



Research Document: Where is The Rock adventure area located? Investigating *B8: Journey to The Rock* (1985) and “The Hall of Rock” from *B1-9: In Search of Adventure* (1987)

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March 2025, version 0.0
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*Note: Throughout this document, because the adventure is known by two different names: *Journey to The Rock* (1985) and “The Hall of Rock” (1987), I refer to the mapped area as “The Rock adventure area,” or “TRaa” for short.

This moniker is based on Michael Malone’s statements (B8 p.30): “Here are some suggestions for placing **the adventure area** on the maps contained in the D&D Expert Set” and “The maps in the D&D Expert Set offer several possible settings for **the adventure area**.”

Cultures of The Rock adventure area

First, let's look at the cultures of TRaa, so that we better understand this mini-setting—before we untangle its placement on the map.

In this chapter, when providing monikers for these cultures, if no specific location for the encounter or stronghold is indicated by the module, and if they are a random encounter which can happen along the entire stretch of a trail (Western, Northern, or Southern Trail), they receive only a directional moniker (i.e. Western Ogres, Northern Ogres, Southern Bugbears, Southern Gnomes, Southern Nomads). Except I kept the word “trail” for “Western Trail Goblins” because “trail goblins” sounded cute.

Human and Demi-Human Cultures:

- Krayzen Dwarves. A “small tribe.” Enemies of the Krayzen Goblins. NPC: Dunnak Ironhammer, armorer and gem collector. Preferred weapon: warhammer and light crossbow. (p.9, p.10)
- Southern Gnomes. They patrol and range throughout the Southern Trail and New Trail. Enemies of the Southern Trail Bugbears. Miners—they have “gnome mines” (which could mean more than one site, or a collective noun for a single site) and a “clan stronghold” is mentioned in the encounter with the Ocean Gnomes (see below). The Southern Gnomes have prepared the Cave of Sanctuary at the end of the New Trail, near The Rock, as a trail shelter. Preferred weapons: spears and crossbows.
 - Ocean Gnomes. The crew of the *Motherlode Rover* presumably split off from the Southern Gnomes. This was “months ago.” Leader: Roborn Sternslate. Preferred weapons: boarding pikes (spears). The “wandering merchant” who sold Roborn the book about shipbuilding was probably Hakeem the Merchant.
- Southern Nomads. A “small band” (14) of human goatherds. They range throughout the Southern Trail and New Trail, but also travel to the Lake Neshonan grazing grounds. Preferred weapon: clubs.
- Sylvanhome Elves (Western Trail random encounter, p.5). Preferred weapons: longbow and spears. Friends of the sprites. Elves be encountered in any of the woods which abut the Western Trail: Sylvanhome, the Greenweald, Rendwood and the Western Bough. But I use the term “Sylvanhome” as a general term for the elvish culture from this module. In the intro, Hakeem only says he was passing through Sylvanhome, so it's the most prominent areal moniker.

Monstrous Cultures:

- Barkel Goblins. “A very small primitive band” (20+). These are described as a paleolithic / stone age culture. Preferred weapons: clubs and stone axes.
- Chameleon Men of the Krayzen Mountains (pp.6-7) . They consider themselves to be a sovereign Lordship, ruled by the Lemullar the Omnerubesk, Lord of Shade and Hue (a.k.a. the Lord of Shade). Their personal names include: Kanreon, Thronik, and Lamellar. It seems likely that in the Chameleon Man language, *omme* is ‘lord’ and *rubesk* is ‘shade’ (or *ru* is ‘shade’ and *besk* is ‘hue/color’)
- Helgarth's Harpies—They consider themselves to be a sovereign Queendom of Harpies, ruled by Queen Helgarth, the “Wings of Death.”
- Krayzen Goblins (Northern Trail random encounter, p.10). Preferred weapon: spears. A band of raiders and looters. Enemies of the Krayzen Dwarves. At night, these goblins may leave the mountains and range throughout the Northern Trail.
- Northern Ogres (p.11). Bandits who waylay travelers along the Northern Trail. They have a camp east of the trail, within the Sylvanhome.
- Rock Men of the Barkel Mountains. Led by a rock man named Krag. They are described as a “patrol.”
- Southern Bugbears (Southern Trail random encounter). They range throughout the Southern Trail and New Trail. Marauders and robbers. They rob the gnome mines. And the gnomes imprison them. Sample names: Gorbash and Grullkk. Preferred weapon: the fugitive bugbears are armed with only crude clubs—but this appears to be a consequence of their desperate state, not their preferred tribal weapon.
- Sylvanhome Sprites (Western Trail random encounter, p.5). Playful and curious. Enjoy playing tag.

- Western Ogres (Western Trail random encounters, p.5). At least two live along the Western Trail. One is a highway extortionist and dishonest. The other wears a helmet made from the skull of a stag, and attacks with thrown spears.
- Western Trail Goblins (Western Trail random encounter, p.5). Hunters, trappers, bandits. Preferred weapon: spears. Pit traps. Vengeful if any of their band is harmed—and will seek out whoever did it.

Other Cultural Motifs:

- Fantasy Arabian:
 - Hakeem the Merchant. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim_\(name\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakim_(name)) Greets the PCs with the “Peace be upon you!”: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/As-salamu_alaykum . Hakeem is certainly either from Ylaruam or of Ylari ancestry (e.g. Ylari from Selenica).
Character notes with regard to Hakeem:
 - Being the only merchant mentioned in the module (other than a “rich merchant” in the background story of the pregen PC Wolkens), Hakeem is probably also the “wandering merchant” who sold the book on “shipbuilding and ocean navigation” to the gnomes.
 - Also of note: Despite his discrete way of wording it, Hakeem is probably a ‘regular’ supplier of externally-sourced goods and wares for The Manor, and also probably for the elves of Sylvanhome as well. He is obviously a trusted messenger as well. Because...given the extreme isolation of The Rock adventure area (which Michael Malone intentionally surrounds by mountain or hill terrain, no matter which of the five Official Placements is chosen)....and given that there are only trails to the southeast and southwest...and no trails leaving from any other direction: merchants do not happen to “pass through” the area without a good deal of intentionality. Hakeem is surely being ‘discrete’ when he say: *“As I passed through Sylvanhome forest on the way here, I stopped at The Manor, a fine palace owned by the wizard Lirdrium Arkayz.”*
The narrative voice of the module (rather dubiously) states: *“If they question him [Hakeem] further, he says that he believes Jenlar Temlin and Lirdrium Arkayz to be trustworthy, but he knows nothing else about them.”*
I strongly suggest that the statement should be parsed and interpreted in this way: *“...he says that he believes Jenlar Temlin and Lirdrium Arkayz to be trustworthy, but he [says he] knows nothing else about them.”*
 - Master Lirdrium Arkayz’s name is similar to “Imru al-Qais”, the “Father of Arabic Poetry.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imru%27_al-Qais. Al-Qais is a figure whose name would have been found in pre-internet public library resources, such as the Encyclopedia Britannica. The “Qais” in his name was the name of a pre-Islamic Arabian deity.
 - Rahg El-Mahr, The Enlightened One (an elderly human man) appears to have an quasi-Arabic name. The word *al-mahr* means “dowry”: <https://en.wikishia.net/view/Mahr>, but as a surname, El-Mahr is more likely to be an altered spelling of *Al-Maher* “the skilled”: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maher_\(surname\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maher_(surname))

In the wider context, El-Mahr is probably from Ylaruam, having ventured to Threshold on his quest for Enlightenment. And then, like the module says, he entered the desert of the Barrens “a week ago.” Now, following his spiritual experience (the sighting of the gnomish ship), he is walking along the Southern Trail in the Greenweald, on the way back towards civilization to carry his newfound message.

