquerading as merchants, and the Security Guards, commanded by Korterm the Stern, which sounded more like a group of brigands who demand money in exchange for protecting people from "hostile folk." No doubt those "hostile folk" would likely be the very Security Guards themselves in case someone doesn't pay them!

The next problem was getting the ship fixed. Our hired mercenaries shocked me again by informing me that there is no organized means by which to do so. The services to accomplish the goal do exist, but they cannot be trusted, so if I wanted my ship fixed, I had better oversee the entire effort myself. When I expressed my doubts about how a society could function like this, I was told that the people of Turmoil valued their freedom above all else, so they were willing to deal with restrictions such as these in exchange for the sense of liberty they enjoyed, as such was their price of freedom! Personally, I don't see their argument as being anything but flawed—there is enough freedom in the rest of Alphatia, but anarchy is not freedom, at least not in my book. I have to admit, though, that the people of Turmoil are rather consistent on this point. A few of our sailors, who naturally agreed with my view on the matter, got into a lot of trouble when they made the same argument in one of the taverns of South Harbor and so started a brawl. One of our sailors was killed, but two inhabitants also met with fatal ends in that brawl, but because there really are no authorities in Turmoil, there has been no legal consequence over the matter. After that it was clear that we had best keep our people on the Wabe Turtle at all times, however. Although I don't agree with the philosophy of Turmoil, the incident does say a lot about the feelings of the people who live here. They do seem to realize what consequences their lack of authority imposes upon them, yet they are willing to accept the presence of nefarious people who will exploit the situation to their own advantage over the security of local authorities. We experienced this attitude among the majority of the inhabitants in Turmoil throughout our stay here.

There was little choice so I chose two of the mercenaries as well as Jomat and Trillese, two of my crewmembers, to go with me. First we went to a company that specializes in this sort of thing. After discussing the price for an hour, they even dared to demand that half of the money be paid in advance (which took us another half hour to head off). Then we had to ride off with the workers to secure wood in the nearby forest, which some of them called the Spectre Woods (don't ask me why). Along the way, we had to fight off several packs of wolves and some groups of brigands. When I commented on this constant danger, I just received a surprised look and was then told that we could expect more attacks on our way back because then we would have our cargo. Oh wonderful!

The actual acquisition of the wood we needed was about as uneventful as I could have expected (and secretly hoped), except for an attack from some tasloi, obviously. I swear, if rogues and brigands aren't trying to steal your possessions here, and wolves are not trying to eat you, then there are always humanoids to cause trouble. Some of the people we met suggested that things had even been worse, only a foreign wizard (foreign meaning from some other Alphetian kingdom), whom they knew only as Darkcloak, had recently settled in the area, and fear of his powers had cut down the monster activity some. At first I was relieved at hearing about this, but persistent rumors about this Darkcloak character gives me little cause to feel relieved—apparently he just settled down and used magic to create a house, which he subsequently turned into a tower somehow. The local population weren't happy at this, but when they tried to confront him on the matter (or so I was told), he had cast horrible spells of mass-destruction at them, and only after half of them had been killed or incapacitated had he suggested that he would leave them alone if they did the same! Some rumors claimed some other foreign Alphetian wizard had done something similar further to the east, but perhaps we were just hearing different versions of the same story.

On our way back, we did encounter more opposition, just as the soldiers had predicted. Life here is harsh, and if you have something you must fight hard to keep it. We learned that the hard way when we lost Jomat on the way back. All I can say is that we made it back, finished the ship in a few days, and then left as fast as we could.

I cannot imagine why anyone would choose to live like this. The freedom to do whatever you want may sound enticing, but with no authorities, there is no way you can be certain anyone does what they're told, and nothing protects you from attack by complete strangers. The people of Turmoil seem to think that this is a price worth paying for the total freedom they enjoy. As an Alphetian, I value freedom as much as the next person, but there is a difference between liberty and anarchy! As a commoner, I obviously have less freedom than an aristocrat, but I still have some form of security in the imperial laws—if someone killed my crew, they would be held accountable and be punished for it. I shudder to think that if someone had chosen to attack the Wabe Turtle and kill us all in South Harbor, then there would have been no authorities to care about the matter at all!

Don't Miss / Do Miss

The town of South Harbor is considered by many to be the capital of Turmoil for the simple reason that maps of the area show no other towns or major settlements. It does seem to be the most city-like place in Turmoil, but it's scarcely a nice place—it is doubtful you'll ever find a more disgusting hive of filth and brigands. And it's an ugly town too! The forest called Spectre Woods lies nearby, and the newly-constructed tower of the foreign Alphetian wizard, Darkcloak, is rumored to lie somewhere to the north, though this is unconfirmed.

I'd say you should do all you could to avoid Turmoil altogether. There is little to see, and what you can see is usually ugly, hostile, or both.

VEROTH (Kingdom of)

Location: Northern Bellissaria, south of the Alphatian Sea, west of Notrion, north of Lagrius, east of Dawnrim. AS

Area: Approx. 125,000 sq. mi. (323,750 sq. km). Area is approximate as there is still dispute with Notrion as to where exactly to place the borders.

Population: 30,000.

Languages: Alphatian (Randellyn dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Military, Agriculture.

Important Figures: Verothrics (King).

Flora and Fauna: Like most Bellissarian kingdoms, Veroth's animal and plant life was largely brought in from elsewhere. A large portion of the country consists of plains and light forests, and thus one may find many typical woodland animals, such as deer, foxes, squirrels, birds, and bobcats. Wolves are not unknown, but rare. Most of the plant life consists of varieties of deciduous trees (particularly cherry, oak, and maple), grasses, and shrubs. Those regions settled by the Verothians also contain vineyards.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Trastamar.

Our kingdom was carved out of Notrion lands in AD 2016 [AC 1016. Ed.], to create a new fatherland for the Randel folk on Mystara. This land, while technically owned by others, had not been put to proper use, so we seized it and then convinced the Naycese government to acknowledge our claim, which was justified by our military power. The land is suited to our needs, with wide plains and terrain suitable for the military training to which all Randel devote their attentions. Notrion serves as our commissariat, their role is to provision our people so that we can devote ourselves to military and magical pursuits. However, they quibble over prices and terms, when they should simply send us what we requisition. After all, we put out lives on the line fighting, and should not have to barter for what we need, especially since pay is not always forthcoming from the Nayce [and Veroth has developed little of an economy of its own to support its militaristic establishment. Ed.]. Notrion agreed to provide us with grain, and if they continue to bicker over terms we will compel them to live up to their obligations. We used Thyatian laborers to construct barracks within fortified encampments to serve as our settlements, as well as two fortresses in AD 2016 guarding the mouth of the Lagrius River. But the Naycese government, in their treaty with the Thyatians, agreed to send these prisoners back to Thyatis

when by all rights they should have served out their lives as our slaves. This stripped us of a needed labor force for our mundane needs, a quite short-sighted policy.

The resort town planned by Targrus along the shores of Lake Lagrius has had a hard time turning a profit, as most Bellissarians seem insular and home-bound and not much interested in traveling to tourist resorts, and the town is out of the way and hard to get to for most other Alphatians. Many don't seem to have the funds to spend on frivolities these days, part of the fiscal crunch and no doubt due to the necessity to devote all efforts to building up the military strength and prestige of Nayce. The climate here is also not alike that of Randel itself, so producing our vintages has not gone as well as first expected, with most of year's wine being too vinegary for drinking.

These problems, and the reluctance of the Naycese central government to provide the funds we require, has necessitated dramatic cuts in our training budgets. This is an unconscionable state of affairs that may lead to the troops losing their keen fighting edge, which has made the folk of Randel renowned for their combat prowess throughout the Alphatian Empire. The political authorities of Nayce also have refused to grant to us either authorization or requisition of funds to stamp out the rebellion in Esterhold, but many of us are not going to accept this situation much longer. If need be, we'll organize a punitive force to sail to Esterhold on our own account and teach the Jennites a lesson they will not soon forget. We can then seize mining facilities in the area and conscript Jennite labor to operate them, which will provide us with the wealth we require for our needs.

ATLAS OF THE SEA OF DAWN

Introduction to the Sea of Dawn

To the east of the Old World, where the sun rises every morning, lies the Sea of Dawn. It is a place rumored to be mystical in nature by many tavern tales, and perhaps it is. Three exotic cultures can be found in this area, notably the Thothians, the Ochaleans, and the Pearl Islanders.

The rest of the nations, however, are either Thyatian or Alphetian 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 Alphetian 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 Alphetian tongues are widely 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 Alphetia. Since the sinking of Alphetia, the former Eastern Sea of Dawn has now become part of the New Alphetian Sea. The Sea of Dawn ends northward when it reaches the coast of Norwold, and its southern end borders the Jungle Coast on Dabania. West of the southern Sea of Dawn is the Sea of Dread, while to the east is the Bellissarian Sea.

Correspondents for the Sea of Dawn

This year, pending the result of the census, the same reports as you could read last are recopied almost verbatim for the Naycese kingdoms, with only a few minor modifications where necessary. Next year should prove a good opportunity to offer you brand new correspondences.

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

Aiklin

A man who surely needs no introduction, Aiklin is a renowned researcher of air-related magics at the University of Air Magics in Feather Fall, Aeria. He has held this prestigious post for many years, and has more recently assumed rulership over the island following the aftermath of the Great War [the previous king died in the earthquakes following the sinking of Alphatia. Ed.]. This elder mage brings us news from Aeria, and in doing so treats us to a sample of his sometimes rousing speeches.

Allstrick

For those not privy to the man that is Allstrick, he is a half-breed. Born to a Shiye mother and Alphatian father, Allstrick has lived a long life as an adventurer both inside and outside of the Alphatian Empire. He outlived the dangers and retired from the profession, ironically enough taking up residence in Glantri. During the war, Allstrick sent his son back to mainland Alphatia where he hoped he would be safe. He himself moved the rest of his household to a residence in Mirros to wait out the war.

With Alphatia's sinking Allstrick naturally assumed his son had perished. With the divulgence of Alphatia's survival in Hollow World, he began planning a venture to visit the Naycese lands. Rumors persist that he wishes to reassert his prestige upon his countrymen to gain access to the Hollow World. We took advantage of this trip and approached Allstrick on reporting what he saw during his travels; he readily agreed and we look forward to his reports.

Demetius Vannopolus

A career officer in the Thyatian Army, General Vannopolus has been stationed on the Isle of Dawn off and on for over a decade, first fighting against the Alphatian invasion and later as military administrator in the central highlands of Dunadale. His interests go beyond the military, and he has a reputation for showing concern for the welfare of the common people of Dunadale. His insights into the land and people of Dunadale proved to be extremely helpful during this past year. For Thyatis, we are proud to have several close-to-power correspondents, including Stefania Torion herself!



Festebanessendrama

Formerly a worker in the once-burgeoning tourist trade of Rainbow Park, Festebanessendrama fled her home during the Thyatian invasion of AC 1010 for the comparative safety of Skytyr. There she hoped to rebuild her life, only to find her new home threatened by the most recent Jennite uprising, which led to widespread destruction in Esterhold [see the AC 1017 almanac. Ed.]. Hearing that the Thyatian settlers had left Gaity, Festebanessendrama returned to her former home, and sends us this year's overview of the island territory.

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 Elfín

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 since retired from her adventuring career and now lives in Jerendi 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 pursuits, 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.

Teldremon

Teldremon was, in earlier times, a fairly successful customs broker, based in the port town of Aegopoli, in Aegos. During the Great War, and the subsequent Thyatian invasion of the island, he fled with his family to Edairo, there to wait out the hostilities, and ultimately returned to Aegopoli in AC 1017 to resume his trade, only to find himself in competition with the shrewd Thyatian and Minrothaddan merchants of the Thyatian Quarter. Teldremon shares his perspective of his home island for us.

Thalia “Red Sheaf” Torres di Lopez

Accompanying Allstrick is Thalia “Red Sheaf” Torres di Lopez. Thalia is a half-breed from the Belcadiz Principality in Glantri. Allstrick and her had been adventuring companions for years; rumors persist she was a primary influence in his settling in Glantri before the Great War. She is not the mother of Allstrick’s son, however the two have become romantically involved since his birth and his real mother’s departure. So close are they that Thalia left Glantri to stay with Allstrick in Mirros.



Vivianna Romanones



An advisor and supporter of Eusebius, Lady Romanones is one of the empire’s special envoys. Her duties demand a considerable amount of travel throughout the region under Thyatian influence, and she has been kind enough to provide us with some unclassified reports of these areas. A strikingly beautiful but headstrong woman, Lady Romanones is a skilled negotiator known for her dedication to Thyatis and its interests. She is a strong proponent of reform in Thyatis, and of doing the right thing. Some of her detractors claim she is willing to use any means to achieve what she believes is right, but we can only say she deserves praise for the insightful reports she has graciously sent us. We know our readers will find her unique insight into the Thyatian mindset interesting.

Atlas

AEGOS (Kingdom of)

Location: Island in the Alatian Islands chain, south of the Isle of Dawn, east of Echalea. **SD**

Area: 65,846 sq. mi. (170,540 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000, including 5,000 in the Thyatian Quarter (Aegopoli), 1,000 in Aegopoli, 500 in Pittston, 360 in Akethepsur, 280 in Apimonsur, 260 in Ptoteptah, 250 in Ptabistah, 200 in Selenion.

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Thyatian Standard also very common: emperor (5 gp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation. Thyatian taxes are paid in the Thyatian Quarter, with 20% going to the Thyatian treasury.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade.

Important Figures: No king or queen at present. Francesca Egidio (Thyatian Consulate), Delsel Oaktree (Assistant Consulate).

Flora and Fauna: The island 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 Teldremon.

The Land

The island of Aegos is a large and fertile one, but ravaged, with a mixed Alphatian and Thothian population [mostly Alphatian. Ed.], and a few remaining Thyatians outside the so-called "Thyatian Quarter." The land is good for both grazing herds and growing crops. Our location is convenient for trade, but also for invasion and war. We never quite recovered either our population or our prosperity after the emperor uprooted everyone in the 1730s [AC 730s. Ed.], and more recently the empress sent our best soldiers down the shaft at Pittston, from which they never returned. This happened just in time to leave us at the mercy of Thyatian corsairs, which ravaged our coasts during the Great War, and also left us with only ill-trained levies in the face of the later invasion and conquest by Thyatian fleets. Thus, "getting shafted" has become slang among us for being unexpectedly and undeservedly cheated. We were then visited by the attack of a huge, hideous creature out from the bowels of the earth, which disrupted much of the island and further caved in the shaft, preventing further efforts at

finding out what happened to our lost warriors. Our heroic king, Dromedon, was slain while battling—and defeating—this vile creature. But as distressing as this was, it was outdone by the swarms of rapacious tax agents sent by our masters, the Council of Nayce, when they recovered the island from the Thyatians. Alas, these men claimed that we owed the government for their liberation of Aegos and needed to pay for the cost of protecting it from future attacks by the Thyatians. Thus they imposed exactions and defense levies above and beyond the normal taxes [beyond what is listed in Taxes above. Ed.]. They have sent out troops to garrison the island, billeting them in our homes, and we are expected to provision them out of our crops without remuneration, it being considered owed to them by us, and thereby they eat us out of house and home. If Dromedon had lived, perhaps he would have been able to protect us from this fate, but alas the fates left us at the mercy of the whims of these officials.

The People

Most of the settlers sent out by the Thyatian Emperor after they occupied our fair island left in the wake of their withdrawal, going to the Thyatian territories of the Isle of Dawn or to the Pearl Islands or concentrated themselves in their “Thyatian Quarter” of Aegopoli, which remained under the jurisdiction of the Thyatian Empire and is roughly four square miles in area. [The Thyatian Quarter also includes several hundred Minrothaddans. Ed.] Those few Thyatians who considered staying were most onerously beset by the tax agents, and thus they too soon decided to leave. So at least there was a silver lining in the dark cloud of tax collectors and indolent soldiers. With the closing of the pit at Pittston, many jobs dried up and craft shops that used to serve the mining facilities closed, and we have become an island of sleepy farms and herds again.

However, the Thyatians were ceded docking facilities in Aegopoli, which were considered run-down, but which they quickly and efficiently have developed into a superb port and constructed numerous warehouses and the like, and walled off their compound. Even some Alphatian businessmen have moved their shops into this area, which is considered sovereign Thyatian territory, and thus isn’t disturbed by the tax agents or soldiers that bedevil the more honest Alphatians of Aegos. Cunning and devious Thyatians thus prosper while decent Alphatians are denied the opportunities that are by rights ours. This was probably the Thyatian scheme all along, a treacherous plot to grow wealthy at our expense, while we are impoverished. They must have bribed many Naycese officials so that we would be despoiled by corrupt tax agents and greedy soldiers but they would avoid the blame for it all.

AERIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Island in the Alatian Islands chain, southeast of the Isle of Dawn, northeast of Aegos.
SD

Area: 49,384 sq. mi. (127,905 sq. km.).

Population: 17,000, including 10,000 in Feather Fall (includes 5,000 students), 650 in Anumoneh, 450 in Rabestah, 400 in Tephtah, 300 in Tephotepteh.

Languages: Alphatian (Alatian dialect, with some other dialects among the students). Thothian also spoken in some villages.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, plus a 5% tax on the wages of Aeria's wizards and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Nayrese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Nayrese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture and teaching of magic.

Important Figures: Aiklin (King, General and Headmaster of the University).

Flora and Fauna: The island has normal animals and plants found for lands of tropical plains, hills and forest (which are too numerous to all list here). Most of Aeria is wilderness, and almost any type of monster can be found here due to the presence of the university and the more recent escape of monsters from Gaity, plus many exotic herbs grown for use by the school.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Aiklin.

Aeria, with its school of air magics at Feather Fall, is far and away the most important of the Alatian Islands. After a brief accommodation with the Thyatians, we have resumed our relationship with the Alphatian Empire of Nayce, though not without some difficulties which I will describe shortly.

The Land

The island itself is large and well suited to the needs of our school, with farmers toiling at our behest to provide us not only with crops and meats for our gastronomic needs, but growing special herbs and even raising creatures for use in spell research and enchantment. Other commoners are allowed to live in Feather Fall itself to operate establishments at our behest and convenience, for relaxation and provisioning of the school itself, and to guard the facilities. Many of those who toil are of Thothian extraction, as those of that race are known for their disposition to serving quietly and competently. A small port provides for the importation of whatever is not locally produced, so that every convenience is at the disposal of the deserving staff and students.

The People

Most of those who operate establishments within Feather Fall are of good Alphatian bloodlines, though it is true that of late most of the ships that dock here are from foreign lands, Karamaikos,

Minrothad, and even Thyatis, but these merchants sell their goods, buy others, and then sail on, thus fulfilling a proper role of serving our needs. We let—indeed welcome—others bear the burden of such base commerce, as it allows us Alphatians to devote our attention to the important matters of magical study.

Some within Nayce have, and continue to, criticize the temporary accommodation we made with the Thyatians, but would they rather have seen our institution ruined by war? Nay, nay, three times nay I say thee—we preserved our institution during those difficult times as we needed, and shucked off the Thyatian yoke as soon as the opportunity arose. The Thothians, at least, understand. Any who have trouble seeing why we did as we did should visit Gaity and see what the alternative could have been.

But now I must turn to describe the difficulties under which we have had to work since the restoration [this is what the re-establishment of relations with the rest of the Alphatian kingdoms through the formation of Nayce is described as by the people of Aeria. Ed.]. Many who did not face the same circumstances we did have contempt for the decisions we made, and look down upon us, while needing—and exploiting—the facilities of our university. They insisted that we assist the barbarous Karameikans in constructing a skyship, and take in Karameikan students and teach them how to do so. As if the Thyatian barbarians having access to this knowledge was not bad enough, and yes I agree that was an unwelcome development, but circumstances and fate forced that upon us, we had no choice. Then, though, many of the same well-meaning lords within Nayce who were appalled by the Thyatians gaining this knowledge pushed us into providing it to the Karameikans as well, though no circumstances compelled us to share it with those barbarians! However, we at the school did as best we could to limit the knowledge the Karameikans were actually taught, so at least they will have difficulty producing skyships on their own, unaided.

Even more, though, beyond this, many in the Council of Nayce decided that our role should be that of enchanting skyships for the military. They seem to have forgotten that the purpose of the University of Air Magics is to teach and conduct research, and they are treating us as little more than commoner ship builders, expecting us and our students to devote all of our time to enchanting skyships! Studies and research have suffered considerably, as we have hardly any time to teach or even advance our studies. Aeria's budget has been distorted badly as well, as we've had to cut many teaching programs in order to fund the enchantment of skyships (the Nayce government expects a lot of ships but does not provide sufficient funding for them). We've even drawn down our endowments and cash reserves during this time, to the point where the treasury has been emptied and we've been compelled by circumstances to sell some parts of our collection of rare curios to wealthy foreign interests. The Nayce sent a modest influx of new immigrants to expand the construction yards, but these persons have the manners of sailors and dock workers, they do not fit in with the university environment of contemplation and inquiry which I have tried to foster throughout my tenure as chancellor of the university, and now they're talking about settling mere refugees here! This is a school, not a labor camp! But we have little political influence in the Nayce Council at present, due to their disdain for our brief, unwilling affiliation with the Thyatians, and the discredit that those who decide political policy have for our opinions now. Some are musing that perhaps we would be better off if we forged closer ties to Thothia, which at least has the political influence to make their voice heard in the council's deliberations, but I hope to maintain the university's independence. Adding insult to injury they've even imposed an additional tax upon the income of the wizards of Aeria, something I can see doing to commoners, but such exactions should not be imposed

upon the aristocracy. Things cannot be allowed to continue this way for long. This is a place of learning, not a shippard, and we are aristocrats, not serbants!

Don't Miss

The university grounds in Feather Fall. Our community is just large enough to suit our needs without the bustle and noise of a city, with glorious edifices constructed over the past three centuries by the finest masters of arcane architecture, wondrous buildings that almost seem to float in the air with only the most slender and delicate attachments to the ground, just to allow entry and egress from the buildings. Some of these structures were damaged and one or two even fell, along with the floating buildings we had, when magic failed back in AD 2009 [AC 1009. Ed.], but the damaged ones have been repaired and structurally improbed since then so that they can withstand the Day Without Magic. Alas, the floating buildings are gone now, as are the toppled ones, but the rubble has long since been removed and open areas created as a result. It is too bad that these areas are now usually filled with dry-docks for the enchantment of skyships, for I would have preferred to turn them into auditoriums and astrological observation facilities (much needed now that the facilities at Starpoint are no longer available), but one makes due as best one can, and in any case the funds I had hoped to use for these facilities have long since been spent on—what else?—military skyships for the Navy.

Of the buildings that still soar over Feather Fall, the Magnificent Library of Glorious Air Magics is the most impressible, rising as a spiral or spindle majestically over the town. The few minor cracks that appeared along its shell during the Week Without Magic actually add to its charm, giving it a sense of both great age and durability. My own suite, the Offices of the Exalted Chancellor of the Glorious University of Air Magics, sit atop this spire. They used to be within one of the floating buildings (which thankfully I wasn't in when it fell), but circumstances compelled them to be moved to here, which is fine since it still provides a splendid view of Feather Fall and the nearby lands and waters.

CAERDWICCA (Barony of)

Location: Southern coast of the Isle of Dawn, southwest of the Great Escarpment, north of Aegos.
SD

Area: 17,459 sq. mi. (45,220 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000, including 1,500 in the town of Caerdwick; about twice that if you count the numerous pirates that answered the baron's call last year, and are anchored at the town of Caerdwick or elsewhere in the barony.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian and Redstone dialects both common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect), Klantyre (among the McKhomaag clan members).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, part of the Province of Meridia, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, trade, piracy.

Important Figures: Uthgaard McKhomaag (Baron).

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus.

Caerdwicca is a large and prominent Thyatian barony on the southern shores of the Isle of Dawn, often believed to be part of the Province of Meridia (Furmenglaiwe still claims part of that province as land it legitimately owns, a mapper's nightmare). The inhabitants of Caerdwicca are noted for their rakishness.

The Land

Caerdwicca lies along the eastern rim of the Province of Meridia, where the Afon Du River empties into the Alatian Sea. The territories of the barony also run along the northeastern shores of the Straits of Barbarossa. These coastal areas are the most settled and developed portions of Caerdwicca, though there is one village, Lindum, located inland near the forests of Meridia.

The coastal lands of Caerdwicca consist of bluffs overlooking beaches along the Alatian Sea, with many treacherous offshore reefs. These bluffs are often broken by coves and lagoons, which are too frequently the hideouts and lairs for the buccaneers and corsairs that infest the Straits of Barbarossa.

The town of Caerdwick itself, as well as nearby McKhomaag Castle, is built on one of these bluffs, a port in this region and one of the few havens for fishing and trading vessels. [Many say that the majority of ships here actually do more piracy than honest trade and fishing. Ed.]. Approximately a

dozen miles north of Caerdwick Town, in the midst of the gulf, lays a rocky isle of seagulls and pelicans, about a hundred square miles in area. A lighthouse on the isle is operated by a small leper colony, which does some light farming and has some sheep, goats, chickens, and cows to provide for their own needs.

Inland Caerdwicca consists of rolling plains, with true hills around the Carreg Brynniau region. In those hills there are a series of dolmen—mysterious stone monuments—which are believed to have been constructed by fairies. Nearby, around the village of Lindum, is the best agricultural land, though it is mainly used as pasturage for sheep and other herd animals.

The treacherous Straits of Barbarossa, off of the barony's eastern coast, have precious few narrow sea lanes that are safe for shipping. The rest of the straits are festooned with coral reefs and shallows, which only fast, shallow-draft vessels that know the region well are able to navigate safely. These prey on the slower trading vessels that must sail straight through the narrow trade lanes. The pirates dart in like sharks, and only well-protected vessels with good captains, or those who are able to buy off the pirates with protection money, pass through here safely. Many corsairs of the region, it is said, once had a concord with the knaves and pirates of Ne'er-do-well, but this league between them seems to have fractured during the Great War, and the two groups are now antagonistic rivals.

I should mention one other danger for those traveling the Straits of Barbarossa: sudden massive whirlpools can open up and swallow an unwary and unprepared vessel, never to be seen again. The merchant-princes of Minrothad and others with knowledge of water-related magics can help guide one through these dangers, but less able vessels are advised to dock at Furmenglaiwe or sail south through the Sea of Pearls rather than the straits.

The People

Caerdwicca was founded by the McKhomaag Clan, men of Klantyrrian descent who left Glantri after that nation's Light of Rad declaration, and emigrated to Thyatis. This family, known for its brave and worthy fighters, served the empire as military officers. When Emperor Sabrionus I began a series of colonization efforts, the clan managed to secure a fief for itself on the Isle of Dawn. Caerdwick Village was subsequently founded in AC 912.

During the Alphatian Spike Assault of 959, Darragh McKhomaag, a naval officer and the clan's patriarch at the time, led a daring assault against the Alphatian ships around the city of Thyatis as part of Thincol's counter-strikes against them. Though Darragh died during the battle, his quick wit and valor led to the capture or destruction of a number of Alphatian vessels, crippling their fleet and making subsequent counterattacks to recover Thyatian portions of the Isle of Dawn possible. As a result of Darragh's bravery, Thincol, the new emperor, posthumously upgraded Darragh's fief into a barony. Thus, his son and heir, Malachy McKhomaag, inherited his title and became the first living Baron of Caerdwicca.

The McKhomaags are a fiery, hot-tempered bunch, known for their combativeness but also for their gregarious nature. They will brawl with you one moment, then pick you up off the floor, slap you on the back, and share a beer with you. The settlers they have attracted to the barony are much the same, though hardened sea dogs are increasingly common, finding a kindred spirit in the current baron, Uthgaard McKhomaag.

Recent History

Uthgaard spent the recent war raiding Alphatian shipping in the Alatian Sea, having good success doing so, a bright spot in an otherwise disappointing war for Thyatis. As a result of this, the Alphatians tried to take Caerdwicca during the war, besieging Castle McRhomaag for a time, but they were eventually forced to withdraw after having suffered considerable losses. Some say Uthgaard continues to sponsor piracy and is a buccaneer himself, and there are even rumors that he has a hidden grotto used as a base for pirates somewhere in Caerdwicca, but imperial officials have never been able to confirm any of these rumors. In any case, the population of Caerdwicca has grown significantly since the end of the wars, as a result of the increased colonization program, as well as the special efforts of the baron to attract settlers he finds suitable. Caerdwicca's main settlement has grown so much, indeed, that it is now classified as a small town rather than a village. Uthgaard has also expanded by absorbing some of the nearby villages that had been in the hands of petty lords, who had often behaved more like bandits than nobles.

EKTO (Kingdom of)

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

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

Population: 28,000 (1,000 in the city of Ekto). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Thyatian Standard also very common: emperor (5 gp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, mining, metallurgy, and reconstruction.

Important Figures: Tristan (King and General).

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 in 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 probed themselves to be casualties. There are numerous foreign Alphatians in Ekto working to rebuild the city.

Located where it is, Ekto is placed in a highly strategic position. Nayce has recognized this and there is a sizable military presence within the kingdom. King Tristan rules Ekto and commands the kingdom's armed forces. He is a pleasant man, with a deep conviction to his position. Personally I think that he would prefer military command to his kingship. Allstrick knows him from somewhere, and we found ourselves his guests for most of our week-long stay in the city. How they knew each other is still a mystery to me, as they would often begin speaking in the Alphatian tongue, when discussing the "old days." Since I have but a fleeting grasp of the language, I can only wonder.

Recent History

Ekto is a strange place. It is said that it was once Thothian until the Alphatians conquered those people and accepted them into the empire. Since then the two have forged a deep pact of mutual respect... at least as mutual as can be expected by the Alphatians and their views of other peoples. Following the Great War, Thyatis took advantage of Alphatia's demise and began a systematic effort to assimilate the scattered Alphatian lands. However, Alphatian resolve proved greater. Though Thyatian pushes reclaimed much of their pre-war holdings and a few Alphatian ones, the Alphatians of Ekto chose to abandon their kingdom, putting it to the torch along the way. Surely the Alphatians must thoroughly despise the Thyatians to raze their own lands.

Eventually the Thyatian advances were checked and pushed back by Thothian and Alphatian forces. A true peace was gained by the Treaty of Dawn. Soon after Ekto was given independence and its own king. Following Thothia's example, Ekto joined Nayce. Under the banner of Nayce, Ekto has begun the reconstruction process. For the time being, Ekto is aided by imperial grants and deferral of its taxes to the imperial treasuries. Much of its displaced population has 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.

Thothia re-annexed Ekto in M 2017 [AC 1017. Ed.].

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.

FURMENGLAIBE (County of)

Location: Southwestern coast of Isle of Dawn. *SD*

Area: 9,875 sq. mi. (25,575 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000, including 2,000 in the community of Furmenglaibe.

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

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing (both rather sparse and unrewarding).

Important Figures: Phileus Furmenglaibe (Count), Lyra Furmenglaibe (Countess).

Flora and Fauna: Furmenglaibe consists mostly of moors and rolling hills with shrubs and a few scattered woods of ashes, yews and the occasional pine tree. Small ponds also dot the countryside, where sheep and goats are the most common sight. Wild goats and boars and packs of wolves are also common for the shepherds and farmers of the region, who use brave shepherd dogs to protect their cattle and farms. Many unpleasant creatures can be found in Furmenglaibe 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 Furmenglaibians 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 Furmenglaibe is "the Gateway to the Darkworld," as many of its inhabitants call it.

The Land

Rolling hills and great expanses of moors dominate the County of Furmenglaibe. Some patches of scrub trees and gaunt isolated birches and ashes may be encountered up and down the hills of the region, but to call those real woods would be an insult to Mother Nature (especially for me). Moors are the common terrain here, and many people dedicate their lives to raising goats and sheep that produce a fine quality of wool (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 sheep. 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 Furmenglaibe, 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. Furmenglaibe 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 Furmenglaibe, where the count and countess have built the only existing port of the entire domain. A four yard wide street of cobblestones leads from the port 200 yards up to the fortified town of Furmenglaibe, built around the imposing building known as Castle Furmenglaibe, 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 Furmenglaibe is dotted with a handful of tiny hamlets and isolated huts of lone rangers and herders who don't trust wanderers, especially if they're strangers and come by night-time... as I've witnessed myself firsthand.

The People

The people of Furmenglaibe 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' Cobens, 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 Traladarans of the last century than to the common Thyatian: I can only assume they changed their vision of the world when they came to live in Furmenglaibe. 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 Furmenglaibians believe in the dark side of men and nature and are ready to defend themselves using wards and old traditional countermeasures that range from the simple cantrip and garlic necklace to the most complicated formulae magicae (ceremonies) to drive out devils and impure spirits from places and human beings. Normally, special people (auguri—sing.: augurus) who are held in high respect by all the villagers perform these rituals; they have the same importance as priests in the nations of the Old World (and some of them are indeed clerics), though their powers are not always real (but they do believe in them!).

Recent History

Furmenglaibe is ruled by Count Phileus Furmenglaibe 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 Furmenglaibe, a powerful Thyatian wizard. It was upgraded from a barony to its current status as a county following the war with Alphatia in AC 959. At that time, also, it ceased to fall under the jurisdiction of the Provincia Meridia, and its lands have been administered independently of other dominions of the Shadow Coast. As such, the County of Furmenglaibe manages to avoid most of the petty politicking and feuding that plagues the barons and lords of the southern Isle of Dawn. Which is just as well, considering all the horrors they've got to deal with in their own right.

GAITY (Kingdom of)

Location: Island in the Alatian Islands chain, west of Bellissaria, southeast of the Isle of Dawn.
SD

Area: 16,960 sq. mi. (43,925 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000.

Languages: Alphatian (Alatian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: In Rainbow Park: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Nayce.

Industries: Sparse agriculture and refugee camps (Rainbow Park).

Important Figures: No king at present. Hathaldrim (Alphatian Garrison Commander).

Flora and Fauna: The island has normal animals and plants found for lands of tropical plains, hills and forest (which are too numerous to all list here). Most of Gaity is wilderness, and almost any type of monster can be found here the recent escape of monsters from Gaity.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Festebanessendrama.

[The Thyatians evacuated the island during AC 1017, leaving it to the Nayce. Ed.]

The Land

After the wars and difficulties and appalling living conditions of Skyfyr, I was looking forward to returning home to Rainbow Park. Oh, I knew that things would be difficult, and braced myself for what I would find. But nothing in my imagination could prepare me for the reality, what damage those Thyatian barbarians had done, nor the additional ravages inflicted upon my once-beautiful island by the fiendish creature that spawned out of the pits of Aegos. Oh, I know they're saying that wasn't the Thyatians' fault, but I reserve my doubts! They might want to play down the involvement of the crude Thyatians in unleashing that unspeakable horror, for the sake of peace I suppose, but what other race of men would spawn such a destructive monstrosity?

Robber barons (crude Thyatians, of course) warred back and forth over the island, and though they were here only for a few years, being Thyatian barbarians they managed to destroy just about everything lovely during that span, and in their ignorance unleashed dangerous monsters that we had once kept under control in the park facilities. It's unconscionable, but what can one expect from such savages? The fact that this once beautifully maintained island could be described in previous almanacs [by Allstrick. Ed.] as "rather unimpressive" and consisting "mostly of rocky hills" is an indication of the damage those barbarians did during their occupation. If anything, things grew worse since his trip to Gaity, the landscape more blasted and despoiled, Rainbow Park more ruined and ransacked.

Virtually everything of value that the barbarians didn't destroy they carried off with them when they left.

The People

Alas, though the recovery of the island has allowed us to start returning home, sufficient reconstruction funds have not been forthcoming from Nayce's government (they say they cannot afford more than token aid at the moment, due to other expenditures). Indeed, there has already been talk amongst the bureaucratic minds that run Nayce's government of imposing taxes on Rainbow Park's tourist trade when it is up and running again, but all this has done is kill any interest in investing in such a project. It is enough to make one weep. Right now our settlement in Rainbow Park is little more than a shantytown refugee camp and we are dependent upon food shipments from Bellissaria (the little aid that the government has provided us comes in this form). Some of the returnees have struck out for other parts of the island to see if they can find a more hopeful lot, but those have returned report only ruin and desolation. Therefore, most of us remain in the encampment, with a continuous trickle of refugees arriving from Esterhold, but at least regular food shipments also enter the port here.

The Thyatians at least left the island, though signs of their presence are everywhere—ravaged landscape, ruined fortresses. What they didn't destroy in their wars they finished off as they left the island, tumbling down the walls of their keeps and burning their homesteads, which were little more than ugly shacks anyhow.

Do Miss

There is little to see or do here, a far cry from the excitement and wondrous entertaining variety that kept one's attention occupied in the past, glorious days of Gaity. I may end up moving to Bellissaria or even Torenal, when it is completed. I'm not sure I can bear living here too much longer now; Gaity is no longer the place I once called home. They should rename it, Gloomity is more like it. Dismal Park.

HELDUN (Exarchate/Confederated Kingdom of)

Location: Northeastern head of the Isle of Dawn. **SD**

Area: 175,465 sq. mi. (454,455 sq. km.).

Population: 120,000, including cities of Helskir (pop. 12,500) and Dunadale (pop. 20,000), and the towns of Deirdren (pop. 5,000), and Norkinn (pop. 1,000). Helskir's population has fallen due to the hostilities surrounding its liberation from Heldannic occupation.

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

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp); Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy with many elected representatives advising the ruler. Member of both the Thyatian Empire and Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, cutting of peat moss, sheep-herding, trade, some raiding.

Important Figures: Asteriela Torion (Exarcha/Queen).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate, notably herds of sheep and goats. Dangerous monsters include goblinoids and bandits that are common throughout the Isle of Dawn.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus, with commentary from Vibianna Romanones.

Heldun as a kingdom is a bridge. A bridge between a past shrouded in antagonism and war, and a future of prosperity and enlightenment. It was formed from the union of two nations, the Kingdom of Helskir and the Confederacy of Dunadale through the peaceful efforts of Thyatian and Alphatian alike. Heldun is a bridge between cultures, Thyatian, Alphatian, and increasingly Antalian as Ostlander immigrants establish their settlements. That promise of a new future was threatened for a time, as the Knights of Heldann occupied Helskir itself, and much of the surrounding countryside, in a bid to assert control over the northern portion of the Isle of Dawn. Although they were thrown out eventually, the chaos they wreaked will be felt for years to come.

The Land

Heldun is a large nation, with all types of terrain and climate. From the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn where Helskir lies, and the land is cold but where the fish abound, sweeping down the coast in a wide arc to the temperate coastal communities of Dunadale and Deirdren. The fertile coastal lowlands are the most settled parts of this land. As you move inland from the coast the terrain becomes a patchwork of hills, bogs, and forests, a dangerous place, but a place where the people are hardy and

freedom-loving. [The area around Demeran's Moor, at the head of the island, once considered part of Helskir, was ceded to Weststrourke following the signing of the Treaty of Helskir. Vibianna.]

The People

Heldun's cities are thriving communities, with burgeoning trade. The people are beginning to mix freely in these towns. By and large, the cities of Dunadale and Helskir have become communities where Alphatian and Thyatian customs are blending into a new culture, uniquely Heldunian. Even before the recent Thyatian conquest, Dunadale stood out among Alphatian domains as the only place to adopt anything resembling the Thyatian concept of citizenship, and even went a step farther. The inhabitants of the confederacy had rights, could vote, and popularly elected officials limited even the powers of the monarch. Coastal Heldun is a cosmopolitan land, whose spirit the Heldannic invaders could not crush.

But while the coasts with their brash tradesmen are what people most think of when they consider Heldun, it is the people in the countryside which form its heart. These people are the salt of the earth, prizing their self-reliance, and yet ever ready to lend their neighbors a helping hand. For centuries they have lived, wedged between two empires, their lives and livelihoods endangered by war and monster incursions, and yet they thrive. [Until recently Asteriela Torion and Cruul Zaar jointly governed this land, with the capital at Helskir. The assassination of Zaar while on Jonace and the invasion of the Heldannic Knights left the government in turmoil and forced Asteriela to move the capital temporarily to Dunadale. Although she has yet to return to Helskir formally, Asteriela has given every indication that she intends to do so. Vibianna.]

Recent History

Heldun is a new land with more ahead of it than behind it. It was forged from the crucible of war, and tempered by diplomatic wrangling between the Thyatians and the Alphatians. Heldunians have put the past behind them. New arrivals from Ostland and Thyatis, as well as Alphatians returning from abroad, prefer to think of the future. [The arrival of the Knights of Heldann was a painful reminder of the region's strife-filled past, proving that it is not so easy to forget harsh reality, as Vannopolus would like to believe. The wars, especially the recent Final Alphatian War and Thincol's subsequent absorption of the region, still shape attitudes among the people. Vibianna.]

Don't Miss

The lighthouse in Helskir, while not (as previously reported) the largest in the world (several along Vanya's Girdle are its equal or greater), is quite a sight nonetheless, with a brilliant beacon light. The Heldannic Knights used it as a lookout tower, and it was fairly heavily guarded. Although much of Helskir was severely damaged during its liberation late in AC 1017, the lighthouse survived the ordeal intact. [Helskir's once-thriving markets are still quite bare, due to the reconstruction that is currently underway—most of the goods you will find are the bare essentials, as most people living here are more concerned with rebuilding their lives than anything else. The markets of Dunadale are still much more impressive, though in a few years I am sure Helskir will become once more a destination of choice for northern sea traders. Vibianna.]

Also not to be missed is the grand outer wall of Helskir. Constructed by the Heldannic Knights in a bid to both strengthen their defenses and open the way for a massive expansion of the port city, it held off the city's liberators for several days. Although heavily damaged in some portions, the wall is still

very sound, and massive in scale. Helskir's city council is currently debating what to do with the structure—tearing it down would yield much in the way of stone for building materials, but because its construction involved the use of forced labor, it has become highly symbolic of Helskir's time of occupation. There is a movement afoot to preserve the wall for future generations, as well as improve upon it to bolster Helskir's defenses. Regardless of the final decision, I recommend that you visit it.

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.

Do Miss

There are designated areas between Helskir and the outer wall that have been fenced off—heed the warnings and avoid them! Not all of the traps laid by the Heldannic Knights in this region were triggered by the allied force that liberated the city, and thus you could be maimed, or killed, by a mundane—or magical—device left over from the battles. It is unknown how long it will take to deactivate and remove them all, but some city planners estimate that it could take a year or more.

HILLVALE (Kingdom of)

Location: Isle of Dawn. **SD**

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

Population: 10,000 (3,000 in town of East Portage). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Thyatian Standard also very common: emperor (5 gp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

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 shippard facilities to load and offload cargoes for the overland journey west. Facilities for this cargo ferrying are also in abundance. The streets are usually congested with wagons. Likewise the cobbled streets are littered with the waste products of the beasts of burden. And one cannot go down a street without seeing a stable, blacksmith shop, or wainwright. During the summer months the smell is quite bad.

The People

East Portage has traditionally been an Alphatian holding. As such, the populace is mostly Alphatian. The populace's interaction with its Thyatian neighbors has seen the rise of a noticeable Thyatian minority and some adoption of Thyatian ways. As one would expect, the bulk of the populace deals with the transport of goods across the isthmus. The people of East Portage did not carry themselves well after the Great War. Their behavior is not exactly a shining point in their history and they know it. They tend to ignore that period. Many become aggressive if pressed on the matter.

Recent History

East Portage had long ago been under the auspices of the old border wars that had so prevailed between the two empires. In times of war, it had flip-flopped between empires as a possession. In times of peace, it has served as one of the trade junctions between Alphatian lands and those of the Old World. After the Great War, East Portage put up a very limited defense against Thyatian expansionism on the Isle of Dawn. In exchange for a Thyatian ducal title, King Lornce M'Jozee surrendered the kingdom to the Thyatians. The Thothian stand and counteroffensives allowed the return of East Portage to Alphatian hands. With Thothia's entrance into Nayce, East Portage soon followed.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

Within East Portage, there is little to see. The kingdom is quite unremarkable. The locals are too business oriented to offer too much interest. Likewise, East Portage lacks the usual magical flair that Alphatian kingdoms usually bear witness to. The most exciting and hazardous aspect of East Portage is dodging the animal wastes that line the streets. Outside its borders is another story. The Great Escarpment is close enough to offer an unexplored region filled with many unknowns.

KENDACH (County of)

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

Area: 20,810 sq. mi. (53,900 sq. km.).

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

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian and Redstone dialects both common), Alphatian (Hillbale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Marie Kendach (Countess).

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Demetius Vannopolus.

This small county is located at the neck of the Isle of Dawn, roughly southeast of West Portage. The settled part of Kendach is mainly fertile farmlands. The southern edge of the county is dominated by grassland where goblinoids and bandits are known to dwell. Kendach has always been heavily defended—generally against the Alphatians but lately patrols have increased in the south, to deter raids by the creatures of the Great Escarpment. The fortifications are in top condition, and the town has centered its industry on entertaining the military and provisioning tradesmen and travelers on the Crossdawn Road. The citadel of Kendach itself is a large, imposing structure, second on the isle only to Redstone in size and strength. The Kendach Plateau to the south falls under the jurisdiction of the countess, but is unsettled. Before the war, the previous countess, Julia Kendasius, built a fortified observation tower on this plateau, but it was destroyed during the war. There is some thought being given to rebuilding it, as it would make a good communications link on the way to the Tower of Lucinius in the Province of Septentriona. Some in town think there might be minerals worth developing in the plateau as well, but no one has done a full survey yet. The larger plateau to the east falls within Naysese jurisdiction, though that plateau too is unsettled and unexplored.

The People

As a frontier county, Kendach suffered heavily during the Great War and was one of the first places attacked by the Alphatians. The arrival of thousands of colonists from the mainland has replaced these losses and more. The town bustles with new life and enterprise. They trade, mine (mostly iron), and

have farms and ranches in the area. The lands around Kendach are especially good for ranching, with herds of cattle and sheep common.

The people of Kendach have a rough, frontier spirit, and are always alert. The *Kastra* (castle) of Kendach itself is smaller than the citadel of Redstone, but no less well made, and constructed with artillery and other air defenses. Kendach doesn't have the same distinction of Redstone, having fallen not only in the *Final Alphetian War* but also having succumbed to assault in the *Spike Assault War* in AC 959 as the Alphetians pushed to *West Portage*. Yet Kendach remains a stout barrier against all but the most major assaults, having withstood many a siege in its long history. Kendach's defenders are all the more valiant and dedicated as they know the important role they play as the imperium's first line of defense. This is why the local militiamen and reservists are ever ready to spring to the defense of the empire. Their now notorious lax and unready state during the last war is a source of great shame to them, and they have redoubled their resolve, promising to never allow such to happen again.

MERIDIA (Province of)

Location: Southwestern coast of Isle of Dawn. **SD**

Area: 82,160 sq. mi. (212,795 sq. km.), plus Caerdwicca, which is technically considered part of the province.

Population: 3,000, plus Caerdwicca, which is technically considered part of the province.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect). An ancient dialect of Echalean is spoken in some areas of the province.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade (in general; each dominion of the province might have a few extra industries as will be noted in their description).

Important Figures: Valerion Recebarius (Provincial Legate).

Flora and Fauna: The Provincia Meridia consists largely of sparsely inhabited grasslands in the west, and unsettled forests in the north. The hilly regions to the south of the province are rich with mineral ores, and are a hotly contested area between the settlers in Meridia and those of the County of Furmenglaibe to the south. Wild horses roam the grasslands, as well as the usual chickens, goats, pigs, and other sorts of animals. The dark forests are rife with monsters and evil fairy creatures.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

This southern province is most well known for the petty warlords who feud between themselves for mineral and land rights, and for the dark fairy creatures that lurk in the forests (as opposed to the more benevolent fairies who live in my own County of Redstone). The dangers found here have limited colonization in Meridia, as most colonists prefer more stable areas.

The Province of Meridia is almost entirely untamed wilderness. Only the sparsely settled Barony of Caerdwicca has seen any real development. This area was largely left to its own devices until recently, with imperial colonization centered upon developing the northern and central sections of the Isle of Dawn. During the war the Alphatians almost completely bypassed this area, though the privateers of Caerdwicca and the pirates of Ne'er-do-well clashed fiercely at sea.

The Land

The Menhir Wood dominates the southeastern portion of the Provincia Meridia. It is around this forest, along the eastern coast and the southern hills north of Furmenglaibe, that most settlers reside. The woods are named for the numerous strange rock formations that lay within their depths. Sages have pondered over their nature for decades, and most agree that they are somehow magical and related to similar formations in the fairy-haunted Unseelie Forest in the northern part of the province. Their true secrets defy all investigation, however.

Those aforementioned woods have yet to be settled by man. The evil creatures that roam the depths of the northern forest are formidable and aggressive, and few who venture into their depths return. It is rumored that the dark fairies have a kingdom of their own hidden there, and that even the trees themselves are alive and hateful of mankind.

A few small villages may be found in the central grasslands of the Provincia Meridia, along rivers leading to the Western Sea of Dawn. Nomadic herders, descendants of the original settlers of this portion of the isle, also make their homes here.

The People

The original inhabitants of the Provincia Meridia were a slight, yellow-skinned race of people similar to the Ethengars. They once had numerous small villages in the grasslands and along the western portion of the Shadow Coast, but over the centuries they were enslaved and shipped off the island, or conquered by outsiders. Their legacy remains among the nomads who still roam the grasses, and in the legends and lore of the Shadow Coast. Some still speak their ancient language, a language that has surprising similarities to modern Ochalean.

The native inhabitants have since mostly blended with the Thyatian and Klantyprian colonists over the intervening centuries. The more recent settlers' physical traits—red hair among the Klantyprians, for instance—tend to dominate, but aspects of the original stock may still be found—slight epicanthic folds to the eyes, a yellowish tint to the skin.

For the most part, there doesn't seem to be a particular physical type that can be assigned to residents of the Provincia Meridia, but as for cultural outlook... well, let's just say that the Meridians tend to be close-mouthed, but that doesn't mean they're pushovers. They've been beaten down so much by their overlords that they've learned to keep quiet. At the same time, though, they're plotting their revenge on their oppressors.

Recent History

The lords have taken advantage of the chaos of the last several years, and most recently the Crown War, when imperial attention has been distracted. They have not rebelled openly, but they used the disorders for their own interests, while the empire's officials were not paying attention, to scheme against each other and encroach on each other's territories. Some of these lords even are not true lords recognized as such by the empire, but just people who have seized control of an area and set themselves up as warlords or bandit-lords. Due to the crises that have wracked Thyatis in recent years, these lordships have, if anything, multiplied and gotten even more unruly.

Because of this, most recent colonists have settled either around Caerdwicca or Furmenglaibe, or in the northern coastal areas away from the disorders of the lordships. However, the lords recruit new adherents and mercenaries from these areas when they can. They especially seek out the colonists who were sent as a result of colonial conscription, the criminals and other hardened sorts, who make good

thugs in the opinion of the lords. These lords also hire mercenaries in small numbers (none of the lords are able to afford large forces), hardened men willing to do anything for a few gold pieces a month, and employ them in their feuds and wars.

The Provincial Governor of Meridia tries to keep a lid on the strife of the lords, or at least keep the taxes flowing to the city of Thyatis. Until recently it had been Catullus Florus, who employed a group of thugs, most former soldiers—the Korphyri—to enforce his will. However, Catullus was recalled to Thyatis shortly after the end of the Great War, on suspicion of corruption and treason. His replacement, Valerion Recebarius, tried to reign in the lords and bring order to the region, but he has disappeared and foul play is suspected.

Don't Miss

Grosmouth Castle in the southwest is one of the oldest fortifications on the Shadow Coast. It reportedly dates back to around the crowning of the first Emperor of Thyatis. It was built by a Traladaran mercenary named Estragon, who had joined with Thyatian raiders in attacking Alphetian settlements on the Isle of Dawn. He was so intrigued by the place, that he remained and became known as one of the most brutal warlords to rule in the history of the isle. His castle was long rumored to be haunted, but Catullus Florus made his home there during his tenure as provincial governor.

NE'ER-DO-WELL (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 21,699 sq. mi. (56,200 sq. km.), including Greater Ne'er-do-well 17,958 sq. mi. (46,511 sq. km.) and lesser Ne'er-do-well 3,741 sq. mi. (9,689 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000, including Crossroads (pop. 5,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Alatian dialect), many other languages.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: Kleptocracy; officially no taxes are levied, the nation's income is derived from the proceeds of thievery. 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Monarchy heavily influenced by the thieves' guild, member of Nayce.

Industries: Fishing, smuggling, piracy, light agriculture (consisting mainly of people buying the farm), extortion, prostitution, gambling.

Important Figures: Koryn the Harpist (King).

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 Viviana Romanones.

This pair of none-too-fertile islands has what can only be described as a unique form of government, perhaps possible only within Alphatia's "anything goes" tradition. Here is a naked kleptocracy, a haven for pickpockets, smugglers, pirates, extortionists, and "normal honest criminals," governing the island through the institutions of organized crime. Here is individualism at its most extreme, where people openly use others to their own ends without regard for a common interest. It is said that the people of Ne'er-do-well have yet to find a culture they cannot corrupt or profit from. Ne'er-do-well is alternately "friendly to the world" and akin to a disease, needing the normal nations of the region to do the real work of providing order and civilization but feeding off them. Lately pirates based in Ne'er-do-well have had a field day; the breakdown of central authority allowed them to raid at will, and only recently with the rise of the Thyatian and Naycese influence have their appetites been curbed. Still, they prey on shipping in the region, especially near the Pearl Islands and even Ochalea.

OCHALEA (Exarchate of)

Location: Island south of the Isle of Dawn, north of the Jungle Coast, west of the Pearl Islands and southwest of the Alatian Islands. **SD**

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

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

Languages: Ochalean (related to Alphatian but considered its own language), Thyatian (Thyatian dialect).

Coinage: Teng (5 gp), one (gp), tenth (sp), hundredth (cp). Ochalean coins are octagonal with square holes in the middle. Thyatian Standard also freely accepted here without having to exchange it: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

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

Government Type: Exarchate, semi-autonomous dominion member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Teng Lin-Dieu (Exarch).

Flora and Fauna: Ochalea is mostly free of monsters. Dangerous creatures encountered include ghouls, weretigers, tigers, panthers and the rare purple worm. Also common are sheep, goats, and snakes.

Intelligent monsters would include ogres (many that know magic and are often called ogre-magi), while lupins and rakasta often roam the Grasslands of Chi.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Vibianna Romanones.

Ochalea is a large island in the southern Sea of Dread, slanting between the southwestern corner of the Isle of Dawn and the continent of Dabania. Ochaleans, though largely of Alphatian heritage, have a culture unique unto themselves, and think of themselves as Ochaleans and Thyatian citizens, not as Alphatians. One might speculate that Ochaleans derive their culture from that of the original inhabitants prior to the Alphatian invasion, but more on these theories later. Ochalea had a brief flirtation with independence during the War of the Wrath and the immediate post-war period, but has since returned to the Thyatian fold.

The Land

Ochalea is a large island kingdom, consisting mainly of volcanic rock and hills. Most of this land is suitable only for grazing, with only patches of agricultural land. These patches can be quite productive due to the rich volcanic soil, but cover only a portion of the island. The largest of these fertile stretches

is the Shino-Sawa River valley. This river crosses through the island, starting from the hills around the town of Wlongzhao Tsushao, then down to the lake around the town of Chungkiang Li. From this lake, the largest one in Ochalea, the Shino-Sawa empties into the Sea of Dread. Various areas along the shores of this river are forested and very productive for agriculture; productive enough to feed the entire population as well as leave some for export. Also grown here are fields of flax and cotton, which are exported to the city of Thyatis and then made into fine linen and cotton cloth. Mulberry trees grow in groves near Beitung and the village of Wu Li and other settlements. Silkworms are cultivated here, with the raw silk being sent to Beitung where it is spun into silken cloth of all varieties.

The bulk of Ochalea is covered with hill and forest wilderness, left undisturbed by the Ochaleans who with their small population have neither the desire nor the need to interfere with the wilds. The hills were volcanoes in the distant past, but are now completely inactive and have been so for all of recorded history.

There are two large savannas on the island. One is around the city of Beitung (where most Ochaleans live) and another, the Grasslands of Chi, lay along the southern shore of Ochalea. These grasslands gradually change into jungle in the southwest due to southerly ocean currents that warm Ochalean shores.

The People

Ochaleans are of common Alphatian ethnic origin, with coppery skin and fine facial features. They are a scholarly and religious people who place great importance on learning and proper behavior. The large number of priests, whom are held in high regard here, has helped turn this nation into one of the most educated on the Known World. The long-standing following of the traditions of the Immortal Koryis (known as Koryu-Si in the native tongue) has also made them very quiet, polite, and peaceful. Normal recreational activities in the rest of the Known World, such as drinking and gambling, are illegal here. Ochaleans do not like violence and prefer to solve all their problems through negotiation.

Because of their peaceful ways, Ochaleans believe in the equality of all men, standing them even further in stark contrast from their Alphatian forebears. There is no distinction between the respect shown to members of different social classes. But as mentioned above, theirs is a belief in the equality of men—and men only.

By Ochalean tradition, women have a lesser role in society. As Thyatian citizens, they can no longer be bound by ancient laws, but most still feel the trappings of custom. Females are expected to stay at home and perform family duties and household chores. There are more arranged marriages in Ochalea than elsewhere in the empire. A woman normally has very little choice regarding anything. This attitude made my negotiations with Ochaleans somewhat difficult, but luckily their rulers are used to dealing with other Thyatians, and adapted quickly. They place such an emphasis on politeness that they never made an overt point of my femininity. My male assistants did end up being more busy than usual, however.

Ochalean architecture differs from both that of Alphatia and Thyatis—and indeed any other known civilization—having a tiered style with peaked, slanted roofs. Sliding door walls are often made out of a paper-like substance formed out of rice, though this light construction may in part be due to the hot climate of the region. Ochaleans are fine gardeners, designing them to produce a sense of serenity. One of the greatest mysteries of the Ochaleans, however, is their very own traditions, which as you may have surmised from the above differ quite a bit from the Alphatian, and even the Thyatian norm.

Recent History

Ochalea has little recent history of note. They avoided involving themselves in the Final Alphonian War, seceding in AC 1007 from Thyatis along with the Pearl Islands. The Ochaleans spent the brief period between their secession from and re-admittance into the imperium (in AC 1017) in isolation from the world around them. Most recently they have changed this policy, dispatching a small but significant force to Eusebius's aid in the War of the Crown rebellion. Their involvement, and that of the other dominions like the Pearl Islands and the Hinterlands, may be key in determining the future fate of Thyatis.

Don't Miss

Ochalea's capital, Beitung, is a unique beauty, with every structure built in harmony with the others to produce a cohesive whole that is almost a work of art. The entire architecture of the kingdom is exotic compared to the standard Thyatian and Alphonian traditions. The most beautiful of these buildings are of course the temples and shrines dedicated to Koryu-Si.

Of interest to any readers who might also be scholars, it seems that the historians of Ochalea have found some interesting scrolls that have sparked debate over the origin of Ochalean society. Up until now, it was believed that Alphonians without any magical talents colonized the island and developed the theocratic culture now present. Recent evidence seems to indicate that the Empire of Alphonatia actually used the island to drop off undesirables, including non-mage Alphonians as well as another group of colonists that the Alphonian ruling elites had no use for. Both the Alphonians and proto-Ochaleans were victims of Alphonatia's governing classes' disregard for anyone's welfare save their own, an ironic miniaturization of Alphonian history as a whole. These two groups lived together peacefully on Ochalea, both repressed and enslaved by the Alphonian despotate until the successful rebellion of BC 2. The Alphonian coppery skin coloration soon dominated over that of the second culture, whose appearance is as yet unknown, but it would seem that the architecture and many of the traditions of Ochalea come from this other mysterious culture, which is apparently a colony from the distant continent of Skothar. Whether these newly uncovered scrolls are accurate or not remains to be seen, and is sure to be the cause for debate for the next decade.

PEARL ISLANDS (Exarchate of the)

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

Area: 119,719 sq. mi. (310,070 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000, including Seagirt (pop. 5,000).

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

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Barter is common among the islanders themselves.

Taxes: 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods save food, clothing, and fixed assets. Corvée labor on behalf of the nation as needed.

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire with self-rule.

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

Important Figures: Nuokidu Nuar (Exarch).

Flora and Fauna: Mainly dominated by fruit-bearing tropical trees and hardy grasses. Animals include cattle and horse imported from Thyatis. Giant lizards (draco) are also common, as are many sea creatures in the surrounding waters.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

This is a long tropical island chain, which runs east to west for over twelve hundred miles. It consists of many hundreds of small islands, and five large ones.

The Land

The Pearl Islands, named such by Alphatian invader of long ago and commonly called that ever since, are a series of islands north of Dabania, in the South Ochalea Sea and the Sea of Pearls. More properly called the Nuar Archipelago, the islands are of volcanic origin (though a few of the smaller ones are coral atolls), and though most of the volcanoes are dormant a few are not. One, the largest, on Nuar Island itself, has been erupting continuously, if mildly, since AC 1009 when Alphatia sank.

There are often reefs offshore, but not dangerous ones as are found in the Straits of Barbarossa between Aegos Island and the Isle of Dawn. The Pearl Islands indeed have wide, sandy beaches in many areas, as well as bluffs looking out over the sparkling azure seas. Most islanders live near the beach whenever possible.

Inland from the shores to the mountain slopes are tropical forests, though on the leeward side of the islands, which the mountains prevent from receiving as much rainwater, there are usually grasslands instead. The windward sides of the islands get most of the rain, and indeed it often showers once a day in this area. From the tropical jungles come wonderful fruits that are a staple, along with fish and pig, of island fare. Many streams run off the mountainsides down through the jungles to the sea, and some of this water is used to irrigate plants grown in the uncommon island agricultural plantations. There

are few dangerous animals in the islands, though there are draco lizards, leeches, and sometimes poisonous serpents. Streams collect the runoff waters from the mountains and bring them back down to the ocean.

Of the five major islands, only Nuar is large enough to actually have rivers larger than streams, and it even has a large lake in the north central portion of the island. The waters around the islands themselves are known not only for the fish that abound in them, but for their famous pearls, which are harvested and exported by the islanders.

The People

The islanders have dark skin, hair and eyes, and are a robust, muscular people. Their last name is derived from their isle of origin, with most being from Nuar and thus called Nuari. They traditionally live in small settlements rather than towns or cities. They are an energetic people who enjoy relaxation and sport, but are dedicated to excellence and self-improvement. They are fierce fighters yet also great philosophers, and their double-hulled ships, while small, can be quite effective in war and trade. Nowhere can one find better sailors or scouts than here on the Pearl Islands.

It is said that the islanders are descendants of Tanagoro colonists from long ago. Ancient scrolls claim that they were once a matriarchal society, but now men and women are equally regarded. Upon meeting someone for the first time, islanders present them with a small gift, usually a pretty colored shell or stone. The stranger is then expected to return a similar gift before the day is over, and if this custom is not followed the islanders consider it a slight.

One thing that can shock visitors is the islanders' lack of concern for wearing clothing. They normally wear no more than a simple kilt or skirt, along with necklaces, garlands of flowers, and the like, but think little of going entirely nude, especially when swimming. The islanders also enjoy riding the waves on specially crafted boards, a sport that requires some dexterity and skill to master fully and which can be dangerous to the unwary and inexperienced.

Don't Miss

There is so much to see and do here, the islands are a potential tourist mecca if only a convenient means of regular, rapid transportation could be initiated. There is the town of Seagirt, built around the Harbor of Pearls, the imperial naval base, where most Thyatians and traders live and work. In the town also is the palace of the exarch, as well as a coliseum built by Thyatian conquerors back in the first century AC. Down the shore from the town is Diamond Head, a towering rock formation overlooking the sea, which many climb to get a panoramic view of the ocean and the island. Inland from Seagirt is the long dead volcano called the Mount of Sacrifices, which is a graveyard of men and women slain serving in battle, especially against the Alphasians (though few of those killed in the Final Alphasian War are buried here). Many important rituals of the islanders' religion are carried out at the Mount of Sacrifices as well.

And this only mentions those sites nearest Seagirt. Each island is beautiful in its own unique fashion, and it might take a lifetime to visit them all and explore them thoroughly.

REDSTONE (County of)

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

Area: 57,864 sq. mi. (149,670 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000 including 25,000 in and around Redstone Castle.

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect and Redstone dialect are both common), Alphetian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphetian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (grains, vegetables), trade, military concerns, sheep, pigs.

Important Figures: Anaxibius Torion (Count), Stefania Torion (Countess).

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Stefania Torion.

Redstone was made into a dominion at the end of the Final Alphetian War in AC 1009. Emperor Thincol granted the castle and the surrounding land to my husband Anaxibius and myself, changing Redstone's status from a region of Westrourke to a county in its own right.

The Land

This Thyatian dominion is a tempestuous land filled with a wide variety of landscapes. In the northwestern part of the county a huge plateau parallels the coastline. This plateau is covered with grasslands known as the Sutherlands. Herdsmen make their living atop the plateau, trading with the main settlements of the area: Lar and Vildis. The cliffs of the plateau drop almost vertically into the Western Sea of Dawn. The shore is riddled with caves, many of which can only be seen when the tide is low. This area is a haven for pirates and other outlaws, which raid the shipping of Plaruum and Vestland for the most part, avoiding that of Thyatis and of Ostland (the nation many of the pirates hail from, and generally return to when their freebooting days are over).

To the northeast lies lush agricultural land, producing food for the county and for the city of Newkirk. The largest village in the area is Lodar, at a fork in the Lod River near the Carryduff Hills. We are currently considering turning Lodar into a barony to help better administer the area.

The central area of Redstone County is more sparsely inhabited. To the east are the dense forests of Ashton Woods and Lurben Forest, which are inhabited by giant wolves that sometimes attack

travelers. Local lore claims that evil fairies control the packs of dire wolves. The only safe passage in the area is on the patrolled Weststrourke Road, which goes from Dungannon all the way to Newkirk. At the eastern border of Redstone County along this road is the fortified village of Crosston. Crosston was battered during the Alphetian invasion, but has largely recovered, and already plans are in the works to improve the village's defenses and construct a true castle there, to ward against future invasion.

The west central region is dominated by marshlands, with the two largest swamps being the Fengallen Marshes and the Kilpleagh Curragh. The area is infested with bugbears, and Count Anaxibius often leads patrols into the region for training and to cull the bugbears. So far, the bugbears have maintained their hold on the region thanks to the special lizard mounts they use which allow them to cross the swamps quickly. The marshlands are split in two by the rise of the Carryduff Hills that run between the headwaters of the Lod River in the north south to the Redstone Lough.

To the south are the Neagh Flats and various hills and ridges [Hills of 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. Here grain and vegetables are grown, and sheep and cattle are raised.

Out to the west of Redstone Lough, beyond the Balbriggan Reefs, is the Isle of Westhold. This is a hilly island slightly over a hundred square miles in area, with a village and lighthouse perched upon it. The inhabitants live by fishing and gardening, and managed to avoid occupation by the Alphetians during the recent war mostly because they were ignored as insignificant.

The People

Redstone is the main training base for the great legions of Thyatis on the Isle of Dawn, resulting in a large military population. Almost everyone in the military has performed at least one tour of duty at Redstone Castle. They speak only Thyatian as part of their military discipline. This section of the population is generally young, confident and brave. During the nights and off-duty, they often become the rowdiest bunch in town. The local inhabitants are a mixture of Thyatian and Alphetian ethnic origin, though all are Thyatian citizens, and defended their country valiantly against Alphetian aggression during the recent Final Alphetian War. The city of Redstone itself is heavily fortified and dominated by the great citadel, hewn out of red stone. The nearby Port Donaghadee serves as Redstone's harbor, and is itself fortified, with a pair of long walls running down from the city of Redstone to the port of Donaghadee itself, allowing access to the sea even in times of siege.

It seems that everywhere you go, each village has its own share of ghosts and fairies hidden among the villagers. Almost everyone can swear on their grandmother's grave that they've seen a ghost or have been helped or cursed by a fairy. Just look at the names of some of the places. Forest of Sidhe: anyone care to guess what was seen there? Let us not forget the leprechauns and their pots of gold. Did I mention that there is also a Redstone's Lough monster? Suffice to say that no authentic Thyatian explorer, sage, expert or official has ever seen it.

Don't Miss

The greatest sight in Redstone is Redstone Castle itself, built out of rosy red stone that seems to glow in the dawn light and in twilight. Construction on this enormous fortress began in AC 2, and was completed at the end of AC 5, though there have been several improvements and renovations since.

It has stood ever since, for over 1000 years, a marvel of Thyatian engineering. The walls to the castle itself top 50 feet in height, and various towers reach over 100 feet. The tallest spire in the castle, where the court of Redstone resides, peaks just below 450 feet. This magnificent Thyatian citadel is replete with artillery, including superb air defenses and can easily accommodate up to 15,000 soldiers and staff, as well as the mounts for half of them, and hold provisions (stored in underground vaults) for several years.

Throughout its entire history, Redstone Castle was only conquered once, in the year AC 1007, by the invading Alphasians. To say Redstone was defeated, however, would be an exaggeration. The commanders surrendered when the rest of the surrounding territories fell to the Alphasian attackers. It took the combined Alphasian armies of General Benthazim, General Joshtintan and General Martigan to obtain that result. Redstone Castle has therefore never been taken by force since its creation. Even during the Spike Assault war, Redstone Castle was isolated and bypassed, screened off by an Alphasian army rather than assaulted. It then served as the locus for Thincol's counter-offensive, with troops landed at Port Donaghadee marching up to Redstone Castle's relief, and out from here the Thyatian legions spread, pushing back the Alphasians once again until Eriadna sued for peace to end that war in AC 962.

Visitors to the County of Redstone should patronize its taverns, which the locals call pubs. There, they serve their ale and whisky, and all tell tall tales of the Wee Folk and the magic of the fairies.

SEPTENTRIONA (Province of)

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

Area: 95,775 sq. mi. (248,055 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000 including the capital of Rialtos (pop. 2,500) and the town of Laticea (pop. 2,000).

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

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, logging, mining.

Important Figures: Deitica Baralius (Governor-General).

Flora and Fauna: Septentriona has the usual sorts of the normal animals and plants found for lands of its climate and weather. The black dust desert is known to be the home of several sorts of dragons, and evil fairies plague the dark forests along the southern coasts.

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

Description by Stefania Torion.

Septentriona is a large but mostly undeveloped province, with a few settlements but vast areas of wilderness. Septentriona has the distinction of not having been occupied by the Alphatians during the Final Alphatian War, mainly because they didn't bother to invade it, bypassing it instead.

The Land

Septentriona covers the western coast of the Isle of Dawn from the sea inland to where the Great Escarpment rises up over the land. It has a widely varied terrain, from the northern prairies south of the County of Kendach, to the vast, deep forests of the Shadow Coast, with towering mountains north of the Great Escarpment. The northwestern region, fronting Seawolf Bay, is probably the most developed. There is an active volcano, inland from Cape Gabrionus, the mount known as Nova Gabriona, that showers ash over the Black Dust Desert. South of Nova Gabriona lay the ruins of Fjellstue, a place of unknown age, whose origins are lost in the mists of time. Dragons are known to inhabit the Black Dust Desert, and the Retebius Air Fleet has attempted to glean recruits from among them from time to time. Curving around the desert in a semicircle, roughly parallel to the coast, is the range of hills known as the Culaesar Bulge, which keeps the dust of the desert contained. The outer

rim of these hills is forested, giving way to lush country around Cape Gabrionus and the Liminaris and Salicia Bays. This is the main region of settlement within the province, with a trail (the Linus) running along the coast from the Tower of Lucinius in the north to the village of Perdidis in the south.

Northeast of the Culaesar Bulge are the Tigris Plains, good pastoral country but as yet sparsely utilized. Inland from the Black Dust Desert and running down the coast is the Geocian Forest, a dark wood that remains wild and untamed.

Septentriona is bifurcated in its middle by the Skull River, which runs down out of the Great Escarpment to empty into the Western Sea of Dawn. Indeed, the Skull River valley becomes a gorge at the Great Escarpment, and is one of the few ways to ascend it easily. Here along the river itself is where the most recent colonization efforts are underway, centered on the recently founded town of Rialtos. Many colonists have been directed to this region, as the banks of the river have good soil, the nearby timber can be culled for export, used to build ships in Thyatis, and the region is suspected of having valuable minerals.

Outside of these zones most of the province is covered in a thick tangle of dark forests, though there are some coastal plains that might make good land for settlement. The forests themselves are known to be the haven for many fell creatures, and few things happen here more often than even in my own Redstone County, though they are far more often malicious and malevolent. At the point where the Great Escarpment rises up over the lands below, the cliffs are riddled with caves and caverns leading out into the forests. These likewise are very dangerous, and only the most brave and skilled explorers dare enter them, or reach that far into the province's depths. Even so, many of these adventurers are never seen alive again.

The People

As mentioned above, there are two main centers of Thyatian habitation in the province. The first is the northern coastal region, running from Cape Gabrionus to the Boreus Cliffs. There are four main settlements here. In the north is the Tower of Lucinius, a fortified watch post, wizard's tower, and lighthouse. South of the tower, at the mouth of the Cavia River, is Laticea, which has grown in size from a large village to become a small town in recent years. Below this, at the mouth of the Doloma River, is Latveii, while considerably further to the southeast along the coast, at Salicia Bay, is the community of Perdidis. These are all communities of farmers and fishermen, living along the coasts and rarely venturing more than twenty miles inland on hunts and the like, for the lands further inland are known to still be home to dangerous monsters. But this coastal strip is relatively safe, and life here has gone on with little change for several centuries. The people of the region consider themselves fairly lucky as they have rarely been directly impacted by any of the wars fought on the Isle of Dawn, having to deal with only the occasional monster raids. This was true for the most part during the Final Alphonian War, though for a time during the later stages of the fighting this area became the center of Thyatian resistance on the island, coordinating Thyatian partisan groups fighting the Alphonians elsewhere on the island. The impact of these efforts on the course of the war was small at best, but those involved in them take deserved pride in the part they played in it.

To the south of this zone, and separated from it by a long stretch of coast and thick forests, are the newer colonial settlements along the Skull River. Here is the town of Rialtos, a port near the mouth of the river, sheltered from storms rolling in off the Western Sea of Dawn by a lagoon. The town itself is built on several small islands, with pylons driven into the ground around them to keep them

stable. The site was chosen, despite the mild inconvenience of it, because the islands are more secure from monstrous incursions. The townspeople are able to easily reach the banks of the river using barges, which are also used to transport goods up and downstream. Along the river's banks upstream are burgeoning farmsteads and logging camps, as well as some encampments of prospectors hoping to find mineral deposits and strike it rich. Dangers are known to lurk in the nearby forests, however, so colonists are well equipped not only with tools but with weapons.

THOTHIA (Kingdom of)

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

Area: 458,157 sq. mi. (1,186,627 sq. km.), 95,277 sq. mi. (246,767 sq. km.) for Thothia proper and another 362,880 sq. mi. (939,839 sq. km.) for the Thothian Plateau.

Population: 80,000.

Languages: Nithian (Thothian dialect), Alphatian (Thothian dialect, official language).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing and trade.

Important Figures: Ramenhotep XXXIV (Pharaoh).

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 survivin' in such dry place, our dat ye have a good guide. De desert is filled with large, triangular buildings dey call pyramids, which serve to house der dead. It be an expensive way to bury dem, but it comes in real handy when dey be needin' to raise dem all to fight in deir army, as dey did against Thyatis a few years ago. It be a scary sight to see skeletons and zombies charging against ye, mohn.

The soudeastern most edge of de kingdom be a dry grassland where a few herders dwell, but dey be mostly scarce. Instead, de grassland be de home of de cat-people called rakasta [of the msongo or fast runner race. *Ed.*] who run around an' hunt for food. De rakasta be not considered to be citizens of Thothia, yet de nobles often use dem in der armies or as pets. I don't be thinkin' dat de rakasta like dis deal, but it seems dat dere be too few of dem to do anydin' about it.

Not much be known about de Thothian Plateau. Most who go dere don't come back, and dose dat do claim dey be attacked by giant spiders call araneas by de locals. De plateau seems to be heavily forested, a sharp contrast to de desert and grassland of Thothia down below.

The People

Thothians be a strange bunch, mohn. Dey call themselves civilized, yet refuse to deal with other cultures. I be thinkin' that talkin' to others be what make ye civilized, mohn. Dey be small people, wid a brownish skin and red hair, although mainy Alphatians have fled here since de war and have now mingled wid dem.

De Thothians have a deep respect for de dead, an' any form of grave robbin' be a capital offense here. I have always believed in lettin' de dead go, so I can agree wid dis law. Dis respect comes from der religion toward de Immortal Rathanos. In fact, der king, called a pharaoh, must be a priest of Rathanos. I guess dis be makin' Thothia a deocracy of sorts. Who really knows, mohn.

Dere be anoder religion in Thothia, although dis one be widout any Immortal. A game called de Spider's Web be holy to dem, but de pharaoh not be likin' dis game. He be tryin' to get his people to abandon it, and de mysticism dat be goin' wid it. Dis has someding to do wid de pharaoh's fader, Ramenhotep XXIII, who was bein' controlled by a spider demon. It seems dat he be overthrown by adventurers, mohn, just before the turn of de century [we believe it was circa AC 1000, but this is yet unconfirmed. Ed.], and de new pharaoh doesn't want dem spiders back. Could dey be related to dem araneas on the plateau? Who knows, mohn, but I wouldn't take a chance either.

Recent History

Thothia prefers to be left alone, mohn, so dey not be influencin' de world much. Of course, when Thyatis invaded dem after Alphatia sank, de pharaoh showed dem Thyatians just how much dey be wantin' to be alone. Dey animated most of der dead and sent dem off to defeat de invaders. I be thinkin' dat de sight of de undead alone was enough to rout de Thyatians. Add magical statues and golems into de group, and ye be seein' dat Thothia be powerful indeed mohn.

Dey conquered lands dat were originally Alphatian until dere be a peace treaty between Thothia and Thyatis. Dis Treaty of Dawn, as some call it, defined what territories belonged to Alphatia and which would be giben to Thyatis. In it, Thothia was granted control of the Great Escarpment, now called de Thothian Plateau. Soon after, Thothia be joinin' de New Alphatian Confederate Empire, re-establishin' its loyalties to de empress.

Since den, not much has happened. Except for on de plateau. De Thyatian colonists dere have been fleein' into mainland Thothia, askin' for help against the araneas that live dere. Thothia does not care much about dem Thyatians left on der land, but now de spider monsters actually be raidin' into Thothia proper. Many believe dat Ramenhotep XXIV will be doin' somethin' about it soon, mohn.

Don't Miss

For a Nuari, dere be nothin' here to miss. Come and see it all, mohn. De pyramids are examples of spectacular engineerin', mohn, an' de statues of sphinxes an' oder such monuments are larger dan ye would dink possible to create. De culture be different too, an' word learning about. I must say, I be enjoyin' that Spider's Web game, too.

TRIKELIOS (Kingdom of)

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

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

Population: 70,000 (25,000 in the city of Trikelios). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Thyatian Standard also very common: emperor (5 gp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of Nayce.

Industries: Shipbuilding, reconstruction, agriculture.

Important Figures: Stillian (Queen).

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 one 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 shippards are being given great attention. They are even building ships, though at a reduced capacity because of the still unfinished shippards. 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 used to it after a few days. Most of the locals swear that they do not even notice it. In fact, they do not notice much. Most seem completely focused upon their present work.

Recent History

Trikelios had been one of the Thothians' settlements until coming into the Alphatian fold. Under Alphatian rule the city had prospered with its shipbuilding. After the Great War Trikelios was occupied for a time by the Thyatians. Thothian intervention wrested the city from its occupiers, nearly destroying the city in the process. With the signing of the Treaty of Dawn, Trikelios became an independent kingdom with its former ruler, Stillian, as its queen. Not too long afterwards, Trikelios became a member of Nayce. Since then, Thothia re-annexed Trikelios.

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. **SD**

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

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

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian dialect official, Redstone dialect also common), Alphatian (Hillbale dialect), Thothian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire.

Industries: Trade, especially portage of goods from West Portage to East Portage.

Important Figures: Jules Docerius (Captain of the Garrison), Periandra Docerius (Baroness).

Flora and Fauna: Due to its proximity to the Great Escarpment, all manner of creature types may be found wandering into the barony.

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

Description by Stefania Torion.

The community of West Portage, capital of the province with the same name, is a small but bustling town of barely 5,000 people, mostly human. Though previous reports described West Portage as poor, this was mainly due to the results of the recent war and the sack of the town by the Alphatians, who thoroughly ravaged it during their occupation. West Portage is a trading town and has largely recovered, and is prospering from the general increase in trade and prosperity in the region. Many new buildings are under construction, and old ones have been repaired. This year the baroness started construction on a series of fortifications intended to defend the port town.

The Land

West Portage thrives because of its position at the neck of the Isle of Dawn. Located on the northern shores of calm Seawolf Bay, West Portage is situated on the shortest overland pass to the eastern half of the Isle of Dawn. Those merchants who prefer not to sail all the way around the whole Isle of Dawn can put in at West Portage and cart their cargoes across to East Portage. Those using the overland route are charged a fee in exchange for the service, but it saves time for many traders, and time is money. Whole ships can be lifted onto huge wagons and brought across the island. Some wild-eyed dreamers propose the construction of a canal from time to time, ignoring the difficulty of carving one through the hills and linking two very different nations. Recently a dwarven visitor

proposed that such a canal be constructed as a tunnel under the hills, rather than over them, but what do dwarves know of seamanship?

The portage route, known as the Crossdawn Road, was one of the most dangerous places on the isle in recent years. Increased patrols and the general post-war recovery have lessened this danger considerably, however. This was the first year in recent memory without a successful raid on a caravan [though there were still numerous unsuccessful attempts. Ed.].

Off the coast of the town itself is a long island running parallel to the shore in the shallows. A lighthouse known as O'Connor's Light is built at its northern end, guiding ships to the harbor of West Portage. This island helps protect the land from the worst effects of storms blowing in off Seawolf Bay.

The People

The inhabitants of West Portage are open, cosmopolitan people, busily employed in the resurgent trade. Right now there are few idle hands, and more people are needed simply to keep up with the growing traffic. Thus, West Portage welcomes new colonists.

Because of the presence of rich traders, thievery is high in the town, mainly confidence games. Up until AC 1009, when Emperor Thincol I made Docerius baroness of the region, the Province of West Portage was unofficially known as the city of thieves. Docerius replaced the former ruler, Lareth Kubek, when he was executed by Alphatian invaders during the Great War. At that point, the thieves came out of the woodwork. It took the baroness almost two years to get things back under control.

Most people work either at the docks, or as guards and caravan drovers along the Crossdawn Road. Most residents can speak both Thyatian and Alphatian, but are firmly devoted to the former empire. Recently Baroness Docerius was involved in the plot to join the rebel faction in the War of the Crown rebellion. The baroness was arrested in Redstone Castle. Loyalist forces moved into West Portage, and most tellingly no one raised a sword to defend their treasonous ruler. Captain Jules Docerius, the baroness's nephew, now administers the city as temporary ruler. Previous reports of his drinking and corruption seem to have been exaggerated, for he has governed ably in the short time he has been in charge, or so we are led to believe.

Don't Miss

The main sites worth seeing in West Portage are the marvelous docks. There is a mechanism at the docks which allows entire sailing ships to be raised onto large wagons. The device, constructed by the gnome Dresel Ratchethook, is a large tower at least 10 stories high. Dresel calls his machine a crane.

The top floor of the crane consists of solid beams extending out into the air for about 40 feet. Large counterweights and magic help make sure these beams remain balanced. Attached to the beams are several pulleys and ropes, which are lowered down onto the ship and tied to the hull in various places. Over a hundred horses then pull on the ropes, lifting the ship out of the water and into the air. It is quite the sight to see a large sailing ship swinging in the air over the water.

The top of the crane swivels around, powered by steam-driven mechanisms and various cranks and wheels, until the ship is resting over these large barge-like wagons, also designed by Dresel. The horses then move back, lowering the ship onto the wagon. Most of the horses are then attached to the berth-wagons, and pull it across the Isle of Dawn.

WESTROURKE (Exarchate of)

Location: Northern section of the Isle of Dawn, south of Helskir, east of the province of Dunadale and north of the province of Redstone. **SD**

Area: 119,344 sq. mi. (309,100 sq. mi.).

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

Languages: Thyatian (Thyatian and Redstone dialect both common), Alphatian (Hillvale dialect).

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (pp), lucin (gp), justiciar (cp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Alphatian Standard also very common: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Dominion, member of the Thyatian Empire with home-rule.

Industries: Military, salt mining, agriculture (truck vegetables).

Important Figures: Thrainkell Firestorm (Exarch), Holva Firestorm (Exarcha).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate, notably herds of sheep and goats. Dangerous monsters include goblinoids and bandits that are common throughout the Isle of Dawn.

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

Description by *Vivianna Romanones*.

Once the largest dominion on the Isle of Dawn, Westrouрке suffered some territorial losses since the Wrath of the Immortals war. However it is still one of the largest territories, and also one of the most stable and prosperous.

After a period of experimentation Westrouрке seems to have settled into its position as part of the Empire of Thyatis. As an exarchate it is a dominion with considerable home rule that follows imperial foreign policy. Imperial agents collect trade taxes on behalf of the empire and Thrainkell Firestorm, with the new title exarch, contributes funds and soldiers to the imperial legions. 20% of the total governmental income (inclusive of any sub-domains Firestorm may permit) goes to the central government in Thyatis City, this in addition to the commercial mentioned above. Westrouрке has seats in the senate and can defend its borders with its own forces (classified as auxillia by the imperium), as well as calling on Thyatian legions in time of need.

The Land

Westrouрке is blessed with a wide variety of terrain types and towns. The exarchate is divided into several dominions.

The Duchy of Newkirk is the duke's own seat of power. Here lies the city of Newkirk, capital of the exarchate and by far the largest settlement in the dominion. The borders of the duchy are bounded by

the Southern Kauth Hills, a light forest to the east, and the grasslands to the north. The Bay of Newkirk is the western border. In fact, the entire coastline is one large cliff dropping into the waters below, giving the duchy an excellent means of defense from sea reavers of Ostland. The city of Newkirk is renowned for its excellent chain and plate mail, and the legion often orders in bulk from their armorers. This is the best-settled and most developed region of Westrourke, and is protected by a series of fortifications (Gund's Tower, Battleford, South Creek, and Tromblekeep) warding it from invaders from the east.

The Dust Reaches is a large plateau located about 30 kilometers (20 miles) off the shores north of the Duchy of Newkirk. This wasteland is overflowing with goblinoids, particularly kobolds and orcs. Many military excursions have been sent to clear them out, but so far with no success. Between the plateau and the Bay of Newkirk are the Sveikassli Woods. This region is lightly inhabited, with the main settlements being at the lighthouse of Lag and the fortified settlements of Axelkeep and Eriksen Tower.

North of the Dust Reaches you enter the County of Viksdalen. Contained within its borders are the Glotta Forests and the Fyresbatn Bogs. Viksdalen is a major trade town as all overland caravans from the north must pass through the town to get to Newkirk or beyond. Viksdalen also has a strong military presence, mainly due to frequent raids by orcs from the Dust Reaches or lizard men from the Fyresbatn Bogs.

Spreading out toward the north and west, around the Bay of Westrourke, are the Baronies of Blido, Guddal, Tromsheim, and Ptre Pstrebo. In fact, each barony is centered on a village, and each baron controls land within about 24 miles of their capital. The area is well-forested and home to many lumberers and woodsmen. The plains are also fertile and produce enough food to keep Westrourke self-sufficient, with some surplus for export to the mainland.

The County of Nordvik is the largest dominion of Westrourke. This county encompasses all the land around the Erdals Fjellet Riber as well as the Seittinden Mountains. A small gold mine within the mountains provides some income for the dominion, but in fact its main industry is the production of dyes and pigments. Nordvik was formerly the northernmost dominion of the exarchate, near the border with Helskir.

The newest addition to Westrourke, the Helskir Reaches, lies beyond that. It consists in a large section near the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn formerly disputed between Helskir and Westrourke. Firestorm's new land grant policy has spurred settlement in this region. The policy has been successful so far, and Firestorm is considering applying it to other areas of Westrourke as well.

The People

Thyatians and Ostlanders make up the majority of the population, though it is not uncommon to notice Westrourkites of Alphatian descent. The people are rough and ready, not uncultured but also used to the hardships of frontier life, and skilled with a weapon. Most also have one at hand at all times, due to the dangers found in the area.

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 Final Alphatian War. In fact, Westrourke's prosperity is dependent upon Thyatis's own recovery. Should

that fail, the hard won gains of Westrourke may disappear as well, and many of the more insightful inhabitants of the exarchate realize this.

Recent History

The Exarchate of Westrourke was conquered in AC 1007 during the Final Alphatian War, a fact that took Thyatis by surprise. Helskir treacherously switched sides, allowing Alphatians to invade the duchy from the north while General Martigan of the Alphatians spearheaded an assault onto Newkirk itself. The battle was long and bloody, but the Alphatians outnumbered the Thyatians and eventually overwhelmed the defenders. Duke Donegal Firestorm gave his life defending his people, allowing many defenders to escape the doomed city and sail to Thyatis.

His son, Thrainkell was one of those who escaped, and he was named Duke of Westrourke when Thyatis recovered the land in late AC 1009. But the emperor did not return full control to Thrainkell Firestorm. First, the entire southern peninsula between the Gulf of Westrourke and Seawolf Bay was turned into the County of Redstone and given to the emperor's daughter Stefania and her husband Anaxibius. Second, a large part of the northern territory was disputed between Westrourke and the Kingdom of Helskir until the recent treaty. Still, Thrainkell held Emperor Thincol in high regard and accepted the decision—but he was ambitious, and when Thincol died, he let his ambitions get the best of him.

He was ready to make a bid for independence for his dominion, but sided with the other rulers of the Isle of Dawn nations in remaining loyal to the empire during the signing of the treaty of AC 1012. Since then, the ambitious Firestorm seems to have settled down, outgrowing the impetuosity of his youth. He has diverted his dreams to building Westrourke into a strong and prosperous member of the Thyatian family of nations.

Don't Miss

Westrourke has a magnificent signaling system all along its coast, starting from Finnegar's Watch in the Seittinden Mountains all the way down to the city of Newkirk. Several towers dot the coast every 100 miles (150 kilometers) or so. Within each of these towers are large, magical chimneys that can send a pillar of smoke into the sky. The smoke signal is easily visible by the occupant of the next tower, who can pass it on down the chain. Thanks to this method, a message can quickly reach the capital about an invading fleet. Just as importantly, all the local inhabitants can also see the immense smoke clouds and will rush to safety. This saves the bother of sending out messengers to each village to warn of an impending attack.

ATLAS OF DAVANIA

Introduction to Dabania

Across the Sea of Dread lies the mighty, mysterious continent of Dabania. 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 Dabania. 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 Paddlom, and to the south by the Adakkian Mounts. It is here where the city-states or Kastelios and Garganin are located, perhaps the only true examples of civilization outside the Thyatian colonies. The Serpent Coast region is a land of rolling hills, pleasant grasslands, mighty rivers, and rugged coasts. Though it lacks the raw brutality of many of the Jungle Coast's native inhabitants, the more sophisticated cities here can pose dangers well known in Brum, 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 are the little-known Meghala Kimata Plains. In the north, the 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. 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 Dabania 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.

Dabania 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, Dabania is open to you.

Correspondents for Dabania

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

Friedrich von Eisendorf

Friedrich von Eisendorf brings us news from the Heldannic Territory of Vanya's Rest, on the southern continent of Dabania.

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 Dabania. 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.

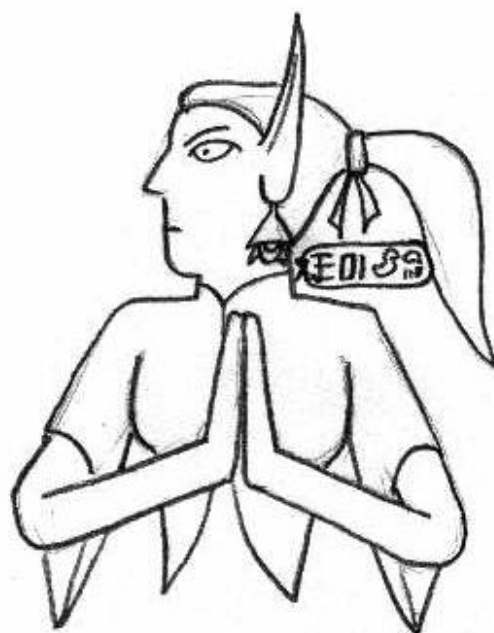
Marina Takanitas

Marina Takanitas is 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, Marina is 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 Dabania as they happen. No danger is too much for her, and, believe me, she knows how to use that short sword she carries!

Shaun the Elf

Shaun of clan Grunalf is one of the most renowned artists and adventurers of the Old World. A well-traveled and knowledgeable elf, she has long since retired from her adventuring career and now lives in Jerendi 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 pursuits, 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 Dabania, southwest of the Thyatian Hinterlands. **DV**

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

Population: 125,000.

Languages: Emerondian (a language not related to any other spoken on Mystara).

Coinage: None.

Taxes: None. Emerondians have a vague notion of private property and share freely with one another.

Government Type: Dynastic monarchy (loosely organized city-states under one monarch).

Industries: Farming, gathering.

Important Figures: Jerem Rhody (King), Pikkolu (Forest Protector), Dendeh (Sun Protector), Kamesama (Earth Protector).

Flora and Fauna: Emerond is a forested land west of the Thyatian Hinterlands. The kingdom has literally been “grown” into the jungle for there are few clearings and no serious attempt at large-scale clearing has ever been made. Many types of plants grow in the region, from sub-tropical species native to the region to more alien versions of common trees and bushes, directly imported from the ancestral home planet of the Emerondians. Some of these plants are able to modify their external structure and possess a rough form of intelligence and instincts. The common fauna encountered in the region include jungle creatures such as panthers, jaguars and other great felines, all varieties of tropical snakes, displacer beasts, and some lizards and amphibious creatures. Near the Emerondian settlements, insect-like creatures descended from pets brought to Mystara by the Emerondians (use statistics for giant insects but alter the creatures’ appearance). Treants and gakaraks can also be found here and they are on friendly terms with the Emerondians. Other plant-like beings can be found here too, both dangerous and benign ones.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Shaun the Elfin.

Oh yes, I remember the land of Emerond very well. A fascinating place, very similar in its untamed beauty to my beloved Forest of Canolbarth, though a thousand times more enthralling and mysterious, especially for the uniqueness of its flora. I had the opportunity to visit it and meet some of its inhabitants many years ago, while adventuring in that region with a group of friends looking for a lost treasure. On our trip back to the Hinterlands we met none other than Pikkolu, who shared with us his knowledge of the Kingdom of Emerond and of the Forbidden City (which we had just explored). I stayed there for over one month, talking with Pikkolu and witnessing the marvels of the jungle, and now it’s time to share this knowledge with you.

The Land

Emerond is a living kingdom, this is what really differentiates it from other countries. Its land is a living entity and it's one with its inhabitants: there could be no Emerond without the Emerondians and vice versa. This might seem an obvious statement, but it is not, believe me. If the ecosystem is in good condition and the forest thrives, the Emerondians too share their land's health and happiness as if it radiated from the soil and the leaves of the plants. Everywhere you go in Emerond you will only see green lush plants and sparkling streams, healthy animals and tasty fruits, weird creatures and cozy hidden glades. It's a veritable paradise for us sylvan creatures, but I must say that it could seem a bit too wild from the human point of view. Any dwarf would surely get sick of the landscape after a couple of days (as I've witnessed myself). But do not get me wrong, Emerond is not a savage natural park. Emerondians have got settlements that can be compared to those of humans and elves, even though they don't build them using the tools and knowledge of the common peoples of Mystara. Their cities are living: all is made of wood, which grows leaves and flowers and even fruits in spring and summertime. They grow special trees and plants that continue to live even after they chop them to create their houses; this way they can practically change the aspect of their homes yearly, during the period of the Change, when the house reacts to the mental commands of its inhabitants. Their cities are built on different levels, both on solid ground and on higher levels inside and outside these special trees. Each district of the city is connected via bridges and elevators or even 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 Emerondians perform their weekly religious ceremonies to praise the Land, the Forest and the Sun. They are what makes them live on every day, and so they feel the need to pay tribute to these elements (which are considered intelligent entities) through worship. The Common Well is held as sacred as the temple, for it provides the water so essential to the Emerondians' survival. The well is normally guarded at all times 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 glass lenses 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 sun's rays daily if they want to regenerate their strength.

Emerondians use giant insects as vehicles: giant bugs resembling horses (but they can even climb vertical walls), hornets and butterflies for faster movement, and worms for digging holes underground. These insects comprise both the normal species commonly found on Mystara, which the Emerondians tame and train, and unique insect-like creatures originally imported from their lost world. These creatures come in different shapes and have different abilities, but all share an emphatic link with their rider and are more intelligent than common insects. They have also a more menacing appearance, with spikes and thorns protruding from their carapace. These creatures are created and tended in special enclaves administered by druids, where the Emerondians' cattle also live.

From the political point of view, Emerond is formally a kingdom ruled by a dynasty (a single family that holds political power). The kingdom is based on a loose alliance of city-states that are normally independent from one another and even from the king. The king himself has absolute power only in case of war or of natural calamity (situations where the ecology of the kingdom is threatened). Otherwise he limits his influence to coordinating among the various cities for purposes of trade and cultivating the

jungle. Each city-state has its own rules and political bodies, but all must obey to the first and foremost rule: *Never Harm the Forest*.

There are three other important figures besides the king and each city-state governor: the holy protectors. These three individuals are the high priests of the three deities commonly worshipped in Emerond: the Forest (Ordana), the Sun (Ixion) and the Earth (Terra). All Emerondians, regardless of their status or occupation, recognize the authority of the holy protectors, who act as heralds of the deities' will. Each one is chosen during a ritual that is celebrated after the death of the old protector and they are always considered blessed by the deity they represent. Nobody questions their judgments or advice, but they don't often meddle with political issues, except when they are so asked by other important figures or when the deity orders it. When somebody becomes a holy protector, his real identity is (symbolically) erased from the memory of the community during a ritual and he becomes known only by his title; this way, he becomes one with the other precedent protectors. The forest protector is called Pikkolu (pron.: pĒĒk-ko-lou), the sun protector is called Dendeh (pron.: den-deh) and the earth protector is called Kamesama (pron.: kah-me-sAH-mah).

The People

Emerond is a kingdom ruled by creatures who look like elves, but are slightly taller, green-skinned and silver-haired. Emerondians are plant-like creatures. They have a chlorophyll-like substance that acts as their blood and has many properties of other bodily fluids. They have a few internal organs used to produce their blood by altering other fluids they ingest (primarily water), to digest the foods and to reproduce. Their skin and muscles have a special feature: they're extremely elastic. Emerondians can 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 greater quantities than humans do (three times more). The Emerondians use the energy of the sun to produce the inner chemical reaction that transforms outer fluids into blood, much like plants, and only the mature and sane individuals 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. Others guard those people to protect them, helped by beasts bred from special plants. Emerondians eat only vegetables, roots and fruits, and cannot tolerate meat of any kind: their metabolism cannot digest it.

The Emerondians reproduce much as humans do: the male impregnates the female, who then act as a host and nurtures the baby inside her womb. The female normally keeps the baby inside her body for a season (4 months), then during a special ceremony the male opens the belly of his partner by cutting the skin and extracts a small seed-like organism the size of a fist. He then attaches the tentacle the seed-organism has to his nipple and places the seed inside a special "marsupial pouch" he has formed on his belly during the four months. For the next season (another four months) he will nurture the creature through his nipple and at the end of the period the couple will open the seed by breaking its shell, finally revealing the baby.

Emerondians have always tended the forest and protected it from the first time they settled in the Jungle Coast. They are so deeply linked with their ecosystem that they couldn't bear losing it or seeing it damaged. They love their land more than anyone else on this planet, I believe, and their sense of duty towards the land exceeds even that of the elves. In fact, they have much in common with the elven race, as much as with the other sylban 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 local rules on its own, but every Emerondian obeys the First Law: Never Harm the Forest. Whoever is found guilty of this crime is immediately expelled from the Emerondian society (if he belongs to it) and abandoned alone in the jungle to face the Forest's Judgment, for it is the forest that is the highest power in Emerond. Foreigners who commit sins against the forest are sentenced to the Forbidden Territories instead of being delivered to the forest, because they are considered filthy and would poison it. The Forbidden Territories are, according to the legend, the land where the first generation of Emerondians (Pyrrithians) lived when they arrived in Dabania. 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 Pyrrithians who came to Mystara after leaving their world, which was on the verge of destruction. The first settlers founded the city of Pyris east of the current kingdom of Emerond and they lived in that part of the forest for several decades, until disaster struck. Legend has it that the last ruler of Pyris sinned against Nature and the Land, for she wanted to use the Land for her own goals instead of serving Nature, and so she was cursed by the holy protectors. The protectors then, foreseeing the impending doom over the city, led the population westwards, where they crowned the new king, one of the nephews of the former ruler, and founded Emerond, cutting all ties with the other Pyrrithians. As to what befell those who remained in Pyris, this is a mystery. Apparently, some weeks after the great majority of the people had left, 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 had any particular problems with the nearby tribes of Winterlanders, 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 hadn't discovered its existence before mainly because it never ventured so far to the south or west (they still have problems keeping their Winterlanders in line), but one never knows what the future will bring. One thing is for sure: if the Thyatians start a war to conquer Emerond, I don't think they will have an easy war like that waged on the Winterlanders this time.

Don't Miss

Well, I haven't visited the capital city of Izmira, but Pikkolu told me that it's a model of Emerondian architecture and perfection, so I think it should be worth a visit if any of you ever manage to get that far. I myself have seen only one specific site that really deserves a visit (besides the whole region, of course): the Tree of Knowledge. This is one of the holy places of Emerond and it's directly guarded by Pikkolu (each holy protector guards similar holy places as a duty). It consists of a big tree created by the magic of Pikkolu (I suspect the first Pikkolu) which contains all the tomes and

parchments pertaining the history of Emerond and of their Pyrrithian 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 discover its location now. Some of the other holy places Pikkolu mentioned included the Cave of Magic, the Lake of Time and the Field of Dreams.

Do Miss

I speak firsthand here: never ever venture in the Forbidden City if you don't want to risk your soul. The city has a name, but it's known only by the holy protectors and not spoken out of fear of attracting the attention of evil forces. We discovered it by reading an ancient parchment and some inscriptions found inside the city: Pyris. It is basically a deserted city made of a strange resilient stone-like material (petrified wood according to Pikkolu), with buildings made of one to even five stories, many of them collapsed and in bad condition. The city covers a two-mile radius and is surrounded by high walls that have collapsed with time at more than one point. At its center stands the Temple of the Holy Protectors, a pyramid about fifty feet high. The strange fact is that this city lies in the middle of a rocky desert, and the feeling you get when you roam around its streets is one of utter loneliness and aridity, dryness. Nothing 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 sterile and clean in its abandon: there are not even the remains of its former inhabitants, those who weren't so lucky or so wise to leave it before it was too late. And then there is the sensation that somebody's watching you all the time, trying to bring you towards the pyramid. This way we entered it: chasing a shadow that was seemingly spying on us. The map and the inscriptions told us that a great treasure was hidden inside the pyramid, so we explored it, and we encountered many traps and strange forces that wanted to stop us from going on. And not all of them were evil. What lies in the pyramid must not be disturbed, this is what I learned from our experience, or we risk unleashing in the world that which has caused the fall of a city like Pyris.

The Hills of Desolation are the second place I'd avoid if I were you. Indeed, we were able to avoid travelling in that region, and after hearing Pikkolu's tales I can only thank our guide for choosing another path. Dragons, evil and ferocious humanoids (orcs and trolls in particular) and other serpent-like abominations ply these lands, apparently guarding some mysterious lair or secret that has been forgotten by all except dragonkind. Even Pikkolu couldn't tell us much more for he himself hadn't ventured so far in his voyages, but I think that if a man so powerful as him has never found the time to explore that region, then I am sure I won't have the time to do it even in a thousand years...

GARGANIN (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Dabania, on coast of Sea of Dread. **DV**

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

Population: 21,000 (around 2,300 live in scattered farms outside the city).

Languages: Hulean (Garganin dialect).

Coinage: Lira (gp), kurat (sp), piastre (cp).

Taxes: Citizens have their total worth assessed every year, and are taxed 20% of that amount.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (wheat and vegetables), crafts, fishing, sheep.

Important Figures: Mehmet II (Baron), Kemal (Dock Warden).

Flora and Fauna: The city of Garganin sits upon the fertile Garganin Grasslands, whose rich black soils yield bountiful crops year after year. Along with the typical crops found on the numerous farms scattered about the city, passersby will notice many varieties of wildflowers and shrubs dotting the great expanses of flatlands. One can also find the occasional stand of oak trees as well, though these are scarce in the immediate area of Garganin. The frequent rainfalls year-round ensure that the flora is almost always luscious.

The animals one is likely to encounter here include all manner of grassland wildlife, such as falcons, field mice, gazelles, gophers, hawks, leopards, salamanders, snakes, and wild horses. Also present in this region are scattered tribes of gnolls, goblins, and orcs, and the occasional griffon, though these tend to be found in the hills farther south, where the terrain is more suitable for nest-building.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

I had the opportunity to venture to Garganin not long after accepting an offer from Joshuan to cover affairs as they transpire on Dabania. I am a Kastelian, and Garganin is the closest large settlement to my home. My family routinely does business with the traders of Garganin, so the trade road to this city is not strange to me.

The Land

Garganin is blessed with beautiful terrain and rich soils, where there are no sharp angles; every terrain feature seems to gently mix into the next, until the land gradually slopes down to the Sea of Dread. The weather is always fair here, with breezes from the sea constantly blowing in from the north, literally blanketing the city with the salty tang of sea air. The city itself is fairly large considering its population; it is the same size as Kastelios, yet my city has 5,000 more people. Of course, the answer is clear once you enter any of Garganin's three gates—the buildings are low and expansive, with many having tiny vegetable gardens running along their sides and back. Once inside, though, it becomes clear that much of this city is taken up not by residential quarters; there are countless temples, shrines, and public buildings scattered within the city walls. Another thing you will notice is that Garganin is clean; it is forbidden, by order of Baron Mehmet, to leave garbage in the streets in

public view. People will regularly come by and sweep the streets themselves with wide brooms, and every piece of litter is gathered up and carted away to be burned.

The People

Never have I met a single people so close-mouthed as those of Garganin! I have been to the city many times, and I have done business with the same people, but they still insist on going through a ritual of coffee-drinking, during which no one may speak. It seems that Garganinese, as the residents call themselves, strongly believe in formality and established traditions. Nothing is acceptable unless it has an established way of being done, and even then the prescribed ways of doing things must be followed. Even the way in which people socialize in the streets has a series of informal rules. Always use your right hand when touching others or eating. Never turn your back to another person. If offered a gift, politely decline and later offer a gift to the giver, when both of you can then exchange gifts properly. It is a good idea for any venturing to this city to learn the customs quickly—otherwise they will risk offending their hosts! Perhaps what is most bizarre about these people is that in many cases, they have long forgotten the original reasons for their customs and traditions; they follow them regardless.

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 Daddlom 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 Halab, Petra, Zircheb, 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 Dabania, 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 naby. 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, Kalabronti, Pabdlom, and occasionally Sind and Minrothad hawk their wares to passersby. Though the locals do not wish to have extended contact with foreigners, they are not reluctant in the least to obtain foreign goods such as spices, precious and common metals, and wood.

Another place of interest is the baron's palace. In form it greatly resembles the palaces described by travelers who have ventured to Hule, with its graceful towers, domes, and curves. Baron Mehmet himself has opened part of his palace to the public, so that they may gaze upon and admire the rich carpets and adornments found throughout. For those interested in Hulean architecture, Garganin presents a much safer alternative than going to Hule itself.

Do Miss

The one section of Garganin that should be missed at all costs is called the Dark Quarter. This is where the poorest people live, and where murder and theft is rampant. Even Baron Mehmet cannot bring this part of the city under his control fully. Many of the people here think that foreigners are stealing Garganin's wealth and its livelihood, and outsiders who wander the Dark Quarter's narrow alleyways and shadowy squares for too long have been known to disappear. There are rumors that a thieves' guild runs this section of the city.

HRISSOPOLI (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Dabania, east of Adakkian Mountains, west of Meghala Kimata Plains.
DN

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

Population: 21,000 (with another 10,000 living on the surrounding farms and villages).

Languages: Milenian (Hrissopolian dialect), Rakasta.

Coinage: Crown (gp), laurel (sp), shield (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, mining, sheep.

Important Figures: Katambos (Khatambe) XXXIX (King), Androsius Tyropolikos (High Priest).

Flora and Fauna: The city of Hrissopoli sits in a grassy valley, whose soils produce ample crops thanks to irrigation and plentiful rivers. Along with the fields of corn, wheat, and potatoes found scattered about, passersby will notice many varieties of wildflowers, shrubs, and lone trees dotting the hills and mountainsides.

The animals one is likely to encounter here include all manner of grassland wildlife, such as falcons, gazelles, gophers, leopards, snakes, wild horses, and vultures. In the hills one will find many varieties of mountain goat, lynx, and various species of rodent and bird. Also present are scattered orcish tribes in the hills, as well as griffons and hippogriffs.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

Hrissopoli is seldom visited by the merchants of Kastelios; they have little that we cannot get closer to home, and they provide for all their own needs. Still, the readers of the Mystaran Almanac may be interested in what goes on in this remote outpost of civilization—surrounded as it is by hostile creatures and savages.

The Land

Hrissopoli is situated in the middle of a wide valley, which extends southwestwards into the Adakkian Mountains. The valley itself, known in that region as the Valley of the Lions, is covered with tall grasses and the occasional patch of light forest—the latter tend to predominate in the foothills of the Adakkian Mountains. From those heights, numerous streams make their way towards the center of the valley, where they form the source of the Ristos River, which in turn winds its way northwards towards the Sea of Dread.

Cut off from the moderating breezes of the Sea of Dread by the bulk of the surrounding mountains, the Valley of the Lions is quite hot all year round, with few rainfalls—unlike the Green Coast and Amalur Lowlands, on the other side of the mountains. Were it not for the natural irrigation system

provided by the numerous streams pouring into the valley, this place would be quite arid. Nonetheless, the farmers here manage to grow enough crops to feed the populace adequately in most years.

The People

Of all the known city-states in this region of Dabania, Hrissopoli is unique, in that it is not governed by those of Milenian heritage. Certainly, the bulk of the populace shares the same ancestry as the denizens of Kastelios, Ilioloosti, and Mibosia; but Hrissopoli is ruled by a rakasta dynasty [they are of the simbasta sub-race. Ed.]. Thus, Hrissopolian society is stratified—humans comprise the working class, the bulk of the city-state's artisans, and the backbone of its army; the rakasta make up the ruling class and dominate the top ranks in the army and clergy. I was surprised to learn that the current high priest is, in fact, of Milenian blood.

This odd state of affairs has persisted as long as any Hrissopolian can remember, and indeed many an old soul can recount the exploits of past rakasta kings, told to them by their aged grandparents when they were young children. Why it should be so is not immediately apparent, but dutiful research, and asking the right people—it takes a competent merchant to root out all the facts—will soon reveal that this division of power has persisted for centuries, as the next section shall show. Suffice it to say that few people question the current state of affairs, after all, the “Katambian Dynasty” (as it is referred to in proclamations) has provided security to the region, and upheld order. Personally, I think the people here are far too complacent; they seem all too eager to remain in their gilded cages, prospering in what would normally be a dangerous region, while placing their fates in the hands of a race whose motives are unknown to many of us.

A visitor can see the impact this has had on the populace. The Hrissopolians appear to lack the same drive and enlightenment of their cousins in other city-states. Here, you will find no attempts to regain lost glory, to seek out and revive those traditions of our ancestors that were noble, and worthy of emulation. It is as though the people here are content to drift in whatever direction their king dictates, and to fulfill his dreams for this city-state—whatever they may be.

Likewise, the minority rakasta are interesting to observe. Though they often speak their own guttural language when amongst their own kind, they seem to have taken up the local dialect of Milenian quite readily. Indeed, many of them seem to have “Milenianized” their names, such that the king, Khatambe, is often referred to as “Katambos” by human and rakasta alike. Many rakasta have also adopted the local dress and habits as well, wearing light, loosely-belted tunics, and lounging about the city's agora to discuss whatever is on their minds. I would note, however, that both races still largely keep to themselves, though the lower-caste rakasta mix more freely with the higher-status humans.

One interesting thing I have heard (in private) is that the current king, Katambos XXXIX, is in fact not the real king! It is rumored that, due to centuries of exclusivity, many of the most powerful rakasta families (including that of the king) are severely inbred. Some people think the powerful, noble rakasta who makes proclamations and public appearances is in fact a stand-in, who follows the commands of the senior officials of the royal household. If this is true, then the true king could be a drooling idiot hidden away somewhere. Needless to say, this rumor is considered highly treasonous.

Recent History

Hrissopoli was founded circa BC 400, initially as a rest stop for caravans bearing ore from the Adakkian Mountains to the heartland of the Milenian Empire. Over time, more people settled here,

drawn by the relatively hospitable climate and the rich veins of silver in the surrounding hills. The increasing population led to a need to open the surrounding lands for cultivation, though the soils were drier than those of the Green Coast to the north, and the region surrounding the great Meghalo Fithi River, which was to Milenia as the Mesonian River is to modern Thyatis. Engineers from Ilioloosti were brought in to design a great network of aqueducts and irrigation channels (many of which are still in use today) to increase the yield of the region's soils. This grand undertaking drew more people, until the great city of Brissopoli, by BC 200, boasted 67,000 people within its walls, and a great number in the surrounding countryside. So magnificent was this city that the emperor proclaimed that it should become the new capital of the Province of Kytheria—thus relegating the smaller city of Sybaris (the former capital) to a lesser role in the empire.

For another 100 years and more, Brissopoli became synonymous with mineral wealth, along with its sister city of Cyclonia, which lay further to the south. This was not to last long, however; with the collapse of central authority in the remaining decades before the crowning of the first emperor of Thyatis, the city found itself in peril. The once-vigilant garrisons that protected the flanks of the empire from the ever-present humanoid threat faltered due to corruption and infighting, and the long-suppressed hordes of orcs, and worse creatures, thundered into the valley and seized whatever plunder they could find. Within weeks of the initial attack, all but Brissopoli had fallen to the monstrous raiders, and those Milenians who were not able to flee had been put to the sword ruthlessly. Despite great efforts on the part of the city's defenders, Brissopoli's gates were thrown asunder, and the invaders had their share of loot, though they lost many warriors in doing so.

Brissopoli's story would have ended then, were it not for the rapaciousness of the raiders, who, in obtaining what they wanted, soon squabbled over the spoils. Taking this opportunity for one last attempt to regain control of the city, the remaining defenders rallied and, against all odds, managed to push the humanoids out of the city, and drive them back into the hills. The years that followed were dark ones—only one-fifth of the populace remained within the partly-ruined walls, and the source of Brissopoli's wealth, the silver mines, were no longer accessible; many monsters still roamed those areas. Thus, Brissopoli settled into what its historians called the Long Night, during which more raids were suffered, but none of the ferocity of the initial one. It was not long after one of these attacks, circa AC 300, when a great band of rakasta came out of the east, and, after surveying the partly-ruined city, offered the inhabitants a choice: either they could submit to rakasta authority and live in peace, or they could die. The Brissopolians, all too aware of their precarious situation, acquiesced to the rakasta's demands, and opened their gates to them. Since that time, the senior male of the ruling family of that tribe (who always goes by the name Khatambe) has been king of Brissopoli.

Since that time (since named the Dawning), Brissopoli has slowly regained its strength, its armies led by powerful rakasta generals and a series of decisive kings, and under that protection the city began the slow and painful process of rebuilding—unaccompanied by the fear of humanoid raiders. Though the rakasta initially held themselves apart from their human subjects, some cultural exchange was inevitable: many rakasta began to worship the Milenian Immortals, and to adopt some trappings of the remnants of Milenian civilization. Likewise, the humans became accustomed to the rakasta hierarchy and legal tradition. Under the guidance of the Katambian Dynasty, Brissopoli has reasserted control over its surroundings, and has even managed to regain control over the nearby hills—thus allowing some mining to resume, and for some of the aqueducts and irrigation channels to be restored.

It was not until AC 760 when, after undergoing centuries of recovery itself, explorers from the city-state of Ilioloosti came upon the Valley of the Lions, and Hrissopoli itself. The rakasta rulers, though eager to see their dominion grow in strength, have always been wary of outsiders, especially those from other city-states. They fear that prolonged contact with these other states will expose their subjects to foreign ideas—ones which might involve the abolition of the Katambian Dynasty. Nevertheless, trade now exists between Hrissopoli and Ilioloosti, and some caravans from Kastelios are now beginning to make their way here, taking with them samples of fine silver work and rakasta art, as well as rare nuts.

Don't Miss

Although a pleasant city with clean streets and tidy, well-maintained buildings, Hrissopoli lacks many of the inspiring monuments and sights that may be found in Kastelios, or other places. Many have deteriorated over the ages, or have been replaced by the ruling rakasta in favor of testaments to their own power. The Lake of Heroes, a great man-made pool rimmed with marble pillars, is said to have been filled with the statues of legendary figures from Hrissopoli's history, but at some time in the past these statues were knocked down. Today, a grand likeness of King Khatambe I rises from the pool. Elsewhere, within the Great Temple of Halab, which dominates the Hill of Hrissos, the once-legendary frescoes depicting that Immortal's triumphs have been replaced by those featuring past rakasta kings receiving holy blessings. Despite these changes, which have been accepted by the clergy of Halab, the temple is still a sight worth seeing.

Another interesting place to visit is the reservoir, which is the main junction of all the man-made channels and aqueducts that carry water from the rivers and mountains into Hrissopoli itself. While the reservoir is not grand to look at, being a great catch basin, from which pipes run to supply the town with water at public wells, it is remarkable in that such an engineering feat was completed so long ago, and still functions to this day! I do not know the volume of water carried by that system, but it must be great.

Do Miss

Although Hrissopoli is a fairly safe place, there are a number of places that should be avoided. First, visitors may not enter the palace grounds uninvited, under pain of expulsion from the city-state (if unarmed), or death (if the interloper was armed at the time). I find such a law highly restrictive, but nonetheless it is enforced. Second, care should be taken not to venture too far into the wilderness, unless you are armed. The lands immediately surrounding Hrissopoli are well-settled and productive farmland, but further out, the land grows wild, and it is known to be populated by all manner of dangerous creatures. Unarmed visitors wishing to take a hike in the hills may hire a guard at a reasonable rate (5 sp per day, more if anything dangerous is encountered), but otherwise are responsible for their own safety.

Finally, on the south side of Hrissopoli, sealed away by a sturdy wall, is a remnant of the old city. Although overgrown and weathered by centuries of neglect, many locals claim that the ruins contain forgotten treasures, waiting for someone brave enough to reclaim them. On occasion, a young man or woman, brimming with optimism, passes through the well-guarded gate, eager to seek their fortune. Few return, but some of those lucky enough to do so bring back jewelry, ancient coins, weapons, and other valuables. Many think that the ruins are filled with all manner of undead... and worse things.

ILILOOSTI (City-State of)

Location: Continent of Dabania, western Meghala Kimata Plains. **DV**

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

Population: 32,500 (19,000 in Ilioloosti, 13,500 living in scattered villages and towns).

Languages: Milenian (Ilioloostian dialect).

Coinage: Danorii (gp), vesta (sp), pirnii (cp).

Taxation: All citizens are taxed at 20% of their assessed worth once per year (Kaldmont 28).

Government Type: Oligarchy, some democratic elements.

Industries: Agriculture (primarily wheat, fruits, and corn), sheep, crafts.

Important Figures: None known.

Flora and Fauna: The plant life present around Ilioloosti is what one would normally expect for a riverside region, being largely of such water plants as lily pads, papyrus and reeds, plus a midget variety of what is known to some people as the Cestian gobbler. On land one can see many species of grass, including large patches of grab grass, as well as the occasional piece of shrubbery. Among the trees present here are oak, olive, and pine. Not far from the city there is a large oak grove, which serves as the home for a very old treant.

The more exotic animals that may be encountered around Ilioloosti include blink dogs, displacer beasts, griffons, hippogriffs, and any type of giant insect. Among the more organized humanoids, tribes of bugbears, hobgoblins, and orcs have been spotted in the region numerous times in the past. Also, a large group of over one hundred minotaurs is known to inhabit a large group of hills west of the city. Little contact has been established with them, but the city's leadership is aware of their existence. Further southeast, several tribes of rakasta are known to exist. Contact with them is sporadic, but peaceful.

Further reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

If there is any other city-state in northern Dabania 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 Mibosia, 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 Meghala Fithi and the Milenia rivers, where the latter river meets the Meghala 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 Dabania. 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 a regression into barbarism, and, within twenty years, was clearly on the way to a recovery. During this time, a ruling council was formed, composed of those who were 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 Mibosia 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 Dabania.

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 Halab was built 500 years ago by Alexandria Karamanes, who was then the most powerful wizardess in the land, as a gift to her home city. Legend has it that in a time of great need, when even Ilioloosti's greatest heroes fail her, the Colossus will come to life and defend the city-state from all who would inflict pain and misery upon the people. Truly a remarkable tale, I think! The Colossus stands astride the main gates of the city, which faces north upon the plateau upon which Ilioloosti proper rests. It is especially beautiful during festive days, when garlands of flowers are draped all over the Colossus's body.

Not to be missed is the collection of statues of historical philosophers and leaders of the city, which surrounds Alexandria Square, the main market of Ilioloosti. Carved in the plinth of each statue is a brief biography of the person depicted—though those who cannot read Milenian will have a tough time of it! In Alexandria Square, a person may buy almost any good made in the region, whether it be cuisine or some sort of craft.

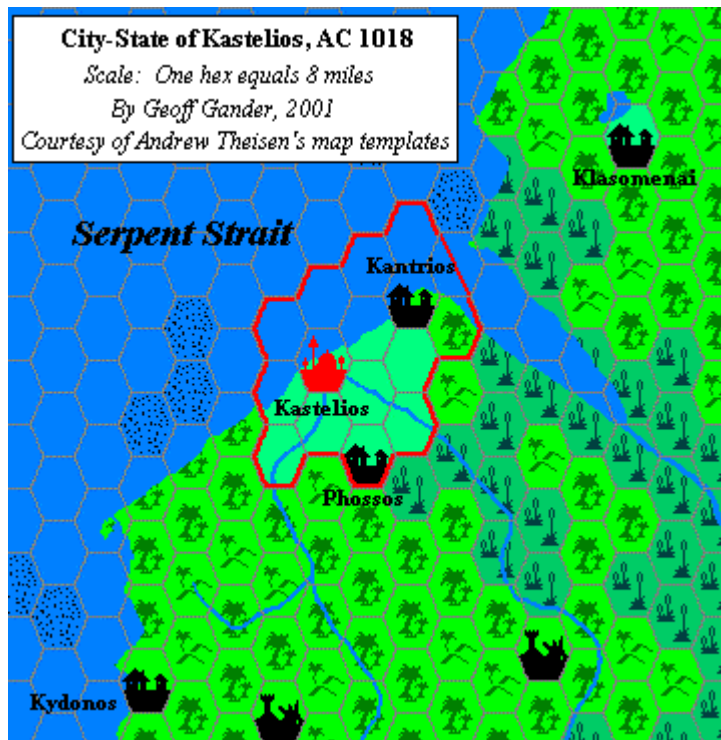
Another feature of this place lies outside Ilioloosti proper, along the eastern border of the city-state. Here, a long line of towers runs north-south along the eastern fringes of the lands controlled by Ilioloosti. Construction of this 25-mile long fortification was started in AC 1005 and completed around AC 1010, and it consists of towers, small fortresses, and trenches. Each tower or fortress is within visual range of the one next in line, and all are equipped with signal fires and mirrors to pass messages quickly. Ilioloosti's chief rival is Mibosia, 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 Dabania, on coast of Sea of Dread. DV

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

Population: 26,300 (another 5,600 live in satellite villages and in the countryside).

Languages: Milenian (Kastelian dialect).

Coinage: Sun (gp), moon (sp), heart (cp).

Taxes: All citizens pay 15% of their earnings twice per year (Klarmont 2S and Kaldmont 2S), as well as 7% of the assessed value of their land once per year (Kaldmont 2S).

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), Marina Takanitas (Experienced Trader), Xenthos Sarantakos (Council Spokesman).

Flora and Fauna: The plant life present in Kastelios is atypical for the region, due to human intervention. Where there should be water grasses, reeds, mangroves, and bogs one finds instead grasses, bushes, and trees, such as cypress, oak, and pine. Many flowering plants are also in abundance, such as daffodils, orchids, and tulips.

The original animal life that was present here consisted of alligators, various amphibians, and water birds such as flamingos and spoonbills. Due to the draining of the swamps, these have been forced north and south into the remaining swamplands. In their place have come the animals that the Milenians brought with them—primarily domesticated animals such as cats, cattle, dogs, pigs, and sheep. Also present are bobcats and wild boars. Kastelios is fortunate enough to be “monster-free,”

though this does not prevent the occasional sighting of blink dogs, displacer beasts, goblins, hippogriffs, orcs, and trolls (especially near the swamps in the latter case).

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

It is with great pride that I share with you, gentle reader, all that I can say of my home in a few scant pages! Ours is a city that is truly the gateway to Dabania, 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 Halab, 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 Winterlanders, 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 Kalabronti, or Ilioloosti. Despite this difference in appearance, we in Kastelios are no less Milenian than our neighbors. We honor the true Immortals—Halab, Petra, Zirchev, Protius, and Asterius among others—and we hold a deep regard for the honorable traditions of our ancestors.

Our dialect of the Milenian tongue is said to be the closest in form to that spoken by our people when the Milenian Empire was strong. Whether this is true or not may never be known, but one need only spend a day with us to learn what it is to be truly Milenian!

Unlike many of the other city-states, Kastelios still follows the democratic principles of our ancestors. All citizens of Kastelios elect their representatives to the city council, who in turn elect a spokesperson—one who moderates council debates and represents the city to the outside world. We also regularly hold athletic games of skill, where adventurous souls may probe 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 Dabania. 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 Dabania 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 Dabdrom 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. More recently, the city-state took a risk, and reached out to some of the nations of the Known World, sending delegations to Jerendi, Darokin, Minrothad, and Thyatis in the hopes of building lasting ties with nations beyond the northern coast of Dabania. In large part this gambit paid off, and now the Kastelians are beginning to make their presence known to the people of southern Brun. Encouraged by this success, the city-state established a presence on one of the islands of the Thanegioth Archipelago in AC 1017, which could serve as both a way station for trade with the Old World, as well as a source of exotic fruits, spices, and other goods.

Don't Miss

The Public Forum is always worth a visit when in the city! Here one can listen to philosophers, scientists, and other thinkers put forth their ideas on the front steps of this lovely white marble building, graced with massive columns and engravings along its front. It is especially lively when debates begin—these tend to draw crowds, depending on the topic. Inside is the Grand Chamber, where the thirty elected councilors debate issues of the day, guided by the spokesperson. Most meetings are open to the public, though important issues, such as declarations of war and the like, are always held behind closed doors.

Another sight worth seeing is the Great Temple of Halab! 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 Halab 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 Pabdlom, Kalabronti, Ilioloosti, Brissopoli, Sind, and increasingly Minirothad, Jerendi, 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 Demetrima 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 Docksidēs. 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 Docksidēs, 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 Dabania, central Meghala Kimata Plains. **DV**

Area: Approx. 1,400 sq. mi. (3,625 sq. km.). The full extent of annexations from last year remains unknown.

Population: 40,700 (21,500 in Mibosia, 19,200 living in scattered villages and towns).

Languages: Milenian (Mibosian 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 (Cirmont 15).

Government Type: Military dictatorship.

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

Important Figures: Diamanes Chesakkus (General of the Mibosian Army), Diocletian Alerasthasius (Head of the Interior Ministry), Petrassia Amonduria (Captain of the Mibosian Cavalry Brigade)—these three people lead the ruling triumvirate.

