

# ATLAS OF THE OLD WORLD

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

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

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

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

The Old World is a large stretch of land found in the south-eastern 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 Wastes to the west, and the Mengul Mountain Range to the North. Within this land are 21 "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.

*B.F.*

## 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 of Mystara. Some of them you will recognize from previous almanacs, while others are new writers with us. We wish to welcome all of them into our fold.

### ***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.

This year, Ursula once more describes to us the nations of Darokin, Ethengar, and Sind.

### ***Filferil Feadiel***

Assistant Treekeeper to Jorodrin Feadiel, Filferil is part of the group of Alfheim sages that tries to understand how to revert the evil magic that made Canolbarth a twisted forest.

Filferil describes to us the nation of Aengmor. Being an Alfheim refugee his words are often harsh to those who conquered and spoiled his former homeland. Next year we hope to have a true shadowelf correspondent, until then Filferil will be our only eye into the reclusive nation of Aengmor.

## ***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 halfling adventurer describes to us his homeland of the Five Shires, as well as the nations of Ierendi and Karameikos.

## ***Alasdhair MacCallum***

The swashbuckling rogue known as Alasdhair MacCallum is a young Glantrian that enjoys emphasizing his own cleverness while subtly insulting those around him. Luckily for him, he's highly skilled with a rapier, which has more than likely kept him alive after his usual comments (shall we say insults) on the fashions of various members of the high society. His own fondness for elaborate dress gives others the impression of him being an empty-headed young fop.

In AC 1015, Alasdhair describes to us his homeland of Glantri, as well as the neighboring Broken Lands.

## ***Misha Mananov***

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

Misha describes the three nations of the Northern Reaches for the Almanac.

## ***Astrid Ragnisdottir***

Alas, it is with sad news that I must announce that our brave skald from Ostland did not survive her injuries suffered at the siege of the Falun Caverns. The Editors of the Mystaran Almanac wish to express their sympathy to her family. We should praise such a worthy adventurer who died heroically facing fiends summoned from the very Pits themselves.

## ***Ryuk-uk Tshaa***

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

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

## ***Favonius Viator***

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

Favionus was recently freed from his captivity by the merfolk and now describes to us the wondrous places he has seen. He is also the writer for the entries on Minrothad, Ylaruam and the Empire of Thyatis. It has been noted that his recent captivity has given Favonius a rather cynical outlook on life.

## ***Faisel ibn Yasir***

It seems that our former friend Faisel ibn Yasir no longer deems us worthy of his correspondence. Thanks to the philosophies of the Kin faction, he now views us, along with the rest of the world, as infidels who do not deserve his respect.

## **Atlas**

### ***AENGMOR (City of)***

**Location:** South of Glantri and Ethengar, north and west of Darokin, former Broken Lands.

**Area:** 60,000 sq. ft. (5,400 m<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 15,000 (75% shadow elves, 15% various humanoids).

**Languages:** Elvish (shadow elf dialect, Oenkmarian dialect), Tharian Common, and other goblinoid tongues.

**Coinage:** Bright (gp), shine (sp), glint (cp), kalafi (varnished strips of hard, bark-like fungus, they come in 10 gp, 50 gp and 100 gp denominations). Oenkmarian coins can also still be found: 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 (Atzanteotl's minion, shadow elf, male, M15)

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

**Further Reading:** GAZ 10 - The Orcs of Thar, GAZ 13 - The Shadow Elves, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3.

### **Description: by Dorrik Stonecleaver**

Due to the shadow elf civil war and the following clashes we were unable to get a report from the Aengmor area. Actually we sent there our accomplished archeologist Julius Fyodorov, the one who wrote about the rising of Aengmor in last year's Almanac, but as of today we get no news from him. Anyway, in order to give you an overview of the former Jewel of the Depths, we charged our correspondents all-over the Old World to collect rumors and tall tales about the City of Aengmor.

One thing that might be of interest to the reader is how the shadow elves distinguish the city of Aengmor and the nation of the same name. Apparently, they don't have the same name. Both shadow elves and elves that I have talked to confirm that there is a difference between the two, but humans (and other demihumans) can't hear it. They claim it has to do with the sensitivity of their elven ears. Of course, when humans talk about Aengmor to the elves, the elves become just as confused because the humans can't pronounce the difference either.

### ***The Land***

"The city is built on a series of concentric plateaus over what was probably the top of a rocky hill. Though usually wrapped by smoke (probably coming from the local foundries), it's sometimes possible to see a huge maze of narrow, chaotic streets. Except the heavy walls there're a couple of notable buildings in the city. On the top of the central plateau there's a big temple, like the Thothian ones but with stepped sides instead of sheer surfaces. North-east of the temple there's a circular arena, much smaller than the Thyatian coliseum, but similar in shape. The city also has parks and a couple of lakes."

*Young gnome in Serraine.*

"Soldiers told me that the shadow elves conquered all the Eastern Broken Lands [11,600 sq.mi (26,100 km<sup>2</sup>). Ed.] killing or enslaving all humanoids out there."

*Darokinian farmer in Corunglain.*

“The road is completely blocked, you can no more cross the Eastern Broken Lands now. Before it was dangerous, now it’s suicidal. Shadow elves kill humans on sight. The only way to bring these carts back to Darokin is crossing through New Kolland and the Great Crater, unless you want to travel the long way through Fort Sablestone and the Sind desert.”

*Glantrian army officer talking to a Darokinian merchant.*

## **The People**

“Ruthless xenophobic shadow elves, that’s what they’re!”

*Anonymous adventurer*

“Shadow elves are not so bad, you know. It’s just that they mistrust the other races and so they appear evil and aggressive. My word, they’re a misunderstood race. Do you remember what happened a few years ago when some unscrupulous Thyatian kidnapped two of their children? They (rightfully) blamed humans for that and were ready to wage war on Darokin. Fortunately someone was able to stop both armies just in time, otherwise there would have been a real carnage for a misunderstanding. Hear me, my friend, let them learn the ways of diplomacy and they’ll look less evil.”

*Dav Curan, adventurer.*

“We’ve managed to capture an orc alive a few months ago. Actually he was so frightened that he spontaneously surrendered. We tried to ask him about Aengmor, he looked scared and grunted a few words about Oenkmar, evil elves rallying humanoids and a feathered serpent. Not much in my opinion. I don’t know what’s going on there, but it’s certainly something dangerous. Believe me.”

*Darokinian Sgt., Ft. Nell.*

## **Recent History**

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 too (not to mention elves) these rugged lands were probably the most dangerous area in all the Old World. But things changed dramatically in AC 1006. A meteor crashed in the Kurish Massif creating the Great Crater. Life was never the same in the Broken Lands. The feared orcish leader Thar and King Kol IV of the kobolds moved their hordes to the Great Crater (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 dwarvish army left Rockhome to defeat the hated orcs and conquer the fabled 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, Alebane’s ogres ransacked the city in Ambyrmont just a few days before the shadow elves’ final attack. In AC 1014 shadow elf mages managed to raise the city back to the surface and their troops secured all the Eastern Broken Lands. From then on little is known about who inhabits the city and what happens there. There has been a civil war among shadow elves and it seems that a few rebels elected Aengmor as their stronghold rallying the few scattered humanoids in the area and using them as slaves.

## **Don’t Miss**

If you happen to be in Serraine when it’s cruising in the Darokin area don’t miss to take an aerial tour over the City of Aengmor. The skilled gnomish pilots will bring you on a breathtaking and completely safe journey over the formerly buried city of Aengmor, something you’ll never forget. Guaranteed. The tour costs 100 gold pieces, but if you show the gnomes a copy of this almanac you’ll have a reduction. [Editor’s Note: With the recent reports of a civil war in Serraine, its is quite probable that this tour is no longer available.]

## ***Do Miss***

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

If someone offers you to go in the arena in exchange of freedom, then refuse. A few orcs, captured by Darokinians, said that really terrible things happen in that arena.

## ***AENGMOR (Colony of)***

**Location:** In eastern Darokin, north of the Five Shires and Karameikos.

**Area:** 17,950 sq. mi. (40,388 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 130,000 shadow elves.

**Languages:** Elvish (shadow elf dialect).

**Coinage:** Bright (gp), Shine (sp), Glint (cp), Kalafi (variously rated at 10 gp, 50 gp and 100 gp).

**Taxes:** One fourteenth of a shadow elf's earnings goes to the Temple of Rafiel and the King. Employers deduct this amount from the wages they pay and send it to the tax collector each month. Tax evasion is very rare among shadow elves.

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

**Industries:** Military, mining (precious metals).

**Important Figures:** Tanadaleyo (Radiant Princess, shadow elf, female, F13/M13).

**Flora and Fauna:** Deers and other small forest animals, basilisks, gorgons, and lycanthropes. Evil faeries are also reported to have moved in. The flora is now predominately twisted, and blight oaks are practically the only trees that have managed to survive.

Also, the shadow elves have imported many of their skinwings to the surface, so they can continue to act as flying mounts for their soldiers. Some have since broken free and now live in the wild of the forest.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 5 - The Elves of Alfheim, GAZ 13 - The Shadow Elves, CM7 - The Tree of Life, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## **Description: by Filferil Feadiel**

Long are gone those joyful days when the luxuriant Canolbarth forest was home of peaceful elves and merry faeries, when robins twittered in the fresh air and the sons of Ilsundal danced among evergreen trees. Now everything is dark and dangerous here, the only clear thing being the pale skin of shadow elves. [To learn more about the shadow elves' invasion check "Timeline of Alfheim Invasion" by Fabrizio of Lizzieni and Hervé of Vyonnes published in Rymskigrad by the Igorov institute. Ed.]

## ***The Land***

Gone are the mighty oaks that made Alfheim famous all over the so-called Old World (and even beyond), now the once-green forest is a dark and dry land, very similar to the dry steppe that covered the area before the arrival of Ilsundal's sons. Aengmor, as the shadow elves renamed my motherland, is located completely inside the Republic of Darokin, lying on a plain bordered by the huge Streel River (to the West), the cursed Cruth Mountains (to the South), where many friends died while fleeing to Karameikos, and the dangerous Orclands (to the North and East) home of nasty Orcs and hungry Trolls.

The forest receded a few miles since the invasion giving ground to lush Darokinian grass. The Canolbarth's trees turned into twisted version of their former selves, their gnarly and intertwined branches forming an impenetrable canopy that shrouds the forest undergrowth in darkness. New fungi of an unknown sort and strange mosses now grow under the twisted trees, but without water the once-mighty forest is slowly dying.

Gone are the rivers and the lakes, gone are the fresh streams and the small waterfalls, gone is the water from Alfheim. [this is not completely true. As far as I know the northern rivers and the Selinar lakes aren't entirely dry, because of water runoff from the Dwarfgate mountains. Ed.]. Nothing lasts of my homeland, only darkness, drought, death and decay.

## ***The People***

Gone are the sons and daughters of Ilsundal, gone is High King Oberon and his court of merry faeries, gone are the dryads and the fauns. The current dwellers of Aengmor are shadow elves, a xenophobic and violent race, a pale imitation of real elves. Shadow elves are really different from elves: they live in (disgusting) stone houses or in (even more disgusting) caves, like the burly dwarves from Rockhome. Unlike dwarves they like to sing, but they have horrible squeaky voices. The shadow elves' way of life has indeed little to do with the "standard" elvish one: usually shadow elves spend most of their time underground, because the sun is harmful to them; they don't eat bread, berries or boars, but trania, a strange food that they grow underground; they know very little about trees and usually prefer stone over wood to build their houses or temples.

These underground elves are a very religious race. Their priests, usually called "shamans", wield a tremendous power inside their society. You can recognize these shamans from the purplish mark on their forehead, this mark identifies as favorites by Rafiel [the marked ones don't belong to a particular race as written in last year's almanac. Ed.]. It's rumored that some among them are very accomplished spellcasters, able to destroy a whole army with a simple gesture of their hands; personally I doubt it.

Another peculiarity of this twisted race is their favorite mount: horrible squeaking flying monsters called skinwings.

## ***Recent History***

Though the memory of the shadow elves' invasion is still fresh in my mind, I won't say anything here about that sorrowful occurrence, because too many people already spoke about that, often out of turn.

After the invasion the forest has never been the same again: no more elves to tend the trees, no more trees to shelter the birds, no more twittering birds to enliven the elves' lives. Anyway life has not been easy for the invaders either. The first problem has been the forest itself, because the powerful evil magic used by shadow elves has completely destroyed the forest enchantments causing the nightly rainfall to stop and thus the once-mighty oaks to slowly die. Shadow elves asked the Norwold elves for help, but they could do little to restore the original spells.

That same evil magic caused another big problem, one that should worry everyone in the Old World, not only the shadow elves: bad magic points. These sources of evil magic already existed before the invasion, but recently they grew in number and power. Strange monsters appeared in Canolbarth and odd things happened near these areas, only the Immortals know what will happen in future.

Because of their warlike nature shadow elves had also problems with peaceful Darokin: first the silly shadow elf request of extending Aengmor borders just after the end of the Great War, then the kidnapping of young princes Erian and Calenderi that put Aengmor and Darokin on the verge of a war, and finally the invasion of Oenkmar, with shadow elf troops boldly crossing the Darokinian soil as if it was their home! Unfortunately the Darokinian army has still to recover from the war against the Master to be able to face the aggressive shadow elves, so they must put up with such blatant violations of Darokinian ground.

Anyway, after the civil war that razed the forest even more, it seems that Princess Tanadaleyo decided to take the diplomatic way in a desperate attempt to save the twisted forest. As assistant to Treekeeper Jorodrin Feadiel I'm here in Rafielton with Alfheim diplomats, but I must admit that, after last year's assassination attempt, I don't trust these elves very much and I think there will never be peace between us.

## ***Don't Miss Do Miss***

In my opinion there's nothing worth seeing in Aengmor and you've better keep out of the forest if you wish to live long. Anyway for those foolhardy adventurers who like to live on the edge always risking their life there's one thing to see: Rafielton, the only permanent settlement of shadow elves.

When the shadow elf troops invaded Alfheim in the fall of 1007 AC, all the elvish villages were destroyed or burned down in the short battles that occurred. The westernmost area of Alfheim Town suffered from magically-started fires too [actually shadow elf authorities blame the fleeing Alfheim elves for setting their cities on fire. Probably the truth stays somewhere in the middle. Ed.], anyway, the shadow elf decided to preserve this city and, after renaming it Rafielton, elected it as Aengmor's capital. As you may know Alfheim Town wasn't the real capital of Alfheim, but more

correctly a trading post where humans and elves might exchange their goods, anyway it was also the only human-looking city with a few stone buildings and a surrounding wall and this is probably why shadow elves decided to put the capital here.