His spiritual message includes Judaeo-Christian motifs:

- Leviathan. This is from from Hebrew Bible (including Psalms, the Book of Job, and the Book of Isaiah), and the non-canonical Book of Enoch: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leviathan>
- The Outer Darkness. This term is specifically from the Christian Gospel of Matthew (8:12, 22:13, and 25:30) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outer_darkness

- The illustration of the Ghostly Horsemen of Tuma shows Middle-eastern style minarets, and also the style of armor appears (to my inexperienced eye) that it could be Arabesque:



- Fantasy Danish
 - Jenlar Temlin (the red-headed Fighter bodyguard/companion of Master Arkayz) is from a fantasy Danish culture (e.g. the Northern Reaches). The real-world name “Jenlar” is Danish:
<https://forebears.io/surnames/jenlar>

The Ancient Common Runes and Language

The Tumans spoke Ancient Common. They wrote in Ancient Common Runes, as seen inscribed on the archways of the Western Bridge and Southern Bridge, which mark the southeastern borders of their realm:



The inscription reads:

“Let no man cross the bridge without first giving to the water that which is its due.”

In this scene, the characters (but not the players) are supposed to be able to suss out what the words say in modern Common. Which means that the script and words are partly intellible to any speakers of D&D Common.

“**Odd runes** are carved into the arch. The runes are **ancient, yet somehow familiar**. [...] The characters will have to fight the guardians unless they decipher the runes and guess what they must do. The inscription is in **an ancient form of the common language**. A character who casts a *read languages* spell can automatically read the runes. However, **it is possible to read the runes without using magic**. If a character tries to read the runes without using a spell, roll 3d6 and subtract 1. If the result is equal to or lower than the Intelligence ability of the character, the character can read the inscription. If the roll is higher than the Intelligence ability, the character cannot understand the runes. Each player is allowed only one try at deciphering the inscription without magic.” **(boldface added)**

This obscure illustration has implications for the entire D&D Multiverse. Because according to 2E Planescape sources, the Common language is supposed to be essentially the same language on all the prime worlds, due to parallel divine evolution—therefore the Common language of the D&D Multiverse is also known as “Planar Common.”

But this scene in B8 shows the *ancient predecessor of Common*—which presumably differs in vocabulary and grammar and script from (modern) Common. Even so, this Ancient Common is supposed to still be partly decipherable to anyone who is literate in (modern) Common, from anywhere in the D&D Multiverse. In a similar way that—depending on their “intelligence” (language skill)—a modern English speaker could conceivably piece together some or all of the meaning of text written in Old English (a.k.a. Anglo-Saxon) or Classical Latin.

This Ancient Common language of the World of Ur/Mystara presumably represents the same language known in other worlds as:

- Thorass—a.k.a. Auld Common, Old Common—in the World of Toril:
https://forgottenrealms.fandom.com/wiki/Thorass_language

- Old Oeridian in the World of Oerth: https://greyhawkonline.com/greyhawkwiki/Old_Oeridian
- Old Common in the World of Kryn: <https://dragonlance.fandom.com/wiki/Common>
- Old Common in the World of Eberron: https://eberron.fandom.com/wiki/Old_Common

Unfortunately, the TSR artist Doug Watson appears to have not made the Tuma script a functional / intelligible alphabet or cipher. But it could be re-interpreted in such a way, by assigning real-world sounds or letters to the symbols. In a similar way that the Aurebesh alphabet of Star Wars was originally just a non-functional decoration on the film set, but was later re-interpreted to be a functional alphabet. That's beyond the scope of my project at this time, but it could be done. The Ancient Common Runes might be interpreted to be related to the Thorass alphabet, which is the closest thing to a D&D multiversal Common script: https://forgottenrealms.fandom.com/wiki/Thorass_alphabet

* * *

In a later scene, we see more Ancient Common words, but this time, they are depicted in modern English/Roman script:

H	U	B	R	E	L	I	S
T	U	M	A	S	S	E	N

Here's the narrative boxed-text for the players:

“Letters of silver and gold are etched into the floor in front of you. They read, HUBRELIS TUMASSEN.”

And here are the DM notes:

“The words, HUBRELIS TUMASSEN, are written in a style similar to the inscriptions on the arches of the Western Bridge and Southern Bridge. A character can read them automatically with a *read languages* [spell], or can read them if the character's Intelligence is high. When a character tries to read the words, roll 3d6 and subtract 1. If the result is equal to or less than the character's Intelligence, he or she can understand the words. When translated, they read, “THE GREAT PRIDE OF TUMA.”

* * *

Linguistically, these two language puzzles are pretty awkward. Because the bridge scene shows a fantastic invented alphabet...whereas this scene uses the real-world English/Roman alphabet. But they are both supposed to be “written in a similar style”(!)...and both use the same kind of Intelligence test.

Instead of using a bland INT roll, the author really should have used the runes in both scenes, and made them an actual 26-letter cipher puzzle which the players could really try to figure out, with each player gaining a certain number of the letters depending on their PC's INT test. And the actual words (once the script is deciphered) of both puzzles should have just been slightly archaic English, which could actually be comprehended, like:

“Let nay man crosseth yon bridge without first giving to the water that which is its due.”

“TUMANNISH HUBRIS”

Something like that.

Nevertheless, this scene actually shows a bit of the vocabulary and grammar of Ancient Common, which as I said above, is relevant to all D&D worlds where Common is spoken. Here's a tentative analysis:

- *hubr-* = “pride”
- *-elis* = “great” (or superlative, similar to Italian *-issima*).
- (Or, an alternative analysis: *-el-* “great” could be an infix which modifies the base word *hubris*.)

- *Tuma* = “Tuma”
- *-ssen* = “of” (possessive/genitive)

August 1985 to March 1986: Six Simultaneously Official Parallel Worlds, of which the Wardle River is primary

B8: Journey to the Rock was published in August 1985. Let's look at all of its Official Placements.

First off, there's Official Placement #0...which is "non-placement." As presented, the default assumption of the 1985 version of TRaa is not placed in any existing campaign world. B8, p.30 says:

"Here are some suggestions for placing the adventure area on the maps contained in the D&D Expert Set [...] All of these adventure suggestions require considerable work on the part of the Dungeon Master. However, they are examples of ways in which the module can be integrated into an existing campaign."

I boldfaced some of the text in order to show that the *opposite* must be assumed to be the default:

1. The default implication is that the adventure area is NOT on the maps contained in the D&D Expert Set.
2. The default implication is that the adventure area is NOT placed on the Expert Set map, since it requires CONSIDERABLE WORK to do so.
3. The default implication is that the adventure area is NOT integrated into any existing campaign.

So the Official default is that it's a standalone mini-setting. We could even call it a "mini-campaign", as indicated by the fact that there was a whole chapter at the end of the book entitled "Additional Adventures." That chapter suggests a continued campaign, solely using the maps and information from B8 alone:

"After the characters have completed their mission to The Rock, further adventure are possible, using the maps and information contained in the module." —B8, p.30

Okay, that is the default. But this option has no relation to the World of Urt (Earth's prehistoric Age of Magic), or to the World of Mystara, or to any other published TSR world. Furthermore, we know nothing about designer Michael Malone's home campaign world, and are unlikely to ever know. And so nothing more need be said about Placement #0..."non-placement."

Furthermore, there are only so many Official Mystara products and references. So I feel it's worthy wringing every last drop of Official lore in order to enrich Mystara.

So let's look at the five Official placements on the Expert Set map, which Malone suggested:

Grand Duchy of Karameikos. The area is in the Cruth Mountains, on the river northwest of Wereskalot, or in the Cruth Mountains on the river northwest of Threshold. The Barkel and Krayzen Mountains are extensions of the Cruth Mountains.

