

ATLAS OF THE KNOWN WORLD

Once again, dear readers, you arrive at the section of the Almanac that details the geography, countries, and famous places of the Known World. This year, we have concentrated on the Isle of Dawn and Norwold, leaving the mainland behind. Expect the Bellissarian nations in our next volume.

It has come to our attention, however, that this area is no longer as valid as it once was. I do not mean that it is no longer accurate or valueless. Instead, I believe that it is badly organized. After all, just look at the chapter's title once more: Atlas of the Known World. Just what exactly is the Known World?

Our knowledge of Mystara has increased tremendously over that past several years. We are now in relatively good contact with the nations of the Savage Coast and tavern stories have made sure that almost everyone is aware that there is a Hollow World beneath their feet.

It is my belief that the first editor of this Almanac, because of his egocentric (although they would rather call it patriotic) Thyatian upbringing, decided that wherever Thyatis could reach is the World and the rest does not exist; hence we have the Known World.

Also, the area called the Known World is simply getting too big to be handled in one section. More than likely, in the next almanac, this chapter will be divided into two separate chapters; one dealing with the coast of the Sea of Dread (Five Shires, Glantri, Karamaikos, Thyatis, ...), and the other with the nations of the Alphatian Sea (Norwold, Isle of Dawn, Bellissaria, Esterhold Peninsula, ...).

The editors of this Almanac would therefore like to propose a name change to the area, and we invite you, the reader, to give us your opinions. Send us a letter suggesting the names you would like to give to these areas, as well as the reason you think those names are the best. Perhaps next year, you'll find your names in the Almanac!

With all that said and done, let us continue with the Atlas to the Known World.

B.F.

ALPHA (Kingdom of)

Location: Known World, continent of Brun, northeastern reaches, area of Norwold.

Area: 9,478 sq. mi.

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

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

Coinage: Alphatian Standard: Crown (gp), mirror (sp), judge (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 20% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent monarchy part of the New Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use), fishing, logging, mining, and trapping.

Important Figures: King Ericall (Human, male, F20)

Flora and Fauna: Alpha features the plants and animals one expects of the northern wilderness. The Peninsula claimed by Alpha is devoid of monsters thanks to the Regent Pass, but cold-climate creatures (such as snow apes, white dragons, frost giants, frost salamanders, and sasquatches) fill the rest of Norwold, as well as several scattered goblinoid tribes.

Description: by Alasdhair MacCallum

After the long trek through the Icereach Range, I was glad to finally make it back to civilization here in the city of Alpha. [Ed. Note: Alasdhair writes his articles to us in chronological order, yet in the Almanac, we placed them in alphabetical order. For details on why he was in the Icereach Range, read his article on the Arch of Fire.] Having decided to take a

boat back home instead of walking, well, for the majority of the trip anyway, the ports of Alpha became the logical choice as my next stop.

Alpha is blocked off from the inland by a large, rugged stretch of mountains that cut off the entire peninsula at the neck. There is only one way through these mountains; a small, twisting path known as Regent Pass. This narrow gap is guarded by a fortress garrisoned with an entire unit of the King's Guard.

The Land

From atop the hills of Regent Pass, the splendid deep-water port of the city is easily visible, with ships from around the world docked in its large harbor. Numerous fishing boats can also be seen scattered throughout the Great Bay. The city itself appears to be one huge castle or fortress, with several layers of high walls surrounding the city like various layers of an onion.

Atop a large hill in the center of the fortified area lies one of the largest palaces I have ever seen. There must be at least a dozen huge buildings all interconnected to each other with arches and bridges and walls. Dozens of chimneys dot the rooftops of the palace, more than likely keeping the place comfortably warm during the cold winter nights here up north. Various small parks and woodlands can be seen within the palace grounds as well, suggesting that great care is taken to maintain its beauty and appearance. Still, despite the architectural decorations, the thick walls and several dozen towers clearly indicate that the main purpose of the palace is indeed defense.

The old section of the city has its own, central wall dotted with towers, ballistae, and catapults. This wall used to be the other wall of the long abandoned Thyatian fortress that once occupied this very area. A more recent wall, thicker and higher than the others, surrounds the rest of the city. All these overlapping walls and towers make the defenses of the city a very formidable obstacle to any enemy. It must help the Alphans sleep well at night, knowing that they are well defended despite the Heldannic Knights being only several hundred miles away. The other sections of the city also have a larger than normal share of parks and trees compared to most modern cities of the Known World.

Besides the palace, two other buildings draw in the attention of any visitor to the area. The first is the Hardball Arena. This large marble structure was commissioned by King Ericall in AC 1007, in the hopes of drawing more people to Alpha. Unfortunately, with the destruction of Almathia, the arena hasn't been as successful as he hoped. Still, there are a few games between minor local teams played here, and it's also used for various other social functions and reunions by the nobility and upper class who don't have access to the palace. On the bright side, it seems that there will indeed be a hardball season in AC 1014, so the local teams are training hard to see who will get to represent Alpha this year. Such "friendly" practice matches are very competitive and worth watching if one gets the chance.

The last structure of note is a temple dedicated to Zirchev. A large temple made out of strong and sturdy oak, this shrine stands just over three stories high. A large brass bell tops the tallest spire, which can be heard throughout the city. What makes the temple so beautiful is its sheer simplicity. There are no fancy decorations, extravagant use of gold or silver, or even tasteless statues used to honor Immortals (Rad forbid anyone would want to anyway!). The only thing indicating that it is a house of Zirchev is a carving of his face just above the main double doors. It seems the Forest Immortal has gained quite a bit of popularity here in Alpha, and there are almost daily ceremonies held to honor him. The high priest even has a choral of trained birds who "sing" the hymns during the prayers. Even I, who detests prayers and such religious nonsense, must admit that the presentation of the ceremony was marvelous. I would say one should disregard his religious beliefs (or lack thereof) for a brief moment and participate to at least one such ceremony, if just to see and listen to the show.

The land between the garrison at Regent Pass and the city of Alpha is almost completely converted into farmland, with just the occasional patch of evergreens here and there. The soil is rich in nutrients, apparently deposited by a glacier long ago, or so I've been told anyway. The farmers don't seem to care where it came from, just that it's there. Various natural lakes and small streams make sure that every farm has an adequate supply of fresh water.

The People

The inhabitants of Alpha are mostly Almathian, although many of Heldannic and Thyatian ancestry are also very visible. The vast majority are happy to have a King Ericall to rule them, adding what they believe is a needed form of government and order to their lives.

Most are simple farmers or fishermen who do not have the typical Almathian disdain of mundanes; those unable to use magic. Being removed from the former Almathian mainland, magic did not become so mainstream in Alpha as to affect their lives very much. Alphans therefore have more or less the same ridiculous fear of the arcane as most peasants from around the Known World, besides Glantri, that is. Besides that, they are polite and welcome strangers eagerly in exchange for courtesy and the occasional stories about your travels. Most believe in minding their own business, do

not interfere with your plans, and are content to simply do their work and not get involved in politics and “important” things.

There are three current major topics going around the taverns of Alpha. The first is the previously mentioned religious ceremony to Zirchev. Many people here are those who helped colonize the area or are their direct descendants. Alphans therefore have a greater respect for nature than most city-dwellers, as the numerous city parks and the wildlands in the area can attest to. I would say that Alpha could almost be called the City of Rangers and Foresters.

Another subject whispered every now and then concerns the encroaching Heldannic Knights to the south. The fall of Oceansend has caused even the most doubtful to believe that Alpha is next target of the Knights of Vanya. Despite the superb defenses of the city, many are making plans on means of escape should the inevitable come to happen.