Not being so skilled in working with wood, though they're trying to learn, shadow elf decided to remove the ironwood wall and replace it with one made of solid rock. This wall and the many new stone buildings give Rafielton a gloomy dwarvish look. King Celedryl Plaza was immediately renamed Rafael Square and covered by a linen canopy held up by tall poles, this canopy shelters the pale shadow elf from the burning rays of the sun. On the western side of the square (in the former non-elvish area) the Merchant Brotherhood Office now houses the Radiant Princess court, in front of it the former Darokinian cathedral shelters a small group of shamans. A new temple to Rafael was under construction on the eastern edge of Rafael square, but the civil war caused the works to stop. The dwarvish compound is now the army headquarters, while the air-force (skinwings) has its headquarters in the former Alpathian embassy. No foreign ambassador has now an official seat in Rafielton, though a permanent envoy of the DDC has a room in the only inn of Rafielton: "The Golden Skinwing".

Nothing lasts of the sky city except a few rotten axes and ropes.

Rafielton now houses roughly 15,000 shadow elves, mostly soldiers, while the majority of them live in the caves near the Sump and Weir.

## ***ATRUAGHIN CLANS (Territories of)***

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

**Area:** 46,380 sq. mi. (104,355 km<sup>2</sup>), with 19,172 sq. mi. (43,137 km<sup>2</sup>) on the plateau itself.

**Population:** 230,000 humans. (On the plateau: Bear Clan: 45,000; Elk Clan: 30,000; Horse Clan: 70,000. In the lowlands: Tiger Clan: 60,000; Turtle Clan: 25,000. )

**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 led by a chief and/or shaman, loosely collected into larger clans.

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

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

**Flora and Fauna:** Horses, buffalo, 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 lairing somewhere in the region.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 14 - The Atruaghin Clans, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## **Description: by Ryuk-uk Tshaa**

It is with grave misgivings that I submit to you this chronicle of the way of life of the Atruaghin peoples. The study of human cultures, tribal though they may be, is not my field of scholarly interest. Even were it so, I fear that to attempt to condense the cultures of an entire people, particularly one so wonderfully diverse as those of the Atruaghin clans, into a few paragraphs, is a tragedy.

For a more comprehensive treatment of these folk, however, I refer you to the writings of my colleague, Hoo-ti Ruk, who has done extensive ethnographies of the Atruaghin people. [Attempts to contact the above mentioned Hsiao were unsuccessful. He was last seen mounting an expedition to Davania in 1013 AC. Ed.].

## ***The Land***

The predominant feature among the lands of the Atruaghin people is the great Atruaghin plateau. An immense natural wonder, rivaled in stature only by the Adri Varma plateau to the northwest of Glantri. Such is the majesty of this plateau that the Children claim Atruaghin himself raised the plateau in ancient times, using his powerful magics.

It is atop this plateau that the majority of the Atruaghin peoples live. To the northwest, where the plateau dips downwards, live the peoples of the Horse clan, on a combination of grassy plains and soil rich lake regions. To their east live the Bear clan, in large pueblo cities built in the side of the plateau. Bear clan farms line the upper ridge, catching the rains that blow northwards from the Sea of Dread. South of the Bear clan, in thick forests, live the tribes of the Elk clan.

Below the plateau, to the east, live the deadly tribes of the Tiger clan, in their thick jungles. On the lands south of the plateau, along the shores of the Sea of Dread, live the Turtle clan, plying the seas in their canoes.

## ***The People***

Outland scholars have long divided the Children of Atruaghin (as they often refer to themselves) into five major cultural traditions- the Bear, Elk, Horse, Tiger, and Turtle clans- though such distinctions are broad generalizations that do not do these people justice. In any event, the Children themselves do not use such terms to identify themselves, and regard outlanders who do with amusement.

The Children are largely tribal in nature, though the extent of their social organization varies between cultural groups. Individual tribes of the Turtle and Elk clans, for instance, primarily consist of small bands of extended families, that seasonally come together as a tribe. Leadership among them is very informal, and it is only in instances of great necessity (such as war) that the clan acknowledges one overall chieftain. Such a system suits these peoples well, as their hunter/gatherer lifestyle does not accommodate itself to more than a semi-sedentary means of living. [They move around a lot. Ed.]

The Tiger and Bear clans, on the other hand, have very complex social structures. These people live sedentary lifestyles, building large cities and relying heavily on farming as their means of subsistence. They are very much like modern nations, with very formal leadership - the Tiger clan in particular denotes itself as a kingdom (a fact which seems to have slipped by outlander scholars, so keen on presenting them as 'primitive barbarians'). Both nations also have organized religions as well, as opposed to the largely shamanic ways of the Elk and Turtle clans. It is interesting to note that, whereas the Bear clan priests complement the role of the chieftain, the Tiger clan priests seem to wield as much (if not more) power among those people than the monarchy.

The peoples of the Horse clan deserve special mention, as they have perhaps been most wronged by outland scholars. My observations show that there are really two separate, but closely connected, groups that make up these people. There are the plains tribes, which roam the steppes on their horses year round, and the village tribes, which live a largely agricultural lifestyle around the lakes on the northern edge of the plateau. Both groups interact closely, which undoubtedly has led less observant scholars to assume they were one and the same. As to their religious activities, the village people have more formal priestly organizations, while the plains folk rely predominantly on shamans.

Additionally, I must note here that the Horse clans do in fact have spoken languages. Many tribal dialects, in fact. They do not use their spoken language with outsiders, however, only amongst their own tribes. In dealings with others, they use the sign language they have become renowned for. The nonsense about the plains folk not using bows in hunting is untrue as well. They use the bow and arrow most often in hunts; it is only when performing acts of bravery to improve their status, or impress outsiders, that they attempt to take down buffalo with close quarter weapons.

## ***Recent History***

The Atruaghin region was largely unaffected by the Great War years ago, primarily due to the sheer logistic improbability of an invading force being able to take and hold the plateau.

A group of Alphatian mages, fleeing the sinking of their continent, arrived on the plateau and subjugated the various tribes of the Bear clan, in 1010 AC. They were driven off by the Children of Atruaghin by the following year, though the World Elevator that connected them to Darokin was destroyed.



Recently, maps of trails through the interior of the plateau have allowed Darokinian merchants to resume trade with the Children. I should note here that, while visiting the Bear clan, my keen vision espied activity at the base of the plateau where the World Elevator once conducted commerce. I can only presume that Darokinian merchants are perhaps seeking to repair the enormous contraption. What effects this might have amongst the merchant houses of the Republic are certainly beyond my ability to comment on.

Last year, Eelsha Spider's Kiss was confirmed as the Tiger Clan high priestess, following the death of the former high priest. In the subsequent months, she has apparently utilized her influence in her position to spur the Tiger clan to vicious raids on Turtle clan tribes and nearby Darokinian towns in the Tenobar region.

### ***Don't Miss***

I noted during my brief stay among Bear clan cities a surprising degree of outland clothing (notably Sindhi and Darokinian) and trade goods. It would appear that Old World merchants are beginning to make great inroads into this previously isolated region of the world. I am unsure if that is a good thing or not.

Additionally, while asking about the Bear clan manner of building cities on the side of the plateau, I was mildly surprised to learn that there were legends of a time when the Bear clan lived on the ground below the plateau. Bear clan priests tell of large cities, thriving centers of commerce between Bear clan peoples and those of other peoples in the surrounding areas (I suspect these people must be early settlers of the Darokin region and perhaps Tiger clan people, in the days before the split between clans). There was a disaster of some kind that destroyed the cities and drove the survivors to return to their home on the plateau, though what sort of disaster is unclear. The tales speak of wars and invasions, from Tiger clan peoples or some other, outside force. It would be interesting to see whether any record of these cities may exist in ancient Darokinian scrolls, or even if remnants of these cities still remain below.

## ***BROKEN LANDS (Goblinoid Territories of the)***

**Location:** South and south-east of Glantri, north of Darokin.

**Area:** 11,600 sq. mi. (26,100 km<sup>2</sup>) on the surface, with an unknown amount of territory underground.

**Population:** 5,000 goblinoids.

**Languages:** Elvish (shadow elf dialect), Tharian Common (most dialects), and most other goblinoid tongues.

**Coinage:** Any, as all are stolen from neighboring lands. No local coins are produced.

**Taxes:** Whatever a horde leader can take.

**Government Type:** Feudal monarchy.

**Industries:** Warfare above ground, while fungus growing and mining (of gold, copper, tin, and jade) take place underground.

**Important Figures:** Deimos (human lich, male, M18).

**Flora and Fauna:** The Broken Lands are just swarming with creatures driven out of human lands. This includes herds of goats, giant ants, rock baboons, every race of goblinoid, giant lizards, rats, giant scorpions, and giant spiders.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 10 - The Orcs of Thar, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3.

### **Description: by Alasdhair MacCallum**

If there is any place on Mystara that one could consider a part of the Pits [AD&D: Mystaran name for the Abyss] made real on our world, it would be the Broken Lands. Only the most foolhardy would enter the area voluntarily, and unfortunately, that list includes any merchant who wish to travel between Darokin and Glantri. Since it's a major trade route between the nations, I have traveled through the Broken Lands several times, so I can give this description from my experiences.

## ***The Land***

Unfortunately, not much beyond the sight of the two major caravan routes are known of the area, and my knowledge is just as limited. From what can be seen, the Broken Lands are an endless series of winding ravines, high cliffs, rocky outcropping, jagged hills, sharp mountains and impassable wasteland. Needless to say, one rarely travels here for the scenery.

Along the Vesubia River, a beaten path barely 3 meters (10 feet) wide is all that guides the caravan from one end to the other. The river itself is convoluted, twisting and turning too many times to be counted. Greater rapids dominate almost its entire length. Still, there are a few spots where the water slows down, and at two of these, the caravans actually ford across the river.

The Vesubian trail crosses straight through the mountains of the area, making an arduous climb a daily event. Even the walk back down is dangerous and the slopes are very steep. Near the Glantrian end of the trail, off to the East, one can barely see a huge mountain peak covered in snow; this unnamed mountain is about the only sight on this side of the broken lands.

A second trail follows the Streel River to Ethengar. This trail is wider than the Vesubian trail. Since it passes through a rough valley, it often reaches widths of up to several hundred meters (yards). Although no less exerting than the Vesubian trail, there is definitely more scenery. First, after leaving Corunglain, there are two active volcanoes, each belching fire and lava down their slopes. Of course, because of the dangers of the volcanoes, the caravan route fords across the river and makes its way into the high mountains.

In the mountains, it passes along the base of Mount Valdomir, named after a Traladaran merchant who died here. Mount Valdomir reaches incredible heights and is perpetually covered with glaciers.

Once back along the river, both the trail and river pass in a huge canyon located between two very high plateaus. Often, unless the sun is at high noon, the caravan will remain in the shadows of the cliffs on either side of it.

Finally, a dangerous swamp known as the Mucks, where entire caravans have been known to be sucked down into the mud, is all that remains in the way to Ethengar.

## ***The People***

The people of the Broken Lands consist of nothing but barbaric goblinoids who follow the rules of the jungle. The strongest one leads the groups simply because he kills anyone who challenges him. Those goblinoids who manage to take charge of large groups often style themselves kings and queens, but these titles mean nothing in the civilized world of men and elves. And that is about the extent of civilization in the Broken Lands.

Along the Vesubia river, trolls are the most frequent encounter. They mindlessly attack any caravan they see, not even fearing their own death. This of course makes them formidable opponents. Be warned: if you travel in the area, make sure to always - and I do mean ALWAYS - have a fire handy in case of a troll attack.

Near the Streel River, orcs and gnolls are the major threat to caravans. Although easier to deal with than trolls, they are more numerous and a lot craftier, making this journey dangerous in its own way. On the interesting side, these goblinoids seem to outright fear Heldannic Knights, remembering clearly the massacre the Knights caused on their people during the Wrath of the Immortals. Having a few Knights with your caravan is therefore a very good idea. Another idea that caravan leaders enjoy is to have some of their men dress up as Heldannic Knights, which causes the same effect. Of course, the Heldannic Knights themselves view this as heresy, so such activities are not without risk either.

## ***Recent History***

The Broken Lands have been without any true leader since Thar united the tribes under his banner [having lost most of his previous horde to Prince Kol of Glantri. Ed.], and invaded Rockhome while the dwarves were in the middle of a civil war. Thar lost that battle and never made it back to the Broken Lands. The only other goblinoids of note, King Alebane and Nizam Pasha, also left the Broken Lands, each striking out in their own direction. Only a handful of the goblinoid who lived here now remain, and even that population is dwindling.

Now, various new kings are trying to dominate the area, but none have had much success. As such, this only helps to create anarchy among the goblinoids. Only one has had any success so far; an individual named Deimos. Deimos' race still remains a mystery as none have seen him, but many speculate he is an orc [Adventurers who defeated Deimos after this account was written describe Deimos as a former human lich. Ed.].

But another threat has risen in the area - literally. The City of Aengmor is now the base of a group of shadowelves who themselves are trying to dominate the tribes of the area. Since the goblinoids are too busy bickering among themselves for power, the shadowelves are succeeding rather easily. I can only speculate that in a few years, all that remains of the Broken Lands will belong to the city of Aengmor. Still, on the brighter side, the constant battles between the shadowelves and goblinoids have made caravan travel much safer in the area than it has been in years.

### ***Don't Miss***

The only sight worth seeing in the Broken Lands, if one is powerful enough to survive the trip, are the twin volcanoes along the Streel River. These volcanoes are the only two in the Old World which spill lava down their slopes. The three volcanoes in Glantri, as well as those in Rockhome are ash volcanoes, belching out destructive clouds of burning ash [more information on the volcanoes are available in the Geology of the Old World entry in the Mystara Miscellanea. Ed.]. This makes them a unique sight found nowhere else in the Old World.

These lava flows follow predictable paths and are usually easy to avoid, so one can safely navigate in the area to good vantage points. Still, many have died when they believed they were safe (hence the reason the trade route takes a long detour around the area), so do not attempt anything without an expert to guide you along. When in a safe area, a favorite hobby of some is to place an item into the lava edge then remove it slowly. The lava will cool down and solidify, placing the emerged sections of the item in solid rock. These "items-in-a-rock" make good merchant curiosities, since most people believe that magic was involved somehow.

## ***DAROKIN (Republic of)***

**Location:** West and north of the Five Shires.

**Area:** 68,964 sq. mi. (155,169 km<sup>2</sup>), not including the Orclands, which is only nominally under control of the Republic.

**Population:** 1,260,000 humans, plus a scattering of elves, dwarves, and halflings.

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

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

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

**Government Type:** Republic Plutocracy; it is a republic as leaders are voted in, but only the wealthy can apply for positions of power, therefore Darokin is also a plutocracy.