Flora and Fauna: The area upon which Mibosia 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 Mibosia. Most of what people will see consists of chickens, the occasional cow, and a large number of sheep. Despite this, people in outlying regions have encountered giant insects, gnolls, griffons, harpies, hippogriffs, orcs, and on rare occasions purple worms.

Further reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

It was with some trepidation that I set out southeastwards from my home in Kastelios to explore this far-off city-state of the Meghala Kimata Plains. We on the coast do little trade with this place, as there is nothing that the Mibosians 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 Mibosian army, as the city-state's forces steadily encroached upon its neighbors. Whether or not these tales are true, few people wish to head inland to this place by the Meghala Fithi River. For many, it is fine to venture as far inland as Ilioloosti, but no further.

The Land

Mibosia is situated on fertile hilly terrain bordering the great Meghala Fithi River as it flows northwestwards towards the Sea of Dread. The land is well-watered, with many streams and brooks cutting across one's field of vision, and all emptying themselves into the Meghala as it surges by.

Unlike Kastelios, Mibosia 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 Mibosia'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 Mibosia'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, Mibosia 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 Mibosians! 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 Mibosians 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 Mibosians 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 Mibosia.

It was very difficult obtaining information for this portion of my submission on Mibosia for Joshuan, owing to the strict regulations governing contact between citizens and foreigners. No citizen of Mibosia 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 Mibosia, 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 Mibosia'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 Dabania, is considered by the Mibosian triumvirate to be subversive propaganda. Just last week I heard a man was sentenced to forty years of hard labor for trying to sell a copy of this book within the city. But enough of my troubles in getting this information to you, the reader, let me begin by telling you something of the people.

As I mentioned before, the Mibosians 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 Mibosia 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 Mibosia 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 Mibosia 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 Mibosians idolize their soldiers and strong figures, they also denigrate those who are not so blessed. It seems to be an unspoken rule in Mibosia 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 Mibosia'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 Mibosian, 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 Mibosian react to all this? While I encountered some who, through subtle visual cues my soldier escort did not seem to pick up, told me that they disagreed with the government's policies, most of those I tried to talk to refused to converse with me, their reasons ranging from my being a lowly foreigner to gazing fearfully at my escort, and telling me that they had an urgent errand to attend to. The average Mibosian 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 Mibosians was the seemingly mindless devotion to what many here see as Mibosia'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

Mibosia 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 Mibosia 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 Mibosia, fairest of the fair.” Fragmentary records from this time describe Mibosia 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 Mibosia. 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, Mibosia 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 Mibosia, 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, Mibosia 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, Mibosia'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, Mibosia has undergone a program of rapid remilitarization, expansion, and centralization. Those towns and villages which strayed from the Mibosian orbit have since been re-incorporated into this growing city-state, and areas that have never known Mibosian rulership are now finding themselves under its control.

More recently, Mibosian territorial ambitions have collided with those of the Heldannic Knights, a fanatical collection of soldiers and crusading priests serving the Immortal Vanya, Patroness of Conquest. Since the fall of Polakatsikes to the knights in AC 1015, the Mibosian war machine appears to have sprung to a new life, something that only bodes ill for the people of the Meghala Kimata Plains. Last year, in AC 1017, these fears proved to be well-founded, as Mibosia's legions surged southwards, engulfing lesser city-states along the way. Now, several thousand people find themselves under Mibosia's sway, their young men press-ganged into the army, and their best lands confiscated by their new overlords. Their advance was halted at Polakatsikes, where the Heldannic Knights held off Mibosia's assault, and forced them to withdraw—though this was done at great cost. It is said that, already, the fires of rebellion are burning across the countryside. Whether Mibosia's might will be checked remains to be seen.

Don't Miss

Although Mibosia 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 Mibosian 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 Meghala Fithi River from Mibosia. 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 Mibosia. As I have already explained, Mibosia takes a dim view to foreigners in general within its walls. Should you find yourself in Mibosia, 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. Mibosia has strict penalties in place for those found guilty of spying.

POLAKATSIKES (Dominion of)

Location: Continent of Dabania, eastern Meghala Kimata Plains. DV

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

Population: 7,950 (includes roughly 200 Heldannic Knights), approx. 1,050 in the countryside. Population has been reduced due to wartime losses.

Languages: Heldannic, Milenian (Polakatsikan dialect).

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

Taxes: Every citizen's worth is assessed annually, and is taxed at a rate of 20%.

Government Type: Military dictatorship, member of the Heldannic Empire, town council has some autonomy.

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

Important Figures: Wolfgang Stemmle (Landmeister), Trimos Sortiropolis (Former Bürgermeister).

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 Dabania, and struck a death blow against the people who caused our Patroness much grief in life—the Milenians! We were commissioned by Vanya Herself to probe 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 Stommel, 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 Haldannic 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 nobility of the knights, and some have begun to emulate them to a degree.

In AC 1016, the encroachment of the Haldannic Knights attracted the attention of the city-state of Mibosia, and the two regional powers soon descended into hostility. During the following year, Mibosia's legions poured across the Meghala Kimata Plains, conquering numerous petty states along the way. They did not manage to conquer Polakatsikes, and suffered considerable casualties during their assaults. Nonetheless, Haldannic territorial ambitions in the region have been checked for the time being, as the colonial regime focuses its energies on reconstruction.

Don't Miss

Those who are interested in classical Milenian architecture and culture will not be disappointed in Polakatsikes. One can find public buildings with graceful pillars and statues, fountains, beautiful groves, clean paved streets, and a functioning sewer system. Many of the larger buildings were constructed when the town was first established, which means they date back a thousand years at least. One can also see changing building styles over the ensuing centuries simply by walking down a street. The weight of history is present in Polakatsikes.

One interesting place to see is the Town Forum, a sort of indoor amphitheater where the town council, and now the Haldannic 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 Haldannic 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 (Exarchate of)

Location: Continent of Dabania, Jungle Coast region. **DD**

Area: Approx. 92,315 sq. mi. (239,095 sq. km.). Total area gained from annexations in AC 1017 have yet to be tallied accurately.

Population: 200,000 (30,000 in Raben Scarp, 35,000 living in scattered Thyatian villages and towns, roughly 35,000 Milenian refugees settled in Dabania Superior and Inferior, 100,000 Thyatianized Hinterlanders scattered throughout jungles, unknown number living deep in the wilderness).

Languages: Thyatian (official), Thratian. Some Milenian dialects spoken as well.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: emperor (5 gp), lucin (gp), justiciar (ep), asterius (sp), denarius (cp).

Taxes: 20/25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Da. 1, Jy. 3, and Ei. 1). Thyatians abroad must still pay their taxes. Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 10% imperial commercial sales tax on all goods except food, clothing, and fixed assets.

Government Type: Exarchate, member of the Thyatian Empire.

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

Important Figures: Leilah ben Nadir (Exarcha).

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-baunted 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 Dabanian 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.

The third major group of people living in these territories are refugees from the various city-states of the Meghala Kimata Plains that fell victim to the ongoing Mibosian hostilities, and to a lesser extent the conflict between Mibosia and the Haldannic Knights based in Polakatsikes. These people share the same heritage as I, though, of course, my people have achieved a far greater level of prosperity and security. Currently, many of them live in and around Raven Scarp, though a sizable number live in the larger towns and villages of the northern Hinterlands. Late last year strife arose between the Milenians and the existing inhabitants, due in part to cultural clashes, but also to strained resources because of the sudden influx of refugees.

In fact General Leilah ben Nadir is Exarcha of Dabania Superior, the coastal territory lying west of River Torion. Other Hinterlands territories include Dabania Inferior (east of River Torion), the Barony of Fiorenza, the Barony of Cittanova, the Territory of Torionensis, and the Territory of Thratia.

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 Dabania 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 Dabania. 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 Dabania 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.

In AC 1017 the Hinterlands have been split into several regions, including an exarchate and two baronies in lands that are well colonized now and thus recognized as rightful dominions of the empire, and two less settled territories in the fringes that constitute the ever-expanding frontier of the Thyatian expansion in Dabania. These changes were accompanied by an influx of several thousand refugees from the city-states of the Meghala Kimata Plains, some of whom have been settled in the Hinterlands, while others have been transported to Hattias for resettlement. Recent reports from Thratia indicate that the inflow of refugees has not ended; how much longer it will continue is unknown at this time.

Don't Miss

During my stay in the Hinterlands I found several things of note, which any passerby should visit should he or she have the chance. Perhaps the most breathtaking sight that first greeted me as I entered Raven Scarp was the actual Raven Escarpment, after which the port city is named. Although the cliffs themselves are only 150 feet tall at most, the rock itself is crisscrossed with many different-colored bands. A gnomish prospector who I had the pleasure of meeting in that city told me that the different colors are caused by the gradual sedimentation of different forms of rock over many eons. At ground level one can see pink granite, with itself was extruded from mighty volcanoes ages ago. Above that are many layers of sandstone, limestone, obsidian, mica, and finally chalk at the very top. The swirling of the different bands of color was breathtaking; I have never seen its like anywhere else.

For those seeking imperial grandeur at its best, the Imperial Square is the place to go! Much larger than even the greatest market square in Kastelios, the Imperial Square is where imposing lines of Thyatian legionnaires drill every day, and perform parades on holidays. Their ceremonial bronze armor was so highly polished on the day that I went, that I was nearly blinded! Aside from the displays of military prowess, one can also see the majestic buildings that house the colonial government of the Hinterlands. On the northern side stands the Imperial Legislature, where the famed Leilah ben Nadir, Governor of the Hinterlands, resides and holds court. On the other three sides stand impressive examples of Thyatian architecture, with great columns and walls of dressed white marble. Mind you,

they are a far cry from the graceful buildings of Kastelios—it is clear to me who served as an inspiration for Thyatian architecture.

Another thing worth seeing is the Great Fall. Located a day's ride south of Raven Scarp, along the River Torion, this great waterfall plunges 300 feet, and is bathed in multicolored water droplets where it ends its fall. Locals, both Thyatian and Hinterlander, say that the waters where the falls end have curative properties, and some claim to have been cured of horrendous diseases by bathing there. At night, the waters at the base of the falls glow with a faint blue luminescence, the source of which is unknown, for many have tried digging there to no avail.

Do Miss

One area that Hinterlanders say should be avoided like the plague are the Fens of Lost Hope, which lay in the south of the Barony of Fiorenza. Ancient Hinterlander legends tell of a great battle fought here ages ago, after which the defeated force was imprisoned somehow. Local lore has it that this imprisoned entity was so malevolent that the very forests nearby were corrupted, and ultimately the Fens of Lost Hope came into being. This vast trackless waste is filled with all sorts of foul beasts and poisonous plants, and the murky waters hold nothing but danger for the wanderer. So evil is this land that Hinterlanders who have greatly wronged their clans are sent here as penance for their deeds. I have also heard that there are great treasures within the fens, remnants of a bygone civilization, but none who have ventured here have ever returned.

VANYA'S REST (Outpost of)

Location: Continent of Dabania, eastern coast by Gulf of Mar. DV

Area: 448 sq. mi. (1,160 sq. km.).

Population: 3,800 (does not include around 500 farmers supplementing local rations). Losses are due to conflicts arising late in AC 1017.

Languages: Heldannic.

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

Taxes: None.

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

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

Important Figures: Thomas von Wettingen (Castellan).

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 Wettingen, 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 Agyptian 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 Agyptian Desert.

Our fortunes have changed for the better recently. Only last year, in AC 1017, our forces advanced mightily into the territories surrounding our grand fortress. A considerable amount of land was conquered from the barbaric Meghaddara, upon which we have built a line of impressive watchtowers and minor forts—the better to protect our sacred ground, and to push back the savages even further. Some of these new lands have passable soils, and thus it will not be long before we settle them properly.

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 Dabania, on the coast of the Gulf of Mar. The boldest and most pious, eager to prove their worth to Vanya, and to show respect for Her mortal remains, made a great pilgrimage to that region, as foretold in a dream. They landed after weeks of sailing, and as one force, they stormed the shores, only to find a small settlement, populated by indigenous human tribesmen descended from the Milenians. These people were driven out, their village destroyed, and the entire region was searched until the remains of Vanya were found. The tribesmen, known as the Meghaddara, were forced to wander the Meghales Amosses Desert and the Agyptian Savannah in search of a new home—and have been the sworn enemies of the Heldannic Knights ever since.

The remains were then reverently placed under a stone cairn, upon which was built the great fortress now known as Vanya's Rest. Once the fort was complete, in AC 935, Vanya visited Her faithful and told them they had done well, and secured Her rest from unbelievers. She then told them that they had to marshal their forces, and return to Hattias, there to bring all who were true to Vanya's Path to the ultimate victory, a home of their own. Most of the Heldannic Knights, as they began to call themselves, returned to Hattias, but they left behind a garrison of elite soldiers to guard the fort.

Don't Miss

The one thing visitors must not miss is the fort itself! Those who come to Vanya's Rest will immediately notice how massive the structure is. The outer walls themselves are at least five feet thick, and are thirty feet in height. At regular intervals along the walls are stout square towers, each mounted with heavy catapults and ballistae. Finally, the most breathtaking structure within the fort is the Great Cathedral, which houses Vanya's remains and is decorated by stained glass windows, numerous sculptures, and tall archways, all in a gothic style.

Do Miss

In the territory claimed by the knights, the regions immediately to the north should be avoided. These northern territories are inhabited by the Meghaddara, who have been sworn enemies of the knights since they were pushed out of their own lands when the fort was built. Those wearing the insignia of the Heldannic Knights, or who travel in their company, will be attacked on sight by the Meghaddara.

ATLAS OF NORWOLD

Introduction to Norwold

The lands to the far north of civilization are lands of constant warfare and power struggles between the nobility. Once united as the Kingdom of Norwold, with the disappearance of Alphatia, the region's former king was unable to hold onto the reins of power. Now the land is dotted with hundreds of small kingdoms, counties, baronies, and other type of dominions.

The realms of Norwold follow the old practice of feudalism, with the local lord controlling all aspects of life within the dominion. All the rest are merely peasants who toil at their leaders' whims. Some are lucky and have benevolent rulers, while others are treated no better than slaves by the tyrants who hold the crown.

The level of education in Norwold varies greatly, as do the cultures of the inhabitants. Those who colonized from Alphatia tend to be more literate (especially the nobility), as do the people conquered by the Heldannic Knights (thanks to their forced education in the ways of Vanya). Those of Thyatian descent are also literate, while the native 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 Brum, Norwold stretches from the frozen Arctic Ocean all the way south to the Mengul Mountains. The beach along the Alphatian Sea delineates the eastern margin, while the imposing Icereach Range cuts off western Norwold from the rest of the world.

Correspondents for Norwold

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

Adik de Chevas

This mage from the sophisticated Principality of Nouvelle Aberoigne is the latest addition to our cadre of correspondents from Norwold. A sage and expert of universal magic, poetry, literature and ancient mythology, Adik is a fine observer and a keen writer. Working in team with Arcadius, he will cover many regions of Norwold from now on.

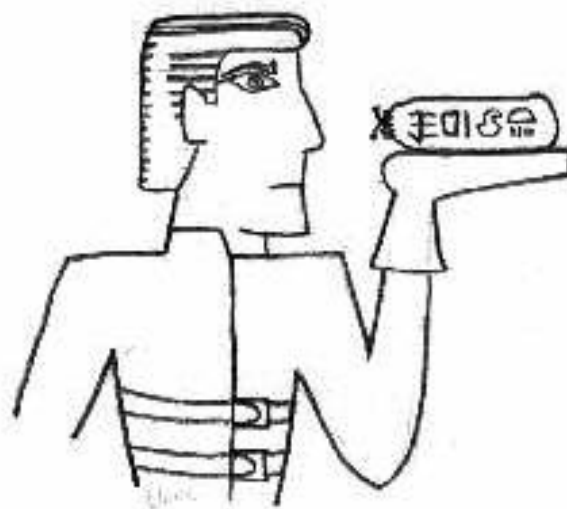
Arcadius

This Traladaran mage is the Baron of Arcadia, a remote and wild dominion in northern Norwold. Although normally a solitary wizard, he has agreed to work for our almanac together with his colleague Adik de Chevas to map Norwold as none has ever done before. His acute political skills and his vast knowledge will undoubtedly serve him (and us) well.

Christopher Dove

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

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



Synthala of Aasla

Born in the once famous city of Aasla, Synthala is a ranger who worships the Immortal Zirchev. Having loved animals as a child, she quickly moved to the wilderness lands of Norwold as soon as she could afford it. Her home is now Alpha, the City of Rangers and Foresters. From there, she travels the breadth of Norwold, exploring all the wilderness she can.

Atlas

Arctic Wastes

The region known as the Arctic Wastes extends north of the Foresthomes, comprising the southern bogs near the Landsplit River and up to the frozen tundra and icy shores of this part of the continent. The great island of Frosthaven also belongs to this area, which is obviously the coldest and most inhospitable of all those found in Norwold. Nonetheless, many settlements and nomadic tribes do live in the southern area of the Arctic Wastes, coping with the elements and the warlike humanoid population to survive.

FROSTHAVEN (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, island north of the continent, in the arctic circle. *NA*

Area: Approx. 22,455 sq. mi. (58,158 sq. km.).

Population: Approx. 6,000 frost giants, 1,500 crypions.

Languages: Grimen (frost giants' tongue), Crypion.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Pearly tributes are paid to the great king as sign of submission and obedience. The exact amounts vary at the king's whim.

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

Industries: None. The frost giants fish, hunt and raid the southern regions. Crypions are hunter-gatherers.

Important Figures: Brumkarth (Giant King), Ocyplok (Elder).

Flora and Fauna: Only lichens and mushrooms grow in this desolate island of ice and rock. Nothing else can grow here, and the intelligent beings living here prey off the smaller mammals and fish they find. Common arctic wildlife in this region includes wolves, arctic wolves, remorhaz, polar bears and frost salamanders.

Further Reading: *CMI* Test of the Warlords.

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

KAARJALA (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of the Great Bay, between the Kaarjavi and Vaaranabi rivers (known as the Landsplit River to most people). *NW*

Area: 63,206 sq. mi. (163,704 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000 settled humans plus 50,000 nomadic humans (on the average); demihuman population is negligible; humanoid population is unknown, though relatively low in the patrolled areas.

Languages: Saamari (a language unrelated to any spoken in the Known World; spoken in two dialects, Kaarjalan and Vaarana); some Alphatian.

Coinage: Markka (gp), penni (sp), oren (cp); coins of Alphatian and Littonian origins are also in common circulation here. Most of the economy is still based on barter, as coins cannot be eaten or wielded as weapons.

Taxes: Commoners usually give one-fifth of their assets at the end of each year (Kaldmont 28) to their ruling nobles, who then pay tribute to the king, usually one quarter to one third of their wealth.

Government Type: Monarchy, with a strong and independent minded noble class.

Industries: Agriculture (grains and potatoes; production is high due to the Great Saampo, an artifact held by the king of Kaarjala), dairy, fishing, logging and trapping. The nomadic Vaarana rely on the herds of reindeer during the winter months and farm ancestral lands in Kaarjala during the summer.

Important Figures: Kaarlo Taabinen (King), Rikka Kaalwa (Maga), Vaalkoi Taapionen (Great Druid of the Kaarjalan Circle), Pekka Seppanen (High Priest of the Church of Kaarjala and Grand Smith of Ilmarinen).

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: *CMI Test of the Warlords*, Kaarjala by James Mishler, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

While we were visiting the Kingdom of Littonia, many of the locals suggested that, if we were to truly understand the far north of Brun, we would do well to venture to the Kingdom of Kaarjala, which lies west of Littonia. After we had seen what we wished in Gaudabpils, 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 Gaudabpils 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 Vaaranabi 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 Vaaranabi 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 Lemminkäinen, who was the Great Wanderer of the Wastes, an heroic figure who battled the forces of evil wherever they appeared; all three led the battle against the humanoid hordes that ravaged the region centuries ago. The Church of Kaarjala reveres all three of these Immortal Heroes as well as the Ancient Ones (older Immortals who were the patrons of the Great Heroes and the Saamari during the elder days) and the Exalted Heroes (heroes from ancient days who did not attain Immortality, but were made into Exalted level associates of their respective Immortal Patrons).

The Vaarana still revere the Ancient Ones as well as the Spirits of Animals, Plants and Elements; they have priestly shamans as well as sorcerous (wizardous) shamans. There are also the Druids of the Circle of Kaarjala, who work with both the Vaarana as well as the Kaarjalans; they revere The Mother (Djaea) and are "led" by Her son, Taapio and his wife Mielikki (Exalted level entities who reside in the forests south and west of Kaarjala). There is another Exalted level being directly involved with Kaarjala; an entity known as the Lord of the Puletide; 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 Alphantian 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, Taabi Kaalevinen).

In those early years, the lands now occupied by Kaarjala were thinly settled by Littonian homesteaders, who resisted Saamari attempts at settling the land. A series of wars broke out between the newly-unified Kingdom of Littonia and the Saamari people. After ten years of intermittent and inconclusive warfare, the two peoples concluded a peace treaty, in which the nation of Kaarjala was formed. The two nations have been on good terms ever since.

The Kingdom of Kaarjala existed peacefully until the mid 6th century, when the Vaarana Saamari, cousins to the Kaarjalans, fled into the region following a major series of defeats at the hands of the humanoids. The Kaarjalan Saamari and the Vaarana united with the nearby elves, dwarves, hin, and Littonians to defeat the invasion of the horde at the Battle of White Bear River in AC 640. The Vaarana then returned to their nomadic life, wandering the northlands, centered on the warm lands between the rivers. Since that time there have been no great threats to Kaarjalan sovereignty or to the Vaarana until the late 10th century, when new dominions, nominally under the rule of King Ericall of Norwold, began to spread northwards. Some elements of Kaarjalan society resent this colonization, considering it to be encroachment upon traditional Kaarjalan lands.

Don't Miss

The capital of Kaarjala is Kaarja (pop. 12,000), the only settlement of any notable size north of the Great Bay, with the obvious exception of the Littonian capital city of Gaudavpils. Kaarja is found in the exact center of the kingdom. Compared to the sheer ruggedness of the rest of the nation, this small city is a veritable island of paradise.

One thing that surely must be seen in Kaarjala is the Great Citadel, which is the center of Kaarja. This great stone building, rising from the stony ground like a great carved needle, is where the king holds court. We were truly honored, while staying in sheltered Kaarja, to be invited to sit with the king one afternoon as he went about his duties. Make no mistake, while Kaarjala may be an isolated realm, it is certainly not lacking in politics and factionalism. A lively stay, to be sure.

In an open steeple, on the highest tower of the Great Citadel, is found the Great Saampo, a mighty artifact in the shape of the sun. Truly a fascinating item! Deactivated, we were told, it is about 3 inches in diameter and unremarkable, appearing as burnished bronze covered in tiny black runes. When activated, however, it transforms into a golden sphere approximately three feet in diameter. It levitates at about seven feet above the ground and glows as a continual light spell of some sort, but the brilliance was so intense that we dared not gaze too long at it. It is said that the Great Saampo was constructed

by the Kaarjalan legendary hero Ilmarinen, and brought by Vainamoinen on the long journey from the west. The Great Saampo ensures that the entire kingdom will enjoy a beneficial climate as well as abundant harvests, since Kaarjala's location all but ensures that it does not enjoy the same sea-borne microclimate enjoyed by nearby Littonia. There are many other powers available through the Great Saampo, but these can only be used by those who know the magical runes or rhymes that will activate them, or so we were told.

The Great Saampo has been known to do many things: Call down the Great Aurora, which burns creatures of the night as though it were daylight; create gold; raise the dead; and, in times of extreme distress, it can be called upon to act as the sun. Truly a powerful construct!

Do Miss

While Kaarjala is truly a fascinating nation, filled with honest, good-natured people, there are many dangers here, which should be avoided if 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 (Cirmont 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 Brum, along the northern border of Norwold. *NW*

Area: Approx. 12,096 sq. mi. (31,329 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000.

Languages: Litoniesu (official), Lietuban, some Alphetian 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: Aldis VI (King), Laila (Queen)

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: *C&M Test of the Warlords*, *The Kingdom of Littonia* by Geoff Gander, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chebas 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 Alphonian Sea, the largest of which, the Gaudaba River, is the main trade route through the nation. So important is this river that the capital city, the port of Gaudabpils, 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 Gaudabpils, 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 Litionesu, 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 Litionesu 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 Lietubans, who occupy the northern third of the nation. They are a people of farmers and trappers, who do not deal much with outsiders. Few Lietubans live in Littonia's urban areas, and when they do so they tend to keep to themselves. Some Lietubans claim that they once had a nation of their own, though our research has found little evidence of this. If there was indeed a Lietuban 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 Alphonian 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 Lietubans are said to have established their own kingdoms not long after Namejs's departure, and the royal line started by Namejs himself soon fell into obscurity, until Karlis the Unifier, who claimed to be a direct descendant of the legendary ruler, defeated his opponents and founded the modern state of Littonia.

From our inquiries, it seems clear that Littonia, in its modern incarnation, is rather new. Though this kingdom has existed for over 1,100 years, it has not been until relatively recently that it has taken on the trappings and appearance of anything resembling what we call a "civilized" state, with written laws, a national currency, and formalized relations between nobles and commoners. Beforehand, it seems, Littonia was more of a collection of loosely-aligned nobles serving the House of Karlis, named after the noble warlord who united Littonia over a thousand years ago and started the royal succession. Commoners served their lieges through a sort of client-patron relationship, in which each had rough guidelines as to what was expected of them, and what sort of support they owed each other in times of war. Today, Littonia seems to be well on its way to becoming a modern state in every sense of the word.

During the recent Norwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.] Littonia remained out of the conflict and chose to act as neutral negotiator to avoid repercussions from the Heldannic and Alphan governments.

Don't Miss

While Littonia is very remote as far as nations are concerned, there are several attractions here that make this nation a rather pleasant one. In the capital of Gaudabpils 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, Gaudabpils, 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 Gaudabpils with Kaarja, and even then they should traverse the distance hastily.

Lothbarth Forest

The Lothbarth Forest is the region commonly known as the Foresthomes. It comprises all the woods north of the Great Bay and up to the Landsplit River, a broad, primeval forest of evergreens where elves and animals have lived side by side for centuries. The Foresthomes properly are the elven settlements, which are divided into smaller clans and families, but they all recognize the Lothbarth Forest as their homeland and always try to protect it from the outsiders' eyes and grasp.

ELMS (Barony of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, north of Leeha, west of Panteria. NW

Area: Approx. 997 sq. mi. (2,580 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000 elves.

Languages: Elvish (Shiye-Lawr and Altheim dialects).

Coinage: Barter only.

Taxes: None. Each elf willfully helps the rest of the community as needed.

Government Type: Barony (elven dominion, the baron is advised by the clanmasters). Member of the elven Kingdom of Nordaltheim.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Quillan Elm-Grower (Baron and Clanmaster), Lidial Almashiye (Almashiye Clanmaster).

Flora and Fauna: Well-tended elms and evergreen trees abound in this area. Deer, bears, elk, wolves, and various small northern forest animals can be found here.

Coats of Arms: Baron Quillan Elm-Grower: Three green elms on white background; Barony of the Elms: Green elm on white background.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Among the Shiye clans that live in Lothbarth Forest, the Almashiye are special because they are neither part of White Oak nor are they one of the independent foresthomes.

The Land

Unlike most of Lothbarth, the land of the Almashiye is not covered in various evergreen trees, though it has them too; instead, sturdy elms grow here. Oh, sure, there are some hardwood groves in several spots, around which where most Shiye clans have settled in fact, but these are generally maples, and most specially oaks. This is, as far as I can tell [and I've spent a lot of time in that forest, as well as everywhere in Norwold. Synthala.], the only spot in Lothbarth that has elms.

The Barony of the Elms lies in the western part of Lothbarth, where the forest is less dense. Oh, don't get me wrong here—this is a forest all right, with hardly any beings for hundreds of miles around, except for the Almashiye themselves. But you do not travel the White Forest of Norwold for

the social encounters—you go there to commune with nature, the vast expanses of untamed forest, and the many animals that call it home.

The People

Still, if you long for a conversation a bit more consequential than the flimsy chatter of the birds or the slow, ponderous speech of the old trees [for, surely, you can speak with animals or speak with plants. *Synthala.*], know ye that the Almashiye are the most open of the Shiye clans of Norwold.

Baron Quillan is not an Almashiye, though, but an elf hailing from former Alfheim. An adventurer at heart, he traveled the known world with human companions, until he settled in Norwold among his northern cousins, his lust for adventure satiated at last—or so he thought, anyway. Some Alfheim elves from Quillan's clan settled in the Barony of the Elms, and more after the destruction of Alfheim by the Shadow Elves. The Almashiye being open—for Shiye, anyway—accepted their brethren among them, so that the barony still comprises only one elven clan. Though they each tend to worship their own Immortal (either Eiryndul or Ilsundal), they are open-minded about it and it is not unheard of that an Almashiye starts to pay homage to Ilsundal (possibly in addition to Eiryndul), especially if she marries into the Alfheim community (or vice-versa). The Elms is, indeed, an open ground for the budding Faith of the Ancestors.

Baron Quillan has always been very close, in a strange way, to High Priest Zoltan. It is not, however, a relationship of equality, as Quillan views the human treekeeper as a religious figure, while Zoltan sees the elven baron as a faithful follower and, I think, tool. For Quillan and Zoltan are, truly, complete opposites, both of which certainly wishing they were born in the other race—not that Quillan really would have enjoyed being human, but sometimes he likes to think so. Oh, don't get me wrong, Quillan Elm-Grower is an elf all right, and he would not actually have it otherwise, but he likes the company of humans as well, and sometimes convinces himself that he prefers it to that of his brethren. And indeed he spends a lot of time around humans, including at the court of Ericall in the crowded city of Alpha, where he is more than happy to be the voice of Zoltan and the elven clans of Lothbarth—and Zoltan is more than happy to let him deal with the human politics, too [a feeling I understand very well. *Synthala.*]. Because I don't spend much time in Alpha myself I can't say for sure, but I think Quillan played a role in the rapprochement of Zoltan the Treekeeper and Elarianthas Blackblade, that resulted in the creation of the elven Kingdom of Nordalheim, of which the barony is a component; none of those involved would confirm my suspicions, though, as they prefer to keep the dealings that created Nordalheim secret.

Quillan, being an endearing elf, maintains cordial relations with most of the other lords of Norwold. His barony is notably on good terms with its immediate neighbors—Leeha, Chitine, and Panteria. The Free Foresthomes are not so enamored with Quillan, though, but this is more based on political, and ultimately religious—even though Quillan himself is not, deep down, a religious person—grounds.

Recent History

Quillan came to Norwold in answer to King Ericall's call to heroes of the known world to come to his young nation and carve out dominions loyal to him and to the Alphonian Empire. As he adventured in the wilderness of Norwold in search for a suitable dominion, he came across this one place in Lothbarth Forest that reminded him of home, with its elves living among sturdy elms. He immediately fell in love with the place.

Baron Quillan could not stay in place for long, though, and he soon was spending as much time visiting Alpha, or other lords' estates, as in his barony. It was not much of a problem, though, as the Almashipe could run themselves fine, thank you, but I believe this brash young elf would need to find himself a nice Almashipe mate to settle down a bit. Anyway, the baron's friendships with human lords coupled with the Almashipe's openness allowed the barony to conduct trade and maintain good relations with the neighboring human dominions.

During the Great War there was some disturbance in the Elms as there was throughout the Shiye foresthomes, as the followers of Eiryndul agitated against the infiltration of the following of Isundal and the encroaching presence of the Alphatians, but the barony was probably the less hit elven domain—much less than Zoltan's lands, at any rate.

More recently, the Barony of the Elms joined the newly-founded elven Kingdom of Nordaltheim.

Don't Miss

Though the forest outside the Almashipe clanhold is composed mainly of evergreens, there is, several miles to the south of the elven stronghold, a grove of maple, birch, and aspen that flash vivid reds, yellows, and pale oranges flickering among the greens, that are a marvel to behold. Though I saw no one in the vicinity—despite my attempts to reach out for a presence—I remain persuaded that there must be a druid to watch over that grove, although he or she visibly does not want to meet anyone [I was on my way south from the Almashipe, and decided not to retrace my steps just for the sake of satiating my curiosity. Synthala.]. As a consequence, I advise you do not attempt any of the stupid things that city-dwellers typically do in a forest—especially using those trees as firewood—as I'm sure the druid would do something unpleasant to you at the slightest misconduct.

Do Miss

A few miles to the northwest of the Almashipe clan lies a large pool of freshwater. Such lakes are a very common sighting throughout Norwold, but this one is peculiar in that it is inhabited by a community of nixies. Each young Almashipe, on his or her hundredth birthday, travels to the nixie pool, where he or she lets down the elven immunity to charms and becomes the (almost) willing servant of the nixies for a full year. Then the young elf is free to come back to the clan, and after this rite of passage he or she is considered an adult. The reason I indicate this pool as a place to avoid, rather than visit—despite its beauty—is due to the fact that the nixies try to charm into servitude everyone who comes close to their pond, not just the Almashipe. Unless you plan on spending one year in thralldom at the bottom of a lake, I advise you make yourself invisible, or just avoid this otherwise pleasant pool.

FORESTHOMES (Free Clans of)

Location: Continent of Brum, north of the Great Bay, south of the Landsplit River. **NW**

Area: Approx. 179,560 sq. mi. (465,060 sq. km.) in western and eastern Lothbarth.

Population: 10,000 elves.

Languages: Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Barter only.

Taxes: None. Each elf willfully helps the rest of the community as needed.

Government Type: Group of independent clans united under a council of clanmasters.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Soridel (High Priest of Sinar), Desel Leafbower (Leafbower Clanmaster).

Flora and Fauna: Deer, bears, elk, wolves, and other small northern forest animals. Frost giants also raid occasionally, and other tundra monsters can sometimes make an appearance in the elven forest.

Further Reading: CM 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 Alphonian 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 spending time studying and always trying to learn something new.

Despite their dislike of other races, a few humans—myself included—and even one dwarf have been accepted into their lands, provided we do not stay too long on any given visit.

The elves of the Foresthomes are divided into seven major clans plus several minor ones. Each clan is completely independent from the others. When a dispute arises between two or more of the clans, all the clanmasters of the Foresthomes gather together in Sinar and decide how best to handle the problem. This is as close as the clans come to being a nation since a civil war almost broke out ten years ago.

The Leafbower clan is renowned for its marksmanship and ability with the bow. Its clanmaster, Desel, leads them from the town of Silverleaf.

Clan Feryndul is more intellectual than the others, always ready to debate and give the various sides and opinions of any conversation. They have a small library in their town of Feryndul, but refuse to place too many books into it in the fear of becoming too much like the Shipe-Lawr they left long ago.

The other clans don't really have any specialties. These clans are the Sunbeils (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 Ithyshipe (the eighth major clan), who are now ruled by Hlsundal's High Priest Zoltan Hytaxius, are not counted among the free clans of the Foresthomes, nor are the minor Almashipe clan (under Quillan Elm-Grower's rulership) [See the report made by Adik and Arcadius for those elves living in White Oak. Synthala.]

Finally, a small number of other minor clans also live in the forest of Lothbarth: half of them live among the free clans, the other half recognize Zoltan's leadership. Many of these Shipe came to Norwold during the Great War, when they refused to obey the Alphatian Crown's orders to fight against Glantri and chose exile in a foreign land to retain their freedom.

Recent History

Centuries ago, the elves of the Foresthomes left their homeland of Shipe-Lawr to colonize the frigid lands of Norwold. They were displeased at the strict order and laws of the Shipe-Lawr, as well as the neglect of the forest way by their continuous studies and learning. They therefore decided to create their own nation across the sea.

Nine main clans left Alphatia, eight of which settled in the northern forests. The ninth clan, the Shalidye, proceeded further south, completely separating from even their fellow colonists. Each clan claimed its own territory and was completely independent from the others.

And so it remained for several centuries until AY 1990 [AC 990. Ed.], when the humans of Alphatia started a massive wave of immigration to the area. They placed Ericall as King of Norwold, and he granted dominions left and right during his first decade of rulership. At that point, the clanmasters slowly began talking about uniting to better deal with the increase of human activity in the area. As is typical for elves, it would take a long time before a decision was reached.

In AY 1995 [AC 995. Ed.], King Acroschipe of Shipe-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 AD 1997 [AC 997. Ed.], the charismatic Firehawk managed to unite the clans under the leadership of the priests of Ilsundal, with himself and Princess Rahasia in charge. But unlike Acroshipe'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 AD 2004 [AC 1004. Ed.], when Rahasia gave birth to a female human child. Her affair with Count Martigan soon became public knowledge. At that point, Soridel, high priest of Eiryndul, began making statements that Firehawk was too incompetent to lead the Foresthomes and that he should be removed. The birth of a human child was 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 AD 2007 [AC 1007. Ed.]. If this is true, there were probably many more such subtle manipulations caused by the Immortals during the Great War than is apparent to the mortals' eyes.

In the last years, High Priest Soridel came into conflict with Zoltan Hytaxius's efforts to unite all 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 Ithyshipe, away from their true ways" [as Soridel put it to me. Synthala.], and his influence is still growing. However, another would-be elven unifier also exists in Norwold, Lord Clarianthas Blackblade of Ironwood. Taking advantage of the situation, Soridel has been successfully manipulating the rivalry between the two lords to make sure the Norwold elves remain independent and free from the oppressive yoke of an absolute leader [at least that's how the free-spirited Shiye of Norwold view an organized country. Synthala.].

The Foresthomes remained neutral in the recent [AC 1016. Ed.] Norwold Wars, since they were never directly threatened by the Heldannic and Qeodharan forces and preferred to maintain their isolation, especially towards human conflicts. The recent founding of the Kingdom of Nordalfheim and the alliance between Zoltan of White Oak, Quillan of the Elms and Blackblade of Ironwood has changed the balance of power in the region in favor of the Nordalfheim leaders, and this has not been welcome by the leaders of the free Foresthomes.

Don't Miss

If you have never seen an elven stronghold, then those are the sites to visit here in the Foresthomes. The houses within the trees, and the rope bridges connecting each of the large oaks, make it appear to be a gigantic tree fort. It will 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: Continent of Brum, north of the Great Bay, northeast of Panteria. *NW*

Area: Approx. 44,890 sq. mi. (116,265 sq. km.) in central Lothbarth.

Population: Approx. 5,000 elves.

Languages: Elven (Shipe-Lawr and Alfheim dialects).

Coinage: Barter only.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Elven foresthomes each led by a clanmaster, recognizing more or less explicitly the spiritual leadership of Zoltan and the political leadership of King Blackblade. Member of the elven Kingdom of Nordalheim.

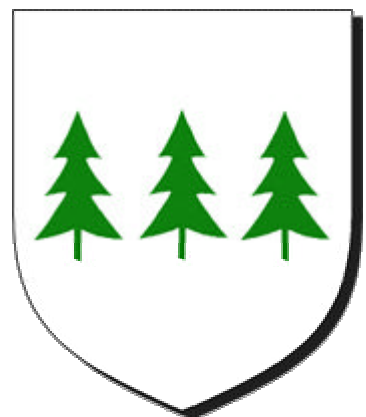
Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Zoltan Hytaxius (High Priest).

Flora and Fauna: The dense northern forests are covered with evergreen, mainly pine; in the lands nearest to the Great Bay, they intermingle with various hardwood trees: oak, elm, maple, walnut, ash, orchard trees. It is among these that stands Zoltan's magical Tree of Life—the White Oak. In the north, the pine trees do not block the faint sun's rays, allowing a rather thick layer of vegetation to grow at ground level: shrubs, short grass; waist-high grass in glades. In the south, the thick canopy blocks the sun, providing little light for plants to grow underneath. Many animals live in the forests, especially small mammals and rodents, boars, deer, elk, caribou, moose, bears, wolves, blink dogs, and white and green dragonflies. Many fairies also dwell there, especially centaurs, actaeons and shargugh. More dangerous denizens include the occasional rogue white or green dragon, basilisks, decapuses, and the rare wydrds.



Coats of arms: High Priest Zoltan Hytaxius: Uses no coat of arms; human lords generally attribute him a white oak over green. Each foresthome also has its own symbol; human lords often represent the Shipe elves as a whole with one—or from three to a dozen—green pines over white.



Further Reading: *CMI Test of the Warlords*, Zoltan the Treekeeper by Hervé Musseau, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Shipe 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 thousand of them living in small clans called foresthomes. Foresthomes often exist miles and miles away from each other, mostly in the southern part where hardwood trees are more numerous. Elves rarely travel far from their homes, but hunters can sometimes be encountered in uninhabited wilderness—but beware because they are likely to hunt you like any game just for fun!

The climate of the southern and eastern parts of the forest are somewhat tempered by the Great Bay and the Alphatian Sea, though it remains rather chilly. This is enough for hardwood trees to grow, with almost a five month growing season during good years. These are the parts of Lothbarth that Shiye live in, leaving the northern and western parts mostly uninhabited. Those regions experience very short growing periods, a few months at best and virtually none during the colder years, especially where the forest gives way to the Icereach range to the west. In such regions, only coniferous trees can grow and life is especially hard for those rare foresthomes that prefer to live in the pine trees rather than the more welcoming oaks.

The People

Lothbarth houses 21 Shiye clans (nine major and several minor clans), scattered about the forest; others can be found throughout the rest of Norwold. Of these, one major and seven minor clans can be considered directly or indirectly under Zoltan’s guidance [including Quillan’s barony, which recognizes Zoltan’s spiritual leadership but is however independent. Arcadius.]; the others have remained independent from his influence, often vehemently.

The most important of these clans is clan Ithyshiye, in which Zoltan originally settled when he came to Norwold. Not only is this clan one of the largest in Norwold, but it is also in its territory that stands the fabled Tree of Life that made Zoltan famous among the Shiye—and gain sway over the Shiye despite the opposition of the clergy of Eiryndul. Despite the original friction, especially with the local clerics [of Eiryndul, the traditional Immortal patron of the Shiye. Ed.], the Ithyshiye are now staunch supporters of Zoltan [but without forfeiting their cultural attachment to Eiryndul either. Arcadius.].

A close ally of Zoltan’s is Baron Quillan Elm-Grower: though independent from White Oak, the Barony of the Elms recognizes the spiritual guidance of Zoltan. 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 playing practical jokes, a tradition that has not dwindled despite the influence of Zoltan [most Shiye

still revere Eiryndul above Ilsundal, despite Zoltan's best efforts, or even the efforts of Elarianthas Blackblade to the south to spread a new pantheon. Arcadius.]. Since Zoltan himself is not a model of openness, this is one trait that his influence over the elves definitely did not change. On the other hand, worship of Ilsundal has somewhat spread again among the Shipe, as even many clerics of Eiryndul avoid strongly opposing the powerful Zoltan unless their patron Immortal urges them to.

Now that Zoltan has become the High Priest of the Faith of the Ancestors (the newly-created elven pantheon founded by Lord Blackblade and spread in all the dominions of Nordaltheim), he hopes that by widening the faiths allowed in the lands of Nordaltheim the elves will all come to recognize him as their main spiritual leader.

A few dozen Altheim elves call the forest north of the Marquisate of Panteria home. These elves have followed Zoltan back to Norwold rather than remain in Wendar after the invasion of their homeland by the expansionist shadow elves. They did not meet much welcome from their brethren, though, and settled on the fringes of Lothbarth nearer to human lands. They often make pilgrimages to Zoltan's Tree of Life, and have come over the years to trading goods from Panteria for products of Shipe (or their own) making, so that they now often look more like caravans of merchants than actual pilgrims.

Recent History

The Shipe 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 Shipe-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 Shipe 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 Heldomers, or with settlers from Alphatia, Thyatis or elsewhere were very rare at best, and the dragons from the Wyrmsteeth also left the Shipe 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 Shipe 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 Ithyshipe, 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 Shipe.

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 AC 1007 Zoltan disappeared and it was thought he had left the land; actually he was in Alfheim helping the elves flee the shadowelf invasion to Wendar.

After his return from Alfheim, Zoltan stopped promoting any tentative alliance with the 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 does not win him the affection of many Shiye, but he was able to expand his influence over a great part of Lothbarth nonetheless, especially after the sinking of 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.].

In the recent Norwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.], Zoltan didn't send troops to aid the southern nations engaged in the struggle. He preferred to follow his policy of non-intervention in non-elven matters, even though he helped Ericall and his nobles in purging Norwold from the deadly Red Fog that threatened to kill thousands of people. In Swiftmont AC 1016, after seeking advice from his Immortal patron Ilsundal through prayers at the White Oak, Zoltan was imparted with a glimpse of the Immortals' plans for the elves, and his part in its accomplishment. Thus he went to Ironwood to relinquish his leadership in favor of Elarianthas Blackblade, and took the lead of the official religion of the new-founded Kingdom of Nordalheim, paving the way for the creation of the largest elven kingdom since the fall of Alfheim.

Don't Miss

It is very difficult to get a glimpse of a Tree of Life, especially if you're not an elf. The situation has only worsened since the invasion of Alfheim, as treekeepers had to give special attention to their artifact trees or even hide them away from the evil shadow elves. The White Oak, however, is not so restricted, because Zoltan wanted all Shiye, many of whom had never seen a Tree of Life, to be able to come and hopefully discover the way of Ilsundal. Alfheim refugees without a Tree of Life can also make pilgrimages to the sacred tree. Thus, contrary to what happens in most clans, access to the Tree of Life is not restricted to the treekeeper and his assistants, but open to any, including non-elves. In fact, this is the one place where the Shiye won't annoy you—but you bet they will play pranks on you on your way there, as they will be amused—or irritated—by the presence of humans in their forest.

Do Miss

Unless you're Shiye [something I doubt, as I don't think many Shiye read the Mystaran Almanac. Adik.], I advise you not to venture into Lothbarth. Even though the elves will tell you that one can live in the cold forest, it isn't a nice place to go on vacation. Besides, the elves will detect the presence of trespassers rapidly, and they certainly won't let your trip unfold uneventfully. But don't respond to their provocation with fireballs though, as they would in turn resort to even greater violence. No, you should accept their practical jokes with smile, and they will eventually let you pass; but if you really want to win their respect, you should return the favor and play even bolder and funnier pranks at them. Anyway, the safest way to get to the White Oak remains teleportation.

Northern Bay Marches

The area called the Northern Bay Marches comprises all 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 an economic, military and political point of view.

DRAKEN (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brum, northwest of Alpha. *NW*

Area: 2,992 sq. mi. (7,750 sq. km.).

Population: 6,120.

Languages: Alphatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 25% of income.

Government Type: Duchy, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, military, trading.

Important Figures: Beriak (Duke).

Flora and Fauna: Usual coniferous and evergreen trees abound in Draken, since the settlers didn't cut down large areas of Lothbarth. Great variety of fish can be found near the coast, many wild animals in the woods inland (elk, moose, bears, wolves, foxes, etc.). Many birds of prey and wild felines roam the eastern areas of the 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 duke's abode.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chebas and Arcadius.

A loyal vassal state of Alpha since the Great War, the Duchy of Draken has the highest percentage of Alphatians among its populace [90% of the Drakenites are Alphatians, which makes Draken even more "Alphatian" than King Eriacall's dominion. Adik.]. Its ruler, Duke Beriak, is a capable mage and an expert tactician, and has proved invaluable to King Eriacall's cause in many circumstances, standing at his side even in the direst of times. It is because of its ruler's loyalty and courage that Draken now holds an important place in the geopolitical scenario of Norwold.

The Land

Draken is a rather large dominion located on the northern banks of the Great Bay, near the Strait of Todstein. Due to its proximity to Norwold's gate to the Alphatian Sea, Draken holds a very important strategic position, since it is charged with the task of protecting the Great Bay from seaborne invasions and maintaining viable and safe the Strait of Todstein. Draken's navy shared this task with Odinia's fleet before the Norwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.], but since Odinia's fall it must rely only on the occasional help from Alpha's and Latela's navies should the need arise.

Draken is a land blessed by Mother Nature: lush pastures in the central area of the domain, high mountains rich with ores along the eastern border, evergreen forests full of game and herbs in the north, and clear waters where fish abound along the southern cliffs. Lord Beriak chose this place fully aware of its potential, and he was keen and able enough to exploit the natural resources of his dominion to their maximum. Nowadays Draken produces enough food to sustain itself, and has even a good-sized surplus it sells to the neighboring nations [which is no small feat in Norwold. Adik.]. Its mines are a constant source of income, as well as the woods, which are not exploited by the logging industry [in order to avoid the Shipe's retaliation. Arcadius.], but rather by trappers, furriers and beastmasters, who hunt in the woods for furs and trained animals to sell around the world. Unfortunately, a good deal of Draken's trades suffered after Alphatia's sinking, since it relied heavily on its privileged commercial relationship with Stonewall [Beriak's homeland. Adik.]. Beriak has been able to establish new trading routes with the southern nations, but it is difficult to compete with Latela's and especially Panteria's merchants [who trade in nearly the same goods as Draken. Adik.], who already had well-established partnerships with the southern merchant guilds.

Draken's main towns number five, each one located strategically in one of the five regions of the dominion. Draken, the capital city, lies in the central region, while Ninsun is nestled in the middle of the northern woods. Soron is a veritable port town, harboring the units of the Draken navy on the southern coast. Erbathia, a mining town, lies in the eastern mountains, and finally Wyndaria, the most picturesque one, dominates the western landscape. They are all protected by sturdy stone walls, with stone and wooden dwellings arranged in orderly blocks and the occasional wizard tower rising like a stone finger pointing at the sky.

Also, Draken enjoys some luxuries that the nations of lower Norwold can only dream of. First of all, it has next to no trouble with its neighbors: the Lothbarth elves tend to keep to themselves and avoid contacts with the humans living in the Northern Marches, while Latela is sufficiently peaceful and distant to pose no threat to its borders. Second of all, Lord Beriak already disposed of the most annoying and dangerous beasts roaming the land when he took possession of it, back in AC 1000, and some people say he also invited a couple of gold dragons to live in the eastern mountains, to keep other potential sources of trouble away from his lands [it seems that these gold dragons receive a small amount of Draken's yearly income to check the region and eliminate dangerous monsters before they spread mayhem. Arcadius.].

This relative peace has lately been broken only by the events of the Norwold Wars and by the Qeodharan raids. Currently the most annoying problem Draken has to face are the renegade Ostlander and Qeodharan raiders hidden in the foggy Strait of Todstein, who prey on the occasional trade vessel and on Draken's coasts regularly.

The People

Drakenites are proud people who still remember their Alphatian heritage. For this reason, they tend to view the rest of the Norwold population as simple folk that must be guided, protected and taught how to live decently. Draken boasts the highest literacy rate throughout Norwold, and it is no small feat that even the humblest ranger or farmer is able to read in this country! Draken's laws are mandatory on this: everyone must attend at least two years in the public schools of the five most prominent towns [this is done both to give them a basic education as well as to spot the most talented youths and train them in the magic arts or in military techniques. Arcadius]. This explains why Drakenite commoners

have such a high opinion of themselves in comparison to the other inhabitants of Norwold, although most of them lack the typical haughtiness of the Alphetian wizards [Drakenite wizards not included, of course. Adik.] and instead tend to consider the less fortunate people as fellow men to be helped, rather than slaves to be exploited.

The people of Draken are an industrious lot, well versed in the trading ways as well as in agriculture and mining, thanks to their better education. But there is another thing that they are good at, being Alphetian: magic. Rumors say that at least one tenth of the Drakenites are able to cast magic and know the basics of the arcane arts. Obviously this is not confirmed by Duke Beriak, who is always very evasive on this topic [probably to scare the other nations and prompt them to abandon any thoughts of hostile action against Draken. Arcadius], but if this be true, it would surely give Draken a great advantage on any enemy trying to invade its lands. Also, given the fact that all of the male population is trained to fight [they must serve in the army for one year at the age of 16. Arcadius.] and that Draken's military officers are among the best of the old Alphetian guard [and are in fact often summoned by Ericall for military matters. Adik.], one should not have trouble in trying to understand why Draken was never once seriously threatened during all these years and wars.

Recent History

Duke Beriak, a Stonewall mage loyal to the Alphetian crown, came to Norwold in AC 1000, after King Ericall's issue for new landlords [many wizards living in Draken actually say he was sent here by Empress Eriadna herself, to oversee Ericall's moves and help him in case of troubles. Adik.]. He immediately swore fealty to King Ericall and carved his small barony in the Northern Marches, taking with him many Alphetian commoners and soldiers from the motherland, as well as a cadre of thirty loyal retainers [commonly known as "the Battlemages" in Draken, responsible for training and teaching warfare tactics and arcane arts to Drakenites. Arcadius.].

During the Great War, Draken countered the attempts of the Thyatian navy to bypass the Strait of Todstein and invade the Great Bay, and Lord Beriak distinguished himself for his brilliant tactics and superior military experience, which earned him the title of count at the end of the war. In AC 1016, the Norwold Wars put Beriak's skills to test again, but he passed it in the end, containing the Qeodharans' raids and countering the Black Duke's strikes as effectively as he could. For his loyalty to the Alphan Crown and for always standing on Ericall's side even when the king was about to lose his kingdom, Beriak was then awarded the title of duke, now second only to Archduke Rey of Chitine in the eyes of Ericall.

Don't Miss

Wyndaria is by far the strangest and most attractive feature of the whole dominion, mainly for the presence of the most bizarre building found in this region: a high tower that stands right in the main square, overlooking the whole town. Contrary to what the occasional passerby could think, however, it is not the dwelling of some powerful mage, but rather the unique "Skyreach Inn," built by a famed Alphetian architect who specialized in this kind of multi-story building [the fact he hails from Floating Arkan probably tells something about his mentality. Adik.]. The inn is seven stories high [reaching the impressive height of 80 feet. Arcadius.] and aside from being rather expensive, its upper story can be reached only by customers capable of flying [it even has a sort of landing platform for flying mounts on its roof! Adik.].

Do Miss

There isn't really a dangerous place within Draken's borders, although once you travel outside of it, you're on your own. Humanoids prowl the mountains on the east, and magical beasts and monsters have been sighted in the west and inside the Lothbarth Forest in the north. Also, due to some magical experiments of the Drakenite wizards, strange planar rifts occasionally occur in the countryside, especially near isolated towers, and fearsome planar creatures step out terrorizing the locals before being dealt with by the soldiers. Be prepared for strange encounters once in a while, then.

LATELA (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, northeast of Alpha. *NW*

Area: 1,995 sq. mi. (5,165 sq. km.).

Population: 5,650.

Languages: Thyatian, Alphetian.

Coinage: Alphetian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 20% of income.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Trading, logging, agriculture.

Important Figures: Longtooth (Baron), Tano Tarantella (Guild Master).

Flora and Fauna: The coastline of Latela is dotted with farmlands and orchards, while the inland regions are still covered by the evergreen trees (mostly pines and sequoia) so common in the Lothbarth Forest. The wildlife in the forested areas include common animals like deer, boars, elk and moose, and more feral beasts like wolves, black and brown bears, pumas and owls. Fish are not so common in Latela's waters.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

The Barony of Latela is basically a Thyatian province rather than an Alphetian 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 bustling logging industry [the main economic resource of the barony, according to the official data. Arcadius.].

The coastline and the small villages in this part of the country (including the capital city of Civis Noba) 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 Noba. But there are some differences from the typical southern Thyatian town. First of all, all other streets except the two main roads are dark and narrow alleys, often unpaved, unlike the main roads. Also, the buildings (even the arena) have wooden sloping roofs, typical of the northern countries where heavy rain- and snowfalls abound in the coldest months.

The capital of Civis Nova (pop. 2,000) lies in the southernmost tip of the barony, with direct access to the Great Bay. Its port is one of the largest in Norwold, rivaling with those of Alpha and Panteria. Many foreign ships dock in Latela, especially those coming from Thyatis and the Isle of Dawn, which seem to have made special trade agreements with the baron. Latela's capital is a small pearl of Thyatian architecture, with all its buildings painted white and all the streets (even the narrow alleyways) paved with cobblestones. A natural amphitheater has been cut out in the rocky promontory that faces the Great Bay, a couple of miles to the west in the outskirts of the town, and dramas are held there regularly once a month.

Together with the amphitheater, the Temple of Asterius and the Guildhall are the other two interesting features of the city. The first is a white templum with a ring of outer columns that masquerade the inner walls. Inside, the temple is decorated with golden stucco works and paintings depicting the glory and munificence of Asterius towards his worshippers. The priests' quarters are outside the templum, in a smaller and less elaborate enclave. Ceremonies are held daily and many people participate with donations and services, testifying how widespread Asterius's faith is among the citizens. The Guildhall is the only two-story building in the whole country [not even Lord Longtooth's villa is that tall. Adik.] and is the place where representatives of all guilds of the dominion meet to discuss economic agreements or sell goods to foreign ambassadors.

The People

In contrast with the Thyatian homeland, which is a melting pot of different races, Latela is a country mostly inhabited by Thyatians of Kerendan and pure Thyatian origins, while the few Alphatians living in the region are concentrated in the hamlets and houses built inside the woods [they are trappers and loggers. Adik.]. The Thyatians are obviously aware of their heritage and do not miss any opportunity to display it in the face of Alphatians. However, Latela never created problems for Ericall, and Baron Longtooth's loyalty to the Alphan Crown, although many times questioned, never failed. Latela enjoys a stable government and an enviable economic situation, which places the barony and its inhabitants among the richest in Norwold. Obviously this only applies to the Thyatian majority, since they fill the ranks of the trading guilds. Alphatians are usually small craftsmen and woodcutters for the most part, and even if a good deal of Latela's entries come from the logging industry, the woodcutters do not participate much in the wealth of their industry.

The role of the guilds is very important in Latela, although not as much as is in Minrothad, Darokin or even Panteria. Guilds are left free to trade among themselves with whatever agreements they see fit, provided they keep accurate estimates of their revenues. Trade agreements with foreign nations must be made with the authorization of the baron, however, and are always supervised by the United Guilds Senior Chairman, a position currently held by Tano Tarantella [who founded the union and has been chairman since its creation. Arcadius.]. This position is, according to some rumors, even more important than that of the baron, since the union's chairman has the final word on all trade agreements with any foreign merchant [and since Latela's economy depends on the foreign trade, this is likely the truth. Adik.].

The Tarantella family is a well-known Thyatian dynasty that counts among its seemingly infinite members merchants, governors, senators, guild masters and rich landowners, both inside and outside the Thyatian Empire. However, some rumors say that the Tarantellas have also ties with the infamous Thyatian crime organization known as Causa Nostra, which has grown in power in the Old

World (especially during the last decade) and caused the downfall of many merchants and rival thieves' guilds [particularly famous is the Flaccus Scandal of AC 1004, where a Thyatian Senator was exposed as being one of the leaders of the Shadow Hand, a powerful Thyatian criminal organization, which suffered then a major blow from this event. Arcadius.]. These same rumors also tell that the Tarantellas are behind Lord Longtooth's power, and that Latela's revenues have been boosted more by the slave trade than by the logging industry.

Recent History

Lord Longtooth [whose origins are shrouded in mystery, even though he insists in being the only—albeit illegitimate—son of a deceased rich Thyatian landlord. Adik.] came to Norwold in AC 1001, answering King Ericall's call to colonize the wild areas of his kingdom. He immediately swore fealty to Ericall and built the village of Civis Nova, concentrating on enlarging its docks and harbor. Once everything was ready and the dangerous beasts had been dealt with, the first waves of Thyatian immigrants began to hit the coasts of Latela at an impressive rate, and the small village of Civis Nova soon became a full-grown town in less than a year. The settlers who came to Latela were basically poor artisans and beggars, who were convinced by Lord Longtooth they could have a new and better life if they left Thyatis for this new land. The strategy succeeded, and indeed most of them changed their lives for the better.

During the Great War, Latela kept providing the Kingdom of Alpha with important food and weapon supplies, but it never sent its rather puny army on the battlefield. Some say Latela also helped the Thyatian troops that came to Norwold against the Alphatians, but so far nobody has found evidence supporting this hypothesis. Also, other rumors state that Latela's guilds were involved in the bankruptcy that ruined the western dominion of Westria, and that Lord Longtooth was about to buy the barony when Lady Celia of Panteria intervened and beat him in time. Again, these are but unconfirmed rumors, of course, since nobody [not even the many probosts 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 official permission to conduct business or do many other things in Latela, unlike in nearby Panteria, so if you are a merchant or if you are interested in making a profit without troubling too much with rules and laws, Latela is the land that suits you.

Do Miss

Even in a rich town like Civis Nova the alleyways are dangerous, and brim with cutthroats and cutpurses. They especially target foreigners who visit the town, and the narrow streets seem to have been built just to suit their shady needs. Also, since the guards are not 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 at night.

NORDENHAFEN (Jarldom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, isle in the Great Bay, west of Alpha. **NW**

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

Population: 700.

Languages: Heldommic.

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

Taxes: 30% of income.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Kingdom of Ostland.

Industries: Fishing, hunting.

Important Figures: Bardeen Longwalker (Baron), Kleng Bloodhand (Pirate).

Flora and Fauna: Nothing really grows on this rocky chunk of Norwold, except small, stunted shrubs and subarctic flowers. Few are the animals that live here, most notably seagulls, puffins and other abians, as well as seals and small fish. Occasionally monsters from the Elemental Plane of Water exit from the whirlpool south of the island and cause trouble, but otherwise no real monstrous wildlife is present here.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

This small rocky island in the middle of the Great Bay is home to a small community of fishers and seafaring Ostlanders. It is not prominent in Norwold's political system, but it's worth noting as a clear example of how a dominion should not be run.

The Land

Nordenhafen is a rocky island in the Great Bay, halfway between Alpha and Lecha. It is flat and windswept most of the year, and nothing can grow on its soil except shrubs, and the common flowers of northern Norwold and a few vegetables (those resistant to cold climates). There are, however, many birds that have made nests on the isolated coasts of Nordenhafen through the centuries, and when the fish are not sufficient to sustain them, the islanders hunt down the abians, preying on their eggs as well. Seals are also a common sight here, and they are heavily hunted [especially during winter, when the Great Bay waters freeze near the isle and people can walk on ice and lure the seals outside the water by making holes in the frozen bay. Arcadius.], since their fur is a precious good to sell throughout Norwold.

Nordenhafen's only settlement is its capital, a village of 500 souls that bears the same name as the barony. It is nothing more than a fishers' village surrounded by a wooden palisade, with small thatched houses built with rocks and mud. Only the baron's manor is entirely made of wood [probably the last and only trees that grew on the isle were used to build it. Adik.], and it's a typical Ostlander longhouse. The Seadogs Tavern is the only gathering hall of the whole island, and it is often crowded at night, full of sweating and cursing northmen whose only pastimes are mocking the baron or starting

a fight. The remaining 200 inhabitants of Nordenhafen live in small hamlets on the shores of the isle, and occasionally come to the capital when they need tools or edibles.

The People

Nordenhafen's few inhabitants rely solely on their fishing skills to survive, and a few of them also hunt the seals who swim in the Great Bay, selling the byproducts to the nearby dominions to earn their living. There are a few craftsmen in Nordenhafen, most notably Ostlanders who came here lured by the baron's promises of wealth. They produce fine boats and small sailing vessels, but since no trees grow on the island, the baron must import the wood from Latela or Panteria. Obviously the costs surpass the profits, but the baron insists in supporting this industry, hoping that one day it will boost the isle's economy [this is but one proof of Baron Bardeen's shortsightedness. Adik.].

This small island was home to a few communities of Heldanners when Bardeen first arrived, and 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 resources to exploit. Adik.].

In order to keep the populace in line, Baron Bardeen uses the Hammer Guard as Nordenhafen's official militia. These are deranged followers of the official faith of the barony, the Church of the Thundering Hammer, a sect of fanatical worshippers of Thor, who go into berserk frenzy every time they enter a fight. It is difficult to keep them in line and prevent them from causing brawls all around the country, but at least the baron doesn't have to pay them [he gives his tithe to the church and the priests provide to the guard's needs. Arcadius.].

Finally, there are now many pirates in Nordenhafen. This is caused by the fact that at the end of the Norwold Wars, the Ostlander raiders that plagued the internal waters of the Great Bay found sanctuary in Bardeen's dominion, and the lord is currently sponsoring their raids in the surrounding nations to get more than his fair share of wealth [unconfirmed rumors tell he allied himself with Ostland at the end of the wars, thus explaining his current boldness. Adik.].

Recent History

Nordenhafen's history is notoriously devoid of any significant facts. Originally inhabited by Antalians, the isle was always left alone from all those who came to the Great Bay, since it held no particular mineral or animal resources and was too close to the dangerous elemental whirlpool. Then in AC 1003 Bardeen Longwalker, once a proud adventurer and pirate from Ostland, came to Ericall's court to found a new dynasty, pursuing dreams of glory and richness sent him by the Thunderer [in fact, after the jarls of Ostland refused his claim over one of the dominions, he was forced to abandon his country to pursue elsewhere his dream of rulership. Arcadius.]. He convinced many Ostlanders to follow him on his voyage [using the Church of the Thundering Hammer as a tool to persuade others of the foreseen success of his deed. Arcadius.] and so he finally settled the isle without any great effort

[aside from the great frost giants' invasion of AC 1004, which caused severe losses in Nordenhafen. Arcadius.], swearing fealty to Ericall and Alphonatia.

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 Haldannic Knights' and the Thyatians' side, while others insisted on remaining loyal to the oath of loyalty made to Ericall. The result was that a civil war nearly broke out in Nordenhafen [although one cannot call a "civil war" simple skirmishes between dozens of furious individuals. Adik.], and the Hammer Guard was so busy keeping peace inside the country that it could not participate in the war.

The fate of this little domain is still unsure, mainly because Baron Bardeen is not a good politician and nobody cares if he will be removed by his own subjects. After his dubious conduct during the Norwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.] many thought he was on the verge of being replaced by Ericall for his incompetence at stopping the piratical raids inside the Great Bay. The baron surprised his neighbors by swearing fealty to the distant Kingdom of Ostland, a move that probably saved Bardeen's dominion, while allowing Ostland to extend its influence to Norwold at minor cost and risk.

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 rabaging berserkers. Also, Nordenhafen is the nearest place to the elemental whirlpool of the Great Bay, and many ships with their sunken hoards are said to lie near the whirlpool. So if you want to take your risks, Nordenhafen is awaiting you.

Do Miss

If you are a civilized person, just miss the whole island, mainly for the same reasons stated above.

PANTERIA (Marquisate of)

Location: Continent of Brum, northeast of Leeha, on the northern coast of the Great Bay. **NW**

Area: 2,494 sq. mi. (6,460 sq. km.).

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

Languages: Alphatian, Thypatian, Haldannic, Lalor.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: Vary in nature and amount, averaging to 25% of income, collected regularly by the guilds. People not affiliated to the guilds do not pay taxes but generally cannot work either.

Government Type: Marquisate, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy. Any and all activities are supervised by the powerful guilds.

Industries: Trade, some crafting.

Important Figures: Celia (Marquise), Weston (Governor), Lucci Dhay (Dame and Headmaster of the Trade Guild, actually a spy from rival Causa Nostra).

Flora and Fauna: The uncultivated lands of the marquisate are sparsely covered by short grass and shrubs that can resist even the most frigid winters under several feet of snow. Hin cultivate snow tulips in their gardens, which appear to be dead plants during their eight months hibernation but blossom in the spring into beautiful flowers larger than hin hands. Snow crabs come ashore during the winter to mate, but crab-hunters are careful not to stumble on deadly frost salamanders for whom the ice-plated crabs are a delicacy. Deer, wolves and other woodland animals can be spotted during the harsh winters. On rare occasions, frost giants come this far south in their forays into human lands, but the marquise is generally warned of their approach by Zoltan's elves or by Duke Ney.

Coats of arms: Marquise Celia: Black panther lying at the foot of a white oak, background silver (top) and gold (bottom); Governor Weston: Two diagonally-crossed black daggers with four gold circles (one in each quadrant), red background; Marquisate of Panteria: Black panther head, silhouette of a white sphinx (bottom left), gold background; City of Panteria: Black panther head, four coppery ships (one in each corner), gold background; Town of Cape Westria: Black dagger (blade pointing up), four gold circles (left half), black panther head (right half, top), silhouette of a white sphinx (right half, bottom), red background; Panterian Guilds: Copper ship (heading right) with two silver waves below, black lion head (or specific symbol, by guild) (bottom), gold background.



Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Among the feudal dominions that dot the large expanses of Norwold, the Marquisate of Panteria is atypical—as much as are atypical all the dominions carved out of the wilderness by the heroes of various lands who answered King Eriall's call before the Great War. But what makes this dominion stand apart from all the others more than anything else is the mere fact that this profitable realm never

parted from Alpha to gain sovereignty, even after the Sinking of Alphatia, like most others did. Of course, this isn't the lone peculiarity of this place.

The Land

The marquissate extends along the northwestern bays of the Great Bay, following the coastline and the milder plains a few miles into the interior to the edge of the great northern forests. A good part of these plains 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 marquissate 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 marquissate 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 Shipe or goods from the mostly-forgotten kingdoms of Kaarjala and Littonia, as well as mundane or exotic goods from around Nayce, the Old World, and even sometimes from Dabania. Panteria's deep-water harbor was recently upgraded (during the occupation of Oceansend by the Haldannic 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 marquissate as much as develop an alternate supply route, a road is being built between Panteria and Cape Westria.

The reason why Minrothad and Oceansend ships are so common here is trade agreements. With Oceansend there always was good relations, but then Panteria's deal became even more profitable because of the Heldannic Knights' takeover [basically, most trade was diverted from Oceansend to Panteria. Arcadius.]. With Minrothad, there is a guild-to-guild trade agreement standing. This agreement is profitable to both sides: Panteria, which doesn't have a large trade fleet, gains access to rare goods from faraway lands and increased traffic, and can also accept foreign coins for that reason; the Minrothaddans gain a good entry point to a big market (Norwold, and also Alphatia before it sank) where there previously was a big competitor instead (Alphatia itself), benefiting from special advantages (cheap anchoring fees, lighter bureaucratic procedures, reduced tariffs [which still works for within Nayce. Adik.]), guilds taking care of things for them. Minrothaddans are not forced to work with Panteria, it's just that most captains do because their government has signed agreements that allows them to make more money than by sailing to Oceansend, Alpha, Leeha, or rival Latela.

The People

Most of Panteria's population are humans from various ethnic origins, mostly Alphatians, Minrothaddans, and some Heldanners, Thyatians, Karamaikans, and various other backgrounds.

A sizable portion of the population are Oceansenders, some of whom live in the marquisate, though most are refugees who left the city when it fell to the Heldannic Knights. Most of the nobility and gentry of Oceansend settled in Panteria rather than Alpha, as the marquise sent many ships to the falling city to allow their escape; though King Harrvikson did go to Alpha, most of his court was staying in Panteria. Many nobles have returned to their estates now, but some stayed behind or travel regularly between the two. Many ships sail from Oceansend to Panteria, sometimes without stopping at Alpha, and it is well known among the Norwold nobility that the guilds of Panteria have a branch in Oceansend and participated in the overthrowing of the knights.

In and around Cape Westria, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the marquisate, live peaceful hin who settled a few miles north of their ancestral lands in search of better soil for their beloved snow tulips. Those hin generally live in burrows—nicknamed igloos by their human neighbors because they are covered in snow most of the year—covered by gardens of blossoming tulips during the late spring and summer months.

Everything in the marquisate is regulated by the guilds; everybody lives by the guilds' rules. The marquise officially is head of state, but the guilds have the actual say in everyday affairs. There are guilds for every activity going on in the marquisate: trade of course, crafts, magic, fishing, agriculture, even snow tulip gardening. Everyone willing to do the slightest thing within the field of a guild must first register at the appropriate guild, and follow its regulations. It is virtually impossible to do anything without registering at a guild; even beggars have their own guild! Those who tried anyway were soon forced to close shop: nobody would sell to or buy from them, and they were regularly visited by burglars.

A craft guild, for example, grants the right to practice one's activity, buys from another guild or imports raw materials and sells it at a fixed price to the craftsman, buys the finished product at a price varying with the craftsman's skill, then sells it to another guild or exports it. The guild also handles the whole tax aspect, speeds up or slows down the amount of work—and workers—according to market demand and raw material availability, plans the training of new craftsmen or immigration of master craftsmen from other regions, seeks out craftsmen that live outside of the guild and contacts

other guilds to discourage their activities. All guilds work along these lines, with minor variants for each particular guild.

Each guild master is himself a member of the Master Guild, which purpose is to collect the taxes from the guilds and hand it over to the marquisate, create or disband guilds, set new trade lanes and economic agreements with other countries or guilds, and decide on other high-level and often secret policies. The identity of the high guild master is kept secret, even from the other guild masters, but it is commonly believed that the marquise herself is in fact leading the most powerful guild of her dominion.

Recent History

Panteria is a fairly recent dominion; until the dawn of the new millennium, it was but wilderness, with just the occasional settler. When King Ericall invited heroes from all lands to come in Norwold and gain nobility and dominion in return for pledging fealty to the crown of Alphatia and to himself, many worthy heroes came to carve their own dominions; among them were Celia and Weston. Both became barons of Ericall and settled in this region of Norwold, founding cities to be their capitals.

Weston built a small tower where he wanted to create Cape Westria, encouraged settlers to come to his barony, surrounded the small town with wooden palisade for protection, and traded with the hin of Leeha, the Barony of Latela, and Alpha.

Celia built not much at first, but set the base for what would become the guilds, attracting people she would entrust the guilds to. She also contacted various rulers and guild masters, especially in Minrothad and Oceansend, and arranged for advantageous agreements for both parties. She then had a decent port built in the bay, and trade began. Cash was flowing into the guilds' treasury, the port of Panteria was a destination for many ships, and soon the baroness set into motion an aggressive policy of immigration, attracting merchants, skilled craftsmen, but also simple farmers or fishermen, from Alpha, Oceansend, Minrothad, and elsewhere, creating new daughter guilds as the need arose. Celia was awarded the title of countess in AC 1007.

In early spring of AC 1006 a most unusual storm destroyed a natural dam, thereby flooding 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 AC 1010 the two dominions peacefully merged. Actually, Countess Celia flatly bought Westria [some people speculated that the two would marry to seal the deal, but they didn't. Adik.]. Celia paid back the debts and the guilds quickly extended their control over to the new lands—most certainly greatly annoying the creditors, who probably had other plans for the barony upon its bankruptcy. It was expected at the time that Celia would declare her independence from Alpha like so many other petty lords, but she instead started to go by the title of Marquise of Panteria—she loved the word—and asked at Ericall's court for that title to be recognized, which he gladly accepted.

When Oceansend fell to the Haldannic Knights, many ships allowed the nobility, gentry and some commoners to flee to Panteria before the Haldannic 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 Heldomic 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 his lands, then don't miss a visit to Cape Westria anytime in summer so you can tour the carefully tended snow tulip gardens. There you will be amazed by the connecting patches of blossoming flowers, forming intricate designs with their colors ranging from snow-white to yellow, orange, pink, red, and deep blue. If you are a spell-caster like myself, I strongly encourage you to levitate and marvel at how the patterns assemble like a vast mosaic across the individual gardens.

Do Miss

I advise everyone against doing any business in Panteria without first checking at the appropriate guild, unless you're looking for trouble. I [Arcadius] myself had the bad idea of simply casting a few spells while traveling the land incognito and quickly found myself in trouble—which I won't detail here—until I managed to prove that I was a lord of Norwold and a friend of Celia's. And yet I know that whenever I enter the marquisate the guilds still have me under watch all the time. I imagine with a shiver how easily this can become a terrible nightmare for a mere commoner with no connection to the marquise.

Western Bay Marches

The Western Bay Marches comprises all of the dominions located west of the Great Bay but east of the Icereach Range proper. The nations of this area are some of the most powerful, wealthiest and most important throughout Norwold and they all enjoy a great deal of freedom or independence from the Kingdom of Alpha.

CHITINE (Grand Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brum, northwest of Lecha. *NW*

Area: 4,988 sq. mi. (12,920 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000.

Languages: Alphetian, Haldammic.

Coinage: Alphetian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 25% of yearly income.

Government Type: Grand duchy, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Military, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Ney (Archduke).

Flora and Fauna: The plains are lightly covered by evergreen trees, mostly pine, which become even rarer in the hilly and mountainous regions to the west of the duchy. As the duchy rises into the Icereach Range, trees are slowly replaced by shrubs, then hardy mosses until the altitude becomes too great for any plants to survive. Horses are bred for the knightly order; mountain goats, mountain lions and snow apes inhabit the Icereach Range. Frost giants or white dragons living in caves in the mountains beyond the border of the duchy occasionally attack despite their being regularly driven away by the duke's knights.

Coats of arms: Duke Ney: A six-branch black star (center) surrounded by four silver-red swords pointing to the corners, background green (upper quadrant), blue (bottom quadrant), yellow (left quadrant) and white (right quadrant); Duchy of Chitine: Two red diagonal lines, silhouette of a white sphinx (top quadrant), background green (top quadrant), blue (bottom quadrant), yellow (left quadrant) and white (right quadrant); City of Furmy: A six-branch black star (center), two red circles (top left and top right sextants), background green (upper sextant), blue (bottom sextant), yellow (bottom left sextant), white (bottom right sextant) and black (top left and top right sextants); Knights of Chitine: A black shield (center) behind a white circle, four red swords pointing from the corners to the circle, black background. The duke may also carry Alpha's banner when leading the armies of the king into battle as Ericall's general.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Along with the County of Draken that controls the access to the Great Bay, the Duchy of Chitine constitutes the backbone of the defense of Alpha. The duke is inflexible in his loyalty to the crown of Alpha—and to that of Alphatia—and has been entrusted by King Eriall 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 furnies'—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 Shive elves, while lands to the east of the duchy are mostly uninhabited and remain neutral land between the domains of the hin and this dominion loyal to Alpha. A broad stretch of land to the south is the result of a mutual pact of non-belligerency between the Duchy of Chitine and the Kingdom of Siegeria.

It is the duty of the Knights of Chitine to patrol not only the duchy, but also the neutral lands beyond to ensure the safety of southern territories. They keep a watch over the White Bear River to make sure no threat bypasses them through this natural passage through the Icereach Range. They also patrol the buffer zones up to Siegeria's borders and up to Cape Westria in Panteria. They do not patrol the northern forest, instead relying on the elves living there to warn them of any frost giant raid or other threat. Unless the Great Bay is frozen enough to let an army cross it, no enemy should be able to reach Leeha or lands beyond without facing the knights beforehand.

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 Eriall—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 Furny Castle, attending King Ericall in Alpha, or anywhere in Norwold where their duties as protectors of the crown lead them.

There is always a group of Knights of Chitine accompanying Blind Wooster (a monk of Tarastia) to make sure his judgments are respected and his sentences carried out. The monk still acts as high magistrate for most countries of Norwold, just like he did for all Ericall's subjects in the years before the Great War.

Recent History

Ney pledged fealty to King Ericall shortly after the land was opened to be divided into dominions. He immediately started the construction of a great defensive castle, but his alien nature [Ney is a furny, 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 Haldannic Knights, Baron Ney and his elite warriors were ready and rode into the traitor's dominion and fought his evil minions. Alak Dool fled and his land fell. When Ney reported to King Ericall what had happened, his liege replied that the baron had greatly helped the crown by eliminating an enemy of Alphatia, and that he had honorably conquered the land and thus would rule it in addition to his own, with the title of count [other lords were either using the war to declare their independence, or even taking up the cause of the enemies of Alphatia, which helps explain why the king was so generous with those lords that stood by him and fought his foes. Adik.]. Alak Dool's tower was razed.

After Alphatia's sinking, even more dominions won their independence. Count Ney remained true to his oath to King Ericall. He transformed his informal warrior-heroes into the first Knights of Chitine, bound to protect the crown of Alpha and be the protective shield of the king. Two years later, King Ericall increased the size of his dominion and honored him as Duke of Chitine, giving him and his knights the task of patrolling the land from the Great Bay to the Icereach range to stop the advance of any hostile force. The king also gave him the task of watching over Sieger von Duwn, now an independent king; Chitine and Siegeria signed a mutual pact of non-belligerency and agreed that a broad stretch of land between the two dominions would remain neutral.

When the commander of the Alphan forces was executed by the Haldannic Knights after the fall of Oceansend, King Ericall appointed the loyal duke to the position. When Alpha joined the Nayce, Ney was officially recognized as General of Alpha.

In the recent Norwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.] Ney led his Knights of Chitine to Alpha to protect Ericall from the attacks of the treacherous Black Duke of Ossian and the Qeodharan pirates. Unfortunately, a lone tyrant [Coiger de Mory, a fanatic priest of Rathanos. Arcadius.] living near his dominion profited from the lord's absence to march towards Chitine with a small army of efreet, fire

giants and other fire denizens of the nearby Arch of Fire. The ensuing war went really bad for Chitine, claiming many of its bravest warriors, but the advance of de Mory's army [led by an efreet lord named Duke Dahish. Arcadius.] was somehow slowed by the intervention of the sollux of the Arch of Fire on Ney's side. The later addition of troops from Siegeria and Leeha blocked the efreet advance, and at the end of the Norwold Wars lord Ney returned with his remaining Knights of Chitine to throw out the invaders. However, this didn't turn the tables as he hoped, and the war is currently being waged as we write this parchment [beginning of AC 1017. Ed.], with a tense stalemate between the two sides.

Don't Miss

Furny Castle is the heart of the duchy, surrounded by sturdy walls. Around it lies the city of Furny, 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 Furny for the duke, Petra, Vanya, Tarastia, Diulama, Halab, Ixion, Alphatia, Thor or Odin for the knights.

Do Miss

Although Alak Dool's tower was razed shortly after he had been driven out by Ney and his knights, the demonic magics of the evil wizard have not completely dissipated from the land. This threat still remains a matter of great concern to the duke, who isn't too knowledgeable about magic. The exact nature of the magical hazard is not known for sure, but several wise wizards of Norwold [including Adik and Arcadius. Ed.] have formulated the hypothesis that Alak Dool was trying to summon a fiend from the Pits to unleash upon his enemies. The spell was never completed, but various nasty creatures occasionally pop up at random, attracted by the weakening between the planes caused by the partial gate.

LEEHA (Shire of)

Location: Continent of Brum, on the western coast of the Great Bay. NW

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

Population: 6,700.

Languages: Lalor, Alphatian (Alphan dialect).

Coinage: Barter mostly, otherwise Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 20% collected twice a year.

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

Industries: Agriculture, fishing.

Important Figures: Shaedrik Dibotfoot (Sheriff).

Flora and Fauna: Leeha's rolling hills are forested with a mixture of evergreens, oak, maple, hickory, elm and ash in the southeast. Thickets, brambles and ferns are common beneath the taller evergreens. The forested areas abound with wildlife and wild animals can be encountered away from the settlements. The forests give way to gentle rolling fields and meadows filled with wildflowers and fruit trees, as well as crops. Streams are smaller and gentler in the fields that make up the heart of the shire. There's also an inland swamp near the Gulf of Leeha; quicksand is a deadly peril found amongst the peat bogs here. Twisted and stunted trees give shelter to all types of swamp denizens, monsters included.

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

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Finally I have had the time to see this marvelous land, and what a pleasure! The hin county of Leeha has always been an independent, merry land to visit. It is divided into seven smaller dominions (called shires by the hin), but few outsiders notice this, since the hin always make decisions through consensus and live as a single nation. In this report, while describing the whole region in general terms, I will also provide details on each of the various clanholds that make up the shire.

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. Men from the Duchy of Kameloth also travel these hills, and both orcs and hill giants can be found further to the south.

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 Fogbail Swamp, before emptying into the Gulf of Leeha.

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 dangerous Snakebite River crosses the stretch of Hightimber Forest between Leeha and Grassy Knoll. 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. In addition to the snakes and other swamp-life, it is rumored that fierce lizard men also dwell here (but rarely venture from the salt marshes).

To the north of the Great Bay, the woods also become increasingly more evergreen, but are rarely completely so. The trees are dense and thick, making travel difficult. The woods form a protective border on this side of the shire, and have been dubbed the Northguard Woods. These woods are a true wilderness and are mostly unexplored.

Leehashire is composed of seven hin clan strongholds, each with its own leadership (and Crucible of Blackflame). The 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 seven 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 pricey. 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 had 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 Leea Defense Force and krontar 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 Leea 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 Leea 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!). Most residences are one or two stories tall, but all have some type of cellar. Many of these "hobbit holes" are more spacious than the above ground dwellings and some are entirely underground! During deep snows that could paralyze a hin city, the residents simply retreat to their burrows and life goes on.

The People

Overall, Leea has the atmosphere of one big happy family. The seven clans are represented in roughly equal numbers, many of whom have chosen to live in Leea permanently. The mix of full time residents and pallaren passing through make it an interesting place to visit. It may seem somewhat uncontrolled at times (especially during holidays), but the hin tend to watch out for their own. They are friendly folk who are willing to lend a hand to almost anyone. The residents are more aware than they may seem, however, and many are quite worldly. The hin can muster a force of 1,500 warriors, and, although the small folk try not to become involved in human quarrels, they will not hesitate to band together and defend their homeland against incursions by monsters and other undesirables.

South of Leea, following the White Bear River to its source, lies the small clanhold housing the Highticket Clan. The clan and town both take their name from the Highticket River, which flows down from the foothills of the Icecreach Range into the White Bear River. Highticket is a community of loggers and outdoors hin. Wood and timber are the primary resources of this area, which is deep in Hightimber Forest. Hin who are not loggers are most likely fur trappers or game hunters. Grouse and wild turkey can be found here. Deer, bears, and cougars also inhabit the surrounding woods and mountains, in addition to animals whose pelts are coveted by trappers, such as beaver, fox, mink, and ermine. The hin are good stewards of the land, and will never overcut the forest. This clanhold is significantly removed from Leea, so that visits from outsiders are rare. When visitors do arrive, they are not greeted as warmly as they would be in Leea. The Highticket Clan are hard-working and tend to keep to themselves and their woodlands.

Merrybrook is home to the clan of the same name. It lies down the river from Highticket, near the confluence of the Highticket, Fishrun, and White Bear Rivers. As such, the rivers are the major fact of life for this clan. Fishing is their mainstay. Brook trout, salmon, and other fish are plentiful in all

of these fresh mountain streams. The waters also help to provide a fertile soil along their banks where various foodstuffs (such as potatoes) can be grown. The Merrybrook Clan are also skilled river pilots. Riverboats and sailboats can both be found here for navigating the White Bear and some stretches of the Fishrun. Smaller canoes and rowboats can advance further up the Fishrun and the Highthicket, both of which contain significant rapids. The Merrybrooks are somewhat adventuresome, and travel to Leeha and beyond fairly often. Some even take to piracy along the White Bear. The clan is quite receptive to guests who can arrive easily by way of the rivers. There are a few decent taverns and inns scattered throughout the clan's territory, all of which serve excellent "fish and chips." Celebrations and merrymaking are almost constant among this clan, which has its share of musicians and entertainers.

Nimbleville is the clanhold of the Nimblefingers Clan. It is located northeast of Leeha, on the shores of the Gulf of Leeha. The shoreline is rocky, and only a few small boats may dock here. The Nimblefingers Clan are the most stealthy and streetwise clan in Norwold. They make excellent scouts or spies, as the case may be. Keep your pouch close to your hip while in Nimbleville, as thieves are common here. These hin are curious, rather than ruthless robbers. They are raised with the notion that personal property is more communal than personal. Any item of interest is fair game, and some items can change hands several times in the course of a day. There are some hin, however, who take their crime more seriously. They are known as "nighthin," and they can be as tough as any human bandit. Aside from the illegal activity and loose definition of possessions here, Nimbleville is a haven for various artists and craftshin. Potters, leatherworkers, carpenters, glassblowers, and other artisans all ply their trade here. Many outsiders pass through here en route to Leeha. Whether purchasing hin crafts, or simply passing through, purses tend to be lighter after leaving Nimbleville. This usually does not leave the best impression of the hin folk on visitors.

Fort Divotfoot is home to the military-minded Divotfoot Clan. Located along the trail east of Nimbleville, Fort Divotfoot is the most heavily fortified of the clanholds. Its walls are completely of stone, and numerous towers provide further protection. A central tower-keep is at the heart of the fort. This clan is devoted to military pursuits. Their soldiers are always vigilant for incursions of orcs or other humanoid. Patrols range throughout the clan's range and even extend into areas held by neighboring clans. One can find all types of weapons and armor here, including some of larger sizes. Weaponsmiths, armorers, bowers and fletchers all have shops here. The fort is kept clean and is run with the type of precision that only a military outpost could be. The town tends to shut down early, and the parties are more subdued than in other clanholds. The Divotfoots [the Divotfoots call themselves that, which is why I use the name as well, but there is a recurrent debate among the hin whether Divotfoots should rather be referred to as Divotfeet. Synthala.] are the watchdogs of the shire and have come to the defense of their more carefree brethren on more than one occasion. This clanhold contrasts sharply with neighboring Nimbleville. The law is firm in Fort Divotfoot, and krondar are obeyed without question. The hin who live here are not oppressed, however. The military way is their tradition and one they are proud of. They have a strong sense of duty to clan and shire. The lands surrounding the fort are fertile and are farmed for various grains and other crops. Farming is the primary occupation of the majority of non-military personnel. Lazyday Stream crosses the pastures and is a popular spot for hin on leave from the fort. It flows into Lake Gusst, which once saw a pitched battle with orcs along its shore.

Goodfield is the clanhold of the Gardener Clan. It is located to the east of and slightly to the north of Fort Dibotfoot. The lands of Goodfield are extremely fertile and are the breadbasket of the shire. All kinds of crops are grown here, including wheat, corn, alfalfa, clover, parsley, beans, and various garden vegetables. Some hin keep small orchards of fruit trees, mainly apple and pear, especially along the banks of Appletree Creek, which flows through the territory. Carrots, radishes, and turnips are all plentiful. Some hin cultivate rare herbs, such as wolfsbane. Flowers are grown, both for commerce and for their aesthetic appeal [especially the famous snow tulips. Ed]. Hin farmers will also keep some animals, including chickens, dairy cows, goats, and pigs. Hobbit holes are the primary dwellings in this region of the shire. The Gardener Clan are quiet and folksy in character. They tend to mind their business and not travel too far from home. Those who do, yallaren or not, are looked at funny by their neighbors. The Gardeners enjoy a good meal and a night of merrymaking even more so than other hin clans (save the Merrybrooks). They welcome visitors and stories from afar and they seem to derive some sense of adventure from this. As long as the adventure stays away from Goodfield, it is fine; they just don't like it too close to home. A warm, cozy home and sharing a good meal with family and friends is valued above all else by members of this clan.

The town of Grassy Knoll is found about 40 miles north of Leeha, and is home to the Lowhill Clan. It is a smaller clanhold, built atop a small, grass-covered hill. The lands between Grassy Knoll and the coast are suitable for farming, although the soil is rockier than in other areas of Leeshashire. The Lowhill Clan is more noted for the mines that are located in the foothills southwest of town. The hills produce ample quantities of tin, copper, and even some iron. Lake Galass (or Lucky Lake) is in the vicinity of the mines. Its waters are reported to bring good fortune to those who drink or bathe in them. Sometimes ore can be found on the lake bottom and also along Cupribras Stream, which runs out from the lake. The hin in this town are fairly hard-working folk, but they work the mines at a pace that is not as tiresome as the more industrious dwarven folk. The mine's yields are suitable for the needs of Leeshashire, with maybe some excess for trade on occasion. In addition to mining supply shops and the like, there are a few decent inns and saloons. Other shops belong to metalsmiths and craftshin who work with the recovered metals. On a historical note, Grassy Knoll is the site of a dark event in Leeha's past. In AD 1963 [AC 963. Ed.], a popular sheriff, Kennedy Dibotfoot, was assassinated here while on a victory parade through town. Krondar arrested the alleged assassin, but he was later killed before he could stand trial. This led many hin to concoct wild conspiracy theories about who was actually responsible and why. The rumors persist to this day.

The clanhold of Port Hinly is located on the northern shore of the Gulf of Leeha, and is home to the Harborhin Clan. The coast is rocky here, but the harbor is clear and is deep enough to accommodate larger vessels. The Harborhin are an adventurous sea-going people. Their livelihood is bound up in the waters of the Great Bay. Ships and boats leave daily for Leeha. These hin are skilled sailors. Harborhin ships sail to towns all around the Great Bay. Some adventurous captains even sail beyond the bay's waters to Oceansend, the Isle of Dawn, or other territories. The Harborhin are skilled merchants and are the chief traders of Leeshashire. They are more worldly than the other clans and tend to view their fellow hin as somewhat parochial and naive. However, Port Hinly has a good number of residents who have never left the clanhold. Such folk tend to be fisherhin, dockworkers, net-makers, or shop keepers. The town is a mix of these locals who like to mind their own business, and seahin who travel far and wide. Port Hinly does have a marketplace, but most rare or imported goods make their way to Leeha where there is a greater demand for such items. In winter, the port can be lashed by fierce storms, and only the most foolhardy would dare to set sail during that time. Ice is also a hazard in

winter, and it is not unusual for the harbor to freeze in. In the event of an attack on Leehashire by sea, the Harborhin seafarers serve as an early warning system, and can be mobilized by the clanmaster to form a makeshift navy. Most of their vessels are lightly armed, if at all, having only ballistae and possibly a light catapult. What they lack in artillery, they make up for with good boarding techniques, skilled maneuvering, and general enthusiasm. Some of them may even be pirates, who have honed these skills from previous work. In fact, their pirates are more likely to be a threat to the area than is a foreign naval presence. Another danger on the open water is the Great Bay Monster, affectionately called Bailey by the locals. Many of them report sightings of the monster, but it has never been proven to exist. Harborhin treat it either as a joke, or with extreme seriousness—there is no in-between. Nonetheless, Bailey is often blamed when ships fail to return to port. Most of the town is located close to the waterfront, with a fair portion located out on the docks. Hobbit holes are uncommon here. The surrounding lands are settled only very close to the central clanhold. The Harborhin have not ventured too far into the Northguard Woods. Some homes can be found on the River Smoothstone just west of town, but few are beyond there. The coast road to Grassy Knoll is generally close to shore, and only passes through a few wooded sections. There is an inn located by Pinecone Brook that can accommodate those traveling between the two clans, but it is not large enough to house humans comfortably.

Recent History

The area of Leehashire was settled in the distant past by those driven from the Northern Reaches by kobold invaders. It is believed that these northern ones originally left the Five Shires as colonists, or were driven from there during some earlier turmoil. They 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 30 years ago (AY 1984 [AC 984. Ed.]). Their losses were heavy, especially in the eastern clans (Gardener and Divotfoot), and that area of the shire was in ruin. The their forces were rallied by a brave young sheriff, Collin Nimblefingers, whose guerrilla tactics helped beat the orcs at their own game. The orcs were driven back into the hills, and the dragon was not seen again. Sheriff Collin was secured in his office, and he later successfully defended Leeha from an invasion of frost giants, from Frosthaven, in the brutal winter of AY 2002 [AC 1002. Ed.] when the Great Bay froze over completely. A key hero in that engagement was Shaedrik Divotfoot, who succeeded Collin as sheriff in AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.].

Recently, Leeha has established diplomatic treaties both with the Kingdom of Siegeria and with the Duchy of Chitine (as representative of the Kingdom of Alpha) that guarantee its safety should the two parties come into conflict. It currently maintains peaceful relationships with all its neighbors, and the their enjoy the peace and prosperity of their position. Leeha remained neutral in the recent Northwold Wars [AC 1016. Ed.], although it did send troops to help the nearby dominion of Chitine when the army of efreet invaded it [probably to stop it before it reached Leeha as well, thus avoiding a war on their own soil. Adik.].

Don't Miss

Leeha is famous for its many fine inns and pubs. Without exception, these inns are high quality places, filled with warm food and good cheer. Many are large enough to accommodate humans. Their

songs and stories can be enjoyed with fine ale well into the night. Various acts, shows, and other entertainment take place on an almost constant basis, with yallaren playing a large part.

Another interesting feature you should not miss when visiting Leeshashire 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 Leeshashire 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 southwestern 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 fool enough to venture into the burrows beneath this area of town where rival gangs fight over territory. Being what they are, yallaren 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.

Fogbail 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.

SIEGERIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, west of Leeha. *NW*

Area: 10,475 sq. mi. (27,130 sq. km.).

Population: 39,000 (90% humans, 10% hin) and 500 gnomes.

Languages: Alphatian, Thyatian, Haldannic, 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 Dubn (King), Uthar Metzger (Baron), Lavim Hollister (General), Red Ork (High Priest).

Flora and Fauna: The plains are occupied by farmlands and grasslands, while the hills are lightly covered by evergreen trees, mostly pine, which become even rarer in the mountains in the heart of the kingdom. The somewhat milder temperatures allow herders to raise cattle and farmers to cultivate the soil, which is most fertile especially in the south, near the White Bear River. Domestic animals include goats, sheep, cows, and pigs, while few are the horses that can be found in Siegeria (mostly imported). Wildlife abounds in the hills and mountains, with wolves, bears and boars being especially common in the north and east. In the middle mountains (the Jagged Teeth) a dragon is said to have its lair, along with a small tribe of giants and scattered humanoids. The hills and mountains of the southeast (in the former county of Dragonard) have rich deposits of precious ores that attracts miners as well as aurumborax and dragons. Wild cold-loving beasts roam the southern mountains, where few dare venture.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chebas and Arcadius.

Siegeria is a rather large and hospitable kingdom that borders Leehashire to the east and the Duchy of Chitine to the north. King Sieger von Dubn, a known and respected wizard, is the founder and supreme leader of this country, which is considerably interesting for its political system and its troubled history.

The Land

Siegeria consists mostly of three terrain types: wild and unsettled mountains in the center, fertile plains in the south and lightly forested hills in the north. The former county of Dragonard [annexed at the end of the Portwold Wars, in Cirmont AC 1016, and now divided into five different provinces. Adik.] added forested hills along the eastern border, where woods and light forest cover the rolling hills before turning into mixed forest. Siegeria is blessed with unusually good climate considering its position [a fact often attributed to the magical skills of its king. Arcadius.]: the summer is mild and quite sunny, while the winter is not so harsh as in other parts of Portwold [temperatures usually range between 10°C by day and -10°C at night. Arcadius.]. The main reason is that the strong and chilly

northern winds are somehow blocked by the mountains rising in central Siegeria [the Jagged Teeth, as they are called, reach the 9,000 feet mark. Arcadius.], and so only two of the seventeen provinces suffer from the snow blizzards so common throughout Norwold. Abundant rainfalls in autumn make the grasslands always lush, and this is a boon to the herders, who always praise Father Sky for the blessed water [it is not surprising then, that Odin All-father, embodiment of the sky, is so popular here. Adik.]. Farmlands are also well-tended and the country has no problem with food production [although it suffered a severe famine during the last war that killed hundreds and made others leave the country. Adik.]. Evergreen woods also exist in Siegeria, and the human city of Arboria [in former Dragonard. Adik.] was founded by Alphatians to commerce with the Shipe that dwell outside the dominion's borders.

In the central-eastern part of Siegeria, roads paved with cobblestones connect the southern city of Kishia with the northernmost Axnor and with the hin settlement of Surekeep (on the border with Leehashire) and with the other significant settlements of the dominion. Other simpler trails and dusty roads link the various hamlets with one another, even leading to the town of Arboria, nestled inside the Mur Woods in the east.

The mountains to the south, called by the locals the White Glacier, are technically part of the Icereach Range, although these are the easternmost tip. They reach 8,000 feet in height and vast glaciers cover their peaks all year. In the lowest parts however, many miners have found rich deposits of precious stones and gold, and Siegeria now sells these raw materials to the other dominions or crafts them to produce refined goods to sell to Panteria, which then exports them to the Old World. Even though dragons razed the country during the Norwold Wars and are still often spotted in this region, they never venture beyond the peaks of the White Glacier now [due to the political agreements between King Sieger and the Draconic Earls of Wyrksteeth. Arcadius.], leaving Siegeria's populace in peace.

The political system is another feature that makes Siegeria a haven [and that's also the main reason why there 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 Thyatian minority lives and the remaining nine where the Alphatians and Haldanners dwell), each one ruled by a governor. The radical change is that the governor is no feudal lord, rather he or she is a bureaucrat elected by the populace living in that province [something similar to what happens in Darokin, a nation that King Sieger seems to take as model for many things. Adik.]. The governor has the power to administer the land on behalf of the people and the king, and is sworn to fulfill this responsibility. He can issue laws and decrees, raise taxes and has a seat on the Kingdom Council that advises King Sieger. The king still retains his power over the army (he's the only one who can call the populace to arms) and over domestic and foreign policy in general, and is still due the taxes levied from the people. However, his decisions can be vetoed by the council if all twelve members vote against him. This means King Sieger has still the reins of the kingdom (also, the crown is always in the hands of the von Dubon dynasty), but nominally the people have much more control over the land they live in.

In fact, King Sieger did this to solve two problems. The first was the obvious discontent of the Thyatian minority at the end of the Great War [see the historical references. Arcadius.]. The

Thyatians didn't want to be treated the same way as the Alphatians were [and considering King Sieger was a Thyatian, who had brought them to Norwold in the first place, they felt a bit betrayed by his open war against Thyatis. Arcadius.] and demanded independence. However, they knew they couldn't escape King Sieger's grasp for long and their only possibility was the threat of a migration back to Thyatis. Sieger promptly avoided this by giving them partial independence with the formation of semi-autonomous provinces, but also retained their loyalty by putting a trusted man (former Thyatian General Uthar Metzger) as their acknowledged leader [this proves Sieger is as cunning and subtle as the majority of Thyatians. Arcadius.]. At the moment, the three Thyatian inhabited provinces see themselves as a united barony under Metzger's rule rather than petty provinces, so they only send one representative (Baron Uthar) to the Siegerian Council [his vote, however, counts as one vote only, not three. Arcadius.].

But the second and most important reason for the reform of the state was that King Sieger was tired of coping with everyday problems in his country, and he wanted more spare time to pursue his highest interest: magical research [a very sound reason that explains his moves. Adik.]. With this bureaucratic re-arranging of the kingdom, he has now much more freedom and time to study magic and its applications, and he has still got the gold to go on with his arcane researches, so both he and his people benefited from his decisions.

The People

Four ethnic groups live in Siegeria: the Alphatian majority, and the Thyatian, Haldannic and hin minorities [Siegerian gnomes are negligible, even though they are often employed by King Sieger in some of his obscure researches. Adik.]. The Haldanners have been living in the area the longest, but ever since the first Alphatian colonization of the Great Bay, they have been leaving this part of Norwold. They are mostly herders nowadays, even though many still remain loyal to the fierce ways of their forebears and belong to the Siegerian army as permanent volunteers. They are attached to their old beliefs and respect the law of the king because they consider him a powerful and wise man, who's been put on the throne by the Higher Powers [at least that's what the state church preaches to them. Adik.]. Along with the Haldanners, the hin 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, Labim Hollister [a dear friend of Sieger's and one of his staunchest supporters. Arcadius.], is one of them only makes them proud to live under such an enlightened ruler that has finally acknowledged the "true hin values."

The Alphatians are the first and most common stock in Siegeria, and this is probably due to the fact that this country lies in a region that once was part of an extensive Alphatian principality [there is historical evidence that has led us to believe that the famed Alphatian Prince Alinor once ruled all the lands surrounding the great lake south of Siegeria, now called Lake Alinor by the locals. Arcadius.]. The Alphatians of Norwold are not like the folk living in their motherland. These people are not so haughty and elitist, especially because there are few magic users among them [and those who exist serve King Sieger. Adik.] and they live off the land as simple farmers or artisans. They have been strongly influenced by the hin and now share the same easygoing manners and friendliness towards other people. They don't hate a person for being a Thyatian: after all their lord is Thyatian himself, but they respect him for his justice and bravery.

The Thyatians are the newcomers, and they were brought here by Sieger von Dubwn 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 interbened 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 Dubwns 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 Dubwn, captain of the flying vessel Silber 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 Eriall, the settlement began, and it all went pretty smoothly, especially thanks to the cooperation between him, his friend Shuren [now count of nearby Kameloth. Arcadius.] and his ship's priest Alf Karlsson [who later left Siegeria after establishing the Church of Odin and founded his own dominion, Odinia, to the east. Arcadius.].

In AC1003 Sieger (still a baron) married Cassandra, the only daughter of the southern Baron of Tescan. A few months after their marriage, the Baron of Tescan disappeared while hunting in the hills [the foothills of the Jagged Teeth mounts. Adik.] and Sieger promptly claimed the whole barony as

his, having married the sole heir of that land. So Siegeria became a county and Sieger got the southern lands, more fertile and connected to the Great Bay via the White Bear River. The former Baron of Tescan's body was never found, and Sieger declared he had been victim of the dragon living in the Jagged Teeth. One year later the couple gave birth to their first child and heir [a baby whose name is kept secret by Sieger, out of fear his name could give power over him to his future enemies. Adik.], and he soon proved intelligent and well versed in magic like his father. Two others followed, a girl (Angelica) in AC 1005 and another male (Kurt) in AC 1011 [although many rumors state that the third child was born with horrible malformations due to Sieger's magic, that were later corrected magically by his father. Adik.].

In AC 1005, once the Great War broke out between Alphatia and Glantri, Sieger took his time to state his independence from Ericall's crown and founded his own dynasty, renaming the country Kingdom of Siegeria. He then made a pact with the Thyatian forces, who saw this as a great opportunity to send a bridgehead in Norwold and chase out the Alphatian forces living there. Sieger sold his country to the Thyatians in exchange for spells, protection and the promise to give him free rulership over the whole western Norwold. But this time Sieger had not predicted his countrymen's usual treachery, and he got the worst of the deal. The spells they gave him were fakes, but when he discovered it, the Thyatian troops had already been positioned in his dominion and started conquering nearby lands in the name of Thyatis. They expected Dool's help as well [Alak Dool, another renegade Thyatian lackey, ruled a barony north of Siegeria at that time, near Chitine. Arcadius.], but he was stopped by General Ney of the Alphan Forces. After that, something strange happened: Ney should have invaded Siegeria as well to eliminate any other possible threat, but this didn't happen.

What in fact happened is that Sieger went to Ney in AC 1006 and admitted his deeds: he had betrayed Ericall in his thirst for power. However, Thyatis had proved treacherous as well and now he wanted revenge. For this reason, he was now offering his skills and his intelligence to Alphatia. He wanted to help Ericall regain the lost territories and above all he wanted to reconquer his dominion. Sieger asked Ney to give him a last chance [one must acknowledge that, without Sieger's timely help, Ney's dominion would have risked being invaded in a matter of weeks judging from the Thyatian war machine's results. Arcadius.]. After a test of willpower, Ney finally agreed to Sieger's proposal. He would have refrained from invading Siegeria until Sieger's order, holding instead the Thyatian forces on the border with Lecha's help.

In the meantime, Sieger returned to Siegeria and organized a hidden resistance front of Alphatians, Heldanners and hin, together with some of his older and stauncher supporters. In the following years, he was able to regain the population's support and to push the Thyatian legionnaires out of the southeastern provinces, also with the help of troops of soldiers and mercenaries sent by Ney himself. At the end of the war [AC 1009. Ed.], Siegeria was a divided nation: one part loyal to Sieger, the other one (inhabited by Thyatian settlers mostly) sided with the Thyatian General Uthar Metzger. Sieger had helped Ney and Ericall as promised [also thanks to pacts signed with other nobles of Norwold. Arcadius.], but at this point Ney wanted him to swear fealty to Ericall once more. If he did it, he would have lent him all the troops he needed to reconquer Siegeria once and for all. Otherwise, he would have called back all his troops at once. Sieger, being a proud man and dreaming of ruling an independent kingdom himself, refused. He had seen the havoc wrought by the war on Ericall's troops and estimated that he wouldn't have been able to lay siege to Siegeria so soon. He still had an ace up his sleeve: the famous Thyatian cunning. He parlayed a lot with General Metzger and finally

outsmarted him: he convinced the general that he was about to wage the final battle on his much battered forces and the troops reported moving in his lands sort of proved it [after all, the Thyatian spies knew they were moving, not that their destination was Ney's territory. Arcadius.]. Playing also on the fact that Thyatis never cared about its campaign in Norwold, for it never sent reinforcements [this was because Draken and other dominions made a blockade of the Great Bay. Arcadius.] and on the mutual respect they shared for one another, he convinced the general to surrender. But instead of capturing him, he made him a close friend and adept [he's now a baron and Sieger's apprentice in the arcane arts! Adik.], freeing also his troops and promising lands to all those who stayed and sworn fealty to him. Many went back to Thyatis, but many others stayed.

With this coup, he was able to regain his dominion and proclaimed his independence from Ericall, re-establishing the Kingdom of Siegeria in AC 1010. In that same year, he signed a mutual treaty of non-belligerency with Ney as representative of Ericall, and the northern buffer zone known as the "Pacification Strip" was created.

During the Norwold Wars of AC 1016, Sieger first hesitated to enter the fray against the Qeodharans and the Heldannic Knights, even though Ericall asked openly for his help, but later threw himself in the war when, according to some rumors, the Black Duke offended him somehow. Siegeria sent troops to nearby Chitine to help it against the efrete invasion, helped Lord Shuren against the piratical raids of the Ostlanders, and King Sieger himself participated in the siege of Ossian and was instrumental in the Black Duke's defeat. At the end of the war, King Sieger got an agreement with the new dragon rulers of Wyrksteeth, and managed to annex to his kingdom the nearby dominion of Dragonard with the wyrms' consent. In fact, the former ruler of Dragonard, Count Jax, was indeed a gold dragon, and his death at the hands of the humans called the Dragonslayers caused the dragons' wrath. For many months they ravaged Dragonard and other dominions near the Wyrksteeth, punishing innocent humans for revenge. At the end, Dragonard was left a scarred land, and the wyrms claimed it, endangering the humans living there. King Sieger made his move then [and some say the dragon rulers conceded Dragonard to him because he helped them in restoring order in the draconic society. Arcadius.], and he saved their lives as well as gaining new precious mines. Now Sieger rules over five new provinces, former Dragonard lands, pays a small tithe to the dragons for the ore mined in the White Glacier and everybody's happy.

Don't Miss

Be sure to pay a visit to King Sieger himself if you are worthy enough to be received by him. He is a man of great intellect and superior cunning, an able strategist and a brave hero who doesn't despise a close combat from time to time [in fact, he's expert in some sort of strange martial arts taught him by an unknown hin. Adik.]. He can be found either in the capital city of the kingdom, Cronos, 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 Dubwn, who politely asked the editor to respect state secrets. Ed.]

Another interesting site to behold is Mine #1, some 1,000' up the northern foothills of the White Glacier. That mine is a honeycombed maze, and its walls are shining with gold veins and gems so that it is impossible to resist and not pick something. But you'd better resist temptation, for they are heavily patrolled and overseen by the elite forces of the kingdom, and the punishment for gold theft in Siegeria is not pleasant at all.

Do Miss

Although nominally within Siegeria's border, the whole mountain area named the Jagged Teeth is a wilderness that even King Sieger has not yet tamed. A female red dragon named Kiriakiss rules over this region, and many tribes of hill and stone giants are at her service, along with a few orcs and goblins. Their raids have now ceased after Sieger's agreement with the draconic earls, and now King Sieger provides her with food and gold in exchange for refraining from raiding his dominion. Some rumors also report clans of rakasta [snow pardasta, judging from their description. Arcadius.] living in those mountains, and they may be the cause of the humanoid's drastically low numbers. Anyway, if you are not King Sieger, you'd better stay out of the Jagged Teeth if you want to reach old age.

Also, never go past the northern side of the White Glacier if you value your life. Just because dragons do not invade and prey on Siegeria, it doesn't mean they've become tender lambs that will leave you in peace if you cross their territory. And believe us when we say to you, dear reader, that there are far more dragons than one might think in the White Glacier.

One last note to the wary traveler: west of Siegeria, just six miles away from the capital city of Cronos, lies a dangerous wasteland that is rumored to be alive with a strange kind of beings. King Sieger doesn't talk much about the land, which the locals dubbed the Red Desert, but it seems it was originated after a great magical battle occurred in this area. Some expeditions we made on its fringes revealed that the sandy soil seems to be producing polymorphing creatures of sandstone that attack everyone treading over the wasteland, engulfing the victim and pulling him below earth. What kind of monsters lie in this bleached desert nobody knows for sure.

Southern Bay Marches

The Southern Bay Marches comprise all of the dominions located south of the Great Bay and not too far from its coasts. Since this has always been considered the safest and richest area of Norwold, the majority of Norwold's largest and most important dominions are located in this region, and they are all very close to one another, enjoying rather stable political or economic alliances.

ALPHA (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, peninsula on the south shore of the Great Bay. *NW*

Area: 9,478 sq. mi. (24,550 sq. km.).

Population: 87,000, including 2,000 hin.

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 20% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher, and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 10% of tax revenue goes to the Naycese treasury, and an additional 10% is spent on military forces in the name of the confederation.

Government Type: Independent monarchy, member of Nayce, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use), fishing, logging, mining, and trapping.

Important Figures: Ericall (King), Christina Marie Alanira (Queen), Mадiera (Magist).

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: *CMI 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 Alphetian roots. Most have been living here so long now that they simply consider themselves Alphans; racial ancestry does not mean much to these simple people. For some reason, the vast majority seem happy to have King Ericall to rule them, adding what they believe is a needed form of government and order to their lives. A rather strange belief for people who prefer to be left alone, but an accepted one none-the-less.

Most Alphans are simple farmers or fishermen who do not have the typical Alphetian disdain of non-spellcasters. Being removed from the former Alphetian 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 Alphetia decided to establish some colonies on the western continent of Brun and sent many settlers to Norwold. They landed on the great peninsula on the southern shores of the Great Bay and settled on the same site where Cape Alpha had been founded by Thyatians centuries before, naming their village simply “Alpha.” In AY 1992 [AC 992. Ed.] Eriadna gave the crown of Norwold to her eldest and non-spellcasting son, Ericall, granting him a great deal of freedom. The new kingdom was too vast to be completely controlled by Ericall’s troops, so he proceeded to reinforce his rule over the small peninsula and the nearby coasts, and invited many would-be heroes to settle the unexplored areas of Norwold and to swear fealty to his crown. The strategy worked too well, for dozens of candidates came to Norwold and tried to found their own fiefdom; many failed, but others succeeded, becoming the backbone of Ericall’s kingdom.

The Great War resized Ericall’s ambitions and made him see his mistakes in accepting so many foreigners as subject rulers of his kingdom. Many of the Norwold lords showed their true colors when Thyatis and Heldann sided with Glantri against Alphetia, allying with either the Thyatian Empire or the Heldannic Knights and attacking their neighbors who remained loyal to Alphetia. The southern dominions were thus ruined by the infighting and later conquered by the knights, who made their way up to Oceansend. Oceansend fell and was regained between AY 2010 and AY 2015 [AC 1010-1015.

Ed.], but the situation is still tense down there at the moment. As for the northern lords, Ericall's loyalists were able to contain their assaults and they didn't cause much trouble. Alak Dool was banned from Norwold and Sieger von Duwn obtained independence from Ericall, but signed a peace treaty with him, thus restoring peace in the Great Bay region. King Ericall understood he could not consider himself the King of Norwold, so he renamed himself King of Alpha [and of those many dominions still vassal to his crown. Synthala.].

In Burymir AY 2014 [Kaldmont AC 1014. Ed.] Ericall married the sister of Lord General Mage Beriak [Count of Draken. Synthala.], Lady Christina Marie Alanira, during a lavish ceremony held at the grand ballroom. The wedding was a grand affair, attended by almost all the nobles still affiliated with King Ericall—and even some that were no more. Wealthy merchant families as well as respected priests (such as the priests of Zirchev) or other town members were also permitted to attend. To celebrate the union, the Town Watch has been renamed to the Queen's Guard. In fact, the love-smitten king has placed her in charge of the Queen's Guard; they are rumored to place any of the queen's orders before any order given by Ericall himself.

In AY 2016 [AC 1016. Ed.] the Norwold Wars started and Ericall formed the Norwold Confederacy [a defensive and economic alliance among the free nations of Norwold. Synthala.]. The confederacy started fighting on the southern front with Oceansend against the Haldannic Knights and on the northern front against the invading troops of Qeodhar and the renegade army of Ossian. The war ravaged all the dominions of Norwold and finally ended with a peace treaty signed with the Haldannic Knights, after the fall of the southern baronies, and the allied Kingdom of Ostland. The Qeodharan forces retreated some weeks later, and after the treacherous Black Duke of Ossian was crushed, Ericall proceeded in tightening his grip on the remaining nations and avoided a major war with the dragons of Wyrksteeth by recognizing their dominion over that region in the Draconic Treaty.

Even though the Norwold Wars officially ended in Cyprimir of AY 2016 [Ambyrmont of AC 1016. Ed.], King Ericall believes the Haldannic Knights may try to resume their advance in Norwold during the year, so he has not yet disbanded the conscripted soldiers he recruited in AY 2012 [AC 1012. Ed.]. The decision is very unpopular with the commoners, but Ericall and his generals think it's best to stop the knights at Oceansend's gates than having to fight them on their doorsteps.

Don't Miss

One sight to visit would be the main palace of Alpha. It lies atop a large hill in the center of the most fortified area of town—over a dozen huge buildings all interconnected to each other with arches and bridges and walls. Dozens of chimneys dot the rooftops of the palace, more than likely keeping the place comfortably warm during the cold winter nights here up north. Various small parks and woodlands can be seen within the palace grounds as well, suggesting that great care is taken to maintain its beauty and appearance. And one must not forget the grand ballroom, which is a wonder beyond description. Still, despite the architectural decorations, the thick walls and several dozen towers clearly indicate that the main purpose of the palace is indeed defensive.

If there is any sight worth seeing above all others, it would be the temple known as the Forest of Zirchev. And despite what you may believe, this account is not biased by my worship of that very Immortal. The Forest of Zirchev is a large temple made out of strong and sturdy oak that stands just over three stories high. A large brass bell tops the tallest spire, which can be clearly heard throughout the city. The true beauty of the temple is its sheer simplicity. Zirchev, in His wisdom, ordered that

there be no fancy decorations, extravagant use of riches, or even statues made to honor Him. The only thing indicating that it is a house of Zircheb is a carving of the Forest Immortal's face just above the main double doors.

Zircheb 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 Zircheb. 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, wyberns and other dragon-like beings have their nests, and it is said that an ancient white dragon controls the whole mountain range that extends into the Alphan peninsula.

FREE PLAINS (County of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha, on the western foothills of the Wyrksteeth Range. NW

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

Population: 2,700.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: County, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, herding (horse and cattle).

Important Figures: Allisa Patrician (Countess).

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 Wyrksteeth Mountains, and from the occasional otherworldly monstrosity coming out of Redhorn Barony to the north.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Even if Lady Allisa shares the same cultural background as her neighbor, Lord Brogahn, her dominion is somewhat different from the untamed and savage Khanate of Ublaat-nor. A small part of her populace are indeed nomadic herders like those found in Ublaat-nor, but the rest have been transformed by Lady Allisa's policy into sedentary village dwellers without taming their free-spirited will.

The Land

The Free Plains are just what their name implies: a broad region of grasslands, cultivated fields and lush pastures located between Ublaat-nor and the Wyrksteeth Range. While the western soil shares many similarities with the terrain found throughout Ublaat-nor, and it is then used mainly to support herds of horses and cows and other cattle, the eastern lands are much more fertile, and cultivated fields dot the landscape especially near the banks of the Dragon River.

What is incredible about this region is the total absence of hills or vales, which are a common sight in this part of the Southern Marches. Except for the southern border with the Wyrksteeth Range, where wooded foothills inhabited by wild beasts and shunned by human settlers abound, the whole country is basically a wide plain of grasslands, crisscrossed by affluents of the Dragon River and dotted by small ponds and groves. The Free Plains are so flat that in the clearest days of spring, the trained observer could even see the Great Bay's waters [some 50 miles distant from the northern border. Adik.] from the top of any tree inside the county, or so the people say. However, given its

peculiar flatness, the Free Plains are also especially vulnerable to the strong icy winds that blow from the north during winter. Winter is in fact the deadliest time of year here [a common feature all around Norwold. Adik.], and few people remain outside in the fields during this season, save for the time needed to buy food and take new wood for the fireplace [the few nomadic herders either return to their wooden homes or migrate westwards before winter comes, finding shelter in the caves up the hills. Arcadius.].

The eastern area near the Dragon River is particularly rich in fish and this has made fishing the first source of food and revenue for the county, which trades all kinds of freshwater fish to the nearby lands of Ublaat-nor and Redhorn [it once maintained good trading relationships with Hopeland too, but since Lord Ernest Day's exile in AC 1016, every diplomatic contact has been cut with that dominion, which is now a protectorate of the Draconic Kingdom of Wyrksteeth. Arcadius.]. Agriculture is the only other source that keeps the plainsmen fed, and no real exports exist to enrich this country, which maintains a low political profile in Norwold [although it has always answered King Ericall's orders, who in turn rewarded Lady Allisa's loyalty by awarding to the Free Plains the unlikely status of county in AC 1016. Adik.].

The People

The plainsmen living in this county are primarily Heldanners, with a small percentage (about 20%) of Alphantian immigrants, who came from the north once the Chaosarchy of Redhorn was created back in AC 1012 and settled along the Dragon River. Before Lady Allisa's arrival, they all led a nomadic lifestyle similar to that of the inhabitants of Ublaat-nor, even though they did not share the proud Viaskodas' love for long travels and seasonal migrations. They were content to travel inside their lowlands, and when the winter came they retreated inside caves in the southern hills or in Ublaat-nor's hillocks. They were nothing more than a semi-nomadic group, made of different families linked by blood ties and common legends, and certainly had not the elaborate customs and long-standing traditions that made the nearby Viaskodas a veritable self-aware culture. However, they were strong-willed and determined to remain free, despite the adversities they had to fight with, chiefly among them the weather, the dragons and the feral beasts coming down from the Wyrksteeth or out of the southern Wyrnwoods [the southern forest between the Free Plains and Hopeland. Arcadius.].

Lady Allisa succeeded in teaching these primitive Heldanners the modern ways, taking them from nomadism to a sedentary life that now revolves around agriculture and fishing. Some of them are still wandering herders, but they have more commodities now thanks to the knowledge imparted by their ruler [nothing impressive if compared to the farmers and ranchers living in Thyatis or in the Streel Plain, but decent enough for the wild lands of Norwold. Adik.]. What these plainsmen still retain from their old ways is their fierce character and their sense of honor, which bind them to honor their blood oaths and ties [something Lady Allisa greatly exploited to strengthen her rulership over these people and the Free Plains. Arcadius.]. The plainsmen can be tranquil, albeit a bit rough, in times of peace, but they are terrible foes and ruthless warriors in times of war, as the Thyatians and Qeodharans can testify.

Recent History

Lady Allisa came to Norwold earlier than most of the lords ruling here nowadays, but before talking of her exploits in Norwold, some words must be spoken of her previous life to understand how a traditional Ethengar warrior like her changed her customs so radically.

When Allisa left her tribe in Ethengar in AC 985, she was just a young and rebellious youth who had angered the clan chieftain by refusing to become the last of his chosen wives. Disowned by her parents and cast out of her tribe, the Kaeruts, she was left only with her pony and some tools to wander the steppes. She spent the following months under the stars in the Sea of Grass, trying to enter the keshak and serve as personal guard to the Golden Khan. However, frustrated by the inability of her superiors to recognize her qualities [a common disease every young would-be hero inevitably catches sooner or later. Adik.], she finally decided to leave Ethengar and rode south. She had heard from some merchants that people were really free and could easily become famous heroes there, no matter their heritage, so she joined a caravan and headed for Thyatis.

There she immediately began looking for swift ways of becoming popular and showing everyone her fighting prowess, and she finally ended up in the arena of the Coliseum, fighting for fame. After a couple of years led as a gladiator, she decided to change her lifestyle and to undertake a different path, but found unable to leave her occupation. Unable to write and read Thyatian, she had in fact signed a contract that obliged her to fight in the arena till her elderly years, and the clever entrepreneur who owned her now used every means to protect his rights. So Allisa found herself in chains, obliged to fight not for honor or fame but to enrich a fat slaver and to survive. She was beaten many times by her owner and by the slave master because of her wild and fierce behavior, and when she thought she would never be able to escape her prison, freedom came to her in an unexpected way.

She was bought by a Thyatian merchant, Adrian Patrician, who had seen her in the Coliseum and immediately liked her attitude. After the first difficult months, Adrian was able to win her trust and taught her to read and write the Thyatian language, surprising even Allisa for her capacities to learn quickly and well. He then took her with him in his travels around the Known World, to show her the variety and complexity of things existing outside her small world [and as she told me once, these voyages really made her wiser and aware of the ways of mankind. Arcadius.]. In the meantime, Allisa's respect for his master turned into affection and admiration, and when in AC 990 he finally gave her the long sought freedom, she instead chose to stay with him and boldly "offered" to marry him. Adrian Patrician was obviously in love with her, so he gladly "accepted" her proposal and the two married. They lived a happy life, but their joy was brief, since Adrian Patrician was reported lost at sea during one of his voyages to Alphatia in AC 992. Allisa took in her hands the deceased husband's affairs, but quickly discovered she was not as keen and capable as he was, and started losing hope in the future.

But again Fate played an important role in her life. In AC 993 Allisa came to Norwold to conclude new trading agreements and discovered King Ericall was giving away lands and noble titles to attract loyal followers. She immediately decided to abandon her old life and to become a landlord, realizing one of Adrian's dreams, that of getting a title of nobility. Allisa chose the dominion based on the likeness to her homeland, and she swore she would turn these barbaric people into civilized men, to improve their life and to give them freedom, much like her husband had done with her. That's how the Barony of the Free Plains was founded.

It took Lady Allisa ten years to see the first results, but she was steady and patient and finally half of the population adopted the sedentary ways, becoming farmers and fishermen and settling in the wooden villages Allisa had created for them. However, they didn't forget their traditions and legends, as Allisa insisted in maintaining them. She also struggled hard to exploit the plainsmen's fierceness

and courage and created a competent army of footmen and cavalry, which had many opportunities to show its value in the following years.

In AC 1002 she met Lord Ernest Day of Hopeland during a political meeting to seal a pact of mutual friendship and cooperation between the two countries [they shared the same problem, dragons, and wanted to join forces to fight off the threat coming from the Wyrmsteeth. Arcadius.]. It was during this meeting and particularly, as rumors say, in the joint expedition they made to the source of the Dragon River to hunt down a dangerous white wyrm that she fell deeply in love with Lord Day, both because of his courage, his educated manners and his tenderness [which probably reminded her of her lost husband. Adik.]. They soon developed a close relationship, although neither of the two ever showed [at least publicly. Adik.] more than a deep friendship towards the other.

During the Great War [AC 1005-1009. Ed.], Lady Allisa joined her forces with those of Lord Brogahn to stop and crush the Thyatian advance towards the Alphan Peninsula. It was during this military campaign that Lord Brogahn got to know Lady Allisa's inner strength and passion, becoming inevitably attracted by her [I myself have met Allisa many times, and I can testify that she has been gifted with an incredible force of will and a mesmerizing charisma, despite her petite figure. Arcadius.]. However, the rough manners of Lord Brogahn never won Lady Allisa's heart, already conquered by Lord Day. Driven by his blind passion, Lord Brogahn went to confront Lord Day during a summer joust held by King Ercall at his court [many courtesans and Norwold lords still remember that afternoon, when the two fought honorably for the same woman. Arcadius.]. However, after dueling with him and losing, Lord Brogahn was so deeply impressed by Lord Day's honesty and chivalry that the two became good friends, even though both knew the feelings they felt for Lady Allisa [many also say that it was because of Lord Day's friendship towards Lord Brogahn that he never declared his love to Lady Allisa, to avoid hurting his friend's feelings. Adik.].

The years after the Great War were peaceful enough for the Free Plains, despite the occasional dragon or humanoid raid. And then in AC 1016 the Qeodharans invaded Norwold and the Black Duke threatened to destroy Ercall's kingdom. Lady Allisa and her two friends once again entered the war to defend their king, and Lady Allisa's troops [working with Lord Brogahn's horsemen and with the unpredictable diaboli of Redhorn. Adik.] were incredibly effective in protecting the Regent's Pass against the Black Duke's assaults, turning the tide of the war. Lady Allisa received the status of countess as a reward for her courage, but this didn't soothe her for the loss of her beloved Ernest Day, who was forced by the treaty with the vindictive dragons to abandon Norwold forever.