Finally, on a more joyful note, a certain Christina Marie Alanira is the third most talked about subject. I must admit, I have met this beautiful young lady (how I managed to attend such a high classed reception is another story!), and I cannot blame anyone for talking about her. It seems that this young daughter of a minor noble from Bellissaria has managed to catch the eye of King Ericall. Her own love of the outdoors and zest for life has allowed her to adjust rather well in Alpha, and earned her the respect of many of the nobles here. Needless to say, most rumors have to do with a royal wedding happening in the near future.

If such rumors are true, then I envy those lucky enough to receive invitations. The lands around Alpha is beautiful to behold, and the Grand Ballroom of the palace, where the ceremonies are sure to take place, is rumored to be one of the architectural wonders of the Known World. I’m sure such a night will be one that would be impossible to forget.

ARCH OF FIRE, THE (Geographical feature)

Location: Known World, continent of Brun, northeastern reaches, area of Norwold, Icereach Range.

Area: app. 5,000 sq. mi. (about 2,500 sq. mi. around each volcano).

Population: unknown number of creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Languages: Unknown languages from elemental plane of fire.

Coinage: Unknown, if any at all.

Taxes: Unknown, if any at all.

Government Type: Unknown.

Industries: Unknown.

Important Figures: None known.

Flora and Fauna: small plants and animals common in more southern regions than Norwold.

Description: by Alasdhair MacCallum

Well, for those of you who read Joshuan’s Almanac last year, you might recall that I mentioned I would be visiting the Great Crater and New Kolland to give the world’s first human report on everything that goes on in the humanoid lands. Unfortunately, I’ve been side-tracked from those plans. It seems I have since managed to irritate a mage of some renown within the Great School of Magic and was forced to perform a small task for her, or suffer some “accidental mishaps” she would foreshadow with her divination magic. Still, there is some time left yet during this year, so who knows, the New Kolland Travelogue might still see publication before next spring.

Anyway, this quest of hers brought me up into the frozen reaches of the Icereach Range in far away Norwold. On one of the cold nights, and it does get cold up there, I spotted a huge bright light within the sky. Closer inspection revealed a line of red flames arching through the sky. My curiosity evidently was picked, and so I approached this phenomenon to get a better look. And it is about this Arch of Fire that I write my next article for the Almanac.

The Arch of Fire

The Arch of Fire is situated approximately half-way between the large swamp along the swift White Bear Rive and the large, foreboding Ice reach Mountains. For those who do not know the region of Norwold, that is approximately 300 miles west of the hin city of Leeha.

The Arch itself seems to be some sort of conduit or vortex for the Elemental Plane of Fire. The northern end of the arch starts from a volcano known as Northern Mount Cantrinus, named after the Thyatian explorer who first discovered this special geographical feature. The northern volcano is the outflowing portal, spilling fire for the Plane of Fire here into the Prime Plane. From there, the flames leap up dramatically in the form of a tube roughly 300 feet in diameter. This jet of flames lands 75 miles southward, into the second volcano called Southern Mount Cantrinus (needless to say, Thyatians lack imagination). The other volcano is the inflowing portal, where the stream of lava flows back into the Plane of Fire. The maximum point of the Arch must reach at least 5 or 6 miles in height.

The Arch of Fire is visible from about 50 miles away during the day, and at least 75 miles during the darkness of night. At night, the glow of the flames gives a beautiful orange/red color to the night sky. It is definitely worth a trip into the frozen northland just to see this at least once.

The Land

The land around the volcanoes are wastelands of fire. The area is relatively flat considering how mountainous the rest of the area is.

The whole area is crisscrossed by flowing streams of molten lava, which in turn melt all the snow on the mountain peaks and create rivers and lakes of meltwater. These rivers just as easily lead to rivers or lakes of lava, plunging into the molten rock. This creates rushing gouts of steam which gives the whole area a look similar to fog-shrouded Klantyre back in Glantri. Some of these gouts of steam are from beneath the ground, and steam geysers are relatively common as well.

Vegetation is rather unusual for Norwold. Because of the intense heat in the areas directly around the volcanoes, species that are normally not present in the north are thriving here. Even small mammals that normally avoid the cold and snow can be found scurrying about. This is not to say that a jungle is present here, however. On the contrary, vegetation is scarce and almost non-existent. The heat is just too intense, and the rivers of lava often change course, burning up whatever is in the way. Most areas are also covered in solid rock, obviously old volcanic deposits, and have no soil for anything to grow or live on.

Many small cave mouths dot the rocks that surround both mountains. Although most of these openings lead nowhere, some connect to fissures deep within the earth. The formerly mentioned gouts of steam occasionally scald these caves as well, making them a somewhat hazardous shelter.

The People

Even more surprising is the fact that the area is inhabited. Yet no humans live here; instead, we have two races which are native to the Elemental Plane of Fire.

At Northern Mount Cantrinus, a society of efreet has been formed. Admittedly, I was not sure what species these beings were, but once back in Glantri, I conferred with specialists on the Plane of Fire, and they confirmed that it was indeed the evil efreet. These creatures have created what seems to be a city of basalt and obsidian stones around the mouth of the volcano crater. Because of its relatively small size and the fact that they were continuing in the construction, I would assume that the efreet are new arrivals and have just taken over the area.

The efreet had many slaves working for them, from humans, fire giants, fire elementals, to even the occasional red dragon whose wings had been clipped to prevent flight. By the eagerness behind the slave master's whipping, I could tell that visiting their city would not be a wise decision.

Still, from away, I could see military activity which suggests that they are preparing for a war of some kind. Construction seems to be limited to walls and defensive positions. A quick head count of certain areas allows me to guess at a total population of 4 to 6 thousand efreet.

Further investigating would definitely be worth doing by a larger and better prepared group.

Southern Mount Cantrinus is controlled by fire elementals. Here, my spying was discovered and I was brought to meet their leader. This elemental stands at huge height of 25 feet. Thanks to their magic, I was able to communicate with the leader, and learned that the efreet had indeed conquered the northern volcano from them just a few months ago. The efreet now seem to have plans of taking over the southern volcano as well.

The fire elementals have no love for humans, but do not slay them outright. In fact, it seems that right now they are trying to recruit help from us, as their own reinforcements have been blocked off since the efreet have control of the incoming portal from the Plane of Fire.

Still, when I refused to join their armies, I was immediately asked to leave, and brought to the borders of what they claim as their lands.

I therefore have little to say about the fire elementals, since I could not explore more. Their numbers still remain a mystery. As for their culture, I doubt I would have understood much of it anyway. It is something probably best left to mages and sages who understand more about the Plane of Fire and its inhabitants.

Don't Miss

Well, the Arch itself is one of the wonders of the world, a beautiful sight that is definitely not to be missed if one has the occasion to visit. Unfortunately, everything else there is definitely not worth seeing, especially the inhabitants.

However, each of these creatures are from another plane of existence. This makes them, and their artifacts and magic, rare and unique. This means they are worth quite a bit of gold if brought to the right collectors and sages.

CAERDWICCA (Barony of; Empire of Thyatis)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of the continent of Brun; southwest of the New Alphatian Sea), southern tip.

Area: 17,459 sq. mi.

Population: 2,000, including 500 in the capital Caerdwicca.

Languages: Thyatian (official), Alphatian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: Emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, Ei. 1). Citizens abroad must still pay. 5% sales tax on all but food and clothing.

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

Industries: Trade.

Important Figures: Baron Uthgaard McRhomaag (human, male, F16).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate. Dangerous monsters include goblinoid hordes scattered throughout the Isle of Dawn as well as bandits.