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

**Important Figures:** Corwyn Mauntea (President, human, male, T6)

**Flora and Fauna:** Herds of cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and buffalo. 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 the Orclands and is completely dominated by bands of goblinoids.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 11 - The Republic of Darokin, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Ursula Bremen

It is with the utmost pleasure that I am able to submit this description of my home, the Republic. It is a particularly nice change to be able to write a report that hasn't been carefully censored to relieve it of any potentially dangerous information. Without further ado, allow me to introduce you to the highlights of this land that I love.

### ***The Land***

The wealth of our nation can be traced back to the resources of the very land we live in. The vast Streel Plain - rich, fertile farmlands - provides food for all of Darokin's population, and the surplus is exported to many of our neighboring countries, as well. A long history of struggles against outside oppressors, notably goblinoids from the northern Amsorak Mountains and the Broken Lands, has ensured that most of our heartlands are free and safe for people to live in.

Merchants and fishermen alike prosper in the waters of Lake Amsorak and the Streel river, while the surrounding mountains provide a wealth of natural resources to mine. Even the great, dismal Malpheggi swamp harbors hidden treasures - oil, exotic plants, and more - though it is only the most daring of merchants who attempt to take advantage of those.

### ***The People***

Derogatorily termed the "Land of Leftovers" by outsiders, the Republic boasts one of the single most diverse populations of any nation in the Old World. Thyatians, Karameikans, Ylari, Glantrians, elves, dwarves, halflings - all contribute to the long and rich cultural and racial history of the nation.

The people of the Republic benefit from the great wealth of our nation, perhaps more so than any other nation. Though there is a significant minority of truly wealthy people, even the most poor citizens (those of the Copper class) are still more well off than lower class citizens of other nations... and there are more opportunities for raising one's status in Darokin than anywhere else, too!

Most of the nation is ruled by the Outer and Inner Councils, with a heavy influence from the various Merchants' Guilds. There are still a number of dominions that are more feudal in nature; they are owned and governed by individuals, and their ownership is inherited. Such Borderlands tend to be less organized and often more dangerous than Heartland territories. Occasionally a Borderland is absorbed into the Heartland when its owner dies without an heir, or when the Council buys it out.

### ***Recent History***

Darokin's economy suffered greatly during the Great War, but has been steadily on the rise ever since. The DDC (Darokin Diplomatic Corps) was largely responsible for the creation of the Western Defense League in AC 1010, a union of Old World nations that mutually agree to provide assistance to each other. The WDL consisted originally of Darokin, Karameikos, the Five Shires, Ylaruam, and Rockhome. Rockhome withdrew over the Oenkmarr incident in AC 1012 and Ylaruam withdrew in the midst of their civil war last year. The WDL hopes to renew its ties to these countries, as well as induct new members.

Trade with the nation of Sind has been steadily on the rise, following the events of the Great War, and ties have been renewed with the Atruaghin peoples to our south - notably with the Bear Clan on the northern side of the plateau. Tiger clan attacks on the Tenobar Borderland territory have been on the rise since the induction of a new high priestess last year.

### ***Don't Miss***

The city of Athenos is certainly a notable spot for tourists to visit. One of the largest cities in the nation (pop. 15,000), it is also one of the most ethnically diverse. The port town boasts travelers from all over the Old World- Ierendians, Minrothaddan, Sindhi, even the occasional Yavi. The Hin quarter is the largest population of halflings in Darokin next to the town of Hinmeet, and the city and surrounding regions boast the largest concentration of Makai tribesmen outside of the Ierendi Islands. Having one's fortune told by a Makai Oungan (shaman) is a popular tourist attraction.

The Averoigne Quarter is also popular. Averoignians fleeing the Forty Years War in Glantri [c.788 AC. Ed.] ended up in the region of Athenos, which was then a minor port town. The Averoignians were among the earliest settlers of the region, along with the Makai (many of whom had fled there centuries earlier, following Thyatian invasions of the Ierendi Isles). When the Athenos Canal was finally completed in 868 AC, and the city burgeoned as a major commerce center,

the Averoigne and Makai cultures were already well ensconced within the populace. They remain so to this day, and the Averoigne Quarter is one of the greatest legacies to their influence. Athenos is also one of the few cities in Darokin (Selenica being the other one) where most of the population is bilingual (speaking Darokinian and Sylaire).

Another site of interest is the Great Wall. Work began on the Great Wall of Darokin way back in Sviftmont AC 1010 [see PWA1, ed.] and was finally completed in Vatermont of AC 1014. The 6 meters (20') high wall runs for 200 kilometers (125 miles), from Fort Fletcher to Corunglain City, following the southern edge of the Broken Lands. It is a remarkable feat to have built such an immense project by human hands. I also find it rather amazing to stand on the wall, look to the horizon, and still being able to see the exact same wall stretch all the way out of sight.

## **ETHENGAR KHANATES**

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

**Area:** 57,970 sq. mi. (130,433 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 325,000 (population down from previous years due to internal civil war in 1014 AC). There is also an unknown number of goblinoids.

**Languages:** Ethengarian.

**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), loosely allied under a Great Khan (king).

**Industries:** Cattle, horse-breeding.

**Important Figures:** Moglai Khan, (The Great Khan, human, male, F19) and his bodyguard Gundai (a sabre-tooth tiger), Batu (Khan of the Bortaks, human male, F11), Ghazan (Khan of the Taijits, human male, F7), Huaji (Khan of the Kaeruts, human male, F15), Hulagu (Khan of the Uighurs, human male, F16), Jemugu (Khan of the Yakkas, human, male, F8), Kadan (Khan of the Kiyats, human male, F15; rumored to be possessed by an evil spirit, HD16), Temur (Khan of the Yugatais, human, male, T16).

**Flora and Fauna:** Grasses and small patches of short, wiry trees called tobai trees dominate the land. On the animal side, goats, yaks, deer, ibex, dogs, bears, boars, horses, lions, lynxes, panthers, lizards and spiders are commonly encountered. Dragons, wyverns, and griffons have also been spotted in the steppes.

Finally, in the area known as the Land of Black Sand, various undead are said to be haunting the place.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 12 - The Golden Khan of Ethengar, AC1010 Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

**Description: by Ursula Bremen** *[Excerpted from a report submitted to the Darokin Diplomatic Corps; reprinted with permission]*

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to submit my second report of the [CENSORED] mission to the Ethengar Khanates. The purpose of the mission is to report on the changing political climate and the possible dangers posed by the Great Khan's declaration of war on the Principalities of Glantri.

### **The Land**

From the moment of the mission's entry into the Ethengar Plain (called the Sea of Grass by the Ethengarian people, due to the way the waist high grasses blow in the wind like waves on the ocean), it was evident that preparations for war were in progress. The lands of the Taijits, in particular, were particularly heavily patrolled, with a strong non-Taijit

military presence in evidence. Of note, bands of Yugatai horse warriors and Keshak (the Great Khan's personal bodyguard), were present, as well as members of the [CENSORED] and the [CENSORED], two groups of the Great Khans' brataks (spies)- see Attachment B.

It is the estimation of this observer that the non-Taijit military presence is due to the civil war of 1014 AC as much as it is fortification of the Glantri/Ethengar border.

Of other note, the road leading from the region now known as Aengmor (the former "Broken Lands"- see report [CENSORED]) has been paved all the way from that region up to Bargha, an improvement from my last report, and construction of a newer trail leading through Taijit territory is well underway. Such a major construction by the Ethengarians is unusual, and I speculate that it, too, is of military significance. Specifically, for the transportation of [CENSORED], which I noted in the camp of Bargha in my last visit.

## ***The People***

The various clans have gathered in their winter camps earlier this year, following the proclamation of war by the Great Khan. Evidence of preparation for the war are present, as the warriors of the clan begin to conscript [Ethengarians do not actually conscript people, as most join voluntarily, but the term does aptly describe what is going on. Ed.] younger men in order to bolster the Great Khan's forces.

The anti-Glantrian sentiment that is always present in Ethengarian society is at a new level. Priests of the Ten Thousand Fists of Khan (see Attachment H) have been traveling to the many winter camps, stirring up feelings of hatred towards the Ethengarians' neighbors.

In the Great Khan's camp of Bargha, the number of dwarves is at an unusual high. Many dwarves from Rockhome have come to join in the war against the Glantrians, whom they have hated since the Great Persecution of 802 AC, when the dwarves were driven out of Glantri, under suspicion of bringing a plague with them to the land.

## ***Recent History***

In late Flaurmont of AC 1014, Moglai Khan uncovered the treasonous activities of Oktai, Khan of the Taijits. Our agents have uncovered information that Oktai was working with both goblinoids, under the control of Moghul-Khan (currently of Dast, in Orcland - see Attachment K), as well as Glantrian forces (see attachment L). Moglai Khan mobilized the Keshak as well as other Ethengarian forces, to attack his rival. Once evidence of Oktai's treachery was revealed by [CENSORED], the majority of the Taijits abandoned their khan to Moglai's wrath. Oktai was captured and executed on Ambyrmont 8, AC 1014. He was replaced by his eldest son, Ghazan. Ghazan had publicly denounced his father's treachery, and was instrumental in tracking down Oktai and bringing him to justice before Moglai Khan. Minor uprisings among the Taijits (see Attachment L) over the intervening months have resulted in the large presence of non-Taijit forces noted above.

On the day immediately following Oktai's capture, Moglai Khan declared war on the Principalities of Glantri. He has spent the time since then building his forces, conscripting [again, using a term most people are familiar with. Ed.] more warriors from among the clans, and building his strategy. Of note, there appears to be a lot of activity in the dwarven enclave of Bargha. I suspect that [CENSORED].

## ***Don't Miss***

The winter court of Bargha continues to be the site of great improvements. In particular, the Great Khan has begun construction on fortifications to surround the camp (see Attachment N), many of which are being built by his dwarvish allies. Their purpose is not entirely clear, as it is unlikely that Glantrian forces will attempt to invade Ethengar (should the war turn badly for the Great Khan). It is possible that Moglai Khan is using the war as an excuse to continue to upgrade and modernize his camps, or is making preparations for possible future civil wars, such as that of AC 1014. I suspect it is a little of both. At any rate, Bargha is beginning to take on the appearance of a small town- certainly the single most permanent settlement in the Ethengar Khanates.

In any case, the Ethengar Khanates are not a good place for outsiders at the moment, as the [CENSORED] are on high alert for Glantrian spies, and have been capturing and interrogating any outsiders into the Sea of Grass.

## **FIVE SHIRES**

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

**Area:** 10,660 sq. mi. (23,985 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 210,000 halflings, 10,000 other demi-humans and humans.

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

**Coinage:** Yellow (gp), Star (sp), Sunset (cp).

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

**Government Type:** Each shire is governed by a council of clanleaders with their elected representative, a sheriff.

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

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

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

**Further Reading:** GAZ 8 - The Five Shires, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

### **Description: by Joshuan Gallidox**

Hello dear readers. I am glad to hear that, despite my absence as editor of the Almanac that you continue to purchase future volumes in the series. Since last year, I have been traveling through my homeland as well as spent a rather extensive visit on the isles of Ierendi. I believe that I must have once more embarked upon Yallara, that continuous urge to wander that many Hin acquire during their youth. I guess being editor of the Almanac was just not my purpose in life. But that doesn't prevent me from writing about my adventures.

So, to you, dear and faithful readers, I give the description of the Five Shires - the homeland of the Hin [Halflings, as you probably refer to them. Ed.].

### **The Land**

By far the most beautiful land in the Old World, the Five Shires are dotted with pleasant hills, green fields, and large stands of woods. This scenic paradise is due to moist air blowing inland from the Sea of Dread, only to leave its water behind as it rises and cools in the mountain air. This creates many rivers ensuring fertile land within the Shires.

During the winter months, the Black Spires block the cold Continental Sweep Winds from the north, keeping the land warmer than most other nations of the region. This does not mean that there is no snow in the Shires. Quite the contrary; heaving coastal storms are common, bringing plenty of rain to the mountains, which usually fall as snow. The northern mountain roads of the Shires are often blocked during the winter months, closed to all but the foolish. The rest of the Shires, however do tend to be snow free.

Eastshire is, logically enough, the eastern-most shire. It is mostly farmlands that feed off the Wardle River. Eastshire is the land most often visited by non-Hin, a practice on the rise since the fall of the dread Black Eagle Baron of the former Fort Doom.

Heartshire is a rural hill country that was once rich with mineral and metal deposits. Now, the mines are mostly depleted and the inhabitants are broiled up in industry. Almost everything is made or crafted here; everything but cloth, that is.

Highshire is mostly wilderness, with high mountains, rolling hills, and dark forests. New mines have been opened in the area, and the local economy is on the rise.

Seashire is the coastal country, characterized by its numerous ports and harbors. It is the wealthiest of the Shires because of its booming trade with other nations. Seashire boasts the largest towns in the Five Shires, including the capital Shireton, as well as Thantabbar. The numerous rocks and islands dotting the Sea of Dread in Seashire's territory are also the most notorious pirate haven this side of the Old World.

Finally, Southshire is the most settled region of the Five Shires. Its woodlands have long been turned into productive farmlands and many well-used roads criss-cross the countryside.

## ***The People***

When thinking of halflings, most people immediately stereotype them as mischievous and childlike. Another common belief is that we are lazy and fear to leave the safety of our homes. While it is true that Hin are creatures of comfort and many never leave the town of their birth, it does not mean that all Hin are the same.

Unlike true children, Hin have far more respect for the property and dignity of others. Vandalism is unheard of in the Shires. Also, halflings have none of that wide-eye innocence that can be plainly seen in all human children.

Upon the arrival at adolescence, many Hin experience the Yallara. This is an urge for excitement and adventure. Some grow out of becoming yallaren after only a year, while others - like me, from the look of things - never do. It is during this time that Hin travel the world and can often be found in just about any civilized land. It is from the returning yallaren that the people of the Five Shires manage to learn about the going-ons in the rest of the Old World. Hin are often a lot more knowledgeable than humans about the world around them.

Most Hin are simple farmers, brewers and shopkeepers. They are always merry and happy. Nothing is more enjoyable to them than a warm fire, a good ale and a moving story. Still, a few are bold, daring, and even dangerous. Ask any Thyatian unfortunate enough to encounter a ship full of Hin pirates. These halflings have a well-earned reputation of being a danger of the Sea of Dread.

Finally, Hin do not worship any of the traditional Immortals like the members of other races do. Instead they revere Hin Heroes; Hin who have accomplished great deeds during their lives, often saving the Shires against incredible odds, and now watch over the Hin forever [essentially, they are Immortals; the Hin just call them Heroes instead. Ed.]. Despite this, Hin priests are still rare. Those that do exist are called Masters, and their goal is to protect the Five Shires from all dangers. Very rarely do they ever step foot off of the sacred grounds of the Hin nation.