Republic of Darokin. The area is in the mountain or hill terrain north of Lake Amsorak. The Krevilan River flows into Lake Amsorak south of the wilderness shown on Jenlar Temlin's Map.

B8 (1985), p.30

Official Placement #1: "**Grand Duchy of Karameikos.** The area is in the Cruth Mountains, on the river northwest [sic] of Wereskalot. [...] The Barkel and Krayzen Mountains are extensions of the Cruth Mountains."

The inclusion of this placement in the “Karamaikos” paragraph is erroneous, since the “river northwest of Wereskalot” is the (river which was later named the) Wardle River, whose headwaters are in Darokin. In this placement, The Rock adventure area would straddle the Darokin—Five Shires border. Not in Karamaikos at all.

There is some chance that the “river northwest of Wereskalot” is a typo for “river northeast of Wereskalot”, since the headwaters of the Cruth River at least straddle the Karamaikan border. Directional words are easily scrambled during editing. However, we depict Placement #1 northwest of Wereskalot, as written.

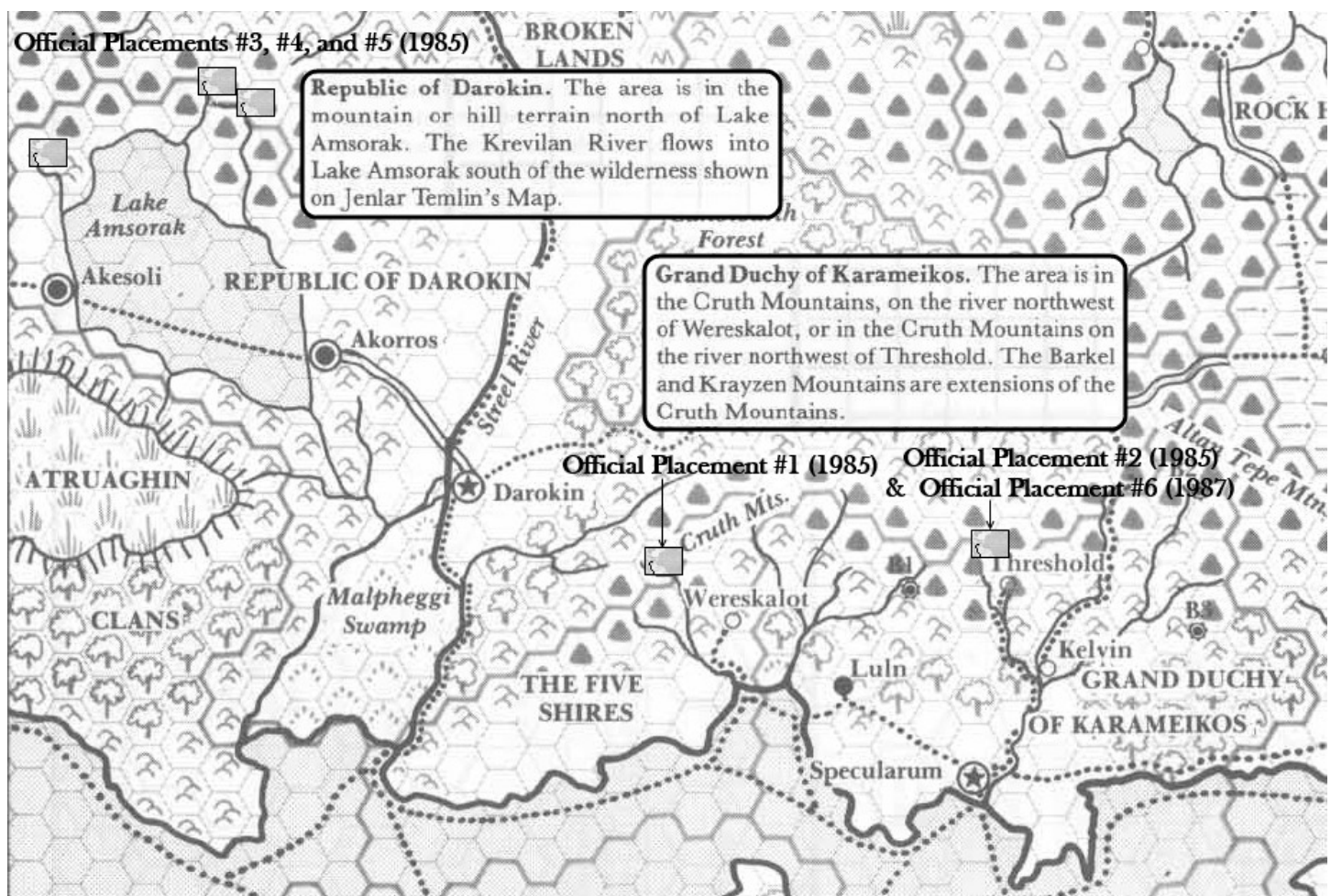
Official Placement #2: “**Grand Duchy of Karamaikos.** The area is [...] in the Cruth Mountains on the river northwest of Threshold. The Barkel and Krayzen Mountains are extensions of the Cruth Mountains.”

This river is none other than the (later named) River Foamfire.

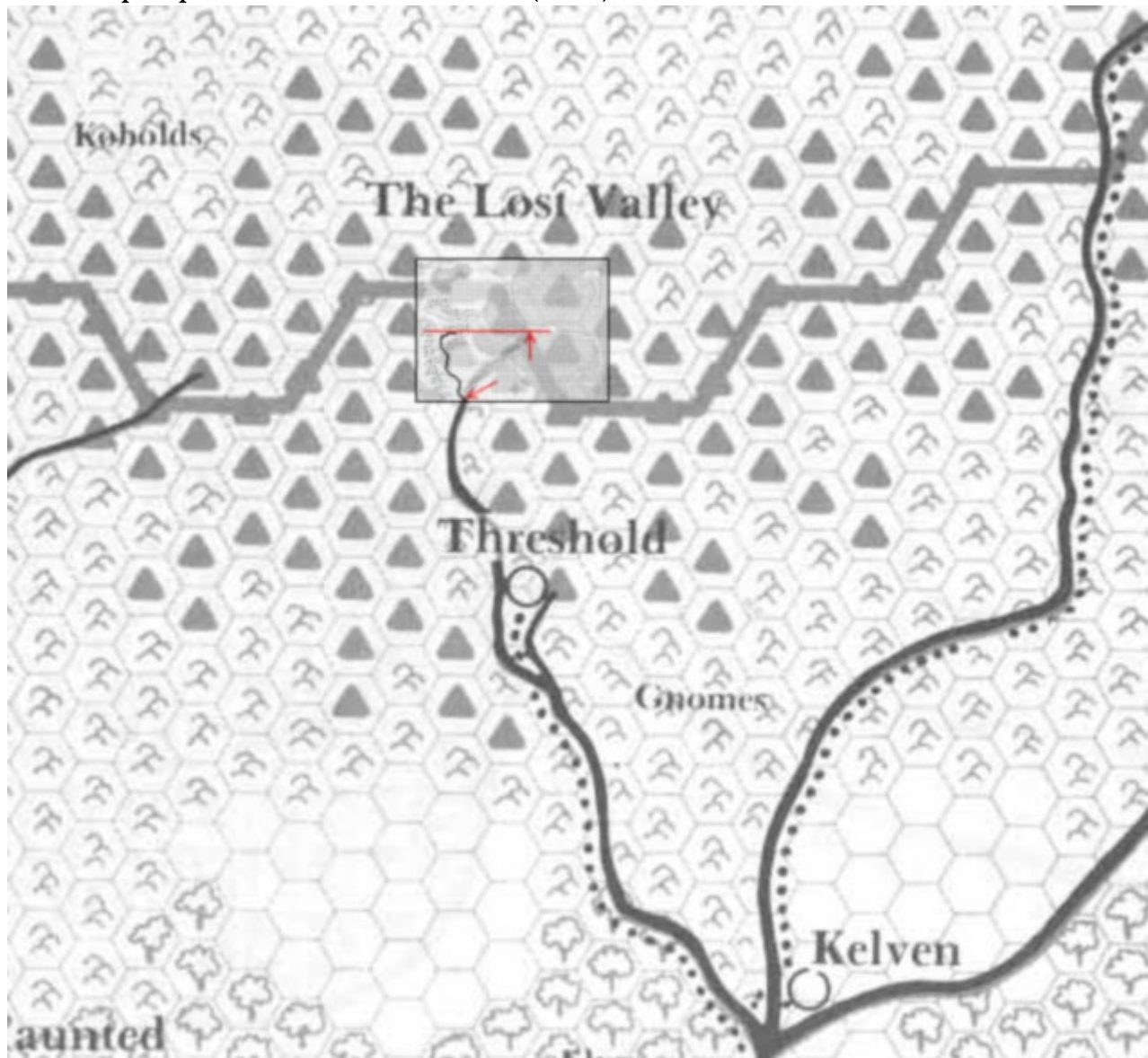
“**Republic of Darokin.** The area is in the mountain or hill terrain north of Lake Amsorak. The Krevilan River flows into Lake Amsorak south of the wilderness shown on Jenlar Temlin’s Map.”