Don't Miss

The Free Plains are nice to visit especially in spring, and we'd recommend you to take a tour of the eastern region, which is enchanting with all its streams and ponds rich of different birds and multi-colored fish. Also interesting is the so-called Stone Tree, a big stone monument resembling a pine tree near the southern border that possesses magical properties [some say it was sent there from the sky by Wotan, while others insist it has been sculpted by the dragons. Adik.]. Apparently, whoever touches it during the first days of thaw is granted some kind of small wish, but it is difficult for the plainsmen to reach it because of the weather in those first days of spring and also because it is dangerously near the northern fringes of the Wyrmwoods.

Do Miss

The foothills of the Wyrksteeth are terribly dangerous because of the wild beasts hunting there, but fortunately the dragons have stopped raiding the Free Plains ever since the Draconic Treaty of AC 1016. However, this doesn't mean they will leave you in peace if you tread on their soil, and some marauder dragons still prey on the cattle raised inside the Free Plains without fearing anything or anyone.

Another area to avoid is the Wyrmwoods, a great forest located south of the Free Plains, between the county and Hopeland. Strange beings are said to dwell in this dark forest, among which a clan of renegade elves that hunt down every stranger setting foot inside their home. Some rangers also report an ancient green dragon ruling over the area [hence the name of the forest. Adik.], and it seems she is actually in league with the elves, who obey her like dutiful, dangerous children.

KAMELOTH (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brum, southeast of Leeha, along the small Bay of Kameloth. *NW*

Area: 4,738 sq. mi. (12,270 sq. km.).

Population: 19,000, 77% humans, 17% hin, 6% elves.

Languages: Alphatian (Alphan dialect), Heldannic, Lalor, Elvish (Shipe-Lator dialect).

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

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Duchy, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, cattle, mining.

Important Figures: Shuren (Duke), Jonas Whiteshore (Seneschal).

Flora and Fauna: All kinds of terrain are present in Kameloth: overgrown forests in the south, rolling and steep hills in the west and lowlands and grasslands in the east and center. As a result, many types of natural products grow here, from vegetables to cereals, from evergreen trees to fruits and underbrush. Wild animals and small tribes of orcs and hill giants live in the western hills between Kameloth and Leeha, while wolves and ferocious predators can be found in the south. Monstrous fish also prey on the smaller ones in Kameloth Bay. Dragons from the Wyrmsteeth make occasional forays into this territory as well, paying attention to harm cattle and not men.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chebas and Arcadius.

Kameloth is a strange dominion among those loyal to the Kingdom of Alpha. In fact, while its duke has always been a good friend and ally of King Ercall, he is not well versed in the art of politics as much as he is in those of magic and skirmishing. For this reason, even though Kameloth has a popular hero as ruler, Duke Shuren is not really the head of the country, which is in fact ruled by the various towns' mayors.

The Land

Kameloth is a large dominion located on the southwestern banks of the Great Bay, bordering with the Kingdom of Siegeria and the County of Leeha to the west and north. Kameloth also comprises the small Kameloth Bay, which is a tranquil fishing area due south of the famous Great Bay Wormhole [the planar phenomenon that occurs regularly in the Great Bay and which connects this part of Norwold with the Plane of Water. Adik.]. Due to its position and to the extent of its borders, Kameloth offers to its inhabitants many types of terrain, going from the shallow beaches in the north, to the thick woods of the south, including the fertile plains of the east and the gentle hills of the hin living in the west. This makes Kameloth a rich country in terms of crop and game varieties, although it has no significant mining activity, save for a rather large silver mine located in the hin's hills [and constantly guarded and exploited by the hin. Adik.].

Kameloth is not exactly a rich land, although its inhabitants do not suffer from famine or injustice [not anymore, that is. Adik.]. The fact is that even though it has abundant harvests and a thriving

fishing industry, it must support a great number of people, which makes profits a little lower than what would be commonly expected in a land like this. Only recently has Kameloth reached the point it can feed all of its inhabitants with the food it produces, and only through hardship and at the expense of Duke Shuren's personal treasury. Also, Kameloth's funds were squandered in past years because of the former seneschal's corruption [he cheated Lord Shuren out of the dominion's revenues for several years before being discovered, but according to some rumors he managed to make it out of Kameloth with his small fortune before being discovered. Arcadius.], so this all has contributed to make it a petty state in comparison to the nearby countries and to other dominions of the same size.

The People

Kameloth's populace is a mishmash of different races and cultures, who have remained proud of their heritage and thus unable to integrate as their ruler had hoped [this also translates into different deities being worshipped inside Kameloth, although Duke Shuren has made Odin's faith the national church. Arcadius]. This is why Kameloth is today a divided country, even though there are no violent frictions within it. This peaceful co-existence is not due to Lord Shuren's influence over the moral ethics of his people, but rather to the populace's common sense and to interregional agreements signed by the leaders of the four ethnic groups living here. The people of Kameloth have long since understood that they cannot count on their ruler to solve and administer their daily issues, so they have basically assumed some political power for themselves and now each community rules itself without the duke's meddling too much in their affairs. Lord Shuren is still the leader of the army and the one to whom the taxes must be paid, but instead of getting all of the troubles that go with ruling a country, he has allowed his subjects considerable administrative freedom and authority (along with some economic advantages), earning more free time and less responsibility for himself.

Jonas Whiteshore is the current duchy's seneschal as well as the leader of the hin community, which lives in the western hills. The hin once belonged to the County of Leeha, but later chose to follow Whiteshore when he founded a new town in the rich hills of Kameloth in AC 1003, where silver had just been found. They are specialists in mining and crafting silver, as well as in raising the beautiful snow tulips that have made Leeha so famous throughout Norwold. Faithful to the classic hin iconography, the hin of Whiteshore are merry and friendly to everyone, although they are by no means naive and can be deadly clever when it comes to trade and economics [and that's why Lord Shuren chose a hin as his new seneschal. Adik.].

Hermann Konstantin represents the Heldammers living in the dominion [the majority of the human population. Adik.], who dwell on the southern shores of the Kameloth Bay and make up the fishing industry of the country. He is a man of few words and, like many of his fellows, prefers to act rather than to parlay. The Heldammers are renowned for their hard work and respected for their abnegation, although they are also criticized for being a tad too dependent on alcohol, especially during the long winter nights when the bay freezes and they cannot sail.

Sphodros is a wizard and the leader of the Alphetian community. Although the Alphetians living in Kameloth are commoners and not spellcasters, Sphodros is well-liked by his fellows and very popular after having organized and led with some success a resistance movement opposed to the invading Thyatians during the Great War. This fame, coupled with his unchallenged superior powers, has led the Alphetian community to believe they could not have been better represented in front of their duke by someone just as cunning and powerful [although I must say that Sphodros's power and intelligence

have been greatly exaggerated by the Alphatians. Adik.]. The Alphatians make up the majority of the farmers living in the western part of the duchy, and together with the Heldaammer fishermen, they are the backbone of the country's food production.

Finally, Nimmar Leldyie is the leader of the insular Shipe elves living in the southern woods. These elves are very secretive and shun every contact with the other communities [much like their northern brethren living in the Lothbarth Forest. Arcadius.], although they acknowledge Duke Shuren's undisputed lordship over the land. They provide some furs and woodland game to the state economy, and are greatly rewarded by the duke's stewardship over their lands [which however suffered horrible scars because of the draconic raids during AC 1016, and this has somewhat reduced their trust in Duke Shuren's power. Arcadius.].

Recent History

Duke Shuren has always been an adventurer at heart. Coming from a successful and renowned "career" as a popular hero in the southern lands, Shuren came here in AC 1002 with a bunch of fellow adventurers [among which the powerful King Sieger von Duwn. Adik.] to try a new experience, and founded a barony mainly out of curiosity: he wanted to change pace for a while. After vanquishing the fearsome monsters that dwelt in the area, he attracted new settlers and began to annex new chunks of nearby lands, without really thinking about the diversity of the races he admitted inside his ever-growing dominion. Then he suddenly stopped enlarging Kameloth [many say both to avoid the dragons' and the hin's anger. Arcadius.] and relaxed on his seat of power, allowing his first seneschal, Bethain Craxius, to run the business.

In the years following AC 1003 he spent his time traveling to faraway places and participating in epic adventures, with the result being his absence from Kameloth nearly eight months every year. Clearly the populace didn't view him as their ruler anymore, but rather as the hero who once defeated the giants and the other monsters threatening the area. Also, since it became apparent to them that the seneschal was only stealing from them, they began to organize things in smaller scale, and the four communities each chose a prominent figure to act as their leader and representative in front of the seneschal. So, Kameloth effectively ended up being a single county nominally, but was in fact divided into four independent regions, which governed themselves and paid a tithe regularly to the central government at Imolus [the former capital of Kameloth. Arcadius.].

Lord Shuren was strangely away during the Great War [AC 1005-1009. Ed.], so the populace was left alone to cope with the Thyatian and monstrous invaders. The seneschal Craxius took once again the matter in his own hands and forged an alliance with the Thyatians, allowing them free passage over Kameloth's soil in exchange for sparing his life and the treasury [he didn't make any objections to the Thyatians pillaging the countryside and the commoners, however. Adik.]. This way Kameloth remained basically neutral during the whole war, allowing Thyatian troops coming from Siegeria safe passage to reach the other dominions in the east and at the same time sending reinforcement troops to these same countries [clearly Craxius didn't want to be labeled a traitor, whatever the outcome of the war, so he took steps to assure his fealty to both sides. Arcadius.].

This all continued until Lord Shuren returned and found out about Craxius's foul play at the beginning of AC 1010. He immediately drove out the Thyatian invaders still stationed inside Kameloth and then went to kill Craxius, only to discover he wasn't in Kameloth anymore [sensing his web of subterfuge and lies was about to collapse, the cunning seneschal fled on his personal boat to a secret

destination, taking with him the incredible sum of 100,000 gold pieces, according to the rumors. Adik.]. Lord Shuren began to take the situation in his own hands then, only to discover the state of the affairs was not as he thought it was. Basically, he was paying all of the bureaucracy and military staff of the country, while each of the four regions sent to him only a small fraction of their actual income. This caused a big gap in the state treasury, and Lord Shuren couldn't allow this to continue. So he confronted the four representatives and demanded them to turn all of their gold to him to pay the country's debts, but they refused and instead threatened to revolt or to leave the county altogether. Lord Shuren was neither a statesman nor a fine politician, but he understood the situation, so he agreed to let things as they were, and named one of the four mayors, the hin Jonas Whiteshore, as new seneschal, in charge of keeping everything in check and avoiding disorder and thievery.

In five years all the debts were paid [also thanks to Lord Shuren's personal funds. Adik.] and the frivolous expenses cut, and Kameloth's economy was finally sound once again. Then disaster struck again when the Norwold Wars broke out. Lord Shuren eagerly put all his strengths into the war against the Qeodharans and the dragons, fighting on the first line and vanquishing many enemy squadrons by himself [although he couldn't prevent the razing of the capital city of Imolus on the dragons' part. The town of Vendrid was later chosen as the new capital, leaving Imolus a silent monument to the draconic power in Norwold. Arcadius.]. In the final battle against the pirate wizard Oberack of Ostland however, he did meet his doom, even though he was able to kill the powerful opponent, thus stopping the Ostlander raids in the inner Great Bay. It was only thanks to his former friend, King Sieger von Dulton, that he was later resurrected instead of mourned and buried [a cunning scheme on the Black Duke's part to eliminate him from the war, as it turned out. Arcadius.], and took part in the final battle against the renegade Black Duke of Ossian, as well as in the expedition to Alphaks's Volcano to stop the disease spread by the Red Fog at the end of AC 1016.

Despite earning the title of duke [and the responsibilities that came with it. Arcadius.] at the end of the war, Duke Shuren has not changed his ways much. He still spends a good deal of time away from his dominion to pursue his adventuring life, but he is still considered the national hero back in Kameloth, and as long as he'll be there, the populace is sure nothing will come to harm them. Unfortunately, Duke Shuren's passion for travel outside the duchy is very well known both to the populace and to the intelligent evil creatures living near and inside Kameloth, and this may be exploited against the duke and his dominion in the future as it was in the past.

Don't Miss

The hin's hills are especially beautiful to behold during spring, when their snow tulips bloom and whiten the gardens. Also great to behold is the Kameloth Bay in the coldest time of winter, when its surface freezes completely and people walk and skate over the ice.

Do Miss

Some of the hills between Lecha and Kameloth, on the western border, do not belong to either of the two states. This is because they are home of a tribe of proud and resistant hill giants that has so far managed to avoid attracting Duke Shuren's attention. They mainly raid the hin communities on the Lechan side of the border, but have also made forays into Kameloth, terrorizing herders and stealing cattle in the western hills. So far they have not caused great havoc and the duke has more pressing matters to handle [whatever they might be. Adik.], so the giants' threat persists in the region.

Also to be avoided is the place called Comeron's Dell, a small depression located on the fringes of the southern forest. What is so curious about this foggy place is that before Shuren's coming, it was in fact a hillock! The Shiye legends tell that below the forested hillock a terrible demon lay in a perpetual slumber, waiting for the right time to awake and unleash the Seven Plagues [mysterious outlandish creatures with great powers who rest nearby, according to the Shiye. Arcadius.] on Norwold. Apparently, Shuren and his friends were able to confront this demon, Comeron, and to defeat him before he awakened fully. However, the energies released in the final battle were so powerful as to make the hillock collapse and to create a dell. A small veil of fog constantly envelops the area now, which is still shunned by elves and humans alike and still considered cursed, despite Duke Shuren's reassuring tale.

OSSIAN (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, on the shores of the gulf south of Alpha. *NW*

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

Population: 1,800.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 30% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, hunting.

Important Figures: Heinrich Niederhaus (Baron and Grand Knight of the Order of the Ash Rod).

Flora and Fauna: Ossian is a lowland valley nestled between the Ossian Bay and the Wyrksteeth. Wild animals and monsters can be encountered in the southern regions, especially on the foothills of the Wyrksteeth, 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: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Once a large and proud nation of both Heldanners and Alphatians, after the Norwold Wars of AC 1016 Ossian was reduced to a small barony, with more than two thirds of its land lost in the shrinking of the nation. Its former ruler, the Black Duke, treacherously betrayed Ericall and allied with Qeodharans, but he paid for his insolence in the end, dying at the hands of the just rulers of Norwold. Now Ossian is beginning to bloom again under the rulership of its new enlightened ruler, although the problems to overcome are still many.

The Land

Ossian currently occupies only the central coastal area of what was once the duchy with the same name. Its territory comprises the lowlands going from the foothills of the Wyrksteeth to the south to the shores of the Bay of Ossian to the north. This vast valley, dubbed Friedental by the locals, is where the great majority of Ossianites live, under the protective wing of the Order of the Ash Rod. The valley consists of many farmlands and grasslands useful to raise crops and to tend small herds of sheep and goats [although herding is not so common, given the presence of the Wyrksteeth dragons to the south, who are constantly looking for easy animal prey. Arcadius.]. The other main economic revenue for the barony is fishing, which is plentiful indeed thanks to the blessed waters of the Bay of Ossian.

The Ossianites left the old capital of Schwarzthal [seat of the Black Duke's machinations and black magics. Adik.] at the end of the war, when the invasion of the Alphan forces left next to nothing of it. The new baron, Sir Niederhaus, sponsored the construction of a new capital in the middle of the current barony, on the shores of the Bay of Ossian, and far from the prying eyes of the dragons. The new

capital, Thorstadt, now houses many of the old inhabitants of Ossian as well as all of the refugees from Odinia [another barony north of Ossian, near the Strait of Todstein, which was invaded and completely razed first by Qeodharans and then by dragons in AC 1016. Arcadius.]. In accordance with Baron Niederhaus's wishes, Thorstadt is dominated by an imposing wooden palisade some 30 feet tall to block out any possible land invasion. The palisade has four watchtowers oriented towards the four cardinal points, and each one is armed with ballistae to repel any possible flying threat [even if dragons don't assault Ossian for now, due to the Draconic Treaty, other flying beasts such as wyverns and manticores have no such scruples. Adik.]. The town also boasts some tricky caltrops in its harbor that prevent all ships from docking without explicit permission from the harbormaster [who must send forth a small boat to show the docking ship the safe route through the caltrops. Adik.] Baron Niederhaus is trying to establish his barony as an important center for shipbuilding, using the skills and knowledge of the Odinian immigrants, although the required wood grows only on the hills at the southern border of the barony, which are currently under the dragons' sway.

The last important feature of Thorstadt is the Hall of the Ash Rod, a majestic longhouse of Haldannic tradition that is the holy headquarters of the Knightly Order of the Ash Rod. Baron Niederhaus is also the grand knight of the order, which has sworn fealty to Odin All-father and to the northern pantheon and whose main goal is to protect the populace from any danger. For this reason the order is rather popular among the people, although the Odinian immigrants remember well that the order could not prevent the destruction of their former homeland [in fact the order was originally created in Odinia, and later moved to Ossian when Odinia was destroyed and Sir Niederhaus got the rulership of Ossian in Kaldmont AC 1016. Adik.]. Inside the hall priests, godi, skalds and paladins of the church gather once a year to celebrate Odin's Death [Kaldmont 20. Arcadius.], to remember Odin All-father's sacrifice when He created mankind and gave them His wisdom, the runes [this is one of the many features the order has taken from the Odinian Church of the Northlands. Arcadius.]. The hall is a wooden thatched longhouse, with many coats of arms hanging from its inner walls. Each symbol refers to one of the noble knights who have sworn to defend Ossian from any threat and who now constitute the Council of the Ash Rod, the knightly assembly that helps Baron Niederhaus in ruling the country.

The political system of Ossian is pretty straightforward: everything is in the hands of the priests belonging to the order. They act as village bürgermeisters and spiritual leaders, as judges and officers of the army [even though the military charges are reserved to the knights of the order properly. Adik.]. Since they are the Immortals' ears and mouths, nobody can really contest their judgments, so the Ossianites can rarely question them.

The People

Nowadays the Ossianites are Haldanners to their heart. All of the Alphatians who once lived here migrated to Draken or to Alpha at the end of AC 1016, leaving the land to the Haldanners [to the joy of Sir Niederhaus, as many people say. Adik.]. The Haldanners are great workers, fond of drinking and telling old tales regarding the ancient forefathers and their Immortals. They are honorbound people, and seldom act maliciously, even with strangers. The Ossianites as a whole are a simple but honest folk, with a great faith in the Immortals and in what they call "Wyrd" [a philosophical and religious concept imported to Ossian by the order, which in turn took it from the Odinian Church of the Northlands. Arcadius.]. We have not been able to determine whether this Wyrd refers to a strong belief in the power of destiny or to a real Immortal [since there is an Immortal with the same name

worshipped in the church's pantheon. Arcadius.], but whatever it is, the Order of the Ash Rod gives it the highest power in nature. This way, they explain, their defeat in Odinia wasn't properly their fault, but it was Wyrð's will: Wyrð wanted the order to escape doomed Odinia in order to reach Ossian to protect it [a clever trick to justify everything, if you ask me. Arcadius.].

As mentioned before, the Church of the Northlands imported from Odinia by the order is now the dominant faith in Ossian. It's slowly spreading its influence even to the other Haldannic communities south of the Great Bay, much to Sir Niederhaus's joy [since after the death of High Priest Alf Karlsson—who was also Baron of Odinia—in AC 1016, Sir Niederhaus is now the highest ranking member of the church. Adik.]. In fact, thanks to its godar (itinerant priests and paladins), the church counts new shrines and temples in Alpha, Kameloth, Siegeria and even some of the Tranquil Coast baronies (including Oceansend). The tenets of the faith are quite straight and begin with the Creation Myth: humans spawned from Yggdrasill, the World-Ash. Then Odin All-father hanged Himself on 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 to Odin All-father to thank Him for His gifts. Then Loki the Trickster came to the world and tempted men, who succumbed to Loki's treachery. Giants invaded the human lands, and the humans invoked again Odin All-father, asking for protection. Odin sent them His son, Thor the Thunderer, who repelled the giants in the mountains and chased Loki away. But Loki still plots and schemes with evil and malicious men and monsters to conquer the human lands, so the Order of the Ash Rod was created, to defend humans from the Trickster and His allies. That is, until the day of Ragnarok comes, when all the Immortals and mortals alike will meet their fates and Wyrð will prevail.

Recent History

The Black Duke founded the dominion of Ossian back in AC 1002, when he migrated to Norwold from Alphatia with his entourage of lackeys and Alphatian commoners. The county soon achieved the status of duchy by conquering nearby lands and killing the humanoid population [and also because the Black Duke asked Eriall to be granted an elevated status in comparison to the other "common" rulers of Norwold. Adik.] and the Black Duke tightened its grip on his people by prohibiting anyone from leaving the duchy. Then the Great War came, but this part of Norwold was mildly touched and the duke remained quiet. It was only during the later Norwold Wars of AC 1016 that he showed his envy towards Eriall's power and sided with the Qeodharans [actually many say he planned the whole invasion from the start. Adik.], attacking the nearby Kingdom of Alpha and blackmailing many of the Norwold rulers. At the end of the war he was finally defeated and the duchy reduced in status as well as in size [part of it was absorbed by the Draconic Earls of Wyrðsteeth. Arcadius.]

By the end of AC 1016, a group of Odinian immigrants [the last survivors of the massacres perpetrated by the Qeodharans, the Black Duke's troops and the dragons. Arcadius.] settled in the central part of former Ossian, led by the surviving members of the Order of the Ash Rod. The Order of the Ash Rod was founded in Odinia in AC 1006 by Sir Niederhaus, with the sole purpose of fighting evil in Norwold in the name of the Northern Gods [the order was pivotal in recruiting the best warriors of Odinia and nearby lands and organizing the army of Odinia, which started to repel the pirates and contain the dragons' attacks. The years following the end of the Great War and the sinking of Alphatia saw the order rise high in Norwold, as well as the church, with many longhouses and shrines founded in many regions south of the Great Bay. One such stronghold has even been built in the isle in the center of Alinor Lake, between the Wyrðsteeth and Icereach Ranges, and is now

recruiting new members for the Order of the Ash Rod to counter the Heldommic Knights' advance. Adik.]. Their leader, Grand Knight Heinrich Niederhaus, petitioned King Ericall for the rulership of Ossian, and the Council of Norwold awarded it a title nobody had claimed so far. Baron Niederhaus put time and efforts to rebuild the power of his order in the new land, and so far [three months after his arrival. Arcadius.] he has managed to build a fortified capital and to give Ossian a new political system.

Don't Miss

Do not miss the Hall of the Ash Rod, for it is a really inspiring place to visit, especially during Odin's Death celebrations. The hall is filled with a mystical energy that gives all those who pray inside it a strong vitality and such a sense of unity with the universe and the Immortals' powers, that they feel regenerated and somewhat inspired to perform incredible tasks.

Do Miss

Stay away from the southern border altogether. Although its lush forests are a breathtaking sight, the presence of the 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 that place that circulate in the northern County of Draken as well. Adik.]. It is believed that the Isles of Todstein and Graben were once inhabited by a fiendish necromancer that got blasted by the Immortals for the heinous crimes perpetrated on the folk living in those islands. Nowadays the isles are presumed deserted and the sailors keep away from the fog-filled area.

REDHORN (Chaosarchy of)

Location: Continent of Brum, southwest of Alpha, along the southern shore of the Great Bay. **NW**

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

Population: 700 diaboli, 50 humans.

Languages: Diabol, Alphantian.

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), Alden (Alphan Ambassador).

Flora and Fauna: Redhorn consists of grasslands and farmlands, with some woods in the southern parts, near the rolling hills to the west. Strangely enough, the landscape seems often "warped" at nighttime, with otherworldly red and greenish hues emanating from the ground. Local animals have long left the countryside since the diaboli settled the land, and previously unseen and distorted parodies of the former wildlife now roam the dominion [probably imported from their own dimension by the diaboli. Arcadius.]. Other stranger and alien monsters occasionally pop up in the wilderness, threatening the diaboli as well as the few humans who live here.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

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

UBLAAT-NOR (Khanate of)

Location: Continent of Brum, southeast of Leeha, between Kameloth and the Free Plains. *NW*

Area: Approx. 998 sq. mi. (2,585 sq. km.); no definite borders, however.

Population: Shifting between 1,000 in winter and 2,500 at other times of the year (nomadic migrations).

Languages: Viaskodas, Heldannic.

Coinage: Barter commonly used.

Taxes: 1/3 of the family's goods must be given to the khan (baron) yearly. He redistributes half of the total amount to the needy families and keeps the remaining half.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Horse herding, hunting, agriculture.

Important Figures: Brogahn (Baron), Barkal the Red (Chieftain).

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 low-lying 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: *C&M* Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

The Barony of Ublaat-nor [or Khanate, as it is commonly called by its ruler and settlers, Arcadius.] is a small and modest dominion, just south of the Duchy of Kameloth and west of the Free Plains County. Basically a large grassland with a few hillocks dotted with pine trees, Ublaat-nor is home of a few standing communities of farmers, but it is better known in this part of Norwold for its nomadic inhabitants, the free-spirited and proud Viaskodas.

The Land

The visitors coming to Ublaat-nor [which means "Plains of the Sky Father" in Viaskodas, Arcadius.] will be profoundly impressed [and probably bored as well, Adik.] by the homogeneous landscape stretching all around. Seemingly infinite grasslands and lowlands, which become a disheartening white sea during winter, and bloom with a myriad of colorful flowers during spring; these are the two faces of Ublaat-nor. Ponds and streams coming from the hills in the west and from the Wyrmsteeth Mountains farther in the south provide freshwater both to the soil and to the grasslands' inhabitants.

However, even though the terrain may seem lush and fertile to the unwary observer, a further and more accurate inspection reveals that the soil is not surprisingly rich for cultivation. This is why few of this barony's inhabitants are actually sedentary farmers [mostly those living in the northwest, near the

hills bordering with Kameloth. Arcadius.], while the rest are herders and hunters. In fact, Ublaat-nor has got a great deal of small game [rabbits, hares, marmots, and even the occasional deer and geese. Arcadius.] and breeds some of the best mares and stags that can be found in upper Norwold. Horses in particular are highly prized in this land, and usually allowed to roam free wherever they want. A law issued by Lord Brogahn even declares horses as “holy animals” to be protected: whoever is found killing a horse is usually lashed and killed in a most unpleasant way in Ublaat-nor [the guilty’s arms are tied to two different horses, which are then sent galloping in two opposite directions, thus splitting the poor soul into two parts. Adik.].

There are no real towns in Ublaat-nor, merely a couple of villages of farmers where the occasional traveler may rest [but do not even think to look for an inn in this place: the best you can have is a bunk or some hay inside a stable or a tent. Adik.]. Since the majority of this country’s populace is made of nomadic breeders, they usually move from one place to another as the seasons change, living in big tents easily packed on the backs of their horses [much like it happens in Ethengar, Lord Brogahn’s homeland. Arcadius.]. Lord Brogahn himself has a standing hall in one of the villages dotting the western hills, where he can be found during the winter, but during the rest of the year he is constantly galloping around the country, to oversee his people’s welfare and to participate in their rites and festivals.

The People

First of all, one thing common to all of the people living in Ublaat-nor: they are by no means rich. They all lead a poor life as farmers, herders or hunters, and do not possess much wealth besides their herds or tools [that is why barter is so common among these folk that they wouldn’t know how to use a hundred gold pieces if they had them. Adik.]. But they seem to like it this way, also since this makes them all equal, more or less, so they lead their lives without complaining too much [the kind of populace every ruler would like to have. Adik.].

A few of the inhabitants of Ublaat-nor are of Heldanner stock, and not surprisingly all of them chose the sedentary life of the farmers. The remaining people all belong to the Viaskodas tribe, a unique culture of nomadic barbarians living in western Norwold. 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 plains, following the seasonal changes. They move yearly, going from the northern dominion of Ublaat-nor to the southern Barony of the Lake, preferring to reside in Ublaat-nor during the summer, and retreating southwards only when the strong winds of autumn start to sweep the northern plains and rainstorms pour over the Valley of the Wind [a long and narrow valley nestled between the Wyrksteeth to the east and Lake Alinor to the west, connecting Ublaat-nor to the southern dominions of Chevas and the Barony of the Lake. Adik.].

Viaskodas are a strange lot, from the ethnic point of view. They have strong Ethengar features, like slightly oval eyes and tanned complexion, but at the same time the color of their hair and eyes ranges from the typical Heldannic blond and blue, to the black and brown found among the Ethengar nomads. Their language has a couple of similarities with Ethengar and Heldannic as well, but they do not seem to have come from Ethengar, nor have they always lived in Norwold. According to their ancestral legends, they came to Norwold on their horseback, riding over the waves of the eastern sea to escape the aggression of the “White Demons,” who apparently came from the Otherworld to invade and raze their ancient homeland [this may refer to the Alphatian conquest of the continent of Alphatia, thus leading to

the conclusion that they were the first inhabitants of that landmass. Yet the mystery of their transition to Norwold on horseback remains, and leads us to believe they have probably exaggerated something in their legends. Arcadius.].

Viaskodas seem to honor not only specific Immortals associated with weather and other environmental phenomena [as it happens in most primitive and barbaric cultures. Adik.], but they have also a strong mysticism that pertains to their dead ancestors. They pay homage to the spirits of their departed [which are embodied by animals, as it happens in Ethengar and among the children of Atruaghin. Arcadius.] with weekly ceremonies, and often their shamans ask them for guidance on important matters, if the clan leader doesn't seem sure enough to make a decision by himself. This gives the shamans a strong influence on the daily life of the tribe, and in fact they are shown deep respect by both the common tribesmen and the leaders.

Another peculiar figure among the Viaskodas is the so-called taltos. These people are considered especially blessed and gifted by their peers, because they have a very close relationship with the spirits of the ancestors, who impart to them secret knowledge regarding all aspects of life and afterlife. As the saying goes among the Viaskodas: "A taltos is born, not made." A caul or teeth at birth, webbed fingers or toes, even a sixth finger or any other distinctive birthmark are signs that a child is destined to be one of the taltos. Taltos are innate spellcasters, drawing power both from the spirits of the dead ancestors and the Immortals, as well as from their inner souls. They are usually trained to become the protectors of their clan, and are bound to destroy evil creatures, especially undead and demons, wherever they find them, giving these wicked souls their final rest.

It is no surprise then, that Lord Brogahn has found so many similarities with these nomads to make blood-bonds with their chieftain, the brave and powerful Barkal the Red, obtaining their support as well as their respect after showing them his strength and courage in battle [the baron told us he undertook many ordeals and tests of bravery, according to the customs of these tribes, before being acknowledged as lord of Ubla-at-nor. Adik.].

Recent History

It is not known why exactly Brogahn of Ethengar came to Norwold in AC 1001. No rumors circulate over this lord's past in his homeland [a clear sign that his subjects both fear and respect him. Adik.], so we must give credit to his words and assume he was simply drawn here by a dream-induced omen received by the spirits. After swearing loyalty to King Ericall of Alpha, he traveled extensively to find a suitable place for his barony, and stopped in Ubla-at-nor, where the spirits told him he would forge his own khanate. He immediately began to make his intentions known to the people living in these grasslands and after traveling with the different clans of the Viaskodas, he was finally able to claim his right to rule Ubla-at-nor in front of the assembled Council of the Chieftains in AC 1002. After succeeding in many different tests posed to judge his strength, his honor and his motivations [last but not least the bare-handed duel with Barkal the Red, renowned champion of the Viaskodas. Adik.], he was officially acknowledged in his position by the council, who however made it clear the Viaskodas would never settle permanently in his land. They came to terms easily, since Lord Brogahn was used to the nomadic lifestyle, and the tribes agreed to pay him a small tribute in exchange for his protection and friendship.

During the Great War [AC 1005-1009. Ed.], Brogahn and his men became an impassable obstacle for the Thyatian legions who marched eastwards across Kameloth, forcing them to avoid these plains

and to march along the northern coast, where the troops of Lady Allisa Patrician crushed their advance once and for all, preventing them from reaching Alpha. It was after this combined military campaign that Lord Brogahn developed a close relationship with Lady Allisa [many say more than an actual friendship, although everyone at the court of Alpha knows well that Lady Allisa's favors were always directed more towards Lord Ernest Day rather than Lord Brogahn. Adik.], and at the same time started a friendly competition with Lord Day of Hopeland regarding any sort of field activity. The friendship bond that linked these three lords was so strong that every time one of them had problems, the other two immediately came to aid their fellow. More than once King Ericall took them as example to show the other Norwold lords the best way to cooperate and create a unified country, but it seems they have always remained the exception to the rule in Norwold.

In AC 1016 the Norwold Wars ravaged our lands, and the three lords were busy repelling dragons, monstrous worms and the baneful armies of the treacherous Black Duke. Lord Brogahn worked with Lady Allisa to stop the Black Duke's soldiers and unholy troops from gaining access to the Alphan Peninsula, and their final battle at the Regent's Pass is now part of Norwold's most heroic legends. Even if King Ericall offered him a promotion in status, Lord Brogahn refused as he had done in the past, staying content with the fame he had gained inside the confederacy. The only bad news for him was the exile that Lord Day had to endure after the peace signed with the dragons of Wyrmsteeth. Lord Brogahn has done everything possible to ease Lady Allisa's pain after Lord Ernest Day's disappearance, but it seems Lady Allisa's heart will still weep for a long time.

Don't Miss

There's nothing really unmissable in Ublaat-nor except for the country as a whole, especially during spring and summer. Flowers bloom everywhere, and the festivals and contests held by Viaskodas are a pleasure to attend, if you are welcome, that is. Also particularly interesting is the Summer Fair held by Lord Brogahn near his hall in Felmont, to celebrate the harvest as well as his friend Allisa's birthday. He has taken the habit of inviting lords from nearby lands and issuing dueling contests of various kinds, so it is always an exciting event.

Do Miss

Again, if you're not used at frigid temperatures and do not know how to escape a pack of voracious wolves, I wouldn't recommend you staying out in the snowy fields of Ublaat-nor during the winter. Better keep your doors shut and a fire always cracking inside the heath as the farmers do, and pray that the evil spirits of the winter do not come to knock at your door.

Icereach Domains

The Icereach domains are those nations located in the area dominated by the Icereach Range, which marks the westernmost border of Norwold. It is a rough and inhospitable region with heights reaching 18,000', especially in the northern area, where the pair of volcanoes called the Arch of Fire is located. For this reason all of the major dominions have been founded south of the great lake called Lake Alinor, where the weather is milder and the dangers are less abundant. It is to be noted however, that even the southern area is not without dangers, since to the west lies the inhospitable Kingdom of Denagoth and to the east tower the peaks of the Wyrksteeth.

ARCADIA (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, bordering Lake Gunaald. *NA*

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

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

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Dwarvish.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); gold nuggets or barter commonly used.

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

Government Type: Barony in name, no real government, independent but loosely allied with the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

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

Important Figures: Arcadius (Baron), Sandryth (Draconic Envoy), Tark Takkas (Clanlord).

Flora and Fauna: Arcadia consists mostly of high mountain, overlooking western Lake Gunaald. The cold freshwater lake is rich in fish, which constitute all the animal life that can be found in the area. A few evergreen trees grow in the small valley bordering the lake, soon replaced by small shrubs, then bare rocks on the towering mountainsides. Some rare chimeræ and wyverns make their lairs in caverns high in the mountains, while dragons from the Wyrksteeth to the east occasionally swoop by.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Arcadius.

Arcadia is a small peaceful dominion located on the western bank of the southernmost of the three major lakes that lie in the heart of the Icereach Range [many smaller lakes dot the region. Arcadius.]. It is commonly avoided by travelers because of its secluded position, but it does trade with the nearby dominions of Chevas and the Barony of the Lake, using the bigger lake (Lake Alinor) as a means of transport to reach Siegeria and Leeha, and from there, all the dominions of the Great Bay [safer than crossing the Wyrksteeth. Arcadius.].

The Land

The Barony of Arcadia lies, to most eyes, in the middle of nowhere. It is an isolated dominion in the tall Icereach mountains, though it also encompasses part of Lake Gunaald. The fact is I rule only over the Tower of Arcadia, which is built on top of the highest peak of the dominion, and I do not try to enforce any law over the rest of the land that is nominally mine; hence I don't really know where it starts and where it ends.

Most of the land is thus high mountains. This does not mean it is a poor land, however. Though there is almost no vegetation and virtually no animals, the soil is rich in valuable minerals, mostly gold. A small clan of dwarves runs profitable gold mines a few miles north of the Tower of Arcadia. The highest peaks are covered with everlasting snowcaps, and cold winds from the north blow most of the year.

The Tower of Arcadia is built on top of the highest peak, and is surrounded at all times by snow. Unless you are well equipped, I do not advise you go there by normal means; the best way to reach the tower is by air, or by magic. When the sky is clear, the tower can be seen from below, including by fishermen at work on the lake. Most of the time, though, clouds block the sight, as the peak stands above the cloud line.

A feature of note is Lake Gunaald, which is frozen during a good part of the year, typically from mid-fall to late spring or early summer. It is a freshwater lake, whose waters abound with delicious white fish called gunaald (the lake is named after the fish) that fetch high price on Leeha, Alpha and even Oceansend's markets. Several families live off the lake's bounties, fishing from small boats in the summer, and making holes through the frozen layer of ice the rest of the year. Most of those fishermen live in the sheltered valley stuck between the lake and the high mountains, because it is quite safe from the cold northern wind thanks to the mountain range.

One peculiarity of the barony that surprises many fellow nobles, especially King Eriall, is the fact that I do not collect taxes of any kind from the few inhabitants of Arcadia, nor do I enforce a single law. Truth is, the dwarves govern themselves, with their own regulations and justice, and it wouldn't be wise to meddle in their internal affairs. As for the fishermen, they are simple people who don't need any law to tell them how to live their lives. However, they both fear me and praise me for supposedly keeping any dragon attack on them at bay, and when they can afford it they donate fish supplies or, more rarely, offer their services. The dwarves also accuse me of being an agent of the dragons that only want to steal their gold, but they trade with me anyway.

The People

Arcadia is sparsely populated at best, due to the fact that it is such a remote place and that I never actively tried to attract new settlers. In fact, I never even conducted a census and population numbers I give are estimates only.

The majority of Arcadia's population is made up of dwarves, a single clan of them, the Takkras. This clan was established some 187 years ago, when young Tark, youngest son of a clan from the region around Oceansend, discovered how rich in gold the mountains west of Lake Gunaald were. He brought with him some members of his former clan and was designated as clanlord by his followers, and has ruled his clan ever since. The clan's main business is gold mining, of course, and all sorts of crafts related to the working of gold. The dwarves often buy tasty fish from the fishermen of the valley, for which they pay in raw gold nuggets. The dwarves are quite paranoid about dragons, whom in their minds are all after their gold. They often accuse me of being in league with them, which I sort

of am, not to mention that in their eyes wizards are not much better than dragons in the first place. Anyhow, since they have not suffered from any dragon raids since I settled in Arcadia, they grudgingly recognize that I may somehow be protecting them, and occasionally trade with me precious, beautifully crafted items that I use as vessels for magical experimentation in exchange for magical items and commodities that I bring back from Alpha or Oceansend or beyond.

The rest of the population are native fishermen of Antalian descent who have been living off the bounty of the nearby lake for an unknown number of generations. They sell 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 will keep on leaving them alone...

Recent History

Dwarves and native humans have been living in the area for quite some time, long before Arcadia was founded. Dwarves moved to those high mountains 187 years ago when they discovered gold veins, and will likely stay there as long as there is an ounce left to mine. The fishermen have been living by the lake for an unknown duration, as they don't keep any records. From their language I speculate that they have been living there in complete autarky since the earlier days of the ancient Antalians, before Loark's horde brought the dark age of most of their people. In their secluded valley, the scattered fishermen probably went undiscovered and lost contact with other tribes. According to the hin of Leeha, at one time they found 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 to baronial status in AC 1002, and the erection of Tower Arcadia took until AC 1004 because of its nearly inaccessible location. And yet I got help from the dwarves—for a hefty price, but that was well worth it. Since Arcadia is so isolated from the rest of Norwold, and since I do not levy an army, Arcadia has been unconcerned by the recent wars that have plagued the continent. With no taxes or troops coming from Arcadia, I am pretty much left to my own devices by King Ericall, which means that I am only loosely allied with Alpha.

The only exception to this concerns dragonkind. I am in permanent contact with the Kingdom of Dragons in the Wyrksteeth through Sandryth, a gold dragon. This is part of an agreement between the Council of Dragons and myself upon establishing my barony, which states they would agree to share some of the knowledge they have accumulated over the millennia with me—I hope to one day be allowed into their hidden city—in exchange for my help in ensuring the humans, and especially their lords, do not encroach upon the draconic lands or slay non-renegade dragons. Sandryth and I are diplomats of sorts between the two races.

On that matter, there is one event in recent history that I wish to clarify, concerning the dragons' assault on Heldammic warbirds above Oceansend. King Ericall did ask me to petition the council for such an action, but I was not surprised when Sandryth answered that the dragons would not get involved in human business and thereby violate an ancient treaty, unless the knights actually attacked them first. However, Ericall was not satisfied with that decision and tried to find some more open-minded dragons—as he didn't need a full commitment from the dragons in the first place, just a handful of them to keep the warbirds in check. Thus he contacted a young, active red that was upset by the conservatism of the council and decided to act, sure that the council elders would in time back the move.

Don't Miss

Two things: if you like good, freshly fished gunaald, try fishing with the natives, and if you like beautiful landscapes, take a look at Tower Arcadia perched high in the mountains during a clear day from either the valley below or from the lake.

Do Miss

The renegade dragons that occasionally venture here or make their lairs in the vicinity.

ARCH OF FIRE (Efreet Kingdom of the)

Location: Continent of Brum, northeastern reaches of the Icereach Range. *NW*

Area: Approx. 5,000 sq. mi. (12,950 sq. km.); about 2,500 sq. mi. (6,475 sq. km.) around each volcano.

Population: Believed to be 2,400 efreet, 1,000 fire elementals, and 400 sollux.

Languages: Unknown languages from elemental plane of fire.

Coinage: Unknown, if any at all.

Taxes: Unknown, if any at all.

Government Type: Efreet duchy; sollux resistance front.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: Feudelance (Brother of the Sun).

Flora and Fauna: Small plants and animals common in more southern regions than Norwold. Fire monsters (such as laba lizards, fyrsnaca, fire salamanders and elemental beings) abound here as well.

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

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

You can find the Arch of Fire approximately halfway between a large swamp along the clear White Bear River and the large, picturesque Icereach Range. For those not familiar with the wilderness regions of Norwold, it would be about 15 to 20 days travel west of the city of Leeha. You'll know you're on the right track soon enough as the arch of flames can easily be seen up to 5 days away during the darkness of night.

A large ribbon of flame leaps out of Northern Mount Cantrinus and lands a good four days' walk to the south in Southern Mount Cantrinus. The arch created must reach a height of 4 to 6 miles (7 to 10 km) at the very least. It seems that the two volcanoes form some sort of planar conduit, creating a loop to and from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Because of this, sages believe that the Arch of Fire will be a permanent feature of the region.

The Land

The land around the volcanoes is a wasteland of fire. This area is relatively flat considering how mountainous and jagged the rest of the Icereach Range is. The entire zone is crisscrossed with flowing streams of molten laba, 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 AD 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 concern what-so-ever about the life here on the Prime Plane, and one can never be too sure what type of reception to expect from them. Sometimes they'll burn visitors, sometimes they won't. Those that aren't destroyed are either conscripted and forced to fight the efreet, or thrown out of their territory.

A new culture has arrived on the scene since last year. A camp of about 400 sollux [a full description of a sollux is available in the *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*. Ed.] has been set up in the plains between the two volcanoes. These strange, red-skinned humanoids are very warlike and disciplined. They are obviously trying to eliminate the efreet on Northern Mount Cantrinus, and have engaged in numerous battles with them.

Unlike the other elemental creatures, the sollux are at least approachable by visitors. It seems that all the sollux here are members of a Brotherhood of the Sun, some sort of knightly order that has sworn to destroy all efreet found on Mystara. Their leader, Feudelance, invites everyone to join them on their holy mission. It seems this event is a first in the history of their people. Never have so many Sun Brothers united to face the efreet. Then again, they claim that never has there been this many efreet in any one place. Feudelance insists that this is merely the staging ground for the efreet and that they will try to invade all of Mystara from here. The Sun Brothers plan on stopping them well before then, however.

The sollux found here at the Arch of Fire are very militaristic and orderly. Still, they are also all Sun Brothers, therefore I have absolutely no idea whether their true communities behave in this matter, or whether this is just the way of life at their military camps. After all, one can't judge the Thyatians by the way their legionnaires behave in their various camps.

Recent History

From what I've managed to learn from Feudelance, it seems that the Arch of Fire has been the home to several thousand fire elementals until about 6 years ago. At that point in time, the efreet conquered the Northern Mount Cantrinus and created their stronghold. Blocked off from reinforcements from the Plane of Fire, the elemental population has slowly dwindled over the years (some fled back to their home plane, others were killed by the efreet). And so it would have continued until last year.

That is when the Brotherhood of the Sun learned of the efreet city. They have been trying to destroy it ever since. At first, a small group of three Sun Brothers arrived, but when they saw their

opposition, they made the historical call to amass an army of Sun Brothers. This army is still in the process of being built [apparently the Sun Brothers have been scattered throughout Mystara until this gathering. It will take some time for all of them to arrive or even receive the word of the forming of an army. Synthala.], but so far 400 sollux have responded.

Feudelance wishes to thank the writers and editors of the Mystaran Almanac, as it was through their description of the Arch of Fire that they learned of the presence of the efreet. Now the battle rages on, and Feudelance insists it will continue until every last efreet is destroyed.

The fire elementals, which have been saved by the arrival of the sollux, do not participate in the war. They merely watch the two groups fight it out. If thankful for their rescue, they have yet to show it.

Don't Miss

There is really no way to describe it beyond what was mentioned by Alasdhair MacCallum: "Well, the arch itself is one of the wonders of the world, a beautiful sight that is definitely not to be missed if one has the occasion to visit."

But as I've mentioned, this is not a journey for someone who does not have any wilderness skills. For those who do, even the trip here from Leeha will be filled with beautiful sights and scenery that is not to be missed by any nature lover.

Still, the Arch of Fire is best viewed from far. If you get too close, you will more than likely get caught up in the interplanar war that is transpiring. And unless you happen to be immune to fire, it is 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: Continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, on the south-eastern shores of Lake Alinor. **NW**

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

Population: 500.

Languages: Heldammic, Aberoignian.

Coinage: Adik (gp), glyph (sp), florin (cp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: None. The baron and the aristocrats own the land and they give it to serfs to work. Serfs must keep only the minimum required to survive, the rest is given to the ruler.

Government Type: Barony, independent but loosely allied to the Kingdom of Alpha, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Adik de Chevas (Baron), Gilbert de Fausseflammes (Aristocrat), Roger Dumas (Seneschal).

Flora and Fauna: Chevas consists mostly of cultivated plains and rolling hills bordering the sandy beaches of Lake Alinor. The cold freshwater lake is rich in fish, which constitute all the animal life that can be found in the area. A few evergreen trees grow on the hills and on the foothills of the Icereach, soon replaced by small shrubs then bare rocks on the towering mountains. Some wyberns and griffons make lair in caverns high in the mountains, while dragons to the east occasionally swoop by.

Further Reading: M2 Vengeance of Alphaks, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas.

La Baronie de Chevas [or the Barony of Chevas, if you go by Thyatian common. Adik.] is a small but proud dominion located on the southeastern shore of Lake Alinor, the biggest lake in the Icereach Range. It is not so important from the economic or military point of view, but it is a pleasant stop on the dangerous route that takes the traveler from northern Leeha to the southernmost dominion of Two Lakes Vale.

The Land

The Barony of Chevas is similar to Arcadia in many ways. It lies in an exposed and somewhat off-the-way position, in the middle of nowhere. West there are the Icereach Mountains, west the Wyrmsteeth, and both brim with dragons and intelligent monsters that prey on all the settlers who come to this region. Also, the weather is not especially comfortable, since Chevas lies in the so-called Valley of the Wind, a great valley that begins near Kameloth in the north and extends southwards up to the Barony of the Lake. This vast plain is always windswept during most 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, Chebas is the safest place one could find in the whole Valley of the Wind.

My dominion is divided into smaller fiefdoms we call *maisons* [an Aberoignian word to indicate a house or a group of people. *Adik.*]. These *maisons* are ruled by an aristocrat appointed by myself, and this way I assure the land is always exploited in the best way possible. In fact, each *maison* knows well the characteristics of its territory and each takes the appropriate decisions to exploit it fully.

The People

Even though not as heavily populated as the northern dominions, Chebas is a tiny little corner of wisdom and happiness, where everyone earns what is needed to survive without making any great effort. True, some people are richer and live better than others, but this is the right order of the world. After all, if there were not leaders to guide the populace, it would surely go into anarchy and fall in disgrace in a matter of years. For this reason, there are two classes in Chebas, 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 Chebas.

Aristocrats are cultivated and wise literati who came to the dominion from Nouvelle Aberoigne (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 Chebas is not so obsessed with magic as Glantri is. The commoners are both Haldannic natives of the region as well as Aberoignian servants and farmers who moved north with the lords when they came here in AC 1005.

Another stock of people can be found in Chebas 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 Ubla-at-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 Ubla-at-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 Criadna'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 really wanted to find evidence of his existence and the truth about his mysterious doom. However, much to my dismay, I found the best archeological sites to be already claimed, so I relegated myself to this untouched corner of the Icereach Range and

started researching. It was only after some months that it occurred to me I had to give King Ericall significant proof of my capacity as a baron if I wanted to ensure my permanence here. So I invited a few friends from Nouvelle Aberoigne and together with them I created the Weather Control Station, a hidden facility that allows us to control weather inside the dominion [quite a feat, although the relatively small dimensions of my barony helped a lot. This is also one of the reasons I am not interested in conquering other lands. Adik.].

Once this was accomplished, we began recruiting commoners and established the Code des Lois, the laws of Chebas. That was AC 1005, and the dominion has done quite well so far. During the Great War we didn't experience any significant threat, aside from the usual draconic assaults, which were however repelled without many losses [I really do not understand why dragons, with all their wisdom, still persevere in attacking my dominion, even though they know in advance they cannot win. Adik.]. The main reason why the population is so low is indeed because of 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 Chebas so small and underpopulated for so long. But we like it that way here.

Don't Miss

Be sure to come during the last week of autumn, when the winds blow fiercely and tornadoes start sweeping the valley. It is an incredible sight, so remain on the borders of the dominion and see huge whirlwinds and tornadoes coming closer than a few yards without actually affecting you at all. Few will ever manage to stare right in the center of the maelstrom's eye without taking any risks!

Do Miss

Do not venture too far from the borders, because the intelligent monsters have by now well understood the limits of the Chebasian aristocrats' scrying powers, and they keep away just the distance needed not to be spotted, but are ready to ambush those who venture too far in their territory.

LAKE (Barony of the)

Location: Continent of Brun, west of Oceansend, in the Icereach Mountains, between the northern Lake Alinor and the southern Lake Gunaald. *NW*

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

Population: 1,000.

Languages: Heldommic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: mirror (sp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 15% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony, member of the Norwold Confederacy.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, crafts (shipwright).

Important Figures: Winnefred of the Lake (Baroness).

Flora and Fauna: The Barony of the Lake encompasses a broad valley nestled between two lakes and some mountains. The cold freshwater lakes are rich in fish, which constitute all the animal life that can be found in the area. Monstrous wildlife comes from amphibious creatures or gigantic fish as well as from some winged predators that swoop down from the Icereach Mountains nearby.

Further Reading: *M2 Vengeance of Alphaks*.

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

MORY (Tyrannie de)

Location: Continent of Brum, west of Chitine and Landfall, near the Arch of Fire. *NW*

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

Population: 100 humans, 100 fire giants, 300 hobgoblins.

Languages: Aberoignian, Hobgoblin, Giant.

Coinage: Barter commonly used.

Taxes: None (everything belongs to Tyrant Coiger, who gives permission to his subjects to use his land as he sees fit, exacting permanent fealty and service in the army in exchange).

Government Type: Independent barony loosely allied with the Efrete Kingdom.

Industries: Raiding, mining.

Important Figures: Coiger de Mory (Baron).

Flora and Fauna: The barony occupies one of the mountains in the Icereach Range near the Arch of Fire, extending both above and below its surface (especially below, in a vast complex of caves and tunnels where almost all of the dominion's hobgoblins and giants live). Given the extreme temperatures and the unforgiving weather of the region, few trees grow in the barony and fewer plants are able to flourish at all outside, while lichens and fungi abound in the caves. Monstrous wildlife consists of rocs, marauding dragons, red worms, fire salamanders, lava lizards, slimes and jellies, and even from the occasional phoenix that ventures over the mountain and inside the grottos. Mountain lions, panthers and wildcats are also frequent encounters, as well as rival bands of independent hill and stone giants.

Further Reading: *M2 Vengeance of Alphaks*, previous almanacs.

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

TWO LAKES VALE (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northwest of Landfall, in the Icereach Mountains, near the border with Denagoth. *NW*

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

Population: 800.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), judge (cp); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Barony; independent but loosely allied to the Kingdom of Alpha.

Industries: Fishing, agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Maltus Fharo (Baron).

Flora and Fauna: The Barony of the Two Lakes Vale encompasses a small valley nestled between the Icereach and the Mengul Mountains, in the southern part of Norwold, near the Denagothian and Heldannic borders. Two lakes stand in the middle of the dominion, providing its inhabitants with plenty of fish. Monstrous wildlife comes from gigantic fish as well as from hippogriffs, rocs and manticores that live in the mountains surrounding the valley. Mountain lions, panthers and wildcats are also frequent encounters. A group of hydras is said to live in the little swamp near the western lake.

Further Reading: *CM2 Death's Ride*, previous almanacs.

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

Final Range Domains

The Final Range domains comprise all those nations which lie in the Final Range, the mountain chain that begins some 100 miles north of Landfall, touching the Wyrksteeth and running along Norwold's eastern coast ending just another 100 miles from the northernmost tip of the Wyrksteeth. The Final Range peaks reach 15,000 feet in height and are surrounded by more or less rocky hills. The settlements are obviously located in the foothills of the range for the most part, especially in the valleys in its northern tip, where 1,000' high hills are predominant, but an isolated dwarven stronghold has been built near the center of the chain, in the very heart of the mountains.

KILDORKAK (Dwarven Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, north of Oceansend. NW

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

Population: 2,500 dwarves.

Languages: Dwarvish (Kildorkak dialect).

Coinage: Gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 30% income tax collected yearly. 20% tithe to the Heldannic Knights collected every four months.

Government Type: Barony (formally allied with the Heldannic Territories, maintains a clanmaster, although his actions are overseen by an Heldannic Governor).

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

Important Figures: Gard Rocktooth (Clanmaster), Niddrow (Forge Keeper), Hölger Scholz (Heldannic Overseer).

Flora and Fauna: The mountains north of Oceansend are home to many mountain felines, including intelligent ones such as rakasta. Other wildlife includes bears, moose and ibexes, the latter especially found at higher heights. Yeti, sasquatches and snow apes can also be found, as well as cave dwellers such as ropers, hulkers and giant spiders. Other monstrous beings that can be found in this region include the occasional white dragon, some mountain giants, and dragonnes. Plants are abundant in the valleys and foothills of the Icereach, but the soil becomes barren beyond 7,200' of altitude, with only scrubs and thorn bushes resisting the chilly winds and the colder atmosphere.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

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

MOONLAND (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, southeast of Alpha, on eastern shores of Norwold. *NW*

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

Population: 4,300.

Languages: Heldannic, Alphatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); barter common.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Fishing, hunting, agriculture.

Important Figures: Sandralane (Baroness and Matriarch).

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: *C&M* Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Moonland is indeed a strange place in Norwold, certainly one that has undergone a drastic change in the past. Today it is a strange, funny place to visit once in a while, especially if you love anarchy and chaos in its most positive form. Its customs are a bit weird in comparison to the more civilized countries, but it is nevertheless a haven for all those who seek a safe enough hideout from the outer world.

The Land

Moonland is located just south of Nordalheim, and it borders on both the elven barony to the north as well as Vvolstograd in the west. Being nestled between these two dominions, it shows the common traits of all the region, that's to say huge evergreen trees, from sequoias to firs to oaks, that tower magnificently to the sky both in the southeastern valleys and on the low hills to the west and north. The woods are teeming with plant and animal life, and herds of deer and moose roam freely in these primeval woods, hunted by both wild predators and by humans and humanoids alike. Flocks of sparrows, woodpeckers and skylarks also make their nests in the highest limbs of the tree trunks. Fresh streams of sparkling water flow through the forest and small ponds dot the countryside especially in the eastern areas.

One could say that Moonland is a natural haven for animals, and in fact the major industry for the country is hunting [and also fishing along the beaches of the New Alphatian Sea or in the ponds inland. Arcadius.]. There are few farms, and these are mostly found along the coast, and the leaders

of Moonland's communities seem to have no intention of boosting agriculture, even though the soil could give fruitful harvests.

The inhabitants of this barony live mostly scattered throughout the woods, and few are the significant settlements to be counted as villages [again, mostly found along the coast. Arcadius.]. The only place that could be labeled "town" is indeed its capital, Lunaria, which can be found in the heart of the dominion. The settlement is surrounded by a wooden palisade and all its houses are basically wooden huts that range from one story shops to three-story inns and taverns. There are in fact many taverns in Moonland, even located in isolated places inside the woods, and each one is a safe heaven from the dangers of the wild woods. Lady Sandralane's own house is the Temple of the Moon, located in Lunaria's main square. The building is a mishmash of different architectural styles of the Old World, even though the original rounded plan can still be made out by the keen observer. The temple's appearance reflects the particular tenets of this faith, which has been gladly embraced by the great majority of Moonland's inhabitants.

The People

Moonland's people can be mostly defined as "peaceful chaotic anarchists," or simply as lunatics in some cases. They all live to the day, without paying too much attention to daily routine and deadlines. Most of the people are hunters and woodcutters, even though Moonland's logging industry doesn't produce as much wood as it could. The reason is that Lady Sandralane has issued a law that regulates the amount of wood that can be cut yearly, and this has been done to avoid deforestation and the consequent loss of woodland game [as is happening in nearby Stamtral. Arcadius.]. Even though Moonlanders do not like laws, they seem to understand the problem and have so far kept in line with the rules. In fact, some rumors even have trespassers promptly caught and executed by other inhabitants, either by skinning or by abandoning them to the wood's dangers.

Moonland has no real set of laws, except the above-mentioned rule about woodcutting, the freedom of faith and the strange law called Majority Rules, which everyone follows. Basically, all inhabitants follow common sense when interacting with one another, but if some disagreements arise, then the people are called to judge over the matter. The two parties may summon up to five people each (even foreigners), and must explain to them the problem, giving each their version of the issue. Then the summoned people give their vote to one of the two, and the party that gets the majority of the votes wins the issue. For this reason, trials in Moonland usually last no more than one day, and there are no formal judges to enforce the laws.

A police force does exist, however, more for protecting the country from outside dangers than for inner security. The Moonlanders are also employed as rangers, patrolling the woods to catch any trespassers who hunt illegally or cut down trees without authorization. They can kill any trespassers on the spot, and can intervene in any brawl or feud only if one of the parties involved calls in for help. This could seem normal to the civilized people, but the fact is calling for help is a sign of weakness in Moonland: this means the individual is not able to take care of himself, and will probably be the target of other assaults (both verbal and physical) in the future.

A few words must also be spent on the unique religion of Moonland, the Church of Matera. This faith worships the moon in all its forms and social applications: the moon as patroness of fertility, love and romance, the moon as keeper of secrets, the moon as cause of change, madness and freedom [three things considered very close to one another by the followers of Matera, each one respected and sought.

Adik.], the moon as symbol of stealth and cunning, the moon as lady of sky and sea and finally the moon as bringer of wealth and good health. All these aspects of the moon can be embodied by different Immortals, but the Church of Matera does not really pay homage to each different deity. Rather it worships Matera, the moon, as a whole, in all its different facets and shapes, because the whole cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. The great majority of Moonlanders respect and follow this anarchic faith, and it is basically religion that keeps them united as their common point of aggregation.

Recent History

Lady Sandralane came to Norwold from Glantri in AY 2001 [AC 1001. Ed.] to found her own dominion. She was fed up with Glantri's oppressive rules against clerics and priests, and since she was raised by her parents in the faith of Razud in the principality of Blackhill, she could not tolerate that situation anymore. When her parents died of natural causes in AY 2000 [AC 1000. Ed.], she made her decision and came to this side of Norwold, founding her dominion after swearing loyalty to Ericall.

At first Moonland was inhabited by many Alphas and a few wilder Haldannians, 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 Alphas to the Kingdom of Alpha in AC 1005, leaving the barony nearly deserted and prey to bandits and tribes of humanoids coming from the north and west.

In AC 1007 anarchy fell over Moonland when Thyatians landed south of it and marched northwards to conquer this side of Norwold. The Thyatians brought with them a terrible plague in the Tranquil Coast region and Lady Sandralane tried to counter both the invasion and the plague, ending up sick herself and powerless against the Thyatian legions. In a feverish night, she received an omen from the sky, and the legend tells that the silvery moonbeams cured her and transported her to a secret cave inside the woods. There she met with the leader of the lycanthropes living in Moonland and she forged an alliance with him, converting to the faith of Matera [some rumors explain her recovery and conversion with the fact that she was infected by this werewolf and became a lycanthrope herself. Adik.]. From that moment on, the Thyatian legions began to lose ground in front of the chaotic hit and run tactics of the Moonlanders and their lycanthropic allies, and were later forced to retire both because of the effective resistance of the locals, and the disease. The Moonlanders on the other hand, did not suffer from the disease anymore, and this was later attributed to the holy moonbeams that bathed them during the night [the real cause is yet unknown to us sages. Adik.].

In AC 1010 Moonland was a different country, with most of the laws abolished and a great deal of independence and authority to all the citizens. Even the taxes were decreased and this prompted many Haldannians living in the nearby lands to come to Moonland looking for a better life [this is especially true for those living in Stamtral and the free territories south of Moonland, where the Thyatians had destroyed nearly everything. Arcadius.]. After regaining freedom and chasing out the Thyatians, Sandralane also declared Moonland's independence from the Kingdom of Alpha and refused to send any salt tax to Ericall anymore [after all, he did not help her when the Thyatians invaded her country. Arcadius.]. Now Moonland is dubbed the "reign of anarchy," rivaling with the outlandish Chaosarchy

of Redhorn on this, and Ericall has no intention of reclaiming it for now. However, its customs seem to attract many people, both free-willed individuals and wanted criminals, who still come to this little corner of the world.

Don't Miss

Moonland's woods are very well tended and still possess much of the ancient magic that fills these places all around the world. A few druids live here and it is always a pleasure to stay and exchange information with these wise men, who will teach you about the ways of the region in order to be prepared for the unexpected.

Also, the capital of Lunaria is a weird enough place to visit, with all its different architectural styles and the amazing Temple of the Moon towering in its center. Be also sure to pay a visit to the 100 inns of Moonland, since each one is completely different from the all others. They are one of the greatest attractions for both tourists and Moonlanders, and the innkeepers are always friendly to the customers. Besides, if you are traveling through the woods, an inn is the best place to be after the sun sets and moonlight madness strikes.

Do Miss

If you are brave adventurers and love flirting with death and strange encounters, then Moonland's woods after sunset are the place you'd love to visit. If however you are just a normal person, who holds his life dear and wants to see his elder years, then avoid the woods and remain on the trail, since beasts do not usually attack those who do not venture outside the known trails. Another place to avoid is the northern border, where humanoid tribes usually make raids on isolated cottages and unwary travelers [and they do not seem to care if you walk on a trail or not, unfortunately. Adik.].

NORDALFHEIM (Elven Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, southeast of Alpha, facing the New Alphatian Sea. **NW**

Area: 3,486 sq. mi. (9,030 sq. km.).

Population: 4,700, roughly 77% elves, 18% humans and 4% other demihumans (in Laran only), 1% intelligent woodland creatures.

Languages: Elvish (Callarii, Shiye, Alfheim and Vyalia dialects), Thyatian, Alphatian, Fairy Tongue.

Coinage: Golden leaf (gp), silver acorn (sp); barter common.

Taxes: Gifts of the trees (special: see under Land).

Government Type: Barony (independent elven dominion: the baron is advised by the clanmasters).

Industries: Hunting, Crafts (woodworking, leatherworking, goldcraft).

Important Figures: Elarianthas Blackblade (King), Thyandros (Blackblade Clanmaster), Taragin Oakbranch (Lightseeker Clanmaster), Renshiye (Shalidye Clanmaster), Sythandria (Mythuinn Clannmistress), Shelingar (Lightseeker Clanholder).

Flora and Fauna: The elven Kingdom of Nordalfheim (formerly known as the Barony of Ironwood) consists mostly of a large evergreen ancient forest and also comprises a narrow area of plains near the coast of the New 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, elk, moose, wild boars and wolves. The land is a haven for sylvan races and has been totally purged of the humanoid tribes that once lived here (though they continue to live in the nearby mountains and hills in the north). A clan of treants and centaurs also live here in a special protected zone of the forest, as well as some unicorns, fairy folk, hsiao and metamorphs. Creatures such as basilisks, gorgons, chimerae, decapuses and monstrous plants have been spotted throughout the dominion.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

After the shaking political events happened in AD 2016 [AC 1016. Ed.] in this part of Norwold, I felt obliged to travel again to Ironwood [now called the Kingdom of Nordalfheim. Synthala.] to witness firsthand the changes that occurred and report them to you, dear readers. Although none of the geographical features of the land changed, many things now run differently on the political and religious field, so it is my duty to inform all of you that a new great elven nation is raising in Norwold: Nordalfheim. The northern home of the elves is constituted of the former Baronies of the Elms, White Oak, and Ironwood [here referred to as Nordalfheim properly. Synthala.]. Elarianthas Blackblade is the king, Zoltan the high priest, and Quillan the ambassador to the Norwold Confederacy.

The Land

The Kingdom of Nordalfheim is a political alliance of various different dominions: the Barony of the Elms and the Barony of the White Oak in the north, and the Barony of Ironwood in the south. The

Barony of Ironwood itself is the political center of this new nation and has thus been renamed Kingdom of Nordaltheim, which is what I am about to describe in this report. The kingdom lies some 280 miles (440 km.) to the southeast of Alpha, nestled under the northernmost tip of the Final Range. The dominion itself is small in comparison to the northern foresthomes, but it's a haven for the elves living in southern Norwold. Only about one sixth of the entire area is not covered by forest: in this zone lies a city that closely resembles the human towns [the king admitted that he copied the town plans of his birthplace, Rifllian, in the Kingdom of Karamaikos. Synthala.]. This is the city of Laran, where the king is building a great port that will help boost the economy of the nation, and trade with other countries. However, this is not the capital of the kingdom, which in fact is named Persimmon and is located deep inside the forest, built in the typical elven style.

Laran is the only place of the entire barony where non-elves are free to roam and reside. The buildings have been built by human engineers and suit the human way of life. Also, King Blackblade has provided the city with a complicated system of running water of gnomish design that makes everyone happy and, above all, clean.

The forest that covers the land almost entirely is made of huge evergreen trees, from sequoias to firs that tower magnificently to the sky like ancient colossi. The woods are teeming with natural and animal life, and the elves take great care in protecting the natural heaven their lord is trying to create here. Herds of deer and moose roam freely in the Forest of Persimmon, and flocks of sparrows, woodpeckers and skylarks make their nest in the highest limbs of the tree trunks. You can also find fresh streams of sparkling water flowing through the forest and gatherers and hunters that move around so silently that it's difficult to discern them from the common sounds of the woods.

However, only fellow elvenkind are allowed this breathtaking experience. It is indeed forbidden to any non-elf to venture into the forest, a law Lord Blackblade passed in AY 2005 [AC 1005. Ed.] for the sole dominion of Ironwood, but that is now upheld in all of Nordaltheim, making it very similar to the foresthomes. This step has been taken to prevent the destruction of the ecosystem the Nordaltheim elves are slowly and patiently trying to build and protect, and all the elves living here support and enforce it.

One last feature of the land worth mentioning is its economy. Each year the elves give their lord the "gifts of the forest." Basically, the baron receives a share of the products the elves gather and hunt in the woods, plus some of the byproducts of hunting, craftworks and a few mineral resources that some elves extract from the soil or the rivers using the appropriate tools built by the gnomes and him 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 haven). Laran is also the only place where coins are minted and have a value inside the kingdom: in all the other parts barter is the rule [although the elves are known to barter not only products of the woods but also finely crafted items and jewels. Synthala.].

The People

The majority of the population of Nordaltheim [although the locals still call it Ironwood. Synthala.] is elven, with the few representatives of the human and other demihuman races living together in the town of Laran. The elves of Nordaltheim, however, do not belong to one single stock or

clan: there are Callarii elves from Karamaikos (about thirty percent of the elven population), who came here with Lord Blackblade when he founded the dominion about ten years ago. Then there are the Shiye, who already lived here when the elf-mage arrived (fifteen percent of the elves) and who have successfully integrated with the other elves. And finally there is a large chunk of newly arrived Altheimers (forty-five percent) and some representatives of the Vyalia of Thyatis (ten percent), who are beginning to integrate with their brethren. The elves are just like any other members of their race found in the Old World, even though the influx of the Shiye culture has made them a bit 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 modern Altheimers [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 Nordalheim is to recreate the elven land of the myths, Evergrun, where all the elves lived in peace with one another and with their forest brethren, the animals and the wood spirits.

Lord Blackblade is an ambitious elf, almost an idealist, but so far he has been able to achieve many of his goals. However, his ultimate goal, what his people now call the Great Project, is far more difficult and demanding than founding a barony and creating a natural park. Yet he and his followers seem resolute and very confident in the possibilities, and are now very close to reaching the greatest achievement for their race: to unify all the elves of Norwold under the same banner, in order to create the first elven empire in the world. Now that Zoltan of White Oak and Quillan of the Elms have joined Blackblade in his dream, the Great Project is nearing its completion, although considering how the northern Shiye are fond of their secrecy and independence [which was also what prompted them to leave Alphatia and settle in Norwold. Synthala.], it may still take a long while before a whole empire of elves is created in Norwold. But who knows: considering Lord Blackblade has a whole elven lifetime to accomplish it, maybe his dream will come true in the distant future.

Lord Blackblade recently introduced to the dominion a slightly modified religious belief that helped integrate the various clans and strengthen their ties instead of creating rivalries. Being a well educated and experienced elf, he created a veritable elven church named the Faith of the Ancestors, where he included all the Immortals worshipped by his people without choosing anyone as head of the pantheon. The common belief that unifies all the believers is that these deities are inextricably linked to the elven race, that they have all worked to protect it and make it great, that they all gave the elves the gifts of the forest and that for this reason they must all be revered to the same extent for the greater glory of the elven race. This way he is trying to prevent the religious disputes that might arise among the various priests, and give the elves the possibility of revering their own patron without angering the other believers or their Immortals. The pantheon of the Faith of the Ancestors so far comprises Isundal, Mealiden, Ordana, Eiryndul and Calitha Starbrow. The elf-mage is convinced that this is the first step to uniting all elves, but it will take him a long time to make this "universal elven faith" popular among all the elves of Norwold. Yet Zoltan's decision to join Lord Blackblade and become the high priest of the faith has now increased a hundredfold the importance and the popularity of this religion among the Norwold elves, who are now being promised by both Zoltan and Elarianthas Blackblade a great future in the name of freedom and supremacy.

Recent History

The dominion is fairly new since the Barony of Ironwood was founded in AY 2003, [AC 1003. Ed.], yet it is already remarkably stable for a frontier land and enjoys friendly relationships with neighboring states. The founder of the barony, Lord Elarionthas Blackblade, is the clanholder of the Blackblade clan to which all of the land belongs. He is the leader of the country in front of King Ericall, to whom he swore fealty, but since we are talking about an elven dominion, he must also answer to the clanmaster of the Blackblades [his father Thyandros. Synthala.] and to the other three sages who represent the major clans of the barony: Taragin of Clan Lightseeker [newly arrived Altheimers. Synthala.], Renshiye of clan Shalidye (Shiye) and Sythandria of clan Mythuinn (Yyalia). 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 Karamaikos. In the ensuing years he remained loyal to Ericall, but was seldom involved in the power plays that erupted among the other barons. Rather he was content with his small isolated dominion and worked steadily to make it a haven for his race.

Persimmon was built at the end of year AY 2003 [AC 1003. Ed.] and the construction of Laran followed in AY 2004 [AC 1004. Ed.]. In AY 2005 [AC 1005. Ed.] Lord Blackblade passed the famous Protection Act: only the elves and the sylban creatures were allowed to roam freely in the forest, whereas the other races were confined to Laran and the coastal territories. During all those years he had worked to integrate the Shiye and Callarii cultures, but it was only at the end of year AY 2006 [AC 1006. Ed.] that the Shiye that lived in his territory finally swore open allegiance to him and acknowledged themselves to be part of his clan, hailing him as their new leader. With their help he began contacting all the other Shiye communities of Norwold and established friendly relationships with all the druids living on the continent. The foundation of the Faith of the Ancestors is the last step in his path to unification and dates back to AY 2012 [AC 1012. Ed.].

It was only after the fall of Altheim that he also began to work on the Project Evergrun: turning his dominion into a center of elven lore and magical research and creating a natural park where samples of all the vegetation types and animal species of the continent could live and be protected. This turned out to be a nice move from the political and economic point of view too, since some other minor Shiye clans living south of the Great Bay supported him and sent representatives to help and take part in this great project.

Lord Blackblade also achieved two great goals during the Great War that ravaged the continent. First of all, he was able to draw a small number of members of the Fairy Court to his dominion, creating a protected territory where they could live in peace. Later, via teleport spells he also transported a small clan of treants to this same magical place [called the Reserve. Synthala], saving them from another baron who wanted to exterminate them to annex their forest to his dominion. The Reserve is now one of the most protected and inaccessible places in Norwold, rumored to host many more inhabitants than one could presume from its rather small size (an 8 mile diameter area). However, Lord Blackblade is not really “in control” of this part of the forest: the fey folk probably consider him as a friend, maybe a hero, but they’ll never answer his commands. They have their own rules and rulers, as we all know from the old fairy tales.

After the end of the Great War, Lord Blackblade contacted Yyalians and Altheimers to explain to them his project, and many moved to Norwold to put at his disposal their invaluable knowledge about magic, nature and history. After that, he declared his nation independent from King Ericall’s kingdom but he didn’t cut the diplomatic ties with Alpha, knowing he needs a powerful human ally in Norwold to

found a demihuman nation. He is currently a loose ally of Eriall [a treaty of mutual friendship exists between the two countries. Synthala.], even though he is not obliged to send troops or money in case of need.

Around AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.] some shadow elves came to Norwold to ask for the elves' help. Unfortunately there were already some Altheimers living in Ironwood by that time (minor clans) and tensions erupted. A few native elves were found murdered and after a brief inspection a shadow elf was discovered while trying to penetrate the Tree of Magic to obtain magical knowledge. The shadow elves were exiled and ordered never to return. Contacts have not been re-established and the current relationship is tense. As soon as Zoltan heard about this fact, he came to Ironwood for the first and only time and gained an audience with the baron: when the two came out of the meeting room, they were both smiling and joking like old time friends, as the guards told me.

In Swiftmont of AY 2016 [AC 1016. Ed.], while Norwold underwent the last stages of the Norwold Wars, Lord Blackblade was surprised by Lord Zoltan the White, who accepted his proposal of uniting their dominions to form a new great elven empire. However, Zoltan made clear he wanted to become the new High Priest of the Faith of the Ancestors, and Blackblade conceded to the albino's request. Zoltan and Elarianthas Blackblade proceeded then to announce to the Shipe elves of all of the foresthomes as well as to the elves living in Ironwood that a new nation had been formed, the Kingdom of Nordaltheim [which in the Shipe dialect means home of the northern elves. Synthala.], to which all elves of Mystara can come and live under the protection of the Immortals of the Nordaltheim Pantheon [the new name Zoltan gave to the Faith of the Ancestors. Synthala.]. Zoltan crowned Lord Blackblade the new King of Nordaltheim, recognizing his political authority, while King Blackblade in turn recognized Zoltan as the High Priest of the Nordaltheim Pantheon. Their nation was later joined by the Barony of the Elms, with Lord Quillan Elm-Grower chosen by the two elves as ambassador to the human lands. The news of the merger and the new religion were well received by the elves of Ironwood and the Elms, though the feelings were more mixed in the White Oak, while the Free Foresthomes elves did not recognize the new kingdom nor the new religion.

More Altheimers, mostly Grunalks that had left Wendar, joined their brethren in Nordaltheim in AC 1017.

Don't Miss

There are at least two places to see if you're allowed to travel through Nordaltheim: 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 Altheim clan strongholds when he built it, with narrow catwalks and roped bridges swinging at an altitude of more than 80 meters, deeply concealed by lower tree branches always covered with thick foliage. The living quarters themselves have been carved out the tree trunks in most cases, while other structures have been built by the elves out of the trees (lookout places, fortified gates and laboratories being the most common). The stronghold is always teeming with life, and you can see elves walking everywhere and gliding down the higher quarters using vines almost constantly. In fact this is not only the capital of the nation but also the center for all the magical studies sponsored by the baron, and it boasts two of the main features of this land. The first one, which rises proudly at the center of the stronghold, is the fabled Tree of Life

of the clan, a daughter oak tree of the Callarii clan, well tended and constantly guarded by its treekeeper and his assistants.

The second impressive feature of Persimmon is the repository of all the magical secrets of the kingdom: the Tree of Magic, an ancient sequoia not very tall (about 70-80 meters high) but incredibly broad (diameter of 60 meters). Many elves say that actually Lord Blackblade has caused it to become that large with powerful magics, and having witnessed His Lordship at work I may even believe it. The elves told me that the Tree of Magic is divided into ten different levels, nine for each level of power of the spells researched, and another subterranean one for the research and experimentation of all kinds of elemental and nature-related magic. Some of the elves I met in Persimmon have even told me that many powerful human mages visit the tree from time to time, all of them trusted and invited by Lord Blackblade, and that visitors from other planes sometimes pop up in the laboratories attracted by the energy released inside them. Another rumor has it that once a year the Tree of Magic is visited by none other than the spirits of the elven Immortals, who roam about it and talk with the higher elf-mages about the secrets of the universe and the lost lore of the elven race.

But the wonders of this small barony don't end here. If you're lucky or powerful enough you could also be allowed to enter the Reserve, that secluded patch of forest where the fairy folk and the sylvan races dwell unmolested. Only the animals, the druids and the clan leaders of the barony are allowed to enter it because of a pact between those beings and Lord Blackblade. The Reserve is small but many beings are said to live there, as if it existed in another larger dimension. Also, for unknown reasons, it seems that if you're not invited by those living in there, you won't be able to access it in any way: once you walk inside it you'll simply find yourself exiting at the other side of the area. Whatever it is, the Reserve surely contains many marvels to those who are allowed to visit it. However, if you are thinking of trying to visit it during the Day of Dread, know that it's useless, for during that day that part of the forest simply doesn't exist. As far as I know, it vanishes the night before, leaving a big empty valley in the middle of the forest, reappearing again the following dawn!

Do Miss

Well, if you're a dwarf or a shadow elf it's better not to enter this land altogether. And this applies to all the troublemakers of any other race, of course. But there's one place in the whole dominion I would advise you not to go too near, and this is the Dragon's Spur. It lies at the western border of the dominion and is not exactly part of it, but being very near to the border (one mile) it is a constant threat. The Dragon's Spur is a jagged mountain on the foothills of the Final Range. It is home to a small number of orcs who serve a local clan of mountain giants, who in turn once followed an ancient black dragon by the name of S'hastarl. No elf has ever ventured there and the few adventurers who tried never showed up again on this part of the mountain. Lord Blackblade himself once tried to eradicate this menace by finding out the dragon's lair and killing him, but he was never able to locate it. S'hastarl has not been spotted for a hundred years and the humanoids have not ventured inside Ironwood so far, but the lords of the western dominions [Stamtral, Vvolstagrada and Moonland. Synthala.] have had problems with them in the last year. Some elven sages in fact speculate that the dragon might be awakening from a decades long slumber and will soon be eager to reassert his dominance over the region.

STAMTRAL (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, about 250 miles southeast of Alpha, near the northern end of the Final Range. *NW*

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

Population: 2,900.

Languages: Heldammic, Traladaran.

Coinage: Coins from various realms accepted (most in circulation are Alphatian); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 30% income tax collected yearly, plus *corvée* labor.

Government Type: Independent duchy.

Industries: Agriculture, mining, hunting.

Important Figures: Stano (Duke).

Flora and Fauna: The valley of Stamtral is rich with woods of various types, with oak, sequoia, fir, and spruce being most common. Freshwater ponds and streams throughout the region are home to fish of several types, including trout and salmon. Much of the valley is agricultural land [either natural or cleared forest. *Adik.*], with potatoes, grains, and legumes as the primary crops. Some grazing animals, such as sheep or cattle, are also present, but these are not abundant due to predators. Wolves, wild boars, bears, panthers, and foxes are all common to the forested regions and northern hills. Some herd animals, such as deer, moose, and elk, also inhabit the region. More dangerous denizens include werewolves, displacer beasts, and yowlers. Humanoid tribes also roam the hills, with orcs, goblins, bugbears and trolls all making their presence known.

Further Reading: *CMA Earthshaker!*, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Stamtral is a small, unimportant domain nestled in the foothills of the Final Range. Its peasants are poorer than most and they generally struggle to survive in this harsh region.

The Land

The Duchy of Stamtral makes up roughly one half of the New Traladara Valley [called the Gremlish Valley by the indigenous people of this region. *Adik.*], so named by Duke Nebik of Vvolstagrada when his dominion was founded in AC 1001. The valley is an upland region, which rises steadily to the foothills of the Final Range, known locally as the North Hills. Numerous streams flow down from the hills, eventually flowing into the River Stryna or the Moonbeam River [note that the Stryna is itself a tributary of the Moonbeam. *Adik.*]. Together, the two rivers serve as a border with Vvolstagrada to the east. The Moonbeam continues on through Vvolstagrada and Moonland to the sea. Small ponds and lakes also dot the landscape, many of which are quite picturesque. The valley is divided between agricultural land and virgin forest. Some areas still bear scars from the Thyatian occupation of this domain during the Great War.

The main settlement in Stamtral is the keep of Stanograd, which has been rebuilt and improved upon since its destruction at the hands of the Thyatian invaders. The outer walls enclose several shops, smithies, and supply houses, which essentially comprise a small village. The remainder of Stamtral's peasantry live in small hamlets, mining camps, or isolated farms scattered throughout the dominion.

The People

The peasants and serfs of Stamtral are mostly simple folk of Traladaran background, along with a few of Heldannic descent. They earn their living [or simply work to stay living. Arcadius.] by farming the difficult Norwold soil, hunting game in the dangerous forests, or digging iron from the mines in the North Hills. Recently, silver was also found in the hills, causing an influx of speculators and prospectors hoping to strike it rich. Mostly, these are common folk from nearby Vvolstograd, but some have arrived from more distant parts of Norwold. Duke Stano's military has been keeping a close watch on all such activity. Stamtral has a strong military [for such a small dominion. Adik.] with a large standing army. The army of Stamtral maintains a more than adequate number in defense of Stanograd, while numerous others are busy patrolling the duchy looking for trouble [and frequently making it. Arcadius.]. Those who are not actively patrolling are usually busy with some sort of military drill or another. The Stamtralians' memory of the Thyatian invasion is still vivid, and they are loath to let down their guard. Their focus on military matters is perhaps, in some ways, an atonement for their past failures in this area [or perhaps it is simply necessary, as there are hostile human and non-human tribes in the immediate vicinity. Adik.].

The Stamtralians keep customs similar to those of native Traladarans, with a focus on palm reading, the reading of tea leaves, and other foolish pastimes long since abandoned by educated people [obviously, Adik does not appreciate the value of tradition! Arcadius.]. Mostly, the folk of Stamtral are illiterate and superstitious, if not hardworking. The typical home is a small cottage of wattle-and-daub, or a log cabin, for the more well-off peasants. The faith in the traditional Traladaran Immortals is not strong here. The people mainly believe in their own efforts and abilities, and of course, luck. There is no strong central theocracy in Stamtral [although Duke Stano did hire on a new chaplain in the past year. Arcadius.].

Another group of people also claim this valley as their territory. These are the Gremlish barbarians, a tribe, or assortment of tribes, of wandering humans who inhabit the foothills of the Final Range. These native Norwolders are of Heldannic [or Antalian. Adik.] stock, with a somewhat primitive culture [although they do forge steel weapons. Adik.] who make do by hunting and foraging. Their nomadic wanderings occasionally bring them within the borders of Stamtral or Vvolstograd, and this has resulted in numerous clashes, although the Gremlish have been allowed to pass through freely, on occasion. Some Gremlish tribesmen have taken to the civilized life [if you can call life here civilized. Adik.] and settled within the duchy. A few men of Stamtral have even taken fair-haired Gremlish women as wives [usually in a trade for some useless trinkets. Adik.]. On other occasions, Stamtral has hired the barbarians as mercenaries, either to combat war parties of humanoids or to raid neighboring Vvolstograd [which Duke Stano vigorously denies, of course. Adik.].

Recent History

The lands now known as the Duchy of Stamtral were originally part of the territory claimed by Nebik of Vvolstograd. Stano was a loyal lieutenant of Nebik when he received the title of count from King Eriall in AC 1001. Stano led many successful defenses against the humanoids and local

barbarians that were driven into the hills. The dominion borders were expanded, and forest was cleared for farming. Stano served as the overseer and military commandant of the county's western borderlands. By AC 1005, he was awarded the title of baron, which was endorsed by King Ericall. Then, during the Great War, in AC 1007, a Thyatian expeditionary force occupied and overran this region of Norwold. Count Nebik surrendered Vvolstograd to the Thyatians, but Baron Stano refused to submit. He harried and harassed the invaders, fighting a guerrilla war that confounded the Thyatian commander. Eventually, the resistance was quelled as the Thyatians burned the countryside and terrorized the populace into submission. Refugees from Stamtral fled into Vvolstograd and Moonland [or even into the North Hills. Arcadius.]. Stano's keep was besieged, but he continued to hold them off with great stubbornness. Stano's resistance was aided by the humanoid and barbarian hordes to the north, who turned their aggressions on the occupying army. Eventually, the inevitable came, and Stano's keep fell to the Thyatians in a bloody battle. Stano himself was captured and slated for execution. However, during the transfer of prisoners back to Vvolstograd, the Thyatians were ambushed by a horde of barbarians, and Baron Stano escaped in the ensuing confusion. As it turned out, the unfortunate [some say hung over from victory celebrations. Adik.] Thyatian field commander was the one executed. The Thyatians finally left Norwold once the Great War ended in AC 1010.

Shortly thereafter, Stano returned to the scorched land of Stamtral, and accompanied by a formidable contingent of mercenaries and other loyal followers, declared himself Duke of Stamtral. Duke Nebik was still reeling from the Thyatian occupation, himself, and could not contest this claim on his lands. Stamtral struggled to rebuild over the next several years, but Stano's keep, dubbed Stanograd, has been impressively restored and expanded upon. Tensions have continued between Stamtral and its parent dominion, with border raids and minor skirmishes being fairly common. However, neither side has been willing to launch an all-out war against the other, so the two duchies coexist in an uneasy peace. Stamtral opted not to join the Norwold Confederacy, seeing no real benefit in such an alliance.

Don't Miss

The call to arms of the army of Stamtral is certainly worth taking a look at if you happen to be in Stanograd at the time. The call is an impressive display of pomp and military prowess, involving the entire army of Stamtral attired in their formal uniforms. Even the peasant reserves take part in this annual event, held each summer. Various drills and other precision maneuvers are performed to the accompaniment of rousing music. Traditionally, lists and other entertainments follow the call to arms, which is widely attended by the peasants of the land.

Do Miss

The North Hills are a rugged and foreboding borderland inhabited by bloodthirsty humanoids and warlike barbarians. The orc and goblin tribes there may hunt you down just for sport [or even worse, for food! Adik.], and hill trolls may tear you apart on sight. The Gremlish barbarians are not much more accommodating to travelers. We recommend that you avoid this part of the duchy.

VYOLSTAGRAD (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, about 250 miles southeast of Alpha, near the northern end of the Final Range. **NW**

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

Population: 3,400.

Languages: Heldammic, Traladaran.

Coinage: Coins from various realms accepted (most in circulation are Alphatian); gems or barter commonly used.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected yearly, plus 10% tithe to the Church of Vvolstagrado.

Government Type: Independent duchy.

Industries: Agriculture, logging, hunting.

Important Figures: Nebik (Duke), Alexis Vatutin (Patriarch).

Flora and Fauna: Forest is a primary terrain type in Vvolstagrado, primarily consisting of fir, spruce, sequoia, and oak. The forests are home to wild beasts and birds of various sorts, including wolves, wild boars, bears, weasels (both normal and giant), deer, elk, and moose. Lycanthropes, displacer beasts, panthers and wood decapuses are among the more fearsome denizens. Wood imps and bands of humanoids also dwell in some of the deeper forests. There is decent agricultural land, which yields grain, legumes, and potatoes. Sheep, oxen, dairy cows, and chickens are common. Humanoid tribes of all sorts, especially orcs and goblins, plague the northern hills.

Further Reading: CM4 Earthshaker!, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Vvolstagrado is a small, independent duchy located in the foothills of the Final Range. Despite its duchy status, the dominion is not a key player in the politics of Norwold, and is essentially a petty domain.

The Land

Vvolstagrado is situated in an upland valley, nestled in the foothills of the Final Range. The large valley, which also contains the bordering Duchy of Stamtral, was named the New Traladara Valley when Duke Nebik first claimed these lands. The dominion is well irrigated by freshwater streams and small ponds, which make for some good agricultural land [by Norwold's standards. Adik.]. The River Stryna flows down from the hills, forming the western border with Stamtral, until it reaches the Moonbeam River, which is, itself, the southern boundary of Vvolstagrado. Most of the duchy is cleared farmland and pasturage, or natural meadows. However, there are several large forests within the dominion; these are unsettled and wild. The northern extent of the domain's territory is marked by the North Hills [very creatively named by Duke Nebik, I might add. Adik.]. These borderland hills are mostly uninhabited by the men of Vvolstagrado, although humanoid tribes and the indigenous Gremlish people both make their homes there. The forested hills of Moonland serve as Vvolstagrado's border to the east.

The town of Vvolstagrād, the site of Duke Nebik's castle, is the primary population center of the duchy. The "capital" is situated on the shores of Lake Grochnigora, along the Moonbeam River. Four villages in southern Vvolstagrād lie within a day's walk of the capital; these are Selchnogorsky, Vyzama, Sumarokopya, and Bityansk. Deposkna and Obechek are the two northern villages, and Stryna is in the west. Trails go from village to village throughout the duchy. The trails are generally well kept through the farmlands, but become difficult to follow in the woods near Stryna.

The People

The men of Vvolstagrād are as poor as they come, but most of them seem content with their lot in life as peasants and serfs [however there have been signs of unrest at times. Arcadius.]. Mostly, they are simple farmers who work incessantly to feed themselves and their families. Others make a living by hunting, as the woods of Vvolstagrād are rich with game. Logging is another trade that is not uncommon here. The tall pines and sequoias make excellent lumber, however much forest has already been cleared and has been converted to farmland.

The Vvolstagrādans are almost entirely of Traladaran ethnicity, having emigrated from Karamaikos as followers of Lord Nebik [there is also, however, a small minority of Haldanners. Arcadius.]. The customs and traditions of old Traladara are alive and well in Vvolstagrād. The peasants [and nobles, too. Arcadius.] are still beholden to superstitions and old wives tales. Most will carry good luck charms of various sorts, and they are fearful of the magical arts, undead, doppelgangers, and werewolves [perhaps, with good reason, considering the proximity of Moonland. Arcadius.]. The custom of Shearing, from the Old World, is practiced here when youths come of age. The Church of Vvolstagrād, a branch of the Church of Traladara, has a strong influence here. The clergy of Vvolstagrād revere the traditional Traladaran Immortals, Halab, Petra, and Zircheb, and share the same basic philosophy as their brethren in Karamaikos. However, where the Church of Traladara believes that a Golden Age will eventually return to what is now Karamaikos, the Church of Vvolstagrād preaches that the New Golden Age will occur here, in "New Traladara."

Militarily, Vvolstagrād is not a potent force. Duke Nebik maintains a small standing army of fair quality, which remains active fending off humanoid and barbarian raids, in addition to occasional skirmishes with neighboring Stamtral. The army consists primarily of cavalry and a lesser contingent of archers. At any given time, roughly half are out patrolling the countryside, with the balance on duty in Vvolstagrād (town). In times of crisis, Duke Nebik must rely on his untrained and unproven peasant militia.

Another group of people, indigenous to the region, are the Gremlish [commonly referred to as, simply, barbarians. Adik.]. These people typically wander more to the north and west of the duchy, but they do cross the dominion from time to time [see Stamtral for further information on the Gremlish. Ed.].

Recent History

Lord Nebik arrived in Norwold in AC 1001, in response to King Ericall's call for dominion rulers. He claimed the entire valley as New Traladara, and received the title of count. Loyal followers and others seeking to leave Karamaikos arrived to build a new life. The work was difficult, but over the course of several years, the local barbarians and monster tribes were driven away, forests were cleared for farming, and villages were built. A key player in driving forth the humanoid tribes was Stano Stamtral, who led Nebik's armies in the field. As a reward for his loyalty and service, he was granted baronial status and land in western Vvolstagrād.

In AC 1007, during the Great War, Vvolstagrado was invaded by troops from Thyatis. Neighboring Moonland had their hands full, and Count Nebik's border patrols were promptly routed by the enemy legions. The count quickly realized that resistance was futile, and turned to diplomacy rather than face slaughter. Essentially, he surrendered to Thyatis without a fight, in exchange for retaining control of his lands. He took this one step further, however, by breaking his oath to King Ericall and swearing fealty to Emperor Thincol of Thyatis, gaining the title of duke in return. The peasant levy that was called up was disbanded, and the men returned to the fields. Things did not go quite as Nebik had hoped, though, as Baron Stano refused to lay down his arms. The Thyatians were determined to make an example of this malcontent, and they proceeded to burn and pillage the barony, despite Nebik's protests. Eventually, the Thyatians stormed Stano's keep and captured him, although he escaped soon thereafter. The Thyatians, tired after years of fighting in the harsh foreign climate, weakened by disease, and disheartened by losses back home, finally left Norwold in early AC 1010.

Although Vvolstagrado was greatly strained by the long Thyatian occupation, Duke Nebik emerged relatively unscathed. With Alphatia sunk below the waves and Thyatis withdrawn to reclaim their lost territories elsewhere, Nebik was able to assert his own independence. As he was gearing up to reclaim the lands of Stamtral, Baron Stano returned with a motley band of mercenaries and proclaimed himself duke. Stano was able to control the western part of Vvolstagrado up to the River Stryna, a significant expansion of his original territory. With his army still disbanded and his treasury mostly in Thyatian coffers, Duke Nebik could only watch. He sent his few able men to patrol the border, and then set about restoring Vvolstagrado. The people recovered quickly, although some did leave for nearby Moonland. One benefit that the Thyatians brought to the duchy was the establishment of trails between the scattered villages. Duke Nebik has been able to maintain these to encourage trade and travel between his towns. In recent years, Vvolstagrado has suffered from increased barbarian raids from the north, along with the usual troubles with humanoids. Relations with Stamtral have never really improved. There have been several skirmishes near the River Stryna, but the prospect of a full-fledged war seems unlikely. Vvolstagrado chose to remain separate from the Norwold Confederacy, which was established in AC 1016.

Don't Miss

Vvolstagrado is a quaint, humble dominion, but it is not much different from other areas of Norwold. The only site really worth seeing is the town of Vvolstagrado. Here one can find markets for the various crops grown throughout the duchy, a few decent craftsmen, and several taverns of varying quality [from bad to worse. Adik.]. The town has a small dock area on Lake Grochnigora for river craft and fishing boats. A stout timber palisade defends the town. Duke Nebik's castle is situated a short distance from the town walls, atop a rocky hill. Within the town, the most notable feature is the Church of Vvolstagrado, its bell tower rising above the thatched roofs like a spear point.

Do Miss

In addition to the treacherous North Hills, the forested area east of Stryna, called Wargwood by the locals, should be avoided if possible. There are trails that lead through this forest, but they are dark, dangerous, and unreliable. The woods are infested with wolves. Dire wolves have been spotted, and there have been reports of goblins and lycanthropic activity in the forest as well. Although some lumber jacks do ply their trade near the edge of Wargwood, only the bravest hunters dare to enter in search of their quarry [many who do, end up becoming the quarry! Adik.].

Tranquil Coast

The Tranquil Coast's southern edge includes the small Bay of Oceansend and it goes northwards up to the Bay of the Hook, near the territory of Dag. It is called the Tranquil Coast because the sea has always been friendly to the sailors and the coasts offer no particular danger in this region. However, the dominions located in this region are far from being tranquil, since many of them are embroiled in a constant warfare and tension runs high. This area also includes the two main islands located off the eastern coasts of Norwold, the southern Isle of the Dogs and the northern Walrus Island.

DAG (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphonatian Sea. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,100 humans, 300 elves.

Languages: Haldannic, Alphonatian, Elvish (Shipe dialect).

Coinage: Oceansend Standard: 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).

Flora and Fauna: The most common terrain in Dag is woods, with clear pastures only to be found along the coast. Woodland game is abundant and all the common wildlife living in northern woods can be found throughout Dag, a real pleasure for every nature lover. Untamed wild animals (especially great cats) and monsters also prowl the land, and many werebeasts have caused problems for the woodsmen.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

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

DIKHOF (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphonatian Sea. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600.

Languages: Haldannic, Traladaran.

Coinage: Oceansend Standard: 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).

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 and eastern borders. 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.

Coats of Arms: Baron Dimitri Dikhoff: Hissing green snake, black background; Barony of Dikhoff: Green circle cut by white filled triangle (pointing up), black background; City of Dikhoff: Three white filled triangles (pointing up) with a fourth green filled triangle (pointing down), black background.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Independent from Alpha since the Great War, the petty Barony of Dikhoff is recognized as a regional power by its neighbors. Dikhoff is embroiled in a vicious war with long-time foe Serenity, a war in which most other local nobles were dragged into over time, the result of a personal enmity between the two barons.

The Land

Dikhoff is a small barony located northeast of Oceansend, consisting mostly of cultivated rolling plains and grasslands, and light forest in the east and north. The woodlands are not dense enough to stop Serenity's cavalry, but are a perfect place to ambush their mounted patrols.

The city of Dikhoff, situated in the south of the barony at the edge of the swamp, is surrounded by a sturdy [and expensive. Arcadius.] stone wall, there to protect the city from the sweeping forays of the Serenic cavalry. To this date the city wall has never been breached by the enemy, who lacks the necessary siege engines and patience, so Castle Dikhoff has never been really threatened. The rest of

the barony outside the town is almost undefended, though, and periodically suffers from raids by Serenity, and burning fields and farms are a common sight. The Dikhoffians are used to such raids, and simply move into the lower part of their cottages [which are not simple cellars. Arcadius.] whenever the border guard reports a unit of cavalry moving through the woods. There they stay until the raid is over and fires stop burning, and rebuild the upper part of their houses and replant their fields [the Serenic cavalry never takes the gamble to dismount and wipe out the Dikhoffians locked in their underground houses].

Officially, the Dikhoffians use the Tranquil Swamp as a resource for valuable salt. But the swamp is also very useful for the Dikhoffian infantry to reside and prepare its attacks on neighboring Serenity. The swamp is impractical terrain for the Serenic cavalry, but it borders their territory and is thus ideal for launching raids and then retreating to safety, so that the buffer zone situated in the swamp is actually the field headquarters of Dikhoff's army [they call it "the Tranquil Road to Serenity." Arcadius].

The People

Dikhoff's population is an even mix of native human Haldanners and Traladaran newcomers. There are four castes of Dikhoffians:

The peasants are generally Haldanner serfs who live in the scattered farmsteads throughout most of Dikhoff. They are a hardworking, fatalistic lot who till their fields relentlessly and stoically wait for the fires to subside when Serenity torches their houses and fields. They give most of their crops to their baron, keeping their share in underground pantries, but the soil is good and they rarely starve. Each raid by Serenity is costly to the baron's granaries as the baron keeps his raided serfs alive by sending them extra bread. There is a rumor running among the farmsteads that the baron's men have slain families after accusing them of setting fires to their own fields [a rumor possibly spread by spies from Serenity. Adik.].

The salt miners, of both Haldanner and Traladaran heritage, live at the edge of the Tranquil Swamp, where they are relatively safe from the skirmishes between the baronies. Many families exploit their own salt pans, but others belong to a handful of wealthy merchants of the city who use slaves to collect the salt [Baron Dikhoff being the first among them. Arcadius.].

The city dwellers are in majority Traladarians. Merchants form the upper class, their fortune generally coming from the trade of salt or weaponry; they generally keep a retinue of servants and slaves. There are also several fine smiths, as well as commoners of all trades.

The Dikhoffian soldiers are, for most of them, light infantry that live in the Tranquil Swamp, outside the official borders as much as within, so that Dikhoff actually controls much more ground than generally believed. If it were not for the need for agriculture to feed the population, the barony would probably have relinquished control of the northern farmlands to encompass swamplands only. The infantry occasionally leave the swamp to mount raids on Serenity, or to counter raid on its own territory, but the Dikhoffian army is at a clear disadvantage against Serenic cavalry in open terrain and always withdraws back to the safety of the swamp. Baron Dikhoff is looking for archers to ambush the cavalry in the forested border zone, but sharpshooters are hard to find.

Recent History

Dikhoff is a fairly recent dominion; until the dawn of the new millennium, it was but wilderness, with a small native Haldanner population living off the fertile grasslands. When King Ericall invited heroes from all lands to come in Norwold and gain nobility and dominions 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 Dimitri Dikhoff. He became a baron of Ericall's and settled in this region of Norwold founding the city of Dikhoff, where merchants would collect and trade the resources of the dominion. But next door the baron's old nemesis, the vindictive Siegfried Sixx, 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 finally attacked Baron Siegfried in force, springing out of the swamp to swarm the barony, up to the city of Serenity. Castle Serenity alone resisted that assault, and the Dikhoffians lacked the siege equipment needed to breach its walls. A fierce sortie by the baron's elite heavy cavalry cut hard into the Dikhoffian ranks, forcing them to break ranks [the light Dikhoffian infantry is not so good at keeping ranks and fighting in formation. Arcadius.] and retreat to the swamp. The Serenic cavalry has been crossing the buffer zone many times since, and the two dominions have been in an intermittent state of war.

Both nobles have stopped answering to King Ericall's calls, as well as sending any tribute, as they estimated they have better things to do with their time, troops and money. The situation has grown into a stalemate lately, and each baron is trying to gain a decisive edge. The latest battles have been confined to skirmishes in the buffer zone, some settlements burnt and their inhabitants killed, but no major battle leading to significant land gain, until a truce was declared—but few believe it will last. Baron Fergus has been an ally of Baron Dimitri ever since Baron Siegfried was rumored to be a traitor in the Thyatians' pay, and estranged Lord Maximus I has on occasion lent his minions as mercenaries to Serenity to supplement their cavalry with some needed infantry. Baron Dikhoff claims that his enemy is trying to forge an alliance with the Thyatians from the Isle of Dawn, but whether this is true or not remains to be seen.

Don't Miss

Swamps are extraordinary places, with a wide range of unconventional flora, if you know where to find it. But unfortunately swamps are often dangerous places as well, with treacherous ground, biting insects, and many dangerous creatures and monsters. Well, the Tranquil Swamp has the treacherous footing, the biting insects, and of course the terrible smell, but it is relatively free of animal and monstrous hazards. With a good Dikhoffian guide [who will refuse to take you anywhere near a military camp, even if you prove at length that you are not a spy from Serenity. Adik.], you can discover an incredible variety of plants, some of which are amazing by their beauty in this otherwise bleak place, or are sought for their medicinal, poisonous, or narcotic properties (not to mention their potential as spell components).

Do Miss

Though his barony would be a fair land, were it not at war, I advise against getting too close to Baron Dikhoff. Under his nice exterior the man is an opportunist, looking for the right time to betray

those that trust him. [I have no prejudice against Baron Dikhoff, but Arcadius seems to, as he lends credit to Baron Sixx's version and disparages Dikhoff. I'll have to ask him about that someday. Adik.]

ERSENBAL (County of)

Location: Continent of Brun, Walrus Island, about 200 miles east and slightly north of Oceansend. *NW*

Area: Approximately 7,000 sq. mi. (18,130 sq. km.); there has been no official mapping of the island or county as of yet.

Population: 5,500.

Languages: Alphatian, Heldannic, Thyatian.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp); other currencies can be found as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax.

Government Type: County.

Industries: Fishing and logging.

Important Figures: Martigan Ersenbal (Count, currently missing), Bethany Ersenbal (Countess), Lord Gerwen (Mayor and Seneschal), Laurida Tremaine (Captain).

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: *CMI Test of the Warlords*, previous almanacs.

Description by Synthala of Aasla.

Ersenbal is one of the many lesser dominions that once dotted the landscape of Norwold. Unlike many of them, it has survived the unrest of the land over the past decades, and as such is one of the few dominions where most people are worry free and not concerned about invasion or war.

The Land

Walrus Island is a lovely, untamed island located not too far from the City of the Sea [Oceansend. *Ed.*]. Except for the three small villages of Ersenbal, Gerwen and Verian, the land is mostly uninhabited. This makes it similar to The Recluse of our wonderful lord Zircheb [an entire Outer Plane in *D&D*, and a realm on the layer of Krigala in the Beastlands in *AD&D* (see *TSR11361 Warriors of Heaven*). *Ed.*].

The island was first noted by colonists 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 Zircheb.

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 sources of spell components ever since Alphonatia 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 Alphonatia 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 Hildannic town of Forton. Ed.], they won't make you feel unwelcome in their town.

Recent History

The Barony of Ersenbal was founded when King Ericall was granting titles of nobility to any warrior who would swear fealty to him. Martigan of Thyatis, a former slave gladiator, was the one who obtained a small barony on this island back in AD 1993 [AC 993. Ed.]. He found a few local inhabitants in the village of Ersenbal. Instead of renaming the village like most of the new petty nobles did throughout Norwold, Martigan took on the name Ersenbal as his own family name since, as a former slave, he never had one of his own.

However, Martigan wasn't an excellent ruler. He simply let his people be, and only intervened when truly necessary. After all, according to his logic, the locals survived before he got there, so they could still survive now without him. Luckily, his adventuring days gave him a sizable fortune from which he paid for the construction of Castle Martigan just outside of the village. Also, since he left them pretty much to themselves, Martigan never tried to have the land developed either. It seems he was wise enough to leave it as a pristine wilderness—may Zirheb bless him.

Through favors and missions performed for King Ericall, Ersenbal was increased into a county in AD 1997 [AC 997. Ed.]. The king also extended his land to include all of Walrus Island. Martigan then elevated two noble families, the Gerwens and Lerians, and placed them in charge of the north and south ends of the island. Typical of city dwellers who crave importance, these two named the villages in their area after themselves.

Still, Martigan craved adventure and often left his barony, leaving either Lord Gerwen or Lord Lerian in charge during his absences. In fact, he was gone from AD 2004 to AD 2009 [AC 1004–1009. Ed.] when he decided to join the Alphonatian war effort to destroy Thyatis [the fact that Glantri

was Alphetia'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 Alphetian general responsible for the capture of Castle Redstone and the Duchy of Westourke 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 Alphetia herself. Synthala.]. Third, when he came back in early AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.], he brought over 2,000 trained veterans who were fleeing from Thyatis because the Alphetian mainland sank.

At first, having as many soldiers as locals caused a lot of tension in the village of Ersenbal. But when the Heldannic Knights started invading Norwold, these troops kept the knights at bay. To this day, the Heldannic Knights have been unable to land on Walrus Island because of the sheer number of veterans present.

Martigan and his wife have disappeared again in AY 2013 [AC 1013. Ed.] and no word has been heard of them since. Lord Gerwen, who has taken over the county in his absence, believes he is off adventuring again. Rumors claim that the famous warrior is off exploring the outer planes, and many doubt he will return this time since it has already been 3 years. Because of this, Captain Laurida Tremaine has been slowly trying to get more power for herself and her men. She was willing to follow the famous General Martigan, but shows obvious disdain for Lord Gerwen. Still, she is loyal and doesn't seem to be interested in a takeover or rebellion.

Don't Miss

There's not much to see in Ersenbal. It's a small, underdeveloped county with simple fishermen and loggers. For those like me who enjoy the wilderness, Ersenbal is a nice place with plenty of pines and the fresh sea air.

As a final note, if there are any druids reading this almanac, I encourage you to send a member of your order to claim the eastern coast of Walrus Island as your land. Someone needs to protect the walrus located there. I have done my part, but I must move on to other areas.

Do Miss

Being a small and rather peaceful island, there are also not many dangerous places to avoid here. The only thing to avoid at all costs are Ersenbal's rocky shores, especially if you are an untrained sailor. I have seen wreckages testifying the doom of many ill-fated voyages scattered here and there on the western shores of the isle, so you'd better watch out for safe waters before you approach Ersenbal. Also, the fact that no lighthouse has ever been built doesn't help the sailors at all.

SERENITY (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, northeast of Oceansend. *NW*

Area: 480 sq. mi. (1,245 sq. km.).

Population: 1,800.

Languages: Thyatian, Heldannic, Alphatian (the use of Alphatian has dropped at the court since Serenity has cut its ties with Alpha).

Coinage: Oceansend Standard: heart (gp), blade (sp), wall (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony.

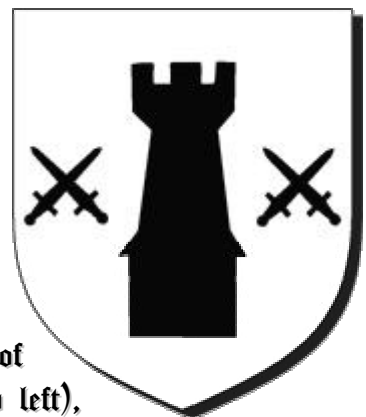
Industries: Horse, agriculture, some fishing.

Important Figures: Siegfried Sixx (Baron).

Flora and Fauna: The lightly forested areas of Serenity are composed mainly of hardwood, especially oaks and birch. A native form of short corn grows rather well in the farmlands around the town of Serenity, which is used both to feed the populace and the horses that are bred here. Common game live in the woodlands, along with some carnivores that prey on horses on occasion, including wolves and great cats. Manticores in search of easy prey have wreaked havoc in the corrals several times, while dragons and wyberns are rarer (much to the herders' relief). Scavengers are often present near the border with the enemy Barony of Dikhoff, especially vultures.



Coats of arms: Baron Siegfried Sixx: Black human skull between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two Xs (right and left), white background; Barony of Serenity: Black castle between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two X (right and left), black human skull (upper left quadrant), white background; City of Serenity: Black castle between two sets of crossed black daggers forming two X (right and left),



white background.

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

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Independent from Alpha since the Great War, the petty Barony of Serenity is recognized as a regional power by its neighbors. Embroiled in a vicious war with long-time foe Dikhoff, a war in which most other local nobles were dragged into over time, Serenity is definitely not a calm place by any means—despite its name.

The Land

The barony occupies a small area northeast of Oceansend, consisting mostly of rolling plains and light forest in the southwest. The woodlands are light enough so that cavalry can ride through them, albeit at a slower pace.

The City of Serenity is built around Castle Serenity, where peasants can get protection when the city is attacked by the Dikhoffians. The city itself is not protected by a wall or palisade, though it is constantly patrolled. The city has already been pillaged and burned on one occasion, when Baron Dimitri attacked Serenity at the beginning of the Great War, but it has since been rebuilt. Corn fields and ranches dot the plains around the city. Castle Serenity is a sturdy, defensible construction that once was the last place controlled by Baron Siegfried, but marked the end of the Dikhoffian forces' advance [until the siege was broken by a rather brutal sortie of the heavy cavalry. Arcadius.]. The castle has its back on the New Alphonatian Sea, with access to wharves where fishermen unload their catches. In case of a siege, unless the enemy can afford a naval blockade [which isn't the case for Baron Dimitri. Arcadius.], the castle can be supplied with fresh fish and imported food. Besides, the castle houses granaries where corn is stocked, and it can feed both humans and horses for long periods.

There is a swampy area on the southwestern border of the barony, where many attacks by Dikhoff come from. The Oceansenders call it simply "The Swamp," while in Alpha and other equally distant places it is referred to as "The Oceansend Swamp." Native Antallians call it "The Tranquil Swamp," a name that probably inspired Baron Siegfried Sixx in naming his dominion. The Tranquil Swamp is a big boggy area, but is not as full of monsters and other hazards as your typical swampy wilderness, hence its name.

The People

Most of Serenity's population are humans from various ethnic origins, mostly Alphonatians, Thyatians and Heldammers. A good chunk of the population of Serenity is in the business of horse breeding, growing corn, raising or training horses, trading them, or riding them as the baron's elite cavalry. All those activities revolving around horses generally remain separate, with family-sized farms or ranches, though a few ranches have grown to larger proportions, with a large corral tended by several employees, and often an adjacent farm dedicated solely to the production of food for the horses. Such ranches often are under contract with the baron, and select the mates especially for the attributes the army is looking for. Oxen and other beasts of burden are rarely used in Serenity, as there are suitable horses aplenty. Indeed, not every horse, however carefully selected its parents were, becomes a sturdy war-horse. Thus lesser horses are used to pull every chariot, cart, caravan, plow, or water pump. This heavy use of horsepower has prompted the baron to ban slavery and servitude [which is not the case in all the petty dominions across 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 advance patrols belonging to enemy forces. They will apprehend trespassers, engage small enemy groups, or report to the castle any larger force. Another group consists of medium cavalry, mounted on medium war horses with leather barding, equipped with medium lances, long swords or maces, light crossbows, and chain mail. They patrol around the castle and the large ranches,

and often engage enemy troops. When not on a mission, they can be found drilling within the castle walls. Heavy cavalry constitutes a small elite group, the baron's guard. They are mounted on well-trained, much sought-after heavy war horses, protected by plate barding, and are equipped with heavy lances, broad swords, and plate mail. They generally train at the castle, only engaging the enemy when it strikes deep inside Serenity, or when the baron is leading a large-scale attack on Dikhoff. They never attack alone, though, relying on medium cavalry to protect their flanks while they charge the Dikhoffian grunts.

Today nobody lives in the buffer zone anymore: everybody has already migrated to one barony or the other, or occasionally to another country altogether, far from this war-plagued area. It is rumored however, that a lone old man still lives in his hut in the middle of the buffer zone, apparently not scared by the war. He must be a very powerful man to be still alive there, or a very mad one. Both barons have heard of this strange person and tried at some point to contact him—each one believes the hermit could be a precious ally against the other. However, scout patrols seem to have problems locating his hut, not to mention that the buffer zone is a hotbed for skirmishes and disputed ground. Some rumors have it that the man is only a deranged fool, while others think he's an insane yet absent-minded Alphantian wizard, who was stranded on Brun after the sinking of Alphantia.

Recent History

Serenity is a fairly recently-established 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 Alphantia 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 Alphantia declared war on Glantri and its allies, Baron Dimitri was quick to declare Baron Siegfried a traitor [based solely on Siegfried's Thyatian origins, and no actual evidence. Arcadius.] and attacked Serenity. King Ericall, unable to keep his noblemen in line, could not prevent this from happening [besides, other lords did betray him, and it was hard at the time telling who was still loyal and who was not. Adik.]. This initial attack was met with Baron Siegfried's well-prepared forces though, and the assault could not break the defenses. The two dominions have been in an intermittent state of war ever since. Battles occur from time to time, and there exists no more a clear line between them, as the buffer zone and the enemy's territory are regularly crossed as if they did not exist.

Both nobles have stopped answering to King Ericall's calls, as well as sending any tribute, as they estimated they have better to do with their time, troops and money. The situation has grown into a stalemate lately, and each baron is trying to gain a decisive edge. The latest battles have been confined to skirmishes in the buffer zone, some settlements burnt and their inhabitants killed, but no major battle

leading to significant land gain, until a truce was declared—but few believe it will last. Baron Fergus has been an ally of Baron Dimitri ever since Baron Siegfried was rumored to be a traitor in the Thyatians' pay, and estranged Lord Maximus I has on occasion lent his minions as mercenaries to Serenity to supplement their cavalry with some needed infantry. Baron Siegfried claims that his enemy is trying to forge an alliance with the Heldannic Knights to the south, but whether this is true or not remains to be seen.

Don't Miss

Horse lovers, come to Serenity! This is one of the rare places in Norwold where you can find horses for sale at a decent price. Of course, you won't find fine stallions as in Maruam 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 look up at the sky regularly, watching for vultures. Adik.]. Even then, you can hardly travel a few miles without being arrested by a heavily armed patrol, always on the lookout for enemy scouts, spies, or saboteurs. I recommend abiding by their directives and accepting their searches and many questions without complaining, because they are quick to consider the faintest opposition proof of your culpability.

SONNENFELD (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphatian Sea. NW

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,300.

Languages: Heldannic.

Coinage: Oceansend Standard: heart (gp), blade (sp), wall (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent barony.

Industries: Horses, birds of prey, hunting, craft (fletchers & bowyers).

Important Figures: Fergus (Baron).

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 the horses tended here. Near the southern and eastern borders with the swamp many birches and willow trees grow, and many flocks of birds also live in Sonnenfeld's territory. This game, the horses and the birds of prey (like hawks and sparrow hawks) raised and trained here are the main resources of the country, since the farmlands to the north produce barely enough food to support the needs of the populace. Wild monsters living in the swamp (like crocodiles, serpents, giant fish and carnivorous plants) prey on the hunters who venture there to catch ducks, hens, coots and such.

Coats of Arms: Baron Fergus: A golden thistle on a field of crimson; Barony of Sonnenfeld: A golden horse's head in profile (facing right) on a green background.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chebas and Arcadius.

Owing to our rather busy schedules as almanac correspondents and as prominent persons of Norwold, we originally thought we would not have much time to explore Sonnenfeld to any great extent. Fortunately, as this barony is not overly large, we did not encounter this problem. One of our mutual colleagues back from the old days remarked that a person could probably cross Sonnenfeld riding the back of a giant turtle, and still miss it if they were to blink. Perhaps his joke was in poor taste, but we found this barony to be a worthy visit.

The Land

Sonnenfeld is a barony lying somewhat inland, in the region known as the Tranquil Coast, though this is perhaps a bit of a misnomer, when one considers the political situation of the region. Sonnenfeld is a blessed barony, however, for it is reasonably distant from the constant struggles between Dikhoff and Serenity, it has excellent pastureland for its horses (both in the hills and in the scattered flatlands along the eastern border), and luscious forests to the south and east (comprising what Baron Fergus has named Stratham Woods). The barony is predominantly hilly—particularly in the west—and it

gradually flattens out towards the east and the south, although rows of hills dot the land and break the potential monotony of the countryside.

The People

The people of Sonnenfeld are an odd, but generally pleasant lot. Although largely of the same stock as most of the surrounding peoples—that is, fair-haired and light-skinned Haldanners—it is clear that at some time in the past there were influences from other cultures. First, we have the manner in which these people speak. Certainly, it is the same language, but, even after allowing for differences in dialects, some of the words these people use, and the way in which they say them, indicates some added element at some point in their history. Where a fellow a few miles away might be named “Ibar”, that person would be called “Ibars” here, for example, though we noted a number of names that were not common at all in neighboring realms, such as Karelis and Gunts for men, and Dyna and Leima for women. If we did not know better, we could have sworn some of those names were similar to those used in places around Littonia. Also, the people here, as we have said, pronounce things differently, tending to put stress on the first syllables of words. An interesting thing to note, but as neither of us are linguists, those observations must remain as they are.

Despite these minor differences, the Sonnenfelders are hardy country folk like any other, living off of the land where they can (mainly on scattered farms in the northern hills, where they grow rye, potatoes, and onions for the most part), and otherwise making a living by hunting, trapping, raising horses, or practicing a craft. In times of war [frequently, it seems. Adik.], peasant levies are raised, though the true strength of the people lies in their archery skills—not only are they excellent bowyers and fletchers, they can use those weapons well. Any invading army would find little of value here, though a barony full of angry Sonnenfelders skulking in the wilderness at their backs would be waiting for them.

Since the arrival of Baron Fergus before the Great War, the people of Sonnenfeld have also begun raising birds of prey on a large scale. The Sonnenfelders have practiced falconry and related arts for a long time, it seems [mainly to aid in hunting. Adik.], but Fergus’s policies of capitalizing on the strengths of his people to develop the barony’s economy have seen trained hawks and falcons exported to neighboring dominions, as well as trained Sonnenfelder falconers serving as mercenaries and soldiers.

Recent History

Sonnenfeld was founded before the Great War, by a warrior of Vestland named Fergus, when King Ericall invited people of courage and character to carve out dominions to rule in his name, although the bulk of the populace has lived here for many generations. Before the coming of Baron Fergus, the people here lived their lives pretty much as they chose; the Alphatian authorities based in Alpha had never visited this place, and whatever government authority existed here was derived from the local clan chiefs, some of whom had distant ties to their countrymen living further south, towards Oceansend. This was the way of things for as long as the people living here can remember. Since arriving in Sonnenfeld, Fergus has spent almost all of his waking days thinking about ways of making his barony more productive.

An observant man, Fergus studied the locals, determining where his actions might be resisted strongly, and where he could make his mark. He encouraged his new subjects to focus more on horse-breeding and falconry, as that would provide more revenues to the barony and its people, which could free them from tilling often unproductive soil. He also put down a number of powerful monsters in the

Tranquil Swamp, that had been terrorizing the southern homesteads. By providing greater security, and by showing them a means of attaining greater prosperity (though it is believed by some that Fergus had connections with the merchants of Oceansend, which gave him better access to markets), Fergus was able to cement his hold on his dominion.

Another policy put into place by Fergus was his limitation on the size of families. Being a northern land with poor soils, Sonnenfeld can only afford to feed a very finite amount of people, he reasoned, and if times were bad, and too many people went hungry, the fires of radicalism could be stoked, and he might lose control over his barony. To head off this potential threat, Fergus ordered that, from the day of his investiture as baron, each family in Sonnenfeld would be allowed only two children at maximum in times of peace, in order to maintain the dominion's population. This would make it easier for families to feed themselves, he reasoned. It is said, though we never saw evidence of this, that Fergus employs a special squad of officers who roam the countryside, ensuring that no family has grown too large. Some say that "excess population growth" is taken away by these officers, to be sold as slaves to other nations. A related policy is that, if the population rises too quickly in times of war, volunteers are encouraged to sell their services as mercenaries to friendly dominions. This not only brings more money into Sonnenfeld (if these men live); if they die, that will mean fewer mouths to feed. Harsh, to be sure, but we must remember that Fergus is a Northman—such sentiments are to be expected.

Were it not for the baron's long-standing grudge against Maximus I (the ruler of Swordcoast), and his alliance with Baron Dimitri Dikhoff against the Baron Siegfried Sixx of Serenity (the latter is believed by Fergus to be in the pay of Thyatis), all would be good for Sonnenfeld. Unfortunately, the simmering conflicts among the barons of the Tranquil Coast may be about to boil over once more, with skirmishes having been witnessed only last year [AC 1017. Ed.].

Don't Miss

Should you ever have the chance to visit Sonnenfeld, we heartily recommend spending some time strolling in the rolling hills in springtime, accompanied by nothing save the gentle breezes wafting from the not-too-distant sea, and the occasional rabbit, mouse, or (if you are lucky) wild horse, as these creatures go about their business in the lush fields of the barony. Truly a relaxing experience!

If mystery interests you, then you should visit the "Old Abbey", which sits on the tallest hill to the north of Baron Fergus's keep, and is in fact within sight of the latter structure. It is named such because, although it has long since fallen into ruin, it is clear that this building was once a place of worship. There is evidence of an herb garden within its tumbled walls (signifying, perhaps, that this was a place of knowledge and healing), and there are several rooms adorned with weathered holy symbols. There are no remnants of battlements here, and the ruins themselves show no sign of violence, so many think this place, if it indeed was an abbey of sorts, likely fell into ruin due to neglect. Who its inhabitants were, and what faith they practiced, are unknown, but nevertheless it is an interesting place to visit.

Do Miss

If "civilized" hospitality is what you seek, you will not find it here. Sonnenfeld is far too sparsely populated to contain any concentration of people larger than a small- to medium-sized village. Instead, you should seek out the keep of Baron Fergus, but be warned, in these uncertain times, he is more likely to question unexpected visitors closely, than to welcome them with open arms. While this could not properly be considered something to avoid, we suggest visitors make friends with the locals instead.

The only other thing that should be avoided is the Tranquil Swamp—at least, one should not venture too deeply within it. All manner of nasty creatures live there, and many would sooner make a meal of the unwary as look at them. It should be noted that some of Fergus's advisors are looking into the prospect of draining the swamp (or at least a large part of it), which may open more land for farming, as the region has milder temperatures than further inland. Such a plan will no doubt take years to come to fruition.

SWORDCOAST (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brun, northeast of Oceansend, on the western shore of the New Alphetian Sea. NW

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

Population: 3,000.

Languages: Heldommic, Thyatian.

Coinage: Oceansend Standard: 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).

Flora and Fauna: The plains of Swordcoast are mostly cultivated with wheat, hops and barley, leaving only the western low hills for pastures. As a result, most of Swordcoast is farmland, with trails and earthen roads crisscrossing the countryside. All of the trees have been cut down, killing and driving away the woodland creatures formerly living here. Common fauna now include livestock (pigs, hens, cows and chickens) and the occasional stone marten, weasel (both giant and normal) and otter. Since the majority of the people living in Swordcoast are able to wield a weapon effectively, not many wild monsters remain today in this country.

Further Reading: CM Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

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

Wyrksteeth Range

The Wyrksteeth Range runs all along Norwold from Heldland to the northern Strait of Codstein parallel to the Final Range. Few humans live in this inhospitable territory, where jagged mountains and rocky outcroppings dominate the landscape. The peaks of the Wyrksteeth rival with those of the Icereach Mountains, reaching 20,000 feet at the highest points. Perpetual glaciers cover the mountains, providing the woods and vales inside the mountain range with fresh water year-long. Forests of pines, evergreens, and huge sequoias house hundreds of beasts, from the small rodents to the swift deer and the daring ibexes, from the great grizzlies and the feral mountain lions to the voracious rocs and the deadly wyverns. At the top of this natural chain lie obviously the unchallenged masters of the Wyrksteeth range, the dragons, who have always lived here ever since mankind was but a thought in the Immortals' brains. Tribes of humanoids also dwell in the area, although they were subjugated by the wyrms long ago. The real size of the draconic community is unknown to everyone but the great wyrms, and rumors have it that they live in gargantuan subterranean cities that only dragons are able to locate. These same rumors also tell of great riches amassed in the heart of the mountains, but few of the adventurers who yearly brave the Wyrksteeth ever return with concrete proof of these tall tales.

HOPELAND (Protectorate of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southwest of Alpha and northwest of Oceansend, in the valley near the source of the Dragon River. *NW*

Area: 1,996 sq. mi. (5,170 sq. km.).

Population: 600 humans, 200 orcs.

Languages: Heldannic, Orcish.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: Half of the ore mined in the foothills and half of the crops harvested are given to the dragons and their orcish minions each year.

Government Type: Protectorate subject to the Draconic Kingdom of Wyrksteeth.

Industries: Agriculture, mining.

Important Figures: Jorkkk (Chieftain and Overseer).

Flora and Fauna: The valley is famous for its good grasses and the fertile soil, which produces an abundant crop every year (if the dragons let the farmers harvest it, that is). Rivers with freshwater fish are also another common feature, while the foothills and mountains at the borders provide the dominion with rich ore deposits to mine (although few are precious ores). Common small game can be found in the valley, as well as monstrous species of canines and felines (both small and great). Humanoids and dragons are also a common enough sight.

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

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

ODINIA (Plains of)

Location: Continent of Brum, east of Alpha, near the entrance to the Great Bay. **NW**

Area: 1,196 sq. mi. (3,095 sq. km.).

Population: Animals and beasts only. Some humanoids dwelling in the foothills near the southern border.

Languages: Goblin, Draconic.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: None.