## ***Recent History***

Although the Five Shires have faced more than enough invasions, conquerors, and rebellions in the distant past, their recent history is rather uneventful; and that's just how they like it. During the Wrath of the Immortals, several Hin units marched to the aid of Darokin when Sind invaded their lands. They were also present to repulse a goblinoid horde pouring out the Broken Lands shortly afterwards.

In AC 1012, the Five Shires was one of the founding nations of the Western Defense League and has remained a member since. The Five Shires also invaded the Black Eagle Barony recently, after King Stefan Karameikos granted them permission, of course. Unfortunately, the Black Eagle escaped his punishment and is now hiding in the magical nation of Glantri.

This Fyrmont, Shireton will be the host of the famous World Games. This will obviously bring many foreigners to the burrows of the Hin, who will only be too glad to show the humans and other races how Hin truly live and behave. I believe this will be the ultimate enlightenment on outside knowledge of the ways of the halflings.

## ***Don't Miss***

One site often visited by travelers to the Five Shires is the ancient and mysterious ring of stone pillars known as Ringrise. Since I've described this site before in Joshuan's Almanac, I'll talk about something else this year.

Mistmyr Falls is the name of the large waterfalls at the head of the Cruth River along the Karameikan border. Mistmyr Falls is actually a series of several smaller waterfalls in a row, with a net result of water dropping over 300 meters (1000 feet) in about 120 meters (400 feet) of distance. The rush of water is so fast and violent that a fine spray always enshrouds the foot of the plunge in a roiling mists. Rainbows can be seen everywhere, creating such beautiful scenery. Hin children from nearby villages can often be seen playing under the safer sections of the falls, enjoying the sensation of water falling from above.



Another place of interest to some visitors of the land would be Shumbril Tower, also known as The Hin's Own Magic & Mysteries Shop. Here, gentle Alace Shumbril (human, female, M8) sells various potions and spell components. Occasionally, she even has a magical item or two available. I mention this because Shumbril Tower is the only place in the Five Shires where a wizard can find spell components - unless he's willing to go out in the field and gather them himself, that is.

## ***GLANTRI (Principalities of)***

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

**Area:** 116,650 sq. mi. (262,463 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 597,500 humans, with a small percentage of them elves and half-elves [D&D: just elves]. There is also an unknown amount of goblinoids in the Principality of New Kolland.

**Languages:** Thyatian Common (Glantrian dialect), Alphatian Common (Flaemish Dialect), Elvish (Belcadiz and Erewan dialects), Sylaire (also known as Averognian), Traladaran (in Boldavia), Ethengarian and numerous goblinoid languages.

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

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

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

**Industries:** Various, as each principality specializes in something different. See below for details.

**Important Figures:** Jaggar von Drachenfels (Prince of Aalban, human, male, M24), Carnelia de Belcadiz y Fedorias (Princess of Belcadiz, elf, female, F12/M18), Juliana Vlaarden (Princess of Bergdhoven, human, female, M14), Morphail Gorevitch-Woszlany (Prince of Boldavia, human vampire, male, M19), Urmahid Krinagar (Prince of Bramyra, human, male, T5 dual-classed to M14), Carlolina Erewan (Princess of Erewan, elf, female, M10), Dolores Hillsbury (Princess of Fenswick, human, female, M14), Brannart McGregor (Prince of Klantyre, human lich, male, M20), Jherek Virayana (Prince of Krondahar, human, male, M18), Kol (Prince of New Kolland, kobold, male, Wd7/M10), Isidore d'Ambreville (Princess of Nouvelle Averogne, human werewolf, female, M11), Malachie du Marais (Prince of Morlay-Malinbois, human werewolf, male, M11), Harald of Haaskinz (Prince of Sablestone and Grand Master of the School of Magic, human, male, M17).

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

**Further Reading:** GAZ 3 - The Principalities of Glantri, PC4 - Night Howlers, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, Joshuan's Almanac, and Glantri: Kingdom of Magic boxed set.

## **Description: by Alasdhair MacCallum**

Known as the Kingdom of Magic by many around the Old World, Glantri isn't even a true kingdom. It's a collection of independent principalities each ruled by a Wizard-Prince with several smaller independent dominions owing fealty to one of the Princes. If only one word could be used to describe Glantri, I believe I would choose "Chaotic." There are more rules in this nation (often conflicting at that!) than anywhere else in the Old World, with license for almost anything you can imagine. I dare say they've even tried to place a license for breathing on a couple of occasions. Their bureaucracy is a mess, and trying to get something done quickly is next to impossible unless you do it illegally.

Despite all this, it is the land of intrigue, backstabbing (both political and literal), and most of all, magic. That is why I love it so. Everyone knows Glantri is a nation of mages for mages. All wizards are automatically higher in social standings than non-mages. Non spellcasting races such as dwarves and halflings are abnormal to Glantrians and are often chased out of their land.

Clerics and Priests are also disliked by Glantrians. Although they have recently been permitted to cross the Glantrian borders, it is still punishable by death for any of them to openly preach about their religion or Immortals.

Glantri, above anything else, is isolated. High pine-covered mountain tops surround the entire nation. Whether it's the impassable Wendarian Ranges to the north, the rugged and sharp Broken Lands to the south, or simply the high cliffs of the Great Northern Wildlands to the west, very few trails permit entry into this nation.

## ***The Land and The People***

Because Glantri is actually a mix-match of peoples, cultures, and lands, I have taken the liberty to combine the Land and People sections for this nation. As such, I will describe each Principality in turn, giving both a brief description of the land as well as the culture found within.

Aalban is a principality of plains and pastures. Despite this peaceful look, it is the most militaristic dominion of Glantri. Warriors and mercenaries are plentiful in the area, and the locals are renown for their remarkable siege weapons and equipment.

Belcadiz is a lightly forested area that serves as the home of the famous winemaking elves. Not only is their wine in high demand throughout Glantri, but so is their metalwork, something unheard of for elves anywhere else on Mystara. Belcadizians are hot-tempered, easy to offend, and enjoy nothing better than a sword duel or two to try and prove their superiority.

Bergdhoven, resting in northern Glantri, is relatively flat. It is a picturesque land with wild flowers growing almost everywhere. These flowers are the base of Bergdhoven's perfume and oil industry. They also attract several mages who need the rare flowers for rare or unique experiments.

Boldavia is a word that causes many to shiver as that principality is often associated with rumors of powerful undead and necromancers. The local Traladarans, who live in small villages among the craggy bluffs and forested hills, are a superstitious lot and are accredited with all the undead legends of the area that spread through Glantri.

Bramyra is a principality that was created to serve as the first line of defense should the Ethengarians decide to invade Glantri. There is nothing of note here except for the vast herd of sheep that roam the hills.

Erewan was once the home of many famous poets, scribes, and artists. Now, the Erewan elves sulk and whine about the goblinoid dominion, spreading false reports about several evil deeds Kol and his minions apparently committed. These elves have been threatening to leave Glantri if the Princes don't fix the situation. So far, all the Princes have been ignoring them.

Fenswick is the newest dominion granted to the remarkably charming and attractive Dolores Hillsbury. As yet, not city or town has been built as the Princess is content to let her land prosper with its logging industry. This principality is almost completely in the mountains.

Klantyre, the famous fog-shrouded highlands, is another place where the sheep are probably the most interesting feature. The weather is the second most popular subject for the inhabitants; they often wager as to whether it will rain 3 days out of five or 4 days out of five.

Krondahar is one of the most cultivated lands in Glantri. The locals are renown for their silk as well as their leatherworking.

Morlay-Malinbois is a forested land where werewolves are probably as common as non-werewolves. In fact, they are considered full citizens while within this principality and have all the rights that any Glantrian would normally have.

New Kolland can best be described as a giant hole in the ground. Created by a meteor impact and then populated by goblinoids, Kol was appointed Prince of the land in return for preventing goblinoid raids into Glantri. Despite this, humans traveling into New Kolland are considered fair game by the locals and Prince Kol.

Nouvelle Averoine was famous as the home of the late Etienne d'Ambreville. It is also renown for its cuisine, and theatre plays are so popular they often sell out months in advance. Nouvelle Averoine is flat near the river, but gets significantly more hilly further inland.

Sablestone is home to Harald of Haaskinz, the Grand Master of the Great School of Magic. There is nothing much in this principality either, except for stubborn farmers who continuously demand that the wizards just leave them alone.

Finally, there's Glantri City, home of the Great School of Magic and capital of the magocracy. In this city, canals replace the traditional roads of other cities, making the gondola the only way of getting around. Glantri is the heart of fashion and style for the nation, and any new trend will soon be copied by all of high-society. Currently, the dark gothic

style of Boldavia is in favor, where aristocrats dress up as vampires and werewolves (or at least how they imagine vampires and werewolves would dress).

### ***Don't Miss***

Unfortunately, now is not the time to plan a visit to Glantri. The Ethengarians have declared war against Glantri, and the nation is scrambling to marshal its defenses. If you are of the mercenary type, then you are most welcome to help defend the land, but otherwise, for your own safety, I would suggest postponing any visit this year.

## ***HELDANN (Heldannic Territory of)***

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

**Area:** 25,000 sq. mi. (56,250 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 250,000 humans.

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

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

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

**Government Type:** Military Theocracy.

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

**Important Figures:** Herr Wulf von Klagendorf (Oberherr, human, male, P19 of Vanya), Sir Geoffrey of Grunturm (rebel leader, human, male, C20 of law).

**Flora and Fauna:** One can commonly encounter sheep and elk herds, bears, boars, wolves and yeti. 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:** AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac. Also, several articles of the Princess Ark series can be useful.

**Description:** by Sir Hendrik Gultzer, servant of the Glorious Lady Vanya.

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

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

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

## ***The People***

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

Heldanner commoners are a tall, light-skinned people most likely related to the men of the Northern Reaches. They toil the fields and are at peace with themselves and the world. The more worthy and brave among them join the ranks of the Heldannic Knights.

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

Victory and glory are assured.

## ***Recent History***

Heldann has had a remarkable growth period recently. The Heldannic Knights have converted the people of lands all the way up to Oceansend to the beliefs of Vanya and the glory of the Heldannic Knights. In fact, the land under our control was so great, we had to divide it into several territories [Notably, Heldann, Heldland, and Vanya's Rest. Ed] which, together, form the Heldannic Empire. Admittedly, a few stubbornly resisted our rulership, but our armies crushed these lawless bands who were known to trouble the other inhabitants anyway. Many have thanked us for our remarkable control on crime and punishment of all criminals.

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

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

## ***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 barrack dedicated to the Lady. From this magnificent chamber Herr Wulf von Klagendorf rules the land and the will of Vanya is interpreted by the high priests.

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

## ***IERENDI (Kingdom of)***

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

**Area:** 17,240 sq. mi. (38,790 km<sup>2</sup>)

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

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

**Coinage:** Pali (10 gp), geleva (1 gp), sana (sp), and cokip (cp). All foreign currency is also accepted.

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

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

**Industries:** Tourism, fishing.

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

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

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

**Further Reading:** GAZ 4 - The Kingdom of Ierendi, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Joshuan Gallidox

Ah, the relaxing lands of Ierendi, known by everyone as the touristic capital of the world. And, I must admit that after spending several months there, I long to return. The trip was one of the most pleasant and comfortable ones I have ever taken during my years as a yallaren.

### ***The Land***

Ierendi is composed of a series of volcanic islands located on the southern edge of continental Brun. These beautiful islands are covered with lush, tropical rain forests with many colorful exotic animals and birds. The western shores of the various islands are rugged and steep, often containing numerous spectacular waterfalls or viewpoints. On the eastern side of the islands, almost every shore are long sandy beaches with wide sandy bays - ideal for swimming or just plain sitting in the sun. And the water is completely crystal clear and absolutely refreshing. And the water is never too cold thanks to the warm currents from the southwest.

Ten islands compose this nation. Each island has a specialty in terms of activities for the tourists. Well, eight of them do, anyway; the last two are strictly off limits to tourist and even to most natives. Of the most famous islands are Ierendi Island, Alcove Island, and Safari Island.

Ierendi is the largest island of the nation and the location of Ierendi City, the capital of the kingdom. This is where the famous Crown Tourney of Ierendi takes place.

Alcove Island specializes in deep-sea treasure hunting, with several actual sunken pirate ships serving as exhibitions. Actual treasures have even been discovered by a lucky few divers.

Finally, Safari Island is purposely populated with monsters and exotic animals. Here, local guides bring tourists on safari hunts and give guided tours of the ancient penitentiary of the island.

The other islands are mainly residential in purpose, but they also have their own, less talked-about touristic experiences. Still, I've visited most of them, and they are also well worth a trip, even if you don't hear about them very often back on the mainland.

### ***The People***

The original native humans of Ierendi call themselves the Makai. Of course, over the years additional colonizations from both Thyatis and the Five Shires have added members of each race into the Ierendi stock. Despite this, the Makai still make up the vast majority of the Ierendians.

Makai are friendly and generous, always willing to help someone out. Of course, since most are also in the tourist business, they are also always ready to sell visitors to the islands worthless trinkets, Makai tribal good luck charms (which never really existed in their ancestral tribes), and anything else to make a silver piece. Makai are easily recognized thanks to their brown colored skin.

The Ierendians live by the money brought in from tourist, and they know it. That's why they are always cheerful, happy, and helpful. When a foreigner is well treated and enjoys his stay, he'll return and give them more money.

On a stranger side of things, the Ierendians have a very unusual method of choosing their monarch. Each year, on Klarmont 1, they hold a fierce competition known as the Crown Tourney. Only renown and successful adventurers can even apply to participate in this tourney. Nationality is irrelevant, as is race. The male and female who score the most points during the competition are awarded the title of King and Queen for a year.

## ***Recent History***

The only thing of exception in their recent history would be Reston of Akesoli, the King of Ierendi. This daring soul first won the Crown Tourney back in AC 1007 and has been undefeated since. Reston has set a new record with 9 kingships in a row. There is talk of naming him King-For-Life.

Also of note to some sages and geologists are the recent minor eruptions of several of the volcanoes. Most have only let out small plumes of smoke and ash, with the exception of one major eruption back in Vatermont of AC 1012. Many volcanic experts speculate that the eruption was only the first of several that will soon rock the island nation. Of course, Ierendi officials deny this, expecting that any serious investigation into the matter is sure to hurt their tourist industry.

## ***Don't Miss***

To put it bluntly, EVERYTHING! There is not an island or town that is to be missed if one has the time - and money - to enjoy an extensive tour of the islands of Ierendi.