These are the three places which meet those criteria. From east to west:

- Official Placement #3: The mountainous headwaters of the (later named) Amsorak River.
- Official Placement #4: The mountainous headwaters of the (later named) Ithel River.
- Official Placement #5: The hilly headwaters of the (later named) Highlake River.



A close-up map of Official Placement #2 (1985)



A note on exact placement. For the map above, I aligned TRaa scientifically according to these principles:

1. Michael Malone explicitly used the Krevilan River as the primary basis for placing TRaa. This is further emphasized by “Looking for the Ocean” adventure seed, which necessitates that the Krevilan River be lined up with a river which flows to the ocean.
2. I only used only the maps which were readily available to Michael Malone in 1985, and which he himself referred to. Namely, the two 1983 Expert Set maps: 1) the 24-mile hex map of The Lands and Environs of the D&D Wilderness, and 2) the 6-mile-hex map of Karamaikos. The 1981 versions of course existed as well, but it’s reasonable to assume the 1983 versions were paramount in 1985.
3. Large-scale “zoomed in” maps trump small scale “zoomed out” maps. For Official Placement #2 (“the river northwest of Threshold”), the zoomed-in Karamaikos map trumped the continental map. On the Karamaikos map, the (later named) River Foamfire extends a good deal further north than on the continental. The Krevilan River was lined up with this version of the Foamfire, not with the continental map’s version. If TRaa had been lined up with the continental map of the Foamfire, TRaa would have been located much further south, and would have overlapped with the the town of Threshold!

4. As for exact alignment. First, I aligned the northernmost tip of the Krevilan River's wellspring with the northernmost tip of each river which Malone indicated from the Expert Set map. See the red horizontal line on the map above.
5. Then I slid The Rock adventure map west or east until the southern edge of the Krevilan River's outflow lined up with the river on the Expert Set map. See the red arrow on the Karameikan map above.

Further principles and implications:

6. Unlike many D&D aficionados who try to quickly jump to synthesis, I first recognize that all suggested placements which are mentioned in published TSR/WotC sources are Official parallel worlds. They all Officially exist within the D&D Polyverse. Therefore, we see five different Official Parallel Worlds in the 1985 module. These are all parallel versions of the Known World of Urt: Earth's prehistoric Age of Magic. Those five continuities differ only in that TRaa is located in a different place in each.
7. Also the default standalone, non-placed mini-setting (not connected to the Known World of Urt) is its own parallel world as well. Though we know almost nothing about what lies beyond the edge of its map.
8. Only once all Official Continuities are recognized (in this case, six different continuities)—only then do I try to suss out and synthesize a primary, archetypal version.
9. Since zoomed-in maps trump zoomed-out maps, this also applies to the ½-mile-per-square TRaa map, once placed. In other words, The Rock area map, once placed, will trump the existing hex terrain which is depicted on the two Expert Set maps.
10. This means that, due to the typically mountainous terrain of the five Official Placements, prioritizing TRaa map terrain will result in the revision of the Expert Set hexes to make a sort of “lost valley” surrounded by mountains.
11. This also means that the shape of the Krevilan River will trump the existing shape of the headwaters of whatever river it is equated with. Throughout the course of Mystaran publications, river courses are depicted quite differently in various maps; and so the fact that—in any of these placements—the Krevilan would be shaped differently than what the hex map shows, is no stumbling block.
12. On an updated map of the 1985 D&D Wilderness map, the “adventure site” symbol would be placed in all five of those locales, perhaps with a parenthetical label: “**B8** ⚙️ (suggested placement)”.

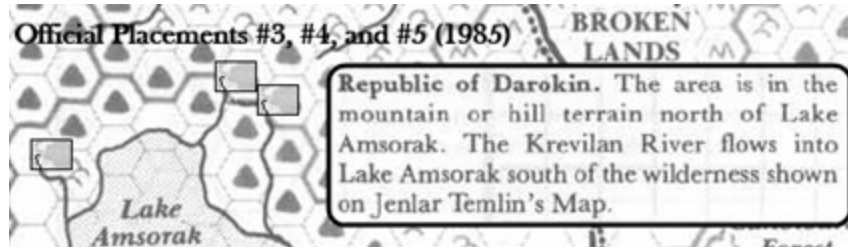
Which version is archetypal?

1. I would say that, as of 1985, the first-listed Official Placement is the priority. Malone could have listed any of the suggestions first, but he chose to list “the river northwest of Wereskalot” first. It is simply the priority.
2. Therefore, as of 1985, if someone wanted to highlight the primary Official timeline of the Known World, I would suggest showing TRaa as straddling the Darokin—Five Shires borderlands. The Krevilan River would be a synonym for the Wardle River. And the terrain of the 1985 hex maps would carve out the Cruth Mountains so that entire TRaa terrain fits right there, as a mostly-enclosed valley. A 6-mile hex map of that area was included in the 1981 Expert Set, but it was clipped in the 1983 version. Thorf has a reproduction here: <https://mystara.thorfmaps.com/expert-karameikos-6-1981/>

“The area is in the mountain or hill terrain”

Malone’s Darokin placements give us a window into how he imagined his map would merge with the existing Expert Set hex terrain. Obviously most of Malone’s map is mostly forested, with some desert (in the southwest) or clear/grassland terrain (in the northwest). Only the western fringe of his map is mountainous. But Malone still blithely says “**the area is in the mountain or hill terrain.**” This is a key indication. ...Even though most of his map “should” be forest hexes.

And looking at the Expert Set map, the hex terrains which line up with the three river options “north of Lake Amsorak” are all solidly mountain hexes or, in the case of the Highlake River, a hill hex. Malone did not even try to situate TRaa map so that the eastern half of the map was suitably forested, or even non-mountainous.



What does “in the mountain [...] terrain” mean? Malone’s approach indicates four things:

1. He imagined and intended that his TRaa map would trump whatever hex terrain is on the Expert Set map.
2. When Malone says that TRaa “is in the mountain [...] terrain” or “is in the [...] hill terrain”, he is functionally using the word “in” in the sense of “enveloped by, surrounded by”—NOT in the sense of “filled with, covered with.” He intended TRaa to be *enveloped by and surrounded by* the mountainous or hill terrain. He did not intend for TRaa map to be *overwritten with, covered with, or filled with* the pre-existing mountain terrain or hill terrain of the Expert Set placement—because in this case, his B8 map terrain would not exist at all!
3. Therefore, Malone intended TRaa to be an enclosed valley, surrounded on all sides (or mostly surrounded) by mountains or hills. Even though these bordering mountains/hills are not shown on TRaa map itself.
4. Since we see Malone’s intention, this applies to the other (non-Amsorak) placements as well.