Description: by Elidor Murtagh

Now here be a port worth mentionin' ta anyone who reads this book. Caerdwicca be a town built by a sailor for sailors, and ye can't ask for much better.

First o' all, there be nothing ta do with anything but ships and sailin' and the basic nesecities for a town ta live. Everybody that's somebody here knows something about a ship, proving that they ain't no land-lubbers.

The city be pretty simple to. No big fancy walls or port masters and bunch of 'em regulations that make ye waste your time dockin' yer boat. Fact, it's this lack o' regulations that make Caerdwicca the pirate haven it is today. Baron McRhomaag was once a pirate 'imself, so he knows what it be like.

Not ta say that Caerdwicca is a bunch of lawless thugs and killers. Nay. The Baron follows all 'em Thyatian laws in his town, but he don't be pressin' against the ships that dock at his ports. There's no searches for stolen goods or questions asked as ta were they came from. But once on solid ground, 'em pirates gotta behave just like anyone else. The only business in Caerdwicca therefore be one of tradin'.

The town is filled with taverns an' inns for all 'em sailors that dock here. There be not much else... not even a wall or pallisade ta protect in case of an attack. The streets aren't even paved like most Thyatian city street be. Course, a few folks get wood from the nearby forests to try and start their own business, but so far that be small business here indeed.

McRhomaag Castle be a funny sight ta see. Don't look like no castle that I be use to. It's a simple two story building built atop a dirt hill, with a crude wooden wall around it. Oh yeah, and a ditch he be calling a moat.

Now why does the Emperor allow this obvious pirate haven ta stay? Because Baron McRhomaag controls 'em pirates, that's why. When he be in trouble, he just asks his pirate captains for hand an' they be coming to the rescue. Just look at all 'em pirate raids against the Alphatians during the war. Think that be a coincidence?

'nyways, Caerdwicca be ta place ta rest if ye be looking for a nice town that be friendly to sailors o' any kind.

DUNADALE (Duchy of; Empire of Thyatis)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of the continent of Brun; southwest of the New Alphatian Sea), northeaster corner.

Area: 168,605 sq. mi.

Population: 61,000, including 19,500 in Dunadale, the capital.

Languages: Thyatian (official), Alphatian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: Emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, Ei. 1). Citizens abroad must still pay. 5% sales tax on all but food and clothing.

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

Industries: Agriculture, lumber, fishing.

Important Figures: Duke Edmondo Tiberia (human, male, F11), Tastalgarth Lunn (ex-king, now hermit, human, male, M14).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate. Dangerous monsters include goblinoid hordes scattered throughout the Isle of Dawn as well as bandits.

Description: by Favonius Viator

The province of Dunadale was conquered by the mighty Thyatian legions in AC 1010. The Thyatian claim to the area was confirmed and reinforced with the Isle of Dawn Treaty signed on Klarmont 13, AC 1012, by a fearful Thothian King wishing to pacify our leaders and prevent his kingdom from falling. Thus did Edmondo Tiberia become the Duke of Thyatis' new Duchy of Dunadale.

The Land

The vast majority of the landscape of Dunadale was unexplored by the former Alphatian inhabitants. Most of the land is therefore covered with virgin forests and unknown resources or treasures.

The area along the coast of the New Alphatia Sea is relatively flat and ideal for farming. In fact, most of the rural population is scattered in various villages and homesteads along this coast, with only the occasional hermit more inland that 75 miles.

More inland, large hills start to dominate the landscape, creating a maze-like network of valleys and passes.

To the far north, past the bogs and near the border of the Kingdom of Helskir, lies the Herdane Escarpment. This 500-foot high cliffside is known for the large number of caverns and entrances to the underworld present on its face.

Dunadale is also famous for the vast number of swamps and peat bogs, where numerous types of insects and monsters make their home, preying on travelers. These bogs fill up all the valleys between the hills, creating rivers of swampland

with the occasional island of dry land. In fact, imperial prospectors believe that almost 50% of the land is one huge bog, unsuitable for inhabitation. Despite this, the Emperor continues to send Thyatian colonists in the area to increase the population, securing our hold in the area for eternity.

The People

The inhabitants of Dunadale are an even mix of Alphatians and Thyatians. Before, the Alphatians were more numerous, but with the signing of the Treaty of Dawn [Also called Isle of Dawn Treaty. Ed.], many of the Alphatians left for territories remaining under Alphatian control.

The number of Thyatians is on a steady rise, however. This is mainly due to the Emperor's wise decision to increase the colonization of the Isle of Dawn and other Thyatian dominions. To date, the new inhabitants have been able to fill in the empty places left by the departing Alphatians, so there is no pressure on communities to expand nor is there any shortages of supplies or room.

The former inhabitants, however, are not completely pleased with their new status of Duchy. They ungratefully complain about their lack of influence with the government compared to when Dunadale was a confederacy under Alphatian control. Back when Alphatia was in command, nothing ever happened; Dunadale remained stagnant. Can't they see that now, with proper Thyatian rulership, Dunadale shall grow into a great Duchy? Already the population is climbing and the land is being explored. And they have their say by voting for the Senators for the region. What more could they possibly want?

The only bad part about such a vast and uninhabited territory is the lack of proper control. Many bandits and deserters have fled into the swamps, preying on helpless Thyatians. It is even rumored that the infamous Mario's Marauders are somewhere within the borders of Dunadale. Travelers be warned.

Don't Miss

The main attraction of Dunadale is its raw, natural beauty untouched by man. As mentioned, most of it is virgin forest, so anyone who desires the feeling of exploration and discovery can enjoy his stay in the area.

Another sight is the Herdane Escarpment. When atop the high cliff, one can see the New Alphatian Sea to the East. This, along with a rising sun in the early hours of the morning, makes a golden/orange ocean covering the horizon line. From what I hear (since I have not visited myself), for those with the patience and endurance to hike the several hundred miles overland for this sight, it is well worth it.

Unfortunately, the Herdane Escarpment is not very well known by the locals and, in fact, hardly ever appears on any map. The only map I have seen with the escarpment is the one given with the Dawn of The Emperors novel [boxed set. Ed], detailing the history of the Thyatian Empire (obviously a Thyatian publishing). However, it is not named on this map. Simply take the map of the Isle of Dawn, and the long cliffside to the southeast of Helskir is the Herdane Escarpment.

HELSKIR (Kingdom of)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of the continent of Brun; southwest of the New Alphatian Sea), northern tip.

Area: 28,932 sq. mi.

Population: 40,000, including 15,000 in the capital Helskir.

Languages: Thyatian (official), Alphatian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: Emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 20% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, Ei. 1). 5% customs tax on all but food and clothing.

Government Type: Independent kingdom under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis (it's ties to Thyatis are merely a formality).

Industries: Trade and fishing.

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

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate, including sheep and goats. Dangerous monsters include goblinoid hordes scattered throughout the Isle of Dawn as well as bandits.

Description: by Alasdhair MacCallum

The town of Helskir is a rather odd sight here in the war-torn lands of the Isle of Dawn. It is the first city I see without any city walls. Admittedly, there is a wooden palisade surrounding the town, but compared to the massive stone walls that most other cities have, it makes Helskir look defenseless.

The Land

Compared to most kingdoms, the nation of Helskir is relatively small. The city itself lies on arable land, well suited for farms and livestock. This farmland follows the coast of the Sea of Dawn, covering about a third of the nation's lands.

To the south of the nation lies the huge Demeran's Moor. Fell lizards and monsters of all sorts thrive within the murky waters far away from any civilization. Demeran's Moor is even more dangerous because a low fog often rolls in, hiding the inhabitants, as well as the various sinkholes and natural dangers of any moor. This giant moor takes up another third of the land claimed by Helskir.