For those of limited budget, however, I recommend Ierendi Island. First of all, it is the site for the Crown Tourney, and interesting things always happen at these competitions between powerful adventurers. Reston always performs admirably, and is well deserving of the title of king. Two years ago, a red dragon participated, causing quite the uproar. This year, an impromptu challenge took place as competitors (and a few other bystanders, myself included) helped a young lady in the crowd of spectators give birth to her child. Judges awarded bonus points to the adventurers who participated. I can't wait to see what happens next year.

Also, Ierendi City is the home of the most famous Adventurers' Club. If you want to meet famous and powerful adventurers - and I'm talking about dragon-slayers, planewalkers, fiend destroyers and the likes - then this is the place to be. If you wait patiently outside their prestigious clubhouse just east of the marketplace, you'll probably see a dozen such heroes and plenty of soon-to-be-famous adventurers. Myself, I enjoyed sitting on a bench in a nearby park watching several of them display their skills to an on-looking crowd. Even more impressive is the fact that all members of the Adventurers' Club will respond to the call of the King or Queen of Ierendi should the fate of the nation depend on it. This gives Ierendi the most powerful and unpredictable defense force in the Old World.

## ***KARAMEIKOS (Kingdom of)***

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

**Area:** 46,750 sq. mi. (105,188 km<sup>2</sup>)

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

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

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

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

**Government Type:** Monarchy.

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

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

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

**Further Reading:** GAZ 1 - The Grand Duchy of Karameikos, AC1010 Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, Joshuan's Almanac, and Karameikos: Kingdom of Adventure boxed set.

## Description: by Joshuan Gallidox

Having lived and wandered through Karameikos for several years, I am honored to be able to describe the richness and beauties one can find in this energetic, young nation. Karameikos is a land that seeks a bright future, but is also highly respectful of the past. It is home to several large cities of civilization, yet covered in untamed wilderness. Even the people can be divided in two direction: the Thyatians and the Traladarans. Despite all this, it is wonderfully united all in one, making Karameikos the vibrant kingdom it is today.

## ***The Land***

Thick, dark primeval forests is probably the best way to describe the lands of Karameikos. Only a few small stretches of land around the larger cities have been cleared for farmlands, while the rest of the nation is uncharted woods.

Despite being mostly wilderness, King Stefan has been working hard on creating numerous roads throughout his nation. While these roads are impressive near the cities of Mirros and Kelvin, with their fine cobblestones and Thyatian engineering, once the city walls are out of sight, they quickly turn into nothing more than a well-used trail. Still, the King's men patrol these narrow dirt roads, making them some of the safest in the Old World. Also, many villages with welcoming inns and households dot these trails, allowing a traveler to always get a comfortable night's sleep.

Further up north, the relatively flat shorelands slowly turn into rolling hills. Many veins have been discovered in these hills, and the mining industry of the nation is slowly on the rise. Soon enough, the hills turn into the towering Cruth Mountains, marking the northern limits of the nation.

To date, only five baronies can be found within the nation:

Halag, once known as the Black Eagle Barony, is a land trying to recover from a former tyrannical ruler. To date, there is no baron to rule over the land, only a castellan appointed by the king.

Kelvin is a major trade city at the heart of the nation. Almost all trade goods from the northern lands of the kingdom will pass through this walled city. A sturdy stone bridge allows caravans to cross Hillfollow River at the city gates. Strangely enough, it is illegal to cast wizard spells within city walls; a fact that annoys the mages studying at the School of Magecraft in nearby Krakatos.

Rugalov is the newest barony and the first with a Traladaran Baron. Baron Yuschiev is currently settling his land with only Traladarans and discouraging all Thyatians from even visiting.

Threshold is a smaller barony whose main industry is logging. For some unknown reason, the village of Threshold seems to create more adventurers than anywhere else in the kingdom.

Vorloi is named after the Thyatian merchant family who owns the dominion. Vorloi is one of the largest sea ports in the nation, second only the Mirros.

## ***The People***

As I have already mentioned, two peoples actually form the inhabitants of Karameikos.

The first are the ancient Traladarans who have lived here for more generations than most people can count. They are short, well, for humans anyway, and have dark hair and pale complexions. Traladarans enjoy a simple life and are often viewed as superstitious by most other humans. This has to do with their love of good luck charms, evil curses, and omens from the Immortals.

The second group consists of the conquering Thyatians. The Thyatians have so many racial stocks mixed into their Empire that there is no one Thyatian look to describe them all. Thyatians care more for efficiency and end results than the Traladarans.

Unfortunately, there is much tension between the two. Thyatians believe that the Traladarans waste too much time with their superstitions and religion. They also believe that as conquerors of the land, they are naturally superior to the Traladarans. On the other hand, many Traladarans view Thyatians as greedy, corrupt, and predatory. Older Traladarans view the Thyatians as simply the next wave of bad luck preventing them from re-attaining the Golden Age of Traldar.

In the more cosmopolitan cities of Mirros and Kelvin, interaction with other races have given the urban Karameikans a better understanding of each other. These Karameikans view themselves as Karameikans, with Traladaran or Thyatian blood being irrelevant. King Stefan calls these multicultural people the “New Karameikans.” Since most foreigners usually encounter New Karameikans within these large cities, it is no wonder that they all believe the two races to be strongly united into one nation.

Whether the two Karameikan peoples will manage to solve their differences and truly unite as New Karameikans in the future remains to be seen. I, for one, hope that they do.

## ***Recent History***

Karameikos is a young nation making almost all of its history rather recent. Still, a few events in the past couple of years can be singled out for the purpose of the Almanac. Most of them pertain to Karameikos trying to make his nation strong, independent of other nations, yet united from within.

In AC 1006, then Duke Stefan Karameikos crowned himself King, declaring complete independence from the Empire of Thyatis. In AC 1012, he renamed his capital of Specularum to Mirros to better represent the Traladaran people of his nation. Also in AC 1013, Queen Olivia Karameikos began financing several public schools throughout the villages of the nation in the hopes of making Karameikos one of the best educated lands of the Old World. Finally, just this year, King Stefan granted nobility to Sir Yuschiev, his first Traladaran Baron.

On the other hand, Stefan Karameikos also removed the title of nobility from his cousin Ludwig von Hendriks. When brave hin adventurers managed to show the King just how cruel and corrupt the Black Eagle was, the Five Shires were granted permission to invade the barony and dispose of the dark baron.

Karameikos was one of the founding members of the Western Defense League, and still remains a member, just like the Five Shires and Darokin.

## ***Don't Miss***

While visiting the city of Mirros, I most definitely recommend staying a few nights at the Black-Heart Lily. This notorious inn is where the famous Yolanda of Luln began her singing career over a decade ago. If you are lucky, you might manage to hear her wonderful voice, as Yolanda often returns to the place of her origins (career wise, that is), giving free performances to the patrons of the tavern below.

The Black-Heart Lily was apparently named after a woman who broke the heart of an ancestor of Luthier Sforza, proprietor of the Lily. Although Sforza is a broad, homely man with bristly brown hair, mustache, and beard, he is a jolly fellow who enjoys sharing drinks with his patrons. He also has a good ear for events that occur on the streets of Mirros, and anyone searching for something - or someone - in Mirros could do worse than talk to him.

Even if not in the mood for socializing, the Black-Heart Lily has many comfortable rooms on the second floor, available for the reasonable price of 2 gp per night. This price includes a good hearty meal early the next morning.

Sforza has been known to accept capable adventurers into his inn on a more or less permanent basis at no cost in exchange for their services as bouncers in the tavern on the first floor. Needless to say, the bouncers here are usually capable of dealing with any trouble that might arise, so one had better be prepared to behave while visiting.

## ***MINROTHAD GUILDS***

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

**Area:** 8,120 sq. mi. (18,270 km<sup>2</sup>)

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

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

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

**Taxes:** Officially, guilds owe a 20% annual income tax, while individuals owe 10%. Yet, there are many extenuating circumstances which can reduce or increase the amount owed of which only Minrothaddan tax collectors can keep track



of all of them. There is an 8% sales tax for local items, while all imported items (or services) have an 18% sales tax. Foreigners must also immediately pay a 20% income tax for all income earned while in the nation.

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

**Industries:** Crafts, trade, and services.

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

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

Vegetation is dominated by mahogany and teak, although numerous fruit-bearing trees are also common.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 9 - The Minrothad Guilds, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Favonius Viator.

Being a merchant myself, I find that makes me perfectly qualified to talk about the money-grubbing Merchant-Princes of the Minrothad Guilds and their nation. They currently enjoy supremacy of the sea-trade, but mark my words, Thyatis is about to claim that title from them.

## *The Land*

Like many of the islands of the Dread Coast, the Minrothad islands are volcanic in origin. The mountain ridges are covered with forests, while the closer to shore are scattered patches of palm trees. The beaches on the eastern shores, are long and shallow, while the western shores tend to be dominated by cliffs and black sand beaches.

The islands of Minrothad have only a few forests remaining, and these are mostly replanted. In their constant pursuit of the domination of the sea, the Minrothaddans nearly cut down every tree in sight to make their precious little boats. Although I admire their enthusiasm, this simply goes to show how short-sighted they are to long-term profits.

Minrothad is situated right where the moist Dragon Winds from the south meet the cold Continental Sweep Winds from the north. This has two main effects on the weather of the area. First, it creates a lot of fog (something the local pirates enjoy), which makes any sea journey treacherous to those who do not know the location of every reef and rock that sticks out of the waters. Second, it creates tornadoes, which can devastate towns or create huge waterspouts to capsize boats, neither of which are useful to anyone.

There are six main islands that compose this mercantile nation. Trader's Isle contains Minrothad City, the capital of this bureaucratic nation. There are two volcanoes on this island which are, unfortunately [we hope he meant to say fortunately. Ed.], inactive.

Alfeisle is home to the wood and sea elves of the nation. It is the one place where forests are still rather abundant, but that's only because of the elven love of trees. Admittedly, these elves are extraordinary sailors. Fortress Island, on the opposite side, is the stronghold of the Minrothad dwarves - dwarves who live on an island and sail the seas. Something about that just screams treachery against the essential nature of dwarves.

The other isles have little importance. North Isle is simply a stopover for ships heading north. Both Blackrock Island and Fire Island are active volcanoes, hence are uninhabited by the Minrothaddans.

## *The People*

What can be said about the Minrothaddans besides the fact that they will do anything to get your money. They call this "the Ethics of Competition," which blatantly means that anything short of murder and treason is acceptable, provided that Minrothad comes out ahead. All the races of the islands believe in this; even the elves and halflings, who are just as bad as the human Minrothaddans [As you might have guessed, these are obviously the opinions of the writer, and not of the editors of the Almanac. Ed.].

Their laws are all aimed at profiting the locals and hurting foreigners, especially their merchants. Just look at the ridiculous sur-tax they have on foreign goods! Worse, unlike any other civilized nation, their punishments are more severe on foreigners who don't know their laws than on the locals. Death is a very common sentence to many crimes, including anything that has to do with money.

Speaking of laws, they have the most complicated system anywhere. Every dispute is handled by the courts instead of with an honorable duel. And the winner is usually the one who can afford the best lawyers. Needless to say, with the extra tax on services for foreigners, it's usually not the foreigner who can afford such legal services.

## ***Recent History***

Minrothad hasn't done much recently, besides continue to make money and not care one way or the other about the rest of the world. During the Wrath of the Immortals, although they did supply Thyatis with ships and transportation, they were just as eager to get their hands on Alphatian gold and provided them with the same services.

More recently, Minrothad has made an attempt to gain control of the Aegos Pit to the Hollow World. Of course, we beat them to it, but our governments came to an agreement to clear the Pit together. Now, they blame us for recent sabotage on their project to steal wealth from the Hollow World. I think they should take a long look at the large list of other nations they have offend in their bid for money before accusing the Great Empire of Thyatis. What do we care for their little projects?

Back on the islands themselves, Oran Meditor is making a slow but steady bid for power. Many believe he will try to name himself king of Minrothad. Of course, the other guilds are plotting to overthrow the elf. I hope the whole lot of them fall in a civil war and destroy themselves. It will save us the trouble later on.

## ***Don't Miss***

If you're a foreigner, the first ship leaving Minrothad. If you stay any amount of time, you'll probably get into an argument, face their dreaded court system, get arrested, and sooner or later obtain a death warrant on your head. Like I've said, they only care about their money, not about foreigners' welfare. One last warning, only members of the Tutorial Guild are allowed to cast spells; anyone else, including foreigners, will be swiftly punished if they try.

## ***ORCLANDS (Goblinoid Territories of the)***

**Location:** Northeast of Darokin and Aengmor, southeast of Rockhome.

**Area:** Approximately 12,936 sq. mi.

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

**Languages:** Tharian Common (most dialects, but Orcish dialect is the 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.

**Industries:** Warfare, subsistence herding. Limited mining (primarily in the region of C'Kag).

**Important Figures:** Alebane (King of Xorg, ogre, male, F10), Hutai-Khan (Khan of New Hobgobland, hobgoblin, male, F9), Moghul-Khan (Khan of Dast, yellow orc, male, F9/rumored to be a Devil Swine), Tlatepetl (Governor-General of C'Kag, red orc, male, F10), Khordarg (Red dragon, male).

**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 C'Kag a long time ago.

**Further Reading:** GAZ 10 - The Orcs of Thar, and GAZ 11 - The Republic of Darokin.

**Description:** by Ryuk-uk Tshaa *[Ed. note: As this account was written early in 1014 AC, before Ryu left to join up with the Great Migration, we are happy to be able to expand upon it with additions from an intelligence report by Ursula Bremen]*

While searching for missing genealogical data linking the Trollhattan trolls to their ancestors in Trollheim [In the Broken Lands and Vestland, respectively. Ed.] my companion Starkad and I found ourselves in the Orclands, where decidedly interesting developments were taking place.

## ***The Land***

The mountains of Orcland are an even more harsh, barren territory than those of the so-called Broken Lands. Sheer mountain bluffs, almost perpetually covered in snow, are the predominant feature here in the Dwarfgate Mountain range. Vegetation is minimal, and the few animals that we have seen appear woefully undernourished.

## ***The People***

The majority of the goblinoid denizens are orcs, of the so-called ‘common orc’ variety. There are a surprising number of Orcus Hyborianus species intermixing with those of the species Orcus Porcus here [For more on the various species of goblinoids, see the ‘Orcs of Thar’ gazetteer by Sir Bruce Herdland, a noted Glantrian scholar. Ed].

Of the other goblinoid denizens, there is a large population of red and yellow orcs, with a smattering of hobgoblins and ogres. I suspect this is a very recent development, with displaced goblinoids fleeing their ancestral homes in the Broken Lands due to Shadow Elf incursions there. The sheer increase in numbers here in Orcland seems odd, though, as the Great Crater is a noted haven for goblinoids since the Great War. I suspect other factors at work.