So how would this encircling mountain wall be shaped? How far does TRaa extend off the edge of its own map? As a way of approaching an answer this question, let’s look at a specific, concrete example: Official Placement #2—“the river northwest of Threshold.”

February 1986 to May 1987: The Effects of B10 on the area north of Threshold

B8: Journey to the Rock was published in August 1985. Six months later, in February 1986, *B10: Night's Dark Terror* was published, which provided an evocative, detailed map of the area north of Threshold.

B10 has no effect on the primary TRaa placement (Official Placement #1: the Wardle River in the Darokin—Shire borderlands), nor on the Official Placements north of Lake Amsorak, Darokin.

...But obviously B10's map challenges Official Placement #2 ("on the river northwest of Threshold"). Let's look at that.

A Continuity Break? B10 and B1-9's conflicted depictions of the area north of Threshold:

We seem to have a continuity break. Because the two landscapes north of Threshold *probably* cannot be functionally reconciled. (Though see below.)

Both TRaa map and the B10 map are large-scale detail maps—so they both trump the 1983 Expert Set hex maps. But B8 and B10 depict the shape of the Krevilan/Foamfire very differently.

Play-wise, the depiction of the Foamfire valley is essential to the approach of the Lost Valley of the Hutaaka. The B10 adventure requires the River Foamfire to be a narrow mountain defile. It would make no sense for those mountain cliffs to be surrounded by the open landscape of TRaa. (Or would it? See below.) On the other hand, the Krevilan River has two bridges across it, which would pretty drastically change the experience of approaching the Lost Valley, to just pass by a couple bridges crossing east-west, on your way to Hutaaka.

So what do we do if there's a continuity break? Well, first I acknowledge that those are both Official continuities. They are both Official Parallel Worlds.

But which of these two Parallel Worlds is most archetypal and primary? Which one represents the legacy, going forward? Or can they be rationally merged in any way?

Before trying to suss out the primary legacy timeline, let's address the off-hand possibility of actually merging the B10 and B8 maps, in their official locations "on the river northwest of Threshold."

Fully merging the Krevilan/Foamfire?

I say "*probably* cannot be functionally reconciled", because: hypothetically, as a thought-experiment, we could allow ourselves to imagine what it would look like to functionally merge the two maps.

For this thought-experiment, I would basically begin by implementing Malone's statement of enveloping B8 "in the mountain terrain", whereby TRaa would be need to be carved out of the mountains like another "lost valley" extending both east and west of the Krevilan/Foamfire. So far, this is just doing what Malone intended.

Next, all the local features of the Krevilan/Foamfire would be somehow be blended together: the narrow path and obstacles of B10's Foamfire Valley, plus the two bridges crossing B8's Krevilan.

Since the two adventures depict the shape and length of the river very differently (and B10 also shifted the Foamfire about three or four miles west compared to the 1983 six-mile hex map of Karameikos!), this would have to be somehow reconciled as well.

In any case, both the B8 TRaa map and the B10 Foamfire map would need to be drastically, drastically revised! The upper reaches of the secret entrance to Hutaaka would have to be enclosed in some sort of elevated gully-like mountainous defile, which would rather awkwardly cut right through the Sylvanhome forest of the B8 map! And then there'd be the ancient city of Tuma and Lake Neshonan plopped right there in the northwest, just outside the southern mountain wall of the Lost Valley of Hutaaka.

It could be done...and it would be interesting to see...but the result would look pretty awkward! Here is a map showing the location of B8 (Official Placement #2), cut-and-pasted onto the B10 landscape (as seen Thorf's updated 1986 six-mile map of Karameikos). Remember, the B8 placement here was already exactly set, back in 1985. Remember, the northern tip of the wellspring of the Krevilan was aligned north-south with the northern tip of the wellspring of the (unnamed) River Foamfire from the 1983 Karameikos map. But now, in B10, the

wellspring (of the now-named “River Foamfire”) is moved about 12 miles to the northeast. But that shouldn’t affect Official Placement #2...since any reconciliation will involve drastically redrawing the river shape anyway!

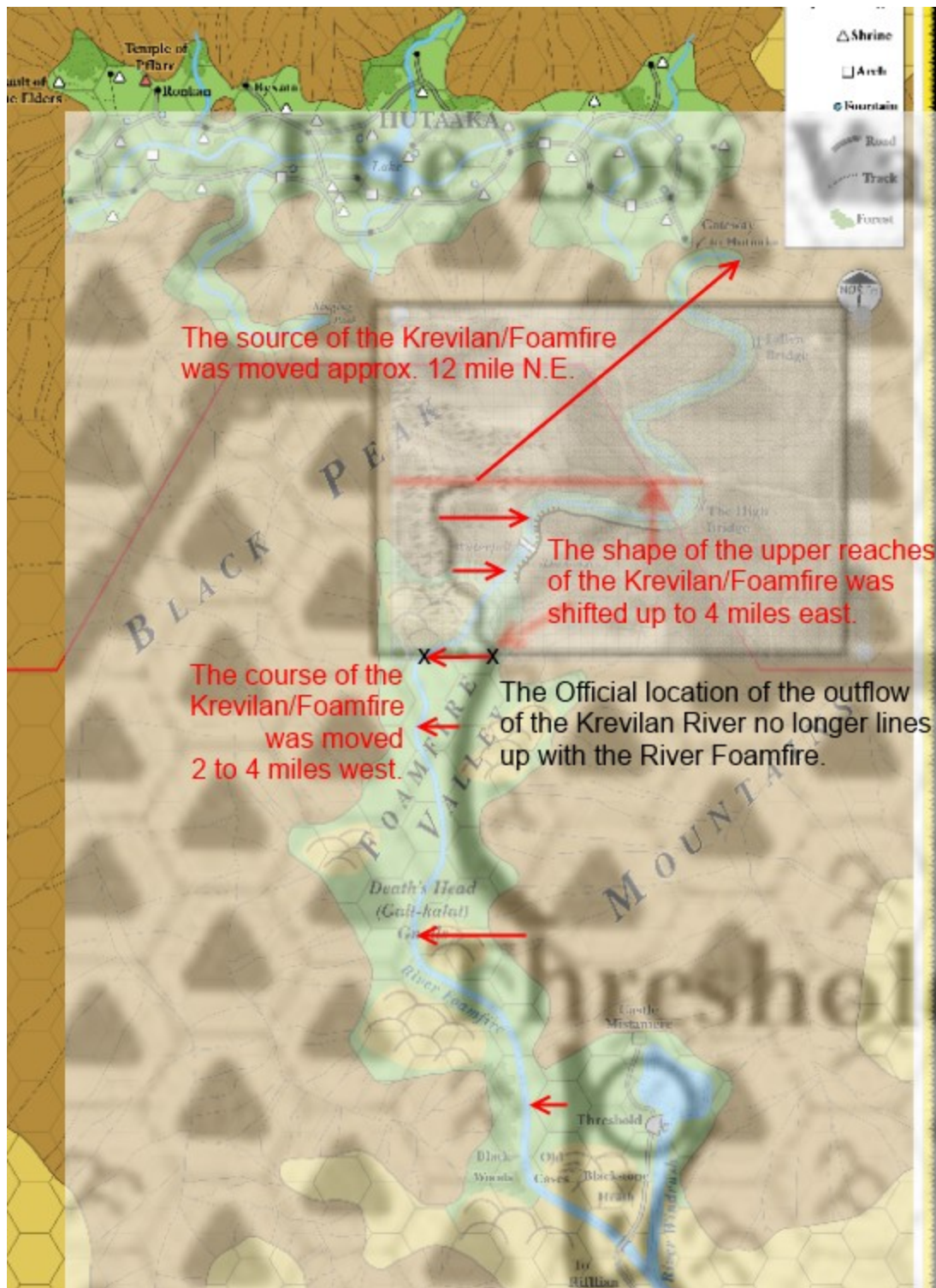


Source: <https://mystara.thorfmads.com/karameikos-6-1986/>

So, for a completist’s sake, in this section I will try to lay out what would be involved in physically merging the map of B8’s Official Placement #2 with the map of B10. It is “doable” but not an easy exercise!