The last third is rocky ground which the people of Helskir use to herd sheep and goats. As one moves toward the southwest, the ground becomes more uneven and rises higher and higher until it stops at a huge, unnamed cliffside several miles just past the border. [Ed. Note: Alasdhair seems to be referring to the Herdane Escarpment mentioned in Favonius Viator's description on Dunadale.]

The city itself was but a small fishing village 40 years ago. King Eruul Zaar has since transformed it into one of the most thriving economical trade centers in this part of the Known World.

Helskir is lucky enough to have a deep harbor with the capacity to handle several ships with ease. Although there are areas of shallow water here and there, a large, stone lighthouse guides ships safely through the bay and to the docks.

Currently, only a wooden palisade protects the city, but the foundation for a stone wall has been laid in various places. The work is expected to be completed by the summer of AC 1015. Key buildings within the city, such as the Fishing and Sailing Guildhall, the Palace, and the lighthouse, are built on a steep hill with their own wooden palisade around them.

The People

The people of Helskir have learned to ignore most rulers and simply continue on with their lives. The city has changed from Alpathian hands to Thyatian control to independence so many times that most have stopped bothering to even try to count.

Now it seems that Helskir is once more a part of the Empire of Thyatis, although it remains a semi-autonomous kingdom under the rulership of King Zaar.

With all the political maneuvering that took place during the Thyatian-Alpathian war, most inhabitants expected Helskir to be one of the first cities to fall and be destroyed. Much to their relief, they have actually prospered except for a brief period of raiding the past few years. Now with the full presence of Thyatian Legions, the economy is once more on the rise.

The inhabitants are of Alpathian descent, although they have long ago abandoned all ties to their Alpathian culture.

Don't Miss

Unfortunately, there's not much to see in the land of Helskir.

Myself, being from the inland nation of Glantri, I was rather intrigued with the lighthouse, so I paid it a visit. This stone tower stands what must be 12 to 15 stories in height, with a base of at least 50 feet in diameter. At the top lies a huge, magical fire that can be seen far out at sea, a fact I can testify to from my sailing trip here from Oceansend. Many other places also have lighthouses, but from what I hear, this is one of the biggest ones found anywhere. Of course, despite all that, it is still just a lighthouse.

The only other place to see in Helskir is the market. In itself, the market is nothing spectacular, but when you consider that almost every ship that sails in the waters of the Sea of Dawn or the New Alpathian Sea stops here, it becomes

evident that almost anything can be found in the market. Helskir is a great place to collect coins and currency from various sea-faring nations of the world. I would imagine only Minrothad can claim a bigger market.

IONACE (a.k.a. Isle Of the NACE) (Island and Imperial District)

Location: Known World, New Alphatian Sea.

Area: 128,199 sq. mi. plus many small islands that were once part of Alphatia (including Nuntar Island, the Vertiloch Islands, the Aasla Isles, the Grey Islands, Mount Thera, Eagret Island, Arogansa Island, Eadrin Island).

Population: 3,000, including 1,000 soldiers of the Alphatian 6th-Army.

Languages: Alphatian.

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

Taxes: 15% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Imperial District under the direct control of the Alphatian Council of Kings and Queens of the NACE.

Industries: None; imports all it needs from the rest of the NACE. Small mining of Mnemonic Minerals, still sought out by mages despite the drawbacks.

Important Figures: Commander in Chief Broderick (human, male, F17). The various Kings and Queens of the NACE also visit rather regularly.

Flora and Fauna: Ionace is filled with various monsters of all sorts. Most are not even natural to the area, or even the Prime Plane. The first level of the underground city is secured, but the deeper one goes, the worse the monsters become.

Description: by Elidor Murtagh

So, fer those of ye who wanted ta know what's goin' on in faraway Alphatia, lemme tell ye I've been sailin' the seas 'round there fer the last year. I managed ta find that ol' wizard who provided the previous owner of the almanac with all his information on Alphatia. Ye should get his archive fer the year ta come an' the previous one, an', me thinks, some kinda geographical survey too.

Tho' my plans were ta head ta Bellissaria, Alphatian marines I've met at various ports o' call throughout the Isle o' Dawn told me o' great political changes in the empire. 't was not clear whether 't was an empire or a confederation o' some sort, but they all seemed happy with it. So we set sail fer the New Alphatian Sea, where that new capital o' theirs should stand, on Monster Island, or, as they call it now, I' o' NACE, a weird name if ye ask me.

The Callista dropped anchor in the small, temporary harbor outside the capital. It stands in a natural bay, so that it reminds me o' those harbors typical o' the Northern Reaches, built inside a fjord. Looks like the sinkin' of Alphatia created that weird landscape o' high mountains risin' out o' the waters. Then we took the steep, tortuous road ta Denwarf-Hurgon and Ionace.

Tho' I could spend my life in rigging, I hate such roads that take ye far away from the sea into the mountains. There be no roads leadin' directly ta Ionace yet. The road splits in two : there's a new one leadin' north ta Sanctuary, whereas the remnants of the old road lead south ta Denwarf-Hurgon. So we went ta that dwarf city o' 'em, an ugly, mostly deserted ghost town. There I spent time with the sole denizens o' the city : soldiers o' Aquas. They're kinda like me, used ta live with water all 'round 'em, 'n they ended up garrisoned here in diminutive buildings surrounded by tall mountains.

We spent most of the night in a tavern, drinkin' as only sailors an' marines can do. Tho' part o' the conversation's shrouded in dark mists, I be sure they warned me 'gainst walkin' alone at night in the city or tryin' ta go in the lower levels o' the city. No chance I ever do that anyway, can ye imagine me burrowed in the ground like a dwarf? No way. They also warned me 'gainst travelin' without a strong guard 'round the island. Seems the mountains and the underground be both infested with all sorts o' terrible monsters. In fact, they even nicknamed the whole isle the biggest dungeon in the world, an' they probably be right.

I also took a glance at the city of Ionace proper. Brand-new buildings that host the government. Totally impersonal, if ye ask my opinion, almost as ugly as the dwarf town. [Ed. Note: These are obviously the opinions of the writer as everyone knows a dwarf town is not ugly. DS.] I tried ta enter a building, but the guys seem completely paranoid 'bout spies, an'

they kicked me out. Seein' no business here, we left the city 'n went ta Sanctuary. Now, that's a real city, the way I like 'em. Livin', bustlin', with merchants an' taverns. Not very dif'rent from a port city back in Minrothad, or anywhere else on the continent, altho' it's no harbor. The men o' Aquas patrol the city, protectin' it 'gainst all those monsters, but in fact the city seems to rule itself : trade and minin', not bureaucrats from Ionace. I heard they mine a strange mineral that's said to enhance one's spellcastin' abilities, but I couldn't find an ounce o' it fer sale. We spent a few days in the city, but we didn't venture in the countryside, then went back to ta Callista, ta sail the New Alphatian Sea. We'll probably be takin' a look at that Sundsvall Maelstrom very soon.

OCEANSEND (City-State of; Heldannic Territories)

Location: Known World, continent of Brun, northeastern reaches, area of Norwold.

Area: 9,977 sq. mi.

Population: 45,000, including 4,000 halflings, 3,000 dwarves, and 1,200 elves.

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

Coinage: Heldannic Standard: groschen (5 gp), gelder (gp), erzer (ep), markschen (sp), fenneg (cp). The former coins of Oceansend (heart (gp), blade (sp), and wall (cp)) are now illegal within the city.

Taxes: 20% income tax, 5% sales tax, 10% tithe to Order of Vanya.

Government Type: Currently occupied by the Heldannic Knights.