The region of C’Kag was until recently inhabited primarily by trolls with a reputation for being uncharacteristically expansionist, particularly in a species of such low social sophistication.

## ***Recent History***

The Orclands have always been a bone of contention for Darokin. The lands themselves have long been considered the Republic’s, due to the fact that no one else wanted them (which is perhaps suitable for the ‘Land of Leftovers’, as Darokin is sometimes called). This has often led to diplomatic difficulties with surrounding lands, who assumed the Republic had some control over the raiding goblinoids who made their homes there.

In the years prior to the Great War, goblinoid activity was at a suspiciously low level. It was suspected that the orcs of the area were busy defending themselves against the trolls of C’Kag. Such concerns took a back seat when the hordes of Hule began their war with the Republic.

Recently, the goblinoids have once again become very quiet. Some of those stationed at Fort Hobart informed us that the Republic suspects another internal goblinoid war is taking place, but they are unsure of with whom. Darokinian forces are staying on the alert.

From a report by Ursula Bremen-

“... reports of their demise was premature. The ogre king Alebane, the hobgoblin Hutai-Khan, and a General Tlatepetl (see attachment E), apparently survived the Shadow Elf assault on the city of Oenkmar (now known as Aengmor- see attachment F) in 1012 AC. We suspect that they escaped by way of [CENSORED], and made their way to the surface.

“It appears as if they returned near the Orclands, where they formed an alliance with the orc Moghul-Khan (Moghul-Khan has been holed up in Dast since the end of the Great War. See attachment H). From there, it appears they spent the majority of the next year conquering the Orclands from the trolls of C’Kag, who had dominated the region since before the Great War. It is possible that [CENSORED] supplied the goblinoids with arms; we have sent an agent to investigate.

“The goblinoid coalition is now in control of the Orclands, though theirs is a tentative alliance at best. Religious differences plague the denizens of Dast and New Hobgobland (formerly Gruk). The greatest threat seems to be the keep of C’Kag, which has been under heavy construction. General Tlatepetl is still an unknown, and it has been difficult to get an agent in past his patrols. We hope to [CENSORED].”

## ***Don’t Miss***

There is a great deal of activity around the region of C’Kag. New construction is being built by the trolls, now apparently the slaves of red orcs. Starkad is quick to point out the effectiveness of the buildings as military fortifications [Ed. note: Ryu noted at a later date that these structures bear a strong resemblance to buildings in the lands of the Tiger Clan]. We were unable to stay for long, for fear of being spotted by the heavy patrols in the area. Starkad also reports that he spotted a red dragon in the vicinity.

From a report to the DDC by Ursula Bremen-

“... red dragon that has raided the surrounding lands for the past few weeks has returned to the mountains near C’Kag. This may bode ill, as Darokinian agents have suspected for years that there was some force masterminding the trollish attacks in the Orclands (see attachment L). [CENSORED] will remain in the region to investigate this development.”

## ***OSTLAND (Kingdom of)***

**Location:** Off the coast of the Sea of Dawn, east of Vestland and south-east of Heldann.

**Area:** 8,920 sq. mi. (20,070 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 131,000 humans

**Languages:** Heldannic.

**Coinage:** Krona (gp), Eyrir (sp) and Oren (cp).

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

**Government Type:** Monarchy.

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

**Important Figures:** Finn Hordson (King, human, male, F5), Yrsa Svlasdottir (Queen-mother of King, human, female, P10 of Odin), Asgrim the Bowed (Royal adviser, human, male, P15 of Odin)

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

**Further Reading:** GAZ7 - The Northern Reaches, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

### **Description: by Misha Mananov**

Surely Halav has blessed me to allow me to visit such wondrous places far beyond the lands of Traladara. I deem it but a small task to write about these places so that others can learn and experience the same sense of wonder that I have.

### ***The Land***

Ostland is composed of several relatively flat islands just off the shore of the mainland. Only Noblo Island has any form of high relief, with small mountains on its eastern shores. With only a few forests scattered about the land, the cold winter winds have nothing to block their entry into the homes of the Ostlanders. These freezing winters would seem like a bad omen to most people in Karamaikos, yet to the hardy northmen it is simply a winter like any other.

Still, the other seasons are much warmer, allowing the hard working Ostlanders a long and blessed growing season for their agriculture.

Ostlanders live in small villages, usually composed of just a single clan. Everyone in such a village is therefore a blood brother, so they eagerly give each other aid when needed. Noblo Island is well populated with such clan settlements, having almost all cultivable lands used for their grain and potatoes fields.

The other islands of the nation are sparsely populated and much more wilder than Noblo.

### ***The People***

Above anything, the Northmen honor bravery and scorn the weak. The civilized way of words used by the Thyatians and Minrothaddans who visit their nation is dishonorable in their point of view. They fear nothing, not even the darkness of eternal death, and march off to battle foes even when hopelessly outnumbered. To a northman, death in battle is the only method of finding happiness in the afterlife.

Ostlanders give praise to their divine Gods [the "Gods" of the Northern Reaches are merely Immortals. The northerners simply call them Gods, much like the hin call their Immortals "Heroes" after the title they received when they were mortal. Ed.], just as any respectful people should. They maintain their ancient traditions and customs, despite many pressures from foreign powers to change. This is what I admire about them, having felt similar feelings of

dishonoring Halav back home with the blending of Traladaran and Thyatian cultures. The reverence for Odin and Thor runs deep in their blood, and never will they accept any insults to their beliefs.

Yet they are quick to anger at any insult upon them, not just those toward their Gods. Battles to the death over a perceived wrong is commonplace here, and to be called a coward afraid to fight is the worse insult imaginable to them. And they do not forgive as easily as you or I; an enemy made is often for life.

Of the three Northern Reaches nations, Ostland is still practicing pirating and raiding of foreign nations. And they do not deny it when accused either. They view such raids as tests of manhood, and that only the weak whine about their fate. To most, such plundering is violent and brutal, but to the Ostlanders, it is a way of life.

## ***Recent Events***

During the Wrath of the Immortals, King Hord of Ostland died while attempting to raid an Alphatian warship. He was succeeded by his son, Finn. Finn only recently turned 18 [in AC 1013. Ed.], and was unable to claim the throne until that point. The nation was therefore ruled by Queen Yrsa and High Priest Asgrim the Bowed until Finn attained manhood.

Since attaining manhood, there have been several attempts on the young man's life. A civil war broke out for the earlier parts of this year, but the Young King showed wisdom beyond his years when he managed to end it peacefully. I foretell a future greatness for this Finn Hordson.

Now, Finn looks on to expand his nation, and his eyes are settling on the Isle of Dawn and Norwold.

## ***Don't Miss***

When visiting Ostland, one should enjoy the hospitality offered by the northmen. Since there are no inns in the entire nation, one might as well accept the comfort of their homes and a warm meal. Often, the men of the village will gather together in their main longhouse for drinking and tale-telling. The storytelling bards of Ostland are known as skalds, and the legends of bravery, heroism, and valor are some of the most moving I have ever heard. It is truly a pleasurable experience and not to be missed when presented with the opportunity.

## ***ROCKHOME (Kingdom of)***

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

**Area:** 41,140 sq. mi. (92,565 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 1,000,000 dwarves, plus a handful of humans who have been permitted to stay.

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

**Coinage:** Sun (10 gp), trader (1 gp), moon (10 sp), star (1 sp), and 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% sales tax on all goods purchased in Rockhome, as well as a 25% income tax on all wages earned in Rockhome.

**Government Type:** Monarchy, heavily influenced by clan leaders.

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

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

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

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, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Ursula Bremen

Unfortunately, the dwarves of Rockhome have recently closed their borders to all foreigners, including to members of the Darokin Diplomatic Corps. The dwarves are still upset over the Western Defense League's refusal to help them in their war against the shadow elves in the caverns beneath the Broken Lands. Now, in their paranoia, they view all humans as allies to the shadow elves.

Rumors have left the dwarven nation claiming that they are facing constant goblinoid raids, yet are too stubborn to ask other nations for help.

I therefore have no report to give to you on Rockhome at the present time. I assure you, however, that the DDC will have a report for next year, whether or not the dwarves give them permission to enter their lands.

## **SIND (Kingdom of)**

**Location:** West of the Atruaghin Territories, Darokin, south-west of Glantri.

**Area:** 200,000 sq. mi. (450,000 km<sup>2</sup>), of which Azadgal: 10,000 sq. mi. (22,500 km<sup>2</sup>); Baratkand: 32,500 sq. mi. (73,125 km<sup>2</sup>); Gunjab: 17,000 sq. mi. (38,250 km<sup>2</sup>); Jalawar: 13,500 sq. mi. (30,375 km<sup>2</sup>); Jhengal: 32,000 sq. mi. (72,000 km<sup>2</sup>); Kadesh: 20,500 sq. mi. (46,125 km<sup>2</sup>); Nagpuri: 13,000 sq. mi. (29,250 km<sup>2</sup>); Peshmir: 12,000 sq. mi. (27,000 km<sup>2</sup>); Putnabad: 11,000 sq. mi. (24,750 km<sup>2</sup>); Shajarkand: 25,000 sq. mi. (56,250 km<sup>2</sup>); and Sindrastan: 13,000 sq. mi. (29,250 km<sup>2</sup>).

**Population:** App. 550,000 plus hordes of occupying goblinoids and other minions of Hule. (Azadgal: 45,000; Baratkand: 40,000; Gunjab: 12,500; Jalawar: 65,000; Jhengal: 40,000; Kadesh: 30,000; Nagpuri: 60,000; Peshmir: 35,000; Putnabad: 75,000; Shajarkand: 65,000; Sindrastan: 80,000)

**Languages:** Sindhi, some Thyatian Common (Darokinian dialect).

**Coinage:** Guru (25 gp), rupee (5 gp), bhani (2 ep), khundar (sp), piaster (cp).

**Taxes:** Each mumlyket imposes and collects its own taxes. The occupying forces of Hule demand an annual poll tax of one Khundar per person, regardless of age, gender, or caste.

**Government Type:** Feudal monarchy (king and nobles called rajahs and maharajahs). The Master of Hule rules Sind through his puppet, Chandra ul Nervi, the current Rajahdhirajah.

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

**Important Figures:** Chandra ul Nervi (Rajadhirahja, human, male, C13), Inay Paramesh (Rajah of Jalawar, human male, T13), Drisana Madhar (former Rani of Jalawar now in exile, human, female, M9).

**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.

**Description: by Ryuk-uk Tshaa** *[Ryu has been sending us descriptions of each of the various areas that he travels to on his way through Sind. Due to the chaotic situation in Sind during AC 1015, we have only been receiving sporadic reports from our Hsiao correspondent. The only entry we have yet received is on the Rajahstan of Jalawar, which we present here for our readers. Ed.]*

## **The Land**

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

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

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

## ***The People***

The main human stock of Sind is a blend of Atruaghin and Urduk racial stocks, a combination which 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 - Ierendians, Minrothaddans, Darokinians, Yavdlom; there is even a sizable population of Sindized 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. Rajah Paramesh, from a more conservative branch of the Madhar line, has been attempting to reimpose the caste system in Jalawar, an action that has not served to make him any more popular among the people of this mumlyket.

## ***Recent History***

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

Rajah Paramesh has slowly consolidated his power in the years since, and has only recently been able to reopen trade with the outside world, bolstering the economy of Jalawar once more. There is still much resistance to the new Rajah, particularly as he is still closely allied with the Hulean invaders. Jalawar is heavily occupied with Hulean forces, as much for the income provided by its trading as for its agricultural surplus, which serves as the main source of food for Hule's Sindhi troops.

## ***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.

## ***SODERFJORD (Kingdom of)***

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

**Area:** 31,060 sq. mi. (69,885 km<sup>2</sup>)

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

**Languages:** Heldannic.

**Coinage:** Markka (gp), penne (ep), gundar (sp) and oren (cp).

**Taxes:** None. Most revenue is raised from tolls to use roads and bridges. The rest of the money is raised by raiding other nations.

**Government Type:** Monarchy, although the jarls (lesser nobles) still hold tremendous power.

**Industries:** Cattle, goats, sheep, fishing, logging, furs, piracy, and trade.

**Important Figures:** Ragnar the Stout (King, human, male, F17).

**Flora and Fauna:** Deer, elk, and wolves can be found throughout the coniferous forests of Soderfjord. Various herd animals, such as sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and bison can be found in the plains of the nation.

Goblinoids used to be very common in the southern Hardanger Mountains, but they have been defeated and now pose little threat.

**Further Reading:** GAZ7 - The Northern Reaches, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Misha Mananov

Once nothing but a collection of petty jarls and nobles, Soderfjord has recently been united under the rulership of the charismatic Ragnar the Stout.

### ***The Land***

The south and west of Soderfjord is nothing but a rocky plateau, uninhabited by all except for wild tribes of goblinoids. Along the coast, however, as well as the length of the Soderfjord River, prosperous farmlands can be found. Since this is usually not enough to feed the entire population, fishing is very popular.

It is in the arable land that most of the northmen live in Soderfjord. These coastal plains are a good dozen meters above sea level, with cliffs dropping sharply into the waters below. There are very few places for a ship to land except at an occasional alcove along the coast.

Deeper inland lies the Great Marsh, a place where entire caravans have been reported to disappear. The northmen claim that the living dead haunt this evil swamp, and I for one believe them. Only the famous Marsh Road is safe, and even then only during the day.

Finally, there are the mountains themselves which act as borders to Rockhome and Ylaruam. Somewhere in the jagged Makkres Mountains to the east lives the Modrigswerg Dwarves, a clan of exiled dwarves who prefer to be left alone. Although the southern Hardanger Mountains are claimed by Soderfjord, no one has lived there since it has, up until last year, been populated by barbaric gnolls and kobolds.

### ***The People***

Above anything, the Northmen honor bravery and scorn the weak. As with Ostlanders, they believe that using words is cowardly and dishonorable. They fear nothing, not even the darkness of eternal death, and march off to battle foes even when hopelessly outnumbered. To a northman, death in battle is the only method of finding happiness in the afterlife. Thor is the ideal example of their lives, and he is almost universally worshiped throughout the nation.

Northmen from Soderfjord are very closely tied to their clan and sadly view all others, including (if not especially) other northmen, as rivals. This has to do with generations of fighting between the clans - the blood spilled during those battles has yet to be forgiven. But such feuds have been decreasing. The new King of Soderfjord has forbidden the most bloody of the clan wars under pains of death. He allows skirmishes and raiding (in fact encouraging it), but draws the line when outright massacre is involved.

Although just as fierce as their brothers of Ostland, the northmen of Soderfjord care little for one another unless they are direct kinsmen. During a battle against a common enemy, they will not watch out for each other, a fact that caused many deaths in the recent war against the Hardanger Kobolds.