Industries: Mining (gold).

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: Odinia has marshes on its western shores, while a great valley extends from the northern shores to the southern foothills. The southeastern borders touch the northern tip of the Wyrksteeth. No real herds exist in Odinia because of the frequent dragon and wyvern raids on cattle, although fish abound in the Great Bay. Great evergreen sequoias, pines and oaks rise mightily in the foothills and in the lower parts of the Wyrksteeth.

Further Reading: CMI Test of the Warlords, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas and Arcadius.

Once a proud and industrious nation, Odinia is now a deserted plain shadowed by the nearby Wyrksteeth Range, with all its draconic inhabitants. Odinia's territory now comprises the lowlands going from the foothills of the Wyrksteeth to the south to the shores of the Great Bay to the north. This vast valley, known as Wiudental, consists of many farmlands and a small trait of marshes and bogs in the western part of Odinia's coasts. This area has a unique feature found nowhere else throughout Nortwold and the Old World: it's called wattenmeer. When the ebb comes, the water recedes, 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 Haldannic word that indicates that part of the coast which has been wrested away from the wattenmeer and the bogs, separated from the sea by a dam and then reclaimed and cultivated. The Haldanners that used to live here used koog for hundred years, building dams with earth, rocks, sandbags and mud.

The southern border of Odinia consists of forested hills and mountains that belong to the Wyrksteeth 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 Wyrksteeth makes these foothills dangerous to live in. The few settlements here before disaster struck in AC 1016 were mining villages who dug out gold and precious gemstones from

the Wyrksteeth's slopes. The dragons of Wyrksteeth now rule over these slopes and mines, and use some humanoid clans to mine out the gold for their personal hoards.

WYRMHART (Barony of)

Location: Continent of Brum, halfway between Oceansend and the Baronie de Chevas. *NW*

Area: 499 sq. mi. (1,290 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000 (90% humans, 10% dwarves).

Languages: Heldannic, Draconic.

Coinage: Draco (gp), wolf (sp); barter common.

Taxes: 40% income tax, collected yearly (half goes to the draconic earls and half to the baroness).

Government Type: Barony, member of the Draconic Kingdom of Wyrksteeth.

Industries: Mining (gold, gemstones), logging.

Important Figures: Lady Maximilian (Baroness).

Flora and Fauna: The barony is nestled in a secluded vale surrounded by the high Wyrksteeth peaks in the middle of the mountain range. Great evergreen sequoias, pines and oaks rise mightily in the foothills and in the lower parts of the Wyrksteeth, while the vale comprises a freshwater lake and rolling grasslands, with fields of flowers dotting the landscape in spring and summer. Great birds of prey share the skies with the noble and fearsome dragons and wyberns, while packs of wolves, wild boars and foxes roam the hills hunting the deer and moose libing here. Lycanthropes are also to be found occasionally (especially werewolves, wereboars and werebears), contesting the ownership of hunting grounds with the Wyrksteeth lords.

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

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

WYRMSTEETH (Draconic Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brun, running from the northern Heldannic border to the peninsula near the Strait of Todstein. *NA*

Area: 146,374 sq. mi. (421,190 sq. km.).

Population: Unknown number of dragons and humanoids.

Languages: Heldannic, Draconic, Orcish, Goblin, Hobgoblin.

Coinage: None.

Taxes: Unknown.

Government Type: Triarchic Kingdom (kingdom divided into three earldoms, each ruled by the draconic earl representative of one of the three wyrm factions).

Industries: Mining, raiding, hunting.

Important Figures: Hissuarbeeum the Gold (Earl of the Lawful Dragons), P'ilorchaem the Lofly One (Earl of the Neutral Dragons), Kentfeodagg the Doombringer (Earl of the Chaotic Dragons).

Flora and Fauna: The Draconic Kingdom of Wyrksteeth encompasses the whole mountain range that bears the same name. For this reason, all of the animals, beasts, humanoids and monsters found throughout the region are equally represented in the lands of the dragons, together with all kinds of natural features that characterize the region. The intelligent humanoids serving the dragons include orcs, ogres, goblins and hobgoblins, while renegade lycanthropes refusing to submit to the wyrms' authority hide and prey in the woodland areas.

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

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

Kammer Bay

Lying just north of the heartlands of the Heldannic Territories is the Kamminer Bay, named so in AC 1010 following the successful conquest of Landfall by the Heldannic Knights. Although technically part of the Heldannic region known as Heldland, the lands surrounding the port city of Landfall are quickly being converted into another part of the heartlands. Waves of settlers are pushing back the frontiers and bringing more of the land under the plow, while the military might of the knights entrenches itself deeper. It is a land on the fringes of civilization, both dangerous and placid; predictable, yet volatile.

HELDLAND (Heldannic Territory of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southern coast of Norwold. *NW*

Area: Approx. 51,378 sq. mi. (133,069 sq. km.) is controlled by the Heldannic Knights at present.

Population: 85,000 (10,000 in Landfall, 5,000 in Forton, 43,000 in Oceansend; many more living in homesteads scattered throughout the territory); unknown number of native Antalian-descended peoples living in wilderness.

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

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

Taxation: 15% income tax collected 4 times a year. 10% tithe to the Heldannic Knights, collected once a year. Poll tax of 1 gp per year on those who refuse military service. Taxes are waived for the first 2 years for new immigrants. There is also a 5% sales tax on all items but food and clothing (these taxes are not waived).

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

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

Important Figures: Helga Schonberg (Landmeister), Hermann Adalard (Landmeister of Oceansend), Thomas Stilldorfer (Landmeister of Landfall), Siegfried Lenz (Grenzmarshall), Ulrike Bethmann (Grenzmarshall), Dirk Hollweg (Grenzmarshall), Erich Barthold (Grenzmarshall).

Flora and Fauna: Heldland is blessed with many natural resources. Along the coastal regions verdant stands of oak, evergreen, birch, and pine predominate, mingled with dense patches of juniper bushes wherever the sunlight manages to filter down to the ground. Further inland, and in the more settled regions, hardy long grasses, wildflowers, and fruit-bearing shrubs predominate, such as dandelions, buttercups, strawberries, blueberries, and not to mention scattered thistles and wild roses. Towards the foothills of the Mengul Mountains to the west, almost as though sensing the sinister evil that seems to emanate from the forbidding Plateau of Denagoth, much of the plant life gives way to blighted briar patches, lichen, yellowed grasses, and the like. It is also in this region that the monstrous species of plant life, such as vampire roses, grab grass, and whipweed, are known to predominate.

The animal life of Heldland is similarly abundant. Here, one may find animal herds such as sheep, caribou, and moose, as well as more solitary animals such as grizzly bears, lynxes, and beavers. In the northern regions of Heldland live numerous wolf packs. Travelers have noted that, as with plant life, those animals living near the Mengul Mountains appear to be almost sickly—or corrupted—in appearance. In the foothills of those mountains, and in the hilly country north of Landfall, can be found giants (mountain, hill, stone, and the rare frost), goblinoids, lycanthropes, as well as the rare, reclusive sasquatch. Dragons also venture into the territory from the northern mountains; most of those few who have been spotted were identified as red dragons, though a few whites are known to live in the area.

Further reading: *CMI Test of the Warlords*, *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chevas.

It was with interest that I accepted the task of surveying this region of the growing “Heldannic Empire,” to see for myself what goes on here—beyond what the knights themselves decide to tell us. Surprisingly, what I had heard of the place turned out, in retrospect, to be fairly accurate. I had heard others call Heldland untamed, rugged, and mysterious—and it certainly was! Of course, I learned much more than this, and perhaps I shall note it down in book form for others to peruse at their leisure, but until then, let the following suffice as your guide to this land.

The Land

It is said by the Heldannic Knights that their homeland is a hard land—and its people are equally inured to life’s trials. Whether or not this is true, Heldland makes the southerly Heldannic Territories seem as homey as the Streel Plain. The waters of the Kamminer Bucht to the south, and the Alphatian Sea to the east, carry with them winds that are cool in the summer, and frigid and damp in the winter. The waters themselves are very cold all year round; many a sailor has fallen overboard in this region, and succumbed before any assistance could reach them. The weather, too, can be unforgiving. The lands bordering the Alphatian Sea are blasted mercilessly during the winter months by strong winds sweeping southwards from the arctic wastes to the far north, while in the summer months gentler breezes are carried from the southeast, making life far more bearable. In the interior, winter is a terrible time of year: during winter storms, icy gales blow down from the Wyrksteeth Mountains, and during the summer, the moisture from rainstorms rarely dissipates in the forests, due to the extensive cover of foliage which blots out much of the sun’s rays; in some regions it is almost impossible to stay dry.

As mentioned earlier, Heldland, for all its ruggedness, is a thickly-forested land, with trees of many types along the coasts, which, where they have not been interrupted by the ebb and flow of civilization, extend inland to the foothills of the Wyrksteeth Mountains themselves. Where civilization has gained a foothold in this relatively untouched land, it is a tentative one. Apart from the festering sore that is Landfall, and the port of Oceansend, there is little in the way of settlements. There are a number of coastal villages, or partially-constructed keeps, lining the coast, but the interior, as before, is no one’s land.

The People

As in Heldann proper to the south, the visitor to Heldland will find a mix of Hattian Thyatians and native Heldanners. In the lands controlled by the knights, the majority of the population is of Hattian

extraction—the knights probably wish to avoid the problems they encountered when they first arrived in Heldann decades ago [AC 950. Ed.], when they consisted of but a handful of men against thousands of indigenous Heldanners. Occasionally one will find a Heldanner or two, but these are most often those who have become assimilated into the dominant Hattian culture. Outside the few built-up areas, most people are farmers; they lay trap lines year round, and till the fields in the warm months, sell what produce they can spare, and wait out the winter in their homes. Most often, their homes are sod huts or wooden cabins.

In Landfall, Oceansend, and a number of villages, the people conduct their lives with a little more certainty. There are shopkeepers, craftsmen, grocers, soldiers, fishermen, and travelers—all that one would find in towns and cities further south, only on a much smaller scale (outside of Landfall and Oceansend, that is). In general attitude, however, I think the Heldlanders are definitely different from their countrymen in Heldann proper. Living on the edge of civilization, they seem to be more practical; they have little time for religious zealotry, as faith alone rarely puts food on the table, and they are plainspoken. Still, many of the newer settlers were awarded generous grants to build their homes here, and thus their loyalty to the regime seems secure for now.

Beyond the colonized areas, however, an unknown number of indigenous people inhabit the forests, living, I imagine, in crude huts and isolated villages, and otherwise subsisting off of the land. I suspect that they are probably related to the native people of Heldann, though I have not met any of these native Heldlanders, so I could not say for certain.

Recent History

Nominally part of the Alphatian colony of Norwold, under the rule of King Ericall beginning in AC 992, the region now known as Heldland was sparsely settled, with Landfall and Oceansend being the only significant settlements in the region. In AC 1010, the Heldannic Knights, capitalizing on the instabilities following the sinking of Alphatia, conquered Landfall and the surrounding region. In subsequent years, their forces advanced all the way to Oceansend, conquering that city after a protracted siege. In AC 1014, the order's knights lost their clerical powers, having suffered Vanya's disfavor over their increasingly cruel rulership over their lands (which did not bring glory to Her). Taking advantage of the situation, Oceansend regained its independence, and the Heldannic Order's control over Heldland slackened greatly, being confined largely to Landfall and vicinity once more.

After the knights regained the graces of Vanya in late AC 1015, they embarked upon a drive to reconquer all of Heldland, including Oceansend, which fell once more to Heldannic forces in AC 1016. Since that time, the knights have been trying to strengthen their hold on Heldland, initiating a colonization drive to accomplish this.

Don't Miss

One place that should be visited if possible is Oceansend, if only for the fact that it is the largest urban area on the Heldland coast which offers anything close to the amenities of a proper city. Originally founded by Thyatians, Oceansend declared independence during the Alphatian Spike Assault [AC 960. Ed.], and maintained its independence until very recently, when it fell to the Heldannic Knights. Although it has fallen somewhat on hard times due to the decline in commerce following the conquest, it is still a fairly nice city, so long as you can ignore the ever-present Heldannic garrison, the fluttering black lion banners, and the tense atmosphere which hangs over the city.

Although there are other pleasant settlements to visit in Heldland, particularly along the coast, none of them are really large enough to be noteworthy, in my opinion. Nice places to spend the night, but little more than that.

Do Miss

If there is any place in Heldland which the visitor should avoid at all costs, it is Landfall. This large town was, is, and likely always will be a breeding ground of scum and moral decrepitude; why the Heldannic Knights allow such a corrupt place to thrive in the midst of their other dominions I shall perhaps never know, but I suspect something is going on behind the scenes. Needless to say, Landfall is filthy, and filled with disease-ridden trollops, greedy merchants, and untrustworthy, self-serving bureaucrats. Avoid it if you possibly can.

Another place I would strongly caution all visitors to avoid is the Finsterwald, which lies many days north of Landfall. Though I never visited the place myself, I have heard it said that the place is a trackless forest filled with swamps, bogs, and ferocious animals. It is also controlled by a man named Helmut Jaschke, who, apparently a former Heldannic Knight himself, has appointed himself the Count of Wolkenberg—which seems to be the name of his purported dominion. The authorities describe him as a traitor, who refuses to submit to the might of the Heldannic Order, but I have heard others say that Helmut had something of an epiphany some time ago, and that he fights against Heldannic supremacy in Heldland because he sees their rule as unjust. Regardless of the truth, travelers are just as likely to run afoul of the count's brigands as patrols of Heldannic Knights intent on crushing him. Best to stay clear until the whole matter blows over.

WOLKENBURG (County of)

Location: Continent of Brum, north of Landfall. NW

Area: 2,993 sq. mi. (7,750 sq. km.).

Population: Unknown; believed to be between 2,000 and 5,000 people.

Languages: Heldannic, Thyatian (Hattian dialect), Elvish (Shiye dialect).

Coinage: None; barter only.

Taxes: None. Inhabitants of the Finsterwald render whatever assistance they can to the count's forces whenever possible.

Government Type: Agglomeration of self-governing villages, under the protection of the count.

Industries: Hunting, crafts, subsistence agriculture.

Important Figures: Helmut Jaschke (Count).

Flora and Fauna: All manner of plant and animal life may be found here. The forests are home to many species of bear, bobcat, deer, fox, rodent, wolf, and birds. Rarer animals include decapuses, giant spiders, owlbears, and the occasional griffon as one approaches the Wyrksteeth Mountains. Locals also know of tribes of goblins living in some of the hills in the north and west. Wolkenburg is home to a wide variety of trees and bushes, including maple, birch, poplar, elm, and evergreen towards the north and at higher altitudes. Where sunlight manages to break through the canopy, it is possible to find varieties of berry bushes (blackberry and raspberry seem to be the most common), as well as juniper. In the denser portions of the forest, it is possible to find strangle vines dangling from branches overhead, as well as archer bushes (but these are thankfully rare).

Coats of Arms: None.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Adik de Chebas and Arcadius.

Following the drive on the part of the Heldannic Knights to reconquer Heldland [in AC 1016. Ed.], a number of regions made it clear that they did not wish to be absorbed by the growing empire in their midst. Unlike most of the other rebellious regions, however, the people inhabiting the forest known locally as the Finsterwald were successful in their bid to remain independent. These people, under the leadership of a man named Helmut Jaschke, comprise the self-styled "County" of Wolkenburg. Curious, we made our way thence, to determine the truth in all the tales we had heard thus far. Don't ask how we entered the forest safely, and obtained the services of a guide; suffice it to say we did.

The Land

Wolkenburg is an untamed land—there are no proper roads, no estates or vast tracts of cleared land, no fortifications, and no large buildings of any sort. To the untrained eye, the vastness of the Finsterwald (literally, "dark forest"), the forest which comprises the entirety of this realm, is uninterrupted, yet to those who know the wilderness and its secrets, it is clear that Wolkenburg is very much inhabited by folk who are quite different from common woodland life. Amidst the seemingly endless stands of pine, maple, and evergreen—broken only by the occasional natural clearing, pond, or

river—one can see well-hidden villages (comprising camouflaged sod huts with small herb and vegetable gardens), tree huts (which serve as lookout posts), and their stealthy inhabitants. Since they do not congregate in cities and towns, the people must by necessity spread themselves out thinly across their land, so as not to impose too great a burden on its resources (or so said our guide).

Although blanketed by a dense carpet of vegetation, Wolkenburg is not a featureless place. Within its bounds run many streams and rivers, as well as lakes which seem to be made of crystal—so clear they are to behold. The ground is also broken in many places by rocky outcroppings and hills, especially towards the Wyrksteeth Mountains in the west.

Located inland, Wolkenburg is spared the dampness carried by the winds blowing along the coasts, and thus it also does not rain overmuch here—enough to maintain the balance of nature, but that is all. While it is fairly dry, however, Wolkenburg does suffer severe snowstorms in winter, as they blow down from the Wyrksteeth Mountains with a vengeance.

The People

The bulk of the people living here are of native Haldanner stock, fair-skinned and fair-haired folk who tend to venerate the pantheon of Immortals revered in the Northern Reaches. The clans living here, however, do not live the same lifestyle as their cousins elsewhere; instead of tilling the fields, the people here live with the land—hunting when there is need, and otherwise raising in small vegetable plots what they cannot gather. Nowhere did we see vast stretches of cleared land, or other conventional signs of habitation. This is emblematic of the fact that the people here live at a different pace—time is measured by the passing of the seasons and the migration paths of the animals, not according to a calendar. It is clear that the Haldanners here like it that way, too. A hospitable lot, but definitely not the trusting sort; our guide told us that the people here are slow to make friends or allies, but when they do, those bonds are made for life, but they expect the same from others. Among these people, apparently, it is far worse to be a breaker of oaths and friendships, than to be a murderer or thief.

Aside from the Haldanners, there are also a small number of Hattians living here. Most of these were Haldannic Knights serving the order under Helmut, and who have continued serving their leader even now. The others are their families for the most part, although a small number of them are would-be adventurers and other hangers-on. These people seem to have adopted a similar lifestyle to that of the Haldanners. Finally, there is a small group of Shive elves living here, though from their appearance they appear to be mercenaries in Helmut's employ. Still, they are a definite presence here, though they spend much of their time living amongst themselves. Although they were friendly enough to their comrades-in-arms, they were decidedly standoffish with us, as though they had had enough of the outside world, and did not want anything more to do with it.

Regardless of the background of the person, almost everyone we saw supported Helmut and his goal of keeping the Haldannic Knights out of the Finsterwald [some were little more than rabing fanatics. Adik.], although few of the people we had met had seen him recently. It seems Helmut and his personal retinue travel round the Finsterwald regularly

Recent History

Although the native Haldanners appear to have lived here a very long time, the true history of Wolkenburg stretches back only a couple of years, to AD 2012 [AC 1012. Ed.], when the bulk of what is now Haldland fell to the Haldannic Knights for the first time. As the knights marched on

Oceansend (their ultimate goal), several battalions of soldiers fanned out into the countryside, obtaining the submission of the local clan chieftains. The region that was to become Wolkenburg was just such a place, and the knight who had been sent to ensure their loyalty was none other than Helmut Jaschke. Comprising no more than 50 warriors, Helmut and his men used their skills in warfare and their clerical powers to subdue the locals, who were led at the time by Geoffrey of Grunturm, who had re-established himself here since his ouster in Heldom proper. Geoffrey was forced to flee again, taking with him some of his top warriors; no one has heard from him since that time, though sightings are rumored.

The subsequent months of occupation were tense, but Helmut maintained an uneasy peace, always ensuring that his men did not get out of line [some of his long-time companions call Helmut a true man of integrity. Adik.]. When the Heldomic Knights lost their clerical powers after falling out of favor with Vanya [AC 1014. Ed.], Helmut willingly surrendered to his former subjects, and ordered his men to do the same. Those who did not heed his orders perished. Over the next year, Helmut and his men remained in captivity, slowly learning something of the ways of the people they had come to conquer. It was about that time when the fallen knights' sympathies began to change, for the Heldomers did not treat them harshly; in fact, the prisoners helped tend crops, build and repair homes, and otherwise performed tasks which aided the community—this seems to be the way these Heldomers conduct wars, with captured enemies being placed in a sort of thralldom.

When the Heldomic Knights regained their clerical abilities, Helmut and his men did not, for they no longer followed Vanya. Thereafter, they have found a new faith of sorts—the protection of the Finsterwald, and of its unique inhabitants, whose way of life would likely be destroyed if the region fell under the sway of the Heldomic Order once more. The rest of the story should be known to most of our readers, for only last year [AC 1017. Ed.] was an expeditionary force sent here to reassert control over the people of the Finsterwald, only to be repulsed by Helmut and his men. Although he has won the field for now, it is uncertain how well Helmut and his people would fare, should their enemies direct their full might against them. In the meantime, the former enemy of the Heldomers seems to have won their acceptance—even their admiration—as a warrior, and has become one of them as a result.

Don't Miss

The Finsterwald is truly a nature-lover's paradise! Rugged mountains, breathtaking views of forested valleys, and lush vegetation everywhere one looks—truly this place is the very symbol of nature's vitality. Were it not for the hostilities at this time, we would not hesitate in recommending a visit to this place as a way of seeing what nature was meant to be.

Do Miss

While the Finsterwald is no more dangerous than any other large forest in the north, one should always avoid straying too close to the Wyrmsteeth Mountains, whose draconic inhabitants tend to take a rather dim view of trespassers. Also, it should be self-explanatory that the eastern reaches of the forest, which have seen some fighting in recent months, should also be avoided.

Finally, somewhere in the depths of the forest lies what would have become the administrative center of a Heldomic province—Wolkenburg Castle itself. The castle was never finished (the knights had lost their powers, and thus their control, over much of the land before construction had finished), and a road connecting it with the other Heldomic dominions was never constructed, but it remains. Some say it is a secret hideout for Helmut and his men; others (when Helmut's more vocal supporters are not present)

say it is where Helmut really goes when he patrols, where all sorts of foul plots lie waiting to be hatched—including the betrayal of the Heddanners by their erstwhile protector. Regardless of what the truth may be, the castle is certainly well hidden (its location never having been revealed to the Heddannic authorities—there had not been time for that, it seems), and it would be folly to seek it out.

Denagothian Plateau

The area known as the Denagothian Plateau encompasses the 7,000' high plateau that lies north of Wendar and west of Norwold. While the southern and eastern areas are covered with verdant evergreen trees that make up one of the oldest forests of the whole continent, the heart of the plateau is a windswept grassy plain where animals roam free. The northern and western parts are the most dangerous and the least inviting, since they encompass a dead forest, a large swampy region and ancient badlands that hide numerous monstrosities. The sinister Kingdom of Denagoth claims most of the region, although some areas of the plateau are not directly under its influence.

DENAGOTH (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, north of Wendar and west of Norwold and the Heldannic Territories.
NW

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

Population: 270,000, roughly 25% human and 75% humanoid; estimated demihuman (elf) population: 2,300.

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 Altheim dialects).

Coinage: Gold (gp), silver (sp); barter common.

Taxes: 30% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Theocratic dictatorship.

Industries: Hunting, raiding, mining, agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use).

Important Figures: Landryn Teriak a.k.a. the Shadow Lord (Overlord), Grumman (General), Durifern Widelarer (Clanmaster).

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 up of dead trees. Throughout the whole region the terrain is rocky and difficult to cultivate, if not impossible. The Abien Plains, in the central part of Denagoth, is the only area where the soil is somewhat able to produce crops and where cattle can be tended without particular problems. The northern zone is basically a rocky waste that gives way to swamps and frozen tundra. The animals commonly encountered in Denagoth are moose, elk, bears (all species, especially grizzlies), wolves (even dire wolves), wild boars, snakes and mountain lions. The land is a haven for humanoid races, and many tribes of orcs, hobgoblins, goblins, bugbears, gnolls and some ogres live in the foothills and on the highest peaks of the mountains, as well as in the forests. The Mengul Mountains are home to a vast variety of monstrous species, such as: snow apes, white apes, giant bats, dragons (white and blue), harpies, giant ferrets, sasquatches, and unicorns. Black dragons abound in the swamps and forests of the entire region, unchallenged masters of the draconic race inhabiting Denagoth.

Further Reading: All 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 the High Priestess of Denagoth 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 desire to cause mischief in the Old World; it is an ancient land with a proud history that only deserves to be acknowledged by the other important nations of the world.

In this brief commentary I will describe the northern region of Denagoth, that comprises the Malor Swamp and the so-called Denagothian Wastes, a barren, rocky wasteland full of crevasses and geysers. As usual, I have been allowed to travel there always escorted by a small group of soldiers gladly provided for my own protection by the Most High Priestess of the Church of Idris.

[Even this year the report arrived in perfect shape, even though persistent rumors coming from the north state that Professor Dove is in the hands of the dangerous forces of the Shadow Lord. We do not know how much of this has been written by his quill and how much has been later added or modified for propaganda by the Church of Idris. We only advise you, dear readers, to take everything written here with the benefit of doubt until we find out more. For more information on the Great Forest of Gelfron, the Abien Plains, the Dead Forest of Lothenar and the overall region, please refer to the previous Mystaran Almanacs, AC 1015, AC 1016 and AC 1017. Ed.]

The Land

Traveling north of the Lothenar Forest, far beyond the holy citadel known as Idris Tower, the traveler finds himself lost in the eerie marshes known as the Malor Swamp. A rather large area of quicksands, deadwood, sick pines and willow trees, this foggy swamp reminds me of the great Malpheggi Swamp located south of my homeland, Darokin. Many animal species [especially birds and amphibious animals, but there is next to no sign of mosquitoes and snakes, although other fastidious insects can be found. C. Dove.] populate this ecosystem, but unlike the Malpheggi Swamp, this region is not really a hot place. Quite the contrary: given the fact it is located so far north, and exposed to the icy winds coming from the northern wilds and the polar regions, the Malor Swamp is a cold and fetid place, where only the dirtiest and most stupid humanoids live [trolls and a few kobolds, tribes which have never submitted to Idris's faith and are constantly trying to harass people who venture in this area. C. Dove.]. Given the precarious state of the soil, the dangerous and renegade humanoid inhabitants, and a few voracious species of monsters and animals braving its murky waters and bogs, it is no surprise that nobody lives here and that there are no human settlements within a 10 mile radius of it.

North of the Malor Swamp lies what is commonly referred as the Denagothian Wastes, a vast area of barren hills, broken lands and insidious badlands filled with geysers. A well-patrolled road, which cuts across the Abien Plains, connects Idris Tower with the northernmost outpost of the Denagothian Kingdom, the ancient tower of Gereth Alinar. In fact, Gereth Alinar is the last civilized settlement one finds if he travels further northwards, since from then on only nomadic humanoids can be found, and they are not really as civilized as their southern brethren living in the Abien Plains. Even though, nominally, the Kingdom of Denagoth stretches far beyond Gereth Alinar, in practice the Shadow Army never ventures too far from that outpost, leaving hundreds of square miles completely unpatrolled and under the humanoids' sway [without counting other more fearsome monstrous inhabitants of the wastelands. C. Dove.].

Gereth Minar is a fortified keep rising on a stone hilltop and overlooking a small village crouched in a glen to the south of it. The fortress comprises a stone walled keep and a ring of military barracks that house the keep's garrison [nearly three hundred people of mixed race. C. Dobe.] as well as their facilities. Gereth Minar is indeed a sturdy building, similar to Idris Tower in architecture, but not as beautifully decorated [after all this is a military outpost, not the seat of the national faith. C. Dobe.]. Even though it is not as ancient as Idris Tower, Gereth Minar has a more interesting and troubled history, since it was built more than 300 years ago by one of the Essurian kings, Gereth. It then fell to the untamed northern barbarians [an ethnic group greatly feared in Denagoth, to which the old hero Henadin, who caused the downfall of the Essurian Kingdom, belongs. Despite all my researches, I have not been able to get any further information about these barbarians. C. Dobe.], and later was rebuilt by Gereth's son, Minnear, who renamed it Gereth's Pride [this is the actual translation of Gereth Minar. C. Dobe.]. Gereth Minar has stood ever since against any assaults made by the northern nomads and a few rebel humanoid tribes, and it is without doubt the most difficult assignment for any soldier in the Shadow Army, be it human or humanoid.

The People

Not much to say about the people living in the Malor Swamp, since next to nobody lives there. The Shadow Army stationed in Idris Tower regularly patrols the fringes of the swamp to catch dangerous monsters and criminals before they venture too far inside the Abien Plains or the Lothenar Forest, but they don't pursue anything or anybody into the swamp, unless they're ordered to by the high priestess herself. The humanoids living inside the Malor Swamp are as treacherous as they are voracious; they cannot be trusted. Some soldiers have told me that a great black wyrm also dwells in the heart of the swamp, but thanks to the power of Idris he has never ventured out of it, probably preferring to dine on the local fauna.

As for Gereth Minar, the soldiers manning the keep are typical Denagothians, deeply loyal to Idris and always following the orders of their leaders in a fanatical manner. They are suspicious of strangers, since they are unaccustomed to them [not many people travel to Gereth Minar and the few strangers they see during the year are always warring bands of humanoids or human raiders coming down from the north or from the surrounding hills. C. Dobe.], but as soon as you prove yourself a follower of Idris or a loyal Denagothian, you're welcome to stay in the village below the hill [no civilian is allowed inside the tower of Gereth Minar. C. Dobe.]. They speak the same language common throughout the plateau, which uses the old Essurian alphabet [Essuria was an ancient kingdom that encompassed the whole Denagothian Plateau for roughly five centuries. C. Dobe.], although many of them are incapable of writing. Since there are also many humanoids living in this region, listening to conversations held in orcish and bugbear is common enough, although the officers insist for everyone to use Denagothian when speaking to reinforce their sense of unity. 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 them represent what they were in their early ages, so they must be considered kin and tolerated [provided they have sworn fealty to Idris and the cause of Denagoth. C. Dobe.].

I cannot say much about the other human and humanoid inhabitants of the Denagothian Wastes, since I have not ventured into their territory for the sake of my own safety. What I can tell, based on the soldiers' words, is that these individuals are extremely violent, aggressive and resistant even to the harsh climate of this region, so they are fierce opponents not to be undervalued. Many monsters also

dwelling in this wasteland, chiefly among them clans of stone and hill giants, tribes of voracious ogres, huge burrowing creatures, packs of beastly scavengers and aerial predators like wyberns, which seem to dominate the skies here.

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 described the Shadow Lord as the sole ruler of Denagoth are false, since it is in fact a perfect theocracy ruled by the most wise High Priestess of Idris. The Shadow Lord is only the commander of the Denagothian army, and the rumors about his violence and ruthlessness have been exaggerated by the nearby Wendarians, since they still remember the wars made in the past centuries with the Kingdom of Essuria and blame the current Denagothian Kingdom for those. Aside from defending itself from the elven invasion of last year, Denagoth didn't attempt any invasion of the nearby lands during all these decades and only now is trying to end its isolation by sending emissaries and ambassadors to its neighboring countries to establish political and economic ties.

Don't Miss

If you are traveling this far, stay on the patrolled road that goes from Idris Tower to Gereth Minar if you don't want any problems. You will be stopped frequently at post houses by soldiers of the Shadow Army to check what your business is, but at least you will be safe from the monstrous dangers of the Malor Swamp and from the renegade tribes living in the northern Denagothian Wastes. There is nothing really interesting in this part of the country to justify a visit, anyway, only potential dangers.

Do Miss

The whole Malor Swamp is foggy and harbors many dangers in the form of quicksands and unseen entities, in addition to the visible monsters and the legendary black wyrm living here. You are advised to avoid it if you want to return home alive.

Also, don't venture too far from Gereth Minar once you're in the northern wild lands, since it is an insidious territory. Geysers abound in the badlands, as well as unknown poisonous plants and insects, and shifting trails and treacherous crevasses that open suddenly under one's feet. You can quickly become lost among all those rocky hills and canyons, and the worst thing that can happen to you then is to stumble into the numerous occupants of one of the many caves that dot these hills. They will not treat you so gently, and you can be sure you will be the special guest at their dinner table... served as the main course.

ATLAS OF THE SAVAGE COAST

Introduction to the Savage Coast

The Savage Coast is a frontier land, with continuous goblinoid invasions and squabbles between the local lords. Most of the land is in ruins and is mainly unexplored. Colonized over the centuries by the riff-raff of the Old World, most people are unscrupulous and the law of the jungle often prevails. The natives who lived there (goblinoids, savage rakasta and lupins, etc.) are none too friendly either, and are often hostile towards humans and demihumans.

Some of the natives are more civilized, such as the rakasta of Bellayne or the lupins of Renardie. In fact, along the Savage Coast, race is often ignored and non-humans can fit in easily to human society. Instead, nationality is the main source of pride, and several nations have had century long feuds in which there appears to be no end in sight.

In this land, the local lords make the rules, and others are poor and uneducated peasants who must follow their whim. Many an adventurer has broken free of this feudalism and wanders the land, without a home, in search of fortune and fame. There are more adventurers without loyalties on the Savage Coast than anywhere else on Mystara.

Unique to this land is a strange metal called red steel. This metal is as strong as normal steel, but much lighter, making it a prized possession by all warriors. Red steel is more precious than gold, and rulers have sacrificed entire armies to try and control its trade. Many grand quests have the goal of finding red steel, and many wars still go on because of it.

Finally, the entire land is falls under the sway of the dreaded Red Curse. This affliction deforms all those it affects, transforming them into hideous beasts. Even stranger, some of the inhabitants seem to have learned how to control this curse, gaining wondrous magical powers known as legacies. It is rumored that once you are affected by the Red Curse, you cannot leave the Savage Coast otherwise the curse will destroy you.

Adventure can be found by exploring the many ruins and searching for ancient artifacts. But on the Savage Coast, red steel and the mastery of legacies are the true keys to power and fame!

Located to the west of the Old World, the Savage Coast stretches almost 2,000 miles in length. Its southern shores lie against the Western Sea of Dread, while the west is blocked by Balu Bay. To the east, the Great Waste separates the Savage Coast from the Old World. Finally, the north is bordered by the Dzak Steppes, home of the endless hordes of goblinoids.

Correspondents for the Savage Coast

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

Snighmen Lodestar

Snighmen is a wicca [mage. Ed.] of Clan Lodestar from the flying city of Serraine. He is a minor member of the clan who is greatly interested in the cultures of the areas over which the city flies. Snighmen is an inquisitive young skygnome who is, whilst practical by gnome standards, still fond of sarcastic humor.

Snighmen makes a report of the kingdoms of Gobar and Suma'a during a trip he made there incognito during Flaurmont, AC 1015. [The report was passed on to the editors of this article through Matazumi, a resident we have contact with from the flying city. Ed.]

Hernando Cagliostro

Hernando is a refugee who fled Narvaez, apparently because of something to do with the inquisition there. He now studies magic in Ciudad Real, and has mastered several cold-related magic spells. He enjoys scholastic research and has a dislike toward the priests of Narvaez whom he claims hide the truth.

Hernando talks about his native Narvaez, as well as the baronies of Gargonia and Saragón.

Kr'kesh

Kr'kesh is a rather typical gurrash warrior who took a Nouveau Renardois captive during a raid. The captive was later freed by a lupin war party, but he died of his wounds not long thereafter. While he was dying he repeated to his fellow lupins the words of his captor, which reflect the view the gurrash have of the new nation of Nouvelle-Renardie.

Marina Takanitas

Marina Takanitas is one of the youngest on our team, and she brings us news from the Serpent Peninsula and the Savage Coast. Marina is a trader who hails from Kastelios, one of the biggest, and fastest-growing, port cities in the region.

A cheerful person, Marina is hard to miss in a crowd, but this exterior also serves to shield a very capable correspondent who will stop at nothing to get you, the reader, the ground-breaking stories of the Serpent Peninsula and the Savage Coast as they happen. No danger is too much for her, and, believe me, she knows how to use that short sword she carries!

Piotr Drobnjak

Adventurer and part-time merchant, Piotr is our correspondent for Slagovich and nearby states. A devout follower of Halab, the young Piotr has a deep knowledge of city-states' affairs.

Piotr describes us his hometown, Slagovich, and the mysterious land of Hule (this one just from bibliographic research).

Rikard Prospero

Former owner of the Poor Wizard's Almanac (property of TSR, the Thyatian Services and Reviews), the book that started the Mystaran Almanac series, Prospero now travels the lands of the Savage Coast, describing to us all the wonders he discovers.

This year, the mysterious yet meticulous wizard once more describes to us a few of the Savage Baronies along the Gulf of Hule.

Atlas

ALMARRÓN (Estado de)

Location: East of Gulf of Hule, north of Cimarron, south of Gargaña, west of El Grande Carrascal. SC

Area: 6,450 sq. mi. (16,705 sq. km.).

Population: 7,000, including 4,200 in the capital Ciudad Tejillas. Roughly 92% human, 5% elven, 3% half-elven.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: Oro (gp), dies (sp), centa (cp).

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

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Mining (silver), coffee, tobacco, furniture, jewelry.

Important Figures: Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor (Barón), Esteban “El Salvador” (Former Tyrant).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate/subtropical climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, alligators, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Dangerous monsters include gnoll raiders from El Grande Carrascal. Normal animals or plants with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Rikard Prospero.

Almarrón is a small nation that is part of Savage Baronies. Collectively called Los Guardianos, because they guard the rest of the Savage Coast from Hule, the people of the baronies are well respected by the other nations, even though there is hardly any contact between them.

The Land

The western half of Almarrón’s territory is a rocky, inhospitable hill country. If it wasn’t for the presence of the large silver mines at Sierra del Plata, the land would be almost useless.

A large fertile plain, fed by the Sierra Borgosa, occupies the heart of the nation. This is where the majority of the population lives, in three main villages (Costella, Paso Dorado, and Ciudad Tejillas) and several scattered homesteads.

Forested slopes and cliffs guard Almarrón’s shores, protecting the nation from pirates and sea raiders.

Located at the mouth of the Sierra Borgosa, Ciudad Tejillas, the capital, is a center for commerce and education for the nation. This town is rather lively thanks to the numerous celebrations thrown by the barón. It is filled with good taverns and inns and even has a theater and a museum. While the hardworking attitude of the commoners gives quiet and peaceful days, the boisterous lifestyles of the

local swashbucklers makes for an exciting nightlife. Despite this, the town is fairly safe—adventurers who live in Ciudad Tejillas are protective of its people and its reputation.

The People

The humans of Almarrón, like the rest of the baronies, tend to be moderately dark-skinned. The Red Curse also gives them red overtones. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair. A few elves and dwarves live in Almarrón, but they are very rare.

Afflicted within Almarrón are well treated by friends and families, and they suffer little prejudice from others. Most Almarrónians view the Red Curse as something that will affect others and simply ignore it in their everyday lives.

The people of Almarrón have gone through so many forms of government that they no longer care about politics and would rather be left alone and leave running the nation to the barón. So far, the current barón seems to have won their respect and has slowly begun to enlighten his nation into a cultural center.

More so than elsewhere, Almarrónians enjoy their freedom, having lost it several times. Swashbucklers and local heroes who fought against the tyrant Esteban are very common amongst them. The continuous wars and revolts have left most families relatively poor. Luckily, Barón Maximiliano provides priests and cinnabryl for those who cannot afford it, keeping the number of afflicted very low.

Finally, the use of Torreóner mercenaries by Don Esteban during the war has left a bad feeling toward Torreóners among most of the populace.

Recent History

Founded in AC 936, Almarrón was another barony led by its noble family. Corruption among the nobles led to a period of expansionism and conquest. Soon enough, Almarrón started losing its battles, and most conquered lands declared independence. With the separation of Cimarron in AC 980, the people of Almarrón had had enough and overthrew their barón. They installed a democratic system inspired by ancient Traldar forms of government. In AC 994, a dictator name Don Esteban “El Salvador” took control of the nation and began collecting the nation’s wealth for himself.

In AC 1006, Almarrón sided against Harbaez during the Inquisition Wars. The wars ended when the baronies united to fight off Hule. The next year, the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal took advantage of Almarrón’s weakened state and invaded. They were routed by the end of the year, but only after destroying Castillo de Tordegena.

By next year, AC 1008, rebels finally ousted Don Esteban thanks to many troubles the land had during the past few years. The people decided to return to the traditional nobility rulership rather than allow another tyrant to take power. Hence, Maximiliano, the only living descendant of the former noble rulers from long ago, was name Barón Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor.

In AC 1009, the Red Curse, which was centered in a few locations just outside the Savage Baronies, mysteriously spread during the Week Without Magic and covered most of the Savage Coast, including all the Savage Baronies. The people soon had to learn to cope with outbreaks of the Red Curse and the creation of new afflicted. Most nobles scrambled to find priests or cinnabryl to help their people, and inheritors made themselves public to better spread their stored cinnabryl.

In AC 1010, many believed that miners had discovered the Mannequin of Ixion, the legendary Oltec artifact that would prevent any army in the world from invading the nation. It turned out to be nothing more than a black vessel for a deadly creature. Still, events during this time caused the death of Maximiliano's honorbound leader, as well as the resignation of Costa, the honorbound who would have replaced him. [Those desiring more information are referred to the novel *The Black Vessel*. Ed.]

In AC 1017 Don Esteban took advantage of the war against Harbaez to reclaim part of Almarrón, forcing Barón Maximiliano to retreat from Saragón to drive the usurper out of his position in Ciudad Tejillas.

BELLAYNE (Kingdom of)

Location: East of Herath and Shazak, West of Renardie. SC

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

Population: Approx. 475,000 (roughly 75% rakasta, with some dwarves and humans concentrated mainly in the north).

Languages: Rakastayne (official), Slag (Savage Coast trade tongue).

Coinage: Crown (5 gp), pound sterling (gp), quid (cp), shilling (sp), penny (cp).

Taxes: An income tax of 20% is paid by every subject, plus a 10% sales tax on all items considered to be luxuries (i.e. not food, clothing, or cinnabryl).

Government Type: Monarchy advised by a parliament made up of elected commoners and the Bellaynish nobility.

Industries: Coal mining, wool, tea, fishing, metal working, news, liquor.

Important Figures: James III (King of Bellayne), Humphrey the Exalted (Archbishop of Kittings), Marston the Just (Archbishop of Leominster), Perceval the Iron Clawed (Duke of Pawcester), Mortimer the Defiant (Earl of Penwick), Rodney the Intrepid (Earl of Theeds), Meghan the Gaunt (Viscountess of Furfield), Francis Blythe-Jackson (Leader of the Wyndham Party in the House of Commons), Benjamin Treeby (Leader of the Royal Party in the House of Commons), Mewsbury Fitzbagpuss (Knight of the Bath).

Flora and Fauna: Bellayne shows the marks of five hundred years of civilization, and so until recently was relatively devoid of interesting creatures. More recently nearly successful goblinoid invasions have led to groups of goblinoids roaming the northern fringes of Bellayne, while the Red Curse has spawned a number of degenerate beasts. Creatures commonly found in Bellayne include animal herds (sheep, cows), bears, wolves, boars, giant rats, giant weasels, feliquines, various goblinoids and dragons. Being a relatively temperate land, Bellayne hosts a wide variety of deciduous trees (including oak, birch, and yew) and various types of shrubbery; the kingdom is well known for its roses, and some aristocrats have been known to spend vast sums of money to cultivate the most expansive and luxurious rose gardens.

Further Reading: Red Steel boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

For this year's contributions to the almanac (thankfully far away from Mibosia for the most part!), my journeys took me to the western reaches of Brum. When I heard that I would be going to Bellayne, I thought I would faint! The stories one hears of the place! It always rains. The people are insufferably stuffy and rigid. The food is terrible and bland. The list goes on. Fortunately, my experiences in this kingdom have proven many of the rumors to be just that—false. The Bellaynish, however, have nothing to teach the Kastelians about seafood, but I digress...

The Land

Bellayne is a small but heavily populated kingdom, forming the westernmost of the kingdoms of the central Savage Coast. The countryside consists of a mixture of rolling hills, open grasslands and forests, blanked by farms and dotted with settlements ranging from tiny hamlets to fairly sizable cities.

The People

The native rakasta of Bellayne form a curious double society—nomadic rakasta who range throughout the kingdom and the Bazak Steppes to the north preserve the traditional rakasta culture, shared with other rakasta in the rest of Mystara and beyond, while the city and town dwellers have borrowed the culture of a race of humans who once lived in the area now covered by Bellayne. In recent years there has been some tension between the two factions as the ever-expanding settlements force the nomads to range further north into goblinoid territory.

Present day Bellayne has a feudal system of government, as well as a fine system of justice and law. But this is somewhat misleading, as even the city moggies remain warriors at heart—they have simply managed to gain control over their emotions.

Recent History

The rakasta of Bellayne, like the lupins of neighboring Renardie, were pushed out of the northern wilderness towards the coast by the goblinoids of the steppes. Here the rakasta discovered Bellayne, a nation of mostly humans with some dwarves and elves who were just beginning to develop a system of national laws and justice. Some rakasta settled here while most remained wanderers—not long after most of the humans and many demihumans were slain by a mysterious plague. Those that remained invited the rakasta into Bellayne, which began the modern history of the kingdom.

While the kingdom has had some perilous times in the past, the strong warrior tradition of the rakasta have kept the goblinoids at bay, while a disciplined and loyal citizenry have enabled the kingdom to prosper. Lupins and rakasta competed in the past for territory, and this has caused a certain degree of suspicion and rivalry between the two peoples. However they are in the main united against the common threat of the northern goblinoids—and in the years of peace rakasta have developed a taste for fine Renardois wines, while the lupins have come to appreciate Bellaynish wool, tea and liquor.

The Kingdom of Bellayne only recently gained a new monarch, King James III. James makes no secret of his longings to make Bellayne more traditional, in the vein of what he sees to be true rakasta culture, and has succeeded in irritating his parliament to the point which there have been clashes of arms—the opening shot of a civil war.

Don't Miss

The capital city of Leominster (pop. 30,300, mostly rakasta, many elves, some humans, demihumans and tortles) contains the headquarters of many companies of honorbound, as well as the famed heralds of Bellayne. These illustrious bards provide the traditional Bellaynish entertainment—they gather information and relay it to the common people, often using illusions and magic. The heraldic guilds are so eager to find news that they will often organize spectacular events or send some of their best adventurers on amazing quests around the world. The guilds also write colorful manuscripts detailing their stories and sell them to the nobility in Bellayne and elsewhere. Different guilds have different styles of work; for example, the Company of the Times consider themselves defenders of the public right to be informed, while the Company of the Sun members search for secrets and share them with the guild, selling them for a price and perhaps seeking favors by letting involved parties know that the

information has leaked. Needless to say, such activities ensure that the politics of Bellayne are particularly lively. Heralds all carry writs of identification or even a guild uniform, and enjoy certain privileges under Bellaynish law.

The word of the monarch of Bellayne is considered law, but the monarch works with both a council of nobles and religious leaders, and a council of rakasta elected from the common people. There is a strong code of national laws, but the various dominions of Bellayne are responsible for the enforcement of those laws. This is, of course, not nearly as egalitarian as the Kastelian political system, but I suppose what works for the locals is good enough.

Other areas of note include the port city of Theeds, home of the Bellaynish navy as well as the Royal University of Theeds; the city of Norchester, which is populated mainly by dwarven coal miners; and the Forest Marches of Wyndham, which form the westernmost border of the kingdom, and are home to various longbow-equipped bandits who have in the past repeatedly rebelled against the monarch's autocratic rule. Wyndham is thought of as a dangerous bandit haven by the common Bellaynish folk.

Do Miss

As mentioned above, the main place I suggest you avoid in Bellayne is the area surrounding the Forest Marches of Wyndham, but more specifically the western reaches, where it borders the Bayou (where lizard-kin live, or so I am told), and the dark forests of Herath.

CIMARRON COUNTY

Location: West of Gulf of Hule, southern edge of the coast, south of Almarrón. SC

Area: 7,984 sq. mi. (20,680 sq. km.).

Population: 18,000, including 11,500 in Smokestone City. Roughly 60% human, 25% dwarven, 10% hin (stouts), and 5% turtle.

Languages: Slag.

Coinage: Oro (gp), medio (ep), dies (sp), centa (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax, 10% sales tax in taverns, and 10% inheritance tax which includes money made gambling.

Government Type: Independent “barony” part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Mining (cinnabryl), production of smokepowder and wheellocks (and flintlocks), ale, saloons, gambling.

Important Figures: John of the Main (“Duke”).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate/subtropical climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Dangerous monsters include goblin and gnoll hordes found scattered throughout the Bushwack Prairie and El Grande Carrascal. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Rikard Prospero.

Cimarron is a small county that is part of Savage Baronies, despite the fact that they call their ruler a duke. Collectively called Los Guardianos, because they guard the rest of the Savage Coast from Hule, the people of the baronies are well respected by the other nations, even though there is hardly any contact between them.

The Land

Cimarron is mostly dry grasslands and farmland with the occasional forest and hilly area. The soil is not very fertile, and compared to the other baronies, could almost be considered a desert. The flora that does manage to survive is stunted compared to most other plants.

Smokestone City is known for its saloons and gambling halls, as well as the rowdy crowds such establishments attract. Most hin of Cimarron live in Smokestone City. Old Fort is a town built atop an old Thyatian colonial fort from long ago.

The People

The humans of Cimarron, like the rest of the baronies, tend to be moderately dark-skinned. The Red Curse also gives them red overtones. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair. Cimarron has several hill dwarves living among them, and this is the only barony in which hin (of the stout variety) are known to live.

Afflicted in Cimarron are often ignored by the upper class who can afford cinnabryl or priestly protection. Because of this, they tend to form their own little enclaves isolated from the normal people.

Cimarron is well known for its rowdy gauchos and the fact that almost everyone carries a wheellock pistol. The inhabitants are fiercely independent and prefer to let everyone take care of themselves and not get involved in other people's business.

Cimarrons are proud of their national trade guild, known as the LB Trading Company. Although there is no relation between the LB Trading Company and the government of Cimarron, most people, especially non-Cimarrons, think the two are indeed working together. This company is responsible for exporting the nation's smokepowder and wheellocks, while importing much-needed food. The LB Trading Company has made several outposts throughout the Savage Coast, including the towns of Dunwick (near Renardie) and Richland (near the Orc Head's Peninsula), and most other nations consider these outpost cities as colonies of Cimarron, which is a logical conclusion since most humans in these towns are Cimarrons.

Recent History

In AC 900, Thyatian colonists created the nation of Narvaez, including the town of Nueva Esperanza. In AC 905, Nueva Esperanza declared independence from Narvaez, along with many other baronies. This lasted until Almarrón conquered the town in AC 939 and absorbed the surrounding territory.

Finally, in AC 980, the rebel General Cimarron led his people to victory and Nueva Esperanza declared independence from Almarrón. His success was due mainly to the secret production of wheellock pistols and smokepowder, as well as Almarrón's preoccupation with trying to invade Garguña. The new nation called itself Cimarron County, and Nueva Esperanza was renamed to Smokestone City. In AC 990, Cimarron ratified the Treaty of Tampicos and was accepted by the other nations.

Cimarron fought against Narvaez during the Inquisition Wars that started in AC 1006. This war ended when Hule attacked the baronies, forcing them to unite together to throw out the invader. The gnolls of El Grande Carrascal took advantage of their weakened state and invaded Cimarron as well as other baronies in AC 1007. They were eventually routed by the end of the year, but at the cost of General Cimarron's life. His son John "The Duke" Cimarron inherited the county.

In AC 1009, the Red Curse, which was centered in a few locations just outside the Savage Baronies, mysteriously spread during the Week Without Magic and covered most of the Savage Coast, including all the Savage Baronies. The people soon had to learn to cope with outbreaks of the Red Curse and the creation of new afflicted. Most nobles scrambled to find priests or cinnabryl to help their people, and inheritors made themselves public to better spread their stored cinnabryl.

AC 1010 brought the invasion of goblinoids from the Bushwack Prairies, but again "The Duke" chased them away. In AC 1013, Cimarron agreed to sanction Narvaez and forbid its merchants or the LB Trading Company from selling smokepowder to that barony. In AC 1016 Cimarrons rode to the help of the gnolls of El Grande Carrascal, and have been fighting the goblins of the Bushwack Prairie ever since. Cimarron also lost its colony of Richland to the Zuyevans and their Renardois allies in AC 1016.

Don't Miss

The most popular establishment of Cimarron County is the Red Steel Saloon, located in Smokestone City. This is a rowdy tavern with dancers, gambling, and many brawls. People claim that at least one showdown (duel with wheellocks or the new flintlocks) occurs in front of the saloon every day. The Red Steel Saloon is the place to be if you want to make a quick reputation in Cimarron; or earn a quick death. Either way, people will learn your name.

GARGOÑA (Baronía de)

Location: West of Gulf of Hule, north of Almarrón, south of Narvaez, and east of Saragón. SC

Area: 7,468 sq. mi. (19,340 sq. km.).

Population: 14,000, including 11,700 in Ciudad Real.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: Real (pp), oro (gp), dies (sp), centa (cp).

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

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council, partially occupied by Narvaez.

Industries: Arts (music, poems, painting and sculptures), diplomats and political advisers.

Important Figures: None.

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, alligators, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Dangerous monsters include various giant lizards and undead found in the swamps of la Delta de Pozaverde. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Hernando Cagliostro.

Gargoña is recognized as the center of culture in the Savage Baronies, a fact affirmed by the location of the unique university of the coast within its borders. Admission to this grand university is free in return for a promise of future tithes to the nation of Gargoña for the rest of your working life. Since Gargoña is generally viewed as politically neutral, its renowned scholars and graduates are found throughout most of the nations of the Savage Coast as advisers or teachers.

The Land

Although about the same size as any other baronía, Gargoña actually has little land for its people to live on. Almost a third of la baronía is inhospitable swampland located at la Delta de Pozaverde, the mouth of the famous Río Copos. On the bright side, this swamp makes approaching the towns of Gargoña from the sea very difficult, preventing attacks from the sea baronies.

The Río Copos crosses la baronía from west to east, and most of the towns and homes of the people can be found along its shores. After about 15 kilometers (10 miles) from the shores, dense forests dominate, and they are sparsely inhabited by any locals. These bosques cover about one half of la baronía, and serve as borders with friendly Almarrón and the religious fanatics of Narvaez.

Ciudad Real is the capital of la baronía, and is located just after la Delta de Pozaverde, where Río Guadiana merges with Río Copos. Skiffs powered by oar ply the waterways of the delta, ferrying commerce to and from seagoing ships, allowing access to the lucrative sea trade.

The People

Gargoñans are typically poets, artists, and scholars. Many dream of adventure and excitement, but only a few actually give it a try (and most give it up after their first tries). Those that do adventure are some of the most swashbuckling souls in the baronies. They are easily offended when people claim that Gargoñans cannot fight and are eager to prove them wrong.

To Gargoñans, the Red Curse is a dreaded disease that must be stopped. Many, especially those with an afflicted in the family, try to raise money to fund research into the curse. Luckily, the few priests found in Gargoña are devoted to stopping it and they use their spells to keep the number of afflicted very low within the nation.

Recent History

The history of Gargoña, like so many of the other baronies, is sad and bloody. Originally part of la Baranía de Narbaez, the southern half of that nation separated and formed a new Baranía de Sotto in AC 913. Cities of this Baranía de Sotto soon declared their own independence, causing a civil war. Ribera (which included Ciudad Real) won its bid for independence in AC 926. Gargoña (which only included la Castillo de Pardalupe) finally declared its independence in AC 934. Sotto retaliated and invaded Gargoña. By AC 936, Sotto was soundly defeated and Gargoña had conquered its parent baranía. Gargoña released its claim on Sotto, and the population reorganized themselves into la Estado de Almarrón. In AC 977, Almarrón again went on a spree of conquest. Gargoña merged with the nation of Ribera, keeping the name Gargoña, and was able to repulse the invaders in AC 979. Baronesa Esperanza was crucial in negotiating a peace treaty with Narbaez during the war of AC 1006 so that the baronies could fight off Hule. The fact that her daughter is married to the son of the racist Don Hugo of Narbaez helped in the negotiations.

As with the entire Savage Coast, the Red Curse spread through Gargoña in AC 1009 during the dreaded Week Without Magic.

Gargoña had thankfully agreed to the sanction of selling smokepowder to Narbaez, until Narbaez invaded Gargoña in AC 1016, and executed Baronesa Esperanza.

GUADALANTE (Estado de)

Location: West of Saragón, north of El Grande Carrascal, south and east of the Pazak Steppes.
SC

Area: 11,300 sq. mi. (25,265 sq. km.).

Population: 7,500, including 6,300 in Ciudad Huelca.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: Oro (gp), dies (sp), centa (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Cattle and horses.

Important Figures: Cristobal "El Barbudo" Bigotillos y Copetez (Señor).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Dangerous monsters include the vast number of goblinoids that raid from the Pazak Steppes. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Rikard Prospero.

Guadalante is a small nation that is part of Savage Baronies. Collectively called Los Guardianos, because they guard the rest of the Savage Coast from Hule, the people of the baronies are well respected by the other nations, even though there is hardly any contact between them.

The Land

Guadalante is nothing more than a large expanse of grassland that serves as grazing land for the numerous cattle and horses found in the barony. Only the Rio Copos and Rio Negro break the monotonous terrain. The land along these rivers is fertile farmlands that produce food for the nation.

Scattered throughout this land are the haciendas (households) of the various rich cattle-trading families. Only two communities exist in Guadalante, most families preferring to stay in their own fortified haciendas. Ciudad Huelca is the capital, boasting a population of just over 6,000, while Dos Cabezas Hacienda is a small village of about 300. The few crafters, merchants, and laborers of the barony come from these two communities.

The People

The humans of Guadalante, like the rest of the baronies, tend to be moderately dark-skinned. The Red Curse also gives them red overtones. Most humans have straight, black or deep red hair. Other races are rare in Guadalante, and goblinoids, rakasta, and lupins are disliked. If any other race is present enough to be called Guadalantan, it would be the occasional turtle who works in the haciendas of the wealthy merchants.

Guadalantans are crude ruffians who simply cannot appreciate the finer things in life. Most would rather sleep on the ground, outside beneath the stars than in a warm, comfortable bed at a local inn.

Guadalantans are proud of their freedom and will do anything to keep it. They are individualistic, and most take care of themselves. The gauchos are the respected heroes here; they are warriors of the ranges who ride horses and wield wheellock pistols with skill. They are by far the roughest, crudest, and rowdiest bunch in the entire Savage Baronies.

Guadalantans ignore the Red Curse until it affects them directly. Since cinnabryl is rare and expensive, most keep the Red Curse at bay by visiting the local clergy for a maintain spell. Afflicted are treated as less than human in Guadalante, so they often live in their own houses far away from any human community. Some haciendas are composed entirely of afflicted.

Recent History

Guadalante has had a very peaceful past when compared with the other baronies. Guadalante was founded in AC 985 when the Baronies of Copetez and Bigotillos united together when their respective heirs were married.

In AC 992, Guadalante fought with Saragón over watering rights, but after one quick battle the two nations came to an agreement with the Treaty of Cortesillas.

Guadalante remained quiet until AC 1006 when it joined forces with the other southern baronies to defend against Narvaez and its allies. It then joined all the baronies to repulse the invading forces of Hule.

In AC 1007, goblinoids invaded the land and caused much damage to numerous haciendas of Guadalante. Finally, in AC 1009, a week without magic released the Red Curse into the area, and people were forced to adapt to the curse by finding cinnabryl or begging priests to cast a maintain spell on them.

Since then, Guadalante has minded its own business and been left alone by the other baronies, just as it prefers, though it finally had to cooperate with its neighbors to stop Narvaez's expansionism.

NARVAEZ (Baronía de)

Location: Northwest of Saragón, north of Gargaña, south of Torreón. SC

Area: 15,477 sq. mi. (40,085 sq. km.).

Population: 16,000, including 12,300 in Puerto Morillos.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: Oro (gp), dies (sp), centa (cp).

Taxes: 35% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Agriculture, mercenaries.

Important Figures: Hugo “El Despiadado” de Narvaez y Montoya (Barón).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Dangerous monsters include the vast number of goblinoids that raid from the Pazak Steppes and from an unnamed swamp on the coast of the gulf. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Hernando Cagliostro.

Narvaez. The name of this baronía alone is enough to cause fear in most people, and with reason. Narvaezans have always be intent on conquest of all the Savage Baronies, and they intend for everyone to worship the flames of Ixion and his Inquisitor.

The Land

Narvaez is the largest baronía of the Gulf of Hule. It is mostly fertile farmland situated in the valley of Rio Guadiana. Forested hills mark the borders on either side of the valley. Many villages can be found along the river, but most have been destroyed and are nothing more than ruins thanks to the holy war Narvaez embarked upon a decade ago. Only two main towns are still left in that region: Paz del Sol and Punto-Eseobar.

The southern part of Narvaez turns eastward and goes all the way to the sea, where Puerto Morillos stands. This is the capital of the nation, where Barón Hugo rules with an iron fist and his Alatónes thugs enforce his laws. Life in Puerto Morillos is very subdued, as to try and be lively and entertaining marks one out for the dreaded inquisitors, who will most assuredly come and visit.

North of this stretch of land, and east of Rio Guadiana, lies las Colinas Grutescas and an unnamed swamp. Bandits and religious refugees have made many a hideout in this area, and it is rumored to be filled with ruins and ancient treasures.

The People

Narvaezans are an oppressed people who have no freedom to do as they please. The dreaded inquisitors and their goddess, aptly named the Inquisitor, make sure that everyone is extremely devoted to Ixion. Those believed to have performed the slightest heresy are burned at the stake.

The populace is heavily taxed so the barón can afford to build his military forces. With these, he insures that there are no revolts in his nation, and enforces the worship of Ixion. Many such mercenaries even serve abroad, although most other countries are afraid to hire them because of their religious convictions. Those that do serve outside of Narvaez must still pay taxes to the barón or they will be declared heretics.

The barón even exports the food of the commoners to other nations for money, often leaving them starving in his own baronía. Then El Despiadado [The Despised. Ed.] wonders why he has so many revolts and has to pay for so many soldiers. The famous Matones, the elite guards of Narvaez, are nothing more than thugs who take pleasure in bullying those weaker than they are. And any who complain to the officials are soon found burning at the stakes; the inquisitors find their devotion in Ixion to be lacking merely days afterwards.

Narvaezans view afflicted as those punished by the Immortals, in particular by Ixion. Since cinnabryl is rare in Narvaez, only the clerics of Ixion can keep the Red Curse at bay with their maintain spells. Those who become afflicted are therefore viewed as those who have not been faithful to the church and therefore suffer the punishment they deserve. What I believe is even worse is that the afflicted themselves, so caught up in the religion of Ixion, believe that they are to blame for their curse. What kind of religion puts such false and destructive ideas into the heads of its own people?

These days, afflicted are automatically viewed as heretics and are to be killed on sight. Also, druids and mages are equally viewed as heretics, since they obviously worship other sources of powers for their spells. It is because of my arcane studies that I was forced to flee my own homeland.

Recent History

Narvaez was the first baronía along the Savage Coast, created many years ago by Ispan [a group of Thyatians. Ed.] colonists at the turn of the last century. They claimed the entire coast of the Gulf of Hule where almost all the other baronies now lie.

Soon after its creation, several towns declared their independence and formed their own baronies. Then, in AC 913, the first barón died and the nation was divided in two by his two heirs. The northern baronía remained Narvaez while the southern one became la Baronía de Sotto. Over the next decades, Sotto fell apart to numerous civil wars and eventually became what are known as Gargoña, Almarrón, and Cimarron.

Meanwhile, Narvaez itself was facing many revolts and declarations of independence as well. Tired of these secessions, the barón started building his forces and attacked the rebellious towns. By AC 937, Narvaez had reclaimed all its lands, not including those that were given to Sotto. El barón continued to build his forces to prevent any other uprisings. Narvaez became known for its infantry and military throughout the baronies. They held their land and remained peaceful until the next century.

Then in AC 1005, Narvaez fell into civil war over their religion. El barón managed to unite his people in AC 1006 by claiming that it was the other nations which were heretics, uniting the factions into a holy war against the rest of the baronies. Correón, Texeiras and Vilaverde joined Narvaez against the other baronies. This war ended when Hule invaded, forcing the barons to work together or lose all their lands.

Near the end of AC 1009, the Red Curse spread throughout the land and many Narvaezans became afflicted. This has begun causing many troubles within la baronía, and many believe that another

religious civil war is inevitable. In AC 1014, Barón Hugo began stockpiling smokepowder, and many feared that la baronía would again start a spree of conquests and expansion. In consequence, they enacted sanctions that thankfully forbade the export of smokepowder to Narvaez. Unfortunately this hasn't stopped Barón Hugo, who attacked and conquered most of Gargaña in AC 1016; he then tried to conquer more of the Savage Baronies, but faced with an alliance of the baronies he was forced to accept peace, at least temporarily.

Don't Miss

The one thing I enjoy in Narvaez is to see the daring swashbucklers in Puerto Morillos. They wear masks and go about taunting the inquisitors, the priests of Ixion, Los Matónes, and even el barón. Sadly, many of them have been killed and burned at the stake, but just as many always manage to escape and harass the fanatical Narvaezans even more.

Do Miss

Unless you are willing to become a near-slave to the whims of the Matónes and the inquisitors, I recommend avoiding Narvaez as much as possible. If you must go, stay in small villages where you will be harder to find.

NOUVELLE-RENARDIE (Colonie de)

Location: In the Bayou, south of Ator, north of Herath, northeast of the Wallaroo Grasslands.
SC

Area: 2,216 sq. mi. (5,741 sq. km.).

Population: 25,000, including Le Vieux Carré (capital, pop. 3,000), La Nouvelle Daens (pop. 1,800), Les Tentés-sur-Bancs (pop. 800). 80% are lupins, the rest are humans and demihumans (mostly elves) from Torreón, and a few lizard-kin.

Language: Renardois, Lupin, Espa.

Coinage: Roi (pp), renard (gp), écu (sp), sou (cp).

Taxes: Income tax of 20%, plus a tithe of 10% for the Church of Pflarr.

Government Type: Colony of Renardie, made independent by the Edit de Loubines in AC 1013. The colony is ruled by a Renardois governor, but the Church of Pflarr has a lot of influence, and growing.

Industries: Exotic skins, furs, and animals, spices, rice, sugar cane, fishing, smithing.

Important Figures: Hugues Leget (Bourgmestre).

Flora and Fauna: Nouvelle-Renardie, typical of the Bayou region, is filled with many forms of aquatic, and semi-aquatic life. Along the coast, vast stands of mangrove straddle the boundary between land and sea, their roots sheltering all types of fish and amphibians. On the more elevated patches of land, the plant life consists mainly of willows and quick-growing poplars, mixed with the occasional oak. Nouvelle-Renardie is notable in that, due to its swampy nature, there is very little undergrowth, save for mosses, lily pads, and tall grasses growing out of the stagnant ponds, lakes, and rivers. Many varieties of monstrous plants are thought to grow here, although detailed surveys have yet to be conducted.

Those animals that thrive in the swamps are those that can live in both land and water. Thus, there are all types of frogs, newts, insects, water snakes, and alligators present here. Along the coast, manatees have been sighted, though these are quite rare. Living in the forested canopy are many varieties of bird, as well as squirrels and other small tree-dwelling mammals. Deep within the swamps are known to exist giant alligators and insects, as well as the gator men.

Further Reading: Nouvelle-Renardie and the Bayou by Bruce Heard, Nouvelle Renardy by Tristan Dunigan.

Description by Kr'kesh.

I like sneaking on unsuspecting furry beasts. Good snacks.

The Land

Them live in ours bayou. Them came to ours swamp. We gonna kill and eat them, and destroy theirs cities.

The People

Them are food for the gurrash. Ours shamans said Goron sent the warm-blooded furry beasts so we can feast on theirs juicy meat. Also to challenge ours skills as hunters. We feast lots. Sometimes we keep one alive, as offering to Her, and Her shamans.

Them build cities on shoals where we can't sneak on to them. Them swim in wood pieces that we can capsize to get to the meat.

Recent History

Them sent by Goron to ours swamps. We killed and ate many. Them built cities so we can't prey on them.

Them came from Goron's home, and after we eat them all and succeed at Goron's challenge, we gonna make offerings to Goron again, and She gonna reward us with Her presents. Until we probe ourselves to Her by beating Her minions, we gonna be denied gifts from Goron.

Don't Miss

Them good. Try one.

Do Miss

Them capture ours alligators pets to train fighting we. Sometimes an alligator is more skillful and gets its deserved snack after all.

SARAGÓN (Baronía de)

Location: East of Guadalupe, north of El Grande Carrascal, west of Garguña and Narvaez. SC

Area: 8,757 sq. mi. (22,680 sq. km.).

Population: 8,000, including 6,600 in Ciudad Matacán.

Languages: Espa.

Coinage: Oro (gp), dies (sp), centa (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax.

Government Type: Independent barony part of the Treaty of Tampicos and Signatory Council.

Industries: Sages and knowledge.

Important Figures: Balthazar de Montejo y Aranjuez (Barón).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its warm temperate climate, including kudzu, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, plains grasses, deer, armadillos, prairie dogs, turkeys, and eagles. Dangerous monsters include goblinoids that raid from the Dzak Steppes. Normal animals with Legacies can also be very dangerous.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Hernando Cagliostro.

Saragón is one of the three enlightened states of the baronies. Along with Garguña and Almarrón, its rulers promote philosophy, arts, and education among its people. Saragón is also famous in its role of defending the baronies from invasions from the Dzak Steppes thanks to la Careta de la Barrera [The Barrier Mask. Ed.], an artifact of the Immortal Ixion that repulses enemy forces that approach it. A second artifact, the Bracers of Forbiddance, enhances the Barrier Mask's already great powers.

The Land

Saragón is mostly composed of prairies that lie along Rio Maldito and Rio Copos. The western borders run along la Bosque de las Sombras (the Forest of Phantoms), woods rumored to be haunted by the legions of soldiers who died fighting the gnolls who once inhabited the forest.

Saragón has three baronets, minor lords who represent each one region of la baronía. The Baronet of Aranjuez represents the north, while the baronet of Montejo hails from the southern parts. The Baronet of Saragón comes from the central area of the nation.

The People

Saragóners are an enlightened people, much like Garguñans, due mainly to the good education they receive from the nobles. Magics and scientists are very common here, and are in fact renowned throughout the baronies as the wisest sages of the Savage Coast. Many here study the Red Curse and are trying to understand it better, and possibly defeat it if possible.

Also common in Saragón are the inheritors. This is due to the fact that the original inheritors all came from this nation. In fact, Baronet Don Luis de Manzanas is one of those original inheritors.

Because of this longer use of Legacies in the area, Saragón has more red steel and cinnabryl than most other nations.

Despite this high concentration of cinnabryl, most people use the priestly maintain spell to keep the Red Curse at bay. This is partially because of cinnabryl's high price, and partially because they have well thought about the consequences of running out of cinnabryl. Afflicted are therefore rare as even the children of the land understand the properties of the dreaded Red Curse. Those that are afflicted are treated no differently than someone with any other disease or wound; say someone missing a leg or an arm.

Recent History

Saragón has had a relatively peaceful history, and this is perhaps one of the reasons it is an enlightened state. The nation was formed in AC 966 when the Baronies of Montejo and Aranjuez united after several years of working together to defeat encroaching goblinoids and gnolls. Saragón remained peaceful except for a small dispute over watering rights with Guadalante throughout most of its history.

In AC 993, adventurers found the Barrier Mask that has helped keep the nation safe since then. AC 1006 brought the holy wars in which Saragón united with other baronies to fight against Narvaez. As is well known, this battle ended when all the baronies united to fight off Hule. Then, in AC 1007, goblinoids from the steppes invaded, but were subsequently repulsed as well.

At the end of AC 1009, magic failed for a week, and there was much commotion in the nation. Goblinoids took advantage of the failure of the Barrier Mask to attack Manzanas's tower and destroyed it. Also, this is when the dreaded Red Curse spread throughout the land.

In AC 1010, Luis de Manzanas had a new castillo constructed, but was then challenged by the inheritor Balazar. The troubles caused by this challenge eventually led to the discovery of the Bracers of Forbiddance, which helped repulse another goblinoid invasion led by Balazar. This new artifact, along with the Barrier Mask, are in la possession of Don Luis de Manzanas, where he keeps the borders safe from goblinoids and Narvaezans.

Since then, Saragón has remained out of most of the politics of the region, except for its demand to increase the sanctions on Narvaez, until it had no choice but to fight off Narvaez militarily.

SLAGOVICH (City-State of)

Location: West of Gulf of Hule, northern region of Serpent's Peninsula. SC

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

Population: 17,000 (mostly humans and a few demihumans).

Languages: Slag, Slagich (dialect of Traladaran).

Coinage: Bright (90% silver, 10% undepleted cinnabryl), fair (98% copper, 2% undepleted cinnabryl), dim (depleted bright), dark (depleted fair). Value: 1 bright = 5 fairs = 50 dims = 500 darks. Silver ingots are used in merchant trades.

Taxes: Unknown.

Government Type: Independent monarchy ruled by a margrave.

Industries: Trade, mining (cinnabryl).

Important Figures: Miosz II (Margrave), Stabro (Leader of the Knights of Halab).

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, previous almanacs.

Description by Piotr Drobnjak.

It's a great pleasure for me to describe my home city in such a precious book published in the same land that gave birth to the Mighty Halab. May He protect us all and help me in the use of Thyatian.

The Land

Slagovich proper is just a five centuries old small stronghold built high atop a plateau, next to a cliff overlooking the Gulf of Hule. The city-state also controls a tiny stretch of hilly land between the village of Kastr to the south and the ruins of Grabana to the north.

High and well-defended walls surround the city's mortar and stonework houses, but the nobles and the richest families live inside the walls. Most of the population lives in badly maintained dwellings, outside the protection of the walls. A few scattered farms dot the countryside.

Almost all buildings have a faint reddish-brown color, due to the presence of cinnabryl in the area.

The People

The inhabitants of Slagovich, mostly humans of mixed Dabdrom and Traladaran stocks, sport dark hairs and reddish-brown skin (probably due to the Red Curse). A few demihumans inhabit the city too. Despite the many adventurers and the bustling trade business, most of the population consists in poor miners who work in the rich cinnabryl mines.

Worship of Halab is the main faith in the area, especially since the brotherhood known as the Knights of Halab has helped Slagovich resist the Hulean attempts at seizing the city.

Recent History

In the last decade or so the whole area suffered from continuous war. Slagovich is an important trading post and the gate to the east, moreover it has an important mine of cinnabryl, so the evil Master of Hule has tried to conquer it several times. He almost managed to do it in AC 1000, when Margrave

Miosz III, then a child, was able to keep his throne thanks to the intervention of the Knights of Halab and an Alphatian adventurer named Haldemar.

In the following years Hule invaded Sind and attempted to conquer all the city-states, but the alliance of the five cities managed to repel the Hulean evil bands.

Recently, as the Hulean threat loosened, Slagovich has been attacked by joint forces of Zbornik and Hojah and tension is still high in the area.

Don't Miss

Slagovich's most famous features, except the Black Samobar Inn, are the hydraulic mechanism designed by excellent Slagobian engineers and present everywhere in the city.

Located in a huge natural cavern connected by a natural shaft to the city, the harbor is a masterpiece of engineering. For a high fee the cavern can be sealed and filled with water, thus allowing a ship to move deep into the city along a series of canals to unload her goods.

Due to the high number of canals, drawbridges and water locks, the city of Slagovich is also known among eastern travelers as "Glantri of the West."

SUMA'A (Kingdom of) and GOMBAR (Kingdom of)**Suma'a:**

Location: Western edge of the Arm of the Immortals, continent of Brun. **WB**

Area: 19,240 sq. mi. (49,830 sq. km.).

Population: 60,000, including 25,000 in the capital Sumag.

Languages: Ak'an (a language descended from Tanagoro and ogre).

Coinage: Pesawa (ep), cedi (gp).

Taxes: 10% export tax, 15% import tax (except on food), 5% mineral tax.

Government Type: Monarchy moderately influenced by mercantile interests. The king must be a shaman.

Industries: Mining (gold, iron, diamonds, electrum, platinum), jewelry.

Important Figures: Aw'ar (Chief Priest of Sumag).

Flora and Fauna: Unknown.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Gombar:

Location: Western edge of the Arm of the Immortals, continent of Brun. **WB**

Area: 28,120 sq. mi. (72,830 sq. km.).

Population: 72,000, including 30,000 in the capital Emdur.

Languages: Ak'an (a language descended from Tanagoro and ogre).

Coinage: Pesawa (ep), cedi (gp).

Taxes: 10% export tax, 15% import tax (except on food), 5% mineral tax.

Government Type: Monarchy heavily influenced by mercantile interests. The king must be a shaman.

Industries: Mining (gold, rubies, diamonds, electrum, platinum), jewelry.

Important Figures: Droog (Chief Priest of Gombar), Opatuo (Head of the Mining Exchange of Emdur).

Flora and Fauna: Unknown.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Enighmen Lodestar.

I traveled briefly in these two kingdoms when Serraine was passing nearby. Matazumi had piqued my interest in this area with tales of land ruled by giant civilized ogre-like beings. These beings, he informed me, rule two huge mercantile kingdoms led by shamans. These kingdoms are rich in mineral wealth with gold, electrum and iron being mined extensively from the hills and mountains of the Arm of Immortals that form the eastern extent of the two kingdoms. Numerous types of precious stones are

also mined from these areas and these along with the gold are crafted by the artisans of the land. The jewelry and mineral wealth, however, is not what has made the area rich. It is the overseas trade that the people conduct with countries up and down the western shores of Brun and Dabania as well as the eastern extents of Skothar that has made the kingdoms what they are. Both kingdoms possess extensive merchant and naval fleets with which they maintain their control over the water.

Once Matazumi had given me this briefing of the land that I would travel in I affected a magical disguise to help me pass unnoticed during my brief sojourn through the land. I decided to borrow a cloud-clipper for my journey and land near the city of Emdur, the capital of Gombar.

The Land

I was unable to visit any area outside the city of Emdur during my stay and therefore do not know anything about it. I hope to visit the two kingdoms again soon and describe the area with more detail on the Kingdom of Suma'a and the lands surrounding the city of Emdur.

However, in my travel from the area where I landed my plane into the city, I noted some things. Primarily the lack of people living outside the city: I passed no one on my short journey and there were no farms—not that the land seemed very arable. Why there are no people living on the land is a mystery to me and how the populace can eat is truly an enigma. During my short trip I did notice the sounds of drumbeats. From where and why these drumbeats were beating was also a bit of a source of puzzlement for me—one that I was unable to answer during my stay.

The People

The people of Gombar and Suma'a are twofold in their interests. Firstly there are the merchants and miners who are interested in furthering their mercantile aims. Then there are the religious groups who lead the populace.

The interactions between the religious and mercantile members of the people are very interesting. The mercantile members of the people seem to have control over the religious group by virtue of the money and jobs that they generate. However it is the religious groups that lead the people. It is true that the leaders are heavily influenced by mercantile interests, but a similar influence of the shamans over the merchants was evident to me, as proved by the respect that shamans visiting the Mining Exchange were given. They were not feared, as those who are religious seem to be in other areas but actually treated with respect.

Don't Miss

The Mining Exchange in Emdur is the tallest and most opulent building in the city. In fact the height of the building is astounding. Over 25 stories high, the building is truly massive, especially considering that because the inhabitants are so tall each story is fifteen feet high; why a building should have so many stories is, however, beyond me. Though seeing the building I have an idea for a weight and pulley mechanism that could be attached to the outside of the building which would move people up and down floors without the need for stairs—I think I'd call it a mechanical-levitator.

The exchange is a hive of activity during the day and throughout the night. Within the exchange miners come in and sell their goods. In the same place merchants buy the minerals to trade with other countries. Artisans also frequent the building buying gold and gemstones and selling their crafts to merchants.

The most amazing sight within the exchange is a large room, known as the Floor, which exists over three stories, within which the prices of the cargoes of ships as well as the standings of the mineral finds from the mines are traded and reassessed on a continual basis. The room is very confusing, with ogre-kin screaming prices and names at the young ogre-kin standing above them at large boards, who write the new prices and standings in the relevant places. How anyone can hear anything in this place is an amazement to me. I was here the day after the platinum from a new mine was being traded in the exchange—I was informed that on this day the Floor was more active than usual—how this can be is beyond me.

PADDLOM (Most Serene Divinarchy of)

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

Area: Approx. 240,000 sq. mi. (621,600 sq. km).

Population: 1,000,000.

Language: Paddlom.

Coinage: Paddlom does not mint its own coins, but foreign currencies are accepted at face value.

Government Type: Divinarchy (rule by sages and soothsayers), nation is divided into numerous dominions.

Industries: Trade, agriculture (mostly fruits, nuts, and vegetables), fishing.

Important Figures: Msiba Jahi (Bwana Kamla (Great Prophet)), Kondu Paka (Bwana Gwaride (Great Guardian)), Jibada Pabswano (Mokuba (Ruler)).

Flora and Fauna: Covering much of the southern portion of the Serpent Peninsula and Thanegia Island, Paddlom 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 Paddlom 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 Mlugumba 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 Dabania, for only a few years, but visiting the odd yet wonderful realm of Paddlom has always been full of new experiences. Whether one seeks high adventure, bustling ports, or relaxation, Paddlom 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 “Dabdlom.” 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 Dabdlom.

As mentioned earlier, Dabdlom 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 Hondian Deep, Dabdlom 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 Dabdlom 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 Dabdlom 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 Dabdlom. Those of the ramla class are forbidden from interfering in the affairs of the nation, lest, according to the Precepts of Dab, 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 Dabdlom, 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 ramalas are as unfathomable as they are wise. This I believe.

If there is one word I would use to describe the People of Pab (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 Pab are not an idle folk, nor are the commoners the slaves of the ramla class.

Recent History

The precise details of Paddlom’s history are lost to us today, but it is known that the people who call themselves the People of Pab 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 Paddlom 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 Paddlom—at least, that history which is studied most often—dates from the legendary time of Pab, 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 Pab to flee westwards to a new land, where they sheltered until their leader, Pab, determined it was safe to return. Upon returning, he issued his people a set of rules, known as the Precepts of Pab, 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 Pab fought as common beasts, and did not aspire to anything.

Paddlom’s contact with the nations of the Old World officially began in AC 852, when Minrothaddan explorers discovered the “most limpid city of Chanopolis,” 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 Paddlom with it, has grown into a prosperous place, with traders from Kastelios, Sind, Minrothad, Jerendi, 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 Paddlom 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 Paddlom, 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 Vabdlom, on the Serpent Peninsula, Gwondoya was founded circa AC 920 by a large group of Vabdlom 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 were the inhabitants. So sinister is the tale, and so strong is the feeling of evil in the area, that no native of Vabdlom will willingly go there; nor will they speak of it. A perplexing tale, to be sure, but perhaps one would do well to heed the words of the natives.

ATLAS OF WESTERN BRUN

Introduction to Western Brun

Western Brun is a not a well-defined region, but rather encompasses the Empire of Hule and the surrounding region, some of which are satellites, while others are independent nations—sometimes even empires. Western Brun is the area west of the Great Waste and north of the Hazak Steppes, and south of Hyborea (though pending our extending to cover Hyborea, events and places from these northern reaches are tagged as part of Western Brun).

Labeled as evil by our Old World standards, the empire of the Master is little known in eastern Brun, where Thyatis and Alphatia have been traditionally casting their shadows. Up to the invasion of Darokin by the Desert Nomads in the wake of the Great War that ravaged the Old World a decade ago, and the spectacular meteor impact that concluded that epic, Hule was seen as a distant, 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 learn from our correspondents about the holy land and its mysterious Master. You will also find out about the nations that lay to the west of Hule, and are less known to us than the mysterious Hule. We will also recount the recent—and occasionally not so recent—events, hopefully shading a new light upon the events that happened right here in the Old World, and for which we were not prepared as we had had so little prior contact with the western empire and other the distant nations of the west. Hule is indeed a big player, however far and forgotten it is, in the international field, and it is certainly not the city-states and baronies of the Savage Coast that will contradict me on that point. We hope that by introducing it to the almanac we will help this otherwise ignored empire come into full light, so that it won't ever have to introduce itself the hard way again.

Correspondents for Western Brun

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

Giulio diSergio-Orsini

The only correspondent from the Klagorst region is the Thyatian Giulio diSergio. Descendant of a fallen aristocratic family, and born in Kerendas, Giulio was a Thyatian diplomat, formerly in Karameikos. After the war of AC 1005-09, due to his obvious diplomatic incapacity at the court of King Stefan, he was given the doubtful honor of exploring the western parts of Brun in AC 1010 for the empire. Giulio has traveled westwards for years, and has now settled down in Valeryistadt. His reports on regions not covered by our almanac before have been given to us by the Thyatian government thanks to the intercession of Vibianna Romanones.

Marina Takanitas

Marina Takanitas is one of the youngest on our team, and she brings us news from the empires west of Hule. Marina is a trader who hails from Kastelios, one of the biggest, and fastest-growing, port cities in the region.

A cheerful person, Marina is hard to miss in a crowd, but this exterior also serves to shield a very capable correspondent who will stop at nothing to get you, the reader, the ground-breaking stories of western Brun as they happen. No danger is too much for her, and, believe me, she knows how to use that short sword she carries!

Piotr Drobnjak

Adventurer and part-time merchant, Piotr is our correspondent for Slagovich and nearby states. A devout follower of Halab, the young Piotr has a deep knowledge of city-states' affairs.

Piotr describes us his hometown, Slagovich, and the mysterious land of Hule (this one just from bibliographic research).

Atlas

BYLOT HILLS

[The following information was obtained, at great risk and personal expense, from confidential documentation found in the DDC offices in Sayr Ulan. Our source believed that the information was originally obtained over the course of several years, through intensive field observations and intelligence gathering. The staff of the Mystaran Almanac are, of course, not at liberty to divulge the identity of the individual in question. Ed.]

Location: Continent of Brun, west of the Dark Wood, east of the Valu River. **WB**

Area: 82,000 sq. mi. (212,380 sq. km.), including 28,220 sq. mi. (73,090 sq. km.) occupied by Hule, 9,800 sq. mi. (25,380 sq. km.) occupied by Zuyebo; the remainder is contested between the two empires.

Population: 175,000 (160,000 humans, 15,000 mixed humanoids).

Languages: Hulean, Zuyeban, Sendaryan.

Coinage: Various, barter is also common.

Government Type: None, except within the imperial territories.

Industries: Gold, platinum, tin, iron, copper, electrum and silver can all be found in abundance here. At the moment there are only a handful of mines. Two are operated by Hule (copper and iron), one by Zuyebo (silver) and one is independently operated in no-man's land (platinum).

Important Figures: Whoever has the most troops and the best weapons rules!

Flora and Fauna: Not included in report.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

The Bylot Hills are a flashpoint region. They are sandwiched between the great empires of Hule and Zuyebo and are rich in mineral wealth. Thus, they have been a contested border region for many years—Talmabs and Hulean settlers have recently begun migrating to the area in large numbers to seek their fortune. Prior to this however, before the mineral wealth of the area was known, the Bylot Hills were a sanctuary for various monster races; humans did not penetrate the center of the hills and lived primarily on the periphery. Olgarians and Huleans lived to the east, Talmabs to the west and Sendaryan tribesmen to the north. However, the balance has changed in the last twenty years—the humanoids that used to live in the area have left for employment in the Master's armies or have been hunted to virtual extinction by Talmab riders.

The Land

The Bylot Hills encompass a large area of central Brun, located east of the northern Hazak Steppes, and west of Hule's Converted Lands. The terrain mostly consists of rough, weathered hills with sparse vegetation. However, the northeastern stretches of hills are moderately forested, and tough Hazak grasslands make up a substantial part of the southwest and western portions.

The area is very rich in a number of valuable ores, although this has only been discovered in the last decade by Hulean and Talmab prospectors. The most common ore by far is copper, which can be found in quite large deposits in the eastern part of the hills. Iron and tin also form a large part of the mineral resources of the region and are located mainly in the northern and central hills. Electrum and silver veins are rarer, being located mostly in the southern and southwestern hills. Gold is not as common as silver, but tends to be scattered all over the region, especially in the eastern and southern hills. Platinum, as one would expect, is the rarest of the ores. Only one vein exists, and it is only a small one at that, located in the northeastern hills. It is currently the subject of an independent mining operation—the miners are Sendaryan, and are doing their best to keep their strike secret—although that is becoming difficult with rival armies dashing all over the place.

The People

The Bplot Hills include the following notable sites:

Bagbar (pop. 6,000): Bagbar is the only town of any note in the Bplot Hills. It is the principal Hulean outpost in the hills and as such is home to a Hulean garrison of 400 troops. Located 110 miles west of Legan it is a cosmopolitan place, home to traders and miners. The population of the town swells to quadruple its size for two weeks every year when the Bagbar Trade Festival is held. About seven miles south of Bagbar is a profitable iron mine that produces high grade ore suitable for weapons and tool manufacturing. The ore is normally transported to Bagbar where it is refined and then shipped to Hule.

Laika Fortress: Laika is a superb defensive fortress almost impenetrable to conventional assault. Garrisoned by 250 troops it is the deepest foothold of Zuyeban power that has so far been built in the Bplot Hills. Laika provides protection to local Talmab and Zuyeban miners and settlers and also acts as a distribution point and market for goods, mined metals, weapons and supplies entering and exiting the Bplot Hills.

Andropob Fortress: Located on a large cliff-like hill overlooking the intersection of the Nyzhin and Valu Rivers, Andropob is a strongly-built river port and fortress. It is home to 400 troops and designed to anchor the trinity of Zuyeban fortresses in the Bplot Hills. The military commander of the fortress is under orders to send patrols north along the Valu River to deter Kazmen tribesmen from southern incursions, as well as sending patrols into the Zdredanyan Forest to assist Sendaryan tribesmen against occasional raids from the Kazmens and Huleans. Covert patrols are also sent along the Nyzhin River into the Bplot Hills, although these are careful to avoid large scale confrontations with patrolling Hulean forces.

Rzeb Fortress: Located in an isolated section of the Bplot Hills region known as the Iron Hills, this area is home to a major silver mine and hence the reason for the Zuyeban presence. The fort is surrounded by wide grasslands, and a garrison of 150 troops is present to secure the northern route from Kulikobo to Andropob and to prevent incursions from the humanoids of the Pazak Steppes (although they are of little threat now—the Zuyebans are being cautious against their inevitable return).

Recent History

Fall, AC 1003: The Zuyeban crusade has driven out or slaughtered many of the humanoids that inhabit the northernmost part of the Pazak Steppes. Unlike the tribes that threaten the Savage Coast

(like the Dankut, Hupkur and Kuttai) the northern Pazak tribes are relatively disorganized and weak; they have proved unable to stand against the might of the Zuyeban war machine. Of those who survive, many flee eastwards to Hule, and into the welcoming arms of the Master.

Summer, AC 1004: A detachment of Talmab settlers arrives in the northern Bylot Hills from the Empire of Zuyebo. They settle among the local colonists and are rapidly integrated in the multicultural society of the Bylot Hills. However, they secretly remain loyal to the distant tsar.

Spring, AC 1006: Consolidating their control of the eastern bank of the Valu River, Zuyeban troops begin constructing a defensive corridor to allow easy and safe access to the northern Bylot Hills. The construction of three major fortresses that anchor this corridor—Laika, Rzeb, and Andropob—begins. They will eventually provide Zuyebo with the ability to maintain large garrisons in the northern Pazak 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 Valu River via Magnitogorod and Sharya.

Summer, AC 1011: Contacts are made between the Zuyebans and the exiled Olgarian Church of Traladara. The Olgarian Church and the Zuyeban Orthodox Church share many sympathies so the Empire of Zuyebo pledges to support the rebels in their struggle against Hule. This support soon materializes in the form of gold and experienced Talmab mercenaries.

Fall, AC 1012: Relieved of some of the military pressure put on them by the humanoids of the Janzary Lands, the Olgarian population rebels wholesale in what seems to be a carefully planned operation. The Hulean governor is ousted and Dimitur Potob, head of the Church of Traladara is liberated with the aid of Talmab mercenaries. The church's clergy proclaims Rahil Venevanova Queen of Olgar. Meanwhile, Zuyebo dispatches some of its Talmab troops to take control of the mineral-rich Freelands of the Northern Bylot Hills, a region nominally under the control of Hule. The Master is furious, but winter is too close for him to retaliate against his new big neighbor.

Spring, AC 1013: A massive Hulean counterattack is mounted against the Talmab troops of the Empire of Zuyebo in the northern Bylot Hills. They are met with strong resistance from the Zuyebans and are also harassed by the Sendaryan tribes from the Zanoboi River valley. Also, further south, troops are sent to quell the rebellion in Olgar. However, the entrenched Olgarians are able to hold them in the eastern part of the country and the two groups seem to be locked into a static position.

Summer, AC 1013: More troops from the northern part of the Hulean Empire are sent into the Bylot Hills and against the Olgar rebels. Seeing that the Master is weakening his northern position and that he won't be able to supply support to Sardjikian, the northern nomads head for Kiteng in order to be in a better position to threaten Hule. Under the weight of the Hulean onslaught, the Zuyebans retreat from the Bylot Hills to their possessions on the Valu River. The Zuyeban 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 Zuyebans continue to send supplies and mercenaries to help the Olgarians in their fight against the Master.

Spring, AC 1014: The Master's troops in Olgar finish cleansing the area of the last obviously rebellious groups. Hulean control of the region is reinstated; however, the rebellion is far from defeated. Instead it has just gone underground and some rebels have moved to the Zuyeban outposts in the Pazak Steppes, where they get resupplied and benefit from free military training courtesy of the

Zuyebans. Agents of the Master are sent to the Pazak Steppes goblinoid tribes in order to create an interference with the Empire of Zuyebo's plans to extend its influence in the Converted Lands.

Fall, AC 1015: With some of his troops recalled from the Bplot Hills region, Tsar Andrei channels more reinforcements into the effort to secure the southwestern reaches of the Hyborean Steppes. Also, he masses a number of regiments at Zablin for a push south to the independent dominion of Richland. For the time being the tsar decides to keep his imperial troops out of the Bplot Hills. However, his interference in the region will continue—he sends a party of high-level adventurers to infiltrate Greatrealm.

Spring, AC 1017: Zuyebo's mines are opened, at least in theory; in reality, the tsar is fed false information by his counselors (some of whom are actually Hulean agents) and corrupt officials.

BRASOV (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, western side of the Endworld Line, north of Zupebo, south of Klagorst. **WB**

Area: 26,700 sq. mi. (69,155 sq. km.).

Population: 19,000 (94% human, 6% elven).

Languages: Brasobian (85% Visneskayan, 15% Elvish), Elvish (Belfadil dialect).

Coinage: Florin (gp), peszy (sp), markwi (cp).

Taxes: 10% income tax, to be paid on the 1st day of spring and 1st day of autumn, plus a special “death tax” that goes to the clergy of Azrael and is paid by the wealthy families (consisting of approximately another 1% of yearly income), which must be paid to the temple of Azrael on the day of the Winter Solstice. No taxation system exists among the Belfadil elves of Cadil.

Government Type: Senatorial monarchy.

Industries: Textiles, agriculture (wheat, corn, apples), farming (sheep, goats).

Important Figures: Szabo II (King), Daunidel Belfadil (Elven King).

Flora and Fauna: Brasob was originally a steppe, dotted with woodlands, but in the last centuries most parts of the steppe have been converted into farmlands. The woods are of pine in the north, but oaks become more common southwards.

Common animals in the region are wolves, bears, deer, foxes, horse, cattle, rats, and sometimes an elk or some reindeer that have crossed the northern mountains from Klagorst.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

Brasob is a small coastal kingdom south of Klagorst, inhabited by humans of Visneskayan ancestry, although their tongue is a little different from that, and is called Brasobian. The capital city of this land is Kronstadt, renowned for its textile industries. The land is good for agriculture, producing wheat and corn, and in the southern regions apples are grown, while in the colder, more mountainous region of the east sheep and goats are free to graze.

Brasob is not a bad place to live in. Its winters are milder than those in Klagorst, and the sea enjoys the last stretches of warmer currents that arrive from the south, and is thus free from the ice in all but the hardest winters. At the same time the northern regions and their cold winds are blocked by an extension of the Endworld Line, which bows in a 90 degree angle towards the coast, just on the border with Klagorst, where the passes are controlled by two military fortresses.

The People

Brasobians are much like the people of Klagorst in appearance, but some of them possess some elven ancestry that gives them some unique features: they have slightly pointed ears, and tend to be a little lighter and shorter than their relatives to the north.

They are generally more open-minded than the Klagorstans are; maybe this is connected with the fact that their land enjoys a warmer climate that protects them from the periodic famines that harass the northern lands. Brasobians are very proud of their military strength, that has allowed them to win the three wars fought with the Klagorstans. It is to be noted that there is a small elven community, the Belfadil Clan. Although some of the elves mixed with the Brasobians, there is still a strong group of Belfadil elves, 800 of whom live in the town of Cadil, and are led by King Daumidel Belfadil. These elves are formally independent, but have always helped the Brasobians since their arrival in the region, even with military support.

An interesting aspect of Brasob is the incredibly high rate of infant mortality, which is well above the average mortality rate of Klagorst. It is really difficult to find a family who has not suffered a spontaneous abortion or stillbirth. The reason for this is not known, however the elves are not affected (as far as I know). A stillborn child is brought to the clerics of Azrael, Lord of the Dead, the second most important divinity of Brasob, after Paban.

Recent History

The Brasobians are descendants of the people of Visneskaya who left that kingdom around AC 400, when the first conflicts with the Zuyebans began to arise. Led by Lord Ivan Brasob, 4,000 Visneskayans arrived in the region in AC 412, when they built the city of Kronstadt. Here they grew in number and slowly colonized the region, and many of them mixed with the elven clan of Belfadil, composed of about one thousand elves; this caused the slight changes of language and physical features that distinguish them from the Klagorstans. Another aspect borrowed from the elven culture was the peaceful attitude of its people: the Brasobians managed to live without internal conflicts, and remained always united against external threats. The first of these were the Visneskayans fleeing from their conquered homeland, in the first half of the 6th century, and then their descendants in the 8th and 9th, and then, finally, in the Sixth Brasobian War, when Brasob was allied with Stygia and Chevalle. The Brasobians were always victorious in all of the wars in which they participated (they fought defensively), and have never engaged in conquest of the northern lands, especially since there is no real reason to do so.

Although called upon to help the Confederacy of Klagorst last year, King Szabo II refused to enter a conflict that didn't concern his nation, as he didn't want to expose his people to it.

Don't Miss

The goulash, a fantastic dish that can be served in every single inn of Brasob. The Brasobian cuisine is rustic and spicy, but very good!

CHEVALLE (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Brum, forests on the west side of the Endworld Line. **WB**

Area: 29,300 sq. mi. (75,885 sq. km.).

Population: Approximately 10,000 forest folk (centaurs, pixies, dryads, etc.).

Languages: Fairy, Centaur, others.

Coinage: Barter; money from the Heartlands may be used.

Taxes: No normal taxation per se; druids and forest creatures tend the forest and perform similar tasks in service to nature and the centaur king, who also serves as official protector of the forest.

Government type: Loose clan federation, ruled by a clan council led by the centaur clan king.

Industries: Woodcutting, hunting.

Important Figures: Dessai (Centaur King).

Flora and Fauna: Apart from the intelligent sylban creatures, wolves, bears, foxes, many species of bird (among which are eagles, hawks and owls), and other forest-dwelling creatures are easily encountered in the forests of Chevalle.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The centaurs and satyrs of Chevalle live in the forests that grow in the shadow of the massive mountains of the Endworld Line. Their society is rather chaotic, and they have been a problem to the Confederacy of Klagorst, from which they have separated (and subsequently rejoined) several times, the last being last year, subsequently to the war. Many factions exist among the centaurs, although the different groups have never fought a civil war, and many small groups are present at the clan council, thus creating much confusion in the administration of the land.

The centaurs are fierce enemies of Vrancea, as they accused that nation of kidnapping forest creatures for Rhorg's experiments. This may change now that the duke has been exiled.

The People

Apart from the centaurs and satyrs, who live together, the forests of Chevalle are home to a great number of sylban creatures: chevalls (who often travel to Brasob and Klagorst), werebears, pixies, nixies, human rangers, druids, and similar friendly elves and humans, and nearly all representatives of the fairy folk. A small human community of woodcutters is located towards the south, near the Brasobian border. They have a representative on the clan council.

Recent History

The fairy folk have been living in the area at least for a millennium. The exact date of their arrival here is uncertain, because the history of the centaurs and the other sylban creatures is an oral one, and reports were not written before rangers and druids came from Brasob and Klagorst. The history of the centaurs has always been troublesome. They warred for a long time among themselves before the

Visneskayans arrived, after which conflicts soon emerged, especially along the northern borders with Klagorst, but there were also several territorial disputes with Brasob concerning woodcutting. In the following centuries, Cheballe's relationships with the surrounding nations were fluid, and several bloody wars took place between it and Klagorst and Brasob, until in AC 902 they joined the Confederation of Klagorst. After this, Cheballe fought at the side of Stygia and Valeryistadt against the other Klagorst nations. In the 10th century, Cheballe left the confederation twice, and then rejoined it, on the basis of conflicts with the human nations. Then they left a third time in AC 1005, in the last war fought in Klagorst, which they won with the help of Brasob and Stygia.

After a disastrous start of the war against Francea last year, Cheballe voted against remaining in the confederation and left, refusing to have anything to do with the war, and accusing the other members of the confederation to having left them without support in the conflict. Most humans and elves are however tired by the sylban creatures' attitude of leaving the confederacy every time a problem shows up, and this may cause problems in the immediate future.

Don't Miss

The Stone of Pears is a sacred place within the Cheballe Forest. It is an area of barren land, roughly 100 square meters, totally devoid of vegetation, like a dot of rocky desert in the middle of the forest. A Cheballian legend says that the day a lost clan of elves comes from the south, the Stone of Pears will sprout life once again, and from there, forests will grow all over the west and overrun all the surrounding lands, and the forest folk will rule all they survey. I have wondered whether the Belfadil elves could be this lost clan, but I must confess they don't seem aware of this, or they pretend so, if they are.

GOURNZE (Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brum, near Endworld Line. **WB**

Area: 17,600 sq. mi. (45,585 sq. km.).

Population: 7,800 (92% barkha, 8% Djikarti).

Languages: Barkhan (80% similarity with common lizard man tongue), Klagorst.

Coinage: Gshar (gp), n'kai (sp).

Taxes: Gournzeean tax rates are unknown at this time.

Government type: Monarchy.

Industries: Mining (silver, iron), farming (giant lizards, cattle, giant rats).

Important Figures: Naarn Dborcic (Warlord).

Flora and Fauna: The Gournzee region is completely free of humanoid monsters. The few that dare enter from the Endworld Line mountains are rapidly dealt with by the barkhas. White and green dragons are known to inhabit the region and the surrounding mountains, but normally they do not attack the lizard men; other creatures are deer, wolves and several species of woodland creatures.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The Duchy of Gournzee is a mountain kingdom of a race called barkhas, underground lizard men. Most of the towns are built on the mountainside, and stretch underground. The capital Cel Gaurn is completely underground.

The People

The barkhas are smaller than their more common lizard man cousins, being four to five feet tall, but they possess similar physical characteristics. The barkhas can hardly be regarded as a friendly race, and they do not like humans, or any humanoid race for that matter. They have purged their land of all humanoids, and are among the stronger military powers of the region...but unfortunately their race has a very, very slow rate of population growth. Many barkhas are born sterile, and the child mortality is very high. Normally a female lays two to four fertile eggs during her long lifespan (nearly 400 years), but only one is in general lucky enough to survive. The barkhas are, incredibly, friendly toward the Djikarti. They do not actively discourage visitors to their nation, but are quick to avenge any perceived offenses, and the local laws do not protect strangers in any way.

A small community of Djikarti gnomes from Szekesh live and work in the region, mostly providing their expertise in engineering. This often seems strange to outsiders, especially since Gournzee is ruled by a harsh militaristic regime, supervised by the Church of Pearl.

[Note: Mystaran barkhas are not totally like the AD&D ones found in Dragon Annual #1. For more information on Mystaran barkhas see The Wyrmsteeth Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.]

Recent History

The barkhas arrived in the Klagorst region in AC 434. Their traditional history says that they were guided there by Pearl, after the destruction of their northern homeland, located in a system of underground caverns in northern Hyborea. The reasons for the destruction have never been revealed to strangers. Anyway, their patron Immortal Pearl told them of a land where they could settle. Their high priest at the time, Jesska, led them to Szekesh, where they were told to kill the troglodytes and free the gnomes of the country, which they succeeded in doing over the following years. Although the Djikarti feared that the barkhas would turn out to be new oppressors, their liberators let them be free, and asked them to help build a cave system under the Endworld Line that would eventually constitute the Duchy of Gournzee.

The barkhas remained fierce enemies of the Stygian troglodytes during the following years. Avoiding as much as possible any contact with the human populations that settled down in Brasov and Klagorst, the barkhas were able to lead several raids, called crusades by the barkhas, against the Stygians. Ten such crusades were carried out, some successful, some not, but the conflict has remained limited to these occasions due to the distance involved, and the presence of Vrancea. During the same time, the barkhas wiped out all the humanoid tribes of the region.

More recently, three more crusades were led in the last fifteen years (AC 1002, 1007, and 1014) thanks to Duke Rhorg of Vrancea, who allowed the barkhas passage through his lands to reach Stygia, much to the indignation of the troglodyte representatives of the Confederacy of Klagorst.

After a barkhan raid in Stygia last year, another war has enveloped the region, and the barkhas were beaten in the end, along with their ally Rhorg of Vrancea. Considering their low reproduction rate, the barkhas will likely keep a low profile for a long time. Warlord Naarn is a close friend of Rhorg, and the latter has chosen Gournzee as the place to seek shelter after having been exiled.

Do Miss

Well, just the thought of coming here is a bad idea for anyone who doesn't have a good reason to do so. The barkhas do not care for strangers, and when I say "don't care," I mean it: no inns, no taverns, a total indifference toward you, apart from guards that forbid anything to anyone... I didn't have a pleasant stay.

GREENKHLAATWDA (a.k.a. Land of the Closed Society)

Location: Continent of Brum, western side of the Endworld Line, south of Hyborea. **WB**

Area: 46,870 sq. mi. (121,390 sq. km.).

Population: Unknown.

Languages: Hydrax (official), Visneskapan.

Coinage: Aa (pp), ghwal (gp), hahkr (sp).

Government Type: Hierarchical monarchy.

Taxes: Unknown.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: Awkaraal (King).

Flora and Fauna: The cold tundra of the region, when it does not give way to arctic mountains and glaciers, is inhabited by small-sized animals, such as arctic foxes, rodents, as well as wolves, deer, and elk. In the northern part of the land some polar bears can be found. Monsters of the region include white dragons, frost giants, and frost salamanders.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

This territory is known to its inhabitants as Greenkhlaatwdaa, but everybody outside the territory calls it the Closed Society, though nobody would say it in front of one of the hydrax who inhabit the country.

The People

The hydrax have a heavily hierarchical society, at the top of which is a supreme king. The hydrax are believed to guard two entrances to the Elemental Plane of Water, one of which is supposedly located in the capital city, whose common name is Grez (actually Grezasaaldakwerytasz). The Land of the Closed Society is nearly impossible to visit; and inside the country there is a lot of bureaucracy; lower class members of society must deal with the few foreign visitors, and ensure they do not learn too much about this nation or its inhabitants. The hydrax write on ice cubes with their claws, in an unknown writing style resembling hieroglyphics, which the hydrax will not allow foreigners to learn. No one has ever tried to rob the hydrax of their secrets. Or, if somebody has, they have not managed to escape from the Closed Society's land.

Hydrax are second in nastiness only to hresha-rhak. Although they are not ugly creatures (they are a sort of intelligent giant crabs made of a substance quite similar to ice), they are an impossibly hierarchical society. Every single action is controlled by the government, and visitors receive the same treatment. It's not that they want to be nasty, just that even the most lawful, understanding creature on Mystara would eventually go crazy here, if they tried to understand why things are done the way there are here. It is also quite disturbing to see the members of the Blue Wind move freely about the country; they seem to be freer than the hydrax themselves.

Recent History

The hydrax have a long and detailed history of their presence on Mystara. They originally lived on Mystara at the time of the Great Rain of Fire, in a region that would later become the Sea of Dread, at the time completely covered with ice. When the Blackmoor explosion shifted the axis of the planet, the region became gradually warmer, and the hydrax found it impossible to survive, so they used their magical powers and their scientific knowledge, and calculated what would become the new polar region. They then left for that area and retired in deep caverns of the region, to fall into a magical slumber that would last until the region became cold enough for them to flourish. Even if their calculations were not completely right, since they arrived in Hyborea instead of the north pole, the region became cold enough to be hospitable to the elemental race.

Their history in Hyborea is long, but few events happened in the last 3,000 years. The hydrax remained isolated, and had little contact with the Djikarti gnomes to the south, although their different philosophies led to hatred, but never to open war. When humans arrived in what is now Klagorst, the hydrax decided to make contact with them to find out if any of the newcomers would be impressionable enough to further their unknown projects, thus leading to the creation of the Blue Wind, a league whose center is in Port Fewalskij.

Don't Miss

The only reason a fellow has to come and visit this land could be its marvelous mountains and glaciers. The capital city of the hydrax, and the smaller ones, are built in the glaciers, and are marvelous crystalline buildings, constructed to resemble prisms, which then reflect light and colors in such a way as to illuminate the area in which they stand, even when the light is dim. This can prove a blinding experience to common human eyes when the sun is shining, but nevertheless, once in a lifetime, an adventurer should see this!

HULE (Hagiarchy of)

Location: North of the Savage Baronies and the Gulf of Hule, continent of Brun. WB, SC

Area: 256,000 sq. mi. (663,040 sq. km.).

Population: 1,000,000 (roughly 65% human, 35% goblinoids—mainly bugbears, gnolls, kobolds, orcs and ogres—and 5% demihuman—dwarves, elves, and hin).

Languages: Hulean (several dialects).

Coinage: Lira (gp), kuru (sp), piastre (cp).

Taxes: Net worth tax of 5% assessed every two years and an annual 10% tithe to the Holy Men of Hule. Hule's major roads also have tollgates every 24 miles charging 1 piastre per person and 2 piastres per large animal.

Government Type: Hagiarchy (ruled by holy men).

Industries: Agriculture, textile (fine cloth, wool), glasswork, trade, conquest.

Important Figures: The Master (The Master of Hule).

Flora and Fauna: Nearly every creature native to the continent of Brun can be found in the large territories owned by Hule.

Further Reading: The Savage Coast online document, X5 The Temple of Death, previous almanacs.

Description by Piotr Drobnjak.

Hule: the land of mischief. I've not actually visited Hule yet, so this report is just the results of several weeks of research at the libraries and inns of Slogobich. I intend to visit Hule (as well as the other city-states) soon, so that I may offer you a complete report in the future.

The Land

Hule, also known as Great Hule and the Sanctified Land, is a large nation northwest of the Black Mountains and north of the Savage Coast's city-states and Savage Baronies. It stretches from the edge of the Black Mountains to the Risilbar Escarpment in the south and the Dravish Steppes in the west. Its southern border includes a tiny slice of the coastline, just north of Slogobich, giving the nation access to sea trade. Much of Hule consists of low, rolling hills blanketed by farms and pastures. The farmlands are dotted by small and simple villages and farming communities. There are also several larger towns that serve as bustling centers of trade.

Western Hule encompasses roughly half of Niwhelm, the Dark Wood—a great oak forest still mostly primeval. The woods contain Lake Tros, also known as the Lake of the Deeps, a large (4,500 sq. mi.) and seemingly bottomless freshwater lake.

The People

Hule is a melting pot of races and species. Only humans have an active role in government, although non-humans may act as advisers to the human officials.

Hule is a hagiarchy, a government run by “holy men” and clergy. Any person that has been shown to be especially favored by Bozdogan may have an important role in the government, not just His priests.

The people of Hule are divided into many classes: holy men, diviners, hermits, prophets, clergy, and commoners. Holy men are the rulers; men who have somehow been touched by the Immortals. Diviners are law enforcers who travel the land searching for criminals; they wear a red robe and black mask. Hermits are people who claim to have had a vision from Bozdogan, telling them to lead secluded lives in the wilderness. Prophets are people recognized for their wisdom; they travel the land and act as judges. Clerics operate the local temples and shrines; their task is to guide and instruct the people. Commoners are farmers, soldiers, crafters, merchants and so on. They’re looked down upon but are considered necessary for the nation to survive.

Priests of any religion other than the official religion of Bozdogan, as well as bandits, troublemakers, and mages, are considered outlaws and traitors.

The goblinoids of Hule do not fit into the above-mentioned class system. All goblinoid tribes are nominally independent and treated with care and respect mainly out of fear. These tribes, however, find it very profitable to ally with the Master of Hule, the highest and most powerful of the holy men.

Demihumans are quite rare and are objects of curiosity to the humans of Hule.

Recent History

The Master, a mysterious individual, is currently in control of Hule. Much of his army relies on goblinoids, in particular goblins, though a vast corps of dervishes defend the city-temples. Among these dervishes are a number of elite troops with red steel scimitars. These dervishes have regularly repulsed barbarian invasions from the north, thanks mostly to their red steel equipment.

Recently, the Master of Hule sent his minions to the Great Waste to conquer the eastern lands. He gained control of Sind in AC 1005. From there, his goblinoids, janissaries [Hulean cavalry. Ed.], and desert nomads drove into Darokin. The armies of Darokin, Karamikos, and the Five Shires managed to drive the desert nomads out in AC 1006, but the Master’s forces still held on to Sind.

Hule also attempted to conquer the Savage Baronies at the same time, but the baronies ended the wars between themselves and united against this common threat, forcing the Hulean forces to retreat as well.

In AC 1014 Hulean forces, mostly goblinoids, invaded and conquered the City-State of Noba Svoga. Hule is currently at peace with the nations of the Savage Coast, recovering from the last set of wars. Huleans still plot and spy, however, and minor events related to Hule occur all the time, especially in the city-states and Savage Baronies.

Though its neighbors generally have failed to notice the change, Hule’s policy has changed since the beginning of AC 1017, as its tactics shifted to subterfuge, intrigue and deceit, rather than brute force; this alteration in policy is due to a new phase in the Master’s quest for Immortality.

Do Miss

Hule is probably worth missing as a whole, but if you really need to go there, please avoid entering goblinoid reserves and don’t go too far from the coastal cities.

The Temple of Death, also known as Greatrealm, is the Master’s capital city: a huge temple complex lying on the shore of Lake Tros. It lies away from the cities, and people seldom visit it.

From here the Master watches his county and the progress of all his military forces. His desires are made known to the people by the diviners or other messengers. This is a place to avoid at all costs.

KERMINHAE (Land of)

Location: Hyborean Sea, west of the Klagorst region, Continent of Brun. **UB**

Area: Islands approximately 1,300 sq. mi. (3,367 sq. km.), size of undersea regions controlled unknown.

Population: Unknown number of hresha-rhak; some human merchants live in the Kerminhae surface cities.

Languages: Ub (official), Visneskayan.

Coinage: No official coinage; all currencies of the Klagorst region can be used.

Taxes: Unknown; resident human merchants are subject to a residency tax, assessed at 5% of their yearly earnings, and collected on Ka. 1 each year.

Government Type: Unknown.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: Unknown.

Flora and Fauna: The animals found in the region are seals, crabs, sharks and whales. Very few land animals, mostly birds and seals, live on the small islands.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

This territory is inhabited by the hresha-rhak, a strange aquatic race. It consists of a small archipelago of five islands, on which stand small cities inhabited by these creatures, plus the few human merchants who live here. A couple of islands cannot be visited, and the seas around them are patrolled by these mysterious sea creatures. Supposedly their rulers and main cities are located under the ocean, but very little information can be gained on them. They are fierce enemies of the hydrax, and seem to have a sort of alliance with the Stygians, but have only marginal interest in the humanoid politics of Klagorst, apart from some commercial ties, carried on by agents or by themselves in the human ports of the Heart Coast.

The People

The hresha-rhak are an aquatic race who worship an elemental water deity known as Hub Eth, Spawn of the Deep; they are man-sized, fish-like creatures, whose bodies are covered with mottled, lumpy green and gray scales. Their hands and feet are webbed and clawed, and their wide mouths are filled with hundreds of needle-like teeth, surrounded by thick, rubbery lips. Protruding from the base of their spines is a vestigial tail, measuring roughly one foot long. An interesting fact is that many specimens seem to have a much reduced tail, and less monstrous appearances overall. These are the only members of the race who travel outside the borders of Kerminhae, and who live in the surface cities of the nation, so sages speculate that maybe these could be younger specimen of this race, that have not yet adapted fully to oceanic life. But who knows really?

Recent History

Nothing is known about hresha-rhak history. Klagorst people have known of these creatures since the first human settlements were established, and so do the other older races of the region.

Do Miss

Kerminhae is really not a place to be visited. The islands are barren, the cities horrendous mockeries of human ones, built with strange and disturbing perspectives, as if they used different geometric principles upon which to base their architecture, and the race is a horrible, fish-like parody of earth-dwelling humanoids. Stay away from the nation itself, if you don't want to be haunted in your nightmares by the horrific things you could see here.

KLAGORST (Confederated Kingdoms of)

Location: Continent of Brun, western side of the Endworld Line, south of Hyborea. **WB**

Area: 61,000 sq. mi. (157,990 sq. km.), not including Stygia.

Population: 25,200 humans.

Languages: Klagorst (80% Visneskapan, 15% Traldar).

Coinage: Zeur (gp), klag (sp), enak (cp).

Taxes: Individual kingdoms have their own taxation; generally taxes consist of services for those who earn less than a certain amount each year, while others (mostly citizens, wealthy landowners, etc.) pay around 10% throughout the year in various forms. Additional taxes are levied for special reasons, such as tournaments and wars.

Government Type: Confederation of autonomous kingdoms, mostly holding the status of baronies and counties.

Industries: Agriculture (predominantly subsistence), animal herding, fishing, horse breeding, trade.

Important Figures: See individual dominion entries below.

Flora and Fauna: A mixed land of forests and poor farmlands, the region is home to deer, elk, wolves, bears; the shores are rich with fish, and seals live on the northern coasts. The mountains of the Endworld Line are inhabited by a great number of humanoids: Hyborean goblins, gnolls, hobgoblins, orcs, and trolls.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The Klagorst region is an inhospitable taiga forest bordering, in the northern regions, with the tundra. The few settlements of the region are built near rivers that are always frozen during the long winters, and the agricultural yields here are only barely capable of sustaining the population. The frequent conflicts have not helped the region develop economically, and have often led to mass murders of farm animals, like goats and sheep.

Famines happen commonly a couple of times per century, although things have gone better for the last few years. The hope of the people of the region is that last year's conflict has been too short to be the cause for another famine in the near future.

The People

The Klagorstans themselves are descendants of the Visneskapan, and resemble greatly their ancestors, who were of Traladaran extraction, with some Oltec influences. They are tall, and mostly pale-skinned, though darker skin is not uncommon; they have dark brown or blond hair, and blue or green eyes, but black and brown are not at all uncommon. They tend to be massively-built, but due to famines and wars many of them are slim.

[See also specific entries for Stygia and Cheballe] The human confederated kingdoms, also called the Heartlands or the Heart Coast, are:

Barony of Fewalskij (pop. 2,000): This seaport is inhabited mostly by humans, though some hresha-rhak live here occasionally. Port Fewalskij is the principal port that connects the Heartlands with the hydrax settlement to the north, and the hresha-rhak dominion to the west. Hydrax are normally never seen here; they prefer to rely on human agents, who are all members of the Blue Wind, an order whose base is in the city center. Nearly insignificant is the little land owned by the city's baron, Sir Markus Achresk, not even enough to sustain the need for food, that must be mostly imported from the southern Heartlands.

Duchy of Vrancea (pop. 2,100): Vrancea is a mountainous realm; it is probably the poorest state of the confederated kingdoms. Some of the human villages here try to farm goats and grow potatoes, with meager results. The former duke, Rhorg, rumored to be a vampire or a lich, has been exiled after the short war that stormed the region last year. Now, the new duke is Jozef Drulovic, who is determined to bring Vrancea out of the poor conditions it has lived in until now.

County of Valeryia (pop. 8,000): Valeryia is a human territory, and the most civilized of the Heartlands. It is ruled by the just Count Janick Essecki, who has recently reformed the army. Valeryia is an agricultural nation, but is also renowned for its horses, and is possibly the richest territory of the Heartlands—probably due to its geographical position. The capital of the county is Valeryistadt (pop. approximately 3,800); other important settlements are the town of Grawys (pop. 1,300), which is administered by the local Guild of Adventurers ruled by Andrzej Vatacek, and the town of Cahen. The remainder of the population is scattered across the county, scraping out a living by tilling the poor soils.

County of Gask (pop. 6,100): The County of Gask is another quite civilized territory, and is named after its capital, that also hosts the confederative palace, where representatives of the seven nations debate pointlessly on every single question of some relevance to the confederation. The president of the confederation is the current Count of Gask, Nilas Dowalski. The soil of the county is quite poor, but the waters of Gask are rich in fish, and the good administration of the Dowalski family has saved it from civil wars during the last century. Also important is the seaport of Gdansk, which in the past was a source of several conflicts with Valeryia.

Territories of the Knighthood of Tcheltar (pop. 7,000): Tcheltar is the homeland of a troubled population of bandits, and is harassed by lycanthropes and monsters. This prevents it from rising to prominence in the Heartlands, because the soil is good for farming, it is not too far north geographically, and the territory is quite big. Tcheltar has experienced many changes of government and leaders since its foundation, and is now in the hands of Sir Georgi Thorowski, Master of the Knights of Tcheltar. Tcheltar was invaded by centaurs twenty years ago, because Cheballe accused it of helping Duke Rhorg of Vrancea in his dark practices. The Tcheltarians have always been friends with the Vranceans. The capital of the nation is Tcheltar; other important settlements are Pracoba and Nowy Sacz.

Recent History

Klagorst's history is only five centuries long, but it is nonetheless extremely bloody. When in AC 502 the Kingdom of Visneskaya engaged itself in a major war with the Zuyeban Kingdom of the south, the Talmab horde, an ally of the Visneskayans, sided with the enemy. This being the case, Lord Doniek Klagorst, ruler of a minor city of Visneskaya, thinking that the war was going to end with a loss for his people, and fearing a life of slavery or death for them, decided to leave the country with his

followers. When he actually did so, the Visneskayans were too busy facing their external enemies to care about him. Lord Voniek had with him only 4,000 men, and was intending to follow the route of Ivan Brasb to the west, towards the Endworld Line, hoping to find the descendants of Brasb's migration. After a very long march, Voniek managed to lead 2,700 men to Brasob in AC 506, after severe losses due to the inhospitable weather conditions, raiding humanoids from the mountains, and internal struggles.

But when the 2,700 Visneskayans arrived in Brasob, the citizens of that kingdom saw them as savages and possible conquerors, and did not care about their common origin. King Szabo I of Brasob led a crushing attack on the surprised Visneskayans, who were ultimately shattered and fled to the colder lands north of Brasob. There, Lord Voniek and his 1,400 surviving men built the city of Gask and tried to survive in the harsh environment.

Around AC 530, after the end of the war with Zuyebo, three other Visneskayan migrations followed Brasb's and Voniek's route, and finally arrived in the Brasobian region. After a few skirmishes with the Brasobians, the Visneskayans turned to the north, where Voniek's people had already settled, and each of the groups built the cities of Fewalskij, Vrancea and Tcheltar. Their relationships within each other, and with the surrounding states were always troublesome. Three wars were fought (AC 589-92, 723-24, 811-12) between a confederation of Gask, Vrancea and Tcheltar against the Brasobians, but the latter always triumphed. Other wars were that of the human nations as a group against the Stygian troglodytes (AC 841-56), which persisted for fifteen years with several interruptions and treaties, before a final armistice, which resulted in the creation of the Confederation of the Heartlands. About the same time, the city of Valerystadt was built (AC 856).

The relations with the centaurs of the eastern forests claimed by the people of the Heartlands, who had by now begun to call themselves the Klagorstans, in honor of Lord Voniek, had always been troublesome. Trying to avoid needless bloodshed, the new Baron of Valerystadt, Janus Essecki, proposed to accept the centaurs as equal members of the confederation. When the other confederated kingdoms refused, Essecki declared war, and with the help of the Stygians and the centaurs, imposed through military strength their entrance into the confederation, and proclaimed himself count (AC 902).

The conflicts did not stop here, and in the last century, many other smaller wars and conflicts were fought, until the last one in the years AC 1005-1008 between Brasob, Chevalle and Stygia against the human Heartlands, a war that ended with a peace treaty that settled the current borders of the region. Subsequent to this were the raids of AC 1011 and 1014 against Stygia by the barkhas of Gournzee, who were allowed to pass through Vrancea, against confederated laws, by Duke Rhorg.

Another war, although a very short one, has been fought in Klagorst last year. The continual provocations by the barkhas and Rhorg finally led to a declaration of war from the troglodytes. Vrancea left the confederation, and allied itself with Gournzee against the other kingdoms. Chevalle, after a bloody fight with the Vranceans, retired from the conflict and left the confederated kingdoms. The war ended with the victory of the confederation: Rhorg was exiled to Gournzee, and a new duke now rules Vrancea.

SZEKESH (Land of)

Location: Continent of Brum, western side of the Endworld Line, south of Hyborea. **WB**

Area: 10,430 sq. mi. (27,014 sq. km.).

Population: 8,000 (95% Djikarti gnomes).

Languages: Djikarti.

Coinage: Drake (pp), ink (gp), sue (sp), jul (cp).

Government Type: Anarchy.

Taxes: No system of taxation exists in Szekesh.

Industries: Agriculture (mostly potatoes), farming (reindeer, goats, sheep).

Important Figures: Wyrht (General of the Blessed of Szek).

Flora and Fauna: Many plants and animals naturally resident of a northern, mountainous realm may be found here. In the scattered secluded valleys and meadows of the region can be found isolated juniper shrubs, evergreens, and hardy grasses. Much of the country is too rugged to support much in the way of plant life, and one may easily find various species of moss and lichen clinging to the mountainsides. In terms of animal life, herds of mountain goats may be found in the southern valleys, and reindeer are known to pass through the region during their migrations. The more dangerous creatures include frost giants, ice wolves, and scattered yeti tribes. Rumor has it that a particularly large, and reclusive, white dragon has her lair in one of the tallest mountains of the region, though no one has found its location.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

The Djikarti live in small villages made of stone houses or carved in the mountains, and the people are equally divided between the ones which live underground and the ones above. There are only two major settlements in the land: Hrektizaga and Fort Swaag. Hrektizaga is the capital and only city of the nation. It is home to 1,200 Djikarti gnomes, 300 humans, and the Academy of Ice Sciences. Fort Swaag is the military center, where 1,000 well-equipped Blessed of Szek gnomes patrol the southern mountains.

The People

The Djikarti gnomes are a merry, anarchical gnomish sub-race. They have no king or organized associations, and the only institution they have is the small army of Blessed of Szek in Fort Swaag. Djikarti are apparently unrelated to other Mystaran specimens. Their love for chaos has made them a fierce enemy of the Closed Society, but friendly towards most other people of the Klagorst region, although they do not understand the humans' apparent need for order. Djikarti are free spirits that can be found anywhere in Klagorst; many are adventurers or mercenaries, and they have often volunteered in armies that tried to cause the downfall of tyrants and despots in the Heartlands. This makes Szekesh a good place to visit. The gnomes are hospitable and friendly, but unfortunately their chaotic nature

results in the absence of the concept of property. Many Djikarti are in this respect equal to thieves, and it is incomprehensible to them, that when they travel in Klagorst, they are often charged of thievery. Perhaps the fact that they do not feel the least respect for any institution makes any form of understanding or agreement with this otherwise pleasant race all the more difficult.

Recent History

According to their traditions, the gnomes arrived in the region of Szekesh around AC 150, guided by their Immortal Szek, Patron of Freedom. The gnomes tell that they once witnessed the decline and self-destruction of an ancient society, and decided therefore to avoid any social organization thereafter. Unfortunately, this decision weakened their race, and exposed them to the aggression of their neighbors, so Szek led His protegees to a new land that eventually became Szekesh. The Djikarti faced few problems, because there were no other civilized races in the vicinity; or so they believed, because Djikarti scouts eventually discovered the hydrax at the north around AC 230. The two races have never liked each other, but never came to war because of the isolationistic nature of the hydrax and the peaceful and disorganized nature of the Djikarti.