Industries: Agriculture (grows barely enough for its own use), fishing, mining, and trapping.

Important Figures: Councilor Olaf Yarrvikson (former king, human, male, F10), Governor-General Hermann Adalard (human, male, Pr9 of Vanya).

Flora and Fauna: The animals and plants one would expect in a northern area. There are also several goblinoids in the Final Range to the west.

Description: by Alasdhair MacCallum

The approach to the city of Oceansend, now under Heldannic control, was rather fearful and filled with tension. The captain was not sure how the Heldannic Knights would react to a boat sailing out of Alpha. It seems the captain's fear was well founded; a Heldannic warship came out to meet and escort us into port. The search of the entire galleon, as well as the long questioning of everyone on board was rather unpleasant, so I will not bore you readers with the details. Still, it is enough that I wish none of you should ever suffer such indignities. I must mention, as I find the following important to anyone traveling to Oceansend, that all weapons were confiscated upon entering the city, and that they were only returned on our departure. It seems that the Knights are fearful of a rebellion now that their clerical magic has left them. I could never understand how anyone could use such cheap magic anyway. They should all go to Glantri to learn what real magic is.

The Land

Oceansend is a large, walled city along a deep-water beach into the Alphatian Sea, making it an ideal port. Unlike many other cities, this one lacks grand buildings or great architecture to boast about or make fine touristic attractions. At least the Heldannic Knights have placed many of their black lion banners throughout the main streets, clearly indicating their presence to everyone, and adding somewhat of a sight to see. Their military parades, although somewhat filled with dread, are, I must admit, well performed, and worth seeing, if one can stand the presence of the Knights.

Like many cities here in the wildlands of Norwold, Oceansend is well fortified. Catapults and ballistae top every tower as well as several sections of the city walls. I was shocked to see that some of the large siege weapons atop the walls were pointed into the city as well as out. It seems that the Heldanners fear uprisings from within as well as sieges from without.

The fields around Oceansend are filled with farms and small villages only now starting to recover from the long siege the Heldannic Knights laid upon the city a few years ago. Most of the crops are very healthy this year, as the ash and other

remains of the war have rendered the soil rather rich. The houses and villages were once beautiful and well maintained, but are now rather make-shift and improvised. Most of them had been destroyed by the Knights, and the peasants had been forced to start their lives over from scratch. Needless to say, this did not help the Heldanners acquire the love of the conquered.

Finally, about 4 days journey west of Oceansend lies the huge foothills of the Final Range. I would dare say that “foothill” is not the correct term, as these hills are long ridges of rocks that can be called mountains back in Glantri. This area is important because it is the home of the Rocktooth Dwarves. It seems that the Heldannic Knights have been unable to capture Kildorkak, the stronghold of these pesky little beasts [A reminder that this is the opinion of the writer and not the editors. Ed.]. Their mountain fortress is still a point of resistance against the invaders.

The People

The people of Oceansend live in fear of the ruling Knights, their every word and action closely monitored by the conquerors. The farmers around the city toil endlessly to meet the Knights’ demands in taxes and tribute, and many have been turned into veritable slaves. The Heldanners do not want to give them the chance to rebel, especially now that they no longer seem to have Vanya’s support.

But still, there appears to be an underground movement forming. I have promised not to reveal any names because more than likely several Knights will likely purchase copies of this Almanac once it is printed, therefore I do not want to place my new found friends in any danger.

I met them in a tavern, whispering about their plans of returning King Olaf Yarrvikson to the throne. Upon noticing that I was Glantrian, and hence no ally to the clerical Heldanners, I managed to join their group briefly. It seems that various important citizens of Oceansend have rallied followers to them, making a veritable army inside the city walls. Even more impressive, the dwarves of Kildorkak have somehow managed to smuggle weapons into the city right under the nose of the Knights.

I have no fear of revealing this information because the Knights are already aware that weapons are entering the city, hence the confiscation upon entering the port. Unfortunately for them, they have yet to discover how. The Knights therefore suspect any dwarf within the city walls, and have imprisoned, tortured and killed many. The dwarven population is half of what it used to be before the conquest of the Heldannic Knights.

I myself would have loved to learn their method, but prior duties called, and I soon had to leave the port city of Oceansend.

OCHALEA (Kingdom of)

Location: Known World, Sea of Dawn, southwest of the Isle of Dawn.

Area: 190,054 sq. mi.

Population: 125,000, including the capital city of Beitung (pop. 50,000).

Languages: Alphatian, Thyatian.

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

Taxes: Income tax of 15%, inheritance tax of 10% Government Type: Monarchy.

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

Important Figures: King Teng Lin-Dieu (human, male, Pr20 of Korys).

Flora and Fauna: Ochalea is mostly free of monsters. Dangerous creatures encountered include ghouls, weretigers, tigers, panthers and the rare purple worm. Also common are sheep, goats, and snakes.

Description: by Favonius Viator

In the blue waters of the Sea of Dread lies a large island that is home to the Ochaleans. Once part of the great Thyatian Empire, King Teng Lin-Dieu has managed to successfully rebel and keep his island to himself. The Ochaleans have yet to produce anything useful since that fateful day back in AC 1007, and one wonders why they even wanted to leave all the benefits associated with the Empire. Am I letting my national pride get in the way of an impartial observation? Perhaps, but then, who can ever give a completely unbiased answer to anything. Still, I am now here as a foreign merchant to work out a trade agreement, and it is from this journey that the description of Ochalea will be available to the readers.

The Land

The large island is a rocky crag sticking out of the Sea of Dread. The vast majority of the land is too rocky or hilly to be of any agricultural use.

Once a volcanic island, the remains of volcanoes dot the islands, but these mountains, although still rather big, are too small to be considered true mountains. Hence, most official Thyatian maps will mark the kingdom as filled with hills. Still, one must be in good shape to hike these hills, as they are far from gentle and rolling.

There are exceptions to this, however. First of all, between the hills, the valleys are well protected from the elements and the water runoffs create fertile land. The largest of these valleys houses the Shino-gawa River. This huge river crosses almost the entire nation, starting from the hills around the town of Wongzhao Tsuhao, then moves down to the lake around the town of Chungklang. From this lake, the largest one in Ochalea, the Shino-gawa then pours into the Sea of Dread another 70 or so miles away. Various areas along the shores of this river are forested and very productive for agriculture; productive enough to feed the entire population as well as leave some for export.

Also, two huge grasslands steppes cover a certain amount of the island. One, on the western shore, is also the location of Beitung, the capital. The second grassland, called the Grasslands of Chi, covers the southern shore of Ochalea. The most southern portion of the flat terrain is actually a tropical jungle thanks to the southerly ocean currents that warm the shores.

The People

The Ochaleans are a strange lot indeed. Of course, that should be obvious to anyone since they willfully wanted to separate from the Empire of Thyatis.

Ochaleans are a reserved and religious people who place great importance on manners and proper behavior. The long-standing following of the traditions of the Immortal Korys has also made them very quiet, polite, and peaceful. Normal recreational activities in the rest of the Known World, such as drinking and gambling, are illegal here. They do not like violence and prefer to solve all their problems through negotiation. How they will survive as a nation without the Thyatian military is beyond me.

One of the greatest mysteries of the Ochaleans, however, is their very own traditions. Because of their peaceful ways, Ochaleans believe in the equality of all men. There is no distinction between the respect shown to members of different social classes. But as mentioned above, it is in the equality of MEN that is followed.

By Ochalean tradition, the woman has a lesser role in society, placing her just above that of a convicted slave back in Thyatis. Admittedly, some places in Thyatis are not much better, but at least that is just the behavior of certain citizens and not an actual law, as it is here in Ochalea. Females are therefore required to stay at home and perform family duties and household chores. There are more arranged marriages in Ochalea than in the entire Empire. A woman has very little choice regarding anything.