Although I have mentioned that the Northmen do not fear anything, this is actually untrue. There is one thing they fear in this world: wizardly magic. To them, it is powers granted by Hel herself, and mages are reviled as stealers of souls and fiends incarnate. If in battle with northmen, by casting a simple magic spell, you might manage to cause all your enemies to flee, or, should your luck turn bad, cause them all to try twice as hard to slay the foolish mage.

### ***Recent Events***

In the year AC 1012, war leader Ragnar the Stout managed to convince his fellow jarls to name him King of Soderfjord. With this, he promised to rid the Hardanger Mountains of all kobolds and embarked upon a holy war. Unfortunately, the battle was not easily won, and Ragnar lost a lot of prestige during the two years of fighting. Still, at the very end,



the goblinoids were eliminated, but many of the jarls believe this was only accomplished with the help of Vestland, and not because of their king.

This year he participated in the civil war of Ostland, hoping to obtain plunder for his warriors. When the war ended peacefully and Ragnar returned home with very little gold, his reputation dropped more.

Now, rumors in the taverns talk about various Jarls plotting to overthrow the King in the near future.

### ***Don't Miss***

There is a sight that marvels my eyes and makes me believe all the stories about the greatness of the Immortals. About 10 miles (15 kilometers) south of the mouth of the Angesan River, the coastal cliffs reach a height of nearly 150 meters (500 feet). This in itself is a breathtaking view, yet it is not the wonder I speak of. Carved directly into the cliff face are several large runes of unknown origin. These runes are nothing like those taught to worthy warriors and godar [northmen priests in plural form, singular: godi. Ed.] by Odin. Many believe that they are the ultimate runes, and when deciphered, it will allow the reader to attain Immortality at the side of Odin and Thor [course, those wanting to know what they really are should read p.22 of GAZ 7]. It is through such wonders that my faith in the Immortals is strengthened.

## ***THYATIS (Nation of)***

**Location:** South of Ylaruam, East of Karameikos and Minrothad.

**Area:** 42,300 sq. mi. (95,175 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 2,700,000 of various races.

**Languages:** Thyatian Common (Thyatian, Heldann, Kerendan, and Tel Akbirian dialects). Many other languages are spoken within the Empire, especially in Thyatis City.

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

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

Expensive and magical items are also taxed 25% of their worth. 5% sales tax on all but food and clothing.

**Government Type:** Monarchy influenced by elected Senate.

**Industries:** Agriculture, mining, warfare.

**Important Figures:** Eusebius Torion (Emperor, human, male, F15), Coltius Torion (Prince, human, male, normal human), Demetrian Karagenteropolus (Imperial Magist, human, male, M20).

**Flora and Fauna:** Bears, boars, centaurs, lycanthropes, mountain lions, dryads, and goblinoids can be found throughout the empire. Pegasus and griffons are common near Retebius, while absolutely anything can be found near the magical estates of Scarlas.

**Further Reading:** Dawn of the Emperor box set, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## **Description: by Favonius Viator**

The glorious and magnificent Empire of Thyatis cannot possibly be described in all its grandeur with just a small entry in the Mystaran Almanac. Still, I will do my best to give the wondrous nation its due credits and describe the most important aspects of its people.

This entry describes the NATION of Thyatis, which is the heart of the EMPIRE of Thyatis. Thyatis is a nation like Karameikos or any other, its size almost identical. What allows us to call our nation an Empire is the fact that we control several other nations elsewhere in the world. These nations are called Provinces, and at the moment there are two: the Provinces of the Isle of Dawn, and the Thyatian Hinterland Provinces. Ochalea and the Pearl Islands were also provinces, but they have recently claimed their independence.

## ***The Land***

The nation of Thyatis is mainly composed of farmlands, with hills and mountains to the north. Still, much variety exists, and only a brief description will be given. The nation of Thyatis is composed of eighteen dominions, from baronies to Grand Duchies. The most important of these are:

Hattias is a county known for its racial intolerance. The Storm Soldiers make their home here, and they preach about racial purity and how women should stay at home to raise families and not try to learn to fight or obtain power. Hattias has rebelled several times against the Imperial family, and the city is now forbidden to build defensive walls.

Kantrium, a fertile duchy which is the home to farmers and fishermen. Kantrium is a historical site since it was the first dominion formed within Thyatis.

The Duchy of Kerendas 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 horse-crazy.

Machetos is a rich farmland which is now the main source of food for the Empire. It has only recently regained its agricultural state after being severely ruined 30 years ago by the Emperor. This duchy was once the Duchy of Karameikos, but the duke gave it up to the Empire for clear rulership of the Grand Duchy of Traladara (now the Kingdom of Karameikos).

Mositius is an island duchy that is the center of tourism for the Empire. There is an active volcano which releases strange mists unto the island, influencing the behaviors of the inhabitants.

Retebius was the duchy named after the famous Retebius Air Fleet, a flying-mount cavalry renown throughout the world. The Retebius Air Fleet suffered tremendous casualties during the Wrath of the Immortals war, and has yet to recover from the losses.

Tel Akbir is a grassy duchy inhabited by Thyatians of Ylari descent. The Legion is keeping a close eye out for Ylari spies in the area.

Terentias is an island that is hotly contested between Thyatis and Minrothad. The elven inhabitants don't seem to care one way or another, and focus their lives on pirating and sailing. So far, Terentias has remained mostly a Grand Duchy of Thyatis for the past 200 years.

Finally, the Duchy of Thyatis is the heart of the nation and Empire. It is the home of Thyatis City, the wealthiest, grandest, and most powerful city of Mystara. From here, Emperor Eusebius Torion decides on the fate of the Empire and the world around us. People of all races and cultures can be found in Thyatis City, as it boasts trade from around the world.

Other dominions include the County of Actius (shipbuilding), Barony of Biazan (algebra university), Protectorate of Borydos(prison), Barony of Buhrohur (dwarves), Protectorate of Carythion (wealthy estates), County of Halathius (gold mines), County of Lucinius (port), Protectorate of Scarlas (wizards), and the County of Vyalia (elves).

## ***The People***

Thyatians are a proud people, and by their accomplishments, they should be. Pure Thyatians have pale complexions and dark hair, although since any conquered race becomes a part of the Empire, absolutely any characteristic can be found among the people.

Thyatians are efficient and pragmatic. Others view this as treacherous, but we simply do what we need to do to get by. Of course we shall make deals that better our nation. To do otherwise would be foolish and inefficient.

If there is any common love for Thyatians, it would be fighting prowess. Coliseums can be found in almost every Thyatian city, and gladiatorial combats draw in crowds like never seen in other nations.

## ***Recent History***

By now, almost everyone has heard of the war between Thyatis and Alpathia from AC 1005 to AC 1009. This war, often called the Wrath of the Immortals because the Immortals destroyed Alpathia for daring to attack us in the first place, caused much death and destruction in the Empire.

Emperor Thincol also became gravely ill at the end of the war, and rebellions occurred almost everywhere when food became scarce. In AC 1010, the Emperor tried to conquer the remaining Alpathian kingdoms at the expense of not feeding his people. These plans shattered when more revolts occurred and when Thothia soundly defeated the Legions on the Isle of Dawn. These battles ended in AC 1012 when Thincol died and was replaced by his son Eusebius.

Eusebius returned the food to his people, and Thothia sign the Isle of Dawn Treaty with the Empire insuring peace on the Isle of Dawn. This treaty cost the Empire the Grand Duchy of Westrouрке and a few Alatian Islands, but the Empire has now recovered almost fully.

Eusebius is now looking at Davania and plans on expanding the Empire into the unclaimed Jungles of the southern hemisphere.

### ***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 nobles throw extravagant parties [some would say decadent. Ed.] in their estates throughout the city.

Of particular note, I would recommend a trip to Argevin Town in Mositiuѕ. 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 the Mount Mositiuѕ; a volcano which emits magical mists that fall down upon the population of the island. This mist radically alters the behavior of those who inhale it, causing blind optimism, love, drunken giddiness, laziness, giggling hilarity, or almost any other emotion imaginable. Duchess Triella Tien-Tang somehow controls this mist and makes sure only harmless emotions are inspired by its magic.

## ***VESTLAND (Kingdom of)***

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

**Area:** 21,060 sq. mi. (47,385 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 155,000 humans, 6,000 dwarves.

**Languages:** Heldannic.

**Coinage:** Schilder (5 gp), guldán (gp), hellar (ep), floren (sp) and 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.

**Industries:** Logging, furs, fishing, and trade.

**Important Figures:** Harald Gudmundson (King, human, male, F13).

**Flora and Fauna:** Bears, deer, elk, boars, and wolves can be found throughout the dark, eerie forests of Vestland. Various herd animals, such as sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and bisonѕ can be found in the plains of the nation.

Goblinoids used to be abundant in Makkres Mountains, but they have been routed and chased deeper into Rockhome.

**Further Reading:** GAZ7 - The Northern Reaches, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

### **Description: by Misha Mananov**

Not all the Northern Reaches nations are loyal to the ancient traditions of their people. Vestland is a kingdom which is trying hard to become like the nations of Darokin and Thyatis. To attain their goal, the Vestlanders are ready to abandon everything that once described themselves in both heart and soul.

## ***The Land***

The southwest region of Vestland is composed of rugged foothills of the Makkres Mountains. It is a beautiful countryside where I enjoyed spending my days hiking around and admiring the beauty granted to this land by the Immortals.

The rivers of Vestland, known as fjords, are located within deep valleys with very steep sides. The lowlands around these fjords are very fertile and are the site for the numerous farms of the nation. Unfortunately, there is not enough such farmland to feed the entire nation. Once up the valley slopes, a rocky plateau unsuitable for agriculture dominates.

## ***The People***

Vestland is a land torn between tradition and improvement. The northmen of Vestland do not wish to give up their old ways, but they also wish to become modern and civilized like the other nations of the Old World. So far, they are advancing slowly along the road of modernization.

They have schools that teach the former warriors how to read and write, and Norrvik even boasts having the only magic college of the entire Northlands [they study the magical runes taught to them by Odin and his priests. Ed.]. This means that they are slightly less fearful of magic than the other northmen.

Of the old traditions, only the worship of the Northman Pantheon remains; all other customs, notably piracy, have slowly disappeared. Unlike Soderfjord and Ostland, Odin and Thor are not the favored Gods [once more, a reminder that God is simply their term for Immortal. Ed.] of the people. Instead, they revere Frey and Freyja first and foremost, with Odin and Thor only worshiped by the nobles. The church of Forsetta, a key Immortal in Vestland religion, is also popular as their priests have played a vital role in the selection of the High Kings of Vestland since the days of Ottar the Just.

The Vestlanders try to be polite and scholarly, although they are not always successful. It is not surprising to see a man break into a rage and start pummeling the person he was arguing, then stop just as suddenly and ask for forgiveness when his rage is better under control.

## ***Recent History***

Vestland allied itself with Soderfjord last year to deal with the problem of Thar and his goblinoids in the Makkres Mountains. The armies of the two nations were successful in routing the goblinoids, but much damage was done to Vestland before it was all over. The towns of Landersfjord and Rhoona were practically completely destroyed, and Duke Stephan Rhoona, one of King Gudmundson's oldest and staunchest allies, was slain in the latter attack.

Now Vestland enjoys much more relaxed borders since the kobolds and trolls have disappeared. Thus did the 45 winters long Troll Border Wars end. This has opened up the way for settlements in the long uninhabited Trollheim Hills.

This year, to further prove itself removed from its ancient barbaric ways, Vestland has petitioned to become a member of the Western Defense League. So far, the WDL has not decided on whether to accept Vestland or not.

## ***Don't Miss***

Norrvik; a real, honest-to-Halav city found within the Northlands. Unlike Soderfjord and Zeaburg, Norrvik has schools, taverns, a market square, and even inns for foreigners to have a place to stay. For anyone who has spent a long time in the Northern Reaches, it is a comforting reminder of home to walk into a semi-civilized town. Unfortunately, it also has some of the drawbacks of civilization; upon attempting to pay for my room at the Inn of the Twelve Princes, I discovered that someone had pilfered my money-pouch. Despite this, it felt good to be back in a place resembling home.

## ***WENDAR (Elven Kingdom of)***

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

**Area:** 78,170 sq. mi. (175,883 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 400,000, roughly 40% human and 60% elves (including 25,000 Alfheim refugees) [For AD&D, make this 35% human, 50% elves and 5% half-elves].

**Languages:** Elvish (Genalleth and Alfheim dialects), Heldannic, Thyatian Common (Hattian dialect).

**Coinage:** Di (gp), on (sp), and teci (cp).

**Taxes:** 20% income tax, collected yearly.

**Government Type:** Monarchy.

**Industries:** Logging, agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use).

**Important Figures:** Gylharen (King, elf, male, F11/M11), Bensarian of Kavar (human, male, M9), Doriath (exiled Alfheim King, elf, male, F12/M15), Brendan Erendyl (exiled Alfheim clanmaster, elf, female, F7/M8), Durifern Widefarer (exiled Alfheim clanmaster, elf, male, R15), Beasthunter (exiled Alfheim clanmaster, elf, male, F12/M13), Starwatcher (elf, male, F10/M20).

**Flora and Fauna:** The region boasts tall ancient sequoias and pines, along with other evergreen trees that make the logging industry the most profitable one. Throughout the whole region the terrain is rocky and difficult to cultivate, so that only the most resistant and healthy plants and crops can grow here.

The animals commonly encountered in Wendar are moose, elks, bears, wolves (in forests), horses, boars, snakes (in open fields and hills) and even mountain lions. Monstrous species are also abundant, 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, faeries, fairy folk, gremlins, treants and wooddrakes are sometimes encountered in the forests.

**Further Reading:** X11 - Saga of the Shadow Lord, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Christopher Dove

Wendar, a land of mysteries to discover and of monsters to slay. So similar to a borderland, yet so overflowed with ancient traditions and customs that are all but barbaric. It is a nation of proud men and stout elves, of sages and fearless rangers, of monster hunters and heroes. It is a country not so different from the so-called "civilized ones" (like my dearest Darokin). 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.

I had always wanted to visit this remote corner of our Old World, but up to now I lacked both the time and the reason to do it. I must thank you, my dear Ursula, for having given back to me that spirit of adventure and that curiosity that fed this old heart of mine in my glory days. I feel my youth is slowly returning me, and it is this job as correspondent for the Mystaran Almanac the cause of the miracle. I will do my best to provide you all, dear readers and editors, with the most accurate information about the places that I've planned to visit this year, and as you've already guessed, my first step back into the path of the explorer has led me to the ancient nation to the north of Glantri, the Elven Kingdom of Wendar.