But I want to try. Here are some not-easy-to-reconcile mapping challenges. Specifically:

1. The (now named) River Foamfire has been shifted in position (about 4 miles west), in shape, and in length (with the wellspring moved several miles northeast). See the illustration below.
2. Therefore, the southern outflow of the Krevilan River is no longer aligned with the River Foamfire; which conflicts with the necessity that the Krevilan be equated to a river which flows to the ocean.



3. B10's local map of the Foamfire Valley, its upper Gorge, and the valley walls cover much of the area of TRaa map. Significant portions of TRaa map are therefore overdrawn with the minutely detailed, hand-drawn rock walls of Foamfire Valley.
4. The Gorge which leads to the Lost Valley—with its High Bridge, Fallen Bridge, and Gateway to Hutaaka—is atmospherically significant to the B10 adventure, and would not easily be merged with the existing landsape of TRaa, which requires that the party cross that same area from east to west. There are also two east-west bridges crossing the Krevilan River, which would not easily fit with the B10 map of the Gorge.
5. The location of Lake Neshonan is just outside the southern edge of the Lost Valley, and would be awkwardly situated on the slope of the mountain wall.

Here's the location of Official Placement #2 on the B10 map, without any adjustments:



What are we to make of this? Well, remember that the primary placement at this time is still on the Wardle River (1985's Official Placement #1). And the other Official parallel placements (the three Lake Amsorak locales, #3, #4, and #5) are likewise unaffected.

As far as the Official timeline where the Krevilan is "the river northwest of Threshold" (Official Placement #2): remember that TSR official policy was "later publications trump earlier publications." With regard to the conflict between B8 and B10, this could be interpreted in two straightforward ways:

- A. B10 simply overrides this timeline, and B8 no longer exists in this timeline. We no longer see any depiction of that parallel world. Instead, we see a new parallel world where B8 doesn't exist at all, in any

location. About this timeline, nothing more need be said. One world goes off-screen and that's the last we see of it, and we see a different world which has nothing to do with B8.

OR

B. The B10 and B8 maps are merged, but B10 features take precedent.

With regard to Option B, it's easier said than done! But here's what prioritizing B10 might look like:

1. The B10 depiction of the area between Threshold and the Gorge (i.e. the lower reaches of the Foamfire Valley, including the area of the Death's Head Gnolls) is unaffected by the merger, and trumps the 1983 depiction of the river.
2. Most importantly, in B10, the River Foamfire has officially changed shape and length. Which means *redrawing the B8 map* to reflect that. Because B10 was published after B8, and "later trumps earlier" in official TSR policy, even on local maps.
3. Nevertheless, in this timeline, B8's Official Placement #2 does continue to exist here, exactly where it was placed in 1985. In a similar way that modules B1 and B2 continue to exist exactly where they were placed in 1983. Just because a nice map was never made which showed B8's location, and just because B10 significantly moved and reshaped the Krevilan/Foamfire river, doesn't mean that the placement of all the other locales (e.g. The Manor, the forest and trails, the Barrens, the city of Tuma, Lake Neshonan, and The Rock itself) are invalidated. They were already Officially placed on the map north of Threshold according to indications which Malone gave. Their placement (compared to B1 and B2) was just less well known by subsequent designers and the fan community. This research article hopes to rectify that for future generations of Urt- and Mystara-aficonados.
4. The essential "play features" of the B10 map are the Gorge entrance and the road through Mountain Pass canyon (including its various features High Bridge, Fallen Bridge, and Gateway to Hutaaka), and the Lost Valley itself. These must be preserved—and they take precedence over the B8 map.
5. However, the exact width of the hand-rendered mountain slopes from B10 is not an essential play feature. Playwise, there is no functional difference between a steeply inclined but horizontally narrower mountain wall which only extends a couple miles across the map, versus a less inclined mountain slope which covers eight miles of the map, as depicted in B10. In the text of B10, the upper edges of the Mountain Pass's enveloping mountain walls are described as a "sheer rock wall" (p.42)...not a vast 8-mile wide slope as depicted on the B10 Foamfire Valley map.
6. As depicted on B10's map, the bottom of the Mountain Pass canyon is falsely depicted to be a mile wide! This is simply artistic license, to make it more visible. Here is the evidence:
 - The text of B10 says that the Mountain Pass canyon is "80 feet" wide at the entrance of the Gorge. Nor does it appear to be a mile wide in its hand-drawn illustration. (The Tower on the Bridge, p.42 and illustration V1)
 - The two side-tributary canyons which must be crossed along the way are both "200 feet wide" but in their illustrations, they appear to be of a similar width as the main canyon. (High Bridge and Fallen Bridge, p.43 and illustration V3)
 - The span of the head of the canyon is only "200 feet wide" as well. Nor does it appear to be a mile wide in its hand-drawn illustration. (Gateway to Hutaaka, p.43 and illustration V4)
7. Therefore, the depiction of the Foamfire canyon upon the B8 map only needs to be 200 feet wide, not a mile wide!
8. There may be a few places where features can be merged, such as by preserving the upper portion of the Krevilan River as a tributary of the Foamfire (as the upper Krevilan serves to demark the foothills from the Barrens desert); and also the hilly terrain at the top of B10's Foamfire Valley (which is located similarly as the southwestern foothills of the Barkel Mountains).
9. Lake Neshonan is assumed to extend off the north edge of the map to a distance and shape equal to its visible portion.
10. Therefore Lake Neshonan will be abutted by a sheer cliff to the north.
11. Also, since no outflow is visible, and since there is scant room on the map, I take the easy route and assume that Lake Neshonan is an endoheric lake, which seeps to the Krevilan/Foamfire via underground

aquifer strata, crevices, and caverns (=adventure sites!). Endoheric lakes do exist in some real-world glaciated environments.

12. The unnamed southwestern woods are assumed to extend off the map to a distance and shape equal to their visible portion.
13. The revised mountain wall of the Black Peak Mountains, which surrounds the B8 map, is redrawn so that it follows approximately a midline between the outermost features of the B8 map and the mountain crestlines of the B10 map. This is in accordance with Michael Malone's statement that the B8 map is located "in the mountain terrain."
14. The B8 area map is assumed to have its own (possibly magical/elemental) micro-climate, including deciduous forest (whereas most of northern Karameikos is conifer forest) and desert.
15. The "small village two miles off the south edge of the map [...] directly south of the Forest of Carm" is placed as shown. Given the association of the name "Forest of Carm" with specifically the southeastern portion of the map, nearest to the village, it's reasonable to adopt that the name of the village...the Village of Carm. (This is based on fan-cartographer Robin's idea.)
16. As for how the PCs reached this village at the start of the adventure: it may be noted that the 1983 Expert Set explicitly states that (at least as of 1983 real world; in "Travel from Threshold", p.39)
 - "No trails lead north or west."
 - "A rarely followed trail leads east from town, winding into the hills (leading to the gnomish mines)."

Also, it may be noted that the "Carm" village is located on the southeast slope of the Black Peaks, which suggests that the trail may run south (rather than west) from there, and thus would connect to the eastern Threshold trail (also to the "gnomish mines").