The major threat to the Djikarti came much later. First, around AC 430, the Stygians began to invade from the south, and nearly conquered all the land. Facing a troglodyte-dictated truce without the possibility of defending themselves, other than with sparse guerrilla activities, the Djikarti would probably have faced a destiny of slavery. Amazingly, a new race arrived from the east, succeeding in the impossible task of crossing the mountains: it was the barkhas, who attacked the troglodytes and freed the country from the invaders (AC 434-437). Even if, at first, the Djikarti feared that the barkhas were simply going to be new oppressors, they left Szekesh when the last troglodyte did so, then departed southwards to forge their kingdom, Gournzee. After that, the Djikarti lived free, but decided to organize a stable military force, guided mostly by Blessed of Szek, self-styled crusaders of Szek, who are born with an innate sense of lawfulness. These are the police and military of the country, but are also not at all oppressive, and although they differ greatly in behavior and mannerisms from their other kin, they know that they were born for the sole purpose of ensuring a completely free way of life for the Djikarti.

When the Visneskayan and Brasobian humans came from the southeast, and attempted to take over the country, the Blessed of Szek managed to oust the aggressive human settlers, and founded Fort Swaag to discourage future invasions, but did not face any more trouble.

Don't Miss

Szekesh is a very good country to visit if you are an anarchist, but otherwise it can be a frustrating experience, maybe more so than the Land of the Closed Society, outside Brektizaga. In this city lives a small community of humans, and the Djikarti who live here try to cope with the needs of order other races have... so there one may enjoy a near-paradise of semi-anarchy, even if most Djikarti feel that the city's atmosphere is too restrictive to them!

STYGIA (Grand Duchy of)

Location: Continent of Brun, southern edge of the Klagorst territories. **WB**

Area: 21,300 sq. mi. (55,167 sq. km.).

Population: 11,000 troglodytes.

Languages: Cywan (60% commonality with the troglodyte language spoken elsewhere on Mystara).

Coinage: Pegh (pp), ehra (gp), syd (sp); Klagorst and Brasobian coinage also accepted.

Taxes: 15% income tax, 5% of which goes to the clergy.

Government Type: Monarchy, heavily influenced by the Church of Peg Shuta.

Industries: Mining (mainly platinum), animal herding (cattle, giant lizards).

Important Figures: Xagash (Archduke); Zar'nag (High Kai (Priest)).

Flora and Fauna: The swamplands of the region are home to giant lizards, some of which have been domesticated by the troglodytes as draft animals and a source of food, and by all sorts of nasty creatures like giant slugs, and a race (that I have never heard of outside of Stygia) of giant albino crocodiles. Some human outlaws and bandits call the southern hills home.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Giulio diSergio-Orsini.

The Land

Stygia is mainly a giant swamp inhabited by troglodytes, and dotted with islands of dry land where giant lizards are raised by some farmer. The towns are all built deep inside the swamp, most of them near the shore, where the troglodytes have ports where goods from the north arrive, and others leave, mostly toward the Kerminhae Archipelago. In the southern hills there are several platinum mines. Stygia maintains a truce with the Confederacy of Klagorst, especially due to the power of the Church of Pegh Shuta, which fiercely opposes Archduke Xagash, who is trying to reinforce the monarchy as well as keep his realm loyal to the confederacy.

The land of Stygia is quite barren and cold, but troglodytes like it; they are not so brutal, savage and vicious like their cousins of other parts of Mystara, but they are xenophobic and some of them are more than a little over the edge of madness, for reasons I cannot yet fathom. The troglodytes speak a strange language that is similar only in part to the troglodyte language of other parts of Mystara; probably the differences derive from the higher level of culture the Stygians have gained, and thus their language is more elaborate.

Recent History

The Stygian troglodytes arrived in the region they now call home some centuries before the crowning of Zendrolion I as Emperor of Thyatis, probably around the 3rd century BC. The troglodytes were apparently of a much lower cultural level then, but they profited greatly from the contact with the Kerminhae. The region was not particularly suited to the troglodytes, being then just a cold steppe much similar to Klagorst, but eventually the troglodytes learned magical techniques that allowed them to change the surrounding environment into a cool swamp. The magics also prevented the waters from

freezing during the cold winters, although its temperature is actually below freezing. In the following years (1st century BC) the troglodytes begun to worship an arch-devil known as Charun, Demon Lord of Stygia, and the country took its name from Him. The priesthood of Charun guided the troglodytes in wars against Kerminhae, the first of those being fought in the then unsettled Klagorst region, where the Kerminhae outpost F'ww'aa was destroyed (AC 12). On that spot, several centuries later the human city of Port Fewalskij would be built.

The success of this war, which wiped out the Kerminhae from the mainland, encouraged the priests of Charun, who engaged themselves in other major wars. On the mainland, the hresha-rhak were repeatedly beaten, but the troglodytes never managed to defeat their enemies at sea, so the two nations signed a treaty in AC 276, after which the troglodytes begun to look with interest towards the northern arrival of the gnomes in Szeekesh. They could find a use for a race of slaves—to settle and exploit the uninhabited Klagorst region, thus barring the coastal lands from the hresha-rhak indefinitely. After some minor skirmishes that tested the strength of the anarchical Djikarti (AC 343 being the first of them), the troglodytes prepared themselves and marched toward the north, seizing most of Szeekesh in AC 429. After that, unfortunately for them, the barkhas arrived from the east, and began to force them out of the region. Internal disorder, instigated by the minority followers of Peg Shuta and aided by the hresha-rhak, led to the hasty retreat of the Charun priests, and their armies, the relinquishing of their claim on Szeekesh, a civil war that ended with the destruction of Charun's priesthood, and the foundation a new theological monarchy in AC 443, with the main divinity now being Peg Shuta. Followers of Charun, their faith declared illegal, are still present in Stygia, and comprise the Horned Skull, a secret society that wants to take power once more and begin a new war against Kerminhae.

Stygia was now in the hands of the Shutan faction, who established a strong alliance with the Kerminhae, and decided to turn their attention inwards, avoiding conflicts with the surrounding nations, including the Klagorst humans who had begun to occupy that region while they were abandoning Szeekesh. The exception to the rule were the barkhan crusades against them, that resulted in several wars, most fought along the borders, although sometimes their enemy lizardkin managed to enter and sack the country. Other important events in Stygian history were its joining the Klagorst Confederacy and its participation in some of the region's wars.

Last year, after yet another raid from the barkhas, Stygia pushed the confederation to declare war to Gournzee. The conflict resulted in a clear victory on the Stygian part, and this will prevent for some time the resolution of the struggle for power between the archduke and the clergy of Peg Shuta. It is only a matter of time before the friction will become inevitable again, though.

Don't Miss

In the capital city of Kragm'aanle the wonderful Temple of Peg Shuta must be seen! It is completely covered with platinum, and has a strange alien geometric shape, although very different from the hresha-rhak architecture, and not so disturbing to one's senses. It is to be noted, though, that most other Stygian buildings follow more regular and normal architectural concepts, but this temple is really a marvelous feat of engineering, to be counted among the best on the planet.

THE WHITE ORCS OF THE NORTH

Location: Continent of Brun, Hyborean Steppes, north of the Zuyevan Empire and the Midlands.
WB

Area: 6,000 sq. mi. (15,540 sq. km.)

Population: 155,000 white orcs with a number of other monsters including a particularly nasty ice demon (Kazukarzash). The white orcs are also allied with local dire wolves, which they train as hunting companions. There are perhaps 50,000 dire wolves in white orc territory. Roughly 50,000 humans live in white orc territory in a besieged river valley known as Azganizband. These Azganiz people are descendants of an offshoot of the great Devo Antalian migration of the second millennium BC.

Languages: Orcish (Graktur dialect).

Coinage: None. Barter is the norm.

Taxes: None, presumably. Whatever the ashakturs exact in tribute from their vassals would probably count as taxation of a sort.

Government Type: There are six principal clans, each led by a war leader called an ashaktur.

Industries: Iron mining, basic crop farming, warfare and weapons production.

Important Figures: Each clan is led by an ashaktur (war chieftain). Occasionally, if the white orcs feel it necessary to band together to face a major threat, or if they just want to engage in widespread destruction and looting of human settlements, they will meet at Furkash to elect an angrashaktur (supreme war chieftain) to lead the armies.

Flora and Fauna: In the southern steppes, tall, hardy grasses predominate, which, in the short summer months, provide the white orcs with marginal croplands (primarily wheat and barley). As one progresses northwards, or towards the foothills of the Endworld Line, the plains give way to hilly country, dotted with stunted shrubs and coniferous trees. Here, blueberries and raspberries manage to grow during the brief summer. Towards the east of the white orc territories, forests begin to predominate, though these are still conifers.

In terms of animal life, this region is home to several herds of elk and deer, as well as caribou towards the north. In the eastern woodlands, the occasional moose can be found. On the open steppes, many varieties of hare, lemming, and fox make their home, as well as ptarmigans. In addition to dire wolves, larger forms of animal life include polar bears (in the far north of this region), grizzly and black bears (in the eastern forests), and lynxes. More exotic animals include white dragons in the far north, and atop the higher peaks of the Endworld Line in this region, and small herds of woolly mammoths, again in the far north.

Further Reading: None.

Description by an unknown author.

[The information contained herein was provided anonymously to the editorial staff of the almanac, contained in a battered leather scroll case. It is not known at this time whether the author of this report is still alive, or how he or she managed to obtain such detailed information. Ed.]

The Land

The lower Hyborean Steppes, which are home to the confederation of white orcs, is an inhospitable place. Snowfalls are regular for the coldest half of the year and only the most rudimentary crops can be farmed by the orcs to supplement their diet. Most of their diet is however provided by hunting—mainly of deer and elk, which are common, but also of humans from the Midlands or Zuyebo.

The People

The white orcs have adapted to the harshness of the icy frozen wastes of the Hyborean Steppes. They live primarily in fortified tribal settlements, owing allegiance to a central clan authority. The only real permanent settlement is the partly subterranean town of Furkash (pop. 6,000) comprised mainly of White Death Clan orcs. This is the meeting place of the supreme orcish war council.

The white orcs are divided into six principal tribes:

Blizzard Clan (28,000 members): This clan is the westernmost of the clans, with their tribal territory comprising the foothills of the Endworld Chain. The Blizzard Clan members are excellent climbers and cabers and also make good slingers for the white orc armies. They possess few dire wolf cavalry, although they have trained some black and polar bears for combat.

Black Storm Clan (18,000 members): This clan is located just east of the Blizzard Clan territories and is the smallest of the six clans. It is a relatively new grouping, having broken away from the Endless Winter Clan a century ago. This clan is however one of the most powerful. It has a high proportion of orc wokani and shamans who specialize in reanimation, darkness, and ice magics.

Endless Winter Clan (25,000 members): This clan is located in the southern central part of the Hyborean Steppes. Thus, they have the most contact with the humans of the Midlands, and as a result they are an extremely warlike clan and have large contingents of heavily armored dire wolf cavalry. They are extremely hostile to humans and will kill them on sight rather than take them prisoner.

North Wind Clan (22,000 members): This clan occupies the northern central part of the lower Hyborean Steppes. Much of the tribe lives underground to ward against the more hostile environment in this part of the steppes. They are the principal miners of the confederation, and extract considerable quantities of iron ore that they manufacture into weapons and armor to equip the white orc armies.

White Death Clan (35,000 members): This clan occupies the area directly to the east of that occupied by the Endless Winter and North Wind clans. This area is largely formed of wooded steppes and so these orcs have become expert woodsorcs and bowmen. This is the largest of all the clans—principally because of the iron discipline enforced by successive White Death ashakturs.

Ice Fist Clan (24,000 members): This clan occupies the easternmost stretches of white orc territory. They are the most decentralized of the clans, with some tribal outposts situated as far southeast as the Borean River. Raiding parties from this clan pose a considerable threat to travelers in the northeastern Midlands and northern Adri Varma Plateau areas.

There is another denizen of white orc territory that is worth mentioning, Kazukarzash as he is known to the white orcs. Kazukarzash is an extraordinarily powerful ice demon who lives in the mountains to the north of the lower Hyborean Steppes. This demon is responsible for the harsher than normal weather conditions that prevail in the white orcs' domain. The demon is possessed of great powers, with

mastery over all types of weather magic, and is worshipped by the orcs as a god. They often bring tribute to the demon (although no orc has ever actually seen him), which pleases the demon considerably. He particularly likes human sacrifices.

Recent History

The white orcs grew from the remnants of the great hordes of the north that chose not to accompany Uogor on his epic journey of destruction in BC 1270. Since that time, with the flourishing of human civilizations in the Dalu River valley and the Midlands, as well as human migrations from the east (particularly the Talmab and Debo), the orcs were forced northwards. Around BC 100, however, an evil presence moved into the northern mountains of the lower Hyborean Steppes. This was the ice demon Kazukarzash. Soon the weather took a turn for the worse and this allowed the white orcs, who by now had adapted to the extreme cold of the northern Hyborean Steppes, to multiply and move southwards. In AC 175 the resurgence of their civilization was complete when Kazukarzash engineered an extreme blizzard that lasted for a whole month. This allowed the white orcs to splinter the burgeoning Debo civilization that was growing north of the Tunguska Forest and destroy many other human settlements including those of the Douzbaks and Talmabs. The weather of the steppes grew increasingly inhospitable and soon all humans were driven east or south. Since that time, the white orcs have thrived on raiding human settlements in winter and mining, farming and hunting in the short summer period.

Recently, in AC 1009, the white orcs have discovered an isolated outpost of the Debo civilization that they had thought they had destroyed some 800 years previously. Located in a mountainous canyon region on the Borean River, the small civilization is known as Azganizband. Comprising some 50,000 people, the Azganiz people have been put under siege for eight years now by 30,000 warriors from the Ice Fist and White Death clans. The entrance to the Azganiz River valley is along a single steep mountain pass (the Jainur Pass) that the Azganiz have heavily fortified (the cataracts on the Borean River make the river impassable). However, as each year goes by, the Azganiz lose some more of their fighting troops and slowly this unique civilization (which dates back to BC 1150 as an offshoot of the Debo Antalian migration from Norwold to present day Zuyebo) is being bled to death. The Azganiz have tried on numerous occasions to send riders for help to the Midlands but without any success, the white orcs always seem to capture them and return their heads on pikes to line the white orc-held section of Jainur Pass.

PEZCHAMENID EMPIRE

Location: Continent of Brun, northern Arm of the Immortals, between the Dalu Bay and the Sea of Brun. **WB**

Area: 508,500 sq. miles (1,317,015 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600,000 (80% humans, 10% pegataurs, 5% dwarves, some elves and demi-ogres).

Language: Dars, Hatti, Pibj, Mebir, Churan, Pegataur, Midannite and Dremen.

Coinage: Talen (pp), darik (gp), sicles (sp), sabzi (cp).

Taxes: 10% property tax, assessed every *Fy.* 1 (sometimes this is paid with produce or crafted goods, in the case of farmers or artisans); once every five years, on *Fu.* 1, a special army tax is levied, for 5% of a person's net worth (calculated based on property taxes paid the previous year).

Government Type: Hereditary monarchy. Divided into nine Zatrapias, each headed by an hereditary family or relative of the shah-an-shah (emperor).

Industries: Trade, textiles, silk, spice, herding (sheep, ox, goats), fishing, rare woods, oil, mining (gold, copper, iron), arts and literature, magic.

Important Figures: Zhoher Pezcham (Shah-an-shah), Quymor Pezcham (Imperial Regent), Parsan Zhemeneh (Zatrap of Darsi), Gulbuddin Marzik (Zatrap of Ubaraz), Mursillis Labinitas (Zatrap of Zrakan), Azartan Cemirtus (Zatrap of Hattas), Zholodeer Demilcataur (Zatrap of Pibja), Nisir Suun (Zatrap of Pazarkan), Eratkar Kasusu (Zatrap of Mebirush), Odarit Muztasir (Zatrap of Chura), Djomel Tirruk (Zatrap of Midan).

Flora and Fauna: The Pezchamenid Empire is a large and geographically diverse nation. In its central regions, much of which are occupied by the Endworld Line, the hilly and mountainous country is covered by a blanket of lush deciduous growth, including redwoods, sequoias, as well as sturdy stands of oak and birch. Further inland, towards the mountain range itself, the trees begin to give way to dense shrubbery, though the occasional pine tree juts above the surrounding vegetation—particularly in the higher elevations. In the many coastal river valleys, however, is where one will find the most lush plant life. Amidst farmland one will see carefully tended stands of mahogany and teak, as well as vast tracts of various spices. The more exotic plant life includes strangle vines and whip weed (deep in the forests), and some open fields are known to host grab grass.

The empire's animal life is just as varied. In the uplands can be found many species of mountain goat, preyed upon by the occasional wolf. Towards sea level, in the forests, can be found wolves, bears, wild cats of various sizes (including reclusive tigers), deer, assorted rodents, and many species of bird. The forests are also home to humanoids of various types (primarily orcs and hobgoblins), as well as owlbears, decapuses, araneas, and displacer beasts. The mountains are known to house a number of hill and mountain giants, as well as griffons.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

Following my exploration of the region around Bellayne, I decided to head further west, as was suggested to me by Joshuan. It seems the far west of Brun is home to many nations only known in

passing in the Old World. The journey was long, but I did manage to make some contacts, and have a good look at some of the Pezchamenid Empire's more important settlements. What follows is the information I was able to glean from my travels—though my fellow Kastelians would be far more interested in the exotic goods to be found here!

The Land

The Pezchamenid Empire stretches along the two coasts of the Arm of the Immortals from the southern foothills of the Resht Zanbaar (southern Endworld Line) to the Resht Kazit (Northern Shield of the Immortals). Most of the empire's population is concentrated on two major plains: the flubial plain of the Zebris Valley, between the Northern Shield of the Immortals and Dzemayaut Range, and the Iyar Plain, northwest of the Valu Bay. The rest of the population is concentrated along the coastal plains and in the higher valleys, only the pegataurs dwell in the highest regions.

The weather of the empire varies widely from one region to the other. Overall, the climate is mild and temperate, with the western coast being slightly dryer than the eastern, although this changes at the latitude of Attasar, where the colder currents coming from the northern Sea of Brun meet with the warmer waters of the western coast of the Arm of the Immortals. Inland, the weather varies according with the altitude; the Zebris Valley shares a similar weather pattern as the western coast, for example. At sea level, or in the large valleys, there are normally four seasons in the empire: a long dry summer, a milder yet dry fall, a short but rainy winter and a rainy and warm spring during which hurricanes may follow the coast up to the Pezchamenid Empire.

The zatripies are:

Darsia: Darsia is the largest of all the zatripies; it is located on the Iyar Plain, and overlooks the waters of Valu Bay. It is characterized by large valleys flowing slowly toward the bay. Small white houses dotting the land are sometimes grouped in small fortified hamlets, sometimes built atop a hill. Many shrines dedicated to the philosophy of Zaranaster may be found along the trails and roads of Darsia; inside them, one can find the ever-burning fires dedicated to Mizara-Idan; it is considered as a crime for a non-believer to even breathe into the air near such a sacred fire. The biggest cities of the zatripy are Darsagades, the imperial capital (pop. 37,000) and Ragmata (pop. 13,000), the empire's major port on Valu Bay.

Ubaraz: This small zatripy is peopled almost solely by Dars, but was separated from Darsia more than 300 years ago as a gift to a cavalry captain who saved the life of the shah-an-shah. Since then, the people of Ubaraz have developed an identity of their own, but the main thing that distinguishes them from the Dars of Darsia is the fact that the hivebrood is a constant threat in the region, and that many from Ubaraz are infected and cured or sent to the southern steppes. The zatripy's capital is Ubar (pop. 4,500), a pretty-looking port on Valu Bay that also serves as the main naval base on this side of the empire.

Pazarkan: Pazarkan is the land of the pegataurs, located atop the high peaks of the northern Immortal Shield. It is a region blown by constant fiery winds and showered by the region's worst thunderstorms in winter and spring. The pegataurs have adapted well to this environment and have built what they call "cloud cities" on the verge of the most precipitous cliffs. The biggest of these cloud cities is Degerin (pop. 9,000), the zatripy's capital and Pegat (pop. 8,500) a city in two parts: the upper level, reserved for the pegataurs, and the lower level where human merchants of the rest of the empire come to trade with the winged centaurs.

Zrakan: Zrakan is one of the poorest zatrippies of the empire, yet it is of strategic importance since its high forested hills and the narrow valleys are the easiest (and almost only) way to cross from the eastern part of the empire to the western coast. People there survive by herding sheep and goats, and by trading their carpets (renowned for their quality) beyond the empire's frontiers. Also, one of the main resources of the zatripp's administration comes from the trade on the imperial road and the central state's credits to maintain it. Praptanj (pop. 3,500) is the regional capital; it is a bleak city where only the central market, the bazaar, seems to live.

Hattas: Hattas is the empire's jewel. It provides almost half of the empire's mineral resources and nearly three quarters of its timber. It also profits from the imperial road, which brings even more riches to the zatripp's coffers. However, Hattas has always been one of the most turbulent zatrippies of the empire, for its people still believe that it should head the empire instead of the Dars. Nevertheless, the riches that Hattas receives from the empire's inner trade are enough to convince them that stability is better than civil war. Attasar (pop. 11,500) is filled with opulence and monuments that were built in the time when it was the empire's capital. It is also a major center for the study of magic in the empire.

Dibja: Dibja is the land of the empire's best and richest merchants. The Dibj are among the best sailors living in Brum, and have ventured farther than many other seaborne peoples. Their only problem is that, if they are good merchants and sailors, they are poor warriors; this helps explain why the empire's overseas trade is still constrained by foreign piracy, after centuries of fighting. Utsidon (pop. 21,000), the capital city of the zatripp, is the empire's biggest and most prosperous port; Bertsos (pop. 11,000) is the home of the imperial fleet and a holy site of the Dibj's religion.

Mebirush: The land of the Mebirs encompasses the most fertile lands of all the empire. There, the irrigation network, is, in itself, a real wonder. Rice, sorghum and wheat are harvested in large amounts, and date palms are grown along the main rivers and on the seaside and provide an additional source of revenue for the peasants. Flax is also grown both for the production of linseed oil and for its textile fibers. There are two cities of great importance in Mebirush: Ishmar (pop. 17,000), the zatripp's capital, is an impressive city renowned throughout the empire for its immense gardens and its multitude of fountains, and Kadour (pop. 11,000), while more austere is also impressive for its fifteen-story-high ziggurat.

Chura: Chura is the land that has been inhabited by sedentary people for the longest period in the empire. Artifacts and ruins of long gone peoples and kingdoms dot its lands. Chura is somewhat smaller than the territory inhabited by the Churans, which extends well beyond the frontier with Midan and along the frontier with Mebirush. Chura comprises most of the central Zebris Valley and the fields are almost as bountiful as they are in Mebirush. Asnibeh (pop. 14,000) is the historical capital city of the Churans and it is still the capital of their zatripp; Regnieh was traditionally the second city of importance in the zatripp, but it has been given to Midan by the current central administration in a bold move to weaken the influence of the Zatripp of Chura.

Midan: Midan is the most artificial zatripp of them all. It has been given to the Midannite nomads by the first emperors so that they would help the central government control the Churans' aspirations to sovereignty. Now, the Midannites are a minority in their own lands, most of them live in the hills at the foothills of the great Immortal Shield (which, from Midan's side, looks like a wall of rock thousands of feet high), while the Churans occupy the valleys and cities. Nonetheless, Midan is one of the richest zatrippies of the empire, its riches coming from its lands, ideal for the cultivation of wheat,

and from its hills that contain many gold and silver deposits. Nishep (pop. 10,000) once was the Churan kings' summer capital, now it is the permanent capital of the zatrapy. Regnieh (pop. 7,000) has been considered as part of the Zatrapy of Chura for most of the reign of the Vezchameni, until the current regent decided to give it to Midan.

The People

The Vezchamenid Empire is a multiethnic state where no one ethnic group really predominates. Relations between the peoples of the empire are free of competition or confrontation on ethnic grounds; the people of the empire refer to themselves as Vezchameni before any other designation based on language, ethnicity or race. The largest ethnic group of the empire is the Dars, who came from the steppes of inner Brun about two millennia ago. These people are of approximately the same stock as the Huleans and the people of the Midlands, even though they mingled with some of the Pitchans who were living on the Iyar Plain before their arrival. Dars can be found throughout the empire serving in administrative offices or trading with the locals, but they are predominant in the three zatrapies of the northwest, Darsia, Uvaraz and Zrakan. Many dialects are spoken among the Dars and may vary wildly from one region to the other. The second most important group of people in the empire are the Churans. They live principally in the Zebris Valley in Chura, Midan and southern Mebirush. Of all the people in the empire, they are the closest descendants of the original Pitchans even if they have lost most of their ancestors' original culture. Some Churans are of mixed Oltec (Pitchans) and Tanagoro blood, which explains their darker complexion. The Mebirs and Divj share the same language and origin but their cultures are so different that the Empire treats them as different people, which they, in fact, are after centuries of divergent development—culturally and religiously. Both peoples are descendants of the first Tanagoro settlers that landed on the western coast around BC 1700 and were integrated with the Pitchans of the coast. The Hattas are closer to the Oltecs than to their Pitchan cousins, they were forced to migrate from the lower basin of the Halu River to the forested hills of the western coast when the Dars tribes arrived in the region. Since then, they might be considered more as a blend of Oltec and Neathar since some intermixing occurred between the two nomadic groups. The Midannites are a smaller ethnic group, they are close to the Dars since they came from the same faraway steppes, but were sent to the higher part of the Zebris Valley so that they would ensure the obedience of the native Churans during the time of the early Kanastenid Empire. Since then, the Midannites have lost most of their earlier cultural traits due to contact with the Churans, but they still consider themselves different. The Dremens are descendants of the Pitchan nomadic tribes, though they have abandoned this way of life long ago, and are now among the most closed societies of the empire. Among them, marriage with the other groups has always been forbidden, which explains their quasi-pure Oltec/Pitchan traits. As for the pegataurs of Pazarkan, they came from the northern mountains millennia ago, and much of their memories of those distant times were lost during their exile. Since then, they have been very reclusive in their high mountains, but accept the suzerainty of the shah-an-shah, for he traditionally gives them the best positions in the army and leaves them to manage their own lands as they want.

The social structure is roughly the same throughout the empire, the main social divide coming not from the different cultural areas but more from the cleavage between the sedentary people of the coastal and flubial plains, and the semi-nomads of the hills in Zrakan, Hattas and Draya. These peoples' social and political structures are built upon clannish ties and leadership is, in general, given to the elders. Clerics and priests are most of the time the counselors of these chiefs, magic-users are few but

respected, and warriors are numerous and skilled. In the urban areas and in the rural communities of the valleys and coasts, social classes are more distinct, with the scholars and religious people being almost on par with the hereditary nobility. Rich merchants may wield more influence than the nobility and scholars and the richest of them may have a similar standing as the upper class, but, generally, they live in conditions closer to the bulk of the laboring population. While highly respected, the free peasants and craftsmen must economically support the entire empire and pay most of the taxes. The law allows slavery in all the empire but the teachings of Zaranaster have had such an impact that some regions are nearly freed from this form of exploitation. The presence of slaves may be deceiving, since some of the richest landowners may grant their slaves the right to retain some of their production for their own use (they may choose to sell it or to consume it). It is not uncommon to see some slaves of the Zebir Valley, for example, live more comfortably than the freemen of the less fertile regions.

Historically, the empire has been quite decentralized, the regional leaders being quite free to do what they want as long as they respected their obligations toward the shah-an-shah, paid their taxes and sent their armies when needed. Nowadays, the zatraps still have almost the same autonomy as kings would have elsewhere, but discontent against the central administration of the imperial regent have encouraged the zatraps to ask for more autonomy. Recently, they have been increasingly reluctant to send their taxes and military to Darsagades, and some are nearly asking for full independence.

One of the most surprising things in the empire is its code of law. It came down through the generations and, albeit modified regularly, has retained most of its original characteristics while being quite modern and impressively comprehensive. Almost everything is codified in Pezchamenid law, from the unified weight of coinage, to the age at which one may marry (15 years for a man and 13 for a woman), to the exact distance at which one must kneel when facing a noble or a high-ranking priest. There are many who say that this strict and comprehensive, while just, code of law is the key to the survival of an empire that might have crumbled under the weight of its ethnic and religious cleavages.

The Pezchamenid Empire is almost as diverse on the religious grounds as it is ethnically. The traditional religious tolerance of the rulers has allowed many pantheons and philosophical schools to develop and perpetuate themselves within the political framework of the empire. Religious conflicts were few in imperial history, and happened only when no legitimate ruler was in charge of the central administration. Spellcasters of the empire are called mages regardless of the origin (magical or granted by the Immortals) of their powers. The peoples of the empire may be broadly divided in five main religious groups: the followers of Zaranaster's teachings (found mainly in Darsia, Ubaraz and Zrakani); the followers of the Churans' pantheon (most of the Churans and Mebirs, and some Midannites); the Hattas and the Divj both have their own pantheons, and the Dremens have their own ways of accomplishing miracles. The pegataurs also have their own pantheon, but many of them have been converted to the teachings of Zaranaster.

Zaranasterism: Zaranaster was a merchant of Dars origin, who went to the land of the enduks, Nimmur, during the seventh century BC and came back enlightened by the winged minotaurs' faith in a sole Immortal. Once back in Darsia, he began to preach the faith in a sole Immortal, Mizara-Idan (Ixion). According to Zaranaster, Mizara-Idan was accompanied by two different immortal and immaterial spirits. Spenta Mainyu, the one He loved and cherished, was a good spirit and was the guardian of a paradise-like place where the souls of those who did good would go after their deaths; the second, Angra Mainyu, despised by Mizara-Idan, was of evil essence and was responsible for the punishment of the evil beings. The teachings of Zaranaster were revolutionary for the Dars as they

gave a meaning to the people's lives. They were not the pawns of the Immortals anymore and were free to choose their path between good and evil and be rewarded or punished accordingly in the next life. According to the prophet's teachings, fire was of holy essence since it was given to the humans by Mizara-Idan to fight the darkness of Angra Mainyu's realm.

If, at first, the teachings of Zaranaster were followed tightly by his followers, the passing centuries and the actions of the Immortals have changed what Ixion once thought would be a realm devoted to His own magnificence. The two Mainyus, which were only supposed to be avatars of Ixion, began to act independently from the Sun God's will. At first, only the evil side of His personality acted autonomously: it was Hel who used this identity to influence the followers of Zaranaster's teachings to do evil acts. Then, in a quick response, Odin overtook the role of Spenta Mainyu to balance the Entropic Immortal. Since then, the followers of Zaranaster's philosophy more or less have a pantheon made of three Immortals even if most ignore this fact.

The Churan Pantheon: The Churan Pantheon is a classic pantheon if compared with Zaranasterism, it consists of many Immortals revered elsewhere on Mystara, even if they have different names or functions. Another specific trait of this pantheon is the role given to the shedu (winged bulls with human heads from another dimension, the ancestors of the enduks) who are the messengers and guardians of the Immortals. The importance given to the shedu help explain the reverence with which the enduks are treated on Churan soil. Each Churan city has its own protector, which might even be from Entropy. Entropic Immortals are on an equal level with each other since They are essential to keep the balance of the universe. They are even more revered and honored in some regions since Their worship is seen as a way to protect oneself from the wrath of the fiend.

The main Immortals of the Churan Pantheon are: Ead (Thor), God of Lightning and Rain; Allaruta (Calitha), Goddess of Copulation and Lust; Aszun (Korotiku), the Wicked Thief; Abskallar (Ka), He Who Teaches the Arts; Asarduxli (Pflarr), He Who Has the Power of Magic; Ashnankan (Freyja), Goddess of Grain and Fertility; Alu (Alphaks), He Who Crushes Men; Pastirrid (Loki), He Who Crases; Shagulhas (Masauwu), Upholder of Evil; Menkir (Odin), God of Wisdom; Enbiludli (Korvis), God of Irrigation, Farming and Prosperity; Kerrar (Orcus), the Scorched Earth; Sibal (Rathanos), Fire God; Gushkin (Kaggar), He Who Works Metals; Basmur (Atzanteotl), the Horned Serpent; Umbala (Ordana), Guardian of the Forests; Ishahura (Tarastia), Goddess of Marriage, the Enforcer of Oaths; Ishteri (Valerias), Goddess of Love and War; Mushassu (Demogorgon), the Furious Snake; Nebur (Ssu-Ma), God of Writing and Eloquence; Namuntar (Thanatos), the Decider of Faith, God of Plague and Other Diseases; Nanash (Nyx), Moon Goddess, the Darkness; Kulit (Tiresias), the Hymns Singer; Nirlul (Calitha), Goddess of Sailors; Numsar (Djaea), Goddess of Plants and Survival; Nuskmarsh (Ixion), God of Light and Sun.

The Hattas Pantheon: As the Churans, the Hattas have their own pantheon, which predates the empire by centuries. The main figures of this pantheon are: Kumarbis (Odin), the Storm God, head of the Hattas' pantheon; Tasmisus (Thor), the Child of Kumarbis; Hannahamma (Terra), the Mother of All Gods; Suwalpattas (Halab), the Warrior God; Apelluri (Gorrziok), a Giant Who Carries the World on His Shoulders; Ulikummis (Kaggar), God of Rocks and Mines; Hapantallis (Ixion), the Sun God; Inaras (Djaea), Goddess of the Wild Animals and Forests; Telepinus (Freyja), She Who Makes the Crops Grow; Hahhimas (Protius), the Sea God; Illuyankas (Ka), the Dragon, He Who Makes the Earth Reborn; Kamrusepa (Pflarr), Patron of Magic and Learning; Astabis

(Orcus), the Destroyer; Harris (Thanatos), God of Pestilence; Hasamelis (Asterius), He Who Protects Travelers; Istustayas (Nyx), Moon Goddess.

The Trinity of Dibia: Strangely, for such a peaceful and constructive people, the Dibi worship a triad of Entropic Immortals: Djaal (Thanatos), He Who Rules the Universe from a Throne of Skulls; Ashaat (Calitha), the False Maiden; and Melheart (Orcus), He Who Supervises the Process of Destruction. This peculiarity comes from long-forgotten times when the Dibi traded extensively with the ancient city of Drabya, where the fiendish cult was venerated. Many Drabians sought refuge in Dibia when the Hazak goblinoids destroyed their city and brought with them the cult of Entropic Immortals. The Dibi see their evil and chaotic Immortals as being at the root of all changes, without Them there would not be a reawakening of the earth every spring, for the earth needs to plunge into darkness to wake up once more. The Dibi have built giant-sized statues of the three Immortals in their cities, with fires always burning inside them; offerings (fresh meat, money, even human sacrifices) to their Immortals are thrown in the fire. Human sacrifices are common, but it is seen as an honorable end to die in such a way that it will appease the wrath of this fiendish trinity.

The Way of the Dremens: For the Dremens, there are no arch-beings, no Immortals from which to draw the energy to cast spells or prayers. This is not to say that there is not somebody able to heal or to turn undead; there are no shamans, either. The Dremens instead revere *gur-zhoitkar*, or permutators. Permutators are people able to discharge the magical power imbedded in the *gur-aoutat* (the root), a magical tuber found in the valleys and caves of Draba. The ways to use the root are only taught to young Dremens who possess certain mystical characteristics. A permutator will discover how to trigger new power from the consumption of the *gur-aoutat* as he or she will become more experienced with the use of the vegetable (same spells and spell progression as with clerics). Many scholars and mages of the rest of the empire have tried to explain and use the magical capabilities of the root, but none have reached convincing conclusions or results, so the use of the *gur-aoutat* remains unexplained and limited to the Dremens.

Recent History

The history of people living on the Arm of the Immortals goes back well beyond the Great Rain of Fire. However, at that time, only the southernmost part of it was inhabited since the northern part was covered with a thick ice sheet. People of roughly the same origins as the Oltecs and Azcans settled this land well before the rise of Blackmoor. The Pitchans, as they called themselves, lived on the coastal plains and in the misty mountains of the southern part of the peninsula. They had followed a path similar to the Oltecs, even though contacts between the two were sparse and the Pitchans were isolated. Between, BC 4000 and BC 3000, the Pitchans were able to unite the tribes of the Arm of the Immortals, and eventually large cities were built atop the rainier plateaus of the central Immortal Shield Range. With the Great Rain of Fire, however, their mighty empire crumbled as terrific earthquakes rocked their lands, drowning parts of the coastal plains and wreaking havoc on the higher plateaus. The remnants of the Pitchans fell back into barbarism as tribes fought each other for the few resources left.

As the ice sheet receded from the northern part of the peninsula, some Pitchan tribes began to migrate north as others tried to reestablish the old order as they remembered it. The two groups gradually lost contact from each other since the hardships of surviving in these troubled times impeded travel, and the arrival of the migrating elves of Ilsundal in the region, around 2350 BC, further rendered the

communications between the two branches difficult. For almost a thousand years, the northern tribes remained nomads trying to survive on the desolate land that slowly replaced the glacial fields. It was only around BC 2100 that the northern Pitchan tribes settled down in the area known as the Zebris Valley, where the ice had receded, leaving behind rich mineral deposits that gave rise to lush pasturelands that were soon irrigated and cultivated by the Pitchans.

There were five Pitchan city-states competing for power in Zebris Valley when, fifty years later, a mission of enduks came in contact with the Pitchans. Following this first contact, trade ties were established across Valu Bay between the more advanced civilization of the enduks and the somewhat backward Pitchan city-states. The Pitchans adopted many of the customs of the enduks in terms of architecture, arts, technology, magic; even their language was rapidly filled with enduk words. The worship of Ixion also grew among the Pitchans, even though it had to share the Pitchans' souls with other divinities instead of being the sole Immortal as in the enduk pantheon. Contacts with the city of Drabya also developed between BC 2100 and BC 2000, even if they were a little tenser than the relations with the winged minotaurs; the contacts with Drabya had a great impact on the still-nomadic northern tribes, some of which adopted the fiendish cult.

The city-state of Asnibeh rapidly took advantage of its position of main trading partner of the enduks among the Pitchans to increase the techno-magical gap between it and its competitors. The Churans of Asnibeh transformed what looked like peaceful knowledge into a military edge against the other tribes and gradually subdued most of them. Around BC 1850, the Churan Empire was at its apex. Centered in Zebris Valley it covered much of the northern Arm of the Immortals, and traded with most of the nations of the Valu and Savage Coasts.

Around BC 1700, a small fleet of rafts loaded with people from Tangor landed in the northwestern region of the Churan Empire. The new settlers were welcomed and were promptly integrated into Churan society. Their assimilation left the Churans with the knowledge about distant lands overseas, but also added new deities to the region's pantheon. In BC 1556, however, the Mebirs—of mixed Tanagoro and Pitchan blood—revolted against their Churan masters, and a civil war ensued between the two peoples. In BC 1478, the civil war ended, and the Mebirs established their hold upon most of the former empire's territories.

The Empire of Mebirush kept control of the northern Arm of the Immortals until, around BC 1280, scores of humanoids from Ulogar's hordes, invaded its territory. For almost a century, the humanoids plundered the land, leaving behind only ashes and ruin. When, around BC 1200, they resumed their southward migration, Mebirush was in ruin; only the high walls of Utsidon and Bertosos were able to resist the creatures' onslaught. Once the humanoids had gone, the two cities began to thrive as the sole inheritors of Mebirush's trade links with Skothar and Dabania.

Another group of humanoids delivered chaos to the distant northern land of the pegataurs, which forced them into exile. They landed in the high mountains of the northern Immortals' Shield around BC 1150, and founded a new kingdom, Pazarkan (Freedom), and established good neighborly relations with the divided and exhausted peoples surrounding them.

Coming from the far steppes of inner Brun, several tribes—of Oltec-Neathar descent—moved into the lands of the Hattis, a Pitchan tribe living at the mouth of the Valu River, and, overwhelmed by the riders' sheer numbers, the Hattis withdrew towards the mountains. The nomadic tribes were the vanguard of the gigantic Valu River Empire, which stretched as far as the Hyborean Valley. Drabya

was conquered and sacked by the nomads in BC 1088. Following the demise of Emperor Dorfin, the Valu River Empire fragmented in BC 1034. Under constant threat from the humanoids of the Hazak Steppes, the main tribe among the nomads, the Dars, retreated behind the protection of the Valu River estuary into the Iyar Plain northwest of Valu Bay. Pressured by the westward move of the northern nomads, the Hattis were forced to settle the forested valley of the Zob River.

The Dars finally settled the valleys of the Iyar Plain, in BC 1000, and Darsagades was founded. Contacts were made with the societies of the western coast; this is the dawn of the region's modern history.

From BC 750 to BC 700, Xaries, King of Darsagades, united the city-states of the Iyar Plain. Trade with the kingdoms of the western coast and Nimmur intensified. In BC 653, Zaranaster, a merchant from Darsagades, came back from a journey to the land of the enduks. He brought home a new cult—in fact a syncretism of the traditional Darsian manicheist pantheon and the enduks' cult of Idu (Ixion)—where Mizara-Idan is the sole Immortal. This religion preached that people doing good will be rewarded at the time of their death while people of evil nature will be sent to a place of eternal torment. Many Dars among the nobility as well as among the populace adopted his religious school.

In BC 611, the sacred alliance was signed between Kanastez, shah of the Dars, and Pasuldar, king of the pegataurs. This alliance decreed that, while being their vassals, the pegataurs would make up the bulk of the Dars' elite troops, and, as such, would be the first to exert their right to plunder new territories in the name of the alliance. Also, the alliance established that as long as the pegataurs stayed trustworthy allies of the Dars, only pegataurs would be eligible as king of their brethren. Following the signature of the treaty, the Dars and their new elite cavalry of pegataurs launched an attack against the small and divided kingdoms of the Arm of the Immortals' western coast and the Zebri Valley. In BC 590, the conquest of the Pitchans' lands was complete and Kanastez was proclaimed the sacred shah-an-shah (emperor); the Kanastenid dynasty was founded as a result.

From BC 590 until approximately BC 400, the Kanastenid Empire bloomed: it became a trade hub in western Brum. The merchants ships of Divja could be found in the farthest ports, and trade links were established with Nimmur, the Nithian Empire, Hule, the Milenian Empire, the eastern coast of Skothar, and western Dabania. Maritime expeditions were sent to explore Mystara, some going as far as Alphatia and Pelatan. Money taken from the taxes financed the arts, science and literature, and the Kanastenids were renowned for their magical skills. The humanoid tribes of the Hazak Steppes were kept at bay or even bribed to remain peaceful. The teachings of tolerance from Zaranaster allowed the empire to avoid any troubles among the diverse collection of religious groups residing within the empire.

The first blow to the Kanastenid Empire was the eradication of the Nithian Empire. Even if the memories of that empire were removed by the Immortals, the disappearance of a major trading partner in eastern Brum handicapped the Kanastenid merchants. More costly was the war between the enduks and the Skothar manscorpions; the demise of Nimmur, the empire's first trading partner, made the eastern trade routes almost unprofitable.

The real blow to the Kanastenid dynasty also came from commerce, even if it was of a very different nature: in BC 314, a cargo ship arrived from Dabanian lands with a crew infested by broodlings. The parasite creatures spread rapidly throughout the unprepared empire, and years of internal fighting

against the hives was not enough for the empire to persevere, and finally, in BC 272, the Kanastenid Empire collapsed, its administrative structures corroded by the monstrous parasite.

Around BC 250, while the people of the northern Arm of the Immortals were divided and exhausted by their struggle against the hivebrood, a group of ogre-kin sailors from Tangor landed on the western coast, south of the former imperial territories. From this time on, they began to settle a land that was known as the Land of the Gyerians during the empire's heyday. The ogre-kin bought parts of the land from the bird-like gyerians in exchange for petty jewelry and fake precious stones. As they settled the lands, these newcomers overtook many of the trade routes abandoned by the disorganized empire. In BC 239, there were enough ogre-kin living in the region to found a new political entity called the Kingdom of Suma'a; 16 years later, a second kingdom was founded, named Gombar. Both countries thrived on the trade with Tangor, Dabania and the Arm of the Immortals.

In BC 44, a group of Hattas adventurers, led by the mage Supalinaan, killed the broodmother of Attasar. This event triggered the reawakening of the people in the former Kanastenid Empire. Supalinaan and his group led a mighty crusade against the hive throughout the empire. As the chief of the liberation squads, Supalinaan and his friends built a new empire: each city freed of the hive had to swear allegiance to the council (composed of himself and his friends) in Attasar. By AC 10, the entire country had been liberated from the hive's yoke, and Supalinaan left the new empire's throne to his son Attassaper in order to quest for immortality. A new special security force was created in AC 9 in order to keep the hive out of the empire's territory; any infected person had to be sent to the nearest temple for immediate healing. Otherwise, the new hivebroods were sent to the steppes south of Ubaraz. The new empire awakened, only to find that it was not the center of the world anymore...

After one and a half centuries of internal rebuilding, the new Hattasin Empire felt ready to reassume its former position. In AC 157, an armada of breathtaking size assembled in the western ports of the empire, its goal to invade the ogre-kin kingdoms of Suma'a and Gombar and reassert the empire's control over the trade routes across the Strait of Tangor. On its way to the two kingdoms, the armada was surprised and nearly annihilated by a hurricane summoned by the ogre-kin shamans. The few remaining vessels of the fleet were sunk or captured by the smaller but faster ships of the ogre-kin navies. Defeated at sea, the empire tried an overland invasion seven years later. But the legions of the Hattasin Empire were humiliated by what was thought to be uncivilized and disorganized gyerians. The Hattas discovered that, helped by the Gombarians, the gyerians had created their own kingdom, Adilli, and mastered the modern war techniques and equipment.

In AC 179, the Devo, a nomadic tribe of Antalian blood from the northern steppes, conquered Hyatka, which was, until then, a satellite of the Hattasin Empire. Preoccupied by the protection of the new territories in the Pazak Steppes, the Hattas neglected to care about these peripheral developments.

Focused on its maritime struggle against the kingdoms of the western coast, the Hattasin Empire was surprised, in AC 217, by a sudden attack from the humanoids of the Pazak Steppes and their Hulean allies. The empire lost its control over Drabya and the Palu River estuary. Threatened on its eastern flank, the Hattasin Empire signed a peace treaty with Adilli, Suma'a and Gombar in AC 220, in exchange for which it obtained control over some minor trade routes toward Tangor. Beginning in AC 233, the empire entered a war of reconquest against the humanoids of the Pazak Steppes. Casualties were heavy on both sides, and the Hattasin advance stalled on the Palu River, with neither adversary able to cross it.

It would not be the situation on the frontline that would define the results of the war: the implosion of the Hulean Empire (in AC 295) and the subsequent fragmentation of the Hazak tribes (in AC 297) was the deciding factor. The armies of the Hattasin Empire reached Drabya in AC 299 and conquered a large portion of the Hazak Steppes in the following four years.

Around AC 415, the increasing resources diverted from the Hattasin Empire's economy to protect the eastern territories stirred discontent among the nobility. In AC 466, the discontent reached its apex and the bassals of Zebris Valley refused to pay their taxes or send any more troops to the eastern territories. The imperial army was sent to quell the revolt and encountered the local garrison, which was supportive of the rebel nobles. The empire was split between those allied to the Hattas rulers (most of the northeastern nobility) and the southwestern kings. The ensuing civil war devastated most of Divja while other territories were more or less spared. In AC 473, while most of the imperial army was fighting in southern Divja, the king of the Dars, Pirooz Vezham, backstabbed the Hattas by sending his forces to Attasar. With the support of the pegataur king, he proclaimed that Darsagades would be the capital city of a new empire, the Vezhamenid Empire. The elite pegataur troops shifted their allegiance to Vezham, followed closely by the core of the imperial army. A separate peace was signed in AC 475 with the King of Chura, thus splitting in two the alliance of the southern bassals. However, it took more than thirty years for the Vezhameni to reunify the empire.

It was only with the victory over the last Dremen rebels, in AC 508, that the new dynasty stabilized. After more than a century of trouble, however, the empire's trade had been disrupted and the most prosperous regions had been ravaged. The economy of the empire was at its worst as traders from the Savage Coast (primarily from Bellayne and Renardie) now controlled most of the trade to and from the Valu Bay ports. Also, the loosening of the sanitary controls during the civil war has triggered a new surge of the hivebrood in the eastern regions.

Following the end of the civil wars was a period of inner buildup and sociopolitical modernization in the Vezhamenid Empire. The multitude of bassals that characterized the reign of the Hattas were reduced to ten zatrapies, each headed by a zatrap designated by the shah-an-shah among the locals or in his family. The teachings of Zaranaster were brought back to the forefront after a period when the Hattas pantheon prevailed. The domestic economy was revamped and a state school system was established. Ready to reassert itself as a major power in western Brun, the Vezhameni built a new war fleet in Valu Bay. In AC 622, at the Battle of the Bayou, the fleets of Bellayne and Renardie were ousted from the bay, and the colonists of those countries were forced to withdraw from the region. However, the two kingdoms of the Savage Coast continued to finance piracy in the Strait of Valu, thus impeding the growth of Vezhamenid trade outside the bay. Also, in AC 649, the hivebrood was effectively eliminated from imperial lands. In AC 665, a new trade treaty was signed with the kingdoms of Suma'a and Gombor that allowed the empire to conduct trade with Tangor and Dabania, but piracy remained an endemic problem in the Sea of Brun's waters.

Around AC 700, the growing power of Zuyebo increasingly worried the Vezhameni. A small-scale military expedition was sent in AC 706 into Zuyeban lands to test their capabilities, and the rapid victory of the Zuyebans signaled to the Vezhameni that they were no longer free of threats from the north.

Despite the piracy problem on both sides of the Vezhamenid Empire, and the growing power of Zuyebo, the eighth century AC was marked by the prosperous and peaceful reign of Qanikes

Dezhamenid “The Enlightened” from AC 727 to AC 789. During his reign the empire underwent an artistic, philosophical and magical renaissance. Trade ties with neighbors also developed, but overseas trade remained constrained by piracy.

His grandson, Sasdan, followed the guidelines set by his grandfather. But his reign was ended abruptly when, in AC 818, his ship was sunk in the Valu Strait by Renardois pirates. Leaving no heirs, his throne became the object of a fierce competition among his brothers. The following fifty years, during which the throne was vacant, were filled with assassinations, intrigue and treason. In AC 866, Fazar Dezhamenid, a distant nephew of Sasdan, was chosen by a council of mages to be the new shah-an-shah. His reign, from AC 866 to AC 903, was renowned as one of the most just of the region’s history.

In AC 913, the southward expansion of Zuyebo crashed headlong into the interests of the Dezhamenid Empire. This expansion led to the first open conflict between the two empires over the status of the southern Valu Steppes. After a brief engagement, in which the mobility and discipline of the Zuyebans allowed them to gain the upper hand against the flying chariots and infantry of the Dezhamenid army, the Dezhameni were defeated, and by the Quesun peace treaty only kept a small area of land around the Valu River estuary to link them with the Zatrapp of Drazde.

In AC 957, the citizens of Utsidon were awestruck at the sight of a flying island hovering just outside their city. Soon they met the island’s inhabitants, wizards of a distant empire named Alphatia. Their island came from the Kingdom of Floating Ar, and for a reason unknown had broken free from its magical anchor and wandered randomly for more than 15 months. In fact, Palartarkan, the Immortal who created the island, freed it from its magical anchor and brought it to Divja in a move to widen His base of followers. The journey of the Alphatians was made hard by the lack of readily available food, and, since the Divja provided them with food upon arrival, the Alphatians felt welcome in this new land. Local merchants, seeing an opportunity to bypass the pirates of the Sea of Brun, began to learn from the Alphatians how to make flying ships. The cult of Palartarkan, taught by the newcomers, found many followers among the merchants and sailors of Divja.

In AC 977, a new competitor appeared in Valu Bay: the Vilaberdans. Five years later, the empire was defeated by them at the Battle of the Horn. The Dezhamenid eastern fleet was destroyed and the bay was opened to the Savage Coast colonial powers anew.

In AC 986, Zuyebo sank into a civil war, and seeing in this struggle an opportunity to weaken its northern neighbor, the Dezhameni secretly provided help and equipment to the two factions. However, in AC 989, the unrest was quelled by pro-imperialist elements of the Zuyeban military under Marshall Steyeb, and the Dezhamenid plot was uncovered, stirring anger throughout the Zuyeban nobility.

The year AC 997 marked the death of Shah-an-shah Mayzar Dezhamenid, in a hunting accident. His sole son, Zhoher, was crowned sacred emperor at the age of four under the tutelage of his uncle Quymmer. The regent’s decision to place some of his own relatives in influential positions, to raise taxes and lower transfers to the zatraps, to use his own guard as a paramilitary force, and to enforce religious repression, earned him the hatred of most of the zatraps. Nevertheless, the zatraps’ allegiance went first to the shah-an-shah and even if they disapproved of his uncle’s policies and strove for greater autonomy, none of them attempted to declare independence as long as a Dezhameni was a head of state.

Profiting from the Dezhamenid Empire’s problem, the Zuyebans launched a series of attacks against the empire’s possessions at the northern tip of Valu Bay in AC 998. Taking the Dezhameni off

guard, they easily conquered the estuary of the Dalu River and founded the city of Kishineb on the bay's shores, thus cutting the Bezchamenid Empire in two. The Zatrapp of Drazde became a de facto independent state in AC 999, but the authorities in Drabya, the capital city, were divided between the supporters of Zuyebo and the loyalists to the old motherland.

Zhoher proved to be a weak ruler, and was unable to prevent the resurgent Zuyeban Empire from increasing its influence in Drazde, and eventually annexing it in AC 1008.

ZUPEVO (Empire of)

Location: Continent of Brum, Dalu River Basin. **WB**

Area: 520,000 sq. mi. (1,346,800 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600,000.

Languages: The Zupebans speak a derivative of an ancient Antalian language that shares a 45% commonality with Heldannic with a slight hint of Ethengar influence.

Coinage: Dvina (gp), vaska (sp), kiven (cp).

Taxes: 25% tax on the income of peasants (much of which is paid in kind or through servitude) and merchants and 10% on the nobility.

Government Type: Autocratic imperial monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture, hunting, fur trading, logging, conquest, mining (gold, silver, tin, electrum, copper, iron), alcohol production.

Important Figures: Andrei III (Tsar), Vasily Stolbob (Minister of State).

Flora and Fauna: Being a northern land with rich soils, Zupebo hosts a wide variety of plant life. Towards the south, grasslands and steppes predominate, while in the north, and towards the foothills of the Endworld Line, great forests cover the land, culminating in the immense Tunguska Forest, which is primarily coniferous. Towards the central regions of Zupebo, the vast stands of evergreens give way to forests of maple, poplar, and aspen. Interspersed with the various mundane plants can be found grab grass (in the steppes), and strangle vines (hanging from branches in the southern forests).

Zupebo is also home to a wide variety of animal life, including deer, mink, beavers, foxes, and wolves. Various humanoids found within Zupebo include troglodytes, goblins, gnomes, some elves (in the Tunguska Forest), and a large number of hill and mountain giants in the Endworld Line, as well as the occasional red dragon. Some fey races have been sighted in the forests north of Archangelsk. Centaur tribes live in the south near the Deschamenid Empire.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Marina Takanitas.

While exploring Bellayne for this year's almanac, I had heard that the far-off nations of Zupebo and the Deschamenid Empire. Though I had been warned of the danger in making such a long journey, I had already gone all the way to Bellayne as it was; a couple hundred extra miles would make no difference, now. Besides, there might be something in it for the family business. Though I did not have much time to explore either nation to any great extent, I was able to get a sense of what these places are like.

The Land

Zupebo is a land of immense steppes and grasslands as well as vast forests. The land is bounded by major natural barriers—the Endworld Mountain Range to the west, the Dalu River to the east, arctic plateaus to the north, and Dalu Bay to the south. It is also a cold and bitter land, especially in the north, and the population works hard to extract a living from the soil. The north of the empire is prone

to heavy snowfalls, although the hunting is good in the birch, aspen and conifer forests of the north in the warmer months as bear, deer and other wildlife are plentiful.

The land is most heavily settled along the Dalu River and its numerous tributaries; however, Zuyeban colonization spreads far beyond these regions, although populations here tend to be much more sparse and clustered in defensible villages along internal routes of communication, and at sites of valuable resources like mines and good hunting regions.

The People

The Zuyebans come from a mixed heritage. The most numerous, from a Devo background, are largely of Antalian heritage, tall and of light complexion. The Talmabs who make up much of the remainder of the population are of Ethengar stock and tend to be more swarthy and stocky. A significant proportion of the peasantry are serfs—bonded laborers—while there is also a small group of well-off, independent farmers: the kulaks. The merchant/middle classes tend to be relatively small as much of the export trade is dealt with by a handful of trading families. The nobility (the only precondition for entry being the amount of farming land owned) is quite large in comparison to most other dominions (especially ones like Karameikos and Thyatis).

The major cities of Zuyebo are:

Zybirsk (pop. 3,000): Zybirsk is a relatively newly created town following the discovery of silver and gold in nearby hills in AC 989. Zybirsk is the classic frontier town—wild and untamed, although the tsar's troops maintain a presence in the town, ostensibly to make sure that taxes are paid on the metals extracted from the mines. However, corruption is rife, and the tsar's troops and officers often accept kickbacks in return for not levying taxes.

Kishinev (pop. 4,500): Kishinev is the newest of all Zuyeban towns, founded in AC 998. It is Zuyebo's only port that is ice-free year-round, and its only outlet onto Dalu Bay. The small Zuyebo Southern Fleet is headquartered here, and the town is a base for naval explorations of Dalu Bay and beyond. It is also the site of the Renardois embassy. The Kingdom of Renardie and the Empire of Zuyebo are forging a strong trade and military alliance—both hope to profit from this at the expense of Vilaverde and Bellayne.

Zuyganev (pop. 40,000): Capital city of the nation, Zuyganev is a prosperous but rambling collection of stone and wooden buildings, surrounded by thick and strong stone walls. It is home to the principal imperial palace, as well as many other fine examples of the unusual Zuyeban architecture.

Dubyshev (pop. 14,000): Dubyshev is a thriving logging and mining town, and is the key to Aska Pass, the narrow and treacherous route that links Zuyebo to its northern ports on the Sea of Brun. It was originally the power base of the Dubyshev princes, but since the recent time of troubles (i.e. the civil war of AC 984-988), the independence of the region has been crushed by the tsar—who maintains two Talmab Guard regiments in the city.

Krasnabodsk (pop. 6,000): The earliest Zuyeban port that was built, it was settled in AC 594 by Talmab explorers. It is now a thriving sea-port, although the bay on which it is situated (the Vaigach Morpe) freezes over for three months of every year and is dangerous to larger ships for another two months due to floating ice sheets and the like.

Archangelsk (pop. 13,000): Archangelsk (archangel in Zuyeban) is the principal port of the empire. However, it faces similar problems as does Krasnabodsk, with the port open to navigation at best seven

months of the year. It is the administrative and economic center of Zuyebo's north. The region (or oblast) is cut off from the outside world for at least four months out of every year with the Aska Pass snowed in and impassable during winter and the shipping lanes similarly impassable. Despite the founding of Kishinev, which is still in its infancy, Archangelsk is the main route for exports to be shipped out of Zuyebo.

Kulikobo Fortress (pop. 6,000 soldiers): Kulikobo is an immense rambling fortification system built on the eastern side of the Valu River. It features a sizable wharf/dock area where riverboats ferry troops and supplies to the fortress from Sharya. The fortress is the most major military instillation of note on the eastern side of the river, and is the point from which military expeditions are sent out against the vicious humanoids of the northern Pazak Steppes. It has two satellite fortresses called Kustany and Aktynkidze, which act as buffers against humanoid incursions.

Sharya (pop. 17,000): Strategically positioned in the apex of the mighty Valu and Rybinskoye Rivers, Sharya is a booming city, and gateway to the east. It is largely a military town, and is constructed as such—neat long streets in a grid pattern. Sharya supplies the troops across the Valu River at Kulikobo, and is the starting point of military and trading expeditions that strike out eastward across the northern Pazak Steppes.

Vyatka (pop. 9,000): Vyatka has been an integral part of the Zuyeban Empire since it was conquered by the Debo in AC 179. It sits amongst vast tracts of excellent agricultural lands—wheat, rye and other grains are grown here in abundance. As a result, Vyatka is known as the granary of Zuyebo, exporting its excess produce north and south along the Rybinskoye River.

Kostyn (pop. 10,000): Kostyn sits at the source of the Medyn River, namely Markabey Ozero (Zuyeban for Markabey Lake). Its main industries are fur trapping and fishing. The city has grown rich and prosperous from the fur trade in particular—pelts of beaver, mink, sable and others are sold here by hunters that range hundreds of miles north and east through the forests of the Kostyn Oblast, punctuated only by stockaded forts and villages. The tsar levies a 15% fur tax on all pelts brought into the city, but corruption and overzealous bureaucracy often results in more or less being collected for the imperial coffers.

Kirov (pop. 19,000): Kirov is the second largest city in Zuyebo. Its size is a result of the prosperity of its fur trade and its strategic position at the junction of the Rybinskoye and Tashkent Rivers. Formerly the capital of the powerful Visneskayan Khanate, it was conquered by the Debo war leader Aliska in AC 517. It is also well known for its most famous product, vodka, which is produced here in abundance.

Kharkab (pop. 11,000): Located on the upper reaches of the Rybinskoye River, Kharkab is the traditional home of the Talmab tribesmen who have been a part of the empire for almost 500 years. The Kharkab Oblast is principally wooded steppe, but there are also large plains of feather grass. Horses are common in the region, and many peasants living in the oblast are excellent horsemen. As such, many go on to join the tsar's armies, and vie for positions in the elite Talmab Guards.

Chusqvoi Selo (pop. 3,500): Chusqvoi Selo is a solitary and often snowbound northern outpost for Zuyebo. Connected by roads (little more than muddy and barely passable tracks) to Saratob and Kharkab, it is the center for those hardy Zuyebans who choose to live in the inhospitable north of the empire. Talmab settlers continue to push the borders of the empire further north and east every year as

they expand the fur and the hunting grounds. They leave behind small fortified hamlets and villages along muddy roads that are forged through the wooded Chusqhoi Steppes.

Saratob (pop. 8,000): Saratob is Zuyebo's window on the north. It is a large trading center—many expeditions leave from Saratob for Douzbakjian and Sardjikjian. Its primary industries aside from that are military and fur related. The military are there to secure the routes of communication and to prevent tribesmen (like the Sendarya from the Zdredanyan Forest) and white orcs from the north from disrupting trade. The hunters are there, because wildlife is abundant in the region and the value of a good pelt is often more than worth the risk.

Vyamisgrad (pop. 3,500): Vyamisgrad is but a shadow of its former glory. The town is still recovering from its almost total annihilation by Marshal Steyeb in AC 988 when it was the unfortunate site of the largest (and final) battle of the time of troubles. However, the region is rich in farming land and is another major crop-growing area, and will likely bounce back within a few decades. Many of the nobility maintain estates in the region of varying sizes—each populated by anywhere from 10 to 3,000 serfs.

Richland (pop. 10,000): Conquered in AC 1016 by Zuyebo, Richland is Zuyebo's southernmost city. It is a port of considerable renown and possesses an excellent deep-water harbor. It is currently in the process of intense re-fortification as the Zuyebans seek to make the city impregnable against retaliation from Vilaverde and others.

Zablin (pop. 7,000): The capital of the former Vezchamenid Zatrapp of Drazde, it was assimilated by the Zuyebans in AC 1008. It gives them a strong presence on the eastern bank of the Valu River and on the northern coast of Valu Bay.

Recent History

Zuyebo's distant beginnings lie in the reign of terror created in Norwold by the vast humanoid army of the Great King Loark. His assault on the Antaliens of the area in BC 1722 was savage in the extreme. A large tribe of Antaliens known as the Debo managed to escape the slaughter by migrating west over the Icereach Mountains. Ten years later, another migration began, this time by Ethengars of the Talmab tribe, driven from their country by the southward rampage of King Loark.

Over a period of 650 years the Talmab horde moved slowly westward warring as they did with various humanoid tribes. Around BC 1050 these Talmab tribesmen, having traversed the entire northern expanse of Brun, moved south, down the Valu River. Skilled horse-archers, they marauded through the declining Valu River Empire. That empire was finally crushed in BC 1034 with the death in battle of Emperor Dorfin. The Valu River Empire splintered as various factions vied for whatever power and resources that they could secure. The Talmabs settled around the area that is now Kharkab.

On a separate, and more northerly migration, the Debo tribes entered the northern Valu River valley from the Hyborean Steppes around BC 550. Finally finding a place safe from marauding humanoids, they settled in the steppes north of Tunguska on the western bank of the Valu River. Over a period of several hundred years the Debo expanded across the northern steppes. In the 2nd century AC, however, a considerable blow splintered their burgeoning civilization. For several centuries the area became increasingly inhospitable as weather patterns across the lower Hyborean tundra made the area colder and colder. In AC 175 freak snowstorms of bizarre intensity struck the region, resulting in a blizzard that covered the whole region for more than a month. The blizzard was accompanied by attacks from

bizarre ice-demons and their cold-loving kin. When the snow finally stopped, the Debo emerged to find many of their kinsmen dead and their cropland devastated.

Seeing no other option, the Debo packed their remaining possessions into longships, which they were now adept at sailing, and traveled south down the Valu River. After failing to find suitable landing sites, in AC 179 the Debo found and quickly conquered the small but prosperous dominion of Vpatka. From this power base in the rich black earth plains, the fierce Debo raiders swept over a number of surrounding tribes and villages during the following 200 years. Soon the Debo found it more profitable to farm the region and grow rich on the tribute levied on subject tribes. They founded their capital, Zuygano, in AC 415, and built the city into both an impressive citadel and a center for trade and the arts.

Their warlike nature did not abate, however, and the Debo continued to conquer surrounding peoples. Over a long period these tribes and kingdoms were gradually assimilated. In AC 502, Zuyebo, as the kingdom had come to be called (literally Place of the Debo), faced one of its biggest tests when it involved itself in a full-scale war with the Kingdom of Visneskaya to the north. The war raged on and off for 15 years, before the Zuyebans, with the help of the former allies of Visneskaya (the Talmabs), finally crushed their opposition. The leader of the Zuyebans, a man known as Miska Gurevich, had himself crowned tsar—emperor of the united Zuyeban and Visneskayan kingdoms—at Kirob, the site of his greatest victory over the Visneskayan forces.

The Zuyeban program of assimilation continued for a further 200 years until they were masters of the entire Valu Steppes. Only a handful of unimportant tribes in the Tunguska River region remained outside the control of the tsar. During this period, the Zuyeban nobility grew greatly, as nobility was based on land control, and warriors and others who had grown rich on the conquests of surrounding peoples soon began to acquire vast estates. This led to a growing class of peasants with no access to land. In AC 696, Tsar Alekseyev, later known as Alekseyev the Brutal, instituted a system of serfdom for landless peasants—a form of indenture, whereby these serfs worked hard on the lands of the nobility in return for the right to own and farm their own little plot in their “days off.”

The dawning of the 8th century AC saw a series of border skirmishes along the southern frontier of Zuyebo with the Dezhamenid Empire. The expansion of the empire had stalled in the north, as the Zuyebans became bogged down in conflicts with the tribesmen of the Tunguska Forest. As a result, Zuyeban interests had turned south to the wide Koltenyi Steppes. More critically though, Zuyebo desperately wanted an ice-free port at the mouth of the Valu River. In AC 706, concerned at the Zuyeban intransigence to its north, the Dezhamenid Empire sent an expeditionary force to teach the upstart Zuyebans a lesson. Tsar Alekseyev led Zuyeban forces to a monumental victory over the invaders at the battle of Akmolinsk. The Dezhamenid force was outmaneuvered by the skillful Talmab Guard cavalry and pulverized by the onslaught of wave after wave of Zuyeban infantry. Out of a force of 13,000 Dezhamenid troops, 7,000 were killed outright and the remainder surrendered. Alekseyev accepted their surrender, disarmed the soldiers and then massacred them.

Although Tsar Alekseyev had been a brilliant leader since his crowning in AC 687, the Dezhamenid invasion appeared to trigger a complete personality change. He grew brutal, perceiving enemies at every turn. Alekseyev abandoned his plans to push the Zuyeban Empire to the brink of Valu Bay and instead turned inwards, conducting a campaign of terror within Zuyebo itself, killing all those who opposed

him. A daring assassination attempt, with the connivance of some Zuyeban military officers, finally ended his life in AC 716.

For the remainder of the 8th and the whole of the 9th centuries AC, the Zuyeban Empire pushed northwards into the Sebernaya Nobay (the new north). The catalyst for this expansion was the fur trade—on which the empire grew rich. Furs and pelts of all kinds were traded to Douzbakjian and other countries of the Midlands as well as Hule, the Pezchamenid Empire and even Gombar and Suma'a. With Talmabs pushing deep into the Tunguska region, conflict with the local tribes was inevitable. However, the superior weapons and technology of the Talmabs proved far superior, and Tunguska tribes were quickly conquered. This was reinforced by the tsar's armies, always plodding along behind the Talmab frontiersmen, enforcing the will of the tsar through the force of arms and the building of stockaded forts and villages along the rivers and trade routes. The late 9th century also saw the discovery of large veins of gold in the western mountains around Dubyshev. This led to the local nobility, and the princes of Dubyshev in particular, growing rich on the taxes levied on the miners.

The beginning of the 10th century AC saw the Zuyeban Empire again expanding southwards after easy gains had been made in the north. Zuyeban settlers overran the Koltyni Steppes and armed conflict between Zuyeban and Pezchamenid farmers were common. This increasing tension exploded in AC 913 when a group of Pezchameni slaughtered a camp of Zuyeban settlers, including many women and children. Regardless of the fact that the Pezchameni were responding to the burning of their farms by militant Zuyeban settlers, Tsar Turgay declared war on the Pezchamenid Empire, sending his large serf armies southwards. The Pezchameni responded by sending a force of infantry and chariots to meet this threat. After a series of skirmishes the two forces met in the battle of Dasht-i-Kavar. Bloody losses were sustained on both sides, but the sheer size of the Zuyeban army eventually carried the day, and the Pezchameni were routed. The Zuyeban war machine continued to rumble south until it was halted with heavy casualties at Qesum. A formal truce was negotiated within weeks that gave the northern two-thirds of the Koltyni Steppes to the Zuyebans. Surprisingly, both sides observed the new borders in a peace that lasted 84 years.

The Zuyebans made the most of this peaceful situation to strengthen their foothold on the eastern side of the Dalu River. Constructing a string of fortresses that radiated out from the giant fortifications at Kulikobo, the Zuyeban army concentrated its efforts on subduing the humanoid tribes of the northern Hazak Steppes. This policy was designed to remove the threat of humanoid invasion from the east as well as to open up the possibility of contesting with Hule for the mineral-rich Bylot Hills, and even the Converted Lands.

The humanoids were driven further and further back after successful campaigns by Tsar Berezob the Great (AC 935-967) and Tsar Andrei II (AC 967-976). However, during the reign of Tsar Alekseyev II, the Zuyeban army suffered a series of reverses in the campaign of AC 979-981. The humanoids had finally united under a strong leader, Vacek Jawbreaker, an orc of exceptional cunning. With dissension at home rising at these continued failures, Tsar Alekseyev II personally took command of the war. This proved to be a disastrous step. The reverses continued and Vacek even succeeded in sacking Kulikobo's two satellite fortresses of Kustany and Aktynkidze in AC 983. The blame for these losses fell squarely on the tsar, where before it had been falling on his generals. After a series of riots in AC 984, the Dubyshev princes led an uprising against the tsar. Initially the rebel forces made considerable incursions into imperial territory, assisted by military equipment and financial assistance from the Pezchamenid Empire. Vyamisgrad and Kirob fell to the rebels in AC 985, and in

AC 986 rebel troops from Anzhero and Krasnabodsk captured holdout imperial forces in Archangelsk. Also in AC 986, Ryazan was sacked by rebel forces and even Kharkab fell under siege by rebel troops from Surgut and Dubyshev.

The summer of AC 987 saw a turning in the tide of the war however. Imperial forces under the leadership of one of the greatest Zuyeban generals of all time, Marshal Steyeb, began to beat back the Dubyshev forces. Kirob was liberated and the imperial forces pressed north to break the siege at Kharkab. In so doing, they allowed Talmab units to move southwards to assist the imperial forces. With Dubyshev forces holding impenetrable positions in the Tashkent Khrebet, imperial troops were forced to swing south along the Vyamis River. In AC 988 the rebellion was finally broken with the defeat of rebel forces at the epic battle of Vyamisgrad. The rebellion quickly fell apart as imperial forces had clearly gained the upper hand. Rebel troops in Anzhero saw the way the war was turning and sided with Marshal Steyeb. This support was critical, as Anzheran troops held the strategic Aska Pass, preventing rebel reinforcements from Archangelsk from reaching Dubyshev in time to save it from the imperial army.

Despite his victory, Tsar Alekseyeb II was politically disgraced, and much of the empire's economy was in ruins. The nobility forced his abdication in favor of his young son, Andrei III. While only a young man of 19, this was a most fortunate move for the Zuyeban Empire, for Andrei III was energetic and dynamic, and a gifted leader. Tsar Andrei revitalized the empire, crushed internal dissent, and focused the empire on expansion once again. This led to colonizing drives to the south of the empire—fortuitously establishing the town of Zybirsk in the southwestern hinterlands. This is a particularly mineral-rich area, and soon gold, silver, electrum and other metals were winging their way back to the center of the empire.

Of far more significance however, was Tsar Andrei's financing of insurgency within the Pezchamenid Empire, a technique he learned from the Pezchameni themselves. With the death of Shah-an-shah Mayzar Pezchamenid in AC 997 in a "hunting accident," and the crowning of his four year-old son, Andrei seized the chance to capture the Valu River Delta. Launching a lightning attack, the Zuyebans seized a large swathe of Pezchamenid territory, effectively cutting the Zatrapp of Drazde off from the rest of the empire. Most importantly, the Zuyebans finally had access to Valu Bay. Tsar Andrei immediately founded the naval base of Kishinev at the mouth of the Valu River, and established a bastion of forts around the Valu River estuary. The Zatrapp of Drazde became de facto independent of the Pezchamenid Empire in AC 999, but the authorities in Drabya, the capital city, were divided between the supporters of Zuyebo and those still loyal to their old motherland and the then seven year old shah-an-shah.

In AC 1008 the Zatrapp of Drazde was absorbed by the Zuyeban Empire as the Zuyeban faction gained ascendancy there. The Pezchameni were still too weak to do more than diplomatically protest the action. The Zuyeban expansion continued and in AC 1016 the Zuyebans conquered the Cimarron trading colony of Richland. Vilaberdan and Cimarron troops were unable to prevent the takeover, and now the tsar plots a way to remove the Vilaberdan scourge from Valu Bay. Meanwhile, the Master of Hule is plotting to keep Zuyebo in check, through infiltrated agents that disrupt the government; he also arranged to have a third party attack Zuyebo's eastern border.

ATLAS OF SKOTHAR

Introduction to Skothar

Dear readers of the almanac, both old and new, I salute you.

My name is Erakliton, and I am a philosopher and politician from the city of Traun, in the Confederation of Mlnaea. Last year I had the pleasure to work for the almanac, correcting mistakes that had found their way in this wonderful guide, and explaining a little better the way Mlnaeans live, their political organization, and describing shortly some of our wonderful cities.

Last year, I also gave some information regarding the Lands of Swanamutu, but I wasn't satisfied with the outcome. The information was sparse and imprecise. I wanted to be brief and not throw vast (and probably unusable) data onto the readers, who probably had already a hard time figuring out that we Mlnaeans are hardly pirates [many Mlnaeans are pirates. Erakliton is obviously speaking from a biased point of view. Ed.], and our culture is as old and interesting as those of the so-called Old World... if not more.

But this year, I will expand on my work on the Swanamutu. I will deal most specifically with the region known as Tangor, the western area of the Swanamutu Lands. The area takes its name from the main power of the region, a powerful empire dominated by a black-skinned human race that call themselves "Tangors." Nearly all the Black Men of the region are of Tangor ethnicity. This is the most known region of the Swanamutu Lands. The existence of an empire in the region has led to the wrong belief that there is only a major empire that occupies all the Swanamutu Lands; this is ridiculous, as I already said last year.

The Tangor region goes from the city of Akuba east all over the Gulf of Tangor up to a longitude of 105° East. The area comprises the western stretch of the Tangor Chain, and thus the area that we will talk about in this description is about the same size as your "Old World." There are no important islands in the region.

Besides the Tarystian Coast and the Tangor region, Thyatian correspondents give us reports about two northwestern nations of Skothar: the Alphatian Republic of Esterhold, and the not-too-distant Kingdom of Thonia.

Correspondents for Skothar

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

Erakliton of Traun

Erakliton is a Minaean philosopher from the city of Traun. He has long been a member of the ruling body of that city, but now he has left all his occupations behind to dedicate himself to scholarship. He has decided to join the almanac after having read the past issues and their imprecise description of the Minaean region.

Welten Feather-of-Blood-and-Soil

Welten is a Femite warrior who accepted to give us his people's opinion on the Alphasians of Esterhold, and what they did to his native land. Although Welten is an illiterate savage warrior, he did not attack our representative on sight (many Femites do, in those times of war, as aliens are associated with the hated Alphasians), and indeed talked to him at length about the people of Jen.

Pin Tang of Beitung

Pin Tang is a priest of Noumena, explorer and soldier. He spent many years prior to the Great War delving into the mysteries of the Dawnssea region and beyond. When it became apparent to him that Alphasia and Thyatis were bound to clash, he enlisted in the Thyatian military, remaining in service even after Ochalea seceded, out of a sense of duty and an unwillingness to betray his oath to the empire, and also because he believed that Alphasia must be stopped. Because of his unique pre-war experiences, he was sent on far-flung missions, including an effort to foster dissent against the Alphasians in Esterhold, a mission that first brought him to the shores of Skothar. After the Great War he was among those that explored the sunken Alphasian continent and he has worked for the reintegration of Ochalea into the Thyatian Empire, and he recently returned to imperial service as an explorer.

Atlas

AKUBA (City-State of)

Location: West of Tangor Empire, immediately east of the Confederated Kingdoms of Minaea, Tarystian Coast. SK

Area: 3,800 sq. mi. (9,850 sq. km.).

Population: 16,500 humans, 90% of Tangor ethnicity.

Languages: Tangor, Minaean (both are considered official languages).

Coinage: Abu (gp), ku (sp). Minaean and Tangor coinage accepted.

Taxes: 10% income tax, collected half on Au. 1 and half on Fe. 1. Taxes are low to boost national trade. There is an import tax of 5%, and non-Akubans must pay to get licenses for conducting a lot of activities (including trade, owning a shop, etc.).

Government Type: Democracy.

Industries: Agriculture (bananas, cocoa, dates), crafts.

Important Figures: Kulu Pomba (Governor).

Flora and Fauna: No humanoids live in the small territory of the city. Giant crabs live on the beaches, and the sea is rich with fish of all types, and of giant squids and octopi. Dolphins and sahuagin are occasionally found.

Further Reading: None.

Description by Eraklito of Traun.

Akuba is a city-state with very small territorial extension, however it is a rich one, having skilled seamen and merchants who export bananas, cocoa and dates westward. This has helped the city to build a strong economy, and recover from its turbulent history. Akuba's economic situation, and its political views, are similar to that of other Minaean cities, however the architecture is clearly inspired by its black-skinned ancestry.

Recent History

Akuba was founded by refugees of the Kingdom of Ubu, conquered in AC 219 by the Tangor Empire, and who were soon joined by the first refugees of the Kingdom of Mawuru, who suffered the same fate a few years later. Akuba still was, however, too near to the empire, and thus it was conquered by Tangor in AC 445, remaining under its control until AC 816, even though it had always been an unstable province, and tried several times to revolt. Freed in AC 816 by the Minaean Confederacy, it refused to become part of it. Batu-Fomba immediately organized a political coup to gain control of Akuba, but it was defied by a young warrior named Dabo, who became king. Struggling to retain its independence, strangled between two great powers, it finally fell again in AC 968. King Mupu led several raids against Batu-Fomba, so the Minaean city, allied with Tangor, eventually attacked it and conquered it after a siege. Then, the city was assigned to a ruling body composed equally of Batu-Fombans and of Tangor. The political exiles of Akuba, led by Trabul (a half-Tangor, half-Minaean

politician), freed the city in AC 981, and created the democratic government that still rules the city-state.

CYMRU (Hivebrood of)

Location: Continent of Skothar, Swanamutu region, north of Tangor and Ulewern.

Area: Approx. 24,710 sq. mi. (64,000 sq. km.).

Population: Unknown number of hivebroods; supposedly a consistent number of degenerate human slaves.

Languages: Hivebrood.

Coinage: No coinage used.

Taxes: No taxation.

Government Type: Hive.

Industries: Sugar and honey production. Barter reduced to a minimum with the Empire of Tangor.

Important Figures: None.

Climate and Terrain: Cymru's climate, like Tangor's, is sub-tropical. The region sits at the threshold from temperate forest to the first hints of jungle. Winter is short (about a couple of months) and rather rainy, the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C; autumn and spring are long, warm (20 to 30°C) and vary much from year to year. Summers are hot and generally are made up of a rainy month with a couple of dry months immediately before autumn. During the summer, temperatures may reach 35°C, and the humidity is incredible.

Flora and Fauna: The animals encountered here may be jaguars, baboons, apes, crocodiles and alligators, and many, many species of insects and snakes of different degrees of poison strength. Flora includes the typical jungle trees, but near the mountains and westward toward Tangor pine trees may be easily encountered.

Further Reading: The Southern Skothar Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.

Description by Craklton.

Cymru is among the darkest nations of the Swanamutu. It is a relatively small region controlled by the dangerous hivebroods. The insect-like race is reputed to hold as slaves thousands of humans, a degenerate branch of the Nailans that once held the region. Cymru is located in a hilly region, where the jungle gives way gradually to pine forest. The hivebrood soldiers patrol the few safe trails of the land, and immediately capture any intruder.

The hivebroods produce sugar and honey; a big part of the production is sold to the Tangors, or more precisely to the merchant organization known as the Ant. The mercenary guards and merchants of the Ant are the only strangers allowed to enter this land.

DURHAN (Republic of)

Location: Continent of Skothar, Swanamutu region, north of Tangor.

Area: Approx. 27,413 sq. mi. (71,000 sq. km.).

Population: 280,000 (99% Tangors), including the capital of Durhan (pop. 36,300).

Languages: Tangor (Durhanian dialect).

Coinage: Plant (gp), animal (sp), mineral (cp).

Taxes: System based on wealth, from 5% to 40% of annual income.

Government Type: Democratic confederacy.

Industries: Agriculture (bananas, coconuts, cocoa, manioc).

Important Figures: Biko M'tala (President).

Climate and Terrain: Durhan's climate, like Tangor's, is sub-tropical. The region sits at the threshold from temperate forest to the first hints of jungle. Winter is short (about a couple of months) and rather rainy, the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C; autumn and spring are long, warm (20 to 30°C) and vary much from year to year. Summers are hot and generally are made up of a rainy month with a couple of dry months immediately before autumn. During the summer, temperatures may reach 35°C, and the humidity is incredible.

Flora and Fauna: The animals encountered here may be jaguars, baboons, apes, crocodiles and alligators, and many, many species of insects and snakes of different degrees of poison strength. Flora includes the typical jungle trees, but near the mountains and westward toward Tangor pine trees may be easily encountered.

Further Reading: The Southern Skothar Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.

Description by Erakliton.

The Republic of Durhan occupies the northern part of Tangor, a rich part of sub-tropical forest where they are able to sustain themselves cultivating tropical fruit plants and selling them to the surrounding nations. Durhan faces danger from the west, where it borders the Goblands, although the relations shift often depending on the whim of the humanoid chiefs. To the southeast, the land gives way to the dangerous jungle area of Cymru.

The Republic of Durhan has been free from the Empire of Tangor since AC 701, when the population voted for independence in a referendum set by Emperor Swahimi. The republic is a confederation of many small provinces (the constitution created a province for each of the Durhanian tribes), each of whom sends a representative to the Council of Elders. The council meets in Durhan, where decisions concerning all the republic (wars, foreign policy, taxation) are made.

The Durhanians are another fierce and proud Tangor population. They call themselves the True Ones, in opposition to all other Tangors, except Tangor Men, which they respect because they have been able to impose their culture on others, and did not sheepishly accept the others' sovereignty. The Durhanian politicians, however, are believed to be plotting the downfall, or at least the weakening, of their too strong and dangerous neighbor.

EKLEKE (Kingdom of)

Location: Continent of Skothar, Swanamutu region, city-state within Tangor.

Area: Approx. 2,703 sq. mi. (7,000 sq. km.).

Population: 30,000.

Languages: Tangor (Mawuru dialect).

Coinage: Lamia (gp), dia (sp), sep (cp).

Taxes: 5% of annual income to be paid three times each year.

Government Type: Monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture (bananas, manioc, peanuts).

Important Figures: Mojambo (King), Kasumi (Queen).

Climate and Terrain: Ekleke is sub-tropical. The region sits at the threshold from temperate forest to the first hints of jungle. Winter is short (about a couple of months) and rather rainy, the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C; autumn and spring are long, warm (20 to 30°C) and vary much from year to year. Summers are hot and generally are made up of a rainy month with a couple of dry months immediately before autumn. During the summer, temperatures may reach 35°C, and the humidity is incredible.

Flora and Fauna: The animals encountered here may be jaguars, baboons, apes, crocodiles and alligators, and many, many species of insects and snakes of different degrees of poison strength. Flora includes the typical jungle trees, but near the mountains and westward toward Tangor pine trees may be easily encountered.

Further Reading: *The Southern Skothar Gazetteer* by Giulio Caroletti.

Description by Erakliton.

Ekleke is an independent city located in the eastern part of Mawuru. The city is surrounded completely by the Empire of Tangor, in the mountains at the western edge of the Tangor Chain. However, the city is safe from invasion from their neighbors because it is taboo.

The reason for this is the weird composition of the population: all males are clearly Mawurus, while females belong to another race known as demonettes, pale-skinned women with small horns. The origin of the demonettes is not known but Tangors believe that the Eklekans have made a sort of infernal deal with demons or other weird creatures...

During the two centuries of Lamu-Ekleke cooperation, intermarriage between the two cultures has flourished, and thus most of the females of the city are now demonettes. The Eklekans are extremely suspicious of strangers—just as anyone in Swanamutu is suspicious of Eklekans. However, in the Empire of Tangor it is not unheard of a traveling demonette falling in love with a Tangor human; a marriage of this sort oftentimes becomes the target of racists and nationalists, if not of romantic tales.

ELO GOBLANDS

Location: Continent of Skothar, Swanamutu region, northeast of Akuba, northwest of Tangor.

Area: Precise area unknown, but the goblinoid tribes control an area that is not much smaller than the Empire of Tangor; supposedly more than 300,000 sq. mi. (777,000 sq. km.).

Population: More than 200,000 humanoids.

Languages: Goblin, Hobgoblin, other humanoid tongues.

Coinage: Most tribes use barter only; otherwise Tangor or any other coin.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Tribes.

Industries: Varies by tribe: agriculture (fungi), mining (iron), smithing, hunting, goat herding, raiding and war.

Important Figures: Dilyme (King of Scobery (Red Fox city)).

Climate and Terrain: The Elo Goblands are sub-tropical. The region sits at the threshold from temperate forest to the first hints of jungle. Winter is short (about a couple of months) and rather rainy, the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C; autumn and spring are long, warm (20 to 30°C) and vary much from year to year. Summers are hot and generally are made up of a rainy month with a couple of dry months immediately before autumn. During the summer, temperatures may reach 35°C, and the humidity is incredible.

Flora and Fauna: The animals encountered here may be jaguars, baboons, apes, crocodiles and alligators, and many, many species of insects and snakes of different degrees of poison strength. Flora includes the typical jungle trees, but near the mountains and westward toward Tangor pine trees may be easily encountered.

Further Reading: The Southern Skothar Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.

Description by Crakliton.

The Elo Goblands are the mountainous regions of the western Tangor Chain where several tribes of Dark Goblins live.

“Goblands” is a term used by the Tangors; the Dark Goblins call the mountains simply Elo (“home”) and refer to themselves as “Elo Goblins.” There is a number of independent tribes, and rumors say that there are more than 200,000 individuals in total.

Black Axe: These goblins have settled the northern mountains, where they have risen to power thanks to the presence of iron mines. They are excellent smiths and are mostly peaceful, because they are able to trade their iron with the Tangors and thus are quite rich, and are better organized than the other goblinoid tribes.

Fire Dogs: The Fire Dogs live on the western part of the Tangor Chain, and often raid the eastern Minaeen cities. They are expert wolf-riders, and wear wolf-furs. Their typical weapons are short swords and bows, and they are very savage and brutal. However, they often have internal frictions and wars, and thus they are dangerous only when united by a strong leader—which is not the present case.

Hammerers: The Hammerers have settled the central plateau of the Goblands, from which they plan their hunting expeditions in the surrounding pine forests, and their raids against other goblinoid tribes. They control the trade route to the Black Axe villages, and never attack humans if they pay a small tribute (the Ant's caravans have free access).

Nightwatch: These goblins have mastered necromantic arts and are feared by all other Dark Goblin tribes. The Tangors consider their land taboo—a small part of the central Goblands east of Mlogg. The Nightwatch tribe is dangerous: usually they conduct raids in northern Mawuru villages and goblinoid ones to get slaves for their unholy experiments, then they remain secluded and peaceful until they run out of bodies...

Stone House: Another western tribe, the Stone House take their name from their habit of building villages in mountain caverns. They farm goats and grow fungi in the caverns for sustenance. They are not particularly savage, but they don't like strangers and attack all intruders, other goblins included.

Throatlitters: A southwestern tribe, the Throatlitters are hunters with the bad habit of cutting the throats of their enemies, who are then impaled outside the wooden walls of their villages, leaving them there for weeks. The foul stench of a Throatlitter camp can be smelled miles away; it is a religious ritual in the name of Vaprak, and the smell is particularly awful after a battle against another tribe. They never impale one of their brethren.

Lifestealers: The most cowardly Dark Goblin tribe, the Lifestealers carve out a dull existence in the eastern parts of the Goblands; they have few contacts with the Tangor area, and their occasional raids are most often directed at the kingdoms of the Westbay region. Their main activity is, however, goat herding.

Red Fox: The hobgoblins of the Red Fox occupy the eastern Goblands. They are powerful and organized, and they are ruled by King Dilyne, ruler of the city of Scobery (pop. about 7,000 hobgoblins).

Ants Marching: This is a tribe composed just of hobgoblins, living in the central-eastern part of the Goblands. All the warriors of the tribe wear ant-masks, and it is possible that they have some contact with the hivebroods.

Blue Hounds: The Blue Hounds live in the central plateaus of the Goblands. They are among the fiercest warriors of the Goblands, and don't allow passage to anyone.

Pathfinders: This tribe lives in the northern part of the plateaus. Beyond them are tall mountains, where no one treads, except them. They are great mountaineers, and know a lot about their mountains; given the difficulty for others to enter the mountains from the north, they are mostly left in peace by everybody in the region.

ESTERHOLD (Republic of) and DRAEH (City-State of)

Location: Large peninsula west of the Jennite lands, north of Minaaea, continent of Skothar. **SK**

Area: Approximately 1,000,000 sq. mi. (2,590,000 sq. km.), including Blackrock 100,000 sq. mi. (259,000 sq. km.) and the “Free City of Draeh” 126,000 sq. mi. (326,340 sq. km.); the rest is mainly wilderness with scattered Alphatian settlements on the southern coast and Jennite tribes in the interior.

Population: 180,000 including Blackrock (pop. 60,000), the territories of Draeh (pop. 100,000), Port Marlin (pop. 10,000 residents in town and 5,000 refugees) and Rock Harbor (pop. 5,000). Cities include Skypyr (pop. 15,000) in Blackrock and Draeh (pop. 35,000) in what was once Verdan. An unknown number of “free” Jennites also live on the peninsula. The former town of Anchorage was destroyed last year and its population was slain, fled as refugees to Blackrock, or joined the Jennite rebellion.

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect) and Jennite.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Barter common among the “free” Jennites.

Taxes: Alphatian-held lands have a 15% income tax and an import/export tax of 2% on magical items and components, and 1% on all other goods (Naycese kingdoms, Karamaikos and Thyatis excluded). 20% of tax revenue goes to the imperial treasury. No official taxes among the Jennite tribes, all are expected to serve community interests as needed. Revolutionary Council in Draeh have instituted communal system of exactions, where everything belongs to their state/community, with requisitions “according to means” and dispensations “according to need.”

Government Type: Blackrock is a monarchy with nascent republican institutions similar to that of the Dunadale Confederacy. Draeh is ruled by a revolutionary council. Rock Harbor and Port Marlin are part of the Republic of Esterhold (Blackrock). The Jennites are governed by tribal councils.

Industries: Military, light agriculture, herding, hunting (free Jennites), fishing, logging (south coast communities). Mining (rich) was once the main industry of Blackrock but the unrest has closed the mines.

Important Figures: Fabian Vern (President), Talin (Jennite Leader).

Flora and Fauna: Scrub bushes, tough grasses, bactrian (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 Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Melten Feather-of-Blood-and-Soil.

Men from far away came upon the sea in a ship. They asked one of us to tell to you why we fight the Alphatians, so they could put it in their book. They gave us weapons in exchange for pretty rocks and bright metal “coins” the Alphatians made, and in exchange for this tale. So I will share our wisdom

with you. No one can own the earth, but the human Jennites have lived here since the rocks were born and the stars of the sky shifted. Then came the inhuman Alphasians, with their powerful magics and greed for rocks and metal, and they said that this land where we lived was owned by their empire. We fought, but they were mighty. We never gave in; the only true man is a free man. Now we win our freedom.

The Land

The land is good. It provides all one needs to live. One need not dig into the ground either to plant or carve deep shafts into the earth-mother in greed to get at pretty stones or metal. All one needs can be found on the surface, for the earth-mother gives her bounty willingly to those who understand the ways of nature. Only inhuman Alphasians and those corrupted by their ways need to toil at the soil and vex our mother. Fish, fowl, berries and grain can be found. It is a hard life for those who have forgotten nature's way and live in large camps surrounding themselves with stone and cutting themselves off from the ways of nature. But we know how to live here, as this is our home.

The land is large. The Alphasians could have lived here side by side with the people of Jen. They also have lands elsewhere that they lived on. They would not do this. They insisted it was all theirs. So the earth-mother swallowed up their home, since they insisted on taking other people's homes. They almost learned. New men came, with them a Fabiaber. He meant well, but he was still Alphasian in his mind. He said "you will be Alphasians now, and we can live as brothers if you accept our rule and agree the land is ours." But we are not Alphasians, we are people of Jen. And the land is not theirs, it is not ours, it is the earth-mother, and we are her [word untranslatable from Jennite into Thyatian, means something like "guests," "visitors," or "tenants," but is not quite the same. Has some of the connotations of the patron-client relationship found in Thyatis, with the planet, Mystara, being the patron and the Jennites viewing themselves as her clients. Ed.]. So we fight.

The People

We are the true people of the land, the Jennites. Also here are the outsiders, the Alphasian aliens who come from beyond the sea. Some say we can live together. But the Alphasians, they do not know the way of the land. They believe one can own the land. We know we come from the land and will return to it. You cannot own the land. They think that some are destined to rule over others, and others are fit only to serve. But we know that all men are free, the land gives to all who know its ways and to the land all will return. Some are great warriors, respected for their hunting skill and gift for war, and their advice is listened to. Elders are wise, having learned much in their years, and their council is given respect and weight. But none are to be enslaved, nor are some to be bowed down to. True men live in yurts [translated the Jennite word into an Ethengar word that our readers will be familiar with. Ed.] and follow the herds with wagons and horses as the land wills.

The Alphasians came and oppressed the people of the land. They try to force their ways upon both the land and the people. They want us to live in one place, in yurts of stone surrounded by stone walls. But the land and the people reject their yoke. We cannot till as they do, or dig as the dwarves do. We must live in harmony with the land, and we must be free. So we fight the invaders.

We have freed much of the land from those who claim they can own it. Their far-to-them, near-to-us stone village is now free, and the Jennites they captured in their raids now rule it. But these are somewhat lost themselves. They lived too long under the sandal of the Alphasians. They think that to

live in such a place can be a good thing. They have forgotten the ways of the land. But they remember they are free. So they can learn the ways, and we will teach them.

It is a shame so much blood must be shed for the people to reclaim their freedom and rid the land of Alphatians. In Draeh last year, one could not pass a tree from which either an Alphatian or a collaborator was not hanging. The same in Anchorage. Some say the terror of the revolution is more bloody than Alphatian rule was. But this is all the invaders understand. It is a shame, but if half the world must burn for us to be free, and for the land to be free, then that is what must happen. We press on, and soon we shall free the land and people where they once burned us with sky fire. When it is over they will all be driven back to where they came from or eliminated. Then there will be peace and freedom, no oppression, no possessions. All will live in harmony with each other and with the land.

ILEWERYN

Location: Continent of Skothar, Swanamutu region, east of Tangor.

Area: Not precise, but the unclaimed jungle covers about 220,077 sq. mi. (570,000 sq. km.).

Population: 72,000.

Languages: Goblin, Hobgoblin, Sedcymrian (degenerated Cymrian language).

Coinage: Barter only; otherwise Tangor coins.

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Clans.

Industries: Hunting and gathering, some agriculture (manioca), raiding.

Important Figures: None.

Climate and Terrain: Ileweryn is tropical. Winter is short (about a couple of months) and rather rainy, the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C; autumn and spring are long, warm (20 to 30°C) and vary much from year to year. Summers are hot and generally are made up of a rainy month with a couple of dry months immediately before autumn. During the summer, temperatures may reach 35°C, and the humidity is incredible.

Flora and Fauna: The animals encountered here may be jaguars, baboons, apes, crocodiles and alligators, and many, many species of insects and snakes of different degrees of poison strength. Flora includes the typical jungle trees, but near the mountains and westward toward Tangor pine trees may be easily encountered.

Further Reading: The Southern Skothar Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.

Description by Erakliton.

Ileweryn is the name by which most of the Tangor jungle is known. Ileweryn was originally the name of a hivebrood colony that was present at the center of the jungle, which since has moved to Cymru. Now the name refers to the wide region of jungle that has not been claimed by any human kingdom. To the west and south it borders the Tangor Empire, to the north Cymru and the Gobland Mountains, to the northwest Durhan, and to the east the westernmost kingdoms of the Westbay area.

About 70,000 goblinoids call Ileweryn home. They are divided into seven major clans, but these are far from united, and they are mostly divided into loose tribes that live on the fruits and game of the jungle, and cultivate manioca.

A small community of 2,000 Cymrians who call themselves the Dark Seed live here, in a town in the southern parts of the forest, not far from the Tangor borders. They have managed to free themselves from the hivebroods that now control their ancestral lands, and live with a consuming hatred for Tangors and hivebroods alike; their lives and habits have become more savage, and they are not too different in behavior from any one of the goblinoid tribes, apart from their internal unity.

MINAEA (Confederated Kingdom of)

Location: West of the Jennite Lands, southeast of the Esterhold Peninsula. SK

Area: Roughly 750,000 sq. mi. (1,942,500 sq. km.).

Population: An estimated 480,000 humans living here consider themselves Minaeans. 412,000 of them live in the sixteen city-states and kingdoms that are members of the confederacy; nearly 70,000 more live in the so-called national territories. In addition, there are an unknown number of tribal humans of Tangor stock (primarily in the southeastern forests of the Minaean Coast). The humanoid population levels are likewise unknown.

Languages: Minaean, Alphantian, Jennite, Tangor.

Coinage: Kalit (gp), kalos (sp), kalen (cp); foreign coins accepted in cities and large towns.

Taxes: 10% income tax collected on Ru. 1 by the confederate government. Individual city-states also collect an income tax that generally ranges between 5 and 10%, collected on Fy. 1.

Government Type: The Minaean government combines a national monarchy with autonomous local governments. The Minaean king has the power to decree and enforce laws affecting national territories (primarily the unclaimed areas between Minaean communities, and along the roads that connect them), collect taxes from member communities, raise an army composed of member communities' militias, and pass judgment on any legal matters brought before him. Each Minaean community passes and enforces its own laws within its borders. Most of them are small democracies, with a governing body consisting of citizens (often adult male land owners). In the larger communities, voting citizens elect representatives and officials to govern for them. Although Minaea claims a large expanse of land, it effectively controls only the areas that are directly occupied by its sixteen ruling cities.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts (especially jewelry, pottery, weaving), piracy.

Important Figures: Korudon (King).

Flora and Fauna: Minaea is assumed to be home to many plants and animals common to temperate and subtropical forests. Gnolls, goblins, hobgoblins, kobolds, orcs, minotaurs, hill giants and firbolgs are known to live in the forests, hills and mountains of the area. Some explorers have observed giant crabs on Minaean beaches. The coastal waters are known to harbor giant lamprey, giant octopi, sahuagin, sea lions, sharks, giant sea snakes, giant squid, tritons, whales, and, of course, pirates.

Further Reading: Previous almanacs.

Description by Erakliton of Traun.

The Land

The Minaean Coast is a vast region stretching along the southwestern bulge of the Skothar continent. Rolling hills rise up from the Steppes of Jen, peak in a hilly range almost tall enough to qualify as mountains, and gradually subside into the coastal lowlands. The entire region is blanketed in forest, and is dotted with open terrain. The climate is surprisingly temperate; in the lowlands, the climate tends to verge on subtropical.

Minaea, the nation's capital city, rests five miles back from the coast, across the Strait of Minaea from Seahaven in Meriander. The coastal town of Piraeus serves as Minaea's port.

Other Minaean cities and towns are scattered throughout the region, connected by a vast network of roads and trails. Each city is semiautonomous, and satellite towns and villages are granted access to community services (libraries, universities, marketplaces, and the like). Minaean cities share a common language, culture, and currency. Trade goods and cultural achievements (literature, plays, music, and so on) flow freely between the cities.

The People

The Minaeans are the principal inhabitants of this forested land. A people of dark complexion with dark brown or black hair, Minaeans are descendants of a mix of Tarystians and Milenians. Although Minaeans are primarily known for piracy, due to the depredations of an infamous band of pirates, Podar's Sea Wolves, that preyed on Alphatian and Bellissarian shipping 70 years ago, this piratical reputation is largely exaggerated [However, in the Alphatian Sea, Minaean pirates have harassed so many ships that most people immediately think of pirates whenever they think of Minaeans. Ed.]. Other races present are civilized minotaurs in the cities of Crech and Sinbay, and black-skinned Tangor. All of them have contributed to the creation of the Minaean culture, and are a full part of it, sharing it totally.

The main Immortal of the region is Athinai, a manifestation of Tarastia. Other worshipped Immortals are Poseidon (Protius) and Zeus (Odin). Collectively they are known as the Olympians, from the name of Mount Olympus, a sacred mountain of Minaea.

Recent History

The history of Minaea goes as far back as BC 100, when colonists fleeing the falling Milenian Empire reached the western shores of Skothar. The land was known as Tarystia, from the name of an ancient city that was once the region's center of power. The Milenians founded the city of Minaea after an agreement with the Tarystians, and during three centuries of peaceful coexistence, the two cultures gradually blended; the Milenians, who had taken with them the technology, magics and architecture of their homelands, were gradually absorbed into the piratical, warlike Tarystian way of life, abandoning their old patriarchal ways for the egalitarian Tarystian attitude; intermarriage was encouraged by the Tarystians, and over a short period the two races had become one, the Minaeans, from the name of that city who had become the main settlement of the new culture. In AC 335, several Tarystian-Minaean cities decided to create a league in order to resist the aggressive attitude of the neighboring Tangor humans to the east. Several wars took place between Tangor and Minaea, notably that of AC 335-336, that saw Minaea's victory, and that of AC 439-446, with Tangor conquering the city of Akuba. Soon after, a disastrous war with the northern Kingdom of Hastwr occurred over the control of the cities of Dool and Durke (AC 536-539).

In AC 721-722, the cities of Crech and Sinbay, founded by a civilized minotaur culture, suffered an invasion of green orcs and savage ones (the name by which civilized minotaurs call their northerly, barbarous counterparts). After the destruction brought by the invaders, they entered the league, which was re-formed as a confederacy in AC 738, with thirteen cities and kingdoms joining. The new confederated kingdoms entered the Third Tangor War in AC 814, which ended in AC 816 with their victory, resulting in the liberation of Akuba. However, the city refused to enter the confederacy, and was able to prevent a Minaean coup d'état to take control of it.

In AC 917, a new green orc swarming attack was crushed at the Battle of Adunapolis, and the date of the victory (Flaurmont 4) is a day of great celebration all over the land. In AC 934 the city of Dool revolted and left the Kingdom of Hastur, joining the confederacy.

Though the Alphatians generally consider the Minaeans as little more than barbaric pirates, the Thyatians were able to establish a first trading contact with them in AC 1017.

The confederated kingdoms are:

Minaea

Population: 49,700 (27,000 in the city), 90% Minaeans, 5% Tangor, 5% minotaurs.

Minaea, the capital city, is a prosperous community of some 27,000 people. The city boasts a sophisticated sewer system and is kept relatively clean. Many of Minaea's public buildings are made of stone and have graceful fluted columns. (The buildings are, in fact, reminiscent of those built by the defunct Milenian Empire on the Dabanian continent.) The king's palace is a magnificent sprawling complex of stone and brick buildings that practically qualifies as a miniature city in itself.

The political status of Minaea is that of capital city of the confederacy. Minaea is ruled directly by the king of the confederated kingdoms. The ruling family of Arkalion has been in charge of the royal seat since AC 730, when the Minaean pirate Arkali threw down the democratic government. Minaea controls the towns of Tresa (pop. 3,400) and Markos (pop. 1,800).

Adunapolis

Population: 32,400 (16,700 in the city), 95% Minaeans.

Adunapolis is an ancient city, and is considered the architectural and artistic center of Minaea. The main Immortals of the city are the Twelve Watchers. The marvelous Temple of Art, decorated with statues of the Twelve Watchers, all in white and pink marble, dominates the city. The government of Adunapolis is made of representatives chosen among the twelve art corporations. The city has always been at odds with Serenia. Adunapolis's racial stock is mainly Minaean. Adunapolis was the site to a great battle in AC 917, and every year, the first ten days of Flaurmont are the occasion of the fair of Adunapolis, during which the city's population nearly doubles.

Batu-Fomba

Population: 24,100 (8,900 in the city), 65% Tangor, 35% Minaeans.

The city of Batu-Fomba was founded by refugees from the Kingdom of Alawuru, conquered more than 750 years ago by the Tangor Empire. Batu-Fombans are mostly of Tangor stock; they are closely related to the population of Akuba, which was also founded by refugees. However, Akuba and Batu-Fomba have been enemies for centuries.

Batu-Fomba is ruled by a tyrant. The tyrant is in many regards like any king, except that the title is not hereditary. A small group of persons, known as the people's tribunal, is elected by all male and female residents over the age of 21 when the old tyrant dies. Those persons must then elect a tyrant, who will act as a monarch for life. The current tyrant is Kwangu Mboma.

Dool

Population: 23,800 (city-state), 75% Jemites, 15% Minaeans, 5% minotaurs.

The city-state of Dool is a powerful fortified military city in northern Minaea. It borders the Jennite lands, and most of its population is of Jennite origin. The city was once part of the Kingdom of Hastur (now a small nation surrounded by Jennite tribesmen), but has been a member of Minaea since AC 934. In the past century, Dool has always had a democratic government. All males over the age of 19 vote every year to select the 100 representatives at the boulè (senate). Then they elect two war leaders who are known as boulesforoi. The city is in a strategic position against Jennite and green orc invasions. The city-state is currently ruled by Seastian Viniska.

Dain-Karak

Population: 31,700 (city-state), 95% dwarves.

Dwarves coming from the Kingdom of Thorin arrived in Dain-Karak about three hundred years ago, and soon entered the confederation, though with the status of ally of the confederacy. This means that, in fact, Dain-Karak is not subject to confederated laws, even if it has the right to be represented at the council. The dwarven city is located in the northwestern mountains. Although most of its population is composed of dwarves, several adventurers, bounty-hunters and orc-hunters live in the city. Dain-Karak's structure is typical of dwarven cities: part of it is above ground, whereas the most important buildings are in caverns inside the mountains. The current king is Durriel III.

Ekimmu

Population: 11,700 (city-state), 85% Tarystians, 10% Minaeans.

One of the original Tarystian cities, founded in BC 1135, this city is one of the few where there is a consistent majority of well-recognizable Tarystians, and not an undistinguishable mix of Milenians and Tarystians (i.e. Minaeans). Tarystians of Ekimmu are close to Jennites in skin tone, and in culture, being great pirates and aggressive toward strangers. Minaeans are respected, but minotaurs, dwarves and Tangor are watched with suspicion. The pirate Podar was born in Ekimmu, and is a national hero. The most revered divinities are Poseidon (Protius) and Korotiku.

Erech

Population: 19,000 (7,600 in the city), 85% minotaurs, 10% Minaeans.

Ruled by the minotaur Overlord Ogzar, the city is a hereditary monarchy mostly settled by minotaurs. The architecture is clearly Minaean, but there are several alien elements that I think can be considered similar to those that I have read about regarding the enduk kingdom of the Arm of the Immortals. The minotaurs are often found as pirate mercenaries; Ogzar often leads goblin hunts in the north. The city hosts a monastery and a temple dedicated to Minoides, Father of Minotaurs.

Erineos

Population: 21,000 (4,000 in the city), 95% Minaeans.

Erineos is a colony of Minaea, founded around AC 500, but has early in its history been granted independence by its founder. There is nothing in Erineos that distinguishes it from other cities in the region. It is a city of merchants and peaceful seamen and fishermen, and as such it has sometimes been sacked by Ekimmu pirates. There is a lot of enmity between Erineos and Ekimmu as a result.

Thanasis

Population: 23,400 (11,000 in the city), 95% Minaeans.

Another typical Minaean city, Thanasis is quite ancient, having been founded just before Minaea. It is famous for its horse-breeding, and has a powerful cavalry. Thanasis is one of the few important settlements with no access to the sea (the others are Dool, Dain-Karak and Tesla). It is ruled by a plutocracy; its ruling body is known as gherusia, and its government structure is identical to that of Ire.

Ire

Population: 22,300 (14,000 in the city), 90% Minaeans.

Ire is a Minaean city of the southeast. A colony of Thanasis, founded in AC 811, it immediately joined the confederacy. It is ruled by a form of plutocracy that is erroneously believed to be the traditional form of government of Minaean cities. This plutocracy allows all male landowners to vote for the election of the gherusia (senate), a body composed of 80 members of the population who are at least 40 years old. The members of the gherusia are called gerontes (sing. geron). Ire is home to explorers and pirates; it is second in piracy only to Ekimmu, but its vessels are seldom seen on the Alphatian Sea, as they prefer to raid the shores of Tangor.

Leontion

Population: 19,000 (city-state), 95% Minaeans.

Leontion was conquered by the four wizard-kings in AC 353, and they rule it still. Leontion was called Lendar at the time of its Tarystian foundation in BC 986, but the wizard-kings renamed it Leontion, and forcefully changed the Tarystian ways (which were being preserved, as the city is quite isolated from the others, and had experienced less Milenian influence) into pseudo-Milenian ones, because they had developed a knack for the Milenian culture. Leontion holds good relationships with Bellissarian nations. It is a safe port for Alphatian ships directed eastwards. The wizard-kings are Alphatians, but their names are unknown.

Serenia

Population: 28,500 (9,400 in the city), 50% Tangor, 40% Minaeans.

This city was founded in AC 649 by Zambul colonists, fleeing their homeland, which had been conquered by the Tangor Empire. The Zambulans, of Tangor ethnicity, faced a hard time fighting against the city of Adunapolis, who claimed the region and wanted them to pay tribute. The two cities are still enemies, and only the fact that they are both part of the confederacy prevents them from fighting each other. A number of competitions are held among the two cities: the most famous is called trio, and is a fight to death of three Serenians against three from Adunapolis. This bloody event takes place each New Year's Day, and it is considered a good omen for a city to win it.

Sinbay

Population: 17,200 (7,900 in the city), 55% minotaurs, 40% Minaeans.

Sinbay is the other minotaur-founded city of Minaea. There are fewer minotaurs here than in Crech, but the city is ruled by minotaurs nonetheless. Lord of the city is Andian, a minotaur bearing the title of tyrant. A new tyrant is chosen by popular acclamation when the old one dies, and rules the city until his own death. In fact, the most important families have a great influence on the popular vote. Sinbay has rich agricultural lands, and is famous for its cows.

Tesla

Population: 39,600 (24,600 in the city), 60% Minaeans, 35% Tarystians.

Tesla is one of the oldest and most important cities of Minaea. Its origins are lost in the past, and it could be considered one of the oldest surviving cities of Mystara. Tesla has had a strong Tarystian presence since its founding, and bears significant traces of ancient pseudo-Jennite civilization. In Tesla, there are two temples dedicated to Tarastia, where She is not venerated in the form of Athinai, and there are a significant number of followers of Rathanos (known, in Minaea, as Apollon). Tesla is an important military center, which is home to the Academy of Military Tactics. Generals from all over Minaea are trained at the academy. A lot of Tesla's activities deal with military matters. The city is ruled by two kings, whose titles are hereditary, but they are controlled by ten ephoroi, who serve for life, selected by the gherusia, a body formed by 28 citizens who are older than 50 years of age. All the political debates, however, must be discussed in the Assembly's Plaza, which can host 10,000 citizens, in order to allow all male citizens over 21 to participate. The current kings are Jan Aronal and Theodozon IV.

Traun

Population: 26,300 (19,200 in the city), 80% Minaeans, 10% Tarystians.

Another important city is Traun, center of philosophical studies and the most enlightened city of the region. Unfortunately, this has often resulted in a softening of the city's customs, and in the decadence of the citizens' lives. Traun does not have an army, and relies completely on a mercenary force of Teslans for its defense, so the general of the mercenaries plays a big role in the city's political life. The city is an ancient Tarystian one, founded as far back as BC 1054. However the city has lost a lot of its grandeur. The city is ruled by a council, known as boulè, made of 30 elected Tarystians and 30 elected Minaeans of the city, plus 5 members of the minorities. The elections take place every two years.

Vidruntos

Population: 22,200 (12,000 in the city), 90% Minaeans.

Another of the Minaean cities, Vidruntos is one of the original members of the confederacy. Founded in the 6th century AC, Vidruntos is a small city and an agricultural center of Minaea, with rich farmlands and a great production of wheat and corn. It is a city with few attractions, however, distant from any significant form of cultural life and adventure possibilities.

TANGOR (Empire of)

Location: Continent of Skothar, Swanamutu region, east of Akuba.

Area: Approx. 463,320 sq. mi. (1,200,000 sq. km.).

Population: 1,600,000 (90% Tangors, 9% Rathasians).

Languages: Tangor (Mawuru, Uherian, Tangor Men, and Zambulan dialects).

Coinage: Any coinage accepted, barter common outside the cities. Official coinage: tang (gp), zab (sp), ras (cp).

Taxes: Varies from province to province; generally around 5 to 15% of total income in money, services and food, depending also on family rank; taxes collected generally during local religious festivities. Part is used by the state for ceremonies, road maintenance, army budget and other state-controlled activities.

Government Type: Confederated empire.

Industries: Agriculture (bananas, coconuts, cacao, manioc, peanuts), crafts.

Important Figures: Kouffour III (King of Tangor, Emperor of the Tangors), Afef (Royal Princess), Oshadogan (General of the Tangor Army).

Climate and Terrain: Tangor's climate is sub-tropical. The region sits at the threshold from temperate forest to the first hints of jungle. Agriculture is not particularly popular among the population, and the productive activities concentrate on goat farming in stretches of land that have been deforested. Goat milk and goat meat is the most common food, supplemented by bananas and other tropical fruits that grow near the villages of the area. Winter is short (about a couple of months) and rather rainy, the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C; autumn and spring are long, warm (20 to 30°C) and vary much from year to year. Summers are hot and generally are made up of a rainy month with a couple of dry months immediately before autumn. During the summer, temperatures may reach 35°C, and the humidity is incredible.

Flora and Fauna: The animals encountered here may be jaguars, baboons, apes, crocodiles and alligators, and many, many species of insects and snakes of different degrees of poison strength. Flora includes the typical jungle trees, but near the mountains and westward toward Tangor pine trees may be easily encountered.

Further Reading: The Southern Skothar Gazetteer by Giulio Caroletti.

Description by Erakliton.

The Tangor Empire is the most important kingdom of western Swanamutu. Not only is its population much larger than that of all surrounding nations, but its history has greatly influenced the past of the region, and the empire casts its shadow over all of western Swanamutu. The empire is a strong political entity; like any typical Tangor state, it is formed as a confederation of several provinces, each of them divided in clans, led by the elders, members of the aristocratic families. The provinces are each ruled by a governor appointed by the central emperor, who is also Governor of the Province of Tangor. Apart from the emperor, all other governors are supported by a Council of Elders, formed by one representative of each clan of Tangor.

The Tangors are a proud race of black-skinned men, with a civilized culture that may seem odd to foreigners. They are extremely good in craftsmanship of all sorts, are humorous and merry, but are also very superstitious ("pious," they say), afraid of taboos and worshipping a myriad of spirits present in Nature, in addition to several Immortals that form the Tangor Pantheon. Tangors set much prize in fighting: they practice several violent sports, and competitions are fierce between a city or village and its neighbors. They don't love city life, preferring to live in towns of medium size, and only the capitals of the provinces, where the bureaucratic, mercantile and political activities take place, have a population of more than 10,000. The Tangors are fond of strangers, but are very quick to take offense (especially regarding religious matters). Although they call other races "barbarians," they respect other cultures and are very interested in Minaeans, with whom they trade exotic fruits and other trading goods (both Minaeans and Tangors view each other's production as "exotic" and are willing to pay big sums for them, thus the trade is satisfactory to both). Tangors do not like traveling, and are completely helpless at sea. This is the main reason why there is so little information about them in Alphatia and Brun.

The current Tangor foreign policy is to avoid meddling with the affairs of other kingdoms, waiting for the right time to gain control of all western Swananutu. They consider Durhan a nation of rebels, and Ekleke a taboo city, while they are indifferent to goblinoids in general, although the empire's borders often face troubles with the most obnoxious tribes.

The provinces of the Tangor Empire are:

Beöl

Population: 244,000 (99% Tangors).

The Province of Beöl is one of the most ancient. Beöl was once a small independent kingdom conquered by the rising Empire of Tangor around BC 167 by Queen Makala. Beöl is not a very important territory. It is not densely populated, nor has it any site of relevance, except for the capital city of Matobe, where the local university trains a small number of excellent magicians, skilled in the arts of animalism (a school of animal-friendly and jungle-dwelling mage-druids).

Kilijaro

Population: 220,000 (99% Tangors).

Kilijaro is the northern mountainous region of the empire, and hosts the fiercest humans (and the most skilled fighters) of the empire. The Kilijaros are goblin-hunters, and revere the Immortal Kala [maybe Halab? Ed.] the Goblinslayer. They have a paranoid fear of open water, and will never travel by sea.

Matwuru

Population: 273,000 (95% Tangors).

The first province that will be encountered when traveling from Minaea to the Empire of Tangor is Matwuru. The Matwurus are among the proudest Tangors of the empire. They believe in their importance as an outpost of the empire toward the barbarian lands of Minaea, and hate fiercely all the Tangors that live on the Tarystian Coast, most of all the city-state of Akuba. The capital of Matwuru is Tompsö.

Rathasia

Population: 170,000 (90% Rathasians).

Rathasia was once an independent kingdom, but now it is but a province of the empire. The Rathasians are fervent supporters of the Tangors, and they are proud to belong to this powerful nation. They mostly believe in the right of the empire to reunite all the black-skinned humans and hopefully to clear the Swanamutu lands of the humanoid presence.

Tangor

Population: 351,000 (97% Tangors).

The Province of Tangor is located at the center of the empire. The province starts north from the capital city of Tangor and goes south, forming the shape of a regular triangle. The province is ruled directly by the emperor. The region's agriculture is productive, although the climate is very wet due to the presence of the river N'goro. Another important settlement of the province is the city of Bawube, the most important port of the western Swanamutu area, where a consistent Minaean community is present.

Ubu

Population: 163,000 (90% Tangors).

Occupying the southeastern part of the empire, Ubu is a quiet land settled by Tangors. The people of Ubu are considered the most shy and most industrious of the empire. The few sailors found in the empire come from this province, especially from the city of Dzibouti, the second most important port of the empire. Dzibouti has a frontier city feel, because it is almost the only city in Tangor where both Minaeans and the eastern folk may be found. Traveling eastwards, the land gives way to the jungles of Lleweryn.

Zambul

Population: 179,000 (98% Tangors).

Zambul is an eastern province which stretches all along the borders with Cymru and Durhan. Once, when Rathasia was an independent kingdom, it held all the northern part of Zambul, but after the conquest of Rathasia by the Tangors, this region was assigned to the Zambulans to avoid contacts with the Duchy of Cymru (at the time settled by a population akin to the Rathasians). The conquest of Cymru by the hivebroods has resulted in the birth of a mercantile society known as the Ant, which in the following centuries has risen to prominence in the region.

THONIA (Kingdom of, a.k.a. Empire of)

Location: Northeastern Skothar, along the Bay of Thorin, north of Esterhold. SK

Area: Approx. 600,000 sq. mi. (1,554,000 sq. km.).

Population: 750,000 (including 80,000 in the capital of Serison), 90% human, 1% elven, 1% dwarven, 1% hin, 2% goblin, 2% hobgoblin, 2% gnoll, 1% pegataur.

Language: Thoniatian (descended from ancient Thonian).

Coinage: Imperial (5 gp), gilder (gp), pars (ep), mark (sp), pence (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax (15% on nobles) collected biannually, 5% sales tax on all goods except food, 5% toll on all commodities passing through the realm.

Government Type: Monarchy advised by a council of nobles.

Industries: Fishing, cattle-raising, horse-breeding, shipbuilding, agriculture (poor), mining (iron in hills).

Important Figures: Iyxis XXXIV (King/Emperor), Verdis (Queen/Empress), Thelekari (Dowager Empress), Marick of Glebum (Archbishop of Serison), various dukes.

Flora and Fauna: Evergreens and deciduous trees, scrub brush, sheep, cattle, elk, deer, wolves, foxes, moose, black bears, grizzly bears, hawks, ogres, trolls, boars, lycanthropes, giant rats, mountain lions, rams, bison, hill giants, yeti, displacer beasts, mastodons, seals, walrus, giant toads, white and silver dragons, wyberns, ghouls, ghastrs, thouls, wights, wraiths

Description by Vin Tang of Beitung.

After landing in Alinaea and learning more about this land, our mood was filled with excitement and anticipation as we sailed to the legendary Thonia, a nation whose heritage dates back to the days of Blackmoor. While we have seen many wonders here, Thonia has to be considered a disappointing and disillusioning experience in reality.

The Land

The Bay of Thorin is bounded on the south by the Peninsula of Esterhold, to the east by relatively good lands and scattered forests, and to the north by sub-arctic steppe lands and hills. Thonia controls much of the eastern and northern shores of the Bay of Thorin, as well as an unremarkable stretch of territory north and east of that (borders here are very permeable, the area inhabited mostly by migratory clansmen with their herds, who share the region with the scattered northern fringe of Jennites). Thonia shares this region with various Ostmarhabner colonies that form enclaves within the region. The borders are not sharply defined, and the Thonian government tries to pretend, officially, that these enclaves don't really exist and that the Ostmarhabner lords are subject to their empire. The Ostmarhabners seem to pretend to go along with this arrogance when they have to have dealings with Thonians, but otherwise do their best to ignore it. Squabbles and even minor wars have started when this attitude has gotten too extreme or forceful, however. But since most Thonians live near their capital, frictions aren't usually too severe.

This southern area shared and feuded over by the two peoples is the best, and thus most densely populated, land in the area. The coastal area is reasonably lush, its climate similar to that of Heldann.

There are plains and farms here, as well as forests and hills in the interior, near the dwarf-holds of Thorin. The northern area claimed by Thonia, the Marches, is considerably less welcoming, topographically and climatologically. This area covers the coast and much of the interior of the northern rim of the Bay of Thorin. It is covered with frigid moors, steppes, taiga, and sub-arctic lands, similar to the grimmer regions of Norwold. This region covers the vast majority of Thonia's land area, but is only sparsely inhabited.

Thonia has one major city and several smaller towns. The capital is Serison, built atop the ruin of an ancient, pre-Blackmoor Thonian city, by survivors of that great cataclysm. This city is very old, pre-dating Alphatian Landfall by centuries if not millennia. It rests on a mound that looms over the surrounding land. This mound is said to be not a natural hill, but rather the accumulation of centuries of debris, crumbled structures built over and over again in many layers. Magic has been used to "raise" various old and important structures several times over the ages to keep them from being buried over time. Such structures include the palace and the wall itself, among other things. Because of this build up, Serison is honeycombed with a network of tunnels and catacombs, and knowledge of much of what these consist of has been lost in time. A seamless wall seemingly carved out of a single piece of stone, thrust up from the earth, surrounds Thorin, and seems to be as old as the city itself.

This wall arcs out into the bay itself, forming a breakwater and creating the city's port. The wall is immune to natural and unnatural damage (such as earthquakes or spells), and is protected against normal, non-magical missiles (including non-magic artillery). The battlements likewise protect the defenders during time of war as if protected from evil/good (regardless of the alignment of the attackers). Numerous pieces of artillery are mounted in and atop the towers that stud the walls. These are operated by ancient mechanisms, allowing them to be aimed and fired with only one crewman, who is protected by 90% cover. They are able to aim these skyward against flying creatures or skyships. Serison itself is a large city, covering almost the same area as the great City of Thyatis does, but with only a fraction of the population. Much of the interior is parkland, fields, even small gardens or croplands, with the occasional cows, chickens, or goats. The population has gradually dwindled for centuries, and here and there can be found weed-choked ruins (though few of these date back to the time of ancient Thonia or Blackmoor—most of the older ruins are buried under several feet of earth). The palace of the Thonian King (a.k.a. "emperor," though usually only outsiders call him that) is a monumental relic to ancient Thonian architecture, with a gilded dome at its center and many large windows. The palace is heated magically, and would be quite pleasant if it wasn't for the jury-rigged towers and fortifications built into its sides, obvious later (and architecturally clumsy) additions. The city is defended by a small but elite royal guard force, some royal marines, and a force of pegataurs tasked with protecting Thonia against aerial attack. Many if not most Thonians live in the lands around the capital city. These engage in farming and fishing. They use large galleys in warfare, and large (if somewhat slow) sailing ships for trade and fishing.

The rest of Thonia is divided into approximately ten provinces, and is inhabited mostly by herdsmen and ranchers (on the steppe lands) and miners (in the hill country). Scattered rustic towns and villages dot the coastal lands of the Bay of Thorin, these mostly built of wood, surrounded by palisades, and having none of the splendor of the city of Thorin. They are grim places, where social life centers around the local watering hole or tavern. There are few inns, and foreigners are distinctly unwelcome in these parts. Only in the capital are accommodations made for outsiders, but they are usually treated brusquely there as well—not rudely, but in a businesslike fashion.

The People

The Thonian people seem to share physiological characteristics with Antalians, though cultural drift has separated them linguistically and in civilization (Jaggar von Drachenfels and some other old Thyatian families trace their lineage back to scions of elder Thonia, however). They are a very spiritual and religious people, devoted to the Immortals and to maintaining their traditional faith. The Immortals they worship include several that I have not heard of before, though some of these may just be variant names for more familiar Immortals. To make things confusing, one of these Immortals is called Serison. Either the capital was named for this Immortal or vice versa. Unfortunately, the Thonians are very reluctant to share more than just general information regarding their faith with non-believers, and keep its rituals secret. Greater study is needed here before I will be able to report more on this.

Thonia's noble class is, if anything, even more haughty and arrogant than that of Alphatia—their hauteur based upon ancient bloodline claims rather than an inborn knack for magic, however. Some of these use their heritage as an inspiration to spur them to excel and thereby honor their ancestors. But many see their heritage as an excuse for indolence, sloth, and arrogance, seeing little need to accomplish anything on their own. In my eyes, this disgraces the very heritage their claims of authority rest upon, and dishonors the legacy of their ancestors.