The one thing I can admire of these people is that their peaceful nature has made them rather scholarly. The large number of priests, whom are held in high regard here, has helped turned this nation into one of the most educated on the Known World, ranking third behind Glantri and Darokin.

Don't Miss

There is not much to see specifically in Ochalea, but lots to see in general.

The entire architecture of the kingdom is exotic compared to the standard Thyatian structure. The wooden buildings are tiered and sloped-roofed, with a small bamboo fence surrounding them. Stepping stones lead around the houses to a little garden with a few trees and perhaps a shrubbery or two. Their gardens are designed to give a feeling of quiet and peace. The most beautiful of these buildings, are of course the temples and shrines dedicated to Korys.

Besides the beauty of the place, Ochalea is, well, rather dull. And that's just how the Ochaleans like it.

Of interest to any readers who might also be scholars, it seems that the historians of Ochalea have found some interesting scrolls to debate over the original inhabitants of the island. Up until now, it was believed that Alphetians without any magical talents colonized the island and developed the clerical worshipping culture now present. Recent evidence seems to indicate that the Empire of Alphetia actually used the island to drop off undesirables, including non-mage Alphetians as well as another group of colonists that the Alphetians found on "their" continent. These two groups lived together peacefully, where the Alphetian coppery skin coloration soon dominated over that of the second culture (whatever appearance they had). It would seem that the architecture of the Ochaleans comes from this other mysterious culture, which is apparently a colony from somewhere on the continent of Skothar. Whether these new-found scrolls are accurate or not remains to be seen, and is sure to be the cause for debate for the next decade.

REDSTONE (County of; Empire of Thyatis)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of the continent of Brun; southwest of the New Alphetian Sea), western-central area.

Area: 57,864 sq. mi.

Population: 50,000, including 25,000 in the capital of Redstone.

Languages: Thyatian (official), Alphetian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: Emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, Ei. 1). Citizens abroad must still pay. 5% sales tax on all but food and clothing.

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

Industries: Armor, weapons, military training.

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

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate. Dangerous monsters include goblinoid hordes scattered throughout the Isle of Dawn as well as bandits.

Description: by Favonius Viator

Redstone was made into an actual dominion at the end of the Alphetian-Thyatian war in AC 1009. Thincol granted the town and the surrounding land to his daughter Stefania, changing Redstone's status from town to County.

The Land

This Thyatian province is a tempestuous-looking land filled with a wide variety of landscapes.

The northwestern part of the county is a huge plateau hugging the coastline. This plateau is covered with grasslands known as the Sutherlands. On it, various cattle herders make their living, trading with the only two real villages of the area: Lar and Vildis. The cliffs of the plateau drop straight down into the Western Sea of Dawn. It is riddled with caves, many of which can only be seen when the tide is low. This naturally makes the area a haven for pirates and other outlaws.

To the northeast lies mainly farmland which produces food for the rest of the County as well as for the city of Newkirk in the Grand Duchy of Westrourke. The largest village in the area is Lodar, at a fork in the Lod River near the Carryduff Hills. The Count and Countess are currently debating whether they should turn Lodar into a barony to help better manage the area.

The central area of Redstone County is mostly uninhabited. To the east are dense forests, namely the Ashton Woods and Lurben Forest. These woods are inhabited by giant wolves which attack all trespassers. Rumors claim that dire

wolves are controlled by evil faeries. The only safe passage in the area is on the patrolled Westrourke Road which goes from Dungannon all the way to the Grand Duchy.

The west side of the central area is almost completely wetland, with the two largest swamps being the Fengallen Marshes and the Kilyleagh Curragh. This area is controlled by bugbears, and Count Anaxibius often leads Legionnaires into the region for training. So far, the bugbears have managed to maintain their hold on the region thanks to their control of special lizard mounts that enable them to cross the swamp quickly and safely.

The southern region of the County of Redstone is dominated by the Neagh Flats and various hills and ridges [Hills of Dooagh, Ballydonegan Hills, and the Bastion Ridge. Ed.]. This area is mostly cleared of dangerous monsters, and many fishing villages as well as farms are scattered all along the coast.

The People

There are two main cultures of people living in Redstone. The first is the military culture. Redstone is the main training headquarters for the great Legions of Thyatis. Almost everyone in the military has performed at least one tour of duty at Redstone Castle. They speak only Thyatian as part of their military discipline. This section of the population is generally young, overconfident and foolhardy. During the nights and off-duty, they become the rowdiest bunch in town.

The local inhabitants, although Thyatian (and some Alphatians), have a culture all of their own. It seems that everywhere you go, each village has its own share of ghosts and faeries hidden among the villagers. Almost everyone can swear on their grandmother's grave that they've seen a ghost or have been helped or cursed by a faery. Just look at the names of some of the places. Forest of Sidhes: anyone care to guess what was seen there? Let us not forget the leprechauns and their pots of gold. Did I mention that there is also a Redstone's Lough monster? Suffice to say that no authentic Thyatian explorer, sage, expert or official has ever seen it.

Don't Miss

There is one great site in Redstone to see, at that's Redstone Castle itself. This enormous castle was ordered to be built in AC 2, and construction was only completed at the end of AC 5. It has been standing since, for over 1000 years [I suspect dwarves must have helped in the design. Ed.]. The walls to the castle itself are at least 50 feet tall, and various towers reach at least 100 feet. The tallest spire in the castle, where the Count and Countess make their room, peaks just below 450 feet. This magnificent Thyatian fortress can easily accommodate up to 15,000 soldiers and staff, as well as the mounts for half of them.

Throughout its entire history, Redstone Castle has only been conquered once, in the year AC 1007, by the Alphatians. To say Redstone was defeated, however, would be an exaggeration. The commanders surrendered when the rest of the surrounding territories fell to the Alphatians. And it took the combined Alphatian armies of General Benthazim, General Joshtintan and General Martigan to obtain that result. Redstone Castle has therefore never been taken by force since its creation.

If visiting the County of Redstone, I also recommend visiting their taverns which the locals call pubs. There, they serve their ale and whisky, and all tell tall tales of the Wee Folks and the magic of the faeries. It might be little children stories for the seasoned traveler or adventurer, but they're still fun to hear.

THOTHIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of Brun, southwest of the New Alphatian Sea), southeastern corner.

Area: 458,157 sq. mi. (95,277 sq. mi. of Thothia proper, and 362,880 sq. mi. of the Great Escarpment, now part of Thothia).

Population: 80,000.

Languages: Thothian (dialect of Nithian), Alphatian (official).

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

Taxes: 15% income tax, collected yearly.

Government Type: Independent monarchy part of the New Alphatian Empire.

Industries: Agriculture, fishing, trade.

Important Figures: Pharaoh Ramenhotep XXIV (human, male, Pr10 of Rathanos).

Flora and Fauna: In the mainland Thothia, standard desert wildlife can be found. Also, various undead and golem/statues protect the numerous ruins and tombs lost beneath the sands. On the Thothian Plateau, the exact wildlife is still relatively unknown, but there is a known presence of phanatons, centaurs, treants, and aranea.

Description: by Elidor Murtagh

Edairo be the name o' the capital of Thothia, the strange land o' ancient magic and the walkin' dead. Just ask any Thyatian soldier who had ta face 'em zombies an' mummies and worse.