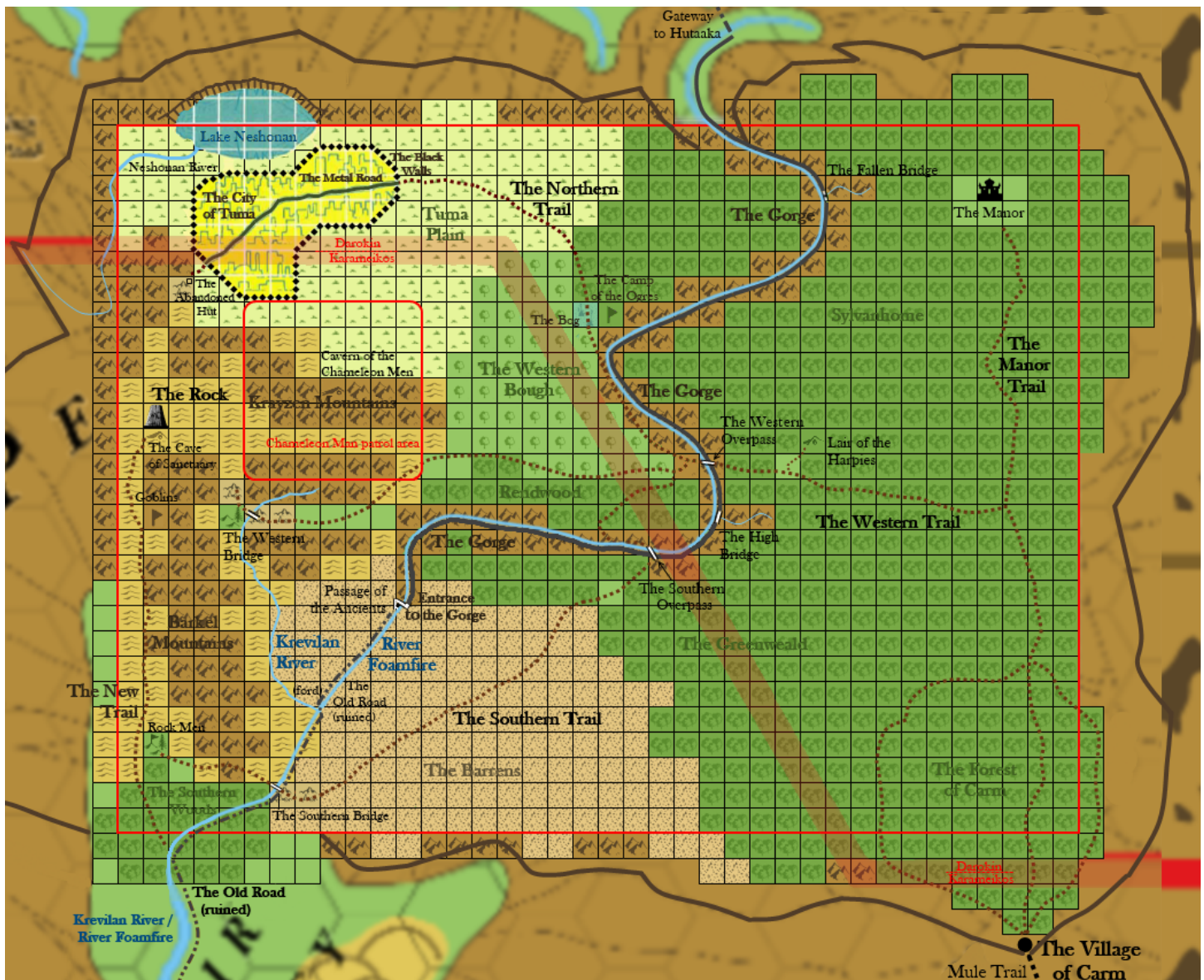
I call that trail the "Mule Trail", since it's said that: "If the characters follow Hakeem out of the inn, they will see him preparing to ride away on a mule." (B8, p.4). So he must've traveled through Sylvanhome with the mule.

17. However, later, in 1987's GAZ1 map, Threshold was moved 12 miles northeast, into the next valley over. Which then makes it located directly south of where I place the village of Carm. However, like Thorf's Atlas of Mystara, I prefer to keep Threshold in its original valley. But in the GAZ1 version of Threshold, Carm would actually be reached via a trail directly north of Threshold. Whereas in the original Threshold, Carm would be reached via the eastern trail out of Threshold, followed by a turn to the north, into the Black Peak Mountains.
18. As for later Official additions to the area north of Threshold—for example the Estate of Reynald (from DUNGEON #42) and the village of Eltan's Spring (AD&D 2E K:KoA)—that's beyond the scope of my project. I'm just trying to highlight and sequentially untangle the Official placement(s) of B8. Others are welcome to connect the dots from there.

In accordance with those principles, here's what a reasonably straightforward merger of B8's Official Placement #2 and the B10 map could look like. Unfortunately, Malone's Official indications were sparse, multiple, and hard to parse, and lacked a quickly-viewable map. However, if TSR had taken the time to sit down and piece together their own Official indications with regard to equating the Krevilan River to "the river northwest of Threshold", and if the existence of the B8 locales and sites were respected just like the existence of modules B1 and B2 was respected, the resulting map would have looked something like this: (On the following pages, see the 6-mile hex map, the 2-mile hex map, and the zoomed-in TRaa map.)







Please note that this image contains a few refinements which are not included in the previous smaller-scale images.

Textual additions:

- Timewise, the adventure Officially takes place in the autumn season (i.e. in the GAZ chronology, the Fall of AC 1000): “It’s **autumn** now, with winter fast-approaching” (Players’ Background p.4). And: “The forest is bright with the **red and gold colors of autumn**, and **fallen leaves** carpet the forest floor” (The Forest, p.4). And: “you are able to thoroughly enjoy the sights and sounds of an **autumn forest**.” (Southern Trail, p.20)
- Therefore, the forest throughout the map is Predominantly Deciduous. Though with some pines: because the crazed ‘enlightened one’ Rahg El-Mahr on the Southern Trail speaks of metaphorically of how “a woodsman fells the **oak and pine!**” (Southern Trail, p.20)
- The Manor is a “palace”, so I use the Palace hex symbol. “I stopped at The Manor, a fine **palace** owned by the wizard Lirdrium Arkayz. “ (p.4)
- The Lair of the Harpies is reached via a small briar-infested path (5-feet wide) which leads north from the main trail. The position of the Lair on the DM’s Map of TRaa appears to be a whole half-mile away, since it’s in another square entirely. But I calculate that the Lair is approximately 540 feet (1/10th mile) north of of northeastern edge of the large clearing, rather than measuring from the trail itself.

This distance is calculated from BECMI wilderness movement rates, which B8 gives a typical example of 90 yards per 10 minutes; but the briars probably make it ½ speed as difficult terrain (like

BECMI mountains rate). The modules says it takes 40 minutes of travel on the path to reach the lair. That makes for 540 feet.

- Since the Bog random encounter is number 2 of 8 on the Northern Trail, I placed it 2/8ths of the way along the Northern Trail. Though it's only randomly placed in the published adventure, I feel that it's good to take an opportunity to include some wetland terrain on the map—and, in real life, there would only be so many low-lying places and springs in the forest, located in specific places—not totally randomly.
- I interpret the Western Bough to be Light Forest (Predominantly Deciduous) based on these two passages: “**The trees are less thick in the Western Bough**, and daylight streams through to light up sections quite cheerily.” and “**As the trees begin to thin out on both sides of the trail[...]**” (Northern Trail p.11)
- Tuma Plain is Grassland. “**TUMA PLAIN: Once out of the woods and past the ogre band the characters enter Tuma Plain. This is a wide stretch of flatland with tall, waving grass like green wheat growing everywhere** but on the dirt trail.”
- I interpret the end of the Northern Trail to be a square of Broken Lands: “you discover to your disappointment that the trail ends abruptly in a **jagged tangle of rock and rubble**, forcing you to go through mountainous terrain to reach The Rock.” (p.14)
- Horizontal lines extending from the Barkel and Krayzen Mountains are interpreted to be foothills (Hill Terrain).
- Areas without lines (Hills) or dots (Rocky Desert) are interpreted to be Clear hexes. But please note that the B8 colored DM's Map has more lines than the Players' Map, so the DM's Map takes precedence.
- I interpret the Barrens to be a Rocky Desert (rather than Sandy Desert), based on the following quotes: “this rough land of **jagged rocks** and hot sand.”