Many of these nobles will not deign to speak directly to a “foreign barbarian,” using an intermediary as a “translator” in conversation, even if the outsider speaks Thoniatian. Some are marginally more open and accepting, doing this only until the outlander has “probed himself worthy” of direct conversation. Thonia's nobility could be called decadent, interested only in pursuing frivolous pleasures.

Thonian commoners do not share this arrogance, per se. They are more gregarious and warm—at least among themselves. But, rather than being haughty, they are very suspicious of foreigners, and insular. Outside Serison they have a small-town mentality, isolated and wanting to be left alone. Fearful of what a strange person might introduce into their community. Surrounded by dangers, I suppose one can see why they might develop this insularity. Once an outlander probes himself or herself worthy and friendly, they are more accepting, though they still seem to share many of the attitudes of villagers in Bellissaria. Which is ironic, considering the disdain that the Thonians in general have for Alphatians and, indeed, all foreign peoples.

An interesting note are the pegataurs and the gnolls of Thonia. The pegataurs of Thonia insist that they are a natural and true race, rather than a magically-created hybrid. They claim that the pegataurs in Alphatia were produced by Alphatian wizards wanting to replicate the natural and original pegataurs, which those in Thonia claim to be. I have not been able to either verify or disprove this claim.

The gnolls are, likewise, somewhat odd [they might actually be flinds. Ed.], being somewhat different from those found on Brun, being hairier and larger. These gnolls are nomads, living mainly on the northern moors and steppes. They often are soldiers in Thonia's frontier forces, but have distinct communities of their own within the nation.

The dwarves are of clans from the dwarven Kingdom of Thorin.

History

Thonia is a survivor-state of the ancient Empire of Thonia, which predated even Blackmoor. Its people are conscious of their history, but surviving in the rugged lands is enough of a challenge that they have never managed to recapture their old glory. The history of Thonia since the destruction of Blackmoor has been one of rebuilding followed by the struggle to survive in their harsh environment.

According to Thonian histories which I have read while here—one of the few things with which to occupy one's time here is to read—they felt the appearance of the Alphatians as a sort of insult, and rancor at the prestige of the Alphatian Empire while it existed and pushed itself onto the world stage. At the time of Landfall the Thonians were in the process of colonizing the continent to their southeast, the continent that the Alphatians would claim as their own. But only a few small Thothian settlements had been created—exploration was just beginning, as Thonia had only recently managed to recover true seafaring capacity and had few ships and did not match the Alphatians in strength. In essence, the arrival of the Alphatians permanently restricted the Thonians to the region they inhabit now, preventing them from ever recapturing the glories of their lost empire, and thus embittered them.

In the interval, the Thonians have occasionally fought with, but in other times cooperated with, the Jemites to their south and the Pstmarhabner peoples who colonized here after they were forced from their homes by the invading Alphatians. The Thonians see these peoples as barbarians who “know their place.” The Jemites are respectful of the Thonians—not so much because they feel themselves inferior (which is what the Thonians would like to believe), but because the Thonians have never cared to try and invade the steppes of the Jemites (having enough near worthless lands of their own). As a result, when the Alphatians attacked Esterhold 800 years ago, the Thonians and Jemites developed closer ties, and see each other as a potential ally to keep the Alphatians at bay.

Almost of necessity, trade sprang up between Thonia and Alphatia over the centuries. This trade was rather meager, however, as the lands of Thonia produced little that the Alphatians wanted (if it had, they would simply have seized it outright). The Thonians often raided deeper into Skothar to capture slaves to sell to the Alphatians in exchange for the wares the Alphatians produced. When Alphatia sank, many thought the Thonians would try to take advantage of this by marching into Esterhold, or at least helping the Jemites recapture that peninsula. But Thonia did nothing. They seem instead satisfied with the disappearance of the Alphatian continent, smugly happy with the pitiful state of the surviving Alphatian kingdoms (which have now formed Nayce)—there is little compassion or awareness that the destruction of the Alphatian Empire echoes their own experience of long ago. They are just happy that the long shadow cast by Alphatia has been removed, and that now the “glory of elder Thonia will be revealed.” Thus the Thonians stew impotently, living in their past, having apparently no real energy to actually restore the glories they still dream of and pantomime. They think that greatness will come to them without their having to take initiative to seize it, a very abnormal perspective on destiny. They only grudgingly accepted some basic trading be established with Thyatis in AC 1017.

ATLAS OF THE HOLLOW WORLD

Introduction to the Hollow World

Hollow World... the name is highly indicative as to this part of Mystara. For Mystara is hollow and within the hollowed space resides an entirely different world. But a world it is, with expansive forests, virgin mountains, tenacious seas, and harsh deserts. Being inverted, the landscape has no horizon and slopes noticeably upwards. Reaching out from the inner crust, the surface features are warmed and lighted by the shimmering and pulsing red sphere that acts as a sun. Around this orb orbit several bodies, one of which is the continent of Alphatia.

This world is populated by peoples long thought dead from Mystara's surface world. Here, one can see the very civilizations that flourished and eventually fell throughout Mystara's history. Though some civilizations have sojourned here for centuries, and even millennia, the passage of time has not altered them. Despite time, they still are as they were when they were present the surface world.

As it is, the Hollow World knows of no night but is in a perpetual state of red-hued daylight. There are no constellations, only the regular rotations of the orbiting landmasses in the void above. Magic is also limited to more primitive levels, with spellcasters being few and far between. This limitation is partly due to the Immortal magics that keep those civilizations as they once were in their splendor—and also in their limitations or sometimes outright barbarism.

Correspondents for the Hollow World

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

Dellebram

Through efforts in Karamaikos, 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.

Leadyl Feadiel

The almanac was able to obtain several reports from the Hollow World written by Leadyl Feadiel through a secondary source. Leadyl is an adventurer from Altheim who reportedly entered the Hollow World via The Pit on Aegos during the Great War. He continued his adventures throughout the Hollow World and was eventually captured by Haldannic Knights during the Battle of Laroun, in the Milenian Empire (AC 1006). He was held prisoner at the outpost of Stonehaven before being liberated by the Oostdok gnomes in AC 1011. In the aftermath of the rescue, he found himself in the Makai Islands and has since made his way to the Merry Pirates Seas. His writings indicate that he is still unaware of many of the events that transpired on the surface world during the Great War.

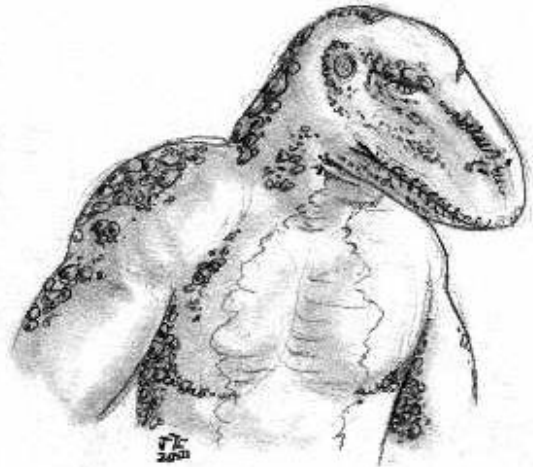


Moctlpotec

The editors of the almanac do not have a biography of Moctlpotec; all that is known about him (or her) is that he or she is a Schattenalfen.

Saasiks the Avenger

Only I remain. When the raiding party returned to the village we found only the rotting husks of our tribe. The other warriors soon became weak. Their eyes grew cloudy and they would not bite flesh. Soon they too were rotting. Only I remain. Never again can I return to my people. I bear the curse of the Nithians. To relieve myself of its weight, I will hunt them. All Nithians will die at my claws. Only... I must find them first.



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, confident 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 years since that time, he has traveled all over the empire, and in other regions of Suridal. When the Mystaran Almanac's researchers and correspondents

were made aware of this enigmatic continent and its obscure inhabitants, they sought out someone who could provide them with the information they needed. Contacts in the organization based in the Lighthouse pointed them to Taleris.

A relatively unassuming man, Taleris walks anonymously along the byways of Selhomarr, with passers-by noticing only another wandering cleric, going about his appointed business. In his position, though, Taleris has gained access to important politicians and other figures, news of which he strives to bring to the attention of the almanac's eager readers.

Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa

A widely traveled Milenian philosopher and sage specializing in cultural studies and political geography, Theukidikies seems to have studied most of the civilizations of the Hollow World over his many years of scholarship. He has provided us with a brief description of most of the Hollow World nations, with extensive reports on some of the more prominent ones. His remarks are academic in tone, and only occasionally influenced by his outlook as a Milenian (this does color his report on Nithia especially, however).



Dupac

I had studied with Teotlan, the aged master of Hunacpu, for many years. It was the day of acceptance, the day that Teotlan would give me a trial to complete so that I might show myself worthy to enter the Lighthouse. The ceremony was quiet, and private. My aged master sat before me meditating (he had been sitting there nearly all day long), the smoky sweet scent of incense filling his cliff-side dwelling. Just as his lips were about to part two village youths ran into the room screaming for my master. "You must come quickly!" they shouted, as if their very lives hung in the balance. My master complied and I followed him to the edge of the city. There we saw Saasiks. He wielded only a spear (of Azcan make no less), but no one would go near him. I could see the fire burning in his eyes even from the distance I myself was at. After hearing the creature's story, Teotlan turned to me with a smile. Now I follow Saasiks on his quest and help him to document his journey.

Atlas

ANTALIA

Location: Northeast coastlands of the Ostzee on the continent of Iciria, east of the Beastmen Wastes and north of the Krugel Horde's lands. **HW**

Area: 322,854 sq. mi. (836,190 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 living in villages of up to 500.

Languages: Antalian, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Corvée labor and levies of in-kind produce prebails in individual lordships.

Government Type: Numerous independent lordships governed by chieftains.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, herding, leathercraft, piracy and raiding.

Important Figures: Kjodar Triudar's Son (Chieftain of Kiefstut).

Flora and Fauna: Sub-arctic; hardy grasses, evergreen forests, hill, stone, and frost giants, bears, wolves, white dragons.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

This is a hostile land of warriors living in a harsh environment.

The Land

The Antalians live in rugged, sub-arctic lands on the shores of the Ostzee, at the foot of snow-capped mountains. The lands are thick with evergreens. There are two rivers here, the longer one being known as the Fym. The inhabitants mostly live along the coasts and fjords, the latter of which are shrouded in fog. A cold wind seems to constantly blow out of the north, making survival here difficult. The mountains and harshness of the land protect the Antalians from invasion, but do not prevent the Antalians from venturing out, either by land or sea, to raid and make war. Fierce wolves and even more dangerous creatures infest the land in large numbers.

The People

The Antalians are a grim, fatalistic and stern people, made hard by the lands they live in. They are a pale race, most having golden hair, though brown and red are not uncommon. Both men and women wear their hair long, with men also having beards. Blue, gray, green, and brown are their eyes. They dress in heavy garments of leather, wool, linen, and furs to protect themselves from the cold. The Antalians dwell in many small villages, in long, single-story halls that hug close to the earth where the winds do not penetrate, surrounding them with stockades to not only keep out enemies (including those from neighboring villages) but the winds as well.

The Antalians are a hard-living, rough people who lead short lives. They hunt and fish their lands, but like the Traldar they most enjoy raiding and piracy, sailing the seas to sack neighboring settlements

with wild abandon. The highest aspiration, it is said, of an Antalian is to command his own pirate vessel, raiding the coasts until brought down at a young age by either hordes of enemies in overwhelming numbers or by an enemy so strong it is deemed an honor to be slain by it.

Those few Antalians who live to see wisdom try to counsel their youth against such a rough and early end of life, but few hearken to such advice, as the lure of the sea and of combat runs strong in the blood of these people. They challenge all strangers who come upon their villages to a duel to first blood with their finest warriors. Those who win are welcomed as guests and feasted, those who fail the test are bludgeoned and enslaved. The Antalians do not enslave each other, but only other people, subdued in such tests or captured in battle.

The Antalians look upon life as a ruthless and harsh test that they are destined to fail in the end, but they feel they prove their mettle by facing it with unwavering resolve. They believe that this struggle against hardship and fate is what makes life worthwhile. They love fighting, but are clever about it, and use trickery to gain for themselves every advantage, seeing nothing despicable in stacking the odds in their favor. After all, it is a matter of life and death to them, and death comes early enough. Antalians fight most often with each other, but occasionally enter into grim wars against the Beastmen and the Icevale elves.

Like the Milenians, they respect their men over their women, though some women among the Antalians do become warriors. These live in one hall in each Antalian town, as the others are uncomfortable and suspicious of them. Many Antalian women warriors end up going out into the world as a result of this. The Antalians respect the Immortals, primarily their patrons, Motan, Donar, Fredar, Fredara, and Lokar. But they are suspicious of magic that does not come from the Immortals, and Antalian wizards are few, and treated harshly, often exiled from their communities, where most die. Those that do live have become quite powerful, however, and a number of these sorcerers rule over their villages.

The Antalians are governed by arls, who preside over them like the kings of the Traldar rule over that people. Other than that, their laws are simple but hard, like the people. The Antalians trade little, preferring to raid instead. They have domesticated the large reindeer who are found in these lands, and even use them as mounts when raiding or traveling by land. By sea they move in long ships with oars and a single mast, descending upon the coasts at will.

Do Miss

This is a harsh and unwelcoming land, inhabited by a harsh and unwelcoming people. There is little of note to see here, just the cold and the wind and the axes of the Antalians.

AZCANS (Empire of the)

Location: Northwest Iciria, east of the Northern Atlass Ocean, north of the World Spine Mountains, west of the Malpheggi Swamps. **HW**

Area: 728,847 sq. mi. (1,887,715 sq. km.). This does not reflect the severe loss of lands to the Schattenalken, which the Azcans refuse to acknowledge.

Population: 3,000,000 including Chitlacan (pop. 200,000, including 10,000 nobles and 30,000 commoners on the island part), Huitlaktima (pop. 45,000), innumerable towns and villages.

Languages: Oltec, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Corvée labor and levies of in-kind produce.

Government Type: Theocratic monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture, especially beans, corn, and peppers.

Important Figures: Otziltipac (Tlatoani), Malinalxoch (Ometochtzin).

Flora and Fauna: Predominantly what is found in tropical and sub-tropical rainforest; dinosaurs, monkeys, swine, snakes (including the Azcan winged viper and feathered serpent), tropical birds of many varieties, and great cats (especially the jaguar).

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, **HW** 1 Sons of Azca, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Azcans live amid a sun-lit tropical rainforest, practicing their bloody rites.

The Land

The lands of the Azcans are flat and wet, and covered in jungle. Indeed, it rains every sleep here, at least once, with unbreakable regularity. The air is warm and damp, the land overgrown with underbrush. The forests are lighter on the fringes of the Azcan Empire, and in the southeast it grows boggy, becoming the Malpheggi Swamp. The country is crisscrossed with an elaborate network of rivers and canals, which the Azcans use to travel and transport goods in canoes and rafts, the more so as they refuse to use the wheel. The wetness of the land also makes it very fertile. Indeed, the farm plots of the Azcans sometimes seem to be like floating gardens. Many dinosaurs prowl the jungles, as do cats such as jaguars and ocelots, which are held in high regard by the Azcans as totem creatures.

The People

The Azcans are a copper-skinned people with coal-dark eyes and hair, prominent noses and high cheekbones. They are short, but strong and fierce. They wear their hair long, but the men have no beards. They favor the wearing of headbands, and dress in linen garments. The wealthy also wear ocelot fur and large amounts of gold jewelry with jade, obsidian, and turquoise gems, and sometimes brilliant emeralds.

The Azcan people are ruled by a king known as the tlatoani, or speaker, a priest-king like the Nithian Pharaoh who rules with absolute power over the people through a vast and exacting bureaucracy and hierarchy of nobles. They administer the Azcan people with more minute exactitude than even the

Nithians are ruled under. The tlatoani nominates judges to adjudicate disputes. Their justice is swift and harsh, with many of the convicted sentenced to be sacrificed to their Immortals.

The Azcan Empire is organized along military lines, with a large and active army. From the day of their birth, Azcan men are devoted to the arts of war. They begin their formal training at the age of six or seven and serve at least until young adulthood, when, if they prove unsuccessful at war, they are expelled from the army, and only those who continue to excel in combat are kept in service. The most successful of these rise to become leaders and officers, and the best of all join one of the three fearsome military orders, the Jaguar and Eagle Knights and Coatl (formerly the infamous Winged Viper). Those who are expelled are pushed into the peasantry, where they are bound over into servitude.

The Azcans have had a shockingly sudden religious upheaval. They followed the Immortal Atzanteotl from the earliest times until just last year, and their tlatoani was always a priest of Atzanteotl. But last year there was a sudden uprising and revolution, and the Azcans deposed the tlatoani and the priests of Atzanteotl, and their new tlatoani reveres Quetzalcoatl and has promoted a faith called the New Way over his people, and claim to have entered a new phase in Azcan history. The followers of the old Immortal, Atzanteotl, continue to resist this revolution in some areas. The Azcan people remain highly superstitious, consulting soothsayers before making any major decision, only now these soothsayers supposedly get their inspiration from Quetzalcoatl rather than Atzanteotl.

The Azcans are organized in a rigid hierarchy, with the common peasants at the bottom, followed by young warriors, then experienced warriors and officers, followed by members of the prestigious military orders, over whom preside nobles (the tecuhtli) and priests. Azcan villages do elect local leaders, known as a calpulle, and this is similar to the Milenian practice of democracy, but the selection of this local chief is as far as they take it. Set somewhat apart from this ordered structure are the tradesmen, the pochtecatl, who are wealthy but despised, and live with separate customs and laws, almost like a nation within a nation, though obedient to the tlatoani and his officials. The pochtecatl do not flaunt their wealth, putting on a humble atmosphere, but they are quite proud. Trade among the Azcans is in barter rather than coin, but this primitiveness is somewhat alleviated because they often use quills filled with gold dust as a means of exchange.

Don't Miss

The Azcan capital of Chitlacan is a splendid city built on an island in Lake Chitlalo and its western shore. Over it looms the step-pyramid temples of the Azcans' Immortals and the massive palace of the tlatoani. The city has broad streets suitable for ceremonial occasions, with the streets being flagged in stone. The ceremonial buildings and dwellings of the nobility are constructed out of large stone blocks. The commoners live in humble square, one-story homes made out of hardened mud (adobe), with each containing a small courtyard open to the sun. The island portion of the city is connected to the shore by a long wooden causeway. The Azcans' lives are so regimented that if one looks upon Chitlacan from afar, they seem like white-breached ants, carrying a seemingly endless stream of supplies to the city in baskets on their backs. Canoes and rafts ply the lake and the rivers leading to it as well, likewise transporting goods to the city. At the center of Chitlacan is a large ceremonial plaza containing a calendar stone from which the Azcans measure time.

BEASTMEN (Lands of the)

Location: Northern portion of the continent of Iciria, south of the Bay of Gam. **HW**

Area: 1,413,353 sq. mi. (3,660,585 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 living in small bands of 10-50.

Languages: Erruuk (a.k.a. Beastman), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None really.

Government Type: Independent family bands lead by a chieftain.

Industries: Fishing, hunting, trapping.

Important Figures: Krogada the Itchy (War Chieftainess).

Flora and Fauna: Arctic tundra; seals, walrus, polar bears, white dragons, frost giants, ice toads, peti, whales.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

These are a brutal and barbarous race of twisted monsters living in an ice-bound land.

The Land

The lands of the Beastmen are, if anything, even more harsh and forbidding than those of the Azcans. They reside among the mountains and in lands of tundra and snow near the northern edge of Iciria. This is an icy land, often made even colder by strong winds and blizzards that blow out of the north.

The People

These are not people as such, they are beasts who resemble the form of men in some ways. Their features vary widely, however, with no two looking alike and none resembling even their parents. The Beastmen are true savages, being cruel and brutal in their ways and unsophisticated in their crafts. They have only three interests: surviving the severe environment they live in (and their still more severe fellows), demonstrating their physical might over others, and breeding more Beastmen. They do not seem to think about wider questions, and I doubt they have ever produced a philosopher or scholar among them. Some Beastmen wander into the southern lands to probe their mettle over others, but most are content to stay in their own lands.

The Beastmen live in dome-shaped dwellings made out of ice, which there is plenty of in their lands. They hunt and they fish, and live simply. Though a cruel people, if approached in peace they do not attack first. Instead, they often invite a traveler to dine with them and stay for a sleep, in exchange for telling them stories. These often end up leading to challenges, however. Still, this is the most civilized custom the Beastmen have.

BRUTE-MEN (Lands of the)

Location: Southern hemisphere of the continent of Iciria, north of Lake Menkor, south of the World Spine Mountains, east of the Sea of Rax. **WM**

Area: 49,883 sq. mi. (129,195 sq. km.).

Population: 200,000 living in clans of 10-60.

Languages: Ka-na-to (a.k.a. Brutish), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Independent clan groups led by chieftains with the support of shamans.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Na-Do (Chief of the Fang Cave Clan), Ug-rum (Shaman of the Fang Cave Clan).

Flora and Fauna: Grasses, coniferous trees, sheep, goats, rock baboons, bats, bears, carrion crawlers, mountain lions, smilodons, dinosaurs, dragons, giant lizards, mastodons, wooly mammoths, pterosaurs, purple worms, rats, giant scorpions, shadows, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, troglodytes, jackrabbits, armadillos.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Cheukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Brute-Men live in a wild and untamed region, but are themselves a gentle, even timorous people.

The Land

The lands of the Brute-Men are a hilly, untamed and untamable wilderness of stone and rock. Cool winds blow out of the nearby mountains, and the soil here is thin and unproductive at best. Many dinosaurs roam through the area, as well as other creatures large and small.

The People

Again, these are not people as such, they are beasts or brutes. They appear somewhat like humanity, but with heavy hair (almost like fur), sloping foreheads that give them an appearance of stupidity that belies their craftiness, and large jaws and mouths like an ape's. They dress in animal skin vests and loincloths, and speak a rough and barbarous language. They live as hunters and gatherers, simply and without any trace of civilization. But they do have arts and an awareness of the Immortals, painting the caves and rock walls with simple but expressive motifs depicting hunts and honoring the Immortals.

The Brute-Men are remarkably gentle and pacifistic, fighting only when threatened or attacked. They live in caves, moving occasionally if the hunting goes badly or the tribe grows too large. They follow the Immortal Ka-gar, but some are said to follow a darker Immortal known as Cha-to. The shamans who act as priests of these Immortals can be very powerful.

GENTLE FOLK (Elf-Lands of the)

Location: Continent of Iciria, east of the Azcan Empire, west of Alphatian Neatharm, near the Neathar lands. **HW**

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

Population: 10,000.

Languages: Elvish (ancient dialect), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: None.

Industries: None (hunter/gatherers).

Important Figures: Brianna (poet).

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 zonga bush, some of the elves chew its leaves to gain its effects. Unlike the zonga 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 of 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 pacifistic and artistic nature has drawn the patronage of both Alphatia and Koryis.

One interesting Truedyl Elf is Brianna, 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. Brianna 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 out 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 Shipe-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 Shipe may even see it as being reminiscent of their own lands on the Alphatian continent so that visiting Shipe 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: Northern mountains of the continent of Iciria, east of the Midworld Gate, north of the Neathar lands, south of the Beastman Wastes. **HW**

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

Population: 100,000 living in clans of 100 to 1,000, including the town of Tuathar (pop. 5,500).

Languages: Elvish (Icevale dialect), Neathar.

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

Taxes: Levies of funds, in-kind products, and labor on an ad hoc basis when needed.

Government Type: Monarchy influenced by clan leaders.

Industries: Furs and leather products exchanged for food, wine and precious metals.

Important Figures: RolloDir (King), Bergeya (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: With its frigid arctic mountainous clime, the region boasts a sizable population of creatures normally found therein. Moose, bears, reindeer, beavers, foxes, and wolves are the most obvious. More dangerous beasts such as white dragons can also be found.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The elves of Icevale live amid the craggy peaks of the northern mountains. Though the climate is harsh, their spirits are light.

The Land

The Icevale elves live in sub-arctic mountain and hill country, always covered in snow. Pine trees and other evergreens cover the hills and the slopes of the mountains up to the tree line.

The People

This area is populated with elves, forming themselves into a kingdom. The only evidence of their habitation is usually a small cabin which, when entered, proves to be the antechamber of a network of artfully crafted caverns warmed by elven magic, which form the dwellings and communities of the Icevale elves.

These elves, like the Schattenalken, are a vigorous race of warriors, but unlike the dark and malevolent Schattenalken they are bright and fun-loving. These elves are tall for their race, hardy and strong. Most are light in complexion and blond of hair, with eyes of blue or green. The men cut their hair short and go beardless, while the women wear their hair long. Among the Icevale elves, the sexes are considered equal, with no distinctions among them. The elves wear furs and deerskin garments, with boots lined with down to protect against the cold.

Though they are capable warriors, the Icevale elves do not devote their lives to combat and warfare. They live as hunters and trappers, subsisting mostly on meat, though they also fiercely protect their forests and mountains against despoliation. They travel by dogsled, snowshoes, or by ski. They also

use these as forms of entertainment and sport, holding skiing and dogsled races, as well as archery contests.

They like to perform mischievous pranks on unwary travelers, hiding from view while doing so. Some of these pranks can be quite dangerous, as when they destroy provisions, but they seem to mean no harm by them, and if the wanderers take it in stride and do not become enraged, the elves may invite them to guest with them.

If they have a dark aspect, it is that they abhor imperfections in their offspring, and sometimes cast such out to die of exposure. Others are permitted to grow, but are shunned and these often leave Icevale as soon as they are able to. The Icevale elves are organized into a loose kingdom presided over by a king, but most matters are handled locally by clan leaders. Only dire problems, such as a war or major disaster, are decided upon by the king.

Don't Miss

The main community of the Icevale elves, and the capital of their kingdom, is a small but beautiful town, Tuathar (previous notations that Argandir was the capital are incorrect; Argandir is actually a ruin, a town destroyed long ago by the Beastmen). This town is largely underground, in a mountain. But it is not cramped or dark like many subterranean settlements; the chambers are soaring and spacious, well lit by magical effects. The rock itself seems to have been shaped by magic or elven art or both into fine features, almost like filigree.

JENNITES (Tribelands of the)

Location: South central plains of the continent of Iciria, north of the Sea of Dr, south of the Tanagoro Plains, between Nithia and Milenia. *HW*

Area: 180,000 sq. mi. (466,200 sq. km.).

Population: 400,000 living in tribal groups averaging 1,000 members.

Languages: Jennite, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Tribes levy goods and corvée labor based on need.

Government Type: Semi-independent clans ruled by chiefs occasionally unified by a chagan (khan).

Industries: Cattle raising, horse breeding, goldsmithing, raiding.

Important Figures: Trudar (King), Rathyka (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: Steppes grasses, aurochs herds, giant beetles, bugbears, lions, chimeras, cockatrices, dinosaurs, dragons, hill giants, gnolls, griffons, hippogriffs, horses, giant lizards, giant locusts, manticores, ogres, pegasi, giant scorpions, sphinxes, trolls, aardbarks, wolves, cats, bulettes, giant ants, and especially rabbits.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikius the Historian of Corisa.

The Jennites are a nomadic horse people who infest the plains between Milenia and Nithia, following their herds.

The Land

The lands of the Jennites are a series of vast steppelands, mostly flat but broken by the occasional range of hills or copse of trees. They lay in the temperate zone of southern Iciria, but cold winds blow hard from the south. These lands are lush in grass and thus make good ranges for cattle and other animals, and provide plenty for herdsmen or hunters. If it were not for the Jennites, who cleave hard to nomadic ways, they would also make good croplands, as the Milenians will one day probe—mark my words. These lands run all the way from the banks of the Dagol River in the west to the deserts and wastes on the eastern edge of the Plains of Teuz, bound by the Sea of Dr in the south and the jungles of the Tanagoro in the north, though the Tanagoro and the Jennites share (and clash in) some of the northeastern plains.

The People

These wide lands are home to the Men of Jen, or Jennites, a nomadic people seemingly born in the saddle. They make no permanent dwellings, but rather range over the land, following their herds of aurochs as they eat the grasses, and pursuing the hunt likewise. As they deplete one area, they simply move on across the steppelands. Thus their dwellings are made to be temporary and mobile, easily taken down in one place and put up in another, like the tents of soldiers, but made to house whole families. These they move in wagons, with some wagons being set up as dwellings unto themselves, with others being used to transport belongings and supplies.

The Jennites are a coppery-skinned people with dark hair and dark eyes, like the Azcans or Olters. The women wear their hair long, the men cutting it short but wearing long, spiky mustaches or short spiky beards. They dress in garments of wool and felt, to keep out the wind and damp, with women and men dressing alike, most unnaturally. Their women even fight alongside their men, and their counsel is heeded in decisions. But, in the end, it is the men who rule, so they are not totally without sense. The Jennites are expert riders who trust to their mounts almost as much as they do each other, and they are all very skilled in using the bow, which is their national weapon, from horseback. Strangely to my mind, they are also excellent goldsmiths, making fine golden jewelry of their wealth and wearing it in abundance. The Jennites have great scorn for those who do not ride, and do not value infantry no matter how often they are beaten by our Milenian footmen.

The Jennites are great gift-givers, with the custom of exchanging gifts highly regarded among their people. This you should keep in mind at all times when meeting the Jennites, for if you do not offer their chief a gift and accept one in exchange, they will be highly offended, and attack you for insulting them. If you do cleave to this custom, however, they will treat you as valued guests, welcoming you into their encampment as friends. It is a terrible thing to be captured by the Jennites in war, however, for they execute all captives with their swords. They follow the Immortal Tarastia, and are very mindful of vengeance, leaving no slight unpunished. As a result, there are many feuds among them, most of which go back as far as those involved can remember, each blaming the other side for real or imagined slights. I must say, though, that they do have a keen sense of honor and justice, and they do not punish arbitrarily or without cause.

The Jennites are ruled over by tribal chieftains or chagans, though these, rather than ruling with an iron fist, except in times of war or battle, listen to the advice of tribal elders, especially the priests of Tarastia. Usually their tribes are disunited and fractious, feuding as described above. But occasionally a great and magnetic leader will arise among them, unifying them into a great and fearsome force. They then often ride forth to terrorize the surrounding nations in a great horde.

KOGOLOR (Dwarven Kingdom of)

Location: Eastern range of the World Spine Mountains the continent of Iciria, between the Brute-Men Lands and the Krugel Hordes. **HW**

Area: 133,021 sq. mi. (344,525 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000, including Kolmstat (pop. 28,000).

Languages: Kogolor.

Coinage: Bitric (50 gp), gilder (gp), platen (sp), kupfen (cp)

Taxes: Tithe of 10% of income to royal treasury, 10% tariff on all goods except food, plus additional exactions as needed in crisis and war.

Government Type: Monarchy influenced by clan leaders.

Industries: Timber, woodworking, brewing, furs, leatherwork, mining.

Important Figures: Bitric III (King).

Flora and Fauna: Mountain and hill vegetation, including aspen trees, evergreens, various underbrush. Animals that survive in these elevations include deer, elk, moose, goats, apes (white-furred carnivorous dwarf-eating apes), black and brown bears, beholders, mountain lions, dinosaurs, giant ferrets, giant weasels, giant hamsters, gnomes, griffons, pterosaurs, purple worms, rats, giant spiders, wolves. Humanoid races include giants (of the hill, stone, mountain, and frost varieties), trolls, orcs, ogres, lycanthropes, minotaurs, and yeti. Troglodytes are known to live underground.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Kogolor are a mountain folk, dwarves who live in the vales amid the peaks of the World Spine Mountains.

The Land

Perched atop the World Spine Range, the lands of the Kogolor dwarves are a rugged but beautiful mountain country. The snow-capped peaks soar over lush mountain vales covered with evergreens and cut by glittering streams of cold water. At the center of these gorgeous mountains, however, are a blasted labascape around Mount Ronani, but even this area has an eerie beauty to it. To the northeast, several forts are built along the passes between the Kogolor lands and the Krugel Horde, to bar the way of attacks by those people into the Dwarven Kingdom. The Hordes do sometimes get by these defenses, however. As a result of this, the inhabitants live in walled towns, protected against attack. These are scattered throughout the Kingdom.

The People

The Kogolor Dwarves who inhabit this land are a stout and robust folk, hearty and gregarious. They dress in tunics dyed in bright colors, wearing coats to protect against the brisk mountain air. They wear doeskin shorts held up with suspenders, which they call lederhosen, and top off the outfit with a short hat with a feather in it. Both men and women wear this outfit, which I find bizarre.

These are an outgoing, cheerful people, given to feasts and brewing and drinking beers, ales, and mead. They embrace travelers as if they were long lost cousins, feasting them, inviting them on hunts, and encouraging them to regale the dwarves with tales of their journeys and exploits. The Kogolor Dwarves are good fighters, but unlike the Gcans or the Antalians, they are not obsessed with fighting. They live as loggers, craftsmen, trappers, herdsman, and brewmeisters. The males govern, but they allow their women to fight and own property.

They have a King, who rules from the capital of Kolmstat, but most matters are decided by town and clan leaders. About a quarter of the Kogolor live below ground, in caverns like the Icebale Elves, though with a different aesthetic sense. The rest live in orderly towns and villages above ground, pretty cottages set along hillocks and in mountain glades. These communities communicate with each other through a type of warbling song, which they call yodeling, and can transmit messages very quickly across the mountains by this means.

Don't Miss

The Kogolor have one true city, the capital of Kolmstat. This is a city, small by Milenian or Nithian standards, but with a strong double-wall surrounding it and a multitude of stone buildings within it. It is built over a series of mountain springs, which the dwarves swim in and say are good for one's health. The ground below the city is riddled with caves and tunnels, so vast that they haven't all been explored. Where they might go, no one can say.

KRUGEL HORDE (Lands of the)

Location: Northeastern Iciria, west of the Ostzee, east of the Neathar lands, north of the World Spine Mountains, south of the Antalian Mountains. **HW**

Area: 428,163 sq. mi. (1,108,940 sq. km.).

Population: 300,000 scattered in numerous villages of 2,000 or less along the Great Mud and Venidar Rivers, including Ubul (pop. 6,000).

Languages: Orcish (Krugel dialect).

Coinage: None; uses coins minted in other lands and barter.

Taxes: Military economy; exactions based on need.

Government Type: Khanate organized along military lines.

Industries: Light agriculture, horse breeding, raiding, mercenary warfare.

Important Figures: Seredek (General).

Flora and Fauna: Arid climate; cacti, ponies, bison, sheep, giant ants, basilisks, chimeras, cockatrices, dinosaurs, horses, giant lizards, manscorpions, manticores, giant scorpions, jackals, snakes.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Krugel Horde lives similar to the way of the Jennites, though they do build some towns along the muddy riverbanks in their blighted lands. They are a bestial, but disciplined people, thriving in their rugged environment.

The Land

The lands of these orcs are a scarred and blasted wasteland, more desolate than most of Nithia, fed by long and meandering rivers (the Great Mud and its tributaries), but these rivers are not as fertile as the single River Nithia. None the less, they do provide the lands with enough moisture to sustain life as the inhabitants live it; as pastoralists and in towns, rather than as farmers and in large cities.

Most of the lands are arid plains and scrub country, with a small desert (Izlirun) in the south, and a larger one (the Desert of Boglucubul) in the northeast. The plains are home to scattered dinosaurs and small herds of bison, as well as scavengers such as hyenas. The drier regions are rocky rather than sandy, with broken rock formations and towering mesas, scoured by a hot breeze.

The People

Within these lands live the orcs of the Krugel Horde. They have sickly, yellowish-brown skin and heads shaped somewhat like those of the Brute-Men. The Krugel orcs, both male and female, wear their dark hair long. They dress in leather garments over which they wear a rough cloth cloak that they call a tabarko. Topping off this somewhat ridiculous outfit is an equally outlandish hat, with a broad brim. This does have the advantage of keeping the sun out of one's eyes, however.

Like the Jennites to the far south, the Krugel orcs seem almost born in the saddle. They use a bow much like that of the Men of Jen, but their national weapon is a long spear or lance, used from

horseback in a mass charge which can be quite fearsome. For the Krugel Horde is a militaristic kingdom, its people organized like a cavalry army. They maintain permanent towns, rather than being nomads like the Jennites, and these towns are ordered like military encampments.

Like the Antalians, the Krugel enjoy nothing so much as raiding, though they do it exclusively by land on horseback, not by sea. They range throughout the region, raiding for wealth and for their livelihood. They have been known to range as far as the Azcan lands in these raids, but raid all the surrounding peoples with great frequency. They also hire themselves out as mercenaries in other people's wars, taking the opportunity to loot and pillage with wild abandon. Any intruder into their lands who does not come for the purpose of hiring mercenaries is set upon and attacked. Even their women behave in this fashion, knowing no proper circumspection. The Krugel Horde is governed by a strong king, who rules through chieftains who function as military officers. When the king shows any weakness, he is overthrown, killed, and replaced at once by the strongest leader among the orcs.

KUBITT VALLEY

Location: Continent of Iriria, east of Traldar, north of Milenia. *HW*

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

Population: 5,000.

Languages: Alphatian (ancient dialect), Neathar, nixie, and dryad.

Coinage: None (various acquired currencies and gems for hiring outside agents).

Taxes: None (collective society).

Government Type: Matriarchal monarchy.

Industries: Agriculture, foraging, military.

Important Figures: Zalmontis (Queen and General), Crawl (King), Zoranthia (Captain).

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 reach 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 Alphetian mage Korubazunth as his personal race of assassins and servants, the kubitts rebelled against their master and killed him. Under Alphetian 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 Alphetian given talents to carve their niche in that world. Since the arrival of the Alphetians 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 AD 2015 [AC 1015. Ed.] kubitt infiltrators were discovered and captured in the city of Haldemar, Alphetian Neatharum. Among them was Zoranthia, niece of the kubitts' ruler. Taken to the floating continent, Zoranthia and her compatriots were not executed—in fact, they were treated with a near celebrity status and Zoranthia 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.

MAKAI ISLANDS

Location: Equatorial waters of the Atlass Ocean, west of Iciria, south of the Merry Pirate Seas.
HW

Area: 7,436 sq. mi. (19,260 sq. km.), including Makai Island, 6,075 sq. mi. (15,735 sq. km.).

Population: 11,000.

Languages: Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: None.

Government Type: Simple tribal monarchy.

Industries: Fishing, pearl-diving, hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Kalakaua (King / Tribal Chief).

Flora and Fauna: The jungle growth found here is typical to tropical rainforests, including bamboo. Fruits include coconuts, papaya, guava, pineapple, bananas, and exotic nuts. Sugarcane, taro, and sweet potatoes are cultivated. Flowers are abundant on the islands, with hibiscus and orchids being the most common. Reptiles (normal and giant) and birds are more common than mammals. Lizards—especially geckos, snakes, and dinosaurs—can be found here. Tropical birds include parrots, macaws, flamingoes, sea birds, chickens, and the nene, a type of goose. The only mammals found are small rodents, wild boars, and dogs. The sea is rich with oysters and other shellfish, and seaweed is plentiful, along with corals of all types. The corals attract many varieties of brilliantly colored fish. The seas also hold turtles, dolphins, whales, crabs (normal and giant), sea snakes, rays, and sharks. Aquatic dinosaurs and other sea monsters plague the waters, as well.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Leadyl Feadiel.

After escaping from the Heldannic stronghold of Stonehaven, I ended up on these pleasant islands, which was a complete reversal from being in a cold stone cell! The friendly people were extremely kind to me, and took me in without hesitation, although they were curious. I spent several years here, working on creating a new spell book, or at least enough of one to get by. It proved impossible to re-write some of the more difficult magics without access to the proper parchments, inks, and other components. Needless to say, it is still a work in progress.

The Land

The Makai are a chain of volcanic islands, which are a virtual paradise! The main island is quite large, with a variety of terrains. From pristine beaches, to rainforest and hills, the island rises to become more mountainous, and is crowned by Mt. Kilethani, an active volcano over 10,000' high. There are plenty of lesser islands, too, all with their own unique charm. It rains here on a daily basis (and in fact, this is how the natives keep track of time), but it is a comfortable rain, and usually not a torrential downpour. The regular rain reminds me of my homeland of Altheim, but this rain seems natural, not conjured by some mighty spell. Occasionally, storms, or even typhoons, will strike the islands, however.

The People

What a pleasant and wonderful people these are! The Makai are a primitive tribe, considered to be Neathar, although they are not anywhere nearly as warlike as those tribes. They are very peaceful, but will fight if threatened. They are amorous and affectionate, displaying their feelings openly, and without shame. Both men (or kane), and women (wahine), wear only breechclouts or skirts, without shirts, or even shoes. Flowers are used to decorate their persons, in their hair, or as necklaces, called leis. The people make their living off of the land, and especially, the sea. They are skilled pearl divers and fishermen, using unusual canoes, called outriggers, to travel the waters. They also gather fruits and nuts from the forests and grow sweet potatoes and taro in small gardens. The root of the taro plant is used to make poi, one of their staples. Personal possessions amongst the Makai are few, and those that they do have seem to be considered tribal property. Items are freely taken (borrowed or stolen) back and forth as needed or desired between tribesmen. And none of them mind at all. This free exchange of property is their natural way of things.

The Makai are ruled over by the ali'i, who are their royalty. They are similar to the chiefs found in other Neathar tribes. Many Immortals seem to be followed by the islanders, but none too fervently. Most are aspects of nature; the dominant ones are Kanaloa (the sea), Pele (a fire goddess), Papa (goddess of love), and Korotiku (this was the only one which I recognized). Priests, called kahuna, lead the people in rituals and give them guidance in religious matters.

Recent History

The Makai are most certainly related to the Jerendi people of the same name. It would seem that these Makai migrated to the Hollow World long ago, rather than the other way around. Their kahuna and other elders recognized some elements of my stories of the surface (such as night, and the moving sun) from their most ancient legends. Apparently they believe that the old world passed away, but that they were spared and brought to the Hollow World.

Don't Miss

These islands are a paradise, and their people are kind and heart-warming. They welcome peaceful travelers with a great feast, or luau. The food, friendship and celebration at such a feast is to be greatly admired!

MALPHEGGI LIZARD MEN (Tribelands of the)

Location: Swamps of Malpheggi, north of the World Spine Mountains, west of the Neathar lands, southeast of the Azcan Empire, continent of Iciria. **HW**

Area: 48,497 sq. mi. (125,605 sq. km.).

Population: 10,000 in clans of about 100 each.

Languages: Malpheggi (Lizard Man).

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Non-lizard folk traveling through the area may have a fee imposed upon them. The fee usually consists of anything that said travelers are carrying that the lizard folk might deem valuable.

Government Type: Autonomous clans led by matriarchs.

Industries: Hunting and gathering; mercenary warfare (scouting).

Important Figures: The Mother of Us All (Matriarch of All of Malpheggi [a mythical figure? Dupac.]).

Flora and Fauna: Cypress, mangrove, willow trees. Sedges, saw grass, pickerel weed, cattails, and bulrush. Giant beetles, giant centipedes, crocodiles, dinosaurs, green dragons, giant fish, leeches (normal and giant), piranhas, purple worms, rats, giant slugs, snakes, giant spiders, giant toads, and giant weasels.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Saasiks (translated by Dupac). [Introduction by Dupac. Ed.]

The senescent lizard men from this land have blood as cold as the peaks of the World Spine. They hire themselves out as mercenaries and guides, helping many of the other peoples in this area to perform raids on their rivals. Many such raids are led against my own people [the Oltecs. Ed.].

The Land

My homeland is wet. Rains come many times a sleep. Only the most hardy of my people survive the challenges within. [It rains in the swamplands of Malpheggi often, sometimes several times in a single sleep. When it is not raining and the red sun shines through the overgrowth, it is hot. Not all of Malpheggi is what you might expect it to be, however. Dupac.]

The wet grasses are where my people meet with the soft skins. The scaleless ones don't seem to mind this area. The black teeth, the soft skins who taste like fire and smoke [I believe that Saasiks is referring to the Azcans. Black teeth is a name given to those who wield obsidian weapons, as the Azcan often do. Dupac.], are especially haughty in this place. Many think they can cross the swamp without our help. They change their minds quickly once they see what Malpheggi is really like. [Many areas that border the swamp can be classified as wet grasslands. Tall grasses dominate the area. The landscape is either crisscrossed by many small streams or dotted with stagnant pools. During dry circles, these areas are often wracked with fires which keep many of the larger plants from gaining a foothold in the area. Dupac.]

Nebertwet regions are sacred to my people. Only the tribal shaman, or those that she selects, may enter here. The nebertwet near my tribe was a thick carpet of yellow flowers. The shaman took me there once when I was younger. I buried her there after she died from the curse. [The nebertwet regions are vast ponds and lettuce lakes choked with surface-covering vegetation. Many of the plants that grow in these areas are covered in a waxy substance that causes them to appear quite dry, even after a heavy rain. Dupac.]

Most things that live in Malpheggi have strong skins. Hard to bite through. [Saasiks seemed unconcerned by many of the pests that normally plague human travelers through the swamp. Insect swarms and rodent infestations gave him little pause. He was more concerned with the animals he deemed worthy of the hunt. Crocodiles, large monitor lizards, and several varieties of swamp-loving dinosaurs. Dupac.]

The People

My people live in small villages within the swamp. Each village is composed of a single tribe ruled by a matriarch. Deep in the swamp is the Mother of Us All, who rules over all of the tribes. Once a year our leaders go into the heart of Malpheggi to meet with her, but I have never seen her. I never shall... now.

The dwellings of my people are diverse. Some are built under the branches of the willows. Some dug into the sides of riverbanks. Others placed near rocky outcroppings.

Hunting is the life blood of the tribe, but we also barter with the soft skins for non-essential goods. In exchange we guide their warriors through the swamp so that they may strike at their enemies. Sometimes we help them with their raids, but the price for that service is high. The soft skins have many enemies, so we know they must be a treacherous breed. They are watched closely whenever they venture near our homelands.

Do Miss

[I would suggest you miss this place altogether. The lizard men are not friendly, and they will not tolerate intruders to their lands... unless of course those intruders intend to pay a premium for a native guide. Dupac.]

MERRY PIRATE SEAS

Location: Equatorial waters of the Atlass Ocean, due west of Iciria. *HW*

Area: 56,811 sq. mi. (147,140 sq. km.), including Island of Baraga, 24,942 sq. mi. (64,600 sq. km.).

Population: 100,000 (90% humans, 10% hin).

Languages: Neathar, Traldar, Thyatian (archaic dialect), Heldannic, various other languages.

Coinage: The eight (8 gp), the triangle (gp), the tenth (sp), the hundredth (cp). Various foreign coins also in wide use.

Taxes: Varies. Examples include port fees for visiting ships, duties, tariffs, excise tax on vessels, income tax, or sales tax. Some islands will have no taxes whatsoever.

Government Type: Anarchic plutocracy; autonomous cities ruled by the wealthiest pirates and ex-pirates.

Industries: Piracy, shipbuilding, fishing, some agriculture, rum production, management of sheep, goats, and some cattle.

Important Figures: Pecco the Black (Pirate-King of Baraga), Handlebar Emilio (Pirate-King of Puerto Morillos and Captain of the Black Raven), Carola the Grappler (Captain of the Leap of Faith).

Flora and Fauna: The islands are home to tropical birds, reptiles (including dinosaurs), and small mammals (especially rodents), plus feral versions of larger animals that have escaped captivity. Fruit trees, grasses, vines, ferns, and agricultural grains and crops all grow on the islands. The fruits found on various islands include pineapple, mango, papaya, and guava. Besides grain, sugar is the most common crop, but produce is also grown; coffee is found on some islands. The seas hold abundant fishing stocks, crabs, dolphins, whales, sharks, rays, aquatic dinosaurs, and even the occasional dragon turtle.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Leadyl Feadiel.

I have been studying the Merry Pirate Seas for some time now, as this has been my home since I left the Makai. In fact, it was a pirate ship, the *Lucky Lass*, under the command of Captain R. Morgan, that brought me from those pleasant islands to the town of Floresque. The pirates are an interesting people, and they have welcomed me, despite the fact that elves are only known to them through their legends. I plan on remaining for at least a few more months before continuing my journey through the Hollow World.

The Land

The Merry Pirate Seas, are not really a land at all, but are an equatorial region of the Atlass Ocean. Nevertheless, there are numerous islands here, which make up the far eastern end of the Anathy Archipelago. The archipelago is formed by the massive mountains of the World's Spine, which circles the entire Hollow World at the equator, entering the deeps of the sea. Many of the islands are quite large, and the soil is good for growing crops or natural vegetation, which is abundant. However, in

addition to the main islands, there are countless smaller islands scattered throughout the seas. These smaller isles range from decent-sized islands that can support small settlements, to islets and even sandbars. The smaller islands are sometimes not even found on the best local charts. Of the greater islands, the largest is the Island of Baraga. Baraga is quite mountainous, and the interior is very rugged and wild. Cool freshwater streams drain down from the mountains to the sea. The lower regions of Baraga are covered in jungle, or are cultivated land. Two pirate cities are located on this main island, Floresque, and the city of Baraga, which is considered the capital of the Merry Pirate Seas. Floresque is an older town of about 5,000, while Baraga is a large, somewhat modern city, of 30,000 inhabitants.

The weather in this region is very pleasant, reminding me of Minrothad, back home. The constant red sun is not overbearing, though, and cool sea breezes make it quite comfortable. In general, the skies are clear or dotted with a few fair weather clouds, but it is not uncommon for fierce storms to sweep the region. The waters themselves are clear and blue. Surprisingly, the seas to the north of the equator are warmer and more tropical than the waters right near the equator. The equatorial waters are cool, but not cold; they also tend to be rich with fish. The warm tropical waters are crystal-clear and are home to a myriad of brilliantly-colored fishes, especially near coral reefs or atolls. I was able to study one of these reefs with the aid of a water breathing spell—quite amazing!

The People

The Merry Pirates are a mixed people, descending from a variety of ethnicities. There are humans of ancient Traldar descent, Thyatians, Ostlanders, and Jerendis, plus people from other surface world and hollow world regions. An eclectic mix, indeed! These humans have, for the most part, intermixed over the centuries, and blended together. However, there are ethnic minorities that remain distinct, such as the buccaneers of Puerto Morillos (Savage Coast descent) or the darker-skinned pirates of Kota-Jayang (from a region of which I have never heard). There is also a sizable hin minority, also believed to have originated from the Jerendi Isles. The method of these peoples' migration to the Hollow World eludes me, but there can be little doubt that they originated on the surface of Mystara. The version of Thyatian spoken here is an ancient dialect, but it is Thyatian, none the same. Some speak it with a distinctive Jerendi accent. The hin speak this accented tongue, and know little, if any, of the Lalor language commonly used in Norwold. The pirates also speak Neathar, which seems to be the "common tongue" of the Hollow World. Walking through a Merry Pirate city can be a lesson in human architectural history. Dwellings range from crude huts, to fine homes made of wood or brick. The more modern styles are the most common, however.

The thing that binds the peoples of the Merry Pirate Seas together, is piracy itself. Piracy is the dominant industry, and the dominant cultural trait of this region. Pirates are nobility here, and their exploits and raids on foreign lands are celebrated like in no other. And celebrate, they do! Taverns and alehouses are filled with boisterous, hard-drinking pirates, all attempting to outdo each other in one way or another. Whether it is who can drink the most, sing the best song, or attract the prettiest girl, everything the pirates do is a competition. And they have fun doing it. Indeed, they do not call them the Merry Pirates for nothing. Mostly, the pirates are men, as a lot of captains have superstitions about women at sea. But, there are women who overcome this bias to join a pirate crew, or even to command their own ship. These are a most individualistic and chaotic people. None of them will even dress alike, there being no clan symbol or insignia to bind them together. Each one dresses in strikingly colorful tunics, sashes, trousers and the like. Footwear ranges from slippers, to high boots, and they wear their

hair in every way imaginable! Everything is a matter of personal choice. Needless to say, some pretty outlandish costumes can be found here.

The pirate individualism is apparent on board their ships, as well. Although the captain is the commander of the ship, many decisions are made by taking a vote, rather than through direct orders. In fact, many captains are elected by their crews, much like it is done for various offices back in Darokin. The most successful and well-liked captains sail under the same crew for many years (or circles, as they say down here), but others are voted out (or worse) if they fail to produce booty. Despite this trend, there are other captains who command in the more traditional manner, or even through sheer terror. This, like everything else in these waters, varies greatly from ship to ship. Each ship has a set of articles, or laws, which outline the rights and responsibilities of each pirate, including the captain. Pirates sign a ship's articles and swear an oath to uphold them when they join a ship's crew. These oaths are taken very seriously by the pirates, and those who break them are dealt with harshly. I will not elaborate on the many varieties of punishments here, but pirates who break their oaths are quite often put to death. This sense of honor extends throughout the Merry Pirate culture, and is applied to many other aspects of life in the seas. All sorts of agreements and contracts, both written and spoken, are used by pirates and landlubbers alike, before business transactions are conducted. The lack of official laws or strong central authority make this necessary, I believe.

Each Merry Pirate city is its own independent state, ruled by a pirate king, or a council of such kings. These kings wield power through the wealth and influence amassed over their careers of piracy. However, although called kings, they are not royalty in the same sense as the king of Altheim is, for example. Instead, they use their vast fortunes to control those around them, put down their enemies, and live lives of decadence. Very little "ruling" of the common people is done, nor is it needed; pirates and landlubbers take care of themselves and their own. Coin flows freely between individuals, with little interference from the "government." I admire freedom, but the lack of controls here can accurately be described as anarchy.

The pirates take to the seas in a variety of vessels. Sometimes galleys or even longships are used, but sailed ships, based on Terendi designs of several centuries past, are by far the most common. Some pirates prefer fast, lightly-armed cutters or sloops, with one mast. Others choose to sail three-masted frigates or barquentines ("bargs"), which can still out-sail a galley while bringing much more artillery to bear. The brigantine, or "brig," is a two-masted vessel which blends maneuverability with a mid-sized battery of artillery, and an adequate cargo hold. Individual modifications and custom designs of these basic ship types are common.

On-board ship, pirates wear little or no armor, and only officers carry weapons larger than daggers. Before engaging an enemy target, all pirates will don full weapons. Favored weapons include the cutlass, rapier, boarding axe, club, and crossbow. There are mages among the Merry Pirates, and it is rumored that some may have wands of fireballs and knowledge of artillery spells, but I have not witnessed this myself. I have not seen these magics cast anywhere else in the Hollow World, ever since my own spell book was stolen from me when I was captured by the Haldannic Knights.

Recent History

There are few historians among the Merry Pirates, which has made it more difficult for me to determine their actual history. As I mentioned previously, the various ethnic groups which make up the pirates have somehow emigrated or been brought to the Hollow World from the surface. The oldest

traditions of the Traldar tell of the “old world’s” destruction, and the other groups also have distorted views of history. There are elements of various legends and tales, especially among the longer-lived hin, that strongly point to outer world origins, perhaps even involving Immortal intervention.

In any event, since arriving in the Hollow World, the pirates have enthusiastically taken to their new home. They have made enemies of their neighbors with their constant raiding. The Milenians, Azcans, Traldar, and Schattenalken all count the Merry Pirates as their enemies. Only the friendly Makai, with whom the pirates frolic and feast, welcome them as friends.

Don't Miss

Baraga, the “capital” of the Merry Pirate Seas, is the most modern city I have seen in the Hollow World. The crafty, old pirate, Pecco the Black, controls this hub of pirate culture. The city is walled and defended by various artillery devices, and the harbor entrance is also protected by sharpened spikes. Ships enter and leave Baraga each sleep. Pirates return from their exploits with treasure to be spent and goods to be sold. The most expensive and luxurious entertainments are found here, along with plenty of the more affordable taverns and sailor’s watering holes. Food, clothing and other wares from all over the Atlass Ocean can be bought in Baraga. Pirates indulge in all sorts of self-gratification and debauchery in this town. The music and drinking never cease, all through the never-ending day. Women dressed in scant attire await arriving ships and seek out the most successful and wealthy pirates. Such practices are not frowned upon, and are even encouraged! This is certainly not Alheim!

Do Miss

Sharkfin Sea lies between Puerto Morillos and Kota-Jayang. This is not the place for a swim, as the waters are infested with ravenous sharks. Pirates greatly fear shipwrecks or falling overboard here.

Another place to be avoided are the islands to the north-west of Kota-Jayang, where it is rumored that the fearsome kara-kara, or “orcs of the sea,” make their abode.

MILENIA (Empire of)

Location: Southwestern coast of the continent of Iciria, east of the Southern Atlass Ocean, north of Lake Agrisa, south of the River Silbius, west of the Jennite lands. **HW**

Area: 400,450 sq. mi. (1,037,165 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000,000 including Corisa (pop. 250,000), Demtor (pop. 75,000), Dophius (pop. 50,000), Emperor's Walk (pop. 30,000), Laroun (pop. 100,000), Tyrnus (pop. 150,000) and numerous towns and villages.

Languages: Milenian (distantly related to Traldar).

Coinage: Platinum emperor (50 gp), gold emperor (10 gp), silver emperor (1 gp), copper emperor (1 sp), platinum medallion (5 gp), gold medallion (gp), silver medallion (sp), copper medallion (cp).

Taxes: 20% income tax, 10% tariff on all goods except food and clothing.

Government Type: Imperial republic; elected senators select emperors for life but no hereditary rule.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, mining, herding (cattle, sheep, goats), horse-breeding, textiles (wool and linen), fishing, shipbuilding.

Important Figures: Adronius (Emperor), Ammethon of Corisa (High Magus), Dagos of Xarda (Lord High Priest), Helentia (Lady High Priest), Myrina (Empress), Pythion of Dophius ("King" of Milenia), Krameos of Tyrnus (Senator), Strabos (Slave and Leader of the Kleonites), Tythus (Lord High General).

Flora and Fauna: Aerial servants, Amorian hounds, Agrisian jellyfish, shaggy aurochs, Zargosian bats, Zargosian changelings, goats, ponies, sheep, basilisks, brown bears, giant beetles, boars, centaurs, chimeras, cockatrices, dragons, dryads, ghouls, cloud giants, storm giants, mountain giants, cyclopskin, griffons, hags, harpies, hell hounds, hippogriffs, hobgoblins, hydras, lions, manticores, medusae, minotaurs, ogres, owlbeats, pegasi, skeletons, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, stirges, treants, trolls, unicorns, wolves, wyverns, and zombies.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, **HW3** The Milenian Empire, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The people of Milenia have created a vast and powerful empire holding the lands between the Atlas Ocean and the Sea of Dr. Milenia is a center of civilization, art, scholarship, and learning, a land revering the Immortals but not in thrall to Them.

The Land

The area inhabited by the Milenians ranges along the coastal areas of the Southern Atlass Ocean, from jungles in the north along the Silbius River to the hills and mountains in the south along Lake Agrisa. Almost any type of terrain can be found within this region, save for deserts, but most of the land are plains tilled as agricultural lands by Milenian farmers and slaves. The Milenian Empire is bordered on the north by the southern spurs of the Twa Mountains, in the south by the Emperor's Rampart and to the east by the Bahl Masib, though the empire is making a strong push to conquer all the way to the rich lands around the Dagol River. The dinosaurs that are found elsewhere throughout

the Hollow World are almost entirely absent from Milenia, due to the diligent efforts of the imperial forces to keep them from rampaging through these lands.

Instead, the countryside is dotted with cities, towns, monuments, and estates. All Milenian communities are protected against barbarian raids with strong stone walls. The common dwellings are of whitewashed mud brick or wood, with tiled or shingled roofs. The more impressive villas and palaces are of marble-dressed stone, with glorious columns and statuary. Paved plazas and agoras serve as markets and meeting places, where political and philosophical matters are discussed.

Most of these communities are built along the shores of the Atlass Ocean, or in the Gulf of Corisa, and on the banks of the rivers that run through Milenia, especially the Dophius River. To the north of this river are the broad Plains of Argos, some of the richest growing lands in Milenia. The river runs out of the large, fog-bound Lake Agrisa. The waters of Lake Agrisa are unusually warm, which causes the fog when the water touches the cold air of the region. Aquatic dinosaurs do swim in the lake, which has also been known to have many unusual disappearances.

Around the northern shores of the lake, the area that is controlled by Milenia, are many forests and hills, including the Great Woods of Drosonai and the Hills of Bachaea. These are given over to pastoralists, herding sheep and cattle, and to hunters. Downstream along the Dophius River, where it empties into the Gulf of Corisa, lies Milenia's greatest city and imperial capital. In the lands around this metropolis there are many temples, shrines, monuments, and estates. The Pelaian Road runs south to Pelai, bracketed on both sides by rich farms, gradually giving way to the Forest of Ppos to the west and the Forest of Isopydos to the east. The city of Pelai sits on a plain between the Emperor's Rampart Mountains and the Strait of Agoras. Just across the straits is the Island of Amora, which has likewise been conquered and settled by the Milenian people.

The People

The inhabitants of Milenia are a cultured, civilized folk, with olive complexions and usually brown hair and eyes, though some are blond or redheaded, and some few have blue eyes. Milenians keep fit and trim through regular exercise, which is popular throughout the empire. This keeps not only their bodies but their minds fit and healthy as well. As a result, athletic competitions are very popular in Milenia, held regularly in most cities. Milenian men wear their hair short, and prefer beards over being shaven like Nithian barbarians, while Milenian women wear their hair long, but up in curls and coils atop their heads rather than unkempt down their backs. The men prefer crisp tunics decorated with dyed motifs, as best as they can afford, while women wear gowns of fine linen, the finer the better if their husbands or fathers are able to afford it.

In Milenia, the men rule while the women are demure and circumspect, keeping to the house and hearth. Women may not own land and do not practice the arts of war or politics, though some become respected clerics and midwives. They do not fight as the over-bold women of other nations sometimes do, though there are some impertinent women who try to break these well-founded customs.

Milenians, alone of all peoples, have given much thought to philosophical matters, and as a result have created a highly evolved civilization, where scholarship is respected and the arts (from statuary and painting to theater) have reached their highest peak of achievement. As a result of our philosophers and the wisdom they have produced, we have created a singular civilization with a highly evolved political process. At the bottom are the slaves, including enslaved Milenians but also Jemites, Tanagoro, Traldar, and Nithians captured in war. But these are not slain like the Jemites do with their captives,

or sacrificed as the Azcans do. Though they are expected to serve their masters loyally, they are accorded protection in the law, to prevent abuse. The Milenians do not permit them to be maimed or slain without cause, and are allowed to have some belongings of their own. Some slaves are quite learned, and are used to tutor children or even adults. Others are entrusted with important tasks. But most, including almost all the outlander slaves, are menial workers, on farm estates or, worst of all, in mines.

Above the slaves are the common Milenians, those who do not own land but who might aspire to. These are free men, the backbone of the empire. They do not vote as they are not citizens, but they serve the empire in its armies and as taxpayers. They hire themselves out as laborers or craftsmen on farms and in businesses, and are the majority of Milenians, and are not bound to any master as such, and can become citizens simply by purchasing property. Some suggest that they should be given citizenship as a body, making even non-property holders citizens, but I do not think this is either necessary or wise.

This is because all those Milenians who own or buy land become citizens, thus giving them a distinction and, even more importantly, a direct stake in the empire as they own part of it. This is a class unlike that of any other nation within the Hollow World, for here the enlightenment of Milenian philosophy shines forth. Citizens participate in political affairs, standing for office and voting for candidates. This means that we do not have an aristocracy based on blood or birth, but rather are able to select the most capable people to run the empire. By this means the leaders of the cities are selected, and the senators of the empire are elected. Those senators in turn elect the emperor and pass laws. The emperor decides the policies of the Milenian people, under the advice of the senate. Thus we have a nation where the people (demos) rule, though the portion who are directly involved in these political matters are only a segment of the Milenian people, we see how different this is from how the Nithians or Azcans decide things. The empire of the Milenians is not ant-like, as the Azcans are, or bound by mystical superstition as the Nithians are.

Don't Miss

The Acropolis in the city of Corisa, an elevated mound surmounted by glorious temples and statuary depicting the Immortals.

NEATHAR (Thousand Tribes of the)

Location: Northern hemisphere of the continent of Iciria, north of the World Spine Mountains, south of the Icebale Mountains, between the Krugel Horde and the Azcan Empire. *HWA*

Area: 712,219 sq. mi. (1,844,645 sq. km.).

Population: 3,000,000 in about three thousand tribes averaging 1,000 members each.

Languages: Neathar.

Coinage: None; barter only.

Taxes: None really (ad hoc tribal levies based on need).

Government Type: Autonomous tribes governed by chiefs with monarchical authority.

Industries: Hunting and gathering.

Important Figures: Zorok (Toralai Chieftain).

Flora and Fauna: As a predominantly jungle region, the Neathar lands see an abundance of conventional native plant and animal life. Without a consolidated government to provide security, hostile creatures are also in abundance. Cave bears, giant insects, boars, great cats, giant lizards, dinosaurs, crocodiles, leopards, tigers, smilodons, giant leeches, lizard men, snakes, giant spiders, troglodytes, wolves, and humanoids can be readily found.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Cheukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Neathar consist of thousands of small tribal bands living as rustics in the woodlands and glades of northern Iciria, in a wide band between the Azcans in the west and the Krugel Horde in the east.

The Land

The lands inhabited by the Neathar tribes are the broadest of lands, larger than the Azcan, Nithian, or even Milenian Empires in size. But the tribes are fragmented and disunited, forming not one nation but many hundreds or even thousands of independent tribes. These tribes live in all types of terrains, except coastal lands and deserts. Most of it is jungle lands, but there are large areas of plains, mountain valleys, and hill country within this band of territory. Several noteworthy rivers run through these lands as well, from a branch of the Great Mud River in the east to the Nogai River in the west. These are well-watered lands, thick with vegetation even in the plains. These lands are also among the thickest with dinosaurs and other monstrosities as well, which hunt and are hunted by the Neathar.

The People

The Neathar are savages, living in tribes of a few hundred to a few thousand members. They do not build large settlements, and live instead in small villages of thatch huts. The Neathar are a tan people, with blond, red, or brown hair and usually with brown eyes. The men cut their hair short and usually go bearded, though some wear mustaches; the women wear their hair long. The Neathar dress in rough garments fashioned out of animal skin, the men dressing in loincloths and the women in skirts and vests. Married women wear earrings, while single women do not.

The Neathar live as hunters and gatherers, little more advanced than the Brute-Men. Each Neathar tribe has its territory, where it dwells and hunts, and fights neighboring tribes for access to prime hunting or lush gathering lands. The Neathar are a warrior people, venerating the hunter and fighter, and, like the Aicans, a boy is not considered a man until he has scored a victory over an enemy. Indeed, one such means is also used to gain a spouse, as the custom of kidnapping a mate from a nearby tribe is found among all the Neathar, and is considered a particularly great achievement. The Neathar do not value scholarship much, and have no written language. Like the Neathar people, their language, shared among all the tribes, is simple and easy to learn. Possibly because of this, their language is widely used throughout the continent for communications between people of different nations.

The Neathar tribes are governed by chiefs, who are almost always men, though there are some exotic tribes where the women rule, and still others where leadership is shared by a married couple. Each village also has tribal priests, and the Neathar venerate many Immortals. The ones most commonly worshipped seem to be the same ones found among the Antalians, however, which I guess is appropriate considering the two peoples share many of the same warrior outlooks on life.

NEATHARM (Kingdom of, a.k.a. Alphatian Neatharum)

Location: Continent of Iciria, west of the Gentle Folk, amid the Neathar lands. **HW**

Area: 95,609 sq. mi. (247,627 sq. km.).

Population: 33,000: 11,000 Alphatians (including 500 gnomes and 500 dwarves) and 22,000 Neathar (Nogai tribe).

Languages: Alphatian (Randellyn dialect, official, and Alatian dialect), Neathar.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

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

Government Type: Semiautonomous monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire (presently under imperial governor administration).

Industries: Military, raiding, agriculture.

Important Figures: Tri kard (King).

Flora and Fauna: As with most jungle environs in the Hollow World, Neatharm 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.

Neatharm 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 Neatharm is rather backward. Regardless, it is an Alphatian kingdom, and the empire's toehold on the terrain below.

The Land

Neatharm is a jungle region on the continent of Iciria. The Alphatian presence has altered the region very little—the Alphatians have only razed certain areas to make room for the capital of Haldemar, the mining town of Dogrel, and a scattering of small farming communities. Though much jungle remains, the wilderness is far less threatening than before. Alphatian troops, mages, and adventurers have all contributed to eradicate any threats from the dinosaurs that once were abundant in the area.

The kingdom is ruled from the capital city of Haldemar. Little more than a town, the capital now boasts stone defensive battlements. Haldemar is the bastion for the kingdom's armed forces. Aside from its regular troops and garrison forces, the capital hosts a complement of fifteen skyships and their crews. The majority of the kingdom's Alphatian and demihuman populace lives within the capital, safely within its defenses.

The People

As its name denotes, Alphatian Neatharum, is made up of two primary peoples. The ruling elite are of course the Alphatians. These Alphatians are troops and colonists sent by Empress Criadna 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 Neatharm 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, Neatharm had been home to the Nogai tribesmen. Quickly subdued by the Alphatians, the Nogai have since seen their position within Neatharm 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 the Hollow World. Until Alphatia's rebirth in AY 2010 [AC 1010. Ed.] Neatharm was alone in a hostile environment. With the rebirth came proclamations from the imperial throne: the Nogai slaves were freed and future Neatharm expansions forbidden. Dogrel struggled at these restrictions, often ignoring them. This led to his removal as King of Neatharm and his being replaced by Gobernoraess Ezeilla in AY 2015 [AC 1015. Ed.]. Dogrel has since been given a commission in the imperial armed forces back on the floating continent.

Under Ezeilla's administration, Neatharm has continued its existence. Peace with neighboring Neathar and coexistence with the Nogai are her crowning achievements and goals. Earlier deficiencies within the Neathar armed forces have been remedied by the appointment of Commander Trihard to oversee the kingdom's military needs. Trihard has since replaced Ezeilla as governor, then has been elevated to kingship by the empress.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

There really aren't a great deal of attractions in Neatharm. The local Neathar are uncouth barbarians and the Alphatians there are lacking the refinements of the Alphatian Continent. As with any jungle the climate is hot and humid, so visitors are encouraged to dress lightly for their own comfort. One could find the varieties of dinosaurs interesting and worthy game. But there are few left

within Neatharm and those that remain are in the far reaches of the kingdom. One could find amazement in the jungles, as their expansiveness is sure to hold some remarkable traits worth seeing. However, like the dinosaurs one will have to go out looking for them.

NITHIA (Empire of)

Location: Southeastern Iciria, west of the Bay of Adoth, north of the Great Southern Shield Mountains, south of Lake Menkor, east of the Plains of Teuz along the River Nithia. **HW**

Area: 687,277 sq. mi. (1,780,045 sq. km.).

Population: 4,000,000 including Tarthis (pop. 350,000), Dashur (pop. 100,000), Hapta (pop. 75,000), Menkara (pop. 200,000), Kanak (pop. 45,000) and numerous towns and villages.

Languages: Nithian, Neathar.

Coinage: Eye (gp), hawk (sp), beetle (cp).

Taxes: Additional corvée labor in the flood season for monument building.

Government Type: Imperial theocratic monarchy (all pharaohs must be clerics).

Industries: Agriculture (rich along the Nithia River), textiles (linen), mining (gold).

Important Figures: Ramose IV (Pharaoh), Al-Belak (Southern King), Djemum (Nomarch of Menkara), Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed (Vizier of Internal Security), Khnemmet-urt (Delta King), Permon (Priest and Vizier).

Flora and Fauna: Among the many monsters and animals are oxen, horses, sheep, goats, giant ants, rock baboons, bandits, giant (scarab) beetles, camels, carrion crawlers, lions, dragons, efreet, gargantua, gargoyles, gelatinous cubes, ghouls, gnolls, lichs, giant lizards, manscorpions, mummies, purple worms, rats, rocs, flame salamanders, scorpions, skeletons, snakes, sphinxes, living statues, stirges, and zombies.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, **HWAR2** Kingdom of Nithia, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Nithians are a city-building folk, a nation of teeming peasants tilling fields along the length of the River Nithia, serving their pharaoh and his priests, rulers of unlimited authority. It is a land where superstition, not philosophy, rules.

The Land

The Nithian Pharaoh, in his arrogance and temerity, claims all the land he or his representatives can see, but we will discuss not these spurious claims but only the actual territory occupied by the Nithians.

This whole land is hot and arid. Therefore, almost all Nithians live along the banks of the river of the same name. This river runs out of the Great Southern Shield Mountains, winding its way north for over a thousand miles until it empties into Lake Menkor. The Kingdom of Nithia is the gift of the River Nithia, as were it not for this river and the fertility it brings to the valley, the kingdom would be as dry and inhospitable as the wastelands to either side of it. Irrigation canals are dug out from the river by the Nithians on either bank, making it possible for them to water their crops.

But the river, which floods twice a year and thus waters the lands along its bank, makes settlement here possible. The Nithians till the lands made rich and fertile by the river, and build large cities along its length. The northern part of Nithia, where the river broadens out into a delta, is a region of broader fertility still, fed by rains sweeping off of Lake Menkor. Here are not only farmlands, but also lands

for herdsmen and shepherds as well. This area forms the Delta Kingdom of Nithia, while the region upriver along the banks of the river forms the Southern Kingdom of Nithia.

To each side of the area made fertile by the River Nithia are wastelands and deserts, where the cruel wind blows hot and dry, but in many areas flat and hard-baked, allowing the Nithians to range across them in their chariots. The wind scours the sand, and sometimes, eerily, seems to sculpt it into fantastic shapes, like beings or creatures, which it is said that some of the Nithian adepts can manipulate as golems.

In this region also there are, however, vast badlands full of rocky, broken terrain and blighted box canyons with walls of clay and rock, where mesa-like rock formations seem to rise in the shape of a natural pyramid. Many wealthy Nithians have their tombs built out in these regions, and tomb robbers and other bandits are a danger to the unwary here.

In the east this country eventually ends at the mountains known as Pflarr's Wall, while in the west it gradually becomes less arid, until the steppes and plains of the Jennites are reached.

The People

The Nithians are a short, dusky-skinned people with dark hair and eyes. The men cut their hair short, and are beardless, while the women wear their hair long, but often they wear elaborate wigs. Most men wear nothing but a loincloth or skirt-like garment, while the women wear linen dresses. Some palace slaves of both sexes are dressed in nothing but a belt. Wealthy Nithians also wear garments of fine cotton or linen, often very sheer and transparent, or dyed in bright colors.

Nithia is ruled by an absolute ruler, who is called pharaoh, whom the Nithians obey as if he were an Immortal, which he claims to be. Under him are two kings, one administering the Delta Kingdom and the other the Southern Kingdom. All Nithians live to serve their Immortals and their pharaoh, whom are considered one and the same, and are ruled through a vast bureaucracy of priest-scribes and noble functionaries known as nomarchs, all of whom ultimately obey the wishes of the pharaoh. Thus the Nithians are governed almost as minutely as the Azcans, and all life in Nithia centers around the pharaoh and his religious apparatus, the priesthood of the Nithian Immortals. Even Nithian artists work in groups, and seem to have no individuality themselves, but work collectively and produce objects, venerating their pharaoh or the Immortals, which look like they were made by one person.

Under the rule of this administration are the Nithian people, their commoner landowners, the peasants who are bound to the land they work or the business they serve, and the slaves. The slaves are divided into two categories, one being war prisoners and captives, who as non-Nithians are considered barely human. The other are the hereditary slaves, which may be house servants and are treated better than the captive slaves.

Average Nithians live in flat-roofed, one-story houses made of sun-baked clay or rough stone coated in hardened mud. They are designed to let breezes through, which keeps the house from being too hot but which also blows dust throughout the structure. Thus, during windy seasons, Nithians prefer to sleep on the roof of their house, under a covering to shield them from the sun, rather than in the house itself. Most of these houses are sparsely furnished, and only the wealthy have tables or chairs, most people making do with reed mats or benches made out of rock or hardened mud. But almost every home has at least one chest in which the people can store their belongings.

The wealthier Nithians have access to various household magics, which keep them in comfort but can also make them soft and indolent, as they are served by not only slaves but have common tasks done for them by magic rather than by diligence.

The Nithians have several cities, but there is no civic life as the Milenians know it, with politics and policy discussed among the people. Instead, the cities of the Nithians revolve around the temples of their Immortals, and upon constructing huge monuments to them and their pharaohs. Nithia abounds in monuments of all types, which are quite wondrous to behold. These range from the palaces of the pharaoh, the kings, the nomarchs, and prominent priests, to the famous pyramids. Obelisks and huge statues are also commonplace, and Nithian society seems dedicated to creating these impressive monuments. Work on them is usually done during the flood seasons, when the river is high, so the farmers, who are not working their lands then, can be directed by the pharaoh's ministers to move stone and work on these structures. Large barges, including hover barges, are also used to move stone up and down river for this purpose. Nithia rivals Milenia in the number of its monuments and artistic buildings, and outdoes Milenia in the sheer scale of these projects, though I believe Milenia has more artistic refinement and realism in its own, and more individuality is expressed in Milenian art and architecture.

OLTECS (Kingdom of the)

Location: North central World Spine Mountains, continent of Iciria, south of the Neathar lands, west of the Kogolor dwarves, east of the Schattenalken. **HW**

Area: 110,851 sq. mi. (287,105 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000 including Manac (pop. 25,000) and several other towns.

Languages: Oltec, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Levies in kind of goods and corvée labor.

Government Type: Loose monarchy with heavy theocratic influence.

Industries: Agriculture (especially corn), herding (sheep, goats).

Important Figures: Monpac the Sunwatcher (King).

Flora and Fauna: Mountain vegetation, aspen and evergreens, underbrush of various kinds, black bears, panthers, smilodons, dinosaurs, hill giants, giant lizards, mountain giants, ogres, pterosaurs, snakes, stirges, and yeti.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Oltecs are a people living in mountaintop communities, of superficial aspect they are similar to the Azcans, but their culture is unique.

The Land

The Oltecs live in the forested foothills of the World Spine Mountains, just south of the jungles of the Neathar. The Manac River runs through the heart of the Oltec lands, and the capital of the Oltecs, a city of the same name, is built on hills overlooking this river. These hills are rich in gold and copper, and this provides the Oltecs with a means of trading with the Kogolor dwarves, with whom they exchange copper for tin, so that they can forge bronze.

The Oltecs have carved their hillsides into ledges and steps upon which they plant their crops. This style of agriculture is unique to the Oltecs, but it is also uniquely suited for this hilly region. The hills here, like those of the Kogolor dwarves and the Schattenalken, are riddled with caves and caverns going deep into the earth. There are also many canyons and crevasses where the Oltecs can find safety from rampaging dinosaurs.

The Oltecs have marked their territories with huge heads of carved stone. These they place around their cities and towns, which are always built on hilltops as Acropolis. They build walls all around their cities and villages, made of rough, squarish stone, shaped and fitted together so that they stand without needing mortar, and indeed they are fitted so carefully and precisely that one cannot slip a knife-blade between them. Outside the walls deep ditches are dug, and lookout towers are constructed to overlook the valleys below, as the Oltecs have to be constantly vigilant against the attacks of their enemies, the Azcans and the Schattenalken.

The People

The Oltecs look a lot like the Azcans, being a copper-skinned people with dark hair and eyes. Both men and women wear their hair long, the men binding it with decorated headbands while the women wear it in ponytails or bind it up with combs. The Oltecs wear shift-like tunics, often belted, of dull tan (though the wealthier sometimes dye it in brighter colors).

Indeed, the Oltec language is akin to the Azcan language, as if they were once one people, though the Oltecs' dialect is less harsh-sounding to the ear. But other than these similarities, the Oltecs are a very different people from the Azcans. They worship the Immortals Otzitiotl, the Sun-Prince, and Kalaktatla, the Amber Serpent, rather than the Immortals of the Azcans. They have a king, who is called The Oltec, but he does not govern as ruthlessly over the Oltec people as the Azcan ruler does, but rather governs them in a light manner, more akin to how the king of the Kogolor dwarves rules. A hereditary prince, who likewise rules leniently, governs each Oltec town and village. Oltec warriors are skilled, but their nation is not a militarized one like that of the Azcans, and they are not interested in conquering their neighbors. Indeed, the Oltecs greet visitors in a peaceable and friendly manner. The Oltecs are a simple people, who enjoy dancing and storytelling but aren't sophisticated in theater and music. It is indeed a tranquil, but somewhat boring land, unless you find the occasional Azcan or Schattenalken raid exciting.

SCHATTENALFEN (Kingdom of the)

Location: Northwestern World Spine Mountains, continent of Iciria, south of the Azcan Empire, west of the Oltecs, east of the Traldar. **HW**

Area: 175,976 sq. mi. (455,780 sq. km.). This area does not take into account the large area that was conquered from the Azcans since the religious war in that kingdom.

Population: 600,000, including Issarthyl (pop. 60,000) and several other towns.

Languages: Elvish (Schattenalfen dialect, similar to the Shadow Elven dialect).

Coinage: Mountain (gp), pyramid (sp), stone (cp).

Taxes: 10% tithe in coin, 15% tariff on all goods, 10% toll on commodities transported through the kingdom, plus levies in kind, surtaxes, and corvée labor based on need.

Government Type: Theocratic monarchy; kings and queens must be priests of Atzanteotl.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, mining.

Important Figures: Catriata (Queen), Caryldian (General).

Flora and Fauna: Basilisks, bats, black bears, brown bears, giant beetles, beholders, black puddings, carrion crawlers, mountain lions, smilodons, giant centipedes, chimeras, dinosaurs, dragons, gelatinous cubes, stone giants, hill giants, gray oozes, green slimes, giant lizards, ochre jellies, pterosaurs, purple worms, rats, trolls, giant weasels, yellow molds.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Moctipotec.

The Divine Atzanteotl, who brings all blessings upon His people, bade me to describe the lands and people that have been sanctified through appropriate and necessary sacrifices in His honor to the outlander world. Wretched apostates and infidel savages have too long used insidious deceits to distort the record of our people and make their invidious hostility to us seem honorable. These vulgar barbarians have used their deceptive propaganda to attempt to confuse the gullible into believing their actions have been appropriate. But they have been the ones to take that which is not theirs by invasion, and they are the despicable ones who have forsaken faith and betrayed us, their former brothers. These renegades and, more recently, the northern savages, were turned by twisted guile and their own ignorant superstitious nature to follow other, darker Immortals who have promised them such rewards—rewards seized and expropriated from the righteous ones. The unrighteous betrayers claim these things by force and guile, while casting aspersions upon we who are honest in our beliefs and actions. We have, through all these trials, cleaved to our faith in spite of the tempters and deceiver Immortals. Atzanteotl has decreed that it is time to counter their lies with our truth, to bring enlightenment even to rustics such as yourselves, so that there might be some chance of comprehension. Thankfully, arrangements were made so that my text could be transported to you without having to taint myself in the presence of outlanders and savages who haven't been prepared for the sacred altar.

So, that out of the way, let me describe the sacred lands and people of Atzanteotl, so that you may learn in awed rapture of our accomplishments in the face of the impositions of the savages and the trials imposed by those elves which betrayed us.

The Land

Our lands are the most blessed in the world, the bounty provided by the grace of Atzanteotl, who led His chosen people to this spot. Here beneath the World Spine Mountains is a wealth of natural resources untold in all the world, vast caverns in which we repose, even baster caverns where all manner of approved, sanctified foods are grown, and mines filled with seemingly inexhaustible veins of metals and gems of all sorts. Through tunnels we also have access to the surface at need, the ability to engage in the Holy Work of smiting the barbarous savages that surround us, whose wicked and nefarious ways cause righteous indignation among those who follow the Code of Atzanteotl. We even wreak Holy vengeance against the misbegotten and profane shadow elves that spurned the True Path and were willfully beguiled by the False and Nefarious doctrines of the evil Katiel, to the point that they expose their own children to death and drive their wisest elders from their midst by means of sacrificing to his insatiable blood-lust. Rumors you may have heard that these creatures of darkness defeated us were, of course, overblown—false rumors spread by their silver-tongued propagandists in order to delude simple but well-meaning folk into trusting them. Their guile is boundless, outdone only by their capacity for deceit and treachery. I give you warning of this, as token of our benevolence. But, nay—we were not defeated. Our punitive expedition against them served its purpose, to show that their dark Immortal cannot protect them from righteous wrath, and perhaps by such lessons they will learn the fallacies of their way, and return to the true path and guidance of the Righteous One, Atzanteotl.

The People

We are a simple, but civilized folk, well-meaning but surrounded by a host of enemies, which covet the bounties that Atzanteotl has bestowed upon us, His chosen people. Thus, against our peace-loving natures, we are forced to arm ourselves and each of us must, by necessity, fight in His name against these savages who would seek to destroy us. We must also, of course, as right-thinking folk, do our utmost to push back the hordes of barbarism and heathen infidelity, especially those of the crude and wicked apostate Azcans, whose flighty ignorance is an offense to proper sensibilities. Thus, we are the sort of people who take up the heavy burden of fighting to bring the light of truth and benevolence to the world, a burden we bear willingly in the name of our Holy Guide, Atzanteotl, our hearts fortified knowing that one day our might will make the world right. We conduct our ceremonies in complete darkness to remind ourselves of the darkness in the world around us, and we cannot live in light until the darkness is driven back from the entire world. We do not ask for your thanks, but your respect is owed to us. While the land-grabbing and invidious shadow elves, having defiled and debased nature by their very presence in the Canolbarth, are winning through cunning deception and guile the sympathy of many easily misled surface dwellers, it is we, the Schattenalken who follow the True Faith of Atzanteotl, who fight their nefariousness. The invidious shadow elves—called such because of the shadow of darkness that shrouds their hearts—have even illicitly seized the Holy City of Blessed Atzanteotl, corrupting it with their vile presence and filling its streets with blood by the massacres they perpetrated there against anyone who dared appear. Foolish people are sympathetic for them, and are willing to believe the lies they spread about my people. If you allow yourselves to be misled into darkness by such, then we shall be forced to smite you down as well, for your own good, as we cleanse the world of all the savage, barbarous, heathen races.

Don't Miss

Glorious Issarthyl contains at its center the great pyramid shrine to Atzanteotl, in the midst of a vast plaza where His most holy priests conduct His religious rites, surrounded by still more temples to Him (we are a very pious people), and by the royal palace grounds. The pyramid itself is a wonder of holy architecture, with frescoes on all sides and topped by a large altar, where the high priest conducts rights honoring Him, attended by acolytes. Should you have the distinct honor of being captured by our warriors in battle and being among those chosen to participate in these ceremonies, you may well see the altar up close. Consider such a role an honor, as you will be doing your part to help us in our Sacred Task. [This is this correspondent's opinion, not an advice from the editors of the Mystaran Almanac. We preferred to warn our dear readers before too many of you ended up being sacrificed. The suggestion of the editors is that you stay away from the Schattenalken, and especially from their altars. Ed.]

SELHOMARR (Empire of)

Location: Continent of Suridal, western regions. *HW*

Area: 256,410 sq. mi. (664,100 sq. km.), including Harnnian Autonomous Region, otherwise area is 248,094 sq. mi. (642,255 sq. km.).

Population: 5,000,000, including the capital, Calinnis (pop. 350,000).

Languages: Lhomarrian (official), Harnnian, Neathar.

Coinage: Various denominations of the alin, corresponding to cp (1 alin), sp (10 alinni), gp (100 alinni), and pp (1,000 alinni).

Taxes: 25% of yearly earnings, and 10% of estimated land value collected yearly on Gallotar 27 (corresponding to Kaldmont 27).

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy; regional nobility has considerable power.

Industries: Agriculture (Selhomarr's climate ensures there is almost always a surplus for export), common spices, fishing, leatherworking, mining (copper, silver, and tin mines), woodworking.

Important Figures: Tamaris (Emperor), Dinaria (Empress), Gallos the Aged (Respected Philosopher and Historian), Mirinasi (High Emissary), Thessia (High Priestess).

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 Korboris Forest is populated by hardy stands of oak, ironwood, and yew.

In terms of animal life, Selhomarr is equally blessed. Herds of aurochs and buffalo roam the Plains of Aymira, while foxes, wolves, birds, giant rats, deer, and other beasts make the forests their home. In the swampy regions, insects of all sorts buzz about, as snakes slither about their business. Also common in the region are monsters known to inhabit temperate zones, such as giant ants, giant bees, displacer beasts, dragons, griffons, hydras, owlbears, pegasi, purple worms, rocs, various undead, and other beasts, as well as such bizarre plants as grab grass, strangle vines, vampire roses, and whip weed.

Further Reading: The Empire of Selhomarr by Geoff Gander, previous almanacs.

Description by Taleris, son of Trestian.

I am happy to present to you a glimpse of the wondrous Empire of Selhomarr, the center of an ancient culture that has existed on Suridal for almost as long as our people have been recording history. As a member of the Lighthouse community, I was approached by others to share some basic

information about my land, which, because of its location, has relatively little to do with events on the main continent of Iciria.

The Land

Selhomarr is a temperate land located on the fertile western shores of the continent of Suridal, centered around the Bay of Lokam. It is bounded by mountains to the southeast and to the north, and forests to the east. It is broken up into three pieces: the northern shore of the Bay of Lokam, the eastern reaches and the city of Annurios, and finally the southern portion, which makes up the bulk of Selhomarr's landmass.

Having been settled for a very long time, much of Selhomarr is currently being farmed, or otherwise supporting a vast network of cities, towns, and villages, all connected by paved roads, save for those outlying regions. Where regions do not receive enough rain, complex networks of irrigation canals and ditches have been dug, and several cities and towns have aqueducts leading down from the hills and mountains, supplying them with all the water they need. Despite this fact, though, there are still many areas of the empire, mainly towards the south and east, that remain untamed. In some places, particularly along the hinterlands of the Forest of Garithor, small fortresses and towers have been built, to protect nearby communities from what lurks beyond the settled regions.

The People

The first thing that must be remembered about Selhomarr is that, unlike many other nations, it has more than one distinct people living within its borders. By far the most numerous group is the Lhomarrian people, of which I am a member. It was us who built much of the empire, and named it Selhomarr, which literally means "New Lhomarr," or "New Land of the Sea." The bulk of our armies are Lhomarrian in origin, as are most of our administrators. The other, much smaller, group consists of the Ilarnnians, who are a different people entirely. Most Ilarnnians live in the Ilarnnian Autonomous Region, a nation within a nation in which they constitute the majority, and in which they follow their own laws and speak their own language. The people of Selhomarr overall are a peaceful and prosperous lot; they enjoy a hard day's work and give their best effort to everything they do. They are a people of explorers, warriors, and philosophers, whose inquisitive nature has taken them all over the Hollow World. Their towns and cities are clean and orderly, and their stone buildings are gracefully decorated with bright frescoes of beautiful scenes.

Though it may seem that all people do in Selhomarr is work and attend to their duties, this is not so. We also love to sing, dance, indulge in sports—especially in the venerable game of dillianath, among the Lhomarrians—, tell tall tales, and enjoy great feasts. All the people of Selhomarr, especially the Lhomarrians, look for opportunities to celebrate something, whether it is a good harvest, a birth, a marriage, or a great personal accomplishment. While the Lhomarrians tend to be open to others, as well as sociable, the Ilarnnians are far more reserved, and their celebrations tend to be more restrained. They are far less open to outsiders, though not hostile to them, and many prefer the company of their own people. It is said that many Ilarnnians see themselves as far more refined than their more numerous Lhomarrian neighbors, though I personally have not run into anyone expressing this opinion.

Among the Lhomarrians themselves there are several sub-groups, each of which has its own traditions and customs, and its own outlook on life. Despite these differences, most citizens of Selhomarr consider themselves Selhomarrians first.

The people of Selhomarr are rather fair-minded in comparison to other peoples. We do not practice slavery, nor do we impose cruel punishments for minor crimes. In our society, both men and women are accorded the same respect and the same rights, though each gender has certain responsibilities not shared by the other. Though not perfect by any means, the society of Selhomarr is, in my opinion, considerably more enlightened than many others.

Finally, the people of Selhomarr are united by their faith in Xeron, the one true Immortal. Xeron is the force behind the eternal sun, and He is the one who created this world so long ago. It was by His mercy that we were brought to this new world, and it is under His protection that we grow strong as a nation. Though other Immortals do exist, they are as faded shadows to the might of Xeron, who is known by some other peoples as Ixion.

Recent History

The Empire of Selhomarr has existed peacefully on Suridal for thousands of years, interacting with its neighbors through trade and diplomatic contacts on a relatively frequent basis. This was not always so, however. Our legends tell of a time, now lost in the ages, when our people fought against a great menace, foul lizard-like beings who lived only for destruction and suffering. It was a time of great heroes and great deeds, but also of tragedy, for in the dying days of that age our old world was destroyed, and only by the grace of Xeron, our patron Immortal, were we brought here to begin anew.

During the long years since then, Selhomarr has grown and prospered, developing ties with the other nations of this world that wish them, and exploring the many strange lands that lie here. There have been conflicts with the Antalians to the north, and with the Krugel Orcs and the Azcans of Iciria, but on the whole Selhomarr has maintained peaceful relations with every people it has met. So it has been for many centuries—a period of slow and steady growth.

More recently, domestic events have taken a turn for the worse. Three circles past a great fire arose in our central plains, devastating many villages and forcing many to go hungry, as our crops were reduced to ashes in the blaze. Only now, as we have begun to recover, a militant group of Ilarnnians grows restive in the north, demanding a homeland of its own. Making matters worse, the normally peaceful dragons who inhabit the mountain ranges that gird our homeland have become far more aggressive, and on one occasion last year a great red wyrm flew out of its lair and did great damage to the cities of Rethnaris and Dirdassos.

Despite this tumult, our empire was nonetheless able to preserve some of Xeron's light in the world. Not long ago [AC 1015. Ed.], our clerics received a summons from our patron Immortal Himself, urging His followers to do battle against the growing darkness taking root in Nithia. With stalwart hearts our armies sailed forth for our nearest neighbor, and there they made account of themselves, liberating large stretches of territory, and helping to place the rightful Nithian Pharaoh on the throne (though it is said the Nithian Immortals themselves made known their support of him). In the following cycle, our men came home as heroes. This was the first time in recorded history that our empire has involved itself directly in the affairs of another nation—something which we have normally been very reluctant to do. Even stranger than this, however, was the arrival to our fair land of the Alphatians, clearly a people of great magical power, for they rode the clouds as we would the seas! Their leader, Adath, was a personable man of integrity, but the magics these larar [foreigners. Ed.] wield are most formidable—Adath and his men were able to challenge and defeat a red dragon with

their power, or so it is said. If this tale be true, then these Alphasians should surely be watched closely, so that their true intent might be known.

Clearly, as the venerable Gallos the Aged is wont to say, "Selhomarr is entering uncertain times, the likes of which have not been seen in all our people's recorded history."

Don't Miss

Selhomarr has more than its share of sights to see! The capital, Calimnis, is a notable site in itself, with its long series of canals spreading like a spider's web throughout the city, and its ancient, well-decorated buildings represent the various building styles that can be found throughout the nation. With its many boulevards and squares, and its vibrant inhabitants, Calimnis is a place that must be seen!

Within the city itself, the Great Temple of Xeron and the Imperial Palace are architectural feats in themselves, and both house a wealth of information on the history of the peoples of Selhomarr, as well as many artifacts from the distant past. Both buildings stand across from each other in the main plaza, and their graceful spires are visible above all other buildings in the city.

Also notable is the Imperial Map Collection, located at the Imperial Museum of Antiquities, which houses one of the most complete and accurate maps of the coastal regions of the Hollow World, as well as a well-preserved map of Old Lhomarr that was brought to this world millennia ago. For those seeking to learn more of this world, almost all the geographical information one might need is contained therein.

Another interesting place is the Great Forest of Marinnir, with its wondrous dillianora trees, which are found nowhere else in the world. In these lands the locals pick the silvery berries of these beautiful trees, and with them make the renowned cakes, potions, ointments, and breads known all over Selhomarr for their quality. It is said that a traveler can walk for great distances, and go for long periods without food, by subsisting only on the slightest portion of the legendary foods and drinks made from this rare berry. Though the process of making these foods is a secret, the sheer beauty of the landscape, and the hospitality of the people, make this place well worth the visit.

Finally, no visit to Selhomarr would be complete without a tour of the lovely city of Dirdassos, where visitors can sample the wonders of Ilarnnian culture, such as the legendary performances of the tale-weavers, whose graceful moves can recite whole epics without the aid of words.

Do Miss

While the heartland of Selhomarr is quite safe due to long periods of settlement, there are still regions of the empire that should be avoided if at all possible. First, the many mountain ranges that gird much of the nation house wild beasts of all sorts, including red dragons and griffons. Not for nothing do we regularly patrol these borderlands to ensure that nothing does harm to our citizenry.

Another region the unwary should avoid are the treacherous Bogs of Disania. For as long as our history has been documented, this fetid land has always resisted attempts at settlement. Those who venture within rarely return, and those who do come back tell tales of undead, and worse, roaming about. It is also known that a great black dragon makes its home within the bogs, said to guard a treasure hoard of incredible wealth. Many a would-be treasure hunter has gone in search of the beast, only to meet with sorrow.

The Forest of Garithor is also known to house dangers. There have been numerous sightings of green dragons flying over the trees, and many travelers have been mauled by owlbears, displacer beasts, and their ilk.

SHAHJAPUR (Kingdom of)

Location: The largest island of the Anathy Archipelago, between the continent of Jomphur and the Merry Pirates. *HWA*

Area: 80,000 sq. mi. (207,200 sq. km.).

Population: 2,500,000 including Dharsatra (pop. 450,000) and the capital of Antha (pop. 200,000) and numerous other towns and villages.

Languages: Sindhi.

Coinage: Guru (platinum piece, 25gp), rupee (gold, 5gp), bhani (electrum, 1gp), khundar (sp), piaster (cp).

Taxes: Legalized plunder: tax farmers contracted to send a specified sum to the central treasury, and keep whatever they take beyond that sum as their pay.

Government Type: Military monarchy heavily influenced by theocratic gurus.

Industries: Agriculture, textiles (especially silk), tea, spices, teak, incense, mining.

Important Figures: Koriktodeva Rava (Grand Mogul).

Flora and Fauna: Teak, bamboo, broadleaf foliage. Tigers, crocodiles, wild dogs, elephants, baboons, mongooses, cranes, snakes of many varieties, water buffalo.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, *HWA3 Nightstorm*, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Shahjapuri inhabit an island realm, and are noted for the rigidity of their social classes and the extreme poverty of the commoners combined with the wealth and power of the rulers. They are a priest and cult-ridden society, a theocracy like that of Nithia.

The Land

Shahjapur is an island nation, but not a seafaring one. This kingdom covers the largest island in the Anathy Chain, an equatorial island lush with vegetation. It has a mountainous interior, but with high plateaus rather than sharp peaks. The lowlands are rich in tropical forest and jungle and grassy plains. The forests consist of bamboo and teak, as well as underbrush. This jungle nears the sea in many areas, but other coastal zones consist of salt bogs where nothing grows. Shahjapur is crisscrossed with a network of rivers and streams to a greater extent than even the lands of the Azcans, though the Shahjapuri do not make as much use of it for transport. Still, they do use small boats and river barges in some areas. The streams are instead lined with rice paddies, orchards, and fields of millet and jute. The lushness of this land allows the Shahjapuri to, if barely, grow enough food to support their large population.

About three fourths of the year, Shahjapuri is sunny and hot. Just as it seems about to dry the land out into a parched desert, it starts to rain. This rainy season lasts throughout the winter period, and occasionally fierce storms will lash the land and seem to nearly flood it. There are some rocky deserts in the interior of the country where this rain does not reach, however.

The People

The Shahjapuri are dusky-skinned natives, slightly lighter skinned than the Nithians, with black hair and eyes. Most Shahjapuri are very thin, starving wretches. Wealthy Shahjapuri are more robust, with physiques like that of the Azcans. Most Shahjapuri wear very little—cotton nappies or simple wraps around their groin, but the richer persons wear fine, colorfully dyed garments of silk.

Most Shahjapuri lead constricted lives, rarely venturing outside of their own neighborhoods or thinking much about philosophical matters (the exception being the samdus and priests). Few leave their communities, except once or twice in their lifetimes for a religious pilgrimage, and discussion of civic and political matters is not engaged in (for this reason, they rank as barbarians, along with the Nithians and the Azcans, other nations that have no civic life). The Shahjapuri are organized into a rigid social hierarchy, their caste system. Priests are on the top, followed by the rulers of the land and their administrators and soldiers, then the landowners, merchants, and craftsmen form their own caste, followed by the common laborers. Forming another layer of society, not officially considered a caste but in effect suborned below them all, are the untouchables, the unclean ones who are limited to doing the worst jobs and relegated to living in filthy shantytowns outside the cities. These can never interact directly with those of a higher caste. But the Shahjapuri at least know the proper role of women in society, keeping them in the home and performing female tasks.

Shahjapuri cities consist of a multitude of humble abodes, but also some splendid architecture. Temples and palaces and the abodes of the wealthy generally have spires and arches, as well as globular or onion-shaped domes that are a wonder to behold. Their visual arts and paintings are almost as good as those of even the Milenians, illustrations of great realism and beauty.

The kingdom is ruled by a king known as the grand mogul, whose authority is nearly absolute, considered second only to the priests', who keep themselves to spiritual matters, however, leaving the political sphere to the grand mogul and the other moguls. Thus, the power of the grand mogul is unchallenged and unlimited. The kingdom is divided into provinces or districts governed by a mogul, and the noble hierarchy of Shahjapur is very systematic, based on providing a specified number of soldiers. Shahjapur's system of taxation is particularly vile; tax farmers, known as darmani (hyenas) are contracted to deliver a specified sum to the treasury, and are "paid" by allowing them to keep whatever they collect beyond that specified sum. This system is, of course, very abusive and kleptocratic.

TANAGORO (Kingdom of the)

Location: South central plains and forests of Iciria, south of the World Spine Mountains, west of Nithia, east of the Twa Mountain Range, north of the Jennites. *HW*

Area: 243,873 sq. mi. (631,630 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000 scattered among a thousand or so villages.

Languages: Tanagoro.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Levies in kind of goods and corvée labor as decided by village elders.

Government Type: Loose monarchy; most decisions made by village chiefs.

Industries: Agriculture, herding (cattle).

Important Figures: Korolo Togoro (King).

Flora and Fauna: Aurochs, giant beetles, boars, bugbears, lions, cheetahs, smilodons, cyclops, dinosaurs, elephants, griffons, giant lizards, manscorpions, manticores, medusas, minotaurs, mummies, pterosaurs, giant scorpions, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, giant apes.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Tanagoro are a plains- and jungle-dwelling folk, a warrior race of surprisingly astute and skillful storytellers.

The Land

The Tanagoro live in a vast stretch of plains (which they share and fight over with the Jennites) and jungle (which they hold on their own), running in a long band parallel to the World Spine Mountains between the Twa Mountain Range in the west to the deserts of Nithia in the east. The plains are hot, savanna-like, watered just enough to keep the grasses growing that support the herds of aurochs (and the dinosaurs that roam the region eating them, the grasses, and each other). It rains more in the north and west, thus resulting in the jungle lands of rainforests. Several rivers run through this region, interspersed with hills, with hills likewise running along the northern edge of the plains themselves.

The People

The Tanagoro are a dark-skinned people, darker than any other race, with tightly curled black hair and dark eyes. They are tall, lean men, who wear little more than loincloths of linen or even animal skin. They are, however, a skilled people, farming the plains and herding aurochs, and they are crafty warriors. But they are a tribal people, living in small villages, in huts made out of thatch.

Their culture is simple and unsophisticated, devoted to herding and farming and praying to their Immortals. The Tanagoro men rule and hunt, while the women farm and keep the home. But both fight and one cannot say that they do not excel in the arts of war, for many a time they have successfully thwarted attempts to subdue them. But they have no central leadership or sense of unity, and this shall be their downfall.

TRALDAR (Kingdoms of the)

Location: Western spur of the World Spine Mountains, continent of Iciria, large peninsula between the Southern Atlas Ocean and the Gulf of Aztlan, west of the Schattenalfen, east of the Merry Pirate islands. *HW*

Area: 84,524 sq. mi. (218,915 sq. km.).

Population: 500,000 in several independent kingdoms, each centered on one town averaging 5,000 residents.

Languages: Traldar, Milenian, Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Levies in kind of goods and corvée labor as determined by kings.

Government Type: Autonomous and fractious monarchies in a loose alliance.

Industries: Agriculture, herding (sheep, goats, cattle), mining, fishing, piracy.

Important Figures: Tiradon (King of Corescos).

Flora and Fauna: Black bears, brown bears, beholders, boars, bugbears, lions, smilodons, centaurs, chimeras, cockatrices, giant crabs, cyclopskin, dinosaurs, dolphins, dragons, dragon turtles, dryads, gargoyles, hill giants, stone giants, cloud giants, storm giants, mountain giants, gnolls, gorgons, griffons, hags, harpies, hippogriffs, hydras, liches, giant lizards, manticores, medusas, mermen, minotaurs, pegasi, phoenix, pterosaurs, rocs, skeletons, snakes, sphinxes, giant spiders, unicorns, wolves, zombies and especially rabbits.

Further Reading: Hollow World boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Theukidikies the Historian of Corisa.

The Traldar share some things in common with the civilized Milenians, but they are a feuding and squabbling people, who spend their time stealing chickens and raiding their neighbors rather than asking questions about the mysteries of the cosmos.

The Land

The Traldar live in rugged, forested mountains along a series of peninsulas that jut, like stubby fingers, into the Atlass Ocean, marking the western end of the World Spine Range and bifurcating the Atlass Ocean between north and south. Despite their equatorial location, the weather is cool and temperate, moderated by both the mountains and winds blowing in off of the sea. The lands are not fertile like those of Milenia, but are adequate for the crops and olive groves of the Traldar and for their herds of sheep and goats, and the fishing in the surrounding seas is good.

Though the region is small, its meandering coastline means it has a long seashore, and most Traldar cities are located near it (though often a few miles from it, with a satellite port village—a legacy of their experience with and as pirates). The main town is usually located on a hill nearby, with a walled palace and temple area at the summit and the town surrounding it also walled.

The People

The Traldar people look like Milenians, but with slightly lighter skin, with brown and red hair being common but also some blond-haired members, which are regarded as special. Both men and women wear their hair long, with the men often sporting beards or mustaches, and the women wearing their hair in tails if married but unbound as maidens. Both sexes wear tunics and sandals, with the men's garment reaching their knees but the women's worn like a gown, all dyed in bright colors. The Traldar speak a language somewhat similar to Milenian, but the Traldar are not Milenians, as much as they try to ape our ways.

The Traldar nation is divided into numerous squabbling petty city-states, each ruled by a tyrant or king. They make their living growing crops, herding, fishing, exporting wine, olive oil, and wool and raiding each other and their neighbors. Their culture resembles the Heroic Age of Milenia from the time before the empire in that they, like the Antaliens, revere foremost brave and great warriors, and the virtues of the hero, and their epics and bard's tales center on the deeds of these heroes. Like the Antaliens they begin training in the warrior arts at a very young age, but they also cultivate exercise and fitness like the Milenians do. They are also excellent sailors, making up in skill what their ships lack in technology, sacking towns up and down the coast, but mainly those of the Azcans, who are not a seafaring people. In confrontations with the nearby Merry Pirates they usually come out on the losing end, as they do with the fleets of the empire, but none can doubt the courage of their seamen.

As I said, the Traldar nation is disunited and squabbling, with there always being a war pitting one or more cities against another. But there have been times in history when the Traldar have been united behind one king, or in a league, in the face of some danger to their lands. Such leagues and kingdoms generally last until the threat is gone, and then the Traldar go back to feuding among themselves. The faith of the Traldar centers around Halab and Petra, and is not too different from the religion of Milenia, though somewhat more rustic and with backwards rites, smaller temples, and less beautiful shrines.

ATLAS OF ALPHATIA

Introduction to the Floating Continent of Alphatia

High above the surface of the Hollow World, hundreds if not thousands of small islands float about. Since the year AC 1010 these have been dwarfed by a huge continent that also floats in the sky and casts its enormous shadow over the lands below as it passes over them. This immense continent is the location of the magical empire of Alphatia.

Alphatia is an empire of magic and wizards, and anyone possessing the ability to cast magic will be taught and eventually become part of the aristocracy here, no matter what their background is. People without magic are held in lesser regard, and the empire still practices slavery. There are two sets of laws – one for aristocrats, which means spellcasters, and one for everyone else. The reason for this is the Alphatian demand for magic. The empire is steeped in magic, and its pursuit is clearly the greatest priority in the empire. This dates back to the time before Alphatia existed on Mystara, as all Alphatians were spellcasters on their original homeworld until it was destroyed during a massive war among the wizards.

The people of Alphatia are mostly humans, typically with coppery skin and with brown or red hair—these are called the common Alphatians. Some Alphatians are taller and quite pale with dark hair and are called “pure” Alphatians because they are descendants of the original founders of the empire thousands of years ago on another world. There are few “pure” Alphatians today, but they are hardly rare. There are also elves, especially the Shiye-Lawr elves of that nation, and dwarves, hin, and gnomes in the nation of Stoutfellow. Other, more sinister, creatures are said to live in Blackheart and Linn, though Linn is populated mostly by peaceful humanoids who would be considered monsters elsewhere.

At the end of the Great War almost a decade ago, Alphatia was an empire on the surface of Mystara. It was destroyed by the magic of the Glantrian Doomsday Weapon, though the Immortals recreated the continent in the Hollow World and moved most of the population there. The former location of Alphatia is now known as Nayce. However, only extremely experienced people on the floating continent of Alphatia know of its true origin—the general population believe they always lived in the Hollow World, because the Immortals arranged it this way.

Alphatia is divided into kingdoms, each king or queen owing loyalty to the elected emperor or empress, currently Empress Eriadna. The power of the empress is checked by a body of a thousand powerful archmages called the Council of Wizards or simply the Grand Council. The council has the power to veto any imperial decree by the empress. The empress generally tries to avoid becoming involved in domestic matters between the various kingdoms, although she can choose to do so if she deems a situation to be threatening to imperial interests.

Given that Alphatia is now surrounded only by the skies unreachable to their enemies, much of the former naval and militaristic effort has been reduced, as there are obviously no enemies who can threaten the empire now. This does not necessarily make Alphatia a peaceful place, though. Wars among the various kingdoms of the empire are not unheard of, and some have begun fairly recently.

Correspondents for the Floating Continent of Alphatia

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

Aritmanes

Aritmanes is a cleric of the Immortal Alphatia in the nation of Vertiloch. He used to live in the imperial capital of Sundsvall and was fortunate enough to survive its destruction. In the years since, Vertiloch has been mostly abandoned for the new nation, Alphas'ar, and its new imperial capital Andaire, but Aritmanes is one of those who remained in Vertiloch to help rebuild the declining nation. He is dedicated to the philosophies of peace that his patron teaches, and as an aristocrat he pities the commoners who are without magic.

Aritmanes is not known to be an adventurer, although there are rumors of him having traveled around during his younger days, and that is probably where he gathered his experience and insight. He looks to be in his late 30s, has long, brown hair, and copper-like skin like most Alphatians. He is rarely seen dressed in clothing other than his kihara robe.

Derentwyn

Derentwyn is a former deputy treasurer at the imperial court of Alphatia.

Furny Mallok

Mallok began his life as a slave working in the hot furnaces of Malevolence Estate. For years he struggled there, not only to survive, but also to maintain some shred of dignity—a short commodity to come by in Blackheart. He is a self-taught musician, though none from whence he came could appreciate his art, or even comprehend his desire to ply it. After nearly twenty years of living a life that should have killed him, Mallok was able to escape Malevolent and found shelter in Shipe-Lawr. He lives there still, serving Clan Traedyis and opposing Baron Jarkainnum in any way he can.

Gerta Knutsdotter

Gerta is of Antalian background, hailing from the town of Krakaj in the Hollow World. She seems to have escaped much of her culture's limitations, however, when she left her homeland as a young woman, and somehow gained a high degree of education. Some think that she may be a scholar from the legendary Lighthouse in the Hollow World. Gerta has a knack for acquiring information that eludes many scholars, but rumors that she uses less than legal means to do so seem to be tales spread by envious rivals. Gerta has spent the last several years studying Hollow World Alphatia for her organization. While she is vague in providing us with information as to how she reached the floating continent to study it, her reports on Alphatia give us a unique outsider's perspective on the mysterious empire.



Khostrubel the Forthright

Khostrubel is a priest of Bemarris, who is called "the Forthright" by his friends, followers, and servants. He is known throughout Alphatia outside of Stonewall as Khostrubel the Agitator (or Khostrubel the Blunt among those with views more sympathetic to those of Stonewall). If he sounds angrier in tone than many of our correspondents, this is because he feels his kingdom is being left to die by those in power within the empire. Try to understand his point of view, even while using your judgment in reading his report.

Kanshahu of Rimpos, Patroness of Enlightenment, Matriarch of the third Sphere of Djaea, Creator of Megtheria Dom, etc, etc...

Kanshahu is a cleric of Djaea and a Bettellyn of common Alphatian descent. She was born to a pair of hard-working Bettellyn supplicants serving Vipric [a Bettellyn honorific meaning spiritual leader. Ed.] Hathender at his cathedral 40 miles south of Rimpos along the Bettellyn Line. Once the vipric recognized her potential, he took her in as an acolyte and began to train her in matters concerning immortality. Once her training with Hathender was complete, Kanshahu journeyed east toward Isoin where she wrested control of the local supplicants from a cleric of Rathanos named Kanfek. After razing Kanfek's cathedral, she constructed one of even greater beauty in its place. Kanshahu was only too happy to share information with us about the grand kingdom she hails from.



Zweibelterm



Coming from the town of Adiach in the Alphatian Kingdom of Haven, Zweibelterm is the scion of old Alphatian bloodlines, rich in magic and steeped in tradition. Zweibelterm gives us a view of Alphatia from the unique perspective of its aristocracy. While his own attitudes infuse his writings and may put off some readers (especially non-Alphatians and non-spellcasters), the very aristocratic attitude he expresses will give our readers an insight into a facet of Alphatian society and the outlooks of his class and kingdom. For Zweibelterm is a patriot of Haven as much as, if not more, he is of the Alphatian Empire as a whole. Zweibelterm seems to have spent his entire life in the continent, visiting and experiencing one region after another in his social travels.

Atlas

ALPHATIA (Empire of)

Location: Largest floating continent, in an equatorial orbit over the Hollow World. *HW*

Area: 1,968,134 sq. mi. (5,097,465 sq. km.).

Population: 5,097,000 (humans 92%, elves 2%, all other 5%; note that this is different from before because the “monster” population of Linn, which is over 4% of Alphatia’s population, was unaccounted for in the previous breakdown). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. *Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (various dialects). Elvish (Shipe-Lawr dialect), Dwarvish (Denwarf-Hurgon dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Various kingdoms may mint other denominations in addition. Kingdoms tend to prefer coins of their own mintage, and charge conversion fees for coins from other kingdoms, especially esoteric coins. Coins of imperial mintage are accepted at full value throughout the empire.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Individual kingdoms may also have some additional taxes.

Government Type: Imperial monarchy overseeing subject kingdoms.

Industries: Agriculture, crafts, herding, exploitation of magic. Various others in specific kingdoms.

Important Figures: Eriadna (Empress of the Alphatian Empire, Queen of Vertiloch, Queen of Alphas’ar).

Flora and Fauna: With its immense size and use of magical arts, Alphatia boasts a wide variety of plant and animal life. One may find examples of just about any life form known, as well as some previously unknown types.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm and Gerta Knutsdotter.

Zweibelterm: Most of the readers of this publication will recognize the Alphatia described herein, though it has been many years since it has graced the surface of the planet. Instead, the continent and people of Alphatia now preside at the center of the world, orbiting the twin suns of the Hollow World. Each of the magnificent kingdoms that compose this majestic nation shall be given its due in a separate entry, but in this entry I shall endeavor to instruct the barbarians with a thorough overview of our empire as a whole, and of the Alphatian people.

Readers familiar with Alphatia as it was on the outer world will find most features, especially geographic ones but including most demographic features, to be exactly the same as they were, without alteration. Similarly, our society remains as it always has been, operating in accordance with long-established customs which you should familiarize yourself with before attempting to visit.

Gerta Knutsdotter: I submit to both the Lighthouse and to this Mystaran Almanac my assessment of Alphatia compiled as a result of my travels and studies of that empire. Alphatia is a powerful and technologically and magically advanced empire set on the Hollow World's largest floating continent. I must note that the Alphatian people almost uniformly treated me throughout my visits to their lands as at best a quaint curiosity and at worst with scorn as a barbarian. While such attitudes are found in other lands, such as Nithia and among the Azcans as well, the Alphatians seem to have taken these attitudes of racial supremacy to uncommon extremes, expressing unusually high degrees of contempt for "barbarians," especially non-spellcasters. I am lucky in that, after having observed their Alphatian Neatharum in earlier years, I at least knew the Alphatian tongue, for it is said that almost all Alphatians will not permit foreign languages to be spoken to them. I should note that there are two basic versions of the Alphatian tongue. One is "archaic Alphatian," supposedly the oldest known version of the language, in use today by Alphatia's aristocrats as a mystical, arcane language and used at social functions by them as a sign of distinction. The other is "common Alphatian" in a variety of dialects, the language of everyday use spoken by average Alphatians.

The Land (Gerta Knutsdotter)

The empire of the Alphatians consists as I said of the largest of the floating continents. The continent contains almost every type of terrain save for deserts, with large areas seemingly affected by magic (either mortal or Immortal. Some plant varieties seem to be alterations of types commonly found elsewhere, but changed to be able to exist in temperate climes where the continent is found). Alphatia is composed of rich tilled fields and lush plains given to pasturage or left in a natural state, forests large and small, rolling hills and several mountain ranges, from the large Kerothar Range which rivals the World Spine Mountains to smaller ranges like the Aasla Spur and Grey Mountains. Much of the land, especially in the places inhabited by the more powerful mages, has been landscaped by magic (see especially Vertiloch).

[Since I am from Vertiloch myself, I had better comment on this... To Alphatians Gerta's comments might seem a bit lacking here, but in all fairness, she never had the chance to witness the marvels of cities like Aasla or, especially, grand Sundsball. Many of our greatest achievements and monuments were lost to the destruction of these metropolitan cities. Though we Alphatians haven't greatly changed the very landscape around us (at Landfall our ancestors settled in the lands that best suited them, so little change was needed), the best way to witness our achievements was to see our cities. In a great number of these, one can still witness our impressive construction techniques. Many a time have I seen foreigners enter Sundsball and nearly lose consciousness [kaleidoscopically clashing colors and images have been known to induce vertigo. Ed.]. It is difficult to grasp, much less describe, the utter beauty and majesty of our structures and towers—the vast buildings, some heavily decorated with infinite details that confound the mind itself, while others were slick and solid, like huge, carved stones of basalt or obsidian, yet in all colors possible. Like I said, the greatest of these marvels have been lost to posterity, but some examples can still be witnessed in a fair number of our cities. Though this naturally means that Gerta must have witnessed at least some of these, I don't hold it against her that she doesn't offer any great description for the simple reason that doing so is exceedingly difficult. I have participated in the construction of such structures myself, and yet I find myself unable to offer a description that would do these marvels of magic justice. In fact, I fear than even a bard or other skilled storyteller or author would not be able to truly capture in words the very majesty of Alphatia's

achievements in this case. We really would require an extremely skilled artist to accomplish such a feat! Aritmanes]

There are a number of rich river valleys and three large lakes (Llyn, Crystal, and Shiell). Because it is a floating continent, there are no seacoasts. But the continent seems formed as if there should be seas, as if those living here expected there to be seas, and the habitation pattern reflects this (with most settlements clustered along the continental rim, almost as if they were built as ports facing a now vanished ocean). There are beaches aplenty, but without the water this seems to have caused some disruption. Resorts are seemingly built overlooking the void, as if they were originally built facing seas. This might be because the Alphetians consider themselves masters of aerial magic, and thus build their dwellings like those of eagles, perched on the ledges. But various details, small and large, seem to belie this. More on these discrepancies between the two versions of Alphetia's origins will be explored later, but for now I shall give just one small example. Leaping dolphin motifs are common in places like Bluenose, and some areas seem to lack sufficient food, as if they were expecting a harvest from the sea or imports from beyond.

[This lack is somewhat made up for by use of the large lakes to replace this lost resource, as Crystal, Shiell, and Llyn Lakes in due time pick up the slack of providing maritime relaxation and some variety of fish. However, unfortunately, the varieties are still limited to freshwater catches, which is a pity and an imposition upon our refined palates. Still, other things have filled this lamentable gap, as well as the gap in available imports of exotic foods, but still the absence is felt, especially among the common people who cannot avail themselves of such substitutions and whose diets and livelihoods sometimes depended upon these lost resources from the seas. Also, an oddity perhaps is that despite the lack of surrounding seas, the Haunted Marshes remain well-watered in southern Vertiloch and southeastern Haven. These marshes are said to be not only the haunt of various monstrosities, but also the abode of lawless types who seek to escape just punishment in the wetlands. This is fine by me, as it usually saves us the cost and imposition of a trial, as these villains become prey to the monsters that lurk therein. Zweibelterm.]

Indeed, the inhabitants seem to recognize a disconnection between their pattern of settlement and their current needs. The settled areas are along the rim of the continent and the interior lands are sparsely inhabited in most cases, but this pattern of settlement is undergoing change as a result of perceived reality, with a notable migration towards the interior beginning, apparently all of the sudden.

In Alphetia, with a few exceptions, most of the land is sparsely inhabited and left in a state of wilderness, with population clustered in a few places, in concentration around the cities and towns with nearly empty lands between these population nodes. This is much like Nithia, where most of that empire's land is virtually uninhabited, with people living clustered along the Nithia River. But in Nithia this is a matter of climate and terrain (with the uninhabited lands being wasteland), while in Alphetia this seems to be a conscious policy rather than a result of the environment, as the wilderness areas are usually good lands. In Alphetia people tend to live mostly in and around the cities. The wizards build their estates in these areas, where they meet and socialize and conduct various businesses in common (like magical research). The commoners live clustered in communities around them. They work either as part of the wizards' households, or as all those around that produce the food on nearby plantations and craftsmen who create the products that are needed to support the aristocrats and the society in general, working as farmers, fishermen, and craftsmen. Many of them work for the wizards, while some are members of the freemen.

Thus most commoners live in or around the cities, and they are forbidden from settling farther from them. The rest of the land is left unsettled as wilderness, resulting in a low population density in Alphatia as a whole. There are some densely populated areas, and clusters of habitation, but around these are vast wilderness areas, used sometimes as hunting preserves and the like. In these unsettled lands, the aristocrats are free to build additional estates. Thus as they grow in power and wealth, the aristocrats tend to accumulate more estates; estates in the cities for socializing with each other, and isolated estates to conduct their more private researches and affairs undisturbed. They keep minimal staff in these more rural estates (servants and slaves only). Rarely do they allow communities to build around their towers and mansions; everything the wizard needs for his research or comfort is brought from a city by his staff or by his magic).

Blackheart is the most extreme example of this pattern of settlement, but it holds true in most kingdoms to a lesser degree. The exceptions are numerous though. Besides the demihuman kingdoms (Shipe-Lawr, Stoutfellow, and Linn) and Stonewall, they are: Haven: because of the project of beautification of the land cities tend to sprawl far and large, and most wizards have estates in larger numbers in the cities and less as hidden labs in the countryside. Ar: With most of the aristocracy gone and the commoners left to themselves, and the need of other kingdoms (primarily Stonewall) for large supplies of food, the fields have been mostly turned to grain production and previously unexploited land is being tilled as well. Bettelwyn: there are more cities and towns in that kingdom than in most, so that there is less land left for hidden labs; besides, the kingdom is not so popular with wizards, because it is more clerical than most would like it. Randel: basically standard, except that people here are more militant and large areas are given over for military exercises; large swaths of the countryside are still left for the wizards, though. Alphas'ar: is becoming normal, but is still underpopulated both in terms of cities (the exception being Andaire) and hidden towers (they used to be imperial facilities only), and some wandering, isolated persons who try to avoid attention. Vertiloch it seems was densely populated until recently, but seems to have lost most of its inhabitants to some cataclysm.

Also, the land itself seems fractured in some places, as if recently affected by a series of great earthquakes or by some other cataclysm or disaster. As for the popular versions of what caused this, see below.

The People (Gerta Knutsdotter)

I will limit myself to a general overview of the Alphatian people here, and then discuss things separately as I describe the individual kingdoms that make up Alphatia. As I noted, Alphatians are a haughty and conceited people, who speak condescendingly to foreigners, which they almost universally consider uncouth barbarians. They are extremely proud and conceited regarding their civilization, deeming it vastly superior to everyone else's. Only the Nithian ambassadors seemed to be excepted from this attitude and treated with respect, perhaps because the two societies are both very magically oriented, with the difference being that the Nithians' society revolves around Immortal magic while the Alphatians' society is more dedicated to arcane magic. Never the less, this attitude is something one must keep in mind when travelling here, as one must be acclimatized to the attitudes that will commonly be expressed. They simply do not believe any other people measure up to them, and often denigrate other societies as if it were simply a given that no one but themselves had achieved anything noteworthy. While this is, as I said, an attitude that is found in other nations as well, the Alphatians seem to have pushed this attitude to exceptional lengths, and never even pause to consider that expressing it might be taken badly by others. Even their currency says "Alphatia Above All."

Alphatia is dominated by two human races, the “common” and the “pure” or “high” Alphasians. Common Alphasians (also called Cypri) have golden to coppery brown skin like Azcans or Nithians, gold, brown, or red hair, and brown, gold, green, hazel, or amber almond-shaped eyes. They tend to be tall and slender. The so-called pure Alphasians are less frequently found. They have pale skin like Antalians but with bluish tints, black hair, and black, blue, or purple eyes. They are also usually tall and slender. There are also elves and some other demihuman races in parts of Alphatia, but these largely live in their own kingdoms and almost nineteen out of twenty Alphasians belong to the two human races described above. Almost singularly among civilizations, the Alphasians have no marriage customs. This can make their family lives complex and even bizarre to others. They are also quite brazen in their sexual mores. I cannot tell you the number of times I was boldly propositioned by an Alphasian who thought I would jump at the offer to be his courtesan simply because an aristocrat was extending his favor to a barbarian commoner, and seemed affronted when I declined.

Alphasian society is built around magical talent and magic use. Newborn children are tested for magical ability, with those who are found to have the ability being sent to one of Alphatia’s many fine magical schools and universities. Thus there are not only many mages among the Alphasians, but an extraordinary number of them become quite powerful. The Alphasians like to enhance their art, theater, and other entertainments with lavish displays of magic, and their more skilled elites enchant items on a wide scale for the purpose of entertaining and fascinating each other. Their use of magic on such a wide scale is captivating in many ways, and is one of the hallmarks of their civilization. They have such a surfeit of magic that, at least among the aristocracy, it is a backdrop of their enjoyment of life, though most of the applications they put it to do not have much practical use as such, but are certainly awesome. Some of these items, especially the skyships they seem almost obsessed with building and which can be compared to Nithia’s hober barges, could no doubt be quite potent in war, however, though most of the Alphasians do not seem to be very warlike, with some notable exceptions.

The Alphasians have their own set of Immortals, but largely seem disinterested in venerating them and are not very pious. Unlike most priesthoods, especially the Nithians with whom the Alphasians seem to have some affinities, the Alphasian clerics seem more interested in the power and status they gain through the favor of their Immortals, than in the teachings of those Immortals. Some kingdoms (again, notably Stonewall) are exceptions to this general lack of interest in matters of faith, but overall it seems most Alphasians pursue clerical studies not out of reverence but for access to the spells, and thus status, that such study gives them. The Immortals seem to accept what they can get, or so it seems, tolerating a lower level of devotion than in most lands.