## The Land

Nestled among two plateaus and two mountain ranges, Wendar (or Genalleth, as the elven race calls it) is a secluded and ancient land that still holds many secrets and marvels even to its inhabitants. Thick evergreen forests blanket more than a half of this region, their beauty and stateliness mirroring the Canolbarth Forest in its glory days. There are four major "reserves" (this is the best translation of the way the elves call them) in Wendar, all closely guarded and tended by Genalleth elves.

The first and most important one, Korrigan Forest, lies in the western part of the nation, touching Wendar City and Sylvaire, the two most thriving Wendarian cities. It is renowned for the beauty of its sequoias and for the many shrines sacred to the Korrigans, the Nine Elven Protectors that watch upon Genalleth. The legend says that they drew their name from the mythical (and believed extinct) korrigan, a woodland animal that once lived here.

The Forest of Bounty (now 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 the Alfheim refugees. Mighty and sturdy oaks grow here, protected by a small group of treants that the elves call "The Elders." Woodgate and Oakwall, two other towns, lie at the easternmost border of this forest, and use its wood to boast their logging industry.

Right at 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 sylvan friends, the centaurs and actaeons, and

those who dare trespass against Nature in this place are bound to be abducted by actaeons and to serve the fairies for the rest of their life. Tales of missing wanderers abound in this region.

The last important reserve lies at the northwestern border and 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. Elven sages blame this to a mysterious being (or race, this is not clearly 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, imprisoning the evil Baamor inside one of the blight trees of this forest. Therefore, in order to avoid freeing him, it is strictly prohibited to cut down any tree in this region. In fact, few people venture there, for it is said that Baamor tries to possess anyone who walks into his forest and use him to achieve freedom.

The rest of the region consists of rocky hills to the east and to the south, where the few herders raise their cattle (horses and sheep mostly). In the central plains and moors the humans raise their crops. The valleys and plains are usually safe and free of monsters, but the more 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 snow-capped 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.

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 Kavar Pass to the southwest, from which the Royal Way leads to the capital winding through the Korrigan Forest. There is a third pass leading northwards through the Mengul Mountains and up to Denagoth, but it has not been used since the last war with Essuria, about 80 years ago. Gylharen Keep has been built near the border with Denagoth under the supervision of King Gylharen, and the standing garrison has the sole purpose of stopping (or slowing) any possible invasion attempt from that land. However, since Denagoth has not given any significant trouble in the last decades, the soldiers stationed here have taken on the duty to harass and annihilate any humanoid band trying to cross the border and cause mayhem in Wendar; so far, they've been successful.

## ***The People***

The Wendarians are no weak folk whatsoever. The climate, the wild land and the wilder monsters living here have toughened them, so that even the elves seem somewhat fiercer and braver than their Alfheim cousins. The humans (all descended from the old Antalian stock) are used to the cold and humid weather so common in this land (it snows and rains seven months a year). The elves, who've been dwelling here for a longer time, are no less tough than their human countrymen. But even though the Wendarians could seem at first a united and peaceful folk, there are many differences and problems that still divide this people.

Just an example: the name of the country is different for each race. The elves call it Genalleth (after a mighty figure of their obscure past), and the humans Wendar, in honor of the first man who created the Wendarian League at the beginning of the millennium. Even the label "Elven" near the word "Kingdom" in the entry for Wendar in every Thyatian almanac would be considered questionable by the majority of the humans living here; but there's more. Every major town has its name translated into both Heldannic and Elvish (the ones written on the map given in the Almanac for 1010 are the human names, obviously), and the proclamations and laws must equally be issued and written in these two languages. Every town with a mixed population has two burgomasters, one for each race, and they both must cooperate and agree to issue anything, from a simple announcement to a legal document. The Wendarian militia is composed 50% of elves and 50% of humans, and each division is either made up of humans or of elves only [AD&D: half-elves can be accepted into either unit].

It seems that in the ancient days the things didn't go this way, but in the last decades many small frictions have occurred and the Wizard King deemed it right to reshape the political and military system this way to avoid bigger problems. Personally, I don't believe he made the right decision, judging from what's happening at the moment, but he's renowned for his wisdom, so I hope he will soon notice that there are far more causes of discontent than he thinks between humans and elves (especially Alfheimers) and that he will pass the right laws to cool down the hotheads.

And talking about the Alfheimers refugees, they're not much happy these days. The first and foremost concern they have is of course the fate of their beloved Canolbarth Forest, and from my observations in Wendar I've noticed they've not yet given up the hope to once again walk under the sturdy trees of Alfheim. Now, eight years after what they call "The Expulsion" from Alfheim, the clanmasters are more ready than ever to reclaim their homeland, and they seem sure that their comeback is near at hand. Perhaps they are aware of something that I fail to see.

Regardless, as long as they remain in Wendar, they have to face another issue: the open feeling of hostility and sometimes xenophobia the humans show towards them. Events during AC 1014 (detailed in my attachment) have

caused an uproar of the human population of Wendar against the Alfheimers, and the elves have not reacted very wisely. The so called “Alfheim Avengers” have indeed undertaken retaliation acts against some minor provocations by the humans, and now the situation is escalating in a very unpredictable way. I fear that if King Gylharen is not able to contain these acts of violence, we will soon have another nation in turmoil as has happened in the Heldannic Territories, Rockhome, Ylaruam and Ethengar. I wonder if some kind of mental disease has not spread amongst the people of the Old World to cause so much unrest in this brief lapse of time.

## ***Recent History***

The past two years have been troubled for the Wendarians. First, a plague originated by the magical healing fruits found in the Forest of the Bounty (the Alfheimers’ territory) has killed over 40,000 humans during AC 1014, and only the intervention of King Gylharen with the use of the Elvenstar has avoided the disease to claim more souls. However, this fact has caused the humans to loathe and mistrust the Alfheimers, who’ve been held responsible for not testing or even creating the malign fruits on purpose (they only killed humans, merely draining elves of their strengths for a while). The situation has thus degenerated in a matter of months despite the King’s attempts at lowering the tension, and this has caused a few minor skirmishes of Alfheim Avengers against human neighbors, with casualties on both sides. King Gylharen has been forced to issue a decree confining the Alfheimers in the southern part of their forest and has repeatedly suggested their clanleaders either to stop the Alfheim Avengers’ activity or to relocate in another country.

With that particular situation becoming rather dangerous in Wendar, some of the Alfheim clans have decided to find another land to live in. They have sent explorers up in Denagoth, where according to historical evidences another clan of elves should have lived. Unfortunately, the returning explorers have reported of the extermination of the elven clan by the minions of the Shadowlord, a mysterious being that is said to live in a fortress called Drax Tallen, where the remaining Geffronell elves are held prisoners along with some members of the exploring party. The clanmasters of Grunalf and Long Runner clans have thus decided to go on a Crusade to reclaim the lost Forest of Geffron and avenge (and possibly rescue) their brethren. The Elven Army made up of many representatives of these two clans is now marching towards Denagoth to battle against the Shadow Army. I’ve joined them as chronicler and expert of lost civilizations to discover what lies beyond the dreaded Mengul Mountains. If I am lucky enough, you will be reading my latest reports from the front line in this same almanac.

## ***Don’t Miss***

All the aforementioned reserves are worth a visit, with the obvious exception of the Dark Woods of Baamor. In particular, the Enchanted Forest is the place to go if you want to relax and to receive “inspiration.” But beware: only those who don’t trespass against the Laws of Nature will be allowed to see the realm of the fairy folk and of their friends. 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 land. To many Alfheimers, this place seems the perfect copy of what they called Dreamlands in their beloved Alfheim, and many often visit it two or three times a year to forget their fears and to attain the peace of mind and soul.

And talking about legends and mysterious places, I’ve heard of a shrine called Shadowmere that lies somewhere south of Wendar, near the mountains. According to the elven sages, this wood is an ancient sanctuary sacred to the very god of all the dragons! Could you have ever imagined: dragons worship Immortals just as humans and elves do! However, nobody has ever found it and the rumors want it to be constantly guarded by the spirits of dead dragons and by a clan of elves who has sworn fealty to this Great Old Dragon instead of the normal elven Immortals! I’ve always thought the elves have no rival to spin tall tales besides halflings, of course.

Also, in the western part of Wendar, near the small hamlet of Kavar, lives a wise old sage known as Bensarian and very much respected by both elves and humans. I had the pleasure to have a nice and scholarly talk with him, and I have to say that all the rumors about his great knowledge and quickness of mind are well earned. He looks like an old wizened man in his eighties, but there are slight physical traits that reveal a bit of elven blood in his veins [although not enough to be considered a full half-elf, if playing AD&D, that is. Ed]. 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 Kavar is a trustworthy and friendly sage, and I advise any of the reader who have problems and travel through Wendar to pay him a visit: I’m sure he will result much more helpful than what you might think.

The last (but not the least) important feature of Wendar is the Korrigan Forest, the biggest forested area of the country. It is dotted with shrines dedicated to the Nine Elves, the Korrigans, the Immortals who according to the legends saved not only the Genalleth Valley, but all of Denagoth and Norwold from the Great Rain of Fire. This forest resembles Canolbarth in its glory days (according to the Alfheimers refugees), and its inhabitants are friendly and

helpful towards all the good-hearted travelers that stop in their small communities (strictly built atop the tall sequoias and pines).

In particular, there is a wonderful holy festival that is performed once a year in this part of the country. All the worshipers of the Korrigans must attend at least once every fifty years: Ad...n Dainy...s (the Land Reborn). This celebration usually takes place around the first two weeks of Fyrmont, when the temperatures and the climatic conditions are at their best in these lands. The sacred festival begins at noon of the first day of the week and ends at dusk of the 9<sup>th</sup> day, going on unbroken for the entire 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 grey, 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 in nine zones of a different color, 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 fiends had a place to call home on this planet, it would surely be the Dark Woods of Baamor. This forest (I’ve only seen it from a hill far enough to be considered safe by the elves) is literally “pulsing” with negative energy. I’ve looked at it especially at night, and what has most impressed me is the faint greenish haze that envelops all the trees like a fouled cape. It’s not just the bright green of the evergreen forest so common in this land, but it’s a more sick and disgusting color - like that of the mold on rotting cheese. I am not an emotional nor superstitious person, but I can assure you, dear reader, that even looking at these woods from over a mile’s distance made me shiver. I can understand the reluctance of the elven guides who accompanied me to venture even closer, and frankly, even if they hadn’t insisted on this matter, I don’t think I would have ever asked to go nearer. That 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 dragonlike 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. That’s why I joined the Elven Crusaders to go exploring that blight and perilous plateau.

## ***YLARUAM (Emirates of)***

**Location:** North of Thyatis, West of Rockhome and Darokin, South of Soderfjord.

**Area:** 54,180 sq. mi. (121,905 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Population:** 230,000 (believed to have dropped to 210,000 by the end of their civil war, but is as yet unconfirmed).

**Languages:** Ylari (also known as Alasyan).

**Coinage:** Dinar (gp), dirham (sp), and 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). Foreigners used to pay double the monthly head tax.

**Government Type:** Monarchy.

**Industries:** Textiles, horse breeding, mining, marble quarrying, glassmaking, and the cultivation of dates.

**Important Figures:** Hassam “the True” Al-Kalim (Sultan, human, male, F9)

**Flora and Fauna:** Horse, camels and cattle are by far the most common animals found, followed by sheep and goats. In the wilderness of the desert, djinn, chimeras, dragons, undead, giant lizards, sphinxes, and manscorpions are all rumored to be present. Fiends [AD&D: tanar’ri] are also in abundance at the moment.



**Further Reading:** GAZ2 - The Emirates of Ylaruam, AC1010 - Poor Wizard's Almanac to AC1012 - Poor Wizard's Almanac 3, and Joshuan's Almanac.

## Description: by Favonius Viator

The religious fanatics known as the Ylari have closed all borders to those they consider unbelievers and infidels. This means anyone who is now a Ylari. Despite this, I believe I can give a semi-accurate, although brief description of their land and can probably guess as to the current philosophies that are being upheld in their society.

### ***The Land***

The emirates are a harsh and inhospitable land, mostly sandy deserts and rocky barrens. The Ylari manage to make a living in the few fertile lands near the various oasis that can be found within their border.

Prior to their civil war, Ylaruam was composed of six emirates, namely Abbashan, Alasiya, Dythestia, Makistan, Nicostenia, and Nithia. Whether any of these dominions are still around is unknown to outsiders. Perhaps the new Sultan, Hassam "the True" Al-Kalim, has kept them, or perhaps he has removed all former Emirs and replaced them with new ones more loyal to his claim of the throne.

There are two major oasis found in the desert. The first is where the city of Ylaruam has been built. Prior to the war, Ylaruam was the capital of the nation, although rumors claim that Hassam has moved his court to Abbashan. Abbashan is of course the site of the second major oasis.

### ***The People***

Ylari are a strange people who preach peace and politeness to others, yet can't accept foreigners or their customs among them. Also, many are warriors who constantly raid other tribes, an act they find admirable despite their constant attempts to unite themselves. Their uncooperative behaviors marks them for the barbarians they truly are.

All are devout followers of the True Way, the philosophies given to them by their Immortal, Al-Kalim. Any who do not worship Al-Kalim are considered infidels, a crime now punishable by death within their borders. Even worse than being an infidel is being a mage, at least according to the Ylari.

Although warriors are the heroes of the land, scholars are also well respected (just more proof to their cultural contradictions). Storytellers are also popular among them, and many a foreign bard has made a fortune traveling the Emirates - before being cast out, that is.

### ***Recent History***

In AC 1014 the World Games were held in the city of Ylaruam, who was at the time a member of the Western Defense League. That is when most Ylari had their first encounter with outsiders, and they did not like what they saw. What exactly offended them is beyond me, but it was enough to spark a civil war which overthrew Sultan Mohammed Al-Kalim. The civil war lasted most of the year, with the Kin faction finally claiming victory and executing the former Sultan. Since then, all non-Ylari have been evicted from their nation and to be seen within their borders is punishable by death.

This year, vague rumors still filter back to Thyatis. The Sultan has apparently moved his court to the city of Abbashan and replaced a few of the Emirs. Stories also claim that fiends are running rampant in the desert, destroying entire tribes of Ylari. The Legion believes that these fiends spilled over from the events in the Hardanger Mountains last year, but some claim there are too many to be the leftovers of the kobold summoning back in Soderfjord. Regardless of their source, the fiends have kept the Ylari forces from attacking Thyatis, and that is probably the best thing to happen to those fanatical religious barbarians in years.

### ***Don't Miss***

I really can't think of much to see or do within Ylaruam. Even if there was, there is not much of a chance of actually visiting the place. Ylaruam is a place that all non-Ylari should avoid as long as the Kin faction is in charge.