The capital be about a day sailin' inland up the Aurora river. The mouth o' the river be a huge delta with farmin' and other land work goin' on there, but once the delta ends, that be pretty much the end o' the farms too. Aroun' Edairo be dry an' arid, hardly a tree in sight. Course I ain't the one ta explore normal dry land, even less when it be a empty desert. From what I hear, the place be filled with ruins an' such stuff, filled with treasures fer those brave enoug' ta risk the journey.

The city be filled with huge, giant statues an' triangular shaped buildin's called pyramids. Seems ta me that the Thothians like ta build big things that don't do much 'cept ta be used ta burry a dead or two. Than again, they can use 'em afterwards in their armies ta defend the place, so what do I know. When I die, t'will be in the warm embraces of the sea, that's fer sure.

One sight ta see would be the palace, if ye could get anywhere near it as a commoner or foreigner. Seems only the nobles or priest can get anywher' near that place.

Another would'a been the library, but seems that burned down a few years ago... durin' the war, me thinks.

Not much else ta Tothia beside a bunch o' farmin' villages here an' dar. Most of 'em can be found alon' the Aurora or the delta, but there be a few of 'em scattered in that desert o' theirs.

The only notable sight of the land be the Great Escarpment, now called Thothian Escarpment in their honor. Seems the last treaty with Thyatis gave'em the rights to own all o' it [Isle of Dawn Treaty. Ed.]. Lemme tell ye, there be quite a few angry Thyatian colonists up on that plateau there. The Emperor o' Thyatis made this law ta force people ta move there, and then abandoned 'em all ta Thothia afterwards. Didn't even give any of 'em the means ta get home if they wanted to. Don't help that the Thothian's don't want 'em either.

Ye see, the Thothiana have this belief that only 'em an' the Alphatians are civilized people. Everyone else, 'cludin' 'em Thyatian colonists in their care, are mere barbarians who don't deserve their attention. Pff.. an' these Thothians don't even know how to sail properly. Wonder what makes 'em think they're civilized.

'Course, now that Alphatia is gone an' can't deal with the savages for 'em, the Pharaoh is forced ta deal with 'em himself. Not that he can't handle it, as he showed the Thyatians who tried ta invade a few years ago. The Thothians try ta ignore foreigners as much as they can.

The Thothians have this strange meditative behavior, which means they like goin' into these trance-like things. They call themselves mystic priests, followin' the preachings o' their Immortal Rathanos.

'Nother weird thing be their like o' tis game called Spider's Web. Seems that everyone can play it, but I ain't managed to quite get how it works yet. Funny thing is, that Pharaoh o' theirs wants 'em ta stop playin' this game or follow other superstitious nonsense. Guess they ain't all so bad after all.

Anyway, that about sums up the Thothians. If ye ask me, stick ta the capital docks, in the good old taverns with other foreign merchants an' sailors, and ya won't be treated like a nobody by the locals... unless yer Alphatian, anyway.

WESTROURKE (Grand Duchy of)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of the continent of Brun; southwest of the New Alphatian Sea), north-western area.

Area: 97,272 sq. mi.

Population: 55,000, including 25,000 in the capital of Newkirk.

Languages: Thyatian (official), Alphatian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: Emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, Ei. 1). Citizens abroad must still pay. 5% sales tax on all but food and clothing.

Government Type: Independent Grand Duchy under the jurisdiction of the Empire of Thyatis. (Its ties to Thyatis are merely a formality.)

Industries: Agriculture, armor, dyes and pigments.

Important Figures: Duke Thrainkell Firestorm (human, male, Pr12 of Vanya), Duchess Holva Firestorm (human, female, T13).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate. Dangerous monsters include goblinoid hordes scattered throughout the Isle of Dawn as well as bandits.

Description: by Favonius Viator

The large dominion of Westrourke is now approximately half the size it was before the war with Alphatia. General Martigan of the Alphatian forces spearheaded the assault into Newkirk where he slew Duke Donegal Firestorm and conquered the Grand Duchy for the sunken Empire. In AC 1009, when the land was reclaimed by Thyatis, Thrainkell Firestorm, Donegal's heir, was forced to give up some of his northern lands to Helskir as well as the large peninsula containing Redstone to form a new County for the Empire. Westrourke still remains one of the largest dominions on the Isle of Dawn.

The Land

Westrourke is blessed with a variety of landscapes and lesser dominions.

The southern-most area containing the Duchy of Newkirk, the capital itself, is delimited with the Southern Kauth Hills, a light forest on its eastern border, and grasslands marking the northern borders. Most of the coast of this Duchy is one large cliff face into the Bay of Newkirk, leaving it unlikely to be attacked by Northmen raiders. The City of Newkirk is famous for its armorers capable of making the most extraordinary suits of plate and chain.

Just north of the Duchy of Newkirk lies the Dust Reaches. This huge plateau is covered with nothing but desert and badlands. It is also overflowing with goblinoids. The two largest groups seem to be a horde of kobolds living at the southern foot of the plateau and orcs making their lairs on the northern edge.

The western edge of the Dust Reaches lies approximately 20 miles inland from the Gulf of Westrourke. This narrow strip is covered with a largely uninhabited forest known as Sveikassli Woods.

Further up north we arrive to the mainland of what is now the Grand Duchy of Westrourke. The southern coastal area around the Gulf of Westrourke is well forested and home to many lumberers and foresters. It is also in this area where just enough food is grown to keep the Grand Duchy self-sufficient.

The northern area currently has four baronies and two counties. The baronies are Blido, Guddal, Tromsheim, and Ytre Ystrebo. Each consists of a small village and the land approximately 20 miles in all directions around the village. [Map lovers will find these places on the Thyatian Trail Map 2: The Eastern Countries. Ed.]

The largest of the lesser dominions is the County of Nordvik. This county encompasses all the land around the Erdals Fjellet River as well as the Geittinden Mountains [which contain Finnegar's Watch, alt. 2,100 feet. Ed.]. Nordvik makes its economy from a small gold mine found in the mountains and from its major industry of dyes and pigments.

There's also the County of Viksdalen along the Dalselva River. Its borders contain the Glotta Forest as well as the Fyresvatn Bogs. This town is always fully on duty as the orcs from the Dust Reaches, as well as lizard men from the bogs, continuously harass the inhabitants of the area. Viksdalen is a major trade town as most overland journeys to Newkirk must pass through its area.

Finally, there is a marvelous signaling system all along the coast of Westrourke, starting from the keep on Finnegar's Watch all the way down to Newkirk. Several towers dot the coast every 100 miles or so. Within these towers are large,

magical chimneys which can send a pillar of smoke into the air which is clearly visible by the occupants of the next tower. Through this method, a message quickly gets back to the capital of an arriving fleet. Just as importantly, any inhabitant of the area can also see the smoke signal and rush to safety themselves, saving the trouble of sending out riders to warn about an attack.

Apparently the Duke is currently seeking out potential new Barons for the regions along the Tromsa River and The Arm. Those areas are infested with goblins, and Duke Firestorm will gladly grant sections of the Svorkomo Forest (along those rivers) to anyone who can clear it of goblinoids and keep it that way.

The People

The inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Westourke are a mix of Thyatian, Alphatian, and Ostlander colonists from centuries back. As with most people on the Isle of Dawn, they grow weary of the constant invasions from Alphatia and would rather just be left alone.

There is a marked prejudice against Alphatians in the area, as many people here suffered tremendously during the war, and have yet to forgive their tormentors. Even the Alphatians who have lived among the Westourkites for years are now distrusted and looked down upon. I am glad to say that many of them have left toward Alphatian dominions. After all, who needs the remains of a destroyed empire.