Alphasians who can afford it, mainly aristocrats but wealthy commoners as well, go in for extravagant makeup and hair styles, but prefer simple, elegant jewelry. Theater and arts, especially magically-enhanced ones, are commonplace. Alphasian architecture is quite well developed and advanced, with towering structures common. Magic is used extensively in the building of monumental buildings frequented by the aristocracy and in the construction of their abodes. A wizard’s friends often contribute to such construction efforts, sometimes adding little touches or practical jokes to the project. Powerful magics shape the nature of entire cities, creating wondrous structures. Living dioramas, permanent illusions, and pyrotechnic displays are among the most respected art forms. Music, gambling, and a game known as hard-ball which has some similarities to the Azcan game of tlachtli (though without the ritual sacrifices of losers) are among the other forms of entertainments relished in Alphatia. Alphatia’s economy is strong, built as it is on two factors: cheap labor in agriculture, mining, and crafts (slaves

and servants) combined with magical disaster relief as needed. Their economy seems to have been even stronger once, but it seems to have experienced some economic setbacks recently, with the destruction of two major cities and disruption caused in the wake of the earthquakes or cataclysm (depending upon which version of recent Alphetian history you find most plausible—see below). Alphetia also has trade guilds that try to make sure they get good wages for their members and high tariffs imposed on imported goods, but except for the magically-oriented ones these guilds don't have much influence.

In Alphetia, the sexes are considered equal and treated as such, with no discrimination, unlike in Milenia or Antalia where doctrines of male superiority predominate and subordinate the women. But one should not get the impression that Alphetians are egalitarian in other respects, for their society is based on a hierarchy of race (Alphetians above all others) and a social hierarchy almost as firmly entrenched and structured as that of Shahjapur.

The Alphetians prize the ability to use magic above all else. In Alphetia, the spellcasting aristocrats are chaotic individualists who have leisure and freedom of choice. They enjoy great wealth and prestige, and though some start off with little more than the robe on their back this soon changes as the society revolves around them and their well-being. The lifestyle of many of the aristocrats in Alphetia is more sumptuous than that of similar classes in many other nations in the Hollow World with the possible exception of Nithia, due to their access to magical devices that enrich their means of entertainment and enliven their leisure. All non-spellcasters are destined to serve in some capacity or another. Great power is possessed by individual spellcasters. Alphetia is a land where such exalted kings can make a whim a law, if only for a day. The Alphetian Empire is maintained through fear and intimidation, eccentric blood ties, and sheer magical might rather than managerial efficiency and impartial law as in Nithia or Milenia. Those who lack the ability to cast spells have a status similar to Acan commoners (the tlacotin and maceualli tenant classes of Azca being rough analogs to Alphetia's slave and servant classes). The servant class is not bound to the soil, but they must, like the maceualli tenant farmers have a master and they do pay taxes. But, unlike the more successful maceualli, the Alphetian servant class never owns land. These commoners, the slave and servant classes, would be called a helotry in Milenian or thralls in Antalia. Most aristocrats who ponder the question believe that everyone is happy and contented with this system because it has lasted a long time, while others simply think everyone must be because they are, and it is true that most of the servile classes are resigned to their lot. But it might be on account of the fact that hardly anyone, especially among the commoner classes, has any basis of comparison of their social structure with others, as a result of the insular nature of Alphetia. In Alphetia few people have any true knowledge of foreign lands [like Karamaikos or the Five Shires. Ed.], but instead simply dismiss them all as barbarians unworthy of consideration or emulation, and thus they wouldn't know how their lives compare to the lives of others. Some kingdoms, Stonewall comes to mind and to a degree Randel and Greenspur as well, are more hospitable to non-spellcasting commoners, and this might be why Stonewall, though a tiny kingdom by Alphetian standards, is its most heavily populated one. But in most of Alphetia the distinction is a sharp one: spellcasters form the respected aristocracy, and most others are in thrall. My lack of ability to cast spells, as a "mere" warrior, was a handicap in my studies, as I was constantly treated as an inferior, and with the exception of the few kingdoms mentioned above this made it somewhat difficult on occasion to gain access to information, because of my status as a "mundane barbarian." They often judged me not on my own merits as a knowledgeable scholar in my own right, but simply on my lack of magical ability. Therefore I might recommend that in the future a spellcasting scholar be sent for further inquiry into Alphetian society, but I do think also that the experiences one has in this society as

a non-spellcaster are worthy of relating, and are also an important aspect to be studied. It is hard to forget how things are when one is experiencing things directly, and this I think gives my report added accuracy and depth. Between the enthralled classes and the aristocratic classes are the commercial classes—the freemen and gentry, whose social role is similar to that of the Azcan pochtecatl. As social class is of utmost significance in Alphatia, I shall discuss each class at further length.

Like the Nithians, Azcans, Milenians, and my own people, the Antalians, the Alphatians have slavery in their society. But it might aptly be said that the majority of their people are held in thrall, because all but the aristocracy and wealthier commoners must have a master over them. There is no such thing as free-agency for average people within Alphatia, thus making their society closer in some regards to that of the Azcans than that of Milenia or even Nithia. This is indicated by the titles of the classes in which most Alphatians fall: slave and servant. In Alphatia, some slaves seem to be of their own race, but many also appear to be Antalian, Jennite, or Milenian [these would probably be from Norwold, Esterhold, or of Minaean or Thyatian descent. Ed.] and other exotic races. The slave is property, as in other nations we are familiar with, but as in all nations it differs in its particulars. An Alphatian slave is little more than a mule—few are permitted to learn, few ever even hold coin, and none have a possession they can call their own. Even touching a weapon is a death sentence for them. An Alphatian slave's life is often like the lot of the most wretched slaves in other lands, such as the tlacotin of Azca. Some slaves do have relatively less burdensome lives, serving as nursemaids, house slaves, or concubines, but for most life is backbreaking labor from youth until death. Any aristocrat can slay them out of hand though they must compensate the owner for destroying her property, and by imperial law runaways are executed. Even the slaves of Milenia are treated better than this, for unlike Alphatian slaves they cannot be killed or maimed without cause and are permitted to have some minor belongings of their own. The laws of Alphatia, especially the ones pertaining to weapon use by slaves, seem to have been put in place as a precaution against uprisings.

The servants are somewhat better off, being more akin to thralls in other nations. They may not own land, and must belong to the household of another. Their main advantage is that they are permitted to change masters if they can find one willing to take them on. Some servants work for no more than room and board, the same that most masters in Antalia or Milenia provide to their slaves, but sometimes with a salary in addition. The Alphatians, their aristocrats at any rate, often see this system as very enlightened compared to other nations, as no one “wanders aimlessly,” but rather all are employed because all must either have a master or be one. By most accounts, nearly seven out of ten Alphatians belong to either the slave or servant classes. [I doubt these figures are entirely correct. Twenty percent, meaning two out of every ten Alphatians, are wizards, yes, but that does not include clerics like myself or other spellcasters who would also be aristocrats. Aritmanes.]

In between the aristocracy and the enthralled classes are the freeman and gentry classes. The wealthy commoners have this status, though they are relatively few since the aristocracy naturally does what it can to concentrate wealth in its own hands. Many if not most explorers and itinerants [she means adventurers. Ed.] belong to the freeman and gentry classes, and those who do not aspire to join it as soon as they are able. Less than one person in ten seems to belong to the freeman class, a name that indicates that this is the first rank at which an Alphatian is considered to have freedoms. Freeman status is achieved by owning a shop or business of some kind, and they do not have to belong to the household of a higher-status person. They may own slaves and have servants in their households, but must make enough money to keep their business registered with the empire, or they will have their

businesses stripped and find themselves reduced to servant status. It is not unknown for aristocrats to use their better connections to do this to mundane competitors, driving them out of business to eliminate unwelcome competition. Sometimes, even, it is said that such aristocrats then buy up the forfeited businesses and find a way to get the old owner to be their servant and operate it for them. Far fewer belong to the gentry, with many of these seemingly the progeny of aristocrats, children of theirs who lack magical ability and thus are endowed by their families with 10,000 gp in a bank in order to keep their status close to their families, and allow them to mingle with aristocrats in social affairs.

All spellcasters, and only spellcasters, in Alphatia are aristocrats. They lead lives of freedoms and pleasures more luxurious than can be found in most other nations because of the magical devices that are often available for their enjoyment and entertainment (not all of the aristocrats have these things, but an unusual number create large items, like rolling palaces or flying yachts). Only the aristocracy can wear the spider-silk robe that is the distinctive garment of Alphatia's elites. Many study arcane matters throughout their lives, becoming accomplished spellcasters, while others simply learn enough magic to be accorded privileged aristocrat status, and then move on to other pursuits. Lords, ladies, princes, princesses, kings and queens are the ranks of the aristocratic class that have governmental roles. These serve much the same functions as rulers in most lands, administering and governing the empire and its kingdoms. All these people must be spellcasters, naturally, with one exception. In the Kingdom of Stoutfellow, a kingdom of dwarves, gnomes, and hin within Alphatia, the current queen is a warrior. The demihuman inhabitants of that kingdom do not seem to have fully adopted the customs of Alphatia, but indeed seem to be recent arrivals from elsewhere, operating almost as if under a distinctive charter.

Alphatia's legal system follows this bifurcation between the classes, with a different code for commoners and for aristocrats, and different penalties depending on the status of the victim. While some might think that they would expect a higher standard of behavior from the aristocrats, who are deemed in other spheres to know better, this is not the case. Penalties for aristocrats are significantly more lax than those for commoners. They make frequent recourse to ESP in their proceedings, relying on magic to produce accurate results. But many less reputable types who I had occasion to interview said that because of the widespread faith in and dependence upon magic, this causes the authorities to underestimate common intelligence, skill, and guile. Indeed, in my travels I found this to be true, as I was able to acquire information supposedly kept in great secrecy just by applying a little creativity. Also, Alphatia does not seem to have imprisonment as a penalty, as many nations do—they impose fines, corporal punishment (lashes), confiscation (including enslavement), and death. Imperial law concerns itself with preserving the status quo. It protects the status of wizards and sets the scale of social hierarchy used throughout Alphatia, decrees how matters of succession is to be handled and establishes imperial taxes. Beyond that, the kings have wide discretion on other laws (civil and criminal).

As I mentioned above, there seem to be two distinct accounts of Alphatia prevalent among its people. Most believe Alphatia was always here, though they have difficulty explaining their history and background. This last shouldn't be too surprising, as most people in many lands are unfamiliar with history. However, in Alphatia those who believe Alphatia was always where it is have trouble explaining episodes which took place in their own lifetimes and which they experienced. For example, they believe that much of the damage that can be seen here and there throughout Alphatia was caused by a series of major earthquakes, but have trouble putting things into context and there are odd gaps and discrepancies in their accounts. Pressing them on these things seems to disturb such people. On the

other hand, there is a different, and though outlandish, more consistent and thus more plausible account of Alphatia's history and background, the version held by the more experienced and accomplished Alphatians. In this version, Alphatia was until very recently a continent like most others on the surface of another world, surrounded by seas. This Alphatia was part of an even larger empire (indeed, it was its core), and recent events (described in detail by in the attached account of Zweibelterm) led to a great cataclysm resulting in the destruction of that empire and the transfer of the continent to where it now resides. While it isn't uncommon for the nations of the Hollow World to have in their lore legends of having existed in another world in the past (the Azrans come to mind), I can think of no other where there are two such competing versions like this. Also, those other nations which have such beliefs in their lore date it back to the misty, almost mythical past, and not so close to current times.

The People (Zweibelterm)

Alphatians are a justly proud people, set apart from all others by their refined and ancient civilization and its exalted traditions. We had mastered magic and the other arts while most of your ancestors were living naked in rude huts or dwelling in caves. The example of our culture is emulated by all who have a pretense of civilization, but none have come close to our achievements. So read my words, transcribed though they are in crude Thyatian you may still yet benefit from them.

Alphatians divide our people by class and race. The Alphatian people do not mix with esoteric and unaccomplished foreigners as the degenerate barbarians, especially the Thyatians, do. The Alphatian people are composed of the original, or "pure" Alphatians—pale of skin, dark of hair, and fair of eye, and of the descendants of the Cypri, who are now known as "common" Alphatians—copper-skinned, they are the more usual type of Alphatian who is encountered. There are some dwarves, gnomes, and elves in Alphatia now, as well as an entire kingdom of what some would call "monsters." The elves do intermingle somewhat, but for good reason most of these demihumans are kept in their own kingdoms, where they can serve Alphatia but live in their own ways. Indeed, one piece of advice comes to mind which I shall generously share with you barbarians who may visit Alphatia: be sure you know our language, as few commoners and no nobles, except for the most permissive, will suffer to have other, lesser languages spoken to them. Sure, we cannot expect you people to be able to fully master our complex and beautiful language, but still you must do your best.

Alphatians are also, as I indicated, divided into several classes, on the basis of an enlightened social hierarchy. At the top, as is only natural and appropriate, are those who have the blood and talent for magic, which is naturally and properly paramount in determining one's status within society. Why others, with the exception of the Glantrians (who learned from the degenerate Flaems anyhow, and have created a twisted and imperfect replica of the Alphatian social order), do not see fit to structure their societies on the natural order of things, recognizing the superiority of those who can wield magic, is beyond me, but it probably has to do with the envy that those without the talent have for their natural betters. Thus they try to pull down what should be exalted, while civilized people, by which I mean Alphatians, do not succumb to such base and spiteful influences. In most Alphatian kingdoms on the continent, the aristocratic class forms some twenty percent or more of the population, a far higher proportion than the so-called aristocracies of other nations. But our aristocracies are also a natural one, based on a demonstrated talent for spellcasting, not some ephemeral achievement that may not be indicative of true superiority. Another difference is that the ruling classes of other nations are all expected to administer to the task of government whether they have the inclination for it or not. This is not so in Alphatia, where the bulk of our aristocracy neither has nor desires a role in political policy,

but would rather be given personal latitude and freedoms. What their position affords them is not government station in most cases, but rather the freedom to do as they please and, instead of mere administration or input into decision making, they devote their time to developing their aptitude for magic, which is what we want. Of course, some of our aristocrats, the lords and kings and up to the empress herself, do devote such time as they must to ruling, but this only involves a small fraction of our aristocracy, with the majority free from such cares and concerns, as I have described. But the aristocracy pays the lion's share of the taxes submitted to our national and imperial treasuries each year, as we have the most to offer. Thus, it can never be said that we avoid our responsibilities.

Our system evidences great care for everyone, far different from flawed societies that do not provide a proper structure and thus wind up with discontent and strife. The proof of this is that our empire has withstood the test of time without interruption or upheaval throughout the centuries, stable and unchanging, while those nations who cleave to plutocracy, believing that wealth derived from being a successful merchant is an indicator of a capacity to rule, are young and ephemeral. Still more has it shown its manifest superiority to systems that grant a useless "citizenship" to anyone and everyone but then fail to provide them with direction and purpose.

The People (Aritmanes)

I shall try to limit my comments for the sake of brevity, though I do feel there are some matters that I need to address here. Most importantly, we Alphatians are often seen as arrogant and haughty by outsiders, which is frequently a surprise to us. Many of us may indeed make the mistake of automatically assuming that we're superior to other cultures, but given the great achievements and learning of our empire and how we have surpassed the accomplishments of others over the long life of our nation, I really do believe that this is at least understandable. However, it is surely not correct to simply assume that we discriminate toward all... [I know how I was treated, and most of the people I saw who were of obviously non-Alphatian background were generally treated even worse. Gerta Knutsdotter.] After all, we did incorporate Thothia into our empire when we met their people (though contact with them is now lost to us). We did deign to allow elves to settle and even establish their own kingdom. We even let dwarves, hin, and gnomes enter our empire and set up their own kingdom under their own laws, where they know their place, and though the vast majority of Alphatian aristocrats dislike Stonewall due to its pro-commoner policies, we still allow the nation to exist. This does, at least to me, show that we show some acceptance, if only to people like the Thothians, as they share our pursuit of magic [actually, Thothians are dedicated to the pursuit of mysticism, not magic. Ed.]. This is exactly where I think most uncomprehending outsiders misunderstand us—they fail to see that, as an empire, we put the pursuit and exploration of art above all else—magic being the grandest art of all, and so, naturally, has with the greatest priority focused upon it! This means that we require all within our empire to aid in this endeavor, even those who have not been fortunate enough of having been born with the gift of spellcasting, who must then serve the attempt in whatever other capacity in which they are able. This is an ancestral trait of our people which predates our very arrival on Mystara all the way back to Old Alphatia where all our people had knowledge of arcane magic. This was not possible on Mystara, but rather than have our traits die out, our ancestors modified the new empire to take this into consideration and then based our society on those conclusions so that our desires for the pursuit of magic has survived and even flourished—to deny our magical heritage is to deny that we are Alphatians! Those best suited to pursue this are wizards, and so all that can, which are about twenty percent, will become wizards in Alphatia. Those who lack these skills can instead become clerics, such

as myself, and though we do lack the true creativity and freedom in our magics that wizards possess, we can still contribute to the greater pursuit of magic. Still, many who cannot be wizards still do not choose to be clerics (even those who have the option of doing so), which I really think should be taken as an indication that life as a commoner isn't quite as bad as some foreigners seem to think, even though it does mean living a life of servitude to at least some degree. [Though this might be more due to the general lack of devotion to the Immortals than anything else. Truth be told, most Alphatian clerics become such in pursuit of spellcasting ability, to escape the life of a commoner, than due to reverence for the Immortals. Ed.] I've lived all my life in Alphatia, and I've rarely, if ever, witnessed evidence to suggest to me that the general populace is greatly dissatisfied with their lot. Some are, naturally, but on average I get the impression that we're all, including the lower classes, proud of our empire and its achievements—our understanding and use of magic, our impressive construction techniques, and our rich accounts of history which are written with great accuracy as a consequence of the fact that Alphatia was a learned empire which predates our arrival on Mystara [though these versions are self-serving, as most nations' histories are, and all nations believe their histories are more accurate than those of their neighbors. Ed.]. Though aristocrats are those who probably have the best opportunity to study history (as they are usually the ones writing it in the first place), our people are not quite as unenlightened as some foreigners seem to think. We do nothing to hide history, and our history even reflects those parts that do not reflect well on our empire, such as the events that predated our arrival on Mystara [though most Alphatians seem to believe a version of their history which appears to be at odds with actual reality, and are kept in the dark about the true history by conscious choice of Alphatia's leaders as a deliberate policy. Gerta Knutsdotter.]. This was indeed an unfortunate and unwise part of our history, but rather than ignore and suppress it, our ancestors decided to learn from it and base the new empire on the mistakes that were made at the time instead, thus attempting to turn the mistakes into strengths.

Foreigners are also typically appalled by our laws, which admittedly favor those who know magic (the aristocrats) over those who do not (commoners or lower classes). Still, though these laws may seem lacking, one must remember that we're generally a people marked by strongly individualistic and even chaotic traits and as such have little respect for strict enforcement of rules [on themselves. I have witnessed how harshly they impose them on their lessers. Gerta Knutsdotter.]. So though a law may grant an aristocrat the right to abuse his slaves, it is by no means given that he or she will do so, although there are, sadly, many cases where this is indeed true. We Alphatians do not wonder so much about these laws that foreigners find so harsh because, we do, in fact, expect them to be harsh so that the freedom of the aristocracy will not be limited by these. But I firmly believe that it is a misinterpretation to believe that because these regulations exist as written that this indicates that the great majority of our people will abuse these to their limits. Many do, but then again, many do not. Naturally, such a system may cause friction where two or more aristocrats are involved, for which the practice of duels has been developed, so that two aristocrats could duel each other for a solution when they could not decide on something. Indeed, there are even stories which claim that such duels have even been conducted over the claimed mistreatment of members of the lower classes, but then such stories are rare [actually, the aristocrats tend to duel each other over disputes between themselves and often because of petty personal feuds, like many Antalian warriors. I have never witnessed, or even heard, of a case where a duel has occurred as a result of disagreement on imposing punishment on a commoner, and commoners I asked about this idea just laughed. Gerta Knutsdotter.].

Recent History (By Zweibelterm)

The Alphasians have a long and magnificent history, a history of wonder and triumph, but we shall not dwell on the past glories and successes of the Alphasian people here. You can find extant histories of our accomplishments and deeds elsewhere, and if you are unable to, then that is a sign that you are unworthy to do so. So instead of spending my valuable time on the distant past, I shall just give you an accounting of our more recent experiences.

All are aware, I trust, of the war that was launched on the benighted Glantrians due to their practice of dangerous magics twisted by Entropy and on account of their wanton, unprovoked destruction of the glorious city of Aasla as a result of their jealousy of our magical and artistic superiority. This jealousy is what caused them to turn to forbidden magics in the first place, in a desperate attempt to outdo us, and it is what caused them to destroy the most brilliant jewel in the Alphasian crown, wondrous Aasla. [Though Aasla was indeed a city of wondrous magical achievement, it still could not best Sundsball. I remember these parts of our history well as there was a great dissent within the Order of Alphasia as to whether we should support Eriadna and oppose Glantri or keep out of the whole affair. Many of the more experienced of our order surprised us all by saying that we should fully support the empire in its stand against Glantri, which was shocking to many of us given Immortal Alphasia's peaceful traits and general reluctance to support any imperial tendencies of conquest. Aritmanes.]. Faced with these things, we had no choice but to declare war upon them, in an effort to remove their blighted presence from the world. Disturbingly, but really unsurprisingly, the venal Thyatians and grasping Haldannic Knights decided to meddle in affairs beyond their concern just as they had a century and a half ago when we were first poised to bring the region now known as Glantri into our fold. They inappropriately intervened once again in the war on Glantri's behalf, thus becoming the tools of the Glantrians in this conflict. Though I did not fight in this war, since some of us had to keep an eye on things at home and support the war effort in other ways, I know some of those who did, including my elder brother, Cratham, and I have heard their accounts and shall altruistically impart them to you.

The meddling interventions of the Thyatians and the knights in Norwold threw it into discord and strife for the duration of the war. Because of this, as well as the destruction of our largest and best-prepared skyship fleet at Aasla by the nefarious and vile Glantrian opportunists, we were compelled to alter our strategy of war, and were diverted into a costly but uniformly successful war of attrition against the enfeebled Thyatians. We overran West Portage only a few months after war was declared, then pushed forward over the next year until we were at the outskirts of Redstone. The siege of Redstone and Newkirk lasted six months, until our war machine smashed the defenses of Newkirk, capturing it. After this victory proved our dominance, the Thyatians in Redstone surrendered. Meanwhile, the Glantrians once again probed the kind of people they are by seeding Alphasia, even unto our mighty capital, with terrorist teams. Even those savages had to know that such methods could not win the war for them, but their destructiveness knew no limits. This caused many of us to stiffen our resolve to crush them, and this was when my brother joined our Grand Imperial Forces. But it also, oddly and bizarrely, caused some dissension and opposition to the war among our own people, especially the Shiye elves, though their forests were not even affected by these Glantrian terror-strikes. The Thyatians stubbornly held out in the northern head of the Isle of Dawn until Ernul Zaar of Helskir wisely defected from their teetering cause in exchange for the title of king and the hand of Thincol Torion's daughter. This allowed us to finish off their last major strongpoint on the island. Though they clung to the Shadow Coast in the south, that was not strategically important.

After grinding them down on the Isle of Dawn from victory to victory, brushing aside the barbarian armies in every major battle as the Thyatians' so-called empire fell apart around them with even Thincol's friend Stefan Karameikos knowing the wisdom of making an accommodation with glorious Alphatia, we were finally in a position to send a fleet against Brun. Envoys sent to attempt to reach an accommodation with the Ethengar barbarians for the destruction of our mutual enemies, the blindly fanatical knights of Heldann and dark wizards of Glantri, were, for some reason, never heard from again. [I have no knowledge of this, though it wouldn't surprise me. It is indeed a sad truth that Alphatian wizards are so blinded by their own powers and magical skills that they frequently act superior to all others. Such behavior is accepted and actually even expected in Alphatia, but it's probably not a good idea to carry such attitudes along if one travels outside the empire, particularly to a place like Ethengar where, from what I understand, they have little respect even for their own wizards. Given that the Ethengars and Heldannic Knights went to war over such attitudes toward each other, it is easy to imagine that such Alphatian wizard envoys might have seemed quite arrogant to the Ethengars. They then likely decided to show them just what they thought of such superior behavior, just as they did to "superior" missionaries from the Heldannic Knights years before, and which caused the war between their people. Aritmanes.]. Therefore, since we were now in a position to kill two dragons with one meteor swarm, having partially restored our sky navy during the war and bolstered our fleets, we instead decided to finish off the weakened Thyatians before completing the task of eliminating Glantri for its crimes against us. The accursed Thyatians foiled our attempt to land on their shores in the summer of AD 2008 [AC 1008. Ed.] through guile and perfidy. My elder brother, Cratham, was serving on a skyship when the Thyatian dogs intercepted our forces in the Sea of Dawn. It was a mighty clash, which we would have won easily as we had the previous battles if it were not for the treacherous tactics of the Thyatians. As a result of these diabolical tactics, my brother's diary describes a bloody clash, and he saw many a skyship destroyed and transport sunk, though indeed we paid them back for every life they took. But in the end, we had to withdraw back to the Isle of Dawn, our first setback in the war. Never the less, they could not thwart us for long. Six months later, after some diversionary feints towards Heldann and Dawnpoint to keep the insensate enemy off balance, our forces were landed in Plaruum, easily seizing Cubia in the face of weak Plari resistance. Our military machine then rolled triumphantly into Thyatis again, smashing into the disordered and confused Thyatian forces and overrunning Tel Akbir. The vile dogs refused to give in, however, in their stubborn ignorance they always failed to recognize when they were bested, thus forcing us to kill more of them than would have otherwise been required. They fought on doggedly throughout most of AD 2009 [AC 1009. Ed.], even though no one would help them. This caused much suffering and waste of life, and led to an increase in the misguided discord at home over the progress of the war, with some going so far in their complaining as to undermine the effort. They brought their fleets down to Vanya's Girdle at Port Lucinius, covering direct access to their filthy capital, and our navies could not press them back from the channel as we did during the earlier Spike Assault. Therefore, we resolved to continue the march overland, to push them back and defeat them bit by bit.

Our forces pushed forward inexorably. The Thyatians, in their barbarous ferocity, battled us to a standstill outside Kantridae, but we brought in reinforcements and went around them, because at this point the pathetic Thyatians did not have enough troops to block every avenue of advance. They refused to budge at the Kantridae River, but again we brought up fresh forces, forded upstream while our massed forces rolled into them at the point of contact itself, and they were forced to cede the field. Thus we had isolated the city of Retebius as their army fell back. But the defenders behind the walls, though

now largely youths and old men, forced us to assault the city, as we could not afford to leave it as a strongpoint in our rear where they could harass us. Though costly, the assault was successful, but the skyship my brother was serving on, the *Aaslan Fury*, was destroyed here. He survived, but had to fight the rest of the war from the ground. In addition, unfortunately, this delay allowed the defeated Thyatian armies to withdraw from Retebius before we could finish the curs off. But they could not stop us from marching in triumph down the road towards Thyatis City. All throughout this period, the treacherous Thyatians had been sending infiltrators into our camps to murder our officers and heroes, though they knew they could not win and these attacks were only provoking our justifiable anger against them, causing retribution to attempt to compel them to desist. At this point in the war, one such incursion of assassins found my brother Cratham, and though I am told he took several of them with him, my brother and the head of our house was laid low. So here his diary of the war ceases, and I must rely upon the accounts of others, brief though the rest is.

We washed over Thyatis with ease, reaching the banks of the Mesonian River. There the Thyatians' depleted armies, slightly bolstered by reinforcements from Glantri and some Haldannic Knights, attempted to face us again. Many foolish Haldannic Knights are said to have charged prematurely, and were swallowed up by our vast and victorious forces, and slain to a man (I am told that among the Haldannic Knights these men are seen as some sort of heroes. The true heroes are the winners). The Thyatians seem to have treacherously abandoned even their allies during the charge of the knights, withdrawing their forces across the Mesonian River or through River Guard Town into Thyatis City. Their ships patrolled both the Mesonian and the girdle, and our triumphant generals were coming up with a plan for crossing the river and assaulting their capital when the Thyatian Emperor finally recognized the folly of continued resistance. A treaty of peace was signed, though for some unknown reason Eriadna agreed to terms wherein we would withdraw from Thyatis, rather than finishing them off! For this, my brother died? But, never the less, in it the Thyatians were forced to allow our armies to continue across their lands unopposed, on our march to Glantri. I suppose that if the war had run its natural course, we could always have returned to the matter of subduing Thyatis once and for all later, treaty or no. So I must assume Eriadna had good reason, and I do suppose subsequent events proved her wise to want to reach, and eliminate, Glantri as quickly as possible. So she ordered our forces to advance as rapidly as they could through Thyatis and Karamaikos, and to push through the Five Shires and Darokin (which had neither the strength nor the will to prevent us from doing so), and on to Glantri.

For, just as our armies had crossed over the Mesonian River and were moving through that part of Thyatis which they call Kerendas, the vile Glantrians put to use the very forbidden magics that this war was fought to prevent them from developing. Knowing what was about to happen, they foolishly provoked us by destroying our ancient capital, Sundsball, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians, and murdering our empress. Just as an ode could be written for beautiful Aasla, one could be written for Sundsball, the City Built by Magic, the product of two millennia of civilization, destroyed in the blink of an eye by the Glantrian savages. The sinister magics caused magic to fail for a week. In Thyatis and Karamaikos (where the vanguard of our forces had already reached and crossed the Rugalob River), skyships crashed, at times even on bewildered troops. Instructions could not be received or messages sent through the usual magical means to home, so the commanders had to decide on their own. Most decided to push forward as fast as possible into Karamaikos, lest the perfidious Thyatians take advantage of the lack of magic as an opportunity to attack our troops. Other commanders, though, sought to withdraw to a defensible position and await instructions. Still others

stayed where they were, likewise awaiting orders. The Thyatians seemed too stunned by their recent defeat and too weakened to even dare to attempt their usual treachery and try and take advantage of this situation, which was a good thing for them, as we could have easily taught them a lesson had they forgotten already. [I think Zweibelterm is forgetting here that Thyatian wizards and priests would have been hit just as hard by the lack of magic as we were at the time. This is a common mistake to make for Alphonatians wizards, who frequently tend to forget that Thyatis had many skilled spellcasters of their own. Aritmanes.] [Something does seem to have taken place somewhere, however, as surviving Alphonatians after the war, either as refugees settling in Karamaikos or troops taking service with Thyatis or on the Isle of Dawn, do not account for nearly the entire Alphonatian army prior to the Week Without Magic. Many were killed when magic failed and skyships tumbled from the sky, but still more seem to have been killed during the week itself. Ed.]

Eventually magic returned and we discovered we had a new ruler, as Zandor declared himself emperor. He ordered the war to go on, though some thought this rash. He sent orders to the generals, commanding them to continue on through Karamaikos and push through the Five Shires and Darokin, as was the original plan, with Glantri as their ultimate goal. But he also summoned the Grand Council of Wizards, so hot tempered was he that he sought instant revenge and retribution to be visited upon the Glantrians, heedless of the consequences. Some of the council refused this order, seeing it as rash and intemperate, and indeed advocated negotiations to end the war. These he ordered into exile. But most submitted to his order, knowing that though it might be precipitous, the Glantrians had earned whatever fate we would visit upon them. The Grand Council undertook rapid preparations, and then left to destroy Glantri City just as they had destroyed our two greatest cities.

But then the Glantrians once again, as some had feared they would, unleashed their insidious magics. Though the surface world entered a dark age as a result of the unbelievable orgy of destruction they unleashed, the Immortals saw fit to preserve us from this fate, and saved us. We found ourselves, as befits the Followers of Air, elevated to a new status, our continent floating suspended over the Hollow World, inviolate from the savagery of the barbarians. Unfortunately, our council was scattered or cut down by the bloodthirsty Glantrians, and our armies stranded in Karamaikos, where many, I have been told, decided to settle temporarily.

For most Alphonatians living upon the floating continent, their memories have been altered to remove any traces of their existence upon the surface world. Only Alphonatia's more knowledgeable and experienced persons retain the true memories of Alphonatia's past. For the unaware, Alphonatia 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 Alphonatians aware of Alphonatia's real history, the empire is full of inconsistencies with its rewritten history. This noble lie has been embraced by the masses, despite the numerous inconsistencies that surround them. Perhaps the powers that altered their memories are just so powerful. Perhaps the masses are too busy in their duties to dwell on matters beyond their limited perspectives. Perhaps they do recognize them, but subliminally the real truth is too difficult to remember or believe. Whatever the case, most Alphonatians have no memory of the events surrounding our movement to the Hollow World, and indeed think we have always been here. The glories of our true past, and the comparison that can be made between our migration from Old Alphonatia to Mystara, remain beyond their comprehension. We are now adjusting to our new position at the center of the world, just as we adjusted to the move from

Old Alphatia to Mystara, and have quickly begun to re-master all the magics we are familiar with but which for a brief span of years were denied us. Thus the cycle of our history is renewed.

Regardless, the general population has been stripped of its knowledge of the Great War: the costly victories, the submission of Thyatis, the goal of Glantri at hand, and the treacherous sinking caused by the Doomsday Device. Still, for most of these types, the common servitors, it is not necessary for them to know, and was not even before—their role is to serve, and to know what they need to perform that role. It is the aristocracy's role to know of history, so that we may guide policy with wisdom. Still, it is a curious and interesting anomaly, worthy of study. To them those events have been replaced by the false memories of massive earthquakes and blistering infernos. Their individual lives and recovering from these catastrophes has occupied the majority of their time. Buildings have had to be rebuilt and deceased nobles have had to be replaced. However, life must and does go on. For those like myself that are privy to Alphatia's true history, the time since the sinking has seen us overseeing the recovery process. This not only includes repairing the physical damage; it also includes familiarizing ourselves with this Hollow World and its attributes. Recovery is not a massive unified project. Recovery is focused on restoring Alphatia's prestige through the rebuilding of its majestic sky navy and similar endeavors. Even now, years since the sinking, there is still much damage about. But already we have a new and worthy capital rising in Alphas'ar at Andaire, just as we built Sundsvall after Landfall. Eventually these projects will be addressed. However, true Alphatians do not dwell on such gloomy matters, but rather keep their gaze elevated.

ALPHAS'AR (Kingdom of)

Location: Center of the floating continent of Alphatia, between Blackheart and Shiye-Lawr in the west, Foresthome and Bettelwyn in the east, and Vertiloch in the south. **HW**

Area: 111,239 sq. mi. (288,110 sq. km.).

Population: 52,000, including Andaire (pop. 25,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Alphas'ar mints the imperial standard only.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Additional taxes include duties on parchments and writing materials. Under discussion also is a property tax, but for now this has been put off to encourage people to move here to settle the kingdom.

Government Type: Monarchy under the direct rule of the empress, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Logging, military, government sinecures, fur trading.

Important Figures: Eriadna (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Alphas'ar is one of two kingdoms directly ruled by Alphatia's empress acting as the queen. Alphas'ar is by far the younger and less fully settled of the two (the other being Vertiloch), but is never the less the location of Alphatia's imperial capital, Andaire.

Alphas'ar is a long kingdom at the very center of the Alphatian continent. It consists largely of forests, hills, and wild prairie. One major river waters Alphas'ar, a branch of the Greenlake River, and the capital is located along its banks. Alphas'ar seems to have been a wilderness until less than a decade ago, when it was created as a kingdom, and it became the location of the empire's new capital after the old one (Sundsvall) was destroyed.

This capital, Andaire, the seat of the imperial bureaucracy and the empress's court, is currently Alphas'ar's sole settlement of any significance. But the Alphatians are proud of how quickly they built it up from a collection of wooden structures to a city of stone, and it is an impressive feat. Many artisans, architects, and engineer-wizards from throughout Alphatia are said to have worked on this project. [Indeed, one of the artisans who I had redecorate part of my family estate after the death of my brother Cratham, the highly regarded Hallothia, is one such. I myself recommended that those involved in designing the new city hire her. I can be gladdened to tell you that she brought the same fine touch to work done there, and through the efforts of Hallothia and others, they have made the imperial palace a work of art in itself (well it should be, having been designed by architects and artisans from Haven), and monument to Alphatian power. Surely, no other land could have accomplished the same feat so hastily, and if we sound prideful at times then simply look upon the awesome majesty of the

imperial palace, and you will know that we do not brag, but simply speak the honest truth. As Sundsball was the City Built by Magic, so too shall Andaire be as well. Zweibelterm.] [As one who has had the good fortune to assist in some of these attempts, I must concur with Zweibelterm on this matter, though he clearly forgets about the many skilled artisans of Vertiloch and other Alphatian nations. I just fear that our good empress is forgetting a bit too much about Vertiloch, where reconstruction is also greatly required these days... Aritmanes.]

The rest of the kingdom is a sparsely-settled wilderness, formerly the hunting preserve of the empire. It is attracting new inhabitants at a fast rate, though, people who want to curry favor with the imperial court, hangers-on, and those who seek the life of a scribe or court functionary. Courtiers abound, willing to flatter the empress or a member of her family in the hope of some favor or boon. Andaire also continues to attract skilled artisans and accomplished mages, and the kingdom is the headquarters of the Grand Imperial Army and skynavy. This has resulted in impressive growth, though it has sapped much of the potential recovery out of Vertiloch as these people, once at the heart of that kingdom's economy, shift their abodes north to Alphas'ar.

Don't Miss (by Zweibelterm)

Why, the imperial capital of Andaire, of course, should be your first stopover in this kingdom. While it isn't what Aasla or even Sundsball was, without the soaring, majestic towers or the massive monuments of two thousand years of continuous habitation, so much has already been done in such a short span, it puts older, squalid barbarian cities such as Mirros to shame. The imperial palace, in particular, sits like a gorgeous pearl set in the center of the exquisite brooch that is Andaire.

Andaire is located along the Greenlake River, though far upstream from Sundsball, in Alphas'ar. Picture an isthmus between two lakes; the Greenlake River runs through them, cutting across the eastern/northeastern part of the isthmus, over which some bridges cross. The palace is located on a square in the middle axis of the isthmus, but set off to one side near the river. Eight streets run out from the palace square, as in Sundsball; to the northeast are some government buildings on the blocks adjacent to the palace square and a park, then the rivers. To the southeast is an aerodrome; on the other sides are businesses and homes for those who work for the imperial government. Along the southwestern shore of the lake are some piers, here river barge traffic can dock, bringing supplies to the city. The northern lake is used for yacht races, and along its shores homes for the wealthy are being built. The rest of the isthmus, as one gets further away from the palace square, is being built up into dwellings owned by landowners who rent them out to commoners, and barracks for the imperial guard in a fortified encampment, shops selling goods of all kinds, taverns, and a hard-ball court.

Also, the untamed beauty of the surrounding forests, the tranquility of repose it might give you, is an experience not to pass up. Do be aware, though, that these forests were set aside until very recently as a wilderness preserve, and many dangerous creatures may still lurk within their depths.

AMBUR (Kingdom of)

Location: Northeast corner of the floating continent of Alphatia, bordered by Arkan. **HW**

Area: 11,723 sq. mi. (30,363 sq. km.).

Population: 103,000, including Starpoint (pop. 30,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Arkan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Ambur also mints electrum stars, coins bearing the images of the currently famous.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. There is also a surtax imposed on theater tickets, as well as licensing fees to operate such establishments and to register acting troupes. There also previously existed a tax on astronomical research structures, but this tax has dwindled to a negligible amount in current circumstances, forcing an adjustment in the kingdom's finances.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, arts (especially acting), exploitation of magic.

Important Figures: Elshethara (Queen), Lodun the Doomed (Fading Star).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Ambur is a small kingdom in the far northeast of Alphatia. Ambur is the center of Alphatian artistry, especially with the destruction of Aasla and Sundsball by the wicked and treacherous Glantrians.

Ambur is a small but densely populated kingdom. However, much of it is undeveloped, with the people clustered along the Ambur River and the north shore of Crystal Lake. The former seacoast here was not as heavily populated as the coasts of other kingdoms, because the sea was so cold here, so the transfer to the Hollow World hasn't affected the pattern of settlement as significantly.

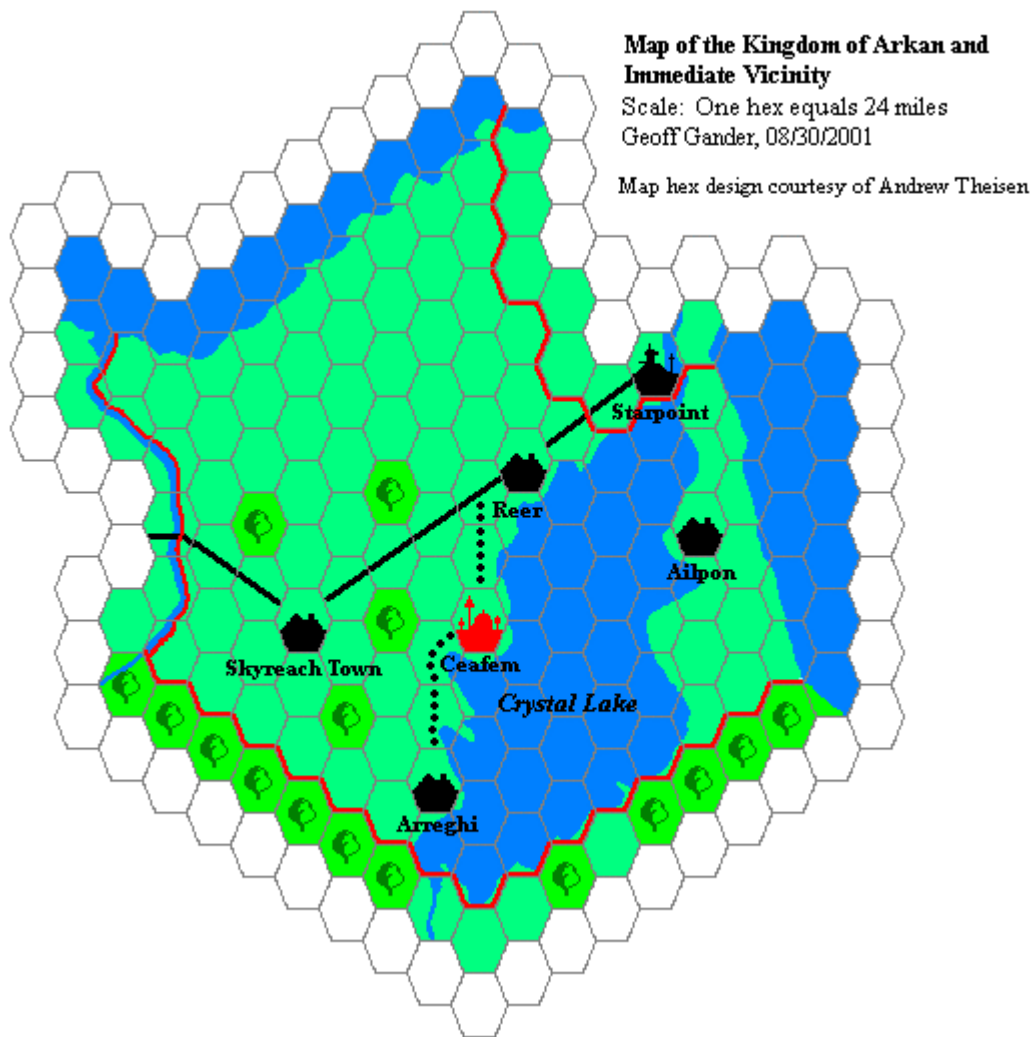
The inhabitants of Ambur are devoted to two things: the study of the stars, and the theater. With the transfer to the Hollow World, of course, astronomy has become a rather empty and moribund exercise. But even the common rabble of Ambur might hope to strike stardust on stage, and become the next Lodun the Doomed, a star in the firmament of celebrity.

In former times, the aristocrats were so obsessed with these twin callings—astronomy and acting—that they paid little mind to the servile classes. This seemed to attract those who were able to move, making Ambur, along with drab Stonewall, one of the most densely populated of Alphatia's kingdoms, despite its small size. Ambur's importance in the past as a center of astronomical research should not be scanted, as the star charts they produced remain of great import in navigation on the surface of Mystara even today. Without them, skyship captains might lose their bearings. A side effect of this is

that many Amburians are attracted to the adventure and romance of serving on a skyship, and they are found in unusual numbers in the fleet. One other change that has occurred as a result of the move to the Hollow World is that those who passed their time observing the stars now have little to do, and so some have turned their attentions to their duties, though this has caused some friction with the common classes, as many of them seem to have forgotten their place. This shows the fruits of the folly of inattentiveness, as a firm guiding hand is needed to keep the unenlightened in hand.

Don't Miss

The theaters in Starpoint are built on a lavish scale, and it is almost worth the price of admission to see experience their luxurious appointments even if the show is bad, which is rarely the case. Of these, the biggest and best is the Elshethara Theatre, built by the queen in her own honor over twenty years ago, with its glorious decorative features and its large staff of liberated servants. Also of note, some of the old astronomical institutes have turned as a means of supporting themselves to giving tours and serving as a museum of astronomical and astrological history, including putting on light shows using illusions of skylscapes and starry vistas.

ARKAN (Kingdom of)

Location: Northeast corner of the floating continent of Alphatia, inland from Ambur, east of Frisland and north of Foresthome, bracketing Crystal Lake. *HWA*

Area: 53,375 sq. mi. (138,240 sq. km.).

Population: 103,000, including Ceafem (pop. 8,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. *Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arkan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Arkan lost its own mint when Skyreach was unaccountably left on the surface, and makes due with coins minted in other kingdoms, especially Ambur.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Prior to the sinking, much of the kingdom's tax receipts were generated from the floating islets. With those left on the surface, the new king has tried to turn to other means of generating revenues to restore finances, imposing severe duties on agricultural exports.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (mainly grain), animal husbandry.

Important Figures: Qimm (King), Selcomad (Stonewall Army General), Rogart (Stonewall Historian), Etesse (Arkan Priest), Amagast (Stonewall Priest), Wolf-Hunter (Foresthorne Ranger), Lotaran (Arkan General), Arbandas (Arkan Druid), Trallans (Foresthorne Army Commander).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Arkan is often called Ar for short by many outsiders and local commoners, because ar is the common Alphatian word for ark, the arcane Alphatian (and official, with respects to the kingdom's name) word. Arkan is a flat land, almost entirely plains sprinkled with some small forests. Its most significant feature is Crystal Lake, around which most settlements, including the capital, a smallish town named Ceafem, is built. This town lacks many of the architectural features that make most Alphatian settlements noteworthy. This fact might be on account of Arkan's odd social situation. The Kingdom of Arkan seems to be almost denuded of aristocrats. Yes, there are some, but far fewer than in most of Alphatia. It is said that until quite recently, the aristocrats of Arkan lived above the kingdom on many miniature versions of floating continents, and that the kingdom's capital was set upon one of these. According to local lore, these floating islets disappeared recently. Those who believe Alphatia has always been a floating continent think they vanished around the same time as the earthquakes, but when pressed on how or where they went, they get perplexed and are unable to explain. Pressing them on the issue just seems to distress them. Those who think that Alphatia was until recently a continent elsewhere that was shifted here in a great cataclysm assert that the floating islet abodes of the aristocrats were simply left behind.

Still, the point remains that the proportion of aristocrats in Arkan is a quarter or a fifth or lower than what one would find in other Alphatian kingdoms. When the local population is asked about this in the presence of an aristocrat, they express grave concern over the issue. But when approached on their own, without an aristocrat observing the conversation, they do not seem to mind much and even seem pleased about it.

Arkan consists largely of farms and fields, and freshwater fisheries around Crystal Lake. This lake could serve as one of Alphatia's better resorts (a factor that is popular among Alphatians and well developed in other kingdoms), but the locals do not seem to have taken advantage of that opportunity. At least Crystal Lake does have beaches, though they seem to go unexploited. Arkan has been attacked by Stonewall for its agricultural and fishing resources, which are needed by that kingdom to feed its extensive population.

Don't Miss

As I said, Crystal Lake is the kingdom's most notable feature. Right now it is also a placid, relaxing place to visit, especially as it lacks the swarms of haughty aristocrats that frequent more common tourist locales. The people of Arkan are down to earth and seem truly contented and happy about their lives, and are unusually open and polite to outsiders (for Alphatians at any rate), making this one of the more pleasant places to visit.

AROGANSA (Kingdom of)

Location: South central rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Theranderol, east of Greenspur and west of Cadrin. *HW*

Area: 135,183 sq. mi. (350,125 sq. km.).

Population: 138,000, including Bluenose (pop. 45,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. *Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Arogansa also mints platinum argers worth 50 gp each and electrum porpoises (ep).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Hospitality industries catering to tourists have additional taxes—lodging taxes per diem are imposed, as are meal taxes at restaurants. These are low as a percentage of the total cost, but due to the volume of tourism used to bring in much revenue. With tourism sluggish lately, the revenue has declined, and the queen is said to be interested in finding means of making up the shortfall.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, tourism, exploitation of magic.

Important Figures: Detteria Scarback (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Arogansa is a true and proper Alphatian kingdom, second only to my own fatherland of Haben in refinement and taste. Arogansa places almost too firm a hand upon the servile masses, but at least they know to keep them in their proper place, unlike uncouth Stonewall. Still, I find the punishments a bit too harsh, but at least the commoners know to take them as their due, and do not express any of the unbecoming insolence that is sometimes tolerated elsewhere by less vigilant aristocrats.

This proper, enthusiastic application of the norms has made this kingdom one of the richest in all Alphatia. Its fine forests and rich plantations are cultivated by suitably submissive slaves and servants. The beaches overlook the vast span of the Hollow World as it spins beneath us, a vision kept to the gaze of those with the taste to appreciate it, because the untalented, who aren't able to protect themselves with levitation or flight, may plummet to a deserved death if they get too ardent in looking upon this vista. Estates and villas of the aristocrats dot the scenic countryside, abodes of the prosperous elites and keeping watch over their dependent minions. Qimm of Arkan has failed to see the tourism possibilities inherent in his kingdom around Crystal Lake and develop them for those with discerning tastes, but even now the more visionary and insightful Arogansans are contemplating how to revive tourism in their nation, which has fallen off considerably on account of the sudden disappearance of the azure seas. While the queen is more interested in military matters, as the kingdom has attacked neighboring Cadrin, others in Arogansa have turned their attentions to solving the problem of slumping

trade. Truly, with such leadership, Arogansa will continue to prosper for the foreseeable future. [Unless one is an Alphantian wizard, Arogansa is probably a place to avoid. It used to have beautiful beaches, but I've always found that Arogansa's harsh treatment of those already punished by lack of magic to be too extreme. The lower classes are already disadvantaged enough without rules like these adding to their misery, and the aristocracy of Arogansa really show no mercy for the less fortunate, I think. Now that those beaches are gone, there really is no reason to go there, except if one wishes to witness just how extreme Alphantian wizards can sadly become. Aritmanes.]

BETTCLYN (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeastern rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Foresthome, east of Vertiloch and Alphas'ar and north of Randel and Theranderol. *HWA*

Area: 172,595 sq. mi. (447,020 sq. km.).

Population: 330,000, including Citadel (pop. 30,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. *Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Randellyn dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Bettcllyn also mints gold citadels worth 10 gp each.

Taxes: 15% income tax on all those of favored supplicant status or higher. Labor performed by supplicants is considered taxable income for whomever that labor is provided.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (especially grain), cattle, sheep.

Important Figures: Ulynara (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: Herd animals of all types abound here, from the common cow, to catoblepas, rhinoceros, and llamas. Earth elementals, gargoyles, and various living statues are not uncommon throughout the countryside. Lately stranger creatures have been entering the land from the ruins of Sundsvall.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Kanshahu of Kimpos.

The Land

Bettcllyn is a fertile land of gently rolling hills and lush plains. It is bordered on the south by the Grey Mountains, and to the east [the Hollow World's east corresponds to the outer world's west. *Ed.*] by the Vertiloch Stretch. The western towns, from Uffacos to Leweo, all sit atop the great cliff, while the capital of Citadel straddles the Ulyn River. Uffacos is the most northern city of Bettcllyn, and rests along the border of Foresthome. It is constantly bathed in mists coming from the Ulyn River as it crashes over the edge of the continent.

Citadel is the heart and soul of our kingdom. It is the greatest testament of the devotion of the Bettcllyn, or of any people anywhere, that can be seen in this world. A towering fortress the size of a mountain, Citadel is both practical and fantastic. The lower levels are a fortress, the likes of which could never be reproduced on this world. The outer heights are decorated by colored glass and lush gardens, and gigantic bases which collect water from rainfall and send vast cascades crashing through the inner levels.

The People

Bettcllyn is of course one of the most illustrious kingdoms in the empire. Many foreign mages find our manner of rule to be strange, and I have even heard some say that it is distasteful, but those not of Bettcllyn know not the true will of the Immortals. In Bettcllyn, things are as they should be. The

aristocrats spend their time in the most admirable and righteous of pursuits; shouldering the responsibilities of rulership, magical studies, and most importantly, deciding the will of the Immortals themselves.

In this fair land there is no need for one man to shackle another with chains. All of the Bettelwyn, from the lowliest supplicant [supplicant is the term used in Bettelwyn to denote anyone who is not an aristocrat. Some Bettelwyn also use the term favored supplicant to distinguish commoners from slaves, and most favored supplicant to denote those that would be considered gentry elsewhere in the empire. Ed.] to the queen herself strive to improve their nation, their lot in life, and their own minds. In doing so they bring greater glory to themselves, as well as those that they serve. Such as it is, supplicants are given great latitude in managing their daily lives. They may choose where to live, whom to love, and whom to serve. Those who make wise choices may prosper, but woe to those who chose not to serve the viprics, for that path especially, leads to ruinous destruction.

Like any of the kingdoms in Alphatia, Bettelwyn is a nation of magic. Many wizards, most of them members of one of the factions of the Followers of Earth, tend to gather together in the major cities. Bettelwyn, such as myself, who have received clerical training tend to our flocks across the countryside. The more powerful viprics build great cathedrals and monuments to which supplicants flock by the hundreds and thousands. Supplicants praise and worship these clerics, and in return their benefactors provide them safety.

Viprics spend most of their time wresting the secrets of the Immortals from this land. To be worshipped is to be powerful. We understand this, just as the Immortals do. Most clerics serve their patron Immortals, but we of Bettelwyn have a deeper understanding of these beings. We understand that those who wield power in this world may come to wield power in the next, and so we act in concert with these exalted beings. We are Their partners... Their equals.

Competition for supplicants is fierce among the upper class, and those who cannot command the power of the Immortals on this plane are sent to search for it on the next. Because of this competition, the face of Bettelwyn is constantly undergoing change. Many cathedrals fall into disrepair once their masters have lost their flocks, and these husks can be seen across the kingdom.

Recent History

Don't Miss

Citadel is of course the most renowned monument of Bettelwyn, but there are many others. Megtheria Dom, just south and west of Isoin, rivals all other cathedrals in sheer magnitude and beauty. The patroness there, though demanding much of her supplicants, is also generous to reward her loyal worshippers. The vast grounds of the College of Rock in Sabetta seem to stretch as far as the eye can see, and some rumor that the courtyard there is connected to the Plane of Earth.

Do Miss

The Kingdom of Bettelwyn is not without its hazards. Many great cathedrals have been abandoned and allowed to deteriorate over time. Some are now home to various monsters, such as gargoyles. I would strongly suggest avoiding such places. It also might be a good idea to steer clear of northwestern Bettelwyn near Lonbal and Weitara where viprics Cerdanyl and Injarryn are currently having a dispute. The battle to claim supplicants in the area is very intense at the moment and unwary travelers could very well be caught up in a messy situation.

BLACKHEART (Kingdom of)

Location: Northwest-center of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Frisland, east of the Kerothar Mountains, west of Alphas'ar and north of Shiye-Lawr. **WA**

Area: 74,326 sq. mi. (192,505 sq. km.).

Population: 45,000, including Shraek (pop. 15,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Blackheart sees no need to mint coins. Indeed, Blackheart mints no coins of its own, but rather accepts the coins of other Alphatian kingdoms.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Payment of taxes and fees by the mages, including the "tower tax" (which actually applies to all types of structures built by the various wizards) insures that the kingdom will stay out of their affairs and leave them alone. Those who fail to pay often receive unwelcome visits. There are also tolls to enter Shraek, as well as surtaxes on all transactions conducted in that city.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Magical research, privacy, herbs.

Important Figures: Belgoroeth the Lamer (King).

Flora and Fauna: It might be easier to list the things which cannot be found in Blackheart. That list follows: Anything pure of heart.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Furrny Mallok.

Blackheart is a land that few people survive unscathed. Those who enter its borders and are able to exit again with their bodies intact might have been better off if they had died.

The Land

The countryside of Blackheart is dominated by dense and overgrown woods. The canopy is dark and what little light makes it through to the forest floor does not provide a traveler with a single shred of comfort. Foliage near the ground is warped and misshapen, and more often than not is covered with vicious barbs and thorns. Many of the larger trees are choked with creepers and vines. It is a wonder that anything lives here at all...and unfortunate that they do.

Dark canopies are the favorite hiding place of lurking predators, ready to pounce at anything that should wander by. The rivers and lakes in this land are the most dangerous places of all. Many beasts and monsters wait for the unwary to let down their guard while they drink. Nearly any monster imaginable, and many that cannot be imagined, are to be found in this forsaken kingdom.

Decrepit keeps and crumbling towers abound throughout the forests. Many are built from the bone-white stone that is quarried here and protrude from the earth like desiccated carcasses of something long

dead. Some of these sites are abandoned and long forgotten, but many more have occupants. Which sites are worse to visit is hard to determine.

The People

Blackheart is a twisted realm filled with the foulest miscreants that Alphatia can produce. The wizards that thrive here are those that thrive upon the blackest of arts. They conduct tortuous experiments on beast, and man, and they do so without fear of retribution from the local authorities. The results of these experiments—twisted and hate-filled creatures for the most part—roam the countryside having either escaped, been discarded, or been released into the wild on a whim.

Shraek is the only large settlement in the kingdom. Its corrupted streets serve as meeting places for those that need the less than reputable services that the occupants of Blackheart can provide. Its king, if he can be called such, has only one law: Do not disturb the king. Anything else is fair game. Private wars are commonplace, although you won't see many duels in the streets. Wizards here are more silent in their plotting, and more subtle.

Recent History

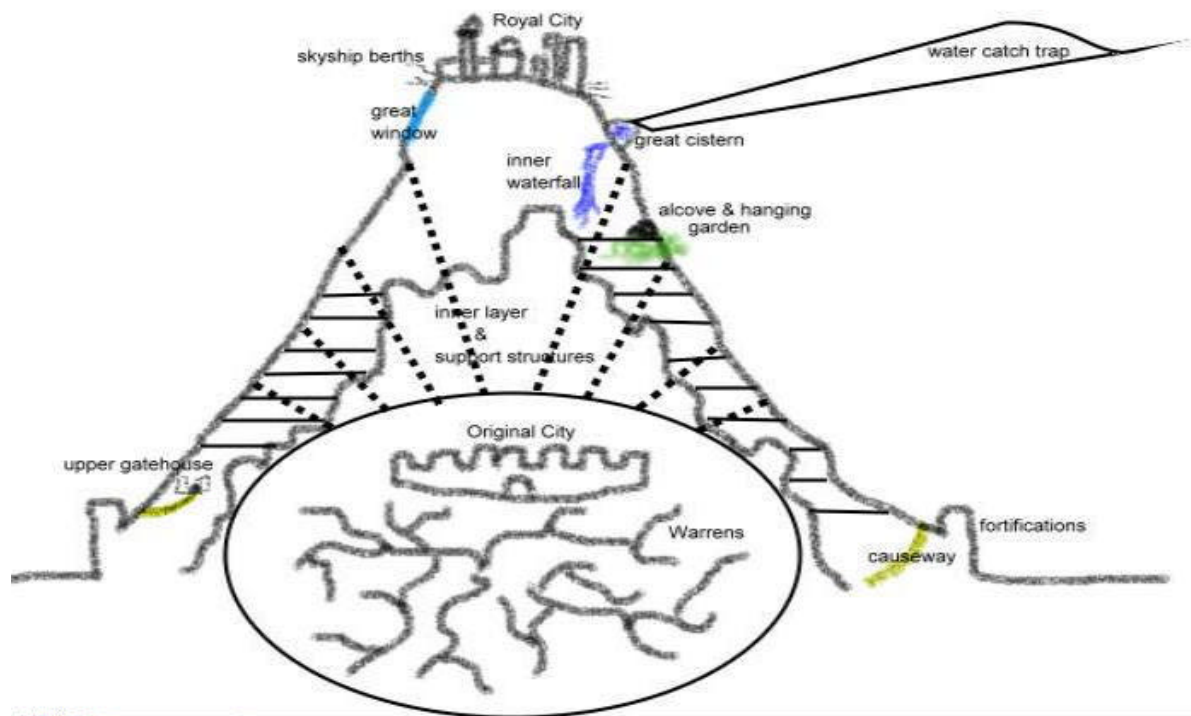
Most of the wizards of Blackheart stayed locked in their towers during the Great War several years ago. Messengers were dispatched to garner their support of course, but most of those can now be found either strapped to a research table or wandering the Ugly Woods in mangled and misshapen bodies.

A few wizards died during the week of no magic. Be thankful for small blessings. Some Alphatians might say that, but not those in Blackheart. Those wizards that died were for the most part killed by experiments set free when magic failed, and many of those experiments are still terrorizing the countryside.

Blackheart remains a quiet realm. Quiet if you discount all of the screaming. Few wizards here make themselves known by interfering in Alphatian politics.

Do Miss

Do not venture here. The entire realm is a cesspool of villainy.

CITADEL (City of)

Location: Northwestern Bettellyn, along the southern shore of the Ulyn River, floating continent of Alphatia. **HWA**

Area: The size of a mountain.

Population: 30,000. [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Randelllyn dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on all those of labored supplicant status or higher. Labor performed by supplicants is considered taxable income for whomever that labor is provided to.

Government Type: Capital of the Kingdom of Bettellyn.

Industries: The chief industries of the city include education, things arcane, and bureaucracy.

Important Figures: Ulynara (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: See Bettellyn. In addition, magical constructs (especially those pertaining to the element of earth) abound in Citadel. Gargoyles and living statues scurry throughout the vast complex carrying out the orders of their masters. Earth elementals can often be seen scaling the inner walls of the city, as well as tunneling through the lower levels and those portions and passages that have collapsed.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Kanshahu of Kimpos.

Citadel is truly one of the wonders of our world. It was one of the very first settlements in Alphatia. Originally designed as a military supply post, Citadel was founded on a defensible hill along the Ulyn

River just before its waters became too shallow to support river craft. The small fortress sent resupply ships down the river in order to support troops in their campaigns against savages inhabiting the area. After the mainland was secured, there was little need for Citadel's military responsibilities. It was not long, however, before river boats started sailing in the opposite direction and Citadel became a major stopping point for trade goods headed from the eastern coast toward the capital of Sundsvall. Over the span of 2,000 years, that small trading post has expanded into a mountainous structure reaching 1,000 feet high. The outer portions of the city are the most densely populated while many of the inner portions have been abandoned or filled in with rubble. The royal city stands at the top of Citadel.

The lowest level of Citadel resembles a castle parapet, although on a much grander scale. 600 years ago this level was the city. It is said that wizards from Thothia journeyed to Citadel and strengthened the base of the city so that it could begin to grow upwards instead of outwards, but this rumor (some might say blasphemy) cannot be proven. [The original settlement of Citadel was built at the top of a hill and now most likely resides deep in the bowels of the current day city. As Citadel expanded over the centuries, it outgrew its original perimeter and slowly covered the entire hill that it was built upon. So in fact the lowest levels of Citadel are not the oldest levels. Ed.] Now its main function is to serve as support for the rest of the city. The outer wall still stands, heavily modified from its original incarnation. There are no entrances into the city from ground level. Centuries of magical strengthening have left the walls polished smooth with no breaches. The old gatehouses and windows were sealed up long ago. The only openings to the outside world at this level are the battlements, several of which are still standing (and in operational condition) around this mountain of a city. The inner level is a dank and lightless place. Most of the inner level resembles a natural cavern more than a city. Few travel through this level (other than the occasional geomancer), as the chances of being caught in a dangerous city quake are highest here.

Most supplicants dwell on the mid levels of Citadel. There are numerous openings in the outer wall at these levels. Vast causeways lead from the ground level to mid level entrances. Many of these are lush hanging gardens, supplied with water from the levels above. Fine restaurants are common here, as are many of the magical colleges and institutes. It is at just such an alcove that the famed cathedralists make their headquarters. [The cathedralists are reportedly an offshoot of the Followers of Earth who have devoted themselves to the study and construction of architectural wonders. There are also rumors of constant skirmishes between the cathedralists and their geomancer neighbors below. Ed.] The inner chambers of the mid levels are still damp and dark, but more light (either natural or magical) reaches their interior. Supplicants live and work in these areas, and there are several fortified positions that guard entrances to the lower level.

The upper levels are encased in huge sheets of glass and crystalline rocks which allow most of the interior to be bathed in natural light. Vast gossamer catch basins, magically woven from spider silk, are stretched like the translucent petals of a giant flower all around the outer wall here. Each morning these delicate constructs collect enough water to fill the many pools and cisterns throughout the city. On a normal day one can hear a small, but steady trickle of water constantly echoing throughout these levels. During rainfall this trickle becomes a torrent, and gushing waterfalls can be seen dropping from one level to the next. The catch basins are usually quickly retracted during such occurrences because heavy rainfall (or worse) may damage the spider silk weave.

At the very top of Citadel sits the royal city. This is a glamorous city, much like other large Alphatian cities, except that it has a view that could match any of that in Floating Arkan. Several skyship berths rim the outer wall here. [At this point the outer wall is little more than a waist-high railing. Ed.] Arching bridges and narrow catwalks reach between many of the buildings here. In many places the ground opens up to reveal the levels below. In the very center of the royal city is Queen Uynara's palace.

Don't Miss

The upper levels of Citadel on a rainy day are spectacular to behold. If one can put up with the torrent of noise that accompanies the waterfalls then one will be in for a sight they will never forget.

Do Miss

Some of the inner levels, especially those near ground floor, are quite dangerous. The threat of city quakes is high, and few rarely survive being caught in them at those depths. [City quakes are caused by the pressure of the higher levels on the lower ones as the city settles. This pressure can cause ripples in the very stone of Citadel itself, and in structurally weaker areas these ripples can be deadly. Ed.] On occasion a creature will emerge from the depths to wreak havoc upon higher levels. There is also the threat of gargoyles and constructs which free themselves from their masters' control.

CADRIN (Kingdom of)

Location: Southeast rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, wedged between Arogansa in the west and Randel in the north. **HW**

Area: 49,883 sq. mi. (129,195 sq. km.).

Population: 90,000, including Archpoint (pop. 15,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp).

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Additional taxes include a lodging tax, though it is lower than that found in Arogansa.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (especially grain), tourism.

Important Figures: Idon II (King).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Cadrin is what happens when an elf is selected to do an Alphatian's job. The result is a kingdom that is nothing more than a pale imitation of the splendor and success of Arogansa. Everything is like Arogansa, only not quite as much, and even the plantations are not as well kept. Even the food is bland and mediocre (yes, I did taste it once, and learned from that experience not to let it pass my palate again!). As a result of this deficiency in quality, Cadrin has to cater to wealthy but unsophisticated common rabble. It's a nice enough place for such people I suppose, more even than they deserve. But people of true taste and refinement will pass Cadrin by, and stick with Arogansa. The inhabitants of Cadrin seem to sense their inferiority by comparison with Arogansa, and there is disaffection from them, and an effort to try and surpass them. But it remains the case that what can be found in Cadrin can be found in superior form in Arogansa. Therefore, I shall not waste any further space on this poseur-kingdom.

Note that the capital's name used to be Archport, but the king changed it recently as there is no longer a sea for it to serve as a port of. Archpoint thus more accurately describes its present condition, as a point sticking out over the void. [I've always found Cadrin to be a likeable place. It lacks the luxury of Arogansa, but then it also lacks the extreme attitudes of Arogansa's aristocracy and harsh treatment of the commoners, which has often kept me away from Arogansa as I found myself unable to close my eyes to the hardships that the lower classes were subjected to there and which then ruined the time I spent there. Cadrin has less luxury and the landscapes aren't as beautiful as in Arogansa, but in my eyes that has always been a strength here, as the landscape wasn't as manipulated or engineered as in Arogansa, which gives it a much more realistic feel and natural beauty. Cadrin is really quite a beautiful place in its own right, and I've always had a better time there than in Arogansa myself (and

their food really isn't as bad as Zweibelterm suggests). Most foreigners would find Eadrin a nice place to visit, I think. Aritmanes.]

FORESTHOME (Kingdom of)

Location: Northeast rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, between Bettellyn in the south, Arkan in the north, and Frisland and Alphas'ar in the west. **HW**

Area: 296,554 sq. mi. (768,075 sq. km.).

Population: 85,000 (90% human, 10% elven), including Greenwood (pop. 15,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Arborean dialect), Elvish (Shipe-Lawr dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Foresthome also mints an electrum coin called the arbor.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Logging is limited, due to elven influence, with permits and licensing fees required beforehand before any timber can be culled.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, logging.

Important Figures: Kikania (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Foresthome is a heavily timbered kingdom and one of Alphatia's largest in size, though smallest in population. The elves keep to the forests, while the human Alphatians live along the coasts of Lyn Lake and the banks of the Eastfallow River. Many also reside along the rim of the continent, though migration from that precipice to the interior lands of Foresthome seems to be happening. The forests are heavily regulated to prevent over-culling and depletion of these resources, with strict punishment of those who fail to observe these restrictions. The region between Lyn Lake and the continental rim is devoted to agricultural plantations, while the lake itself is the source of much of the fish caught in Alphatia these days. Those looking for relaxing pastoral beauty need look no further than Foresthome, one of the most naturally beautiful parts of Alphatia. Foresthome has started a heavy program of canal-building to link its navigable rivers and lakes.

Don't Miss

The city of Greenwood is unusual in several respects. Built along the Eastfallow River, most of its large buildings are constructed out of stone, but shaped to resemble towering redwoods. The more humble structures are built amidst live trees, so that from a distance Greenwood almost resembles an elven city, appearing as part of the forest. What gives it away are some of the more extravagant artistic touches the Alphatians are known for. This gives it a distinctiveness all its own, a blending of two aesthetic styles.

FRISLAND (Kingdom of)

Location: Northwest corner of the floating continent of Alphatia, bracketed by Arkan and Foresthome in the east and Blackheart in the south. **WA**

Area: 160,000 sq. mi. (414,720 sq. km.).

Population: 80,000, including Shiell (pop. 15,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Frisian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Frisland mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Frisland also imposes export fees on timber, agricultural produce, and livestock.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, logging.

Important Figures: Edjer the Twisted (King).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

Frisland is another large but sparsely populated kingdom, where the people live almost like my own Antalian people. It is said by some that their lifestyle was strongly influenced by a people known as the Vanifey, who are said to have once inhabited Alphatia in the distant past. This might explain why their lifestyle is different from that of most Alphatians, and the Vanifey must have lived much like the Antalians do. The city of Shiell, built on the shores of the lake of the same name, is an exception to this generalization, as it is more like other Alphatian cities. Frisland's other settlements are mostly built between the mountains and the continental rim, just like most Antalian villages are built between the mountains and the shores of the Ostzee. The lands of Frisland, despite its temperate climate, even resemble those of the Antalian Wastes in some respects, with evergreen forests and scrub plains prevailing.

Don't Miss

While not the source of mineralogical wealth like the southern portion of the range, the northern Kerothar Mountains are majestic, with river valleys cutting into them which almost made me homesick. This is a largely unspoiled wilderness, with varieties of flora and fauna usually found in colder regions seemingly acclimatized to thrive in temperate Frisland.

GREENSPUR (Kingdom of)

Location: Southwest spur of the floating continent of Alphatia, west of Arogansa. *HW*

Area: 90,787 sq. mi. (235,140 sq. km.).

Population: 565,000, including Eagret (pop. 90,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. *Ed.*]

Languages: Alphatian (Eagren dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Greenspur mints platinum staters and electrum spurs as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Fees are also imposed on the purchase of arms and armor (though these taxes are waived for soldiers serving in the kingdom's or empire's forces) and excise fees on agricultural exports.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, military.

Important Figures: Sildreth II (King).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

One of the embodiments of Alphatia's might, Greenspur's capital of Eagret is home to the largest skyship base in the entire world. Greenspur cleaves close to Alphatian traditions—while the warriors serving Alphatia are treated justly according to their due, they are still kept at hand and not allowed to get above their station as in benighted Stonewall. Greenspur thus achieves the proper balance of things, keeping to the laws and maintaining the natural order and not losing the appropriate distinction between respected servants and the master-classes. Greenspur can thus serve as an example for places like Stonewall that have nearly Thyatianized, and be a model for a successful and prosperous kingdom, while these other places are just hives of teeming and hungry rabble. Greenspur's lands resemble its other fine features, consisting as they do of fertile lowlands, gently rolling hills, and pleasant forests and glades. The fertility of the land is brought to fruition on the plantations by diligent and obedient slaves and servants. This kingdom and its capital of Eagret are one of the true showcases of Alphatia.

A note to travelers destined for Greenspur. Every inhabitant and visitor must carry identification papers indicating their name, location of residence, current job, and (for guest-papers) duration of visit. The kingdom's guards and security forces can demand that these papers be produced at any time (though they usually only do so when they believe something untoward is happening). So be sure to keep your papers on you at all times during your stay here.

Don't Miss

The imperial skyship base at Eagret. Though for obvious reasons of national security, especially to prevent additional skyjacking attempts, access to the base itself is limited, one can still get a good view

of it from afar. There you shall see the manifest might of Alphatia, the rows of ships under construction or maintenance in the docks. If you are fortunate, you shall see one or two flying aloft, sailing the very skies.

HAVEN (Kingdom of)

Location: Southwestern rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, west of Vertiloch, south of Shiye-Lawr and Stoutfellow, fronting the Aaslan void. **HW**

Area: 245,424 sq. mi. (635,650 sq. km.).

Population: 895,000, including Dobir (pop. 15,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Aaslan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Haven mints platinum frescoes and electrum medallions as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Additional surtaxes are imposed on sale of art, but not art supplies.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (grains, fruits, vegetables), art and artistic education, cattle and sheep.

Important Figures: Kryndylva (Queen), Mplertendal (Famous Artist).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Haven is the most elegant jewel in the constellation of Alphatian kingdoms. Even in its current marred state with Aasla in ruins, Haven shines more brightly than any other nation. Haven is my home, and I am born of Aasla, but there are none who with justice can contradict my description of my fatherland, as all who visit it will be impressed by its natural beauty, the splendor of its artistic decorations, and the social order which makes this flourishing of art and magic possible in the first place. The refined and sophisticated tastes of Haven's discerning aristocrats is renowned across the world. Crumbled Vertiloch and rustic Alphas'ar may claim to be the heart and soul of Alphatia, because they are (or were) the seat of the imperial government, but all who visit Haven know that their claims are empty, for we are Alphatia's true heart and true soul. Whenever anyone thinks of Alphatia, Haven is the first nation that comes to their mind, for Haven is Alphatia. [I find Zweibelterm to be a bit too fascinated with his home nation here, but I can scarcely deny that Haven is a major source of artistic expression in Alphatia, though I find it quite odd that he fails to mention the wizard Mplertendal who has kept alive the love for the artistic here and helped it grow in the last three centuries. Since Mplertendal is a known follower of my own Immortal patron, Alphatia, the people of my order have heard much of her and have the greatest respect for her and her achievements. Still, the philosophies of Alphatia have spread to all nations of the empire, and Haven hardly has a monopoly on the arts as Zweibelterm seems close to suggesting here. Aasla, before its sad destruction, was not quite as beautiful or marvelous as Sundsball, for example, although it was remarkable for another city to be such a close second in splendor to the imperial capital, and I'm not trying to belittle the achievements of

the people of Haben, just point out that their achievements are not quite as unique as Zweibelterm comes close to suggesting. Aritmanes.]

Haben is large, but not unpopulated as is Foresthome. Haben's population is large, but not crowded as in Stonewall. Haben's people are refined, not rubes like Frisland or coarse like Randel or insolent like Stonewall. Haben is the perfect epitome of Alphetian civilization. This is why the envious and nasty Glantrians destroyed our brilliant capital of Aasla first. None the less, a new capital now rises at Dobir, inland from the precipice of the continental rim, at the confluence of the Alphas and Ast Rivers.

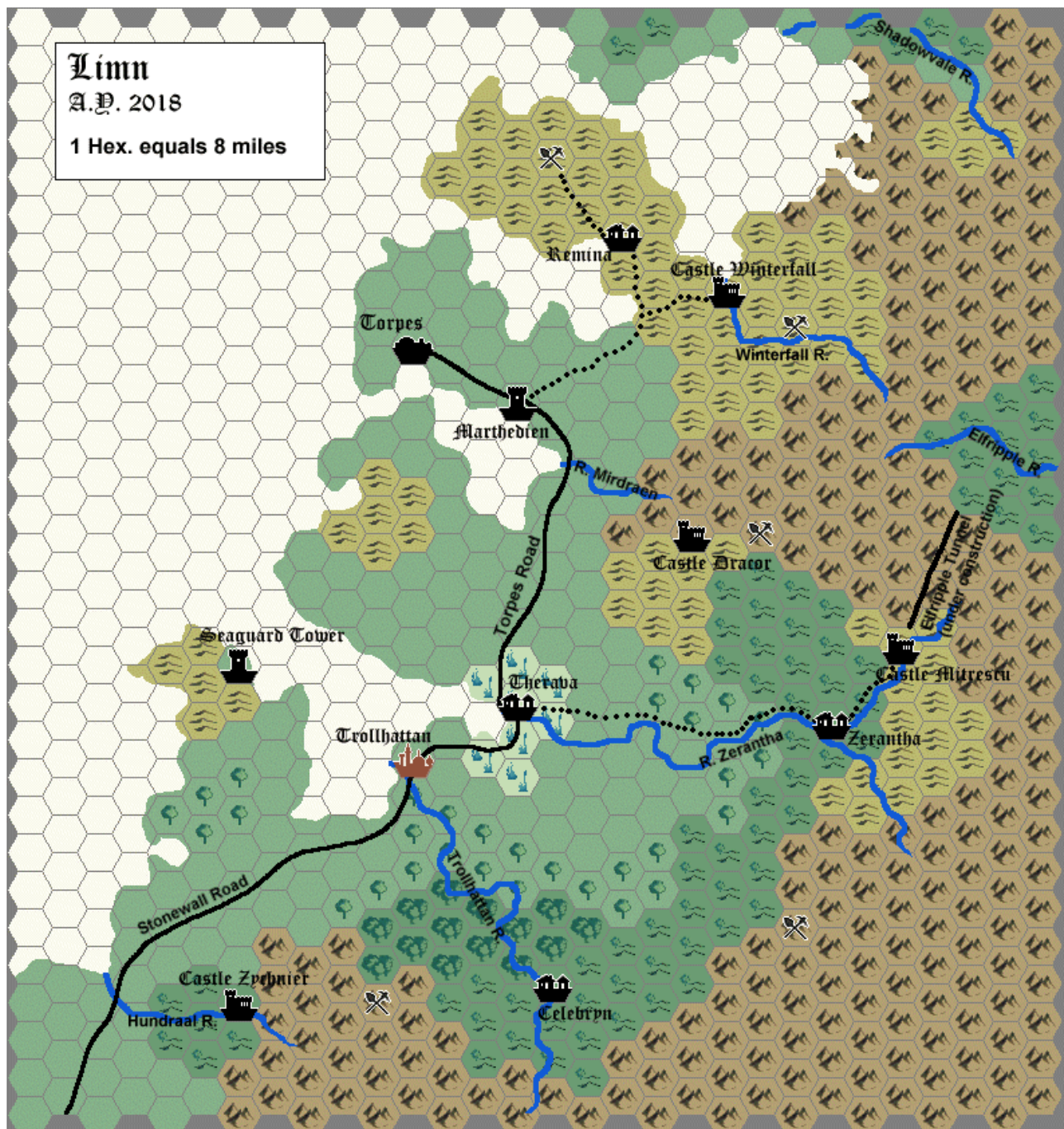
Haben's towns and country estates are all decorated in the style of Alphetian art, its industrious laborers till the lands of Haben's plantations, producing a surfeit of produce which enrich their masters, thus allowing both art and magic to be studied to their highest peak in all the world. Even the streets of Haben are constructed in artistic patterns, as if they were a mosaic.

Alas, one scar blights Haben's beauty—a reminder of the crude and cruel barbarism of foreigners. Glantrian dogs, envious of our achievements, did burn the most exquisite of cities. Aasla is now a charred necropolis of ash, broken walls, shattered statuary, and decaying corpses. Aasla, placed as it is on the rim of the continent, a port where there is no sea, will likely not recover. Especially since so many of its inhabitants are dead or scattered. But Alphetian power and pride is unquenchable—as I said, a new shining city is being constructed at Dobir. Aasla will remain an example of the destructive wickedness of barbarous people, while Dobir will show what Alphetians are made of.

Don't Miss

The queen's castle, located halfway between Dobir and Aasla, rivals and I would say even surpasses the imperial palace in splendor and artistic beauty. It is covered in statuary, gilding, ornate flourishes, gleaming spires, frescoes, mosaics, and other art.

LMN (Kingdom of)



Location: Ledge on the west-central rim of the floating continent of Alphatia between the Kerothar Mountain Range and the precipice, south of Frisland and north of Stonewall. **HW**

Area: 9,977 sq. mi. (25,840 sq. km.). This is the official number as decreed at the creation of the kingdom. Unofficially the sphere of influence of Linn has extended into the less-developed areas of Stoutfellow.

Population: 225,000, including Trollhattan (pop. 30,000). Again, this is the official count. Which races should be included here is a constant source of bureaucratic struggles.

Languages: Alphetian (Linn dialect), Orcish, Goblin, Sylban.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Linn mints no other coins, but accepts all kinds of coins and other wealth as payment.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. An additional fee is charged to register monster variants created through experimentation. In order to encourage the kingdom to remain a haven for monsters, they have also imposed a 5% surtax on “normal” beings (humans and demihumans) living here.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Magical experimentation (especially modification and creation of monsters). Also some mining exports such as iron and gold.

Important Figures: Drushipe (King), Mellora (Queen), Count Mzilikazi (Lord), The Dragon (Lord).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Derentwyn.

The Land

One of the many confusing properties of this nation is the extent of its borders. Knowing the minds of orcs, goblins and other barbaric humanoids, they don't have much regard for official borders in imperial decrees. This is, in my opinion, the reason why the borders of Linn have failed completely in containing its population. When traveling across the Kerothar Mountains, I met a goblin chief claiming allegiance to the “great chief” in Trollhattan, and collecting tolls on his behalf just after leaving the forests of Shipe-Lawr, while I technically had just entered Stoutfellow territory. From what I have found out, it seems like the sphere of influence of the king spreads from the official borders of Linn, and roughly to the summit of the Kerothar Mountains and the borders of Frisland.

The main portion of Linn is the great basin formed by the Trollhattan and Zeranthe Rivers. This basin is covered in deeply forested hills near the mountains, which give way to fertile plains further east towards the rim. To the north, the plains give way to a set of more barren hills, which contain a lot of useful minerals. It is an outrage how these abundant natural resources are being wasted. Even in these days with a food shortage in large areas of the empire, there is almost no organized cultivation of the plains. It seems like the constant threat of raids by their neighbors discourages most creatures that even have high enough intelligence from putting a lot of effort into something as easily destroyed as a grain field. The same seems to go for mining. Mining seems to be restricted to those who are able to defend their territory, such as this entity referred to as “the Dragon” who protects his mines fiercely with a huge private army. This waste of resources could, however, actually be a blessing in disguise until the imperial armies clear out this land for more worthwhile purposes. The low food production of Linn makes it impossible for the population of the land to grow out of hand, at least.

I have also had reason to suspect that an extensive network of caves stretches under the whole area, possibly connecting the monster lairs that are everywhere in this land. It does not, however, seem to be generally accessible.

The People

The “people” of Linn is another troublesome question in this bureaucratic nightmare of a nation. The population count of Linn as seen here is merely the result of the last imperial census. The administration of King Drushipe, on the other hand, claims the figure to be at least 307,000. This is a constant source of conflict between bureaucrats of Trollhattan and Alphas’ar. Of course, the liberal views of the Trollhattan administration clearly show that their own census is not to be trusted. I assume that they have both counted people who stay outside Linn’s borders most of the year, in addition to counting various creatures obviously unsuitable for the imperial census. The official count includes about 2% dwarves, 11% elves (mostly outcasts from Shipe-Lawr), 9% humans, 71% intelligent humanoids, and 7% others. Non-aristocratic undead are not counted, even if they are allegedly intelligent.

With this highly mixed population it seems to be a wonder how they manage to avoid eating each other, especially with such low food production. From what I have been able to gather, there are indeed frequent small skirmishes between the minor lords and chieftains of Linn. As described below, however, it seems like the most powerful lords intervene whenever these struggles become too large, or when one chieftain manages to gather enough power. Barbaric as it may seem to more civilized nations, it seems like it is sheer fear of these powerful lords that keep the others in check.

The government of Linn is a chapter of its own. It is more fitting to a barbarian nation than to a kingdom of the Alphatian Empire. Any orc with who can cast a spell can be a lord here. The formal government structure is limited to the king and queen in addition to an advisory council of 50 aristocrats they appoint. Apart from this, gaining power in Linn seems to be equal to picking up a sword and killing every opponent. King Drushipe seems to be either too incompetent to do something about this, or unwilling to restore law and order to the land.

Even though I spent most of my time in Linn trying to avoid being eaten by hungry trolls and other hideous monsters, an experienced bureaucrat such as myself could not help but notice that something is not as it seems when it comes to the rulership of this kingdom. It seems incredible to me how this dreamer, King Drushipe, has been able to cling to power all these years. He commands far too small a force to be able to keep control here, one that has been reduced even more over the last years. In fact, it seems to me that there are at least two other lords, each of whom has a larger army than that of King Drushipe. It seems like it is these two armies that take action when the balance of terror between the chieftains of the different barbarian tribes seems to be upset too much, or when someone rebels against the king. These two armies belong to the mysterious lord “the Dragon,” and the more publicly known “Count” Mhulikazi, which according to a search through some old archives salvaged from Sundsball seems to have survived at least five emperors and empresses in Alphatia.

Emperor Tylon IV, when he created the kingdom, also divided rulership between King Drushipe and his consort, the dryad Mellora. It is my personal suspicion that it is the diplomatic efforts of Queen Mellora, rather than Drushipe himself, that have kept the lords of Linn supporting the crown rather than fighting over power themselves. It seems that the queen also has great personal influence among the sylvan races that infest the forests along the Kerothar Mountains.

Recent History

The history of Linn has little of interest to offer, other than endless squabbles between barbarian “lords,” but I will try to give a short summary of the most important events. The humanoids of Linn were first conquered by the imperial legions and established as an imperial protectorate in AD 531 [BC

469. Ed.]. Instead of subjugating the monsters living here, they actually did the mistake of turning control of the land over to the monster spellcasters, naming them lords of the empire and only maintaining a garrison at Trollhattan. The garrison posted there could in no way keep order in the land, and there are several accounts of it being overrun and sacked by humanoid hordes.

The city of Trollhattan itself was founded in AY 1007 [AC 7. Ed.] by the more lawful elements of the land as a center for the study of beasts, monsters and non-humans. It has now grown into a great walled community, with battlements and fortifications to protect it from enemies both external and internal. Since then, the city has yet to fall to any attacking force.

In AY 1892 [AC 892. Ed.], the elven aristocrat Drushipe, after being convicted and exiled from Shipe-Lavor, was for some reason awarded Linn as a kingdom by Emperor Tylion IV. What is even more remarkable is that he even got the emperor to agree to a divided rulership with the dryad druidess Mellora, whom he took as his mate. He did bring some sort of order to Linn, but the kingdom is far from the level of civilization we are used to from the rest of the kingdoms of the empire.

During recent years, Linn has seen a recession and growing internal unrest. For some reason, those settled near the rim seem to have lost their livelihood, and are getting more aggressive in their raids of other settlement. So far it has not gotten completely out of hand, but it seems to be only a question of time before the dreamer King Drushipe loses control.

Do Miss

I wouldn't advise anyone to put themselves through the danger of entering this volatile piece of land if it is not absolutely necessary. If you have to go there, bring a sizeable bodyguard and travel only by the main roads.

Don't Miss

There is no part of this barbaric region you should not miss.

MALEVOLENCE (Estate of)

Location: Southwestern Blackheart, along the northern border of Shiye-Lawr, floating continent of Alphatia. **HW**

Area: 34 sq. mi. (90 sq. km.) centered on the crater.

Population: 300 humans, 50 gnomes, 500+ various humanoid (mostly kobolds), uncountable monstrosities.

Languages: Alphatian (Arogansan dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Blackheart sees no need to mint coins. Indeed, Blackheart mints no coins of its own, but rather accepts the coins of other Alphatian kingdoms.

Taxes: The baron accepts only one form of payment in his realm: Blood. Nobody buys anything without spilling some. He sends a portion of the fruits of his labors to the king in Shraek. These consist mainly of manufactured reagents and other alchemical equipment, weapons made in the forges, and the occasional slave to toy with.

Government Type: The baron's rule here is undisputed. In theory he owes allegiance to the king in Shraek, as well as to the Empress of Alphatia, but as of yet neither of these theories has been tested.

Industries: Torment, savagery, and wickedness.

Important Figures: Barkaimun (Baron), Glusoraiban (Baron's Nephew), Feyad'Rauth (Baron's Nephew).

Flora and Fauna: No plant life exists within the domain claimed by Baron Barkaimun. Vermin and insects make up most of the other life forms in the area. Many of them are vicious, poisonous creatures. Other creatures venture in from the forest on occasion, but because they have nowhere to hide they seldom last long.

Description by Furrny Mallok.

The Estate of Malevolence is a small, self-contained dominion in southern Blackheart, near the northern border of Shiye-Lawr. Even amid all of Blackheart, this place is considered to be a dark stain upon the land.

The Land

The estate is centered upon a large crater. The lips of the crater overhang the interior and are lined with gargantuan boulders. In the center of the crater juts a craggy outcropping of stone upon the top of which is a twisted tower of bone-white stone. A single guard tower lies at the bottom of the outer crater rim, and from there a tunnel leads through the earth and to the bottom of the crater. The floor of this gaping wound in the ground is covered with hot forges, and various chemical refineries. Crude cliff-side dwellings are carved into the sides of the crater. On occasion one of these crumbles and collapses, trapping those who live inside and sending rubble onto those unfortunate to be below them.

Several acres around the crater have been scorched clear of any vegetation. The land is baked in the heat of the red sun, and is riddled with cracks that have formed in the unrelenting heat. The forest edges are scarred black where they meet the crater's clearing. No roads or trails lead to Malevolence

from the outside, although there are several game trails leading away from it. Most of these are kept in use by the baron's nephew Glausoraiban, who hunts slaves on occasion.

The People

Those living in Malevolence are either broken of spirit, or degenerate of soul. Slaves lead a hard, short life, the only purpose of which being to toil in the baron's hellish foundries. The strongest, and meanest, of these slaves are culled for the baron's personal guard. These individuals go out of their way to torment those less fortunate than themselves in an effort to prove to the baron that they are deserving of their new station. Brothers turn on brothers, and children turn on their own parents. None wish to return to the life of a slave and will do anything to prevent that fate.

A small enclave of gnomes make a living working in Malevolence, either in the refineries or the baron's personal workshops. Most of these creatures are depraved individuals who practice the lost art of technology. Their experiments usually only succeed in maiming a portion of the populace (which is why the baron keeps them around at all).

Along with humans, a large portion of the slaves in Malevolence are humanoids, shipped in from Linn. The baron keeps a steady shipment of these expendable creatures flowing into his domain.

Recent History

The baron has been keeping a low profile recently. That's not unusual for most Blackheartian wizards, but normally the baron enjoys inflicting his grotesqueness upon others. The Beast has increased his usual number of slave hunts drastically, and as a consequence the baron has had to arrange for several additional slave shipments. Something is brewing in Malevolence, and whatever it is it cannot be good.

Do Miss

Malevolence is a place to be avoided at all costs.

RANDEL (Kingdom of)

Location: Broad plain on the southeastern rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, north of Eadrin, east of Theranderol, south of Bettellyn. **HW**

Area: 187,560 sq. mi. (486,780 sq. km.).

Population: 130,000, including Kardish (pop. 18,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Randellyn dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Randel also mints a platinum sword and an electrum shield.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. Randel also imposes surtaxes on the hiring of mercenaries by other kingdoms, with the tax varying by kingdom (low for kingdoms that Randel favors, higher for other kingdoms). They also impose excise taxes on wines, both imports (to keep them from competing with local vintages) and exports. Finally, they also place additional fees on military students from other kingdoms, though this has largely lapsed since the sinking.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Wine, military forces, military training.

Important Figures: Karatnora (Queen), Juma (Former Queen).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Randel is the source of some of the empire's finest wines, finest troops, and most obnoxious louts. The connection between alcohol, militarism, and loutish behavior should be obvious. But what makes the Randel (as they prefer to be called) so insufferable is their unconscionable tendency to lecture our highest councils on what it means to be an Alphatian at every opportunity (so a wise chairman affords a member from Randel few opportunities to speak at any length). This would not be quite so bad, except that, like their friends in Stonewall, the Randel are infected with a severe case of Thyatianism unbecoming to a true Alphatian. They eschew and sometimes openly scorn traditional Alphatian virtues such as independence and freedom and a respect for one's betters, and obsess instead about imposing conformism and duty and order and discipline to an unbecoming degree, and seem to support a centralizing tendency that would sweep away the traditions of local autonomy which made Alphatia great, as well as giving the untalented masses far too much license. Their servile classes don't even seem to consider themselves servile at all, but are insolent and impertinent to almost the same degree as the rabble of Stonewall. Furthermore, the Randel are not culturally sophisticated, but instead have the bawdy and ribald sensibilities of a warrior culture. Other than that they are like the mountain range in their kingdom: all gray in drabness.

What makes us put up with these boors? Well, for one thing, excellence of their vintages of wine make it possible to suffer their existence. For another, their ready willingness to fight with skill and die on Alphatia's behalf. For, despite their character being so different, they consider themselves the best of Alphatians and are near fanatical in war, forming the vanguard of the imperial armies. Perhaps this is why there are so few Randel today, which is another thing that makes it possible to abide them: if you stay away from their kingdom and avoid hanging out near barracks and déclassé establishments, you're not ever likely to run into one of them. [Zweibelterm's scorn for Randel is quite obvious and some of his comments quite harsh, yet most of his descriptions are correct. I don't much care for Randel's militaristic traits myself, but I would like to add that they are "willing to fight and die for the empire," as Zweibelterm puts it, simply because they are patriotic Alphatians, and unlike Zweibelterm I do respect them for that, although their militaristic posturing is foreign to me. Aritmanes.]

Don't Miss

For those who go in for that kind of thing, try to arrange a tour of Randel's military academy. They might, if you have the proper contacts, permit you to watch a training exercise by their forces, but they tend to be very tight about such things and you are likely better off observing covertly if possible. If you try this, though, don't get caught, as the Randel will consider you a spy and they treat such very harshly.

SHIPE-LAWR (Kingdom of)

Location: Forests north of Haven, east of the Kerothar Mountains, south of Blackheart, and west of Alphas'ar. **HW**

Area: 91,785 sq. mi. (237,725 sq. km.).

Population: 55,000, including Alfleish (pop. 12,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Elvish (Shipe-Lawr dialect), Alphantian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphantian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Shipe-Lawr mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner. They also impose excise taxes on exports to other kingdoms, and severe surtaxes on those non-elves who are (rarely) permitted to live within the kingdom.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphantian Empire.

Industries: Crafts (jewels, woodworking, leathercraft, goldsmithing).

Important Figures: Acroshiye (King).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphantia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Gerta Knutsdotter.

It is said, according to the histories of the Alphantians which I believe to be most accurate, that five centuries after the Landfall of the Alphantians near what would become Sundsvall, the Shipe-Lawr elves were permitted to migrate to Alphantia and establish a kingdom here, swearing loyalty to the empire but living in their own ways. Many Alphantians seem somewhat irritated by the Shipe, on account of the occasional raids they make on nearby kingdoms, but also apparently for another reason. According to those who believe that Alphantia was once elsewhere and was destroyed in a recent war, the Shipe elves were opposed to the war and did not give their usual loyalty to the empire. This may contribute to the impression most Alphantians have of them being not only cunning but malicious, and it is true there is an air of mystery about them, and they are highly insular. These elves and the Alphantian people share similar tastes and attitudes towards life overall, and many Alphantians also point out that their presence has enriched their empire, but while also seeming content that the Shipe largely keep to their own kingdom. Many Shipe are respected as skilled artisans. Some of these have helped with artistic and architectural projects in Haven and Alphas'ar. These are held in particularly high regard, and their style blends well with that of Haven's own artists. The rest of the Shipe keep to themselves in the depths of the forests.

[The Shipe have always been a mystery to me. They are a valuable addition to the empire, but sometimes they act in strange ways. I was constantly surprised at their resistance to aid the empire during the war with Glantri, yet I understand well their hostility toward their neighbors in Blackheart, which has frequently caused problems within the empire as some of them went on quests of vengeance

against Blackheart after some monstrosity of a failed experiment caused havoc in their forests. Still, after the war, the elves seem to have returned to their former support of the empire, and the fact that they prefer to keep to themselves is to be respected, I think. After all, Alphatia is strong because we pursue our individual strengths, so most of us are content to let the elves do what they are good at, which is their unique arts and magic. Aritmanes.]

STONEWALL (Kingdom of)

Location: Ledge wedged between the Kerothar Mountain Range and the west central rim of the floating continent of Alphatia, south of Linn and north of Stoutfellow. **HW**

Area: 15,963 sq. mi. (41,345 sq. km.).

Population: 1,200,000 Including Draco (pop. 450,000), Rustus (pop. 12,500), and Tarazif (pop. 10,000).

Languages: Alphatian (Dracos dialect)

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Stonewall mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Military.

Important Figures: Koblan Dracodon (King).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Khostrubel the Forthright.

The Land

The lands of Stonewall are small in size, fairly rugged, but are lush and fertile. Three short but bountiful rivers, and many smaller streams and brooks, run off the western Kerothar Mountains, making the land productive. The city of Draco lies on the banks of the southern river, Lardrook, while the smaller but once-vibrant towns of Rustus and Tarazif lie at the mouths of Rivers Wisalia and Lancet respectively. All these communities were once vital ports, importing and exporting goods throughout the empire, but they, like the rest of the kingdom, have fallen upon hard times of late. Also, though the land is productive, many more people have chosen to live in Stonewall than our own agriculture can support. Stonewall thus had been dependent upon grain imports, and now that these are unavailable our prosperity has turned to impoverishment.

The People

Mighty Stonewall, this the most glorious kingdom of the Alphatian Empire, centered on Draco, its most glorious and cosmopolitan city, mighty Stonewall's problems have been deliberately ignored by the empire's policies of malign neglect, and the kingdom now faces famine and starvation. But mighty Stonewall, because of the very people that bring it strength and cause the rest of Alphatia to disdain or ignore us, will overcome its troubles and triumph.

For what is it that makes Draco the true vanguard of Alphatian society? What is it that gives Stonewall glory and distinguishes it in relation to the rest of the empire? It is its people. In Greenspur they deem unequal laws enforced fairly to be a sign of the superiority of their nation. In other kingdoms they believe their art makes them great, as is the case in Haven and Ambur. Some display to all who visit their brilliant towering spires built by magic in an attempt to probe their

greatness, as in fallen Sundsvall or rising Andaire or other capitals of Alphatian kingdoms, while others point to whimsical magical enchantments as examples of their achievements. Still more kingdoms throughout Alphatia point to the disciplined servitude of their subordinated classes and the cowed acceptance of the lower classes of their social position as of proof of their society's magnificence, each believing their means of achieving such social stability through submissiveness makes them distinct.

But none of this can truly match the crowning achievement of cultural freedom and harmony that is Stonewall. Vivid displays of magical might, of artistry, or of servility cannot approach the majesty of Stonewall, humble in appearance but glorious in substance. For alone in all the empire, in Stonewall all are considered worthy of respect, as all save slaves are equal in the eyes of the law. Perhaps this is because in Stonewall alone of all the empire, people revere the Immortals as powers higher than themselves, not just viewing Them as more accomplished wizards. Because even the most powerful sorcerers of Stonewall acknowledge a power greater than themselves, this infuses us with a humility that allows us to see each member of our society as worthy of respect. We are not so exalted in our own eyes as to think ourselves so far above even those who lack the talent for spellcasting, nor so arrogant as to see ourselves as the final arbitrators of what is right and wrong for them.

Thus, though we are not so foolish as to believe that people are equal in fact, we believe that it is right for all to be treated equally before the law, and given their due, because even non-spellcasting members of society can make great contributions to it. Thus no one, even these, should have legal fetters placed upon their opportunities to develop their skills, whatever they may be, and make their contribution.

It is true that there are some visionary exceptions throughout Alphatia that hold views similar to this, but they are in a distinct minority among the aristocracy. Only in Stonewall does this philosophy of equality before the law and equality of opportunity hold sway throughout an entire kingdom. Thus, only spellcasters who agree with the philosophy of Draco, the founder of our kingdom, choose to live here, and unfortunately they are few.

In spite of this relative lack of spellcasters among us, a circumstance that most Alphatian aristocrats would consider a grave handicap, we have built a kingdom greater than all others. Our kingdom is the smallest in size in all of Alphatia, cut off from the rest of the empire by a long mountain range, and yet it has attracted to it the most enterprising and venturesome of Alphatia's people. Many of those who live in Stonewall, or their parents or ancestors, traveled far to get here. Some even, or so it is said, were willing to risk the dangers of leaving their masters just so they could try to immigrate to Stonewall, seeking the opportunity provided by our social philosophy.

As a result, the great and mighty city of Draco grew to be the most populous in Alphatia. While other great Alphatian cities, such as Haven and Sundsvall, were impressive in appearance, ours was built upon a humble reverence for the Immortals and for the abilities of the kingdom's people. Many Alphatians, who in my opinion fail to understand the vitality of Stonewall, see our city as a blight, an overcrowded teeming welter of humanity, where the people do not have proper respect for those above their station. Thus they see us as not much better than the barbarian foreigners. But that is because they miss what makes us great.

What makes us great is the very bustling populace they denigrate. For the people of Stonewall do have respect, respect for ability and accomplishment, not blind subservience ingrained by centuries of submission. Our communities are cosmopolitan and open to innovation. We have freedom for all, and

thus also social harmony and cohesion which other kingdoms can only achieve by coercion or enforcing an unthinking acceptance of the social order by the lower classes.

Recent History

It is perhaps because of the example we set that so many who do not wish to change have seen Stonewall as a threat, and wished to see us laid low. Some, during the Great War, even thought our kingdom potential traitors, because we have seen the Thyatians as foes we could respect, not as enemies to despise. Perhaps some thought we identified with them, but such persons forget that we are proud Alphatians, too, and though we may respect the tenacity of foreign barbarians, we do not see them as equals in civilized society. But simply because we respected, rather than scorned them, and were not sure that that war was the right policy, many became suspicious our loyalty to the cause. But Stonewallers are always faithfully loyal to the empire, even now when the empire allows us to starve, we do not violate our honor-bound duty to serve it.

But now we languish and suffer. For, while many Alphatian kingdoms have experienced transitional difficulties of late, it is clear that most Alphatians would prefer to pretend we do not exist or, at worst, wish to see us scoured off the continent. Thus the empire intervened by sending ships to interpose themselves between Bettelwyn and Randel last year, in a minor matter, but has not lifted a finger to organize a famine relief effort.

Because of this, many Stonewallers have, reluctantly, with sorrow and trepidation in their hearts, emigrated to other kingdoms. But the people of Stonewall have not degenerated into a riotous mob. There have been a few minor incidents, and King Koblan Dracodon has had to step up the patrols of the Watch and Guard in Draco, but overall the people have been remarkably unified and placid even in the face of starvation.

This is perhaps because of the trust they have in the leadership of our king, who has worked to resolve this crisis even in trying circumstances. Forces have been sent to conquer the distant and fertile lands of Arkan, in prelude to a colonization effort that will alleviate problems here and allow us access to the food we need to survive. Some in the empire are outraged and would see this effort fail, even as they are indifferent to our challenges, but since we are faced with victory or starvation they will see just how determined we can be if they attempt to stand in our way. Many think that because Stonewall has fewer spellcasters that means we are magically, and by extension militarily, inferior. But they have not faced us, and do not know. We fought at the forefront, more so than the prideful Randel did, against the magically inferior Thyatians, and learned enough from that experience not only to respect their abilities but to use tactics efficiently against those who think magic is the same as military might. We do or die, literally. We will win.

Don't Miss

Draco is the proud capital of mighty Stonewall. It is a city built by skillful architecture rather than by magic, built for and by common people instead of aristocrats. Yes, there are a number of wizard-created towers and spires in Draco built in the style of other Alphatian cities. Draco spans both banks of River Lardbrook, with the king's palace and other main governmental buildings set upon an island in the midst of the river. Soaring bridges connect the island to both halves of the city, and still more bridges connect the two banks to each other. The bulk of the population lives on the city's southern bank, but over a third live in Draco's north bank. The city of Draco has more temples and shrines per capita than any other city in Alphatia, as Stonewall is more religious than other Alphatian kingdoms.

While these temples are not as large and do not soar as high as the cathedrals of Bettelwyn, they are elegant, of exquisite proportion, and built to exalt the Immortals rather than to exalt the builders in the eyes of the Immortals. Draco, once bustling with enterprise, is now in a sad state. Though the buildings remain well maintained and there has not been many food riots or looting, the vitality seems to have drained away. Many have left, searching for sustenance in other kingdoms, and those who remain are now grimly determined where before they were optimistically enterprising. The streets are filled with men and women in military uniform, as well. Some of these are to guard against the possibility of unrest, but most have volunteered to serve in the kingdom's military, to take what the empire refused to give but which we need to survive.

Within the city are many fighting schools dedicated to teaching arms and educating students in the arts of war. Most of these are small facilities operated by famed but retired fighters who devote personal attention to the teaching of their students, but the foremost is the Draconia Guards Training Facility, a royal academy that has been operating for over three centuries and schools the most elite soldiers of Stonewall's armies. It has classrooms on the Royal Isle, and training grounds just outside the northern walls of Draco. It is said that there are also schools for the training of rogues (and even assassins) within Draco, but these facilities operate clandestinely.

As I mentioned before, there are many temples and shrines within Draco. The most revered of these is the Gloriam, the largest temple of Razud in Draco, situated at the north bank of Draco. It is surmounted by a beautiful dome built over a hexagonal base, with a long nave at the northern end of the structure. It was built not with magic, but by the skillful hands of Razud's believers. I must also make mention of my own temple, the Mighty Shrine of Bemarris, a smaller but no less beautiful temple, surrounded by white marble pillars. The importance of the temples of Draco in serving the spiritual needs of the people of Stonewall cannot be underestimated, but in recent years they have also served a material need as well. The more accomplished priests, highest in the esteem of their Immortals, have been able to create food to help alleviate the famine. These efforts indeed helped stave off the crisis for many years, supplementing grain stores, but it could not prevent the crisis from coming. Still, had the empire responded to the impending crisis, this delay would have provided sufficient time for a more permanent solution to be implemented. But it was ignored until it was almost too late, and now we act on our own behalf.

STOUTFELLOW (Kingdom of)

Location: Western spine of the floating continent of Alphatia, running due north-south along the Kerothar Mountains in roughly the shape of an inverted single-bladed axe. *HWA*

Area: 88,542 sq. mi. (229,325 sq. km.).

Population: 58,000 (29,000 dwarves, 14,000 hin, 15,000 gnomes), including Denwarf-Hurgon (pop. 30,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. *Ed.*]

Languages: Dwarvish (Denwarf-Hurgon dialect), Alphatian (Dracos dialect). Gnomish and Lalor are also spoken, though this is uncommon.

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Stoutfellow mints platinum kagvars as well.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slavery does not exist here, as it is against the policy of the demihuman inhabitants. Additional taxes include duties imposed on the export of metals and gems.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Mining, craftsmanship, engineering.

Important Figures: Buthra Bofadar (Queen).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

Stoutfellow was created less than eighty years ago, when Tylion IV recognized a growing need for master craftsmen in Alphatia. Various demihumans were induced to settle, but there was some reluctance until he promised them their own wide kingdom. As a result, Stoutfellow was born. Due to the concessions Tylion IV granted to the demihumans, there are a number of odd peculiarities in the Kingdom of Stoutfellow. First, they do not fit into the pattern of Alphatian society and law, but rather govern themselves in a manner similar to that of Rockhome, with dwarven rather than proper Alphatian law. Dwarven customs predominate, and the same laws are applied to both the talented and untalented, so those Alphatian aristocrats used to receiving their proper due should be aware of this discrepancy and deficiency when traveling here, and virtually no Alphatians live here (the population is almost exclusively demihuman) as a result of its outlandish social structure. The kingdom's sole major settlement is built in dwarven style, buried in the earth, submerged in rock and stone, rather than constructed of soaring towers in the Alphatian manner. But the demihumans (dwarves, gnomes, and hin) of Stoutfellow make up for these drawbacks through their skill as artisans and engineers. Indeed, many have proved to provide instrumental service not only in the creation of the empire's new capital at Andaire, but in rebuilding in Haven as well. Plus, there is something in their attitude that makes it less onerous to accept them than it does the people of Stonewall, as they always seem properly respectful and courteous. Stoutfellow thus forms not only a welcome addition to Alphatia, which was in sore need of expert craftsmen, but is a buffer between Haven and the cyst of Stonewall.

THERANDEROL (Kingdom of)

Location: Center of the floating continent of Alphatia, north of the Aslan void, sandwiched between Haven and Theranderol. **HWA**

Area: 123,710. mi. (320,410 sq. km.).

Population: 183,000, including Errolyn (pop. 20,000). [Population figures are tentative, pending census. **Ed.**]

Languages: Alphatian (Theran dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Theranderol mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, cattle and sheep herding, logging.

Important Figures: Eldrethila (Queen, human, female, A20).

Flora and Fauna: See Alphatia.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperor boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Zweibelterm.

If I were to pick one word to describe Theranderol, it would be “typical.” Save for the fact that it is the ancestral homeland of Alphatia’s imperial family and is ruled by Eriadna’s daughter, there is little which makes Theranderol stand out as exceptional. It is governed effectively, taxes are collected in a timely manner, corruption is kept in check, and the nation’s armies have managed relief projects with aplomb. But Theranderol’s people do not stand out when compared to those of Haven or even Arogansa. They are diligent, but somewhat dull. Similarly, the land itself is pleasant and productive enough, being composed of pretty lowlands that hold prosperous plantations, and of fair forests and pastures. The land is clear of monsters except around the Grey Mountains. But even these features, nice enough as they might be compared with other lands, do not stand out as exceptional in Alphatia. The forests of Foresthome are more impressive than those of Theranderol, the grasslands of Arogansa more beautiful. Alphatia does need a place to provide people of sound disposition and good breeding to provide effective government, so Theranderol has provided a vital role (again, with the lapses of Tylion IV and the notorious Zandor excepted), but this does not make for much excitement.

[Though these descriptions are essentially correct, I’m not sure the people of Theranderol would appreciate Zweibelterm’s comments. The fact is that the nation is one of the few places in the empire where there is little trouble, so this nation should really be seen as a standard for other nations to follow. The authorities are minimal, yet perform their duties effectively with little or no trouble, so many Alphatian nations could learn a thing or two here. Aritmanes.]

VERTILOCH (Kingdom of)

Location: Southern central portion of the floating continent of Alphatia, east of Haven, south of Alphas'ar and Bettellyn, west of Theranderol, and north of Arogansa. **WA**

Area: 49,384 sq. mi. (127,905 sq. km.).

Population: 620,000, including Ashar (pop. 15,000)

Languages: Alphatian (Vertilian dialect).

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Vertiloch mints no other coins.

Taxes: 15% income tax on everyone of servant status or higher. Slaves are counted as the property of the owner and the product of their labor is taxed as income for the owner.

Government Type: Monarchy governed by the currently elected emperor or empress, member of the Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Formerly government, now mainly agriculture. A few people are dedicated to rebuilding the nation and restoring Vertiloch and Sundsball, the capital, to their past glories.

Important Figures: Eriadna (Queen of Vertiloch—Eriadna now resides in Alphas'ar, though).

Flora and Fauna: The land of Vertiloch is mostly fertile land good for farming. It was not used as such originally, but farming has greatly increased in the recent years. Despite this, travelers can often find some old monuments or other artistry, though most of these have suffered from ruin or neglect by now. Vertiloch also used to be a nation with few monsters, but that has changed as well after the harsh times Alphatia has seen, particularly with monsters that survived the destruction of Sundsball when their masters were killed, thus allowing them to escape and roam the nation. Obviously a number of monsters live in the Haunted Marshes as well, but since there has been little reason to go there in recent years, the area should be considered largely unexplored by now.

Further Reading: Dawn of the Emperors boxed set, previous almanacs.

Description by Aritmanes.

Vertiloch. Once the splendor of the Alphatian Empire and a testimony to its might in both artistry and, not the least, magic! This once illustrious nation has been a cruel victim of the merciless passing of time and fate, and its current state is a sad reminder of the harsh times Alphatia has seen.

Now Sundsball is nothing more than a ruin, so the primary city has instead become the town of Ashar, not far from the Sundsball ruins. Ashar is not the place it once was either, though. Whereas it used to be a place for people to get away from all the activity in Sundsball, it is now the capital of Vertiloch with all those functions, yet it also the place where all the disheartened survivors from Sundsball struggle to reclaim the dream of what Vertiloch once was. Though the empress declared that Sundsball and Aasla were to be rebuilt more than a year ago, little has actually happened.

The Land

Vertiloch is still a beautiful nation centered around the ruins of Sundsball, the former imperial capital. It runs south along the Greenlake River through the Haunted Marshes to where the river reaches the rim of the floating continent in a long, narrow stretch of land. Before the violent

calamities, Vertiloch was the decorated and sculpted monument to the greatness of the Alphatian Empire, and it was a marvel to behold for its incredible achievements, with majestic buildings and beautiful feats in art and magic that confounded the mind itself—Vertiloch was never intended to support itself and instead relied heavily on imported food to sustain its population. The land north of the Haunted Marshes is lush and fertile, and many commoners have turned to agriculture in order to support our nation which used to rely heavily on imports.

The People

In a way the tragedies that have struck Alphatia and especially Vertiloch have lessened the potential famine that threatened Vertiloch, however, because it would have been completely impossible to find food for all of its original population now. Half the population of Sundsball was killed when the capital was destroyed and still more of the nation's population was lost during the later devastation of the empire. In the years that have since passed, many more of its people have moved to settle in the new kingdom, Alphas'ar. Most of those who remain have turned to farming, but there are some who have stayed to help rebuild the declining nation in an attempt to reclaim its former splendor.

The disillusioned people of ruined Sundsball who have remained in Vertiloch (rather than going to Alphas'ar) have set up a number of groups. One of these call themselves the Sundsball Guardians. It is a group of soldiers and adventurers, some aristocrats even, who have vowed to rid Sundsball of all the vile scavengers, looters and squatters alike, who are defiling the memory of the grand city. In essence, they are the self-proclaimed protectors of the ruins. The Guardians have no authority and since they have been known to turn to vigilantism and kill those they consider to violate Sundsball, they sometimes cause big problems for the authorities in Vertiloch. Because of this, the Guardians have also chosen to remain largely unknown, and all are apparently anonymous. There are rumored to be ways to identify them, but these are unknown save perhaps to other such Guardians.

Some of the other people who have remained behind are more like myself in that they choose to help rebuild what they can of the nation. There are several sages who seem determined to keep the history and memory of Sundsball's former splendor alive. Some locals have called these scholars the Chroniclers, but they are not organized save by common interest. At times these "Chroniclers" have been known to cooperate to reclaim lost lore from the Sundsball ruins because they clashed with members of the Sundsball Guardians. The various sages claim they are interested mostly in setting up large libraries so that the history of Sundsball, Vertiloch, even Alphatia itself, will be preserved for posterity, but it would seem that the Guardians believe that some of these scholars have more sinister motives for acquiring the lore they claim to seek in the ruins.

Recent History

Vertiloch was the primary kingdom of Alphatia and Sundsball the imperial capital of the empire until the end of the Great War. When the Glantrians unethically used their treacherous "Doomsday Device," they unleashed evil magic that caused a cataclysmic storm which utterly destroyed Sundsball and plunged all of Mystara into a ghastly Week Without Magic. Half the population died instantly and the glorious City Built by Magic was turned into a ruin. After Alphatia was moved to a floating continent of the Hollow World by the Immortals when a subsequent use of the evil device caused Alphatia's utter destruction, it didn't take long before it was obvious that Vertiloch was a dying kingdom. Empress Eriadna turned the former imperial territories into what is now the Kingdom of Alphas'ar and moved her court to the new imperial capital, Andaire. As the years have passed, many

people have followed her and left Vertiloch, slowly draining the nation of its life force. The fact that the food previously imported from Bellissaria was no longer available forced many commoners to become farmers, and since most aristocrats left for Alphas'ar, the number of people who maintained the glory of Vertiloch has dwindled steadily over the years. In AY 2016 [AC 1016. Ed.], Empress Eriadna declared that Sundsball should be rebuilt, but little has actually been done, since the city has become a haven infested with looters and monsters let loose by the city's destruction.

Don't Miss / Do Miss

Vertiloch was once a nation-wide attraction of impressive feats and achievements in the fields of arts and magics. Those times have sadly passed, though. There used to be monuments and other works of art even outside Sundsball, but these have suffered from years of destruction or neglect, as the population turned to farming in order to survive, so most of Vertiloch's achievements are now declining when not outright ruined. The ruin of Sundsball is obviously the greatest example of this. Despite its destruction, one can still sense how mighty it must have been during its years of greatness. It is difficult for people who used to live in Sundsball to bear witness to this, however, and that might be another reason for its current sad state. Much lost lore and magic may still be found among the ruins if one dares to search them, but it is at the risk of falling prey to other looters and monsters that infest and roam the fallen City Built by Magic, not to mention agents of the Sundsball Guardians or one of the more nefarious "Chroniclers". The native people of Vertiloch, and Alphasians in general, don't take kindly to people who pick through the rubble for lost Alphasian valuables either. They have all, particularly the Guardians, been known to respond harshly to adventurers and other treasure-seeking folk who do so, particularly if they are foreigners.

FAMOUS PEOPLE

Almanac Format

This section lists the names of important people at any given entry. The format is as follows:

Name and title or occupation, race, gender, class/level, description, detailed abilities. Note that the level of description varies with each character, from a basic listing to an in depth entry.

We at the Mystaran Almanac endeavor to be at the forefront of innovation and make the almanac as convenient as possible. This is why I must touch upon our using the latest in the codification of people's skills. Throughout its existence the almanac series has used various such codifications, with each evolution an effort to simplify and clarify the readability of the talents possessed by the various rulers, heroes and villains that are prominent in our beloved world of Mystara, and which as such are the main contenders in the Mystaran Almanacs. Although our goal is to make things more convenient for you, the reader, we realize that it may also be confusing at times.

There are several codifications in use to represent the abilities of people. Most unfortunately, not everyone uses the same system, and old classifications are still strongly in use. Moreover, each system has many, many variants. Let's review the main variants, which at one time or another were all used in the almanac series.

The oldest known system is retroactively called "zeroeth" edition (0E), though it is also occasionally called original edition (typically by Alphatian scholars) or old edition (typically by Thyatian scholars), with the more neutral zeroeth being used by, well, the more neutral scholars. There never was a first edition (1E), or it was totally lost to time and decay; some sages speculate to its existence, but then the civilization that would have used it would have disappeared without a trace. We also have no knowledge of prior systems, like that which much have existed at the time of fabled Blackmoor or even earlier. 0E is a nice, simple system, brought to Mystara by the Alphatians two millennia ago; it was originally used by Alphatian wizards to rank themselves without dueling. It is used throughout the Alphatian Empire and in Glantri, and is also used by many sages of the Old World and beyond. It was used in the Poor Wizard's Almanacs for the years AC 1010 and 1011.

This system has endured despite the introduction of the second edition (2E) by the Thyatians shortly after the crowning of their first emperor. At the time, the Thyatians argued that the Alphatian system was too simplistic and could not be used to fully describe every combination of talents and abilities; it is likely, though, that this was yet another weaving of theirs to put themselves apart from their former masters in their efforts to forge a Thyatian identity and to build their empire. In any case, the Thyatian sages and bureaucrats created a complicated system that was supposed to have the capacity of codifying any person's abilities, though 2E had to be tweaked a lot through the centuries to accomplish that. This system is used throughout the Thyatian Empire where it almost completely replaced 0E, and is also used by many sages in the Old World and beyond, though it never quite picked up in Alphatia where it was deemed too cumbersome. It was used in the Poor Wizard's Almanac for the year AC 1012 and in Joshuan's Almanac for the year AC 1013, as well as in the Mystaran Almanacs for the years AC 1014 to 1018 (this year).

When he ascended the throne after the death of his father, Emperor Eusebius commanded—along several other reforms in various fields such as taxes, the army, and others—the complete revision and simplification of the second edition. The result was called third edition (3E). It is a very new system that incorporates the simplicity of 0E (2E had gone far from 0E in a probably deliberate attempt to dissociate things Thyatian from things Alphatian) yet allows for flexibility and the thoroughness of 2E. Time will tell if this system keeps its promise, but already it is replacing 2E in the Thyatian Empire (and is spreading to the rest of the Old World and beyond at a slower, though probably inexorable, rate); what speaks most in favor of 3E however is the fact that it is increasingly adopted by Alphatian sages, even in the Hollow World, and the mysterious organization known as the Lighthouse is rumored to be considering switching to 3E as well. It was used partially (alongside 2E) in the Mystaran Almanacs for the years AC 1017 and 1018 (this year).

Thus this edition of the almanac, for the year AC 1018, uses both 2E and 3E, as we—like many—are still in the process of converting our files from 2E to 3E. We are stuck at an early stage of the process, though, even as we are preparing to publish this year's almanac, so like last year most of the capsules will be presented in the prior system, which is 2E. 2E codification can be recognized as it follows this representation:

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

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

Entries in 3E format can be recognized as they follow this representation:

Class/level is presented in the form of three letters followed by a number, such as Ftr6 or Rog12. The number indicates level, while the letters represent the class according to the following legend (in 3E terms):

Ftr = Fighter	Wiz = Wizard
Pal = Paladin	Abj = Abjurer
Rgr = Ranger	Cjr = Conjurer

Rog = Rogue	Dib = Diviner
Brd = Bard	Enc = Enchanter
Bur = Buraiya	Ebo = Evoker
Clr = Cleric	Ill = Illusionist
Drd = Druid	Nec = Necromancer
Mnk = Monk	Tra = Transmuter
Bbn = Barbarian	Sor = Sorcerer
Ari = Aristocrat	(others)

In addition, for ease of distinction, entries in 3E format are marked “(3E)” after the class/level.
 Belzamith Fingertackles.

Most Distinguished Dead

People who died last year.

Alexandra Kralomene, Courtesan and Former Wife of Senator Aemilian Cratides in Thyatis.

Murdered Sviftmont 4 by the infamous Mincer.

Archibald Shaw, Member of Parliament for the Mining Town of Lichfield in Bellayne.

Found dead on Nubmont 5 in his house. Shaw was a particularly old rakasta, so his death was not a great surprise among the locals.

Balázs Khuen, Rebel Monzag Wizard-King.

Killed Sviftmont 1 by the Master's nomad allies during the last efforts of the Monzag resistance against Hule.

Caracanomnos, Emperor of Milenia.

Executed Kaldmont 28, after the Red Sun returned and trapped him in the imperial palace.

Colwys-Hinton, Brigadier of the 3rd Reserve in Bellayne.

Killed Sviftmont 5 in a trap set up by the parliamentary forces in the city of Norchester, which the royalist force led by Edgwinton.

Curiale Korrigan, Wife of Senator Georgos Korrigan in Thyatis.

Murdered Sviftmont 17 by her husband, who was clumsily trying to copycat Jacobus the Mincer.

Feliona (a.k.a. Madame Feliona of Nouvelle Aberoigne), Astrologer in Glantri.

Killed Kaldmont 27, AC 1017. The famous astrologer from the Principalities of Glantri and resident fortuneteller for the Mystaran Almanac was killed outside her parlor in Glantri City during the Alexander Day Massacre, when the Glantrian constabulary clashed with pilgrims and zealots of the Immortal Valerias. Rumors that she was actually murdered by a rival astrologer or a disgruntled client are unconfirmed, but Madame Feliona was known to have many admirers as well as detractors and adversaries, particularly in more traditional astrological circles.

Gallia Pulchera, Wealthy Widow in Thyatis.

Died Sviftmont 9.

Jacobus Canopularus (a.k.a. The Mincer), Murderer in Thyatis.

Executed Kaldmont 11 for murders due to inhumanity.

Istakhr, Makistani Sorcerer in Plaruum.

Killed Nubmont 12 in a magical battle.

Tarik ben Nadir, Duke (Sheik) of Tel Akbir in Thyatis.

Died Nubmont 2 at age 82.

Thesius Palakratidos, Member of the Kastelian Assembly.

Strangled Nubmont 26 in his home.

Wazor, Court Mage of Baron Maltus Fharo in Two Lakes Vale.

Assassinated Fyrmont 15.

Most Illustrious Monarchs

The world's most important rulers: emperors and empresses, kings and queens, or their equivalents.

Acroshiye, King of Shiye-Lator.

Elf, male, F10/M11.

Adronius, Emperor of Milenia.

Human, male, normal man.

Aiklin, King of Aeria, General of Aeria, Headmaster of the University in Aeria.

Human, male, M20.

Al-Belak, Southern King in Nithia.

Human, male, T12.

Andrei III, Tsar of Zuyebo.

Human, male, F16.

Asteriela Torion, Exarcha/Queen of Heldun.

Human, female, M13.

Awkaraal, King of Greenkhlaawdaa.

Hydrax, male.

Belgoroth the Lamer, King of Blackheart.

Human, male, Pr14 of Jammudaru.

Bensarian of Kebar, Prince-Regent of Wendar.

Human, male, M9.

Bergeya, Queen of Icebale.

Elf, female, M13.

Bergthor Haraldson, King of Vestland.

Human, male, F11.

Bifric III, King of Rogolor.

Dwarf, male, F12.

Brunnkarth, King of Frosthaven.

Frost giant, male, F13.

Buthra Bofadar, Queen of Stoutfellow.

Dwarf, female, F12.

Catriata, Queen of Schattenaltheim.

Elf, female, F10/M10/Pr8 of Atzanteotl.

Chandra ul Nerbi, Rajadhiraja of Sind.

Human, male.

Christina Marie Alanira, Queen of Alpha.

Human, female, M13.

Corwyn Mauntea, Chancellor of Darokin.

Human, male, T6.

Corydon, King of Notrion.

Human, male, M14.

Daunidel Belfadil, Elven King of Brasov.

Elf, male F11/M11.

Dessai, Centaur King of Cheballe.

Centaur, male, F14.

Detteria Scarback, Queen of Arogansa.

Human, female, M19.

Dinaria, Empress of Selhomarr.

Human, female, Dr3.

Diviloplop, Emperor of Twaelar.

Merrow, male, Pr16 of Protius.

Drushipe, King of Limn.

Elf, male, F9/M10.

Edjer the Twisted, King of Frisland.

Human, male, M17.

Clarianthas Blackblade, King of Nordaltheim.

Elf, male, F10/M15.

Craw, King of the Kubitts.

Kubitt, male, F10.

Eriadna, Empress of the Alphatian Empire, Queen of Vertiloch, Queen of Alphas'ar.

Human, female, M20.

Ericall, King of Alpha.

Human, male, F20.

Elshethara, Queen of Ambur.

Human, female, M16.

Eusebius Torion, Emperor of Thyatis.

Human, male, F16.

Everast XVI, King of Rockhome.

Dwarf, male, F15.

Fabian Vern, President of Esterhold.

Human, male.

Finn Hordson, King of Ostland.

Human, male, F6.

Gratia, Queen of Surshield.

Human, female, M4.

Hassam “the True” al-Kalim, Sultan of Maruam.

Human, male, Ftr9(3E).

Hubertek, King and General of Merlander.

Human, male, F20.

Idon II, King of Eadrin.

Elf, male, F9/M10.

Igilbolb, Empress of Twaelar.

Merrow, female, T15.

Iyxis XXXIV, King/Emperor of Thonia.

Human, male, Pr16 of Ixion.

James II, King of Bellayne.

Son of Queen Catherine I, rakasta, male, F5 Noble.

Jerem Rhody, King of Emerond.

Emerondian, male, D16.

Jibada Dabswano, Mokuba (Ruler) of Dabdlom.

Human, male, F7.

Kaarlo Taabinen, King of Kaarjala.

Human, male, F18.

Kalakaua, King / Tribal Chief of the Makai.

Human, male, F9.

Karatnora, Queen of Randel.

Human, female.

Kasumi, Queen of Ekleke.

Demonette, female, Pr12 of Geima (Diulanna).

Katambos (Khatambe) XXXIX, King of Hrissopoli.

Kakasta, male, F18.

Khnetmet-urt, Delta King in Nithia.

Human, male, Pr9 of Pflarr.

Kikania, Queen of Foresthome.

Human, female, M12.

Koblan Dracodon, King of Stonewall.

Human, male, M15.

Koriktodeba Rapa, Grand Mogul of Shahjapur.

Human, male, F20.

Korolo Togoro, King of the Tanagoro.

Human, male, F17.

Korudon, King of Minaea.

Human, male, F8.

Koryn the Harpist, King of Ne'er-do-well.

Human, male, T20.

Kouffour III, King of Tangor, Emperor of the Tangors.

Human, male, F18.

Kryndylpa, Queen of Haven.

Human, female, Pr20 of Alphatia.

Laila, Queen of Littonia.

Human, female, Pr3 of Daina (Ordana).

Landryn Teriak (a.k.a. the Shadow Lord), Overlord of Denagoth.

Vassalich, male, M14.

Lynara, Queen of Bettellyn.

Human, female, M17.

Lucianna Torion, Empress of Thyatis.

Human, female, B9.

Mellora, Queen of Limn.

Dryad, female.

Miosz II, Margrave of Slagovich.

Human, male, F5 Noble.

Mojambo, King of Ekleke.

Human, male, F10.

Monpac the Sunwatcher, King of the Oltecs.

Human, male, Pr14 of Otzitiotl.

Myrina, Empress of Milenia.

Human, female, Pr18 of Matera.

Norlan, King of Qeodhar.

Human, male, F15.

Olivia Karamaikos, Queen of Karamaikos.

Human, female, T12.

Otziltipac, Tlatoani of the Azcans.

Human, male, F18.

Qinn, King of Arkan.

Human, male, M11.

Qissling, King of Floating Arkan.

Human, male, M19.

Quicklimn, King of Hillvale, General of Hillvale.

Human, male, M9.

Ragnar the Stout, King of Soderfjord.

Human, male, F17.

Ramenhotep XXIV, Pharaoh of Thothia.

Human, male, Pr10 of Rathanos.

Ramose IV, Pharaoh of Nithia.

Human, male, Pr16 of Rathanos.

Rathyka, Queen of the Jennites.

Human, female, Dr15.

Reston of Akesoli, King of Jerendi.

Human, male, F16.

Rolلودir, King of Icevale.

Elf, male, F12.

Shaedrik Divotfoot, Sheriff of Leeha.

Hin, male, F9.

Siaron Lagrius, Queen of Lagrius.

Human, female, M13.

Sieger von Dubn, King of Siegeria.

Human, male, M20.

Sildreth II, King of Greenspur.

Human, male, C15.

Stefan Karamaikos III, King of Karamaikos.

Human, male, F15.

Stillian, Queen of Trikelios.

Human, female, M19.

Szabo II, King of Brasob.

Human, male, F13.

Tamaris, Emperor of Selhomarr.

Human, male, F12.

Tanadaleyo, Radiant Princess of Aengmor.

Elf, female, F14/M13.

Telemon, Radiant King of the Shadow Elves' Territories.

Elf, male, F13/M15.

Teskilion, King and General of Dawnrim.

Human, male, F13.

The Master of Hule.

Presumed to be a human, male, Pr20 of Bozdogan.

The Mother of Us All, Matriarch of All of Malpheggi.

Maybe a mythical figure.

Thelekari, Dowager Empress of Thonia.

Human, female, Pr18 of Ixion.

Throfar Strongarm, King of Gråbjerger.

Dwarf, male, F11/M15.

Tri kard, King of Neatharm.

Human, male, Pr11 of Razud.

Tristan, King of Ekto, General of Ekto.

Human, male, F17.

Trudar, King of the Jennites.

Human, male, F15.

Uldis VI, King of Littonia.

Human, male, F16.

Verdis Queen/Empress of Thonia.

Human, female, M13.

Verothrics, King of Veroth.

Human, male, M18.

Villium, King of Horken.

Human, male, Pr19 of Alphatia.

Wulf von Klagendorf, Oberherr of Heldorf.

Human, male, Pr19 of Vanya.

Zalmontis, Queen and General of the Kubitts.

Kubitt, female, F13.

Zhoher Bezham, Shah-an-shah of Bezhamenid.

Human, male, M1.

Zymnia, Queen of Aquas.

Human/mermaid, female, M6.

Most Eminent Ruling Nobles

Local rulers or kings and queens of lesser nations.

Adik de Chevas, Baron of Chevas.

Human, male, M19.

Alexandra Patrizio, Duchess of Lucinius.

Human, female, Rake9.

Allisa Patrician, Countess of the Free Plains.

Human, female, F15.



Anaxibius Torion, Count of Redstone.

Human, male, F20.

Andian, Tyrant of Sinbay in Minaea.

Minotaur.

Angus McGregor, Prince of Klantyre in Glantri.

Human, male.

Arcadius, Baron of Arcadia.

Human, male, M20.

Azartan Cemirtus, Zatrapp of Hattas in Bezchamenid.

Human, male, T9.

Babrak Biazzan, Count of Biazzan.

Human, male, F15.

Baldassare Patrizio, Duke of Lucinius.

Human, male, Pr15 of Vanya.

Balthazar de Montejo y Aranjuez, Barón of Saragón.

Human, male, M12.

Bardeen Longwalker, Baron of Nordenhafen.

Human, male, F15.

Barkal the Red, Chieftain in Ubla-at-nor.

Human, male, F13.

Basileios Zarides, Lord of Krakob.

Basileios was a corrupt Thyatian official who was forced to flee during Emperor Eusebius's governmental purges of AC 1013. Just before his illegal activities were exposed, he sought political asylum in Karameikos, posing as a wrongly persecuted noble. Since then, he has managed to bribe and connive his way into the ranks of Karameikan nobility. Born: AC 979. Hair: Black. Height: 6' 4". Eyes: Blue. Zarides is a tall rail of a man, constantly pale from lack of exposure to the sun and illness.

Human male Ftrl/Rog3(3E): hp 18; Init -1; Spd 30; AC 9 (Dexterity penalty); Atks +3 melee (1d6/crit x2, short sword); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SD Uncanny dodge, Evasion; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; AL LE; Str 11, Dex 9, Con 7, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15.

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

Equipment: Circlet of persuasion.

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +4, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +3, Forgery +2, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +4, Hide +2, Innuendo +3, Jump +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Open Lock +2, Read Lips +2, Ride +4, Search +2, Sense Motive +2, Swim +4.

Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus: Bluff, Weapon Focus: Short Sword.

Batu, Khan of the Bortaks in Ethengar.

Human, male, Ftr11(3C).

Beriak, Duke of Draken.

Human, male, M17.

Bethany Ersenbal, Countess of Ersenbal.

Human, female, C17.

Biko M'tala, President of Durhan.

Human, male, Rak11.

Brogahn, Baron of Ublaata-nor.

Human, male, F15.

Callastian Retebius, Duke of Retebius.

Human, male, Rak16.

Carlolina Crewan, Princess of Crewan in Glantri.

Elf, female.

Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias, Princess of Belcadiz in Glantri.

Elf, female.

Celia, Marquise of Panteria.

Human, female, C20.

Coiger de Mory, Baron of Mory.

Human, male, Pr17 of Rathanos.

Coltius Torion, Count of Carytion and Prince in Thyatis.

Human, male, B6.

Cristobal "El Barbudo" Bigotillos y Copetez, Señor of Guadalante.

Human, male, R10 Local Hero.

Dalia Salieri Actavia, Countess of Actius.

Human, female, Rake 9.

Deitica Baralius, Governor-General of Septentriona.

Human, female, F13.

Delune Darkeyes, Sheriff of Heartshire in the Five Shires.

Hin, female, F8.

Demetius Vannopolus, Count of Machtetos.

Human male, F16.



Derentarius, Archduke of Terentias.

Human, male, T18.

Desel Leafbower, Leafbower Clanmaster in the Foresthomes.

Elf, male, R15.

Diablerus I, Baron of Redhorn.

Diabolus, male, M10/F5.

Dilynne, King of Scobery (a.k.a. Red Fox City) in Elo Goblands.

Hobgoblin, male, F12.

Dimitri Dikhoff, Baron of Dikhoff.

Human, male, F15.

Djemun, Nomarch of Menkara in Nithia.

Human, female, T15.

Djomel Tirruk, Zatrapp of Midan in Pezchamenid.

Human, male, M11.

Dolores Hillsbury, Princess of Fenswick in Glantri.

Human, female.

Dracolish, Gremlish Chief in Stamtral.

Human, male.



Drisana Madhar, Rani of Jalawar in Sind.

Human, female, M9.

Duriel II, King of Dain-Karak in Minaea.

Dwarf, male, F11.

Durifern Widaeferer, Clannmaster in Denagoth.

Elf, male, R16.

Eleya Moonstalker, Horse Clan Chieftainess in Atruaghin.

Human, female, F10.

Eratkar Kasusu, Zatrapp of Mebirusk in Bezchamenid.

Human, male, P11 of Edd (Thor).

Eybind the Odd, Jarl in Vestland.

Human rumored to be a half-elf, male, P11 of Odin.

Fergus, Baron of Sonnenfeld.

Human, male, F15.

Gallia Biazzan, Countess of Biazzan.

Human, female, F7.

Gard Rocktooth, Clannmaster of Kildorkak.

Dwarf, male, F12.

Geraldan Actavius, Count of Actius.

Human, male, F16.

Gerwen, Mayor and Seneschal in Ersenbal.

Human, male, F5.

Ghazan, Khan of the Taijits in Ethengar.

Human, male, Ftr7(3C).

Gilla Blyskarats, Countess of Buhrohur.

Dwarf, female, Pr12 of Kagyar.

Gulbuddin Marzik, Zatrapp of Ubaraz in Dezchamenid.

Human, male, F10.

Guthorm Brittle-Bone, Jarl in Soderfjord.

Human, male, F15.

Handlebar Emilio, Pirate-King of Puerto Morillos and Captain of the Black Raven in the Merry Pirate Seas.

Human, male, F12.

Hara Rudraksha, Maharajah of Peshmir.

Eldest son of the Maharajah of Kadesh, Hara was groomed nearly from birth to join the ranks of the buraiyas. Keenly aware of his father's coldly pragmatic interests in his son, Hara grew to be a bitter, cruel man. Since the birth of his daughter in AC 1010, Hara's spirit has begun to lighten. Though he is still far from benevolent, his cruelty has tempered somewhat. His change of attitude, however, has put him at odds with his father and the cult of the buraiyas. Born: AC 980. Hair: Black. Height: 5'

11". Eyes: Green. Hara wears his dark hair short, and keeps a trim mustache. His right cheek bears a severe burn mark, legacy of a childhood punishment by his father.

Male human Ftr9/Bur3/Rog1(3C): HD 9d10+4d6+26; hp 89; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (Dexterity penalty, scale mail +1, ring of protection +2); Atks +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+7/crit 18-20 x2, unholy scimitar +2), or +16/+11/+6 melee (1d4+4/crit 15-20 x2, kukri +1 of wounding); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +4; AL CN (C tendencies); Str 16, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Languages: Sindhi, Thyatian (Darokinian dialect).

Equipment: Amulet of proof against detection and location, kukri +1 of wounding, ring of protection +2, scale mail +1, unholy scimitar +2.

Skills: Climb +5, Disguise +3, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (Nobility) +2, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Move Silently +10, Ride +4, Sense Motive +3.

Feats: Blind-Fight, Death Blow, Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Kukri, Improved Critical: Kukri, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Point Blank Shot, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus: Scimitar, Weapon Focus: Kukri, Weapon Specialization: Scimitar.

Spells: Currently, Hara Rudraksha does not receive spells from Kala. If his alignment should ever return to CE, he will cast spells as a 3rd level buraiya (-1).

Harald of Haaskinz, Prince of Sablestone and Grand Master of the School of Magic in Glantri.

Human, male.

Heinrich Niederhaus, Baron of Ossian and Grand Knight of the Order of the Ash Rod in Ossian.

Human, male, Pal0 of Odin.

Helga Schonberg, Landmeister of Heldland.

Human, female, Pr12 of Vanya.

Helmut Jaschke, Count of Wolkenburg.

Human, male, Fl2.

Hermann Adalard, Landmeister of Oceansend in Heldland.

Human, male, Pr(cr)9 of Vanya.

Hessuarbeeum the Gold, Earl of the Lawful Dragons in Wyrksteeth.

Ancient gold dragon, male, 22HD.

Holba Firestorm, Exarcha of Westrourke.

Human, female, T13.

Huaji, Khan of the Kaeruts in Ethengar.

Human, male, Ftr15(3E).

Hugo “El Despiadado” de Narvaez y Montoya, Barón of Narvaez.

Human, male, Pr(cr)15 of Ixion War Priest.

Hugues Leget, Bourgmestre of Nouvelle-Renardie.

Lupin (Eusdrian bulldog), male, F10 Myrmidon.

Hulagu, Khan of the Uighurs in Ethengar.

Human, male, Ftr16(3E).

Ian Aronal, King of Tesla in Minaea.

Human, male, F11.

Jarkainmun, Baron of the Estate of Malevolence in Blackheart.

In his youth the baron was a striking male specimen, and quite proud of the fact. His body was lean and toned, his features chiseled, and his shocking red hair like a royal crown upon his head. Being an ambitious man, the baron quickly made enemies, some of which even survive today. Unknown to him, one of those enemies placed a powerful curse on him. Slowly over time his body deteriorated. His skin became pallid and sickly and his body began to retain fat. Nothing he did could stop his transformation. The baron covered up his inability to rid himself of the curse by adopting habits that could account for his quickly growing girth. Watching Jarkainmun eat is enough to turn the hardest of stomachs. Now the baron is a corpulent pustule of a human being. The only way that he can support his obese form is through magical support items that grant him the powers of levitation and limited flight.

Jarkainmun keeps a residence in Shraek, as well as on at the royal court. He enjoys the discomfort that his very presence inflicts upon others when he goes to visit. The baron does this often in order to keep up on imperial politics. Unlike many of his fellow Blackheartians he has a healthy appetite for matters of the state. While at his Estate of Malevolence the baron pursues his other favorite pastimes—tormenting innocent souls, and practicing a unique blend of necromancy and fire-related magics.

Clan Traedypis (of Shipe-Lator) has been a thorn in the side of the baron’s family for generations. He hates them with a passion, and although he has not been able to move against them openly he spends vast amounts of time plotting their destruction.

Human, male, Wz13(3E).

Joannes Rosattas, Lord of Verge.

Joannes was a successful officer of the Thyatian Ministry of Trade for many years, before overzealous investigators wrongfully seized his properties and imprisoned him and members of his family. The corrupt officials were eventually caught by Emperor Eusebius, and Rosattas exonerated, but not before he managed to escape Thyatis and claim asylum in Karamaikos. Since then, the disaffected Rosattas has elected to stay in the kingdom, and was recently granted the dominion of Verge. Born: AC 975. Hair: Blond, now gray. Height: 5' 3". Eyes: Green. A childhood bout of kobold flu has left Rosattas with severe arthritis.

Male human Ari5(3E): **HD** 5d8+5; **hp** 24; **Init** -3; **Spd** 30; **AC** 8 (Dexterity penalty, ring of protection +1); **Atks** +3 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger); **SV** Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +8; **AL** LN; **Str** 10, **Dex** 5, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16.

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

Equipment: Ring of protection +1, cloak of elvenkind.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +7, Intuendo +5, Listen +6, Read Lips +6, Ride +4, Sense Motive +7.

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Focus: Diplomacy, Skill Focus: Appraise.

Isidore d'Ambreville, Princess of Nouvelle Aberoigne in Glantri.

Human, female.

Jaggar von Drachenfels, Prince of Aalban in Glantri.

Human, male.

Jamila ben Nadir, Duchess of Tel Akbir.

Human, female, TL2.

Janick Essecki, Count of Valeryia in Klagorst.

Human, male, FL2.

Jemugu, Khan of the Pakkas in Ethengar.

Human, male, Ftr8(3E).

Joam Astlar, Sheriff of Seashire in the Five Shires.

Hin, male, F9.

John of the Main, "Duke" of Cimarron.

Human, male, Pal5 Honorbound.

Jozef Drulovic, Duke of Vrancea in Klagorst.

Human, male, F10.

Juliana Vlaardoen, Princess of Bergdhoben in Glantri.

Human, female.

Kabir Rudraksha, Maharajah of Kadesh.

The maharajah once hoped to expand his dominion by marrying his son off to the daughter of the Maharajah of Peshmir and then assassinating him. Unfortunately, son Hara didn't play along with the plan. The two men are now bitter enemies, and their dominions are embroiled in vicious civil war. Kabir is secretly the patron and leader of the buraiyas. Born: AC 957. Hair: Black, shaved bald. Height: 6' 1". Eyes: Gray. Though aging, Rudraksha's dark eyebrows and short beard continue to give him a sinister look that is effective in intimidating his underlings.

Male human Bur10/Rog7(3C): HD 17d6-7; hp 54; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 19 (Dexterity bonus, amulet of natural armor +4, padded armor +3); Atks +16/+11/+6 melee (1d4+1/crit 18-20, assassin's kukri +2), or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow +2 of distance); SA sneak attack +9d6, death attack (DC 22), Spells; SD Uncanny Dodge, Evasion; SV Fort +4, Ref +13, Will +10; AL LE; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 16.

Languages: Sindhi, Thyatian (Darokinian dialect), Hulean.

Equipment: Amulet of natural armor +4, assassin's kukri +2, light crossbow +2 of distance, padded armor +3, ring of mind shielding, ring of regeneration.

Skills: Balance +4, Bluff +8, Climb +3, Concentration +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +4, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +6, Gather Information +12, Hide +12, Innuendo +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Nobility) +3, Knowledge (Religion) +15, Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +3, Read Lips +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3, Tumble +2, Use Rope +2.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus: Kukri.

Spells: -/4/3/3/2.

Kjodar Triudar's Son, Chieftain of Kiefstut in Antalia.

Human, male, F16.

Kol, Prince of New Kolland in Glantri.

Kobold, male.

Kulu Pomba, Governor of Akuba.

Human, male, F7.

Kwangu M'boma, Tyrant of Batu-Fomba in Minaea.

Human, male, T15.

Leilah ben Nadir, Exarcha of the Thyatian Hinterlands.

Human, female, Pr19 of Tarastia.

Leonidas Ruggiero, Duke of Kantrium.

Human, male, F15.

Lidial Almashiye, Almashiye Clannaster in the Elms.

Elf, female, Pr10 of Ciryndul.

Longtooth, Baron of Latela.

Human, male, T15.

Lyra Furmenglaiwe, Countess of Furmenglaiwe.

Human/werewolf, female, Pr20 of Protius.

Maeragh Littlelaughs, Sheriff of Eastshire in the Five Shires.

Hin, female, F8.

Malachie du Marais, Prince of Morlay-Malinbois in Glantri.

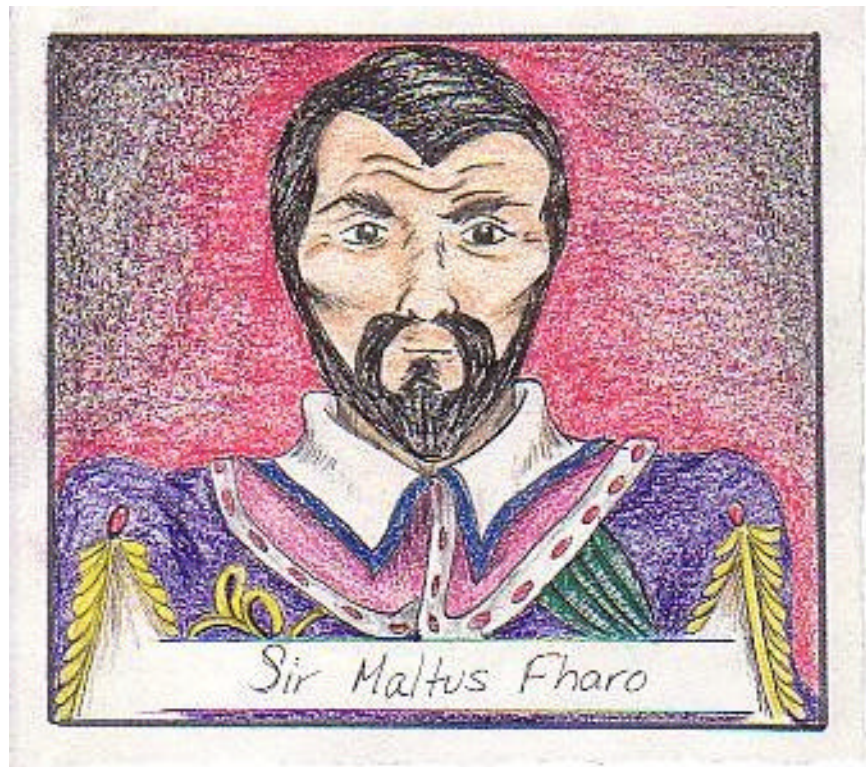
Human, male.

Maldinius Kerendas, Duke of Kerendas.

Human, male, F20.

Maltus Fharo, Baron of Two Lakes Vale.

Human, male, F13.



Manghai, Khan of the Murkits in Ethengar.

Human, male, Ftr10(3E).

Marie Kendach, Countess of Kendach.

Human, female, F9.

Markus Achresk, Baron of Fewalskij in Klagorst.

Human, male, M12.

Martigan Ersenbal, Count of Ersenbal.

Human, male, F20. Currently missing.

Maximilian, Baroness of Wyrnhart.

Human, female, T12.

Maximiliano de Almarrón y Escudor, Barón of Almarrón.

Human, male, F9 Noble.

Maximus I, Baron of Swordcoast.

Human, male, F15.

Meghan the Gaunt, Viscountess of Furfield in Bellayne.

Rakasta, female, F8 Honorbound.

Mealidan Mealidil, Mealidil Clanmaster in Darokin.

Elf, male, M11.

Mehmet II, Baron of Garganin.

Human, male, F7.

Mitasula Retebius, Duchess of Retebius.

Human, female, M18.

Moghul Khan, Khan of Dast in Orcland.

Dellow orc rumored to be a devil swine, male, F9.

Morphail Gorebitch-Uoszlan, Prince of Boldavia in Glantri.

Human, male.

Mortimer the Defiant, Earl of Penwick in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, F11 Noble.

Mursillis Labinitas, Zatrapp of Zrakan in Bezchamenid.

Human, male, M12.

Mzilikazi (a.k.a. The Count), Lord in Limn.

Vampire, male.

Na-Do, Chief of the Fang Cave Clan of the Brute-Men.

Male, brute-man, F9.

Narabipa Dagger Tooth, Tiger Clan King in Atruaghin.

Human, male, F17.

Necco the Black, Pirate-King of Baraga in the Merry Pirate Seas.

Human, male, F9.

Nebik, Duke of Vvolstograd.

Human, male, F9.

Ney, Archduke of Chitine.

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, for which they will typically sacrifice their lives. This does not mean that furmies have no personality and are mechanical, instinct-driven creatures like ants; quite the contrary, just that their values would appear alien to most sentient creatures. Most furmies are of Loyal alignment, and in fact eggs are normally screened for chaotic tendencies before hatching—and eggs that would bear potentially unstable individuals are destroyed mercilessly. Each furmy is born with its future decided for it in advance; the colony provides it with all it needs, including training for its position in the society. Most furmies are simple workers (farmer, craftsman, etc.), some are warriors, while some are bred for wizardry or priesthood or other important positions; thus, furmies of all classes and levels can be encountered. A furmy’s life span is about 100 years; queens generally live about 500 years.

All furmies have an instinctive fear of water, and will avoid crossing seas and oceans, or even smaller bodies of water—there is no known furmy sailors. They also fear fire. Because of their strange appearance and behavior, furmies will generally have a hard time meshing with other races—but that is something they rarely do anyway. Due to their physiology, they cannot speak the humanoid languages without a very strong accent (generally described as chopped and clicking, but the differences are actually more fundamental). Because of their nature, furmies have a hard time grasping various concepts like money, property, poverty, trade, fame, sex, love, family, lie, treachery, treason, often causing them to make major blunders (more often than not at their own expense, but they rarely even realize it).

Furmies are not native to Mystara, but from another world where insect-like creatures are the dominant form of sentient life. One colony accidentally came to Mystara long ago, and though it is

very rare, some of its members can sometimes be encountered. The exact location of the Mystaran colony is a secret no furny will reveal to any non-furny. The furnies worship the Immortal Furny, allegedly the only furny 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, Furny grants spells to Its Mystaran priests.

Nilas Dowalski, Count of Gask in Klagorst.

Human, male, F14.

Nisir Suun, Zatrapp of Pazarkan in Vezchamenid.

Human, male, F5.

Nurokidu Nuar, Exarch of the Pearl Islands.

Human, male, T20.

Oda Elsasdottir, Jarl in Ostland.

Human, female, F7.

Odarit Mustasir, Zatrapp of Chura in Vezchamenid.

Human, male, F14.

Ogzar, Overlord of Erech in Minaea.

Minotaur, male, F12.

Omar al-Kalim, Emir of Tameronikas.

Human, male.

Oran Meditor, Exarch and Guild Master of Minrothad.

Elf, male, F10/M12.

Parsan Zhemenieh, Zatrapp of Darsi in Vezchamenid.

Human, male, F13.

Perceval the Iron Clawed, Duke of Pawcester in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, F10 Noble.

Periandra Docerius, Baroness of West Portage.

Human, female, F12.

Phileus Furmenglaiwe, Count of Furmenglaiwe.

Human/werewolf, male, F20.

Powakuan Sleeps-With-Open Eyes, Bear Clan Chief in Atruaghin.

Human, male, F10.

Quillan Elm-Grower, Baron and Clanmaster of the Elms.

Elf, male, F14/M10.

Quymex Pezcham, Imperial Regent of Pezchamenid.

Human, male, Pr16 of Mizara-Idan (Ixion).

Ralindi Virayana, Prince of Krondahar in Glantri.

Human, female.

Ramanan Venkat, Rajah of Shajarkand in Sind.

Human, male, F7.

Renkkeodagg the Doombringer, Earl of the Chaotic Dragons in Wyrksteeth.

Ancient red dragon, male, 20HD.

Renshiye, Shalidye Clanmaster in Nordalrheim.

Elf, male, R10/TS.

Rodney the Intrepid, Earl of Theeds in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, F13 Noble.

Rutger Dag, Baron of Dag.

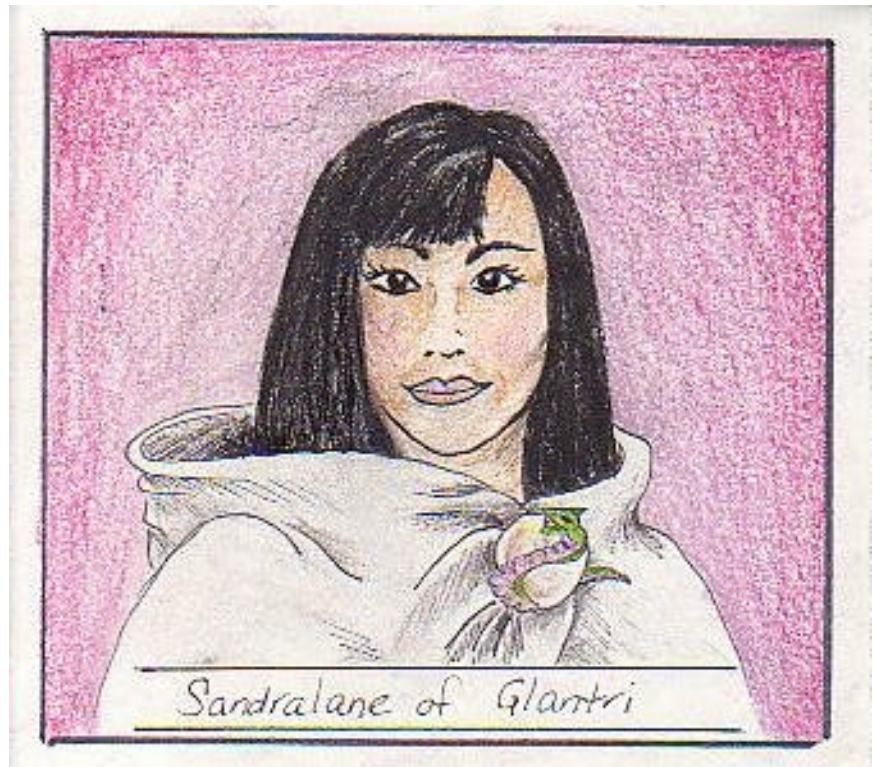
Human, male, F14.

Sabrina Andreana, Countess of Halathius.

Human, female, F11.

Sandralane, Baroness and
Matriarch of Moonland.

Human, female, P14 of
Matera.



Seastian Viniska, Ruler of Dool in Minaea.

Human, male, F20.

Shelingar, Lightseeker Clanholder in Nordalfheim.

Elf, male, F4/M3.

Shuren, Duke of Kameloth.

Human, male, M18/F16.

Siegfried Sixx, Baron of Serenity.

Human, male, F15.

Sildil Seaeyes, Sheriff of Southshire in the Five Shires.

Bin, female, F8.

Stano, Duke of Stamtral.

Human, male, F9.



Stefania Torion, Countess of Redstone.

Human, female, F5/T15.



Sythandria, Mythuinn Clannmistress in Nordalkheim.

Elf, female, M7/Pr7 of Isundal.

Talin, Jemite Leader of Draeh.

Human, male.

Talinguk Kolls-His-Canoe, Turtle Clan Chief in Atruaghin.

Human, male, T13.

Taragin Oakbranch, Lightseeker Clannmaster in Nordaltheim.

Elf, male, F10/M10.

Tarisco Highnose, Sheriff of Highshire in the Five Shires.

Min, male, F7/T7.

Tark Takkras, Clanlord in Arcadia.

Dwarf, male, F10.

Temur, Khan of the Pugatais in Ethengar.

Human, male, Rog16(3C).

Teng Lin-Dieu, Exarch of Ochalea.

Human, male, Pr20 of Koryis.

The Dragon, Lord in Limn.

Possibly an actual dragon.

Theodozon IV, King of Tesla in Minaea.

Human, male, Pr14 of Tarastia.

Thomas Stilldorfer, Landmeister of Landfall in Heldland.

Human, male, Pr8 of Vanya.

Thomas von Mettingen, Castellan of Vanya's Rest.

Human, male, Pr13 of Vanya.

Thrainkell Firestorm, Exarch of Westrourke.

Human, male, Pr(cr)12 of Vanya.

Thyandros, Blackblade Clannmaster in Nordaltheim.

Elf, male, F9/M9.

Thyrius Palykratidius, Duke of Hattias.

Human, male.

Tiradon, King of Corescos in the Traldar Lands.

Human, male, F18.

Tlatepetl, Governor-General of Tlazepetec in Orcland.

Red orc, male, F10. General Tlatepetl has annexed the settlements of Xorg and New Hobgobland, territories formerly under the command of Hulai Khan and Alebane. The two goblinoid leaders both left Orcland in AC 1016 with raiding hordes.

Triella Tien-Tang, Duchess of Mositius.

Human, female, M20.

Tulabal Shadowfall, Elk Clan Chief in Atruaghin.

Human, female, F4/T13.

Urmahid Krinagar, Prince of Brampyra in Glantri.

Human, male.

Uthar Metzger, Baron in Siegeria.

Human, male, F18/M9.

Uthgaard McRhomaag, Baron of Caerdwicca.

Human, male, F12/T4.

Valerion Recebarius, Provincial Legate/Governor of Meridia.

Human, male, T6.

Vincienzo di Randazzi, Baron of Plourgne.

Vincienzo is the consummate gamesman—he will place bets on the slightest whim, and he wins more often than not. He is particularly adept at games involving his summoned creatures, and he was the champion dart-thrower at the Great School of Magic. Now he has turned his attentions to the greatest game in Glantri—politics. Born: AC 979. Hair: Black. Height: 5' 9". Eyes: Brown. Vincienzo always has a twinkle in his eye, and his money pouch close at hand.

Male human Wis/Cjr10(3E): HD 10d4; hp 31; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (Dexterity bonus); Atks +5 melee (1d4/crit 19-20/x2, dagger) or +10 ranged (1d4+1/crit x2, dart +1 of returning); SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +6; AL NG; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Languages: Aberoignian, Thyatian (Glantrian dialect).

Equipment: Bag of tricks (rust colored), dart +1 of returning (x2), deck of illusions, rod of wonder.

Skills: Alchemy +2, Bluff +5, Concentration +10, Craft (Woodworking) +3, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +4, Pick Pocket +4, Profession (Gambler) +13, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +3.

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quicken Spell, Rapid Shot, Scribe Scroll, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus: Dart.

Weston, Governor in Panteria.

Human, male, T13.

Winnefred of the Lake (a.k.a. Winnifred), Baroness of the Lake.

Human, female, Pr18 of Ixion.



Wolfgang Stimmel, Landmeister of Polakatsikes.

Human, male, Pr13 of Vanya.

Xagash, Archduke of Stygia.

Troglodyte, male, F12.

Xenthos Sarantakos, Council Spokesman of Kastelios.

Human, male, normal man.

D'ilorchaem the Lofty One, Earl of the Neutral Dragons in Wyrksteeth.

Ancient blue dragon, male, 18HD.

Oldysyl Greenheight, Count of Vyalia.

Elf, male, F13/M12.

Zholodeer Demilcataur, Zatrapp of Divja in Dezhamenid.

Pegataur, male, F13.

Zorok, Toralai Chieftain in Neathar.

Human, male, T13.

Most Trusted Councilors

Councilors and advisors, ambassadors and consuls, ministers and seneschals and mayors.

Al Fatmah Nikita-Ahmed, Vizier of Internal Security in Nithia.

Human, female, F18.

Alden, Alphan Ambassador in Redhorn.

Human, male, F3.

Asgrim the Bowed, Royal Adviser in Ostland.

Human, male, Pr15 of Odin.

Benjamin Treeby, Leader of the Royal Party in the House of Commons in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, F6 Honorbound.

Delsel Oaktree, Assistant Consulate in Aegos.

Elf, male, F10/M10.

Diocletian Merasthasius, Head of the Interior Ministry of Mibosia.

Human, male, normal man, member of the ruling triumvirate.

Dylan son of Penn, Thratian Consul in Thyatis.

Human, male, F9.

Francesca Egidio, Thyatian Consulate in Aegos.

Human, female, F18.

Francis Blythe-Jackson, Leader of the Wyndham Party in the House of Commons in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, T5 Local Hero.

Frederick Beckman, Probost Marshal in Mositius.

Human, male, F17.

Hölger Scholz, Heldannic Overseer in Kildorkak.

Human, male, Pr5 of Vanya.

Jonas Whiteshore, Seneschal in Kameloth.

Min, male, F3.

Jorkk, Chieftain and Overseer in Hopeland.

Half-orc, male, F10.

Khalid-al-Sharif “the Tale Teller”, Grand Vizier of Blaruum.

Human, male Ftr4/Clr14(3E) of Protius.

Kondu Paka, Bwana Gwaride (Great Guardian) of Haddlom.

Human, male, F16.

Krameos of Tyrnus, Senator in Milenia.

Human, male, F7.

Mirinasi, High Emissary in Selhomarr.

Human, female, Dr 15.

Nikephorus Logotharion, Praefect of Thyatis.

Human, male, Rake15.

Ocylok, Elder in Frosthaven.

Cryon, male.

Roger Dumas, Seneschal in Chevas.

Human, male, M2.

Sandryth, Draconic Envoy in Arcadia.

Gold dragon, male, young adult.

Tanobari Quar, Pearl Islander Consul in Thyatis.

Human, male, Rake9.

Vasily Stolbob, Minister of State of Zuyebo.

Human, male, FS.

Most Influent Aristocrats

Lesser aristocrats, heirs and royal families, fallen monarchs.

Afef, Royal Princess of Tangor.

Human, female, Rake4.

Allatine Proabistes, Lord in Mositius.

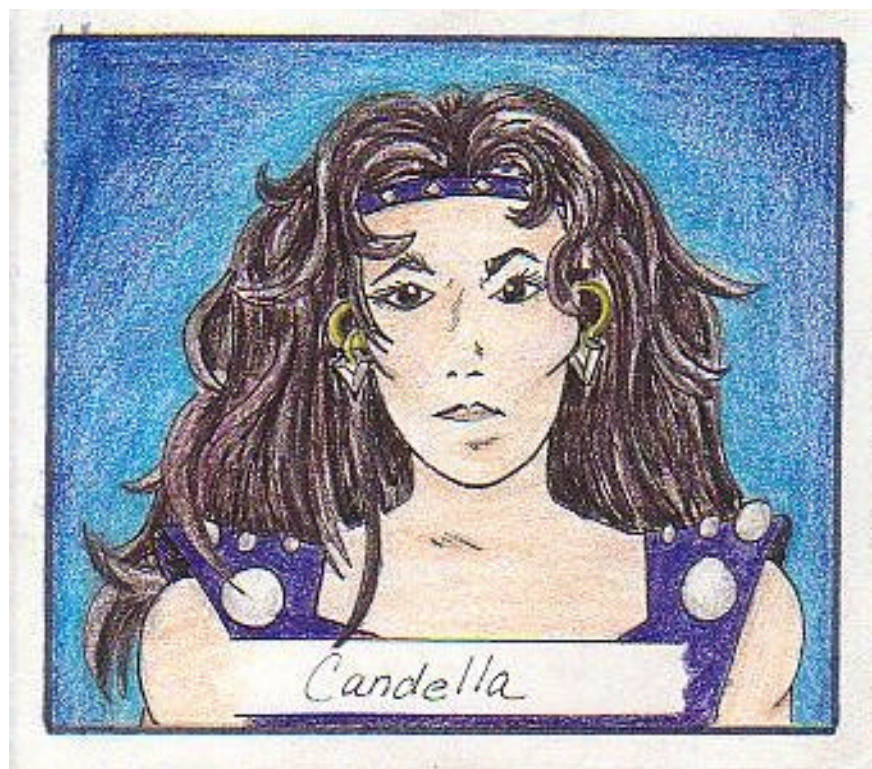
Human, male, M18.

Anthemus Adreanus, Heir in Halathius.

Human, male, F9.

Candella, Aristocrat in Norwold.

Female.



Desdemona Retebius, Heir in Retebius.

Human, female, Rake7/M12.

Doriath, Former King of Altheim.

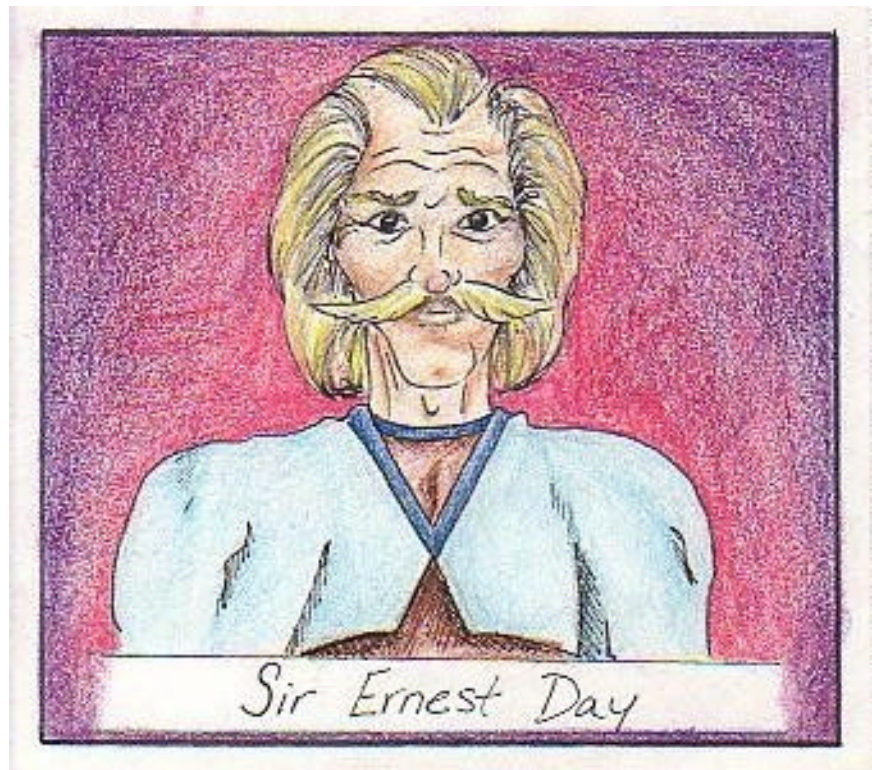
Elf, male, F13/M15.

Elenitsa, Former Queen of Lagrius.

Human, female, F10/T6.

Ernest Day, Former Baron of Hopeland.

Human, male.



Esteban "El Salvador," Former Tyrant of Almarrón.

Human, male, F13.

Eugenos, Lord in Hattias.

Human, male, M20.

Feyad'Rauth, Nephew to Baron Iarkainmun in Blackheart.

By far the most dangerous of the baron's nephews, Feyad'Rauth is a spitting image of Iarkainmun in his youth. When he was just a babe, his older brother killed his parents and brought Rauth to live with his uncle. After hearing stories about his father, Rauth is most pleased about his fate.

He is as adept with the sword as he is with spells. Charming and congenial manners hide the violent savagery that pulsates within him. Rauth has tried several times to have the baron executed, but as of yet has not succeeded. He knows that the baron knows this as well. He also knows that the baron favors him, and would be loath to dispose of him for fear of having his holdings fall into the hands of Rauth's older brother.

Human, male, W134/Ftr2(3C).

Gabronius Torion, Prince in Thyatis.

Human, male, F2.

Gilbert de Fausseflammes, Aristocrat in Chebas.

Human, male, M12.

Gilis Shadowborn, Princess in Gråbjerge.

Dwarf, female, T4.

Glausoraiban (a.k.a. the Beast), Nephew to Baron Jarkainmun in Blackheart.

Glausoraiban is the first-born son of Baron Jarkainmun's younger half-brother. The Beast was always more like his uncle than his father, and so at a young age he apprenticed himself to the baron. Although he learned only a smattering of magic, Glausoraiban delights most in the physical torment of others. He gained his epithet after brutally murdering his own mother and father.

The Beast spends most of his days training with the baron's guard. When he's not doing that, he is hunting some poor unfortunate slave in the wilds of Blackheart. The hunts are never fair, and most of the time the victims are rarely even old enough to hold a sword. On occasion these little hunts cross over into Traedypis land, and the Beast takes delight in wreaking as much havoc as possible.

Human, male, Sor2/Bbn(3C).

Harald Gudmundson, Former King of Vestland.

Human, male, F13.

Heraclius Actavius, Heir in Actius.

Human, male, F12.

Himerius Biazan, Heir in Biazan.

Human, male, F13.

Inay Paramesh, Former Rajah of Jalawar in Sind.

Human, male, T13.

Irene Trenzantenbia Tatriokanita Isaurica, Former Empress of Thyatis.

Human, female, M20.

Junna, Former Queen of Randel.

Human, female, Pr13 of Alphetia.

Larandia Lymianoporus, Lady and Head of the Order of Foresters in Vyalia.

Human, female, F10/M12.

Manfred Torion Dörfer, Former Usurper in Thyatis.

Human, male, F15.

Rhorg, Former Duke of Vrancea in Klagorst.

Human, male, Pr14 of Nyx.

Philippicus Patrizio, Heir in Lucinius.

Human, male, F9.

Qirklin, Prince of Floating Arkan.

Human, male, Pr16 of Valerias.

Tredorian, Prince of Alphatia.

Human, male, F12.

Trimos Sortiropolis, Former Bürgermeister of Polakatsikes.

Human, male, normal man.

Ursa Svalasdottir, Queen-Mother in Ostland.

Human, female, Pr10 of Odin.

Most Powerful Warlords

General, admirals, and other commanders.

Alexandrus Maxentinos, Air Fleet Academy Commandant in Retebius.

Human, male, F20.

Andronicus Ducatzes, Commander of the Hetaerelia in Thyatis.

Human, male, F18.

Antonina Alessandrasia, Lady Knight Commander of the Air Guard in Thyatis.

Human, female, F20/M10.

Belissarian Strategius, Imperial Marshal and Chief of the General Staff in Thyatis.

Human, male, F20.

Branwys Skyratchet, Leader of Revolutionaries in Serraine.

Gnome, male, F8/Pr8 of Saral Glitterlode.

Broderick, Commander in Chief of Nayce.

Human, male, F19. His body is currently possessed by the wizard Karszamon.

Carylidian, General in Schattenalfheim.

Elf, male, F10/M10.

Constantine Lecapenus, First Sea Lord and Grand Admiral of the Imperial Admiralty in Thyatis.

Human, male, F20.

Diamanes Thesakkrus, General of the Mibosian Army in Mibosia.

Human, male, F14, member of the ruling triumvirate.

Dirk Hollweg, Grenzmarschall in Heldland.

Human, male, Pr12 of Vanya.

Erich Barthold, Grenzmarschall in Heldland.

Human, male, Pr11 of Vanya.

Feldian Lehenard, Officer in the Grand Army of Glantri.

Feldian is a mundaner—a person with no magical aptitude—, which makes him a second-class citizen in Glantri. Nevertheless, he managed to win the heart of Princess Juliana Vlaardoen many years ago. Though the Black Eagle has also taken an interest in her, Feldian is determined to fight for his love. Born: AC 983. Hair: Brown. Height: 5' 11". Eyes: Green. A handsome man, but completely unaware of the fact. When not in uniform, he dresses very simply.

Male human Ftr7(3C): HD 7d10+7; hp 53; Init +1; Spd 30/20; AC 11 (Dexterity bonus) or 21 (full plate, large shield, Dexterity bonus); Atks +11/+6 melee (1d8+2/crit x2, masterwork long sword) or +12/+7 melee (1d8+6/crit x3, heavy lance +2); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; AL LG; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Languages: Thyatian (Glantrian dialect).

Equipment: Heavy lance +2, horseshoes of speed, potion of aid.

Skills: Climb +2, Craft: Carpentry +4, Handle Animal +4, Jump +2, Ride +10, Spot +4.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus: Heavy Lance, Weapon Focus: Long Sword, Weapon Specialization: Heavy Lance.

Feudelance, Brother of the Sun in the Arch of Fire.

Sollux, male, F14.

Formosos Treeshield, Warden Marshal in Vyalia.

Elf, male, F10/M10.

Geoffrey of Grunturm, Rebel Leader in Heldann.

Human, male, Pr20 of Law.

Georgi Thorowsk, Knight in Tcheltar in Klagorst.

Human, male, F12, Master of the Knights of Tcheltar.

Geredek, General of the Krugel Horde.

Orc, male, F20.

Grumman, General in Denagoth.

Human, male, F14/T10.

Hathaldrim, Alphetian Garrison Commander in Gaity.

Human, male, M12.

Heinrich Straßburger, Would-be Usurper in Heldom.

Human, male, Pr17 of Vanya.

Hermann Veseldorf, Commandant in Borydos.

Human, male, F20.

Horrobin, Leader of the Grey Front in Serraine.

Nagpa.

Jules Docerius, Captain of the Garrison in West Portage.

Human, male, F12.

Karszamon, Commander in Chief of Nayce.

Human, male. He is in control of the body of the former commander in chief, Broderick.

Khordarg, Dragon in Orland.

Red dragon.

Krogada the Itchy, War Chieftainess in the Beastmen Lands.

Female, beastman, F13.

Laurida Tremaine, Captain in Ersenbal.

Human, female, F8.

Lavim Hollister, General in Siegeria.

Hin, male, F10.

Lotaran, General in Arkan.

Human, male, Ftr15(3C). Arkan general and warrior.

Marcian Lactanius, Commander of the Sacred Guard in Thyatis.

Human, male, Pa20.

Maximillian von Hauptstein, Guard Commander in Halathius.

Human, male, F16.

Maximius Colophorius, Lord Knight and Grand Master of the Glorious Wings of Vanya in Thyatis.

Human, male, Pr20 of Vanya.

Mewsbury Fitzbagguss, Knight of the Bath in Bellayne.

Guild Master, rakasta, male, T13 Swashbuckler.

Naarn Dborcic, Warlord in Gournzee.

Varkha, male, F14.

Oshadogan, General of the Tangor Army in Tangor.

Human, male, F17.

Petrassia Amonduria, Captain of the Mibosian Cavalry Brigade in Mibosia.

Human, female, F12, member of the ruling triumvirate.

Rorterm the Stern, Leader of the Security Guards in Turmoil.

Human, male, F9. The Security Guards is a group of brigands who take payment for not attacking people.

Sabattius Laskaris, Lord Knight Commander of the Knights of the Air in Retebius.

Human, male, F18/Pr16 of Vanya.

Satabus Lucasian, Fleet Admiral in Lucinius.

Human, male, F18.

Selcomad, Army General in Stonewall.

Human, male, Ftr19(3E). A warrior and diplomat from Stonewall.

Siegfried Lenz, Grenzmarschall in Heldland.

Human, male, Pr14 of Vanya.

Stabro, Leader of the Knights of Halab in Slagovich.

Human, male, F14.

Theodorus Metopatius, Fort Commander in Carption.

Human, male, F18.

Trallans, Army Commander in Foresthome.

Human, male, Ftr14(3E).

Tythus, Lord High General in Milenia.

Human, male, F18.

Ulrike Bethmann, Grenzmarschall in Heldland.

Human, female, Pr15 of Vanya.

Vaanes Ornogorius, Commodore in Terentias.

Human, male, F18.

Wagton Blyskarats, General in Buhrohur.

Dwarf, male, F15.

Wolf-Hunter, Ranger in Foresthome.

Human or elf, male, Rgr7(3E). Originally from Arkan. Wolf-Hunter's race is a mystery. He is not quite sure himself. He could be a human, but he clearly has pointed ears as elves do, so he could be counted among both races. Still, he doesn't usually let people see his ears... In short, if he is human, he is one of those who has some elven blood in him, yet is not a half-elf (which are exceedingly rare on Mystara).

Wyrht, General of the Blessed of Szek in Szekesh.

Gnome, male, F8/T12.

Xendorian Hydrosius, Commodore in Actius.

Human, male, F15.

Zoranthi, Captain in the Kubitt Valley.

Kubitt, female, F6.

Most Blessed Ecclesiastics

Patriarchs and matriarchs.

Alexis Vatutin, Patriarch in Vvolstograd.

Human, male, Pr9 of the Church of Vvolstograd.

Amagast, Priest in Stonewall.

Human, male, Clr13(3C) of Razud.

Androsius Tyropolikos, High Priest in Hrissoptoli.

Human, male, Pr12 of Halab.

Arbandas, Druid in Arkan.

Human, male, Drd7(3C). Arkan druid in Frisland who harassed the Stonewall army and was captured.

Aw'ar, Chief Priest of Sumag in Suma'a.

Ogre-kin, female, Pr(shaman)15.

Batzas Daphabkarus, Prelate in Biazzan.

Human, male, Pr17 of Asterius.

Bessarine Hydrosius, Prelate in Carytion.

Human, male, Pr18 of Protius.

Brackularus Lactanius, Prelate in Halathius.

Human, male, Pr16 of Kagyar.

Cyril Christophorus, High Priest in Kerendas.

Human, male, Pr20 of Tarastia.

Cyril Helladius, Prelate in Actius.

Human, male, Pr16 of Protius.

Dagos of Xarda, Lord High Priest in Milenia.

Human, male, Pr18 of Halab.

Dendeh, Sun Protector of Emerond.

Emerondian, male, Pr20 of Ixion.

Dong Luc-Chu, Priest in Mositius.

Human, male, Pr15 of Koryis.

Droog, Chief Priest of Gombar.

Ogre-kin, male, Pr(shaman)10).

Celsha Spider's Kiss, Tiger Clan Cleric in Atruaghin.

Human, female, Pr10 of Atzanteotl.

Etesse, Priest in Arkan.

Human, female, Clr8(3E) of Koryis.

Euphemia Gundesbinda, Sanctifier in Borydos.

Human, female, Pr20 of Kagyar.

Goblopob, High Priest of Protius in Twaelar.

Merrow, male, Pr18 of Protius.

Helena Daphnotarthius, Priestess of Valerias's House of Passions in Thyatis.

Human, female, Pr16 of Valerias.

Helentia, Lady High Priest in Milenia.

Human, female, Pr17 of Petra.

Hobar Duck Watcher, Elk Clan Shaman in Atruaghin.

Human, male, Pr14 of Atruaghin.

Humphrey the Exalted, Archbishop of Kittings in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, Pr14 of Belbion.

Jorodrin Feadiel, Treekeeper in Aengmor.

Elf, male, M15/Pr12 of Ilsundal.

Julius Sartorius, High Priest of the Endless Seas of Protius in Thyatis.

Human, male, Pr18 of Protius.

Kamesama, Earth Protector of Emerond.

Emerondian, female, D18.

Malinalxoch, Ometochtzin of the Azcans.

Human, female, Pr18 of the Four Hundred Rabbits.

Marcus Kelephius, Prelate in Retebius.

Human, male, Pr16 of Odin.

Marick of Glebum, Archbishop of Serison in Thonia.

Human, male, Pr20 of Ixion.

Marston the Just, Archbishop of Leominster in Bellayne.

Rakasta, male, Pr14 of Pax Bellanica.

Michaelius Vaanes, Prelate in Machetos.

Human, male, Pr16 of Halab.

Msiba Jahi, Bwana Kamla (Great Prophet) of Dabdlom.

Human, female, Pr18 of Dav.

Niddrow, Forge Keeper in Kildorkak.

Dwarf, male, J8/Pr8 of Kagyar.

Ormun Corser, Priest of Minroth in Minrothad.

Human, male, Pr16 of Minroth.

Pekka Seppanen, High Priest of the Church of Kaarjala and Grand Smith of Ilmarinen in Kaarjala.

Human, male, Pr12 of Ilmarinen (Kagyar).

Pelagius Daphnorakenzes, Prelate in Lucinius.

Human, male, Pr20 of Protius.

Permon, Priest and Vizier in Nithia.

Human, male, Pr8, the only non-specialty priest in Rathanos's clergy.

Phaedra Daphnorakenzes, Priestess of Vanya in Thyatis.

Human, female, Pr10 of Vanya.

Pikkolu, Forest Protector of Emerond.

Emerondian, male, D20.

Porphyriel, Radiant Shaman in the Shadow Elves' Territories.

Elf, female, M16/Pr13 of Ratiel.

Kalak Ahman al-Mustafa, Priest in Tel Akbir.

Human, male, Pr18 of Protius.

Red Ork, High Priest in Siegeria.

Human, male, Pr14 of Odin.

Regino Helioprobos, Patriarch of Solarios in Thyatis.

Human, male, Pr16 of Solarios.

Salmalin Mahabir, Cult Leader in Kadesh.

Human, male, Clr5/Bur5/Rog2(3C).

Soridel, High Priest of Sinar in the Foresthomes.

Elf, male, Pr10 of Eiryndul.

Thadrik Karstone, High Priest in Buhrohur.

Dwarf, male, Pr12 of Kagyar.

Theophylact Cerularius, Chief Priest of Tarastia in Thyatis.

Human, male, Pr20 of Tarastia.

Thessia, High Priestess in Selhomarr.

Human, female, Pr19 of Xeron.

Trasaricus Theophilus, High Priest of Asterius in Thyatis.

Human, male, Pr16 of Asterius.

Ug-rum, Shaman of the Fang Cane Clan of the Brute-Men.

Male, brute-man, SS.

Vaalkoi Taapionen, Great Druid of the Kaarjalan Circle in Kaarjala.

Human, male, Dr20.

Xatapechtli, High Priest in Aengmor City.

Elf, male, M15.

Zar'nag, High Kai (Priest) in Stygia.

Troglodyte, male, Pr13 of Peg Shuta.

Zemarchus Raetelarius, Priest in Terentias.

Human, male, Pr17 of Asterius.

Zoltan Hytaxius, High Priest in White Oak.

Human, male, Pr20 of Hsundal.

Most Learned Scholars

Wizards, scholars, and famous artists.

Alexiana Hierydyl, Loremistress in Vyalia.

Elf, female, M18/Pr16 of Hsundal.

Amnethon of Corisa, High Magus in Milenia.

Human, male, M20.

Athanasia Romanones, Proctor of the Collegium Arcanum in Thyatis.

Human, female, M20.

Callistita Cataoloia, Magist in Carytion.

Human, female, M18.

Comentas Dulcissimus, Magist in Actius.

Human, male, M18.

Damianus Hermongenes, Magist in Biazzan.

Human, male, M20.

Darkcloak, Newly-settled Foreign Alphetian Wizard in Turmoil.

Rumored to be human, male, M19.

Demetrian Karagenteropolus, Imperial Magist in Thyatis.

Human, male, M21.

Drianna, Poet in the Gentle Folk Lands.

Elf, female, Fl.

Erik Helsing, Blackmailed Wizard in Serraine.

Human, male, M13.

Gallos the Aged, Respected Philosopher and Historian in Selhomarr.

Human, male, T4.

Johannes Angelikos, Curator in Borydos.

Human, male, M20.

Kanafasti, Court Mage in Aengmor.

Elf, male, M17.

Lodun the Doomed, Fading Star in Ambur.

Human, male, M12.

Madiera, Magist in Alpha.

Human, female, M18.

Mercurius Praesentinus, Magist in Halathius.

Human, male, M20.

Methodius Armorakius, Dean of the Imperial Academy in Thyatis.

Human, male, M12/Pr17 of Halab.

Murl of Vlaardoen, Wizard in Minrothad.

Human, male, M18.

Mylertendal, Famous Artist in Haben.

Human, female, M20.

Phillipia Caeseria, Magist in Retebius.

Human, female, M20.

Philoxenus Scholasticus, Curator of the Great Library in Thyatis.

Human, male, M20.

Phoebammon, Magist in Terentias.

Human, male, M18.

Rikka Kaalwa, Maga in Kaarjala.

Human, female, M16.

Rogart, Historian in Stonewall.

Human, male, Rog14(3C). A rogue and historian from Stonewall.

Rusak, Wizard.

Human, male.



Sarapammon, Magist in Tel Akbir.

Human, male, M20.

Theomisticus Chrysemion, Magist in Lucinius.

Human, male, M20.

Vincentius Hallicarnasas, Magist in Kerendas.

Human, male, M20.

Most Prosperous Merchants

Merchants and guilders.

Arturo Franich, Master of House Franich in Darokin.

Human, male.

Benji Trumblehorn, Shop Owner in Kastelios.

Bin, male, normal man.

Bertram Hallonica, Master of House Hallonica in Darokin.

Human, male.

Carola the Grappler, Captain of the Leap of Faith in the Merry Pirate Seas.

Human, female, T14.

Corwyn Linton, Master of House Linton in Darokin.

Human, male.

Elissa Pennydown, Mistress of House Pennydown in Darokin.

Human, female.

Eshram al-Azrad, Master of House al-Azrad in Darokin.

Human, male.

Greenleaf Vickers, Master of House Umbarth in Darokin.

Human, male.

Jeremol the Deceptive, Leader of the Traders' Guild in Turmoil.

Human, male, T10. the Traders' Guild is a thieves' guild.

Kleng Bloodhand, Pirate in Nordenhafen.

Human, male, F13.

Lucci Dhay, Dame and Headmaster of the Trade Guild in Panteria.

Human, female, T19.
Actually a spy from rival
Causa Nostra.



Marina Takanitas, Experienced Trader in Kastelios.

Human, female, normal woman.

Mendel Callister, Master of House Toney in Darokin.

Human, male.

Natalie Kalimi, Mistress of House Corun in Darokin.

Human, female.

Nosmo Beldan, Merchant-Prince in Minrothad.

Human, male, F15/MP12.

Opatuo, Head of the Mining Exchange of Emdur in Gobar.

Ogre-kin, female, Merchant14.

Pythion of Dophius, "King" of Milenia.

Human, male, M12.

Saroso Elsan, Merchant-Prince in Minrothad.

Water elf, male, F10/M16.

Tano Tarantella, Guild Master in Latela.

Human, male, T11.

Theodosius Kantinomeiros, Con Man in Thyatis.

Human, male, T15.

Ulard Forester, Guild Master in Minrothad.

Elf, male, F10/M12.

Valnor Acidelyprobius, Master of the Shadow Hand in Thyatis.

Human, male, T22.

Vodar, Pirate in Ekimmu in Minaea.

The pirate Vodar was born in Ekimmu, and is a national hero.

Most Diverse Local Celebrities

 ladiators and other local heroes or villains.

Andrzej Vatacek, Guild Master of the Guild of Adventurers in Valeryia in Klagorst.

Human, male, Pr20 of Auriel (Sinbad).

Bargle the Infamous, Mercenary in Serraine.

Human, male, M17.

Carolus Anthemion, Gladiator in Thyatis.

Human, male, F9/Werewolf.

Dariyana, Student in the Grey Islands.

Human, female, normal female.

Elektra Sharpblade, Gladiator in Thyatis.

Human, female, F17.

Furny Mallok, Runaway Slave in Blackheart.

Human, male, Rgr4(3C).

Hukkt, Gladiator in Thyatis.

Ogre, male, F18.

Kemal, Dock Warden in Garganin.

Human, male, normal man.

Speriopitis Melanikas, Gladiator in Thyatis.

Human, male, F7/Rakel5.

Strabos, Slave and Leader of the Kleonites in Milenia.

Human, male, Pr10 of Koryis.

Stult Bearclaw, Gladiator in Thyatis.

Human, male, F15.

Palag, Ex-Gladiator in Thyatis.

Orc, male, F12.

Economica

Currency Exchange Fees

Currency	Fee	Currency	Fee
Almarrón	No Fee	Karameikos ²	10%
Atruaghin	No Fee	Kastelios	5%
Bellayne	5%	Minrothad	5%
Cimarron	No Fee	Nayce ²	5%
Darokin	5%	Narvaez	10%
Hillbale ¹	5%	Ostland	15%
Ethengar	No Fee	Rockhome ³	10%
Five Shires	5%	Sind	15%
Garguña	5%	Soderfjord	No Fee
Glantri ²	10%	Thyatis	5%
Heldann	No Fee	Vestland ²	10%
Heldun	5%	Uendar	10%
Hule	15%	Uaruam	30%
Ierendi ²	10%	Vaddlom	5%

Most nations add 5% surcharge to the regular fees for exchanging gems and treasures.

(1) Though Hillbale 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 1018) in Review

Continuing the service we began, we offer you a brief review of the economic year written by some of the most accomplished economic experts of Mystara.

Old World and Beyond (courtesy of the Darokin Diplomatic Corps)

AC 1018, like 1017, saw some promising developments in many areas, but some serious setbacks in others. The houses of Darokin have expanded their trade into most of now freed Sind, though they face competition along the coast from the underhanded merchants of Minrothad and Thyatis. Trade in Plaruum is still sluggish, well below prebailing levels under the enlightened Preceptor rulers, but at least there are some openings now, and signs point to potential improvement in the future. The commerce of the houses of Darokin remains brisk in Karameikos, the Five Shires, and even Glantri where continued sale of goods for rebuilding purposes combined with financial recovery from the Ethengar war has boosted trade to something close to previous levels. The new political situation in Tameronikas may encourage a much awaited reopening of Plari markets, though the Emirate of Tameronikas itself is really a Thyatian client-state and hardly open to fair competition.

While economic conditions in Thyatis have improved markedly over the past couple of years, this has done less to improve the fortunes of Darokin's houses than it otherwise might have. This was due largely to two factors—first, continued trade friction during the early part of last year, during which the imperial government disgracefully discriminated against traders of the Western Defense League. Secondly, the continued retrograde policies of Eusebius in supporting native Thyatian merchants instead of allowing a level playing field, which we have been working hard on having rescinded.

Still, we are confident that continued pressure by the DDC on the Thyatians to open their market to fair competition will eventually produce the desired results. Other opportunities have opened up in the meantime, as enterprising Darokinian traders have begun to penetrate the markets of Wendar and even Denagoth to a greater degree, and have likewise finally begun to expose the Shadow Elves to the benefits of trade. This has helped alleviate the economic crisis in Selenica somewhat, though things remain less than fully stable in the region. On the other hand, Vestland's membership in the Western Defense League is producing the hoped-for results, with Darokinian traders beginning to dominate the local markets. Trade with Rockhome has improved significantly, returning to almost normal level. Trade with the humanoid nations, while frowned upon by some of our allies, has turned out to be quite profitable, fully justifying the granting of independence to the Orclands.

Sea-based trade remains sub-par for Darokin's merchant fleets, though the seafarers of House Linton have managed some recovery from their debacle. Still, market penetration by Thyatis and their Minrothaddan lackeys has left them in a dominant, almost monopolistic position with respect to sea trade. Eventually the Thyatians will confront the fact that closed economies tend to stagnate, and only open competition leads to long-term prosperity. But, due to the short-term successes of their shortsighted policies, Darokinian coasters have chosen to concentrate on markets close to home, in the ports of the Five Shires, Karameikos, Vestland, and even Soderfjord. In these areas, the potential of regaining significant market share in the sea trade is strong. House Linton's fortunes have improved in Jerendi as well, though Sind is a more difficult market due again to Thyatis's attitude. On account of these things, coupled with trade with Thyatis, necessary because of the size, significance, and centrality

of its markets, the enterprises of House Linton have returned to profitability. But pirates seem to plague the Sea of Dread, and Ostlander raiders make the Western Sea of Dawn dangerous. Thus, sea trade is a very risky proposition. Only the significantly lower cost of moving goods by sea, which produces a much higher potential profit margin, makes these endeavors worth the high risk.

If Alphetian ports were a tempting marketplace when Thyatis was in havoc, the same could not be said anymore, as the economic hangover from the sinking of Alphetia finally set in. This, coupled with the fact that the Thyatians and Minrothaddans have cornered most of the potential markets, and the fact that, despite Nayce's wishful thinking on the matter, pirate activity remains a significant threat to honest merchants, makes ventures to Naycese ports unworthy of the risk of loss, at least from this side of the Sea of Dawn, but this situation may change with the development of sea trade based from the Vestland port cities. Further increasing the undesirability of Naycese markets at this time is the fact that the pirates consistently sell captured crew and sailors into brutal slavery in Naycese kingdoms.

DDC Press Bureau, Darokin City, Kaldmont, AC 1018

Thyatian Empire (courtesy of the prefect of the city of Thyatis)

The empire's economic recovery is proceeding briskly. Economic reforms that for the past two years gave hope for future economic improvement have been bearing fruit. This, coupled with a deliberate imperial policy directed towards the continued expansion of trade and the development of potential economic resources throughout the imperial heartland and its colonies, along with the alliance with Minrothad, has revitalized the fortunes of Thyatian merchant families. The empire has also used its influence to begin to develop a strong network of maritime trading bases to facilitate trade both within the empire and in friendly ports. A strong effort has also been initiated to create trade routes with far distant harbors, where Thyatian goods are unusual, and which themselves have exotic products not commonly found in nearby nations. These ports are particularly valuable, because Thyatian and Minrothaddan merchants do not face the discriminatory trade practices of the Western Defense League in these markets.

Trade between metropolitan Thyatis and the Hinterlands of Dabania, along with the City-State of Kastelios and the Chanegioth Isles, have now surpassed the volume of trade prior to the Twaelar War. Peace with the Twaelar has opened that new market to trade, which the merchants of Seahome and the sea-elves of Actius especially have begun to exploit. The now completed reintegration of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands, along with what seems to be a period of relative stability on the Isle of Dawn for the first time since the Final Alphatian War, has allowed trade in these markets to grow significantly. So too, trade with allied Ostland and even in the Alphatian kingdoms of Nayce continues to expand. Trade with the lands controlled by the Heldomic Knights has been uneven again, as factional infighting leads to traders of various lands being in favor with one group but losing favor with another. Since the former patterns of trade, dominated by Darokinians, have been unsettled, this has created opportunities for those who are capable of seizing them. By playing both sides against the middle and making themselves indispensable intermediaries, imperial merchants have largely benefited from this.

While it may still be considered in a state of recovery, as Emperor Eusebius still issues new policies, trade in Thyatis is back to its heyday. It has also been shown that on a fair playing field in neutral markets, like Paddlom, the baronies of the Savage Coast, Nayce, and coastal Sind, the efficient merchants of Thyatis are more than capable of holding their own against the traders of the Western Defense League. The houses of Darokin seem to do best only in their own protected markets, and are being out-competed in ports beyond the league's pernicious influence.

As a result of these developments, many Thyatian ports have expanded their ability to handle increased volumes of trade. While some economic frictions exist, especially as the guilds of Minrothad adjust to Thyatian trade practices, and vice versa, the future looks promising and the dark clouds have definitely lifted.

Office of Economic Information, Prefect of Thyatis, Kaldmont, AC 1018

Nayce (courtesy of the Minrothad Merchant Marine Guild)

The economies of Nayce have continued to suffer from the effects of the economic crisis they so long put off. Attempting to pretend that the loss of their largest and most developed market, the hub of trade in the region, would have no effect helped them achieve apparent strength in the short run. But it has seemed to exacerbate things long-term. This is aggravated by the fiscal policies of Nayce's government. While nominal tax rates are relatively low within the region, resources, facilities, and assets are commandeered along with corvée labor by Nayce itself for projects such as the building of the underwater city of Torenal, submersibles, skyships, and the like. Additional resources are commandeered, along with additional labor for the provisioning of their large military establishment. The owners, private tradesmen and Alphatian guilders are paid dramatically reduced prices, if they are paid at all, for the use of their assets, resulting in the ruination of many once-prosperous enterprises. Others are assessed "supplementary" fees and "special surtaxes" as the Naycese government attempts to collect the money needed to support their imperial pretensions. This has led to an even more chaotic business environment than used to exist in the old Alphatian Empire, the unpredictability of the situation making it even more difficult than in the past for merchants and investors to plan their trade and investments. For better or worse, this burden has fallen upon the native merchants and craftsmen almost solely, with Karamaikan and Thyatian (including Minrothaddan) traders conducting business in the region being exempted by treaty from these taxes and confiscatory practices. This has allowed many of us to prosper by buying up assets in the region at below market prices and selling products to people desperate to buy them, goods that would otherwise be unavailable because the productive forces of Nayce's economies have been absorbed by the large-scale prestige projects demanded by Nayce's leaders. Indeed, for the native tradesmen and guilders of Nayce, this has been the cruelest cut—instead of being allowed to run their own affairs and take advantage of the disappearance of the Alphatian mainland by investing in production of goods once produced in the empire's heartland and thereby put the country on a firm economic and financial footing, they've been forced to expend their resources to cater to the whims of rulers who are ignorant and unconcerned with economic matters and neither know nor care how wealth is generated. The disturbances in Esterhold, and loss of many mines, have further impacted on the situation, as the kingdoms of this region were responsible for producing most of the metals and gemstones used as currency (once the metals had been minted into coin) or in large scale payments (gems), as well as creating a large refugee problem. If economic conditions were better in Nayce, these refugees might have been able to find productive work elsewhere in Nayce, but with things as they are these refugees have become mouths to feed, or at most conscripted as corvée labor by the government for the large projects or in simple make-work.

There are some bright spots. The Thyatian quarter on Aegos is developing into a superb entrepôt for traders sailing into and out of Naycese waters from the imperium, and indeed several Alphatian tradesmen have moved their craft-shops to this zone, which is sheltered from Nayce's tax agents and meddlesome government officials. Weitung (in Ochalea) and Seagirt (the Pearl Islands) have also benefited from this, in a spread-effect, producing goods for sale in the imperium but also in nearby Naycese kingdoms. Haldun's unique political status has also sheltered it from the unwise policies of Nayce as a whole, with Dunadale and even Helskir becoming vibrant ports. Helskir did suffer from last year's occupation by the Haldannic Knights, but was quick to recover due to Asteriela's sound policies and the fact that it lies directly along the route non-Alphatian traders use to sail into and out of

the northern part of Nayce. Wise Alphatian merchants have flocked to Heldun, especially around Deirdren, building shops and facilities, further contributing to Heldun's booming economy as this enterprising element moves in—but draining the rest of Nayce of the same, as they have moved out of other kingdoms, crippling their ability to recover from the current situation (a recovery that would only be possible if they, like the Thyatians did several years ago, recognize the situation and change their policies, something that does not seem about to happen). The longer this crisis goes on, the deeper it gets and the harder and longer it will be to dig themselves out. It may become such that they will not recover in any meaningful sense, assets having been so depleted, the economy so disrupted, and the brightest minds having left for greener pastures that things deteriorate so badly the downward spiral cannot be reversed. But a crafty merchant from a land that is exempt from the consequences of those practices which are wreaking havoc upon the Alphatian's native craftsmen and traders can profit greatly from the situation.

Sea of Dread (courtesy of the Minrothad Merchant Sailors Guild)

With the successful termination of the Twaelar War, as well as the colonization of the Thanegioth Archipelago, trade throughout the Sea of Dread has improved. Markets from Dabdlom to Echalea are being developed by both the traders of Minrothad and our counterparts in the rest of the Thyatian Empire. This is despite the fact that dangers continue to plague seafarers in the central basin of the sea, the vast span of water between Brun and the Thanegioth Isles. The development of imperial way-stations has made this area somewhat safer for Thyatian shipping, but it remains less than safe for the vessels of other nations. This redounds to the benefit of Minrothad, as these facilities are available to our merchants as members of the empire, but denied to our Darokinian and Karamaikan competitors.

Economic ties to the formerly hostile Twaelar are strengthening, and show even more potential. So too the bases at the head of the Serpent Peninsula promise to open strong trade through the northern Sea of Dread from imperial ports to the lands beyond the region. The continuing rise to prominence of the tradesmen of Kastelios, far from undermining our own efforts in the region, has proved complementary to it. This has led to the further opening of markets to the southwest of Dabania, also facilitated by the reorganization of the colonial Hinterlands. So, though dangerous to the untwary, the Sea of Dread continues to see the highest development of trade in the region.

Local Price Adjustments (as of the end of the year)

The following table works in accordance to the rules presented in both GAZ7 The Minrothad Guilds and GAZ11 The Republic of Darokin. For those without the above-mentioned products, assume that each +/-1 in the Price Adjustment column equals to a +/-10% in price for the mentioned goods. Pearly changes to prices are dependent upon what the events and circumstances of the year have wrought on the respective countries. Whether it was commitment of materials for a war effort, natural disasters, or any of the various trade difficulties, prices have been modified to reflect fluctuating prices.

Note that in places like Thyatis, most of the oil produced is either olive oil or fish oils.

This year we provide the merchant with an additional service, the “quality” indicator. This shows up in listings as **Bold Italic** and are products considered to be of exceptional quality produced by and available in the given market. These products receive a further +2 bonus when sold in other markets/ports, except those which export the same product. For example, when selling the wine of Vyonnes, one would add an additional +2 modifier to the sale price, thus if it was sold in Akorros, for example, the net bonus would be +4. This additional quality modifier would not apply in places that receive a negative modifier to the product. For instance, the Vyonnes quality bonus for wine would not apply in Arcadiapolis, since that town is a wine-exporter itself.

Old World and Beyond

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Aaslin	Notrion (Nayce)	C	Grain -8, Meat -3 Wine +5, Textiles +2, Common Metals +4, Dyes +3, Glassware +3, Cloth +2
Abbashan	Plaruum	D	Animals -2, Meat -2, Hides -2, Mounts -2 Weapons +3, Armor +3
Actius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Salt -2, Common Metals -2 Common Wood +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +3
Aegopoli	Aegos (Nayce)	D	Grain -3, Meat -3, Animals -3 Weapons +5, Oil +3, Glassware +3
Akesoli	Darokin	D	Fish -3, Porcelain -2, Tea -2, Pottery -2 Salt +2, Silk +3, Spices +2, Weapons +2
Akorros	Darokin	C	Fish -3, Hides -3, Meat -3 Cloth +2, Grain +1, Semiprecious Stones +2, Wine +2
Alchemos	Meriander (Nayce)	D	Grain -5, Meat -3, Common Wood -3, Precious Wood -2, Oil -4, Dyes & Pigments -2 Textiles +2, Salt +1, Glassware +4, Silk +3, Pottery +1, Cloth +2
Alinquin	Dawnrim (Nayce)	D	Grain -5, Meat -4, Fish -3, Furs -2, Animals -2 Beer +1, Pottery +1, Wine +2, Glassware +1
Alpha	Alpha (Nayce)	C	Grain/Vegetables -5, Meat -3, Precious Wood -2 Ivory +5, Coffee +5, Weapons +4, Wine +3, Armor +5
Altendorf	Heldann	D	Animals -2, Dyes -2, Grain/Vegetables -2, Meat -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Pottery +2, Salt +1, Common Metals +1
Anchorage	Esterhold (Nayce)	D	Common Wood -3, Gems -2 Grain & Vegetables +2, Meat +2
Angorit	Daddlom	D	Common Wood -2, Common Metals -3, Gems -3 Silk +3, Pottery +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Aquas	Aquas	C	Fish -3, Gems -3, Semiprecious Stones -3

	(Nayce)		Common Metals +2, Common Wood +2, Wine & Spirits +3
Argevin	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Salt -2, Dye & Pigments -3, Wine -2 Precious Woods +2, Porcelain +2, Spices +2, Tea +2
Arcadiapolis	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine -2, Oil -2 Common Metals +3, Hides +2
Athenos	Darokin	C	Gems -2, Glassware -3, Ivory -3, Meat -2, Monsters -2 Animals +2, Precious Wood +2, Porcelain +3, Textiles +2
Atruaghin	Atruaghin	C	Coffee -3, Mounts -2, Tobacco -4, Common Wood -2 Beer +3, Semiprecious Stones +3, Weapons +1
Baratpur	Sind	D	Salt -2, Mounts -2 Weapons +2, Common Woods +3, Fish +3
Bayville	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Animals -2, Meats -2 Common Metals +2, Semiprecious Stones +2
Beitung	Ochalea (Thyatis)	B	Silk -5, Grain -3, Animals -2, Porcelain -3 Precious Woods +3, Rare Books +3, Cloth +3
Biazzan	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Silk -2, Spices -2, Tea -2, Common Metals -3 Animals +2, Ivory +2, Rare Books +2
Blueside	Lagrius (Nayce)	C	Fish -4, Common Wood -3, Grain -2, Meat -2 Common Metals +1, Glassware +1, Porcelain +1
Bridgeport	Dawnrim (Nayce)	C	Fish -2, Coffee & Tobacco -3, Grain & Vegetables -3 Hides & Furs +3, Cloth +3
Bridleton	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Mounts -2, Grain & Vegetables -2 Wine & Spirits +2, Cloth +2
Cairnport	Meriander (Nayce)	D	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Meat -3 Cloth +3, Hides & Furs +3, Spices +2
Castellan	Soderfjord	C	Common Metals -4, Dyes -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Armor +3, Fish +2, Pottery +2, Weapons +2
Coppertown	Dawnrim (Nayce)	C	Common Metals -4, Precious Metals -2, Semiprecious Stones -3

			Weapons & Tools +3, Silk +3, Beer & Ale +3
Corunglain	Darokin	B	Gems -3, Monsters -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Hides +3, Pottery +2, Weapons & Tools +3
Cove Harbor	Minrothad (Thyatis)	C	Cloth -2, Wine/Spirits -2 Common Metals +2, Common Woods +2
Cross Road	Ne'er-do-well (Nayce)	D	Grain -1, Common Metals -2, Animals -1 Weapons & Armor +2, Common Wood +2, Cloth +2, Textiles +2
Crownhaven	Notrion (Nayce)	C	Grain & Vegetables -6, Meat -4 Cloth +4, Pottery +4
Cubia	Plaruum	C	Pottery -2, Dye/Pigments -3, Mounts -2 Grain +3, Meat +3, Hides +3
Darokin	Darokin	A	Common Metals -2, Common Woods -3, Hides -2, Grain -3, Ivory -2, Textiles -3, Beer -2, Tobacco -2 Gems +3, Monsters +3, Mounts +3, Precious Metals +4, Weapons +2, Precious Woods +2
Dawnpoint	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Animals -2, Pottery -2 Wine & Spirits +2, Common Wood +2
Dengar & Evemur	Rockhome	B	Armor -2, Gems -3, Weapons & Tools -2 Animals +4, Grain +4, Tobacco +3
Deirdren	Heldun (Thyatis/Nayce)	D	Common Metals -2, Monsters -3, Semiprecious Stones -2 Tea +3, Glassware +2, Pottery +2
Dolos	Darokin	D	Common Wood -3, Semiprecious Stones -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Dubbo	Cirundrym (Nayce)	C	Common Metals -4, Semiprecious Stones -3 Cloth +3, Textiles +3
Dunadale	Heldun (Thyatis/Nayce)	B	Porcelain -2, Weapons -2, Monsters -4, Gems -2, Grain/Vegetables -2 Tea +4, Ivory +4, Glassware +3
East Portage	Hillvale (Nayce)	C	Beer -2, Grain -2, Dyes & Pigments -2 Common Wood +2, Tea +2, Coffee +2
Edairo	Thothia	B	Grain -2, Fish -2, Common Wood -2, Wine -2, Ivory -2

	(Nayce)		Cloth +2, Tea +2, Porcelain +2, Spices +3, Silk +3, Precious Metals +3
Ekto	Ekto (Nayce)	D	Weapons & Tools -3, Armor -3 Common Wood +3, Common Metals +3, Tea +2, Silk +3
Elstrich	Darokin	D	Animals -3, Meat -2, Grain & Vegetables -2 Cloth +2, Common Metals +3, Weapons & Tools +2
Ethengar (no set city)	Ethengar	E	Hides -3, Mounts -2, Salt -3 Common Metals +5, Common Woods +4, Tea +3
Fabia	Maruam	F	Dye/Pigments -2, Silk -2 Fish +2, Common Wood +3
Faraway	Verdan (Nayce)	C	Gems -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Precious Metals -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Grain & Vegetables +2
Favaro	Darokin	E	Animals -3, Grain -3 Beer & Ale +3, Common Metals +3
Feather Fall	Aeria (Nayce)	C	Grain -2, Meat -2 Common Wood +2, Oil +2, Silk +3, Glassware +2, Rare Books +2
Filtot	Ierendi	E	Oil -3, Salt -3, Grain -2 Rare Books +3, Meat +3, Monsters +3
Foreston	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Spices -2, Porcelain -3 Silk +2, Precious Metals +2
Fort Ballarat	Surshield (Nayce)	D	Monsters -3, Ivory -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3
Fort Merrelin	Surshield (Nayce)	D	Mounts -3, Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3
Freiburg	Heldann	C	Animals -2, Porcelain -2, Common Wood -2 Armor +3, Oil +3, Weapons +3
Gapton	Minrothad (Thyatis)	F	Tea -2, Beer -2 Rare Books +2, Spices +2, Pottery +2
Garganin	Garganin	C	Animals -3, Spices -3, Tobacco -3, Ivory -3, Coffee -2

			Silk +3, Pottery +3, Textiles +4
Glantri	Glantri	B	Monsters -5, Rare Books -2, Pottery -6 Gems +4, Glassware +3, Tobacco +3, Weapons +2
Glaugnor	Emerond	C	Precious Woods -4, Gems -4 Wine & Spirits +3, Silk +3
Goldleaf	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Common Metals -3, Precious Metals -3 Oil +3, Meat +4
Grauenberg	Heldann	E	Animals -2, Common Metals -4, Hides -2 Oil +2, Salt +2, Fish +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Grey Bay	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Meat -3, Oil -2 Beer & Ale +2, Pottery +2
Hockstein	Heldann	E	Hides -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Beer & Ale -2 Spices +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2, Common Wood +2
Harbortown	Minrothad (Thyatis)	C	Fish -2, Dyes -2, Animals -3 Spices +2, Meat +2, Wine +2
Hattias	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Meat -3, Hides & Furs -3, Animals -3 Beer & Ale +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Helskir	Heldun (Thyatis/Nayce)	C	Dyes -3, Salt -2 Fish +2, Hides +2, Coffee +4, Pottery +2
Hillcape	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Common Metals -2, Pottery -2 Meat +2, Tea +2
Hillfork	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Animals -2, Oil -2, Wine -2 Textiles +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Horken	Horken (Nayce)	C	Grain -3, Meat -3, Common Wood -2 Common Wood +5, Tea +1, Spices +1, Textiles +2, Silk +2
Ierendi	Ierendi	C	Fish -2, Precious Metals -2, Spices -2 Dyes +3, Cloth +3, Animals +3, Silk +2, Meat +2
Ilioloosti	Ilioloosti	C	Animals -3, Meats -3, Grain & Vegetables -2, Pottery -3 Silk +3, Armor +2, Weapons +2, Porcelain +3
Ionace	Ionace	D	Monsters -3, Gems -3, Precious Metals -3

	(Nayce)		Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Silk +4, Wine & Spirits +3
Izmira	Emerond	C	Precious Woods -4, Monsters -3, Spices -4 Silk +3, Porcelain +3, Wine & Spirits +4, Rare Books +3
Jaibul	Jaibul	D	Animals -2, Precious Metals -2, Oil -2 Silk +2, Wine +2, Spices +2, Rare Books +3
Jahore	Sind	C	Textiles -2, Silk -2, Fish -2, Gems -2, Precious Metals -2 Tea +2, Dye & Pigments +2, Common Woods +2, Mounts +3, Precious Woods +3
Jaboor	Blaruum	C	Coffee -2, Oil -3, Glassware -2 Meat +3, Spices +4, Wine +2, Weapons +1
Julinius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Salt -2, Dye & Pigments -2, Fish -2 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +2, Semiprecious Stones +2
Kantridae	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Wine & Spirits -2 Pottery +2, Glassware +2, Common Wood +2
Kastelios	Kastelios	B	Pottery -2, Oil -3, Dye & Pigments -4 Common Wood +2, Cloth +3, Glassware +4
Karakandar	Sind	C	Fish -2, Semiprecious Stones -3, Precious Metals -2 Silk +2, Spice +2, Mounts +3
Katambwe	Haddlom	C	Cocoa -3, Precious Wood -3, Spices -3 Silk +3, Cloth +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Kelvin	Karameikos	C	Glassware -2, Pottery -3, Precious Metals -2 Ivory +3, Meat +2, Cloth +2
Kendach	Hesperia (Thyatis)	C	Common Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Monsters -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Mounts +2
Kerendas	Thyatis (Thyatis)	B	Beer -2, Grain -3, Meat -3, Wine -2, Mounts -2, Hides -2 Common Metals +3, Common Woods +2, Dyes +2, Oil +2
Khamrati	Sind	D	Salt -2, Animals -2, Mounts -2, Oil -2

			Weapons +2, Grain +2, Common Woods +3
Kladanobic	Kladanobic	D	Fish -3, Mounts -2, Precious Metals -3, Gems -3 Common Woods +2, Spices +2, Silk +2
Kobos	Jerendi	E	Hides -2, Mounts -2, Fish -2 Ivory +2, Silk +3, Monsters +3
Kopstar	Glantri	D	Dyes -2, Oil -4, Precious Metals -3 Precious Woods +4, Semiprecious Stones +3, Spices +2
Lago Springs	Dawnrim (Nayce)	F	Common Wood -3, Common Metals -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Cloth +3
Landfall	Heldann	E	Hides & Furs -3, Monsters -2 Grain/Vegetables +3, Coffee +2
Latehar	Sind	E	Hides -3, Common Metals -2, Precious Metals -2 Weapons +2, Cloth +2, Beer +3
Lone Cove	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -2, Salt -2, Fish -2 Cloth +2, Meat +2
Luln & Halag	Karameikos	D	Beer & Ale -2, Common Metals -2 Cloth +2, Textiles +2
Machetos	Thyatis (Thyatis)	E	Animals -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Wine & Spirits -2 Common Metals +2, Common Wood +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Mahasabad	Sind	D	Tea -3, Animals -2, Common Woods -2 Precious Metals +2, Semiprecious Stones +2, Books +3
Malkton	Minrothad (Thyatis)	E	Spices -2, Oil -2, Pottery -2, Grain/Vegetables -2 Common Wood +2, Meat +2, Beer +2, Cloth +2
Makrast	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Common Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Gems -3, Armor -1, Weapons & Tools -1 Spices +2, Beer & Ale +3, Wine & Spirits +2, Oil +2
Marbletown	Lagrius (Nayce)	F	Semiprecious Stones -5, Common Metals -4 Rare Furs +3, Spices +2
Markos	Minaea	D	Common Woods -4, Precious Woods -3, Cloth -2

			Wine +3, Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3
Mesembria	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine -2, Oil -2, Fish -2 Hides +2, Salt +2
Minaea	Minaea	B	Pottery -2, Oil -2, Cloth -2, Wine -3 Gems +2, Weapons & Tools +3, Silk +4, Porcelain +3
Minrothad	Minrothad (Thyatis)	B	Coffee -2, Tea -2, Beer -2, Fish -3, Dyes -2 Pottery +2, Cloth +2, Precious Metals +2, Gems +2, Common Wood +3
Mirros	Karameikos	C	Animals -2, Common Metals -2, Common Woods -2, Hides & Furs -3 Armor +2, Mounts +2, Rare Furs +4, Weapons +2
Mibosia	Mibosia	C	Animals -3, Meat -3, Precious Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -4 Dye & Pigments +3, Hides +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Mkuba Mji	Daddlom	C	Precious Metals -3, Common Metals -3, Grain & Vegetables -4 Glassware +3, Pottery +3, Silk +3
N'Goro	Daddlom	D	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Cocoa -2 Cloth +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Naral	Sind	C	Salt -2, Hides -2, Meat -2, Animals -2 Mounts +2, Common Woods +2, Cloth +2
Nemiston	Darokin	C	Common Wood -4, Beer & Ale -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Common Metal +2
Newkirk	Westrourke (Thyatis)	B	Dyes -5, Armor -3, Weapons & Tools -2, Common Woods -2 Coffee +3, Gems +3, Porcelain +2
Norrbik	Vestland	C	Salt -3, Silk -2, Weapons -2 Cloth +3, Ivory +3, Pottery +3
Ober's Mimbur	Five Shires	D	Common Metals -3, Precious Metals -2, Semiprecious Stones -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +3, Common Wood +2
Oceansend	Heldann	D	Rare Books -2, Common Wood -4, Fish -2

			Dyes & Pigments +2, Salt +2, Silk +3
Penhaligon	Karameikos	F	Common Metals -2, Beer & Ale -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +2
Pilion	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -3, Animals -2 Cloth +2, Common Wood +3
Polakatsikes	Heldannic Dabania	D	Animals -3, Grain & Vegetables -3 Common Metals +3, Ale & Beer +3
Port Hatti	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Hides -2, Animals -2, Oil -2 Cloth +2, Common Wood +2
Port Lucinius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	B	Fish -3, Oil -2, Dye & Pigments -2 Common Wood +3, Cloth +2, Beer & Ale +2
Port Marlin	Esterhold (Nayce)	D	Common Wood -3, Animals -2, Fish -3 Pottery +2, Beer & Ale +2, Coffee +2
Princetown	Lagrius (Nayce)	C	Fish -2, Grain & Vegetables -3, Wine & Spirits -2 Fine Porcelain +3, Silk +3, Gems +2
Raedestos	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -2, Oil -2 Common Metals +2, Common Wood +2
Rafielton	Aengmor	D	Monsters -2, Rare Furs -2, Rare Books -2 Grain +2, Meat +2, Common Metals +2
Raneshwar	Sind	F	Animals -2, Textile -2, Hides -2, Monsters -2, Precious Metals -2 Salt +3, Grain +3, Fish +3, Silk +2
Raven Scarp	Hinterlands (Thyatis)	C	Precious Woods -3, Spices -3, Monsters -3 Cloth +3, Armor +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Redstone Castle & Port Donaghadee	Redstone (Thyatis)	C	Armor -2, Weapons & Tools -2, Semiprecious Stones - 2 Common Metals +2, Wine & Spirits +2, Hides +2
Retebius	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Animals -2, Hides -2, Rare Furs -2 Monsters +4, Weapons & Tools +2
Rifllian	Karameikos	C	Monsters -2, Common Wood -2 Beer & Ale +3, Textiles +2
Rock Harbor	Esterhold	C	Semiprecious Stones -3, Fish -3, Common Metals -3

	(Nayce)		Meats +3, Common Wood +3, Oil +2
Sambay	Sind	B	Cloth -2, Grain -3, Spices -2, Silk -2 Mounts +2, Dye & Pigments +2, Common Woods +3, Precious Woods +3
Sandapur	Sind	D	Spices -2, Grain -2, Animals -3 Mounts +2, Porcelain +2, Common Woods +3, Precious Woods +2
Sayr Ulan	Sind	B	Rare Books -2, Salt -2, Spices -3 Common Woods +3, Fish +3, Tea +3
Seagirt	Pearl Islands (Thyatis)	C	Vegetables -3, Fish -3, Gems -3, Pottery -2, Spices -3, Tea & Coffee -3 Precious Wood +3, Wine +3, Weapons & Tools +3, Cloth +3
Seahaven	Meriander (Nayce)	D	Grain & Vegetables -3, Fish -3, Salt -3 Cloth +3, Pottery +3, Fine Porcelain +3
Seahome	Minrothad (Thyatis)	D	Common Wood -3, Precious Wood -3 Silk +3, Dyes +3, Hides/Furs +2
Selenica	Darokin	B	Cloth -2, Precious Wood -2, Rare Books -1 Dyes +4, Fish +4, Glassware +3
Selymbria	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Oil -2, Wine -2 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +2
Shireton	Five Shires	D	Beer -3, Grain -2, Tobacco -3, Wine -2 Coffee +3, Fish +3, Tea +2
Serison	Thonia	B	Beer & Ale -3, Oil -3, Ivory -4, Rare Furs -4 Silk +5, Porcelain +5, Glassware +4
Skytpr	Blackrock (Nayce)	D	Beer -2, Common Metals -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Precious Metals -3, Gems -3 Animals +2, Grain +3, Wine +2, Meat +2, Weapons +3, Mounts +2, Armor +3
Soderfjord	Soderfjord	C	Common Woods -4, Grain -2 Armor +3, Wine +3, Weapons +2
South Harbor	Turmoil (Nayce)	C	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -3, Meat -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Beer & Ale +3, Armor +3

Spearpoint	Surshield (Nayce)	B	Grain -2, Meat -2, Weapons -2, Armor -2, Wine -2 Common Metals +3, Salt +2, Glassware +3, Spices +2, Textiles +3, Cloth +3, Silk +4
Stahl	Rockhome	C	Ivory -3, Monsters -3, Precious Metals -4 Meat +4, Silk +3, Textiles +4
Stronghold	Minrothad (Thyatis)	C	Weapons/Tools -2, Armor -2 Common Metals +3, Grain/Vegetables +2
Surra-Man- Raa	Ularuam	F	Precious Metals -4, Pottery -2, Rare Books -2, Monsters -3 Weapons +3, Silk +3, Cloth +3
Tameronikas	Ularuam	D	Animals -3, Dye & Pigments -2, Tea -3, Mounts -1 Glassware +2, Porcelain +2, Salt +2, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Tanakumba	Uabdlom	B	Cocoa -4, Coffee -3, Fish -3, Gems -3, Precious Woods -3, Ivory -2 Grain +3, Meat +3, Silk +3, Precious Metals +4, Cloth +3
Tel Akbir	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Coffee -2, Oil -2, Wine & Spirits -2 Cloth +2, Dyes +2, Hides +2
Tenobar	Darokin	D	Cloth -4, Fish -5, Pottery -5 Hides +2, Precious Metals +2, Salt +3
Terentias	Thyatis (Thyatis)	C	Oil -2, Fish -2 Common Wood +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Thanasis	Alinaea	C	Semiprecious Stones -4, Gems -3, Common Metals -3, Precious Metals -3 Wine +3, Textiles +3, Ivory +3, Silk +2
Thantabbar	Five Shires	C	Animals -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Tobacco -2 Tea +3, Coffee +2, Spices +2
Threshold & High Forge	Karameikos	D	Common Wood -3, Common Metals -2 Pottery +2, Coffee +3
Thyatis	Thyatis (Thyatis)	A	Armor -3, Silk -2, Spider Silk -2, Weapons/Tools -3, Glassware -2, Pottery -3, Porcelain -2, Cloth -3, Textiles -3, Wine -2 Gems +2, Grain +3, Oil +2, Precious Metals +2, Rare Furs +2, Spices +3, Hides +2, Meat +2,

			Animals +2, Tea +2, Rare Books +2, Semiprecious Stones (Marble) +2
Torion	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Fish -2, Tea -2, Spices -2 Precious Woods +3, Ivory +3
Tothmeer	Five Shires	D	Common Wood -3, Beer & Ale -2 Fish +3, Textiles +1
Tresa	Minaea	D	Pottery -3, Animals -2, Grain & Vegetables -3, Common Wood -3 Common Metals +3, Spices +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Trikelios	Trikelios (Nayce)	D	Grain -2, Fish -2, Beer -2 Common Wood +2, Common Metals +2, Tea +1, Textiles +2
Tyjaret	Tyjaret	D	Fish -3, Animals -2, Salt -2 Common Woods +2, Cloth +3
Uhuru	Daddlom	D	Precious Woods -3, Spices -3 Cloth +3, Textiles +3, Pottery +3
Vanya's Rest	Heldannic Dabania	E	Weapons +3, Armor +3
Verdun	Minrothad (Thyatis)	D	Common Woods -2, Cloth -1, Rare Books -3, Precious Woods -2 Furs +3, Dyes +3, Silk +3, Salt +2
Vinton	Thyatis (Thyatis)	D	Wine & Spirits -3, Porcelain -2, Fish -2 Pottery +2, Textiles +2, Common Wood +2
Vyonnes	Glantri	E	Rare Furs -3, Textiles -3, Wine -2 Beer +3, Meat +4, Silk +3
Wendar	Wendar	D	Common Wood -3, Hides & Furs -2, Rare Furs -2, Precious Wood -2 Weapons +2, Textiles +3, Cloth +2, Salt +3, Grain +3
West Portage	Hespiria (Thyatis)	C	Common Wood -2, Dye & Pigments -2, Coffee -2 Cloth +2, Weapons & Tools +2, Oil +2
Wymar	Horken	F	Common Metals -4, Semiprecious Stone -4

	(Name)		Meat +3, Rare Furs +3, Cloth +3
Plaruam	Plaruam	C	Oil -2, Porcelain -3, Semiprecious Stones -4, Rare Books -2 Coffee +4, Mounts +3, Tobacco +4, Weapons +2, Armor +2
Zeaburg	Ostland	C	Fish -3, Cloth -2, Textiles -2 Common Woods +2, Meat +3, Weapons +2, Armor +2

Savage Coast and Beyond

In addition to the contemporary economic resources available from Darokin, Nayce, and Minrothad, we here at Joshuan Gallidox Publishing have also been afforded similar reports from Bellayne.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Ah'roog	Shazak	C	Animal Hides -3, Pottery -2, Live Monsters -3, Rare Wood -2 Grain +2, Meat +2, Common Metals +3
Asgamoth	Herath	C	Silk -4, Rare Books -4, Live Monsters -3 Meat +3, Grain +3, Weapons +3
Ayskudag	Dozgulak (Hule)	C	Fish -3, Grain -2, Gems -2 Common Metals +2, Silk +2
Azkoran	Azardjian	C	Cloth -3, Wine -2, Common Metals -2, Common Woods -2 Animals +2, Books +2, Monsters +2, Salt +3
Azurun	Dozgulak (Hule)	C	Grain -4, Cloth -2, Gems -2, Glassware -2 Common Metals +2, Salt +2, Dyes +2, Silk +2
Boa Mansão	Texeiras	C	Wood -3, Ships -3 Grain +2, Silk +2, Smokepowder +3
Boyâzka	Dozgulak (Hule)	D	Fish -3, Glassware -2, Gems -2 Meat +1, Common Metals +2, Weapons +2
Ciudad de León	Torreón	D	Weapons -2, Wood -2, Grain -1, Meat -1 Wine +2, Smokepowder +2
Ciudad Huelca	Guadalante	C	Mounts -3, Livestock -3, Animal Hides -3 Silk +2, Grain +2, Spirits +3
Ciudad Atacacán	Saragón	D	Rare Books -3, Scientific Gadgets -2, Grain -2 Fine Art +2, Precious Metals +2
Ciudad Real	Garguña	D	Fine Art -3, Rare Books -2, Smokepowder -1 Grain +3, Silk +2, Meat +2
Ciudad Tejillas	Almarrón	D	Precious Metals -4, Tobacco -3, Coffee -2 Firearms +3, Weapons +3, Silk +3
Cirkara	Cibanjan (Hule)	D	Grain -3, Animals -3, Meat -2, Spirits -2 Common Metals +1, Porcelain +2, Glassware +2,

			Precious Metals +3
Deaubais	Renardie	D	Wine -2, Animal Hides -3 Grain +2, Coffee & Tea +2, Weapons +2, Mounts +2
Debredladany	Monzag (Hule)	D	Animals -3, Mounts -2, Furs -2, Common Woods -2, Grain -2 Glassware +1, Spices +2, Silk +3
Dubrax	Robrenn	D	Grain -3, Common Woods -2, Fish -2, Spices -2, Furs -2 Rare Books +2, Precious Metals +2, Pottery +3
Dunwick	Dunwick	B	Weapons -3, Fish -2, Beer -2, Glassware -2, Armor -2 Wine +2, Meat +2, Spices +2, Grain +3
Duzhar	Sardjikjian	C	Glassware -3, Porcelain -2, Mounts -2 Tea +2, Precious Metals +2, Weapons +3, Armor +3
Erdnidze	Chengouch	D	Hides -3, Textiles -2, Animals -2, Monsters -2 Spices +2, Mounts +2, Salt +3
Erzmin	Karsile (Hule)	D	Animals -3, Meat -3, Pottery -2, Common Metals -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Oil +3
Eyf	Robrenn	C	Wine -2, Meat -2, Grain -3, Herbs -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Common Metals +3, Precious Metals +3
Gundegard	Eusdria	C	Beer -3, Furs -2, Spices -2, Common Woods -2 Books +2, Glass +3, Semiprecious Stones +2
Gurr'ash	Ator	F	Meat -2 Semiprecious Stones +2, Weapons +2
Hayebil	Kyurdukstan	D	Textiles -3, Monsters 2, Spices -2 Oil +2, Tea +3
Houriani	Grouzhina	C	Semiprecious Stones -3, Fruits -2, Coffee -2 Weapons +2, Armor +2, Silk +2, Grain +3
Jenzban	Dbinzina	C	Fruits -3, Books -2, Gems -2 Armor +2, Weapons +2, Meat +2, Mounts +3
Iskilü	Kuliye	C	Common Woods -3, Precious Woods -2, Mounts -2,

	(Hule)		Grain-2 Weapons +2, Common Metals +1, Oil +2, Armor +3
Jandak	Hupule (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Weapons -3, Armor-2, Books-2 Wine +2, Precious Woods +2, Ivory +2, Monsters +2, Silk +3
Jehrom	Jandir (Hule)	D	Glassware -3, Cloth 2, Textiles -2, Mounts -2 Common Woods +2, Salt +2, Silk +3,
Khuur	Boludir (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Glassware -3, Cloth -2, Rare Books -2 Wine +2, Precious Woods +2, Ivory +2, Monsters +2, Silk +3
Kiteng	Sardjikjian	C	Porcelain -3, Textiles -3, Animals -2, Meat -2, Mounts -2 Rare Books +2, Common Woods +2, Pigments +2, Precious Woods +3
Kulnobo	Olgar (Hule)	D	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Mounts -2, Animals -2 Common Woods +2, Weapons +2, Silk +2, Armor +3
Le Vieux Carré	Nouvelle-Renardie	D	Furs -2, Spices -2, Animal Hides -1 Wine +5, Common Metals +4, Common Woods +3, Coffee & Tea +2, Meat +1
Les Tentés-sur-Bancs	Nouvelle-Renardie	C	Fish -2, Spices -1 Wine +4, Common Woods +4, Common Metals +2, Coffee & Tea +2, Meat +1
Leominster	Bellayne	B	Tea -3, Weapons -1, Wool -3, Spirits -2 Wine +3, Precious Metals +2, Common Metals +2, Smokepowder +2
Loubines	Renardie	B	Wine -4, Grain -2, Fine Art -3 Coffee & Tea +2, Herbs +2, Smokepowder +2, Silk +2
Magden	Birgidir (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Meat -2, Animals -2, Gems -2, Spices -2 Tea +2, Oil +3
Miriestiu	Buhan (Hule)	D	Meat -3, Animals -3, Weapons -2, Grain -2, Armor-2 Spices +2, Rare Books +3, Dye +2, Porcelain +3
Mons-en-Plecy	Renardie	C	Wine -2, Grain 2 Coffee & Tea +2, Weapons +2, Smokepowder +2,

			Silk +2
Nidzhman	Kyurdukstan	F	Common Woods -3, Furs -2, Textiles -2, Common Metals -2 Grain +2, Wine +2, Oil +2, Glassware +3
Norchester	Bellayne	C	Coal -4, Common Metals -3 Grain +2, Meat +3, Wine +2
Noba Svoga	Noba Svoga	C	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Oil -2, Hides -2 Tools and Weapons +3
Oldsbury- Upon-Blythe	Bellayne	D	Beer -3, Grain -3, Common Woods -2, Hides -2, Animals -2 Wine +2, Tobacco +2, Precious Metals +3
Othmar	Eusdria	D	Common Metals -3, Wood -2, Beer -3, Weapons -2 Oil +2, Grain +2, Precious Metals +2
Port Preto	Vilaverde	C	Oil -3, Ships -3, Meat 3 Common Wood +3, Salt +2, Grain +2, Smokepowder +3, Silk +2
Prijderel	Antasyn (Hule)	C	Animals -3, Common Woods -2, Meat -2, Textiles -2 Mounts +2, Wine +2, Spices +3
Puerto Morillos	Narbaez	C	Grain -3, Meat -3, Textiles -2, Weapons -2 Wood +3, Smokepowder +2
Raska	Zbornik	C	Grain -2, Spirits 2 Weapons +2, Common Metals +2
Risilbar	Wallara	D	Weapons -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Meat +2, Grain +3
Seyban	Karsun (Hule)	C	Grain -3, Spirits -2, Meat -2 Silk +2, Precious Woods +2, Precious Metals +3
Shahav	Herath	D	Silk -2, Rare Books -2, Live Monsters -2, Meat -2 Weapons +2, Grain +2, Common Metals +3
Shkodar	Hojah	D	Common Metals -2, Fish -2, Oil -2 Cloth +1, Grain +2, Spirits +2
Slagovich	Slagovich	C	Weapons -2, Armor -2, Spirits -1 Common Metals +2, Grain +2
Smokestone	Cimarron	C	Firearms -3, Smokepowder -4, Ale -3, Coal -2

City			Silk +2, Animal Hides +2, Mounts +2, Pottery +2
Smolini	Grouzhina	C	Animals -3, Meat -2, Wine -2, Mounts -2 Textiles +2, Glassware +2, Armor +3, Weapons +3
Sorodh	Herath	C	Silk -1, Grain -3, Common Wood -3 Meat +3, Common Metals +3
Tashgoun	Douzbakjian	C	Fish -3, Dyes -2, Textiles -2, Salt -2 Meat +2, Common Metals +2, Precious Metals +2, Common Woods +3
Theeds- Upon-Blythe	Bellayne	C	Tea -3, Meat -2, Fish -2, Scientific Gadgets -2 Coal +2, Wine +2, Wood +3
Um-Shedu	Eshu	F	Semiprecious Stones -2, Animal Hides -1 Meat +1, Grain +2, Weapons +4
Withimer	Eusdria	C	Fish -3, Beer -2, Furs -2, Common Woods -2 Common Metals +3, Glass +2
Denigaz	Dozgulak (Hule)	C	Fish -3, Grain -2, Gems -2 Common Metals +3, Silk +2
Zagora	Zagora	D	Weapons -2, Armor -2 Common Metals +2, Beer +2, Grain +3
Zartakand	Douzbakjian	C	Grain -3, Fish -2, Animals -2, Mounts -2 Common Woods +2, Common Metals +3, Semiprecious Stones +3

Hollow World

Getting information on the Hollow World is often difficult, though with the increased travel (until the unfortunate Lost Squadron episode) we have managed to acquire enough information that the Mystaran Almanac is now proud to be able to provide you with some economic and trade data on this exotic region.

Those who have observed trade interactions in the Hollow World have noticed a striking pattern, however. Most of the people in this realm seem to have a high degree of preference for the commodities and products of their own nations, and a unusually strong degree of resistance to objects from other lands. This does not mean, however, that trade does not occur — it seems to mean that the merchants have to be sharper if they try to trade across cultures. This resistance seems even to apply to such commodities as grains (which are thought to “not taste right”) and the like. [Note to DM: this cultural resistance is as a result of the Spell of Preservation expressing itself in trade matters. From a rules stand point, what this means is that a merchant selling goods outside the culture of origin of those goods suffers a –2 modifier to the sale price. The DM can reduce this to a –1 modifier on some goods if it seems appropriate. For example, animals might suffer only a –1 sales penalty. Raw metals and gemstones might suffer no sales penalty (they are the same everywhere). But worked items, like pottery, textiles, weapons and armor and the like will always have a -2 penalty on sales outside the culture that produced them. This means a merchant can still make a profit selling such goods, but must be a more astute salesman and work harder to succeed.]

Unfortunately, we did not have enough information this year to judge quality modifiers, but hope to be able to provide this information next year.

City	Nation	Class	Modifiers to Price Adjustment
Amtha	Shahjapur	A	Spices -4, Precious Wood -4, Ivory -3, Silk -4 Precious Metals +3, Rare Books +4, Porcelain +3, Grain & Vegetables +5, Wine & Spirits +3
Arana	Merry Pirates	D	Fish -3, Gems -3, Hides -3 Common Wood +4, Cloth +4, Textiles +4
Atacoatli	Azcan	C	Common Wood -3, Hides & Furs -2, Precious Wood -3, Monsters -3 Weapons & Tools +2, Animals +2, Cloth +3
Baraga	Merry Pirates	B	Gems -2, Precious Metals -2, Monsters -3, Semiprecious Stones -3 Spices +2, Silk +5, Common Wood +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +4, Wine & Spirits +4
Chitlacan	Azcan	A	Cloth -4, Weapons & Tools -3, Pottery -3, Spices -3 Precious Wood +3, Rare Furs +4, Precious Metals +3, Grain & Vegetables +3

Colima	Azcan (but culturally different)	C	Semi-precious stones -3, Spices -2, Salt -3 Wood +3, Pottery +3
Corecos	Traldar	D	Animals -2, Pottery -3, Wine -2 Weapons & Tools +2, Armor +3, Hides +2
Corisa	Milenia	A	Rare Books -4, Porcelain -4, Pottery -3, Oil -4, Weapons & Tools -2, Armor -2 Grain & Vegetables +4, Animals +4, Precious Metals +3, Gems +2
Dashur	Nithia	B	Pottery -3, Hides -3, Grain & Vegetables -3. Animals -3 Rare Books +4, Beer +3, Dye & Pigments +4
Demtor	Milenia	B	Grain & Vegetables -4, Precious Metals -4, Common Metals -3 Wine & Spirits +2, Dye & Pigments +3, Cloth +3
Dharsatra	Shahjapur	A	Spices -4, Dye & Pigments -4, Silk -3, Ivory -3 Grain & Vegetables +5, Salt +3, Rare Books +3, Preserved Meat +4
Dilion	Traldar	D	Fish -2, Oil -3, Animals -2 Hides +3, Wine +3
Dophius	Milenia	C	Pottery -3, Fish -3, Armor -3, Weapons & Tools -3 Common Metals +3, Meat +3, Textiles +4
Dossalonus	Traldar	D	Pottery -3, Common Metals -3, Fish -2 Common Wood +3, Cloth +3, Wine +3
Emperor's Walk	Milenia	C	Mounts -3, Fine Porcelain -3, Pottery -2 Ivory +3, Wine & Spirits +3, Spices +3
Floresque	Merry Pirates	D	Precious Metals -2, Gems -2, Semiprecious Stones -2 Common Wood +3, Precious Wood +3, Cloth +3, Textiles +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Hapta	Nithia	C	Beer -3, Cloth -2, Grain & Vegetables -2, Animals -2 Weapons & Tools +3, Common Metals +2, Common Wood +3
Huitlaktima	Azcan	C	Common Wood -3, Fish -3, Gems -3, Spices -3, Precious Wood -2 Weapons & Tools +2, Hides & Furs +2, Wine & Spirits +3

Issarthyl	Schattenaltheim	C	Gems -3, Semiprecious Stones -2, Precious Metals -2, Weapons & Tools -2, Armor -2 Silk +4, Monsters +3, Rare Furs +4
Kolmstat	Kogolor	C	Beer & Ale -4, Spirits -4, Common Wood -4, Fine Furs -4 Cloth +4, Textiles +4, Porcelain +4, Spices +4
Laroun	Milenia	B	Rare Books -3, Semiprecious Stones -3, Pottery -3, Wine -3 Common Wood +3, Animals +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Laxan	Milenia	D	Fish -3, Oil -3, Wine -2 Cloth +2, Common Wood +2, Textiles +2
Louknor	Nithia	C	Precious Metals -4, Semiprecious Stones -3 Weapons & Tools +5, Armor +4
Malinthos	Traldar	D	Common Metals -3, Fish -2, Animals -2 Common Wood +3, Wine +3
Manac	Oltec	C	Precious Metals -3, Pottery -4, Semiprecious Stones -3, Spices -2, Hides -3 Dyes & Pigments +4, Porcelain +4, Common Wood +3, Beer & Ale +3, Wine & Spirits +3
Menkara	Nithia	A	Common Wood -2, Fish -2, Semiprecious Stones -2, Dyes & Pigments -3, Hides & Furs -3 Animals +3, Cloth +3, Common Metals +2, Textiles +3
Moreus	Milenia	C	Fish -3, Salt -2, Wine -2 Common Wood +2, Cloth +3
Nithys	Nithia	D	Common Metals -3, Glassware -4, Precious Metals -3 Beer +3, Meat +3, Common Wood +4
Pelai	Milenia	C	Oil -3, Pottery -3 Common Metals +3, Weapons & Tools +2, Armor +2
Pharos	Milenia	C	Animals -3, Wine -3, Hides -2 Cloth +3, Pottery +2, Weapons & Tools +2
Phos	Milenia	D	Fish -3, Common Wood -3 Armor +2, Cloth +3

Kanak	Nithia	C	Grain & Vegetables -2, Fish -2, Beer -2 Pottery +3, Weapons & Tools +3
Carthis	Nithia	A	Weapons & Tools -3, Armor -3, Cloth -3, Textiles -3, Rare Books -4 Common Metals +3, Precious Metals +4, Grain & Vegetables +4, Common Wood +5
Tenpocatliotl	Azcan	C	Precious Metals -4, Spices -3, Pottery -3 Cloth +2, Grain & Vegetables +4, Animals +3
Titlapoca	Azcan	D	Cocoa -4, Spices -3, Rare Furs -2 Cloth +3, Dye & Pigments +3, Precious Metals +2
Tothys	Nithia	D	Common Metals -4, Precious Metals -2 Meat +3, Beer +3
Tromeas	Milenia	C	Grain & Vegetables -3, Meat -3 Common Metals +3, Wine +2
Tyrios	Traldar	D	Precious Metals -2, Animals -3, Fish -3 Wine +3, Cloth +3, Common Wood +3
Tyrnus	Milenia	A	Common Wood -2, Precious Wood -2, Wine -2, Porcelain -3 Weapons & Tools +3, Armor +3, Common Metal +2
Xarda	Milenia	C	Fish -3, Oil -3 Wine +2, Common Wood +3
Dzihuapac	Azcan	D	Spices -3, Cocoa -3, Hides & Furs -3, Monsters -2 Weapons & Tools +2, Cloth +2, Rare Furs +2, Preserved Meat +3

MYSTARAN MISCELLANEA

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 1018 (AC 1018).

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*	Clabbas*	Amai	Wharlin	Nyxmir
late winter	Vatermont	Vuuldiir	Hiskmai	Morlin	Amphimir
early spring	Chaumont	Maehin	Dalmal	Hralin*	Alphamir*
middle spring	Flaurmont	Odelin	Haimai	Hwyrlin	Sulamir
late spring	Barthmont	Gondulrim	Kevamai	Styrlin	Sudmir
early summer	Klarmont	Mithintle	Seimai	Bahrlin	Vertmir
midsummer	Felmont	Goldaun	Lingmai	Buhrlin	Tslamir**
late summer	Fyrmont	Fyrtal	Tringmai	Klinton	Andrumir
early fall	Ambyrmont	Aumbyr	Demai	Barrlin	Cyprimir
middle fall	Sviftmont	Ssantiir	Chagai*	Biflin	Hastmir
late fall	Eirmont	Tembiiir	Rinpoch	Jhyrlin	Eimir

early winter	Kaldmont	Dauntil	Komai	Kuldlin	Burymir
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- *: marks the first day of the year.
- **: called Islamir in common Alphetian.

Horoscope for AC 1018

It is the dismal duty of the almanac to announce that this will be the last year of the annual horoscopes of Madame Feliona of Nouvelle Aberoigne. The esteemed fortuneteller of Glantri passed away last year, killed outside her parlor during the conflicts with religious zealots in Glantri City, now referred to as the Alexander Day Massacre.

Previous correspondence with Madame Feliona revealed that she had been greatly troubled, because of mysterious inconsistencies in her astrological calculations and the celestial phenomenon that had only recently become apparent—and how ominously they bode for the future. Whether these troubles were for her own personal fortune, or whether they hold true to the rest of Mystara remains to be seen, but her horoscopes this year are markedly grim and disturbing.

Gentle readers should note that Madame Feliona never actually had a chance to officially submit these readings, but rather they were taken from unfinished drafts and personal writings before her demise.

Anticore: In this first House of the Anticore, there lies the first anomaly! Based on my calculations, the Warrior Star should have entered the next House of the Hydra by the middle of Kaldmont; yet upon observations, this unwelcome guest will not complete its transit until three weeks in the new year! Not only will the hostile Warrior Star sabotage the beginning year and all your new endeavors at their onset, but this astronomical aberration bodes particularly ominous, since it hints of the tampering by powers high above mortal ken. The Anticore Star in the neutral House of the Pegasus has little consequence to this baleful portent.

Hydra: The inimical Dragon Star invades the House of the Hydra at the start of this ill-omened year, impelling you to coldly accomplish a single task at the expense of other aspects of your life. Be mindful of your home, if you find yourself always at work; similarly, do not abandon your profession simply to attend to domestic matters. On the other hand, as the Hydra Star itself risks hostile ground in the House of the Chimera, you may find yourself taking on too many responsibilities with no clear purpose or with no hope of completing any of them. It is not impossible that you find yourself in both predicaments at one time or another. Beware the full moon of Cirmont!

Centaur: Perhaps the sign least affected by the balefulness of this year is the Centaur (always blessed by the Sun-Prince Ixion, who rules this sign!), and yet you are not without your troubles. The House of the Centaur is void, leaving you to your own devices. But the dynamic Centaur Star finds its transit in the House of the Giant cold and dispiriting. The death of a close relative or the end of a loving relationship will occur, perhaps not unexpectedly, but your pain and suffering will run deep. Try not to let this cast a shadow over your sunny disposition. The solar eclipse in Klarmont will mark a major transformation in your sense of self and identity.

Basilisk: Although the House of the Basilisk was expected to be void this year, a strange star has been observed transiting through it. Initially thought to have been the Basilisk Star, it turned out to be a totally different heavenly body altogether (believed by some astrologers to be the mysterious comet Hel). I have dubbed it the Specter Star, for its sudden appearance from nowhere—and its occasional unpredicted disappearances from the night sky! Its significance remains to be seen, but it is unlikely to be favorable. The passionate Basilisk Star is incompatible in the conservative House of the Griffon,

meaning your true emotions and heartfelt desires will be much repressed this year, and yet may explode in a most fiery and most hazardous manner.

Chimera: Though ordinarily confident in your abilities and your possessions, with the chaotic Hydra Star exploding into the House of the Chimera, you may find yourself frantically grabbing at attention, approval, and affection from others. Jealousies and insecurities will run high throughout the summer months, building up to the autumn equinox. Be careful not to antagonize your partners in love and in business by neurotic possessiveness. The Chimera Star in the allied House of the Warrior will grant you astute insight into who you are, what you can do, and what is rightfully yours. A long trip of courage and wisdom is imminent, be it traveling across the world or a journey of the mind and soul.

Gorgon: Double jeopardy will strike the Gorgon this year, as the unfriendly Salamander Star enters the House of the Gorgon and the Gorgon Star ventures into the inhospitable House of the Salamander. Though these two signs were previously compatible, the major shift in the configuration of the stars have caused them to be unfavorably aligned against each other, emphasizing their most detrimental qualities. Watch out for hedging and indecisiveness, typical of the Salamander, which will disrupt your privacy and your studies. If possible, you must avoid making final and conclusive decisions, though if done in Klarmont (the month of the Gorgon) or Ambyrmont (the month of the Salamander), you will be open to unexpected benefits.

Griffon: Two opposing stars in the House of the Griffon will adversely challenge you this year: The airy Pegasus Star will blow down your steadfast routines and practicality, while the fiery Basilisk Star will stoke your passions and desires to wild excesses. Many new flights of fancy will fly into your imagination, intensified by the Griffon Star in the House of the Pegasus, but do not pursue them impulsively, especially when you are merely driven by your emotions or lured by worldly indulgences. Nothing substantial will come of it (after all, fire and air only make hot air!). Romantic entanglements will be exciting, exhausting, but ultimately, unfulfilling.

Dragon: The House of the Dragon is void, but this vacuum is ill tainted by the transit of the Dragon Star in the opposing House of the Hydra. Plots and projects this year, no matter how well laid out, will face sudden upheavals and reversals—and not just from one side. The challenge of the ambitious and single-minded Dragon is to be more like its antagonist, the resourceful and many-headed Hydra, and this is not an easy task. Expect much loss in matters of money and relationships. Your health will be at its worst in Vattermont, but may not improve until the end of spring.

Salamander: This is a year of twists and turns for the Salamander, many of which will eventually lead to nothing—save perhaps distract you from your ultimate goals. And remember the Salamanders have a tendency of being wishy-washy! With the homebody Gorgon Star in the House of the Salamander vis-à-vis the Salamander Star in the comfortable House of the Gorgon, your tendency might be just to stay at home and do nothing. The key here is balance and justice. Do not invest your entire fortune, only that which you can afford to lose or hope to gain. Do not attempt to fight all battles, only those that you are assured of victory or minimal loss. And do not take advantage of the misfortune of others, for where they fail, you will surely fail too.

Pegasus: The bold Manticore Star roaring in the House of the Pegasus heralds new beginnings in your life. However, with the hostile Griffon Star also in your house and your Pegasus Star in the hostile House of the Griffon, there will be much difficulty in making these ventures last for the long term, or becoming a routine part of your life (not that the imaginative and flighty Pegasus can ever be

routine!). Short-range ventures for easy money, quick trips for fun and leisure, or even a momentary fling to keep you warm on those cold winter nights, will be quite agreeable with you this year. But matters that require more permanence and security, such as marriage and a new home, will end in ruin.

Warrior: Another error in my previous calculations bodes ill for the Warrior. The Warrior Star travels to hostile territory in the House of the Manticore, warning of brashness and impulsive behavior, likely to lead to harm. A minor illness will prove troublesome in early spring, and will eventually require major healing by the summer solstice. Attend to any old hankering injuries now—or it may need more severe or radical attention in the future. Also, be careful in dealing with sharp or heavy objects and highly charged magical items. Accidents are likely to occur, particularly before the full moon in Vaternmont. The friendly Chimera Star in the Warrior House foretells a small gift of money or inheritance will come to you at the end of the year—perhaps to ease your medical expenses.

Giant: The ominous visitors of the House of the Giant at the beginning of the year are the native Giant Star (ruled by Thanatos) and the hostile Centaur Star (ruled by Ixion). The opposing natures of these two stars mark a year of intense, penetrating, often painful, exploration of the darker aspects of your life. It will be a time to face deep fears and long-standing hurts—be they physical or emotional. Death will also be a grim theme this year for the Giant, whether actual physical death of some one dear, the death of a destructive relationship or habit, or death of illusions and lies, as the Centaur Star shines its harsh garish light of truth. A moment of reprieve will be had with the Klarmont solar eclipse, but the Giant will definitely not survive this year unscathed!

Universities of Mystara

Universities of the Old World

Location	Name	Most Illustrious Teachings
Biazzan (Thyatis)	University of Biazzan	Algebra, Hollow World Theories
Corunglain (Darokin)	University of Corun	Siege Warfare, Land-based Exploration
Darokin (Darokin)	DDC Compound	Diplomacy, Global Trading, Geopolitics
Dengar (Rockhome)	Skarrad High Seminary	Architecture, Engineering
Erendyl (Glantri)	Erewan Dateless University	Botany, Horticulture, Zoology
Evemur (Rockhome)	Syrklist Conservatory	Mining, Metallurgy, Geology
Glantri (Glantri)	Great School of Magic	Magic in all its forms
Harbortown (Minrothad)	School of Harbortown	Navigation, Commercial Shipbuilding
Jerendi (Jerendi)	Naval Academy	Navigation, Naval Warfare
Kerendas (Thyatis)	West Reach	Cavalry Tactics, Mounted Warfare
Krakatos (Karamaikos)	Karamaikan School of Magecraft	Magic in all its forms
Leenz (Glantri)	Drachen Zentral	Monster Lore and Hunting
Minrothad (Minrothad)	Minrothad Institute of Trading	Economics, Trading & Marketing
Norrbik (Vestland)	Uppsala College	Magical Runes, Poetry, Folklore
Port Lucinius (Thyatis)	Imperial Navy Academy (a.k.a. Collegium Navalis)	Navigation, Naval Warfare, Shipbuilding
Retebius (Thyatis)	Retebius Air Academy	Air Warfare, Flying Creatures Training
Rymnskigrad (Glantri) ¹	Igorob Institute	Ancient History, Necromancy
Sayr Ulan (Sind)	Ul Nerbi Palace	Philosophy, Theology
Selenica (Darokin)	University of Al-Azrad	Economics, Commerce, Administration
Selenica (Darokin)	Darokin University of Medicine and Scientific Researches	Medicine, Anatomy & Surgery

Serraine (Serraine) ²	Top Ballista Flying School	Aircraft Piloting, Air Warfare
Shireton (Fibe Shires)	Shireton Tea House	Literature, Poetry, Agriculture
Tameronikas (Plaruam)	Plaruam Medical & Curative Academy	Medicine, Healing Methods, Herbalism
Thyatis (Thyatis)	Imperial Academy	Land Warfare, Diplomacy
Thyatis (Thyatis)	College of Lucinius (a.k.a. Collegium Arcanum)	Magical Warfare & Engineering
Thyatis (Thyatis)	Academy of Music	Music, Storytelling, Construction of musical instruments
Vyonnes (Glantri)	Beaux Arts de Vyonnes	Art & Entertaining
Plaruam (Plaruam) ³	Dream of the Desert Garden University	Water Management, Theology

(1) With the Ethengar invasion of AC 1015, the Igorob Institute was heavily damaged and classes dismissed. Though the damage has been addressed now, the students and faculty have been slow in returning.

(2) The Flying City of Serraine and its Top Ballista Academy are not currently drawing students. This is due to the hostile takeover of the city in AC 1015.

(3) With its past civil unrest and rise to power of a more pro-isolationist government, the Dream of the Desert Garden University has closed its doors to the majority of non-Plari 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, Skyship Engineering & Enchanting
Grey Islands (Alphatia)	University of Grey Islands	Basic Magic
Newkirk (Westrouke)	Newkirk High	Sea Exploration, Linguistics
Seashield (Aquas)	Zyndryl University	Aquatic Races, Underwater Magic, Sea Exploration
Skyreach (Floating Ar)	Aerial University of Ar	Air Magic, Skyship Engineering & Enchanting