It seems that the people are happy about Duke Firestorm's recently acquired semi-independence from the Empire. They foolishly believe that their lives will now be better because of it. I find that rather ridiculous. Besides, Westourke is still part of Thyatis, regardless what any agreements might say. After all, if the Emperor asks for his help, the Duke will rush to his aid. If that is not the role of a vassal, I do not know what is. As was mentioned, the whole agreement was merely a formality anyway.

Finally, it seems that Newkirk is attracting a fair host of bounty hunters. Duke Firestorm has offered a reward of 250,000 lucins (gp) to anyone who can bring him General Martigan alive. It appears the Duke is seeking revenge for the death of his father. General Martigan was a count in the lands of Norwold, but became independent after the sinking of Alphatia, and then abandoned the court life altogether to go adventuring. He and his party are very powerful [18th level+, Ed.], and it is believed they have left Mystara altogether to wander the outer planes.

Don't Miss

There are two main attractions to Westourke that come to my mind. The first involves Finnegar's Watch. Many hiking trails cover the Geittinden Mountains leading up to the famous peak. As you reach the higher altitudes, pine forests start to surround you, and rushing streams from various springs can keep any thirst satisfied. Many an outdoor-lover starts his journey from the small village of Okstad at the foot of the mountains and works his way up.

The view from Finnegar's Watch is just fantastic. Also, thanks to the military garrison at in the area, it is also clear of any dangerous monsters.

Also, near Gund's Tower in the Duchy of Newkirk, many men practice a somewhat unusual sport. They dive off the cliff, almost hundreds of feet high, into the shallow waters of the Gulf of Newkirk. Although it may sound like nothing much, one's heart does race to see someone plummet to what looks like certain death only to come out unscathed. I must say that to see such bravery in a fellow man shows how great the Thyatian people really are.

WEST PORTAGE (Barony of; Empire of Thyatis)

Location: Known World, Isle of Dawn (east of the continent of Brun; southwest of the New Alphatian Sea), west-central area.

Area: 9,977 sq. mi.

Population: 5,000, including 1,000 in the capital West Portage.

Languages: Thyatian (official), Alphatian.

Coinage: Thyatian Standard: Emperor (pp), lucin (gp), asterius (sp), denarius (cp). Coins of many other nations are in common circulation here.

Taxes: 25% income tax collected quarterly (Va. 1, Ya. 1, Fy. 3, Ei. 1). Citizens abroad must still pay. 5% sales tax on all but food and clothing.

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

Industries: Trade and ship transportation.

Important Figures: Baroness Periandra Docerius (human, female, F12), Captain Jules Docerius (human, male, F12), Dresel Ratchethook (gnome, male, T6/M(il)5).

Flora and Fauna: Standard for its climate. Dangerous monsters include goblinoid hordes scattered throughout the Isle of Dawn as well as bandits.

Description: by Belzamith Fingertackles

Hello dear readers. At first we had asked Elidor Murtagh to describe the barony of West Portage for us since he often sailed by the area on the Callista. However, to put it nicely, Elidor refused to go anywhere near a port that would dare commit the sacrilege of bringing a ship onto dry land. It is therefore my pleasure to present the province to you myself, from my observations on our journey to Ionace to talk to Commander Broderick.

The Land

West Portage is a relatively small province in an area almost totally devoid of any great resource or advantage. The region is very hilly and not very useful for agriculture. Prospectors also claim that the area is devoid of any useful mineral deposits or mining possibilities.

The community of West Portage, the capital of the province with the same name, is a small town of barely 5,000 people, mostly human. West Portage is rather poor, and the look of the buildings shows it clearly. The only buildings that are in good condition are the palace and the Thyatian Legionnaire's garrison. The place doesn't even have a wall to help defend in case of an invasion, although the Baroness is currently saving up the money to build some.

West Portage does have one noteworthy advantage though; position. Located on the northern shores of calm Seawolf Bay, West Portage happens to lie on the shortest overland pass from one side to the other of the Isle of Dawn. Those merchants who prefer not to sail all the way around the huge Isle of Dawn can put in at West Portage and cart their cargoes across to East Portage. This overland transportation costs an arm and a leg, in my opinion anyway, but some merchants still prefer to pay the price since they believe they easily make it back with the time they save from avoiding a long detour. In fact, even whole ships have been lifted onto huge wagons and brought across the island.

The overland road is a winding one through the hills at the center of the island, but is well used and easy to follow. Our guide claims that the road is exactly one hundred miles long, from city to city, but I'm sure it must be off by a little. Exactly one hundred miles... sure, and I'm a beardless dwarf.

This trail, known as the Crossdawn Road, however, is one of the most dangerous places on the Isle, besides, perhaps, the Thothian Escarpment which is still largely unexplored. With the constant warfare that has occurred in the area for the past decade, many people have been made homeless, desperate, and angry, which means that many have started the life of banditry. Raids on caravans between the towns have increased considerably in the past decades. And these bandits seem to be getting better and more organized as time goes on. Last month, a whole ship and its crew disappeared along the trail, never reaching its destination of East Portage. Officials have yet to find any trace of it in the wilderness.

The People

The inhabitants of West Portage are simple people who just want to get on with their lives and be left alone.

Being a relatively poor place, thievery is very high in the city. In fact, up until AC 1009, when Docerius was crowned Baroness by Emperor Thincol I, the province of West Portage was unofficially known as the City of Thieves. Still, despite the rumors, West Portage had always had a very low crime rate. The former ruler, Lareth Kubek, was replaced by Docerius, then commander of the Thyatian garrison, because he was unable to deal with the invading Alphatians. At that point, it seems the thieves came out of their holes, and everyone became a victim to one rogue or another. It took the Baroness almost 2 years to get things back under control.

This would lead me to believe that Lareth Kubek was somehow involved with the thieves' guild of the city. However, Kubek disappeared shortly after being replaced as ruler, and his current whereabouts are still unknown.

Most people work either at the docks, or as guards and guides for the Crossdawn Road. The fact that the city often changes from Thyatian to Alphatian hands is rather irrelevant to them. Most can speak both languages, and think of themselves as West Portagers rather than Thyatians or Alphatians.

Of a peculiar note, which I deem worthy of mentioning, is Captain Jules Docerius, the Baroness's nephew. The man is known for his fighting prowess, but not for his personal integrity. He is overweight, and his large nose is permanently red from too much hard drinking. Also, the man constantly wears expensive and elegant clothing rather out of his salary range. Although I have no proof, I am almost positive that the Captain has his connections with the thieves' guild and is probably taking bribes. If you have problems with thieves while in West Portage, don't go and see him. [If you ask me, the gnome is delusional. DS.]

Don't Miss

The only sight worth seeing in West Portage is by far the marvelous docks. Or more precisely, the mechanism at the docks which allows entire sailing ships to be raised onto large wagons. The device, which was constructed by Dresel Ratchethook, a fellow gnome I'm proud to say, is a large tower at least 10 floors in height. Dresel calls his machine a "krane."

The top floor of the krane has several solid beams extending out into the air for about 40 feet. Large counterweights and magic help make sure these beams don't fall. Attached to the beams are several pulleys and ropes, which are lowered down onto the ship and tied to the hull in various places. Over a hundred horses then pull on the ropes, lifting the ship out of the water and into the air. I must say, it is quite the sight to see a large sailing ship just swinging in the air over the water.

Then, the top of the krane turns around, thanks to steam-powered machineries, various cranks and wheels, as well as the power of over a hundred men pulling ropes along the shore, until the ship is resting over these large berth-like wagons, also made by Dresel. The horses then move back, lowering the ship onto the wagon. Most of the horses are then attached to the berth-wagons, and pull it across the Isle of Dawn. It is mainly because so many horses and men are involved that the cost for such a voyage is exorbitant. But I must say, it does indeed include a good show with the trip.