And though one might think that the name of the “Sand Spiders” and their attack description (“Suddenly, the sand around you erupts in little jets”) both suggest that these monsters must dwell in a sandy desert—their description explicitly states that they usually dwell near rock structures or stones: “They inhabit desert or barren regions. Sand spiders live in underground burrows usually **near rocky structures or stones**. Pyramids, sphinxes, **rocky crags** and paved roads offer the best sites” (Sand Spider, p.31-32)

- The exact location of W5 the Cavern of the Chameleon Men was not clear from the map in B8. But this quote makes it clear that the cave is in the adjacent Mountain square: “If the player characters agree to surrender, the chameleon men will disarm them and take them, blindfolded and bound, to the **mountain cavern** of the chameleon men” (p.7)
- I interpret the area just beyond the Western Bridge to have evergreen vegetation, based on the illustration of the bridge:



(p.8)

- I interpret the far end of the Western Trail to be Broken Lands. Because: “The land on both sides of the trail is hard and **rocky. Jagged boulders and sharp stones** litter the ground.” (pp.7, 9)

- I interpret the terrain at the Toll of the Rock Men to have evergreen vegetation, based on the illustration:



(p.22)

- Given these two sample illustrations, it is likely that some or all of the foothills are actually pine-forested hills, but I just marked these two hexes as definitely evergreen.
- However, the drawings of the trees on the TRaa map appear to be deciduous—and the module text describes the autumnal forest as deciduous—so I left the rest of the map deciduous.
- I call the trail on the western edge of the map (which is a hidden extension of the Southern Trail) the “**New Trail**”, based on this passage: “Thus the trail that first appeared to be the most difficult ends up being the easiest, for **this new trail** leads directly to The Rock.” (p.23)
- At site S6, on the hidden trail, there are presumably mountains just off the western edge of the map, since the place is described thusly: “As the trail winds through the **narrow mountain valley**” (p.23)

April 1987: GAZ1

The publication of GAZ1 in April 1987, simply continued the status quo. B10 was mentioned and praised by Allston:

“Thanks go to: Jim Bambra, Graeme Morris and Phil Gallagher, for B10, Night’s Dark Terror which provided helpful materials on the origins of the Karameikos people and on the demihumans living within the Grand Duchy” (p.2)

AND

“The Lost Valley. If you have adventure B10, Night’s Dark Terror, this is where the Valley is located.” (p.41)

On the other hand, B8 was not mentioned, nor was it deprecated, nor was it revised in any way (unlike X4, X5, and X10, which GAZ1 retroactively revised).

Therefore, the status quo of February 1986 continues: namely, the placement of B8 on the Wardle River remains primary during April and May 1987—and there are simultaneously four other Official Placements—until B1-9 was published in June 1987.

June 1987 to June 1990: the Foamfire placement of The Rock becomes paramount

Things were fine. B8's primary location was on the Wardle River. And B10 nicely detailed the area north of Threshold.

Then, in June 1987 (1 year and 10 months after the publication of B8, and 1 year and 4 months after the publication of B10), Jeff Grubb threw a wrench into the works! As editor of B1-9, he chose Official Placement #2 as the primary location of TRaa going forward. The renamed and highly edited "The Hall of Rock" was included in the *B1-9: In Search of Adventure* compilation.

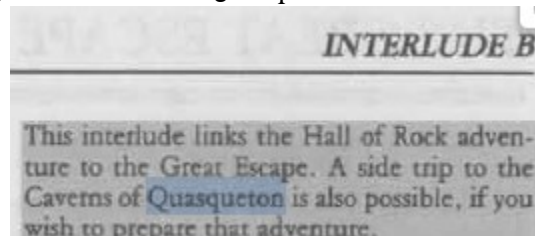
Though Grubb doesn't use the same phrase "on the river northwest of Threshold", there are a few subtle and sparse clues regarding placement, which basically affirm that that is surely the intent. Let's let look at these "Placement Clues" gleaned from B1-9:

- 1987 Placement Clue #1: The description of the first route of the Adventure Flow Chart:

"The first [route] has the players operating west of Threshold. It begins with an elementary dungeon exploration [Castle Caldwell], picks up with a short overland expedition [The Hall of Rock], continues to the town of Luln (with a wicked little surprise for the players) [The Great Escape], then comes back along the Westron Road to Specularum." B1-9, p.6

Relevant data:

1. TRaa is part of the route which is described as "west of Threshold."
 2. The distance from Castle Caldwell/Threshold to the beginning of the Hall of Rock adventure (i.e. the entrance of the Forest of Carm) is described as "a short overland expedition."
 3. After the Hall of Rock, Luln is the next adventure site along the western adventure path.
- 1987 Placement Clue #2: In Interlude B (p.23), following "The Hall of Rock", but before the Luln adventure "The Great Escape", the Caverns of Quasqueton are offered as an optional "side trip":



Relevant data: Due to Official location of Quasqueton in the foothills of the western Cruth Mountains (as shown on the 1983 map of Karamaikos), this data point also suggests a western-oriented location for the Hall of Rock—somewhat west and north of Threshold, rather than east.

- 1987 Placement Clue #3: However, despite the westerly indications of the two previous quotes, the intro to the adventure contradictorily says:

"The player characters begin the adventure in Threshold, which is several hours south of the Forest of Carm." B1-9, p.13

Relevant data: This statement indicates that the entrance to the Forest of Carm is north, moreso than west. Also "several hours" north of Threshold further clarifies what is meant by "a short overland expedition" mentioned in Clue #1.

- 1987 Placement Clue #4: The previous quote seems to be a modified adaptation of the original starting point from the 1985 text:

*"The player characters begin the adventure in a **small village two miles off the south edge of the map**. This village is **directly south** of the Forest of Carm."* —B8 (1985), p.4

Note that the 1985 "small village" is *directly* south. In contrast, the 1987 text doesn't say that Threshold is *directly* south, so Threshold may be more southeast or southwest of the Forest of Carm.

Also "several hours" (from Threshold to the forest) is farther than "two miles" (from the "small village" to the forest).

Therefore, the "small village" which is "two miles" south of the edge of the map, is a different settlement than Threshold, which is not a small village, but a town.

- 1987 Placement Clue #5: *"Each of the adventures given in this book is self-contained. If you have an original module for an adventure that does not appear here in full, you can expand the adventure in this book with material from the longer work with little difficulty."*

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

There are some aspects of the original 1985 module which do "not appear here in full." For example, these are missing from the 1987 version:

- The "small village" two miles south
- The Northern Trail and its encounters. The city of Tuma itself is missing!
- The Southern Trail and its encounters
- The illustration of the Ghostly Horsemen
- The eight pre-generated PCs
- The page of "Additional Adventures" (adventure seeds)
- The five suggested placements on the Expert Set map.

But, that quote from B1-9 page 6 confirms that these details from the original 1985 module *are still officially relevant* for expanding the 1987 adventure, because B8 is not fully reproduced.

This is relevant for placing TRaa in 1987, because the 1985 version provides more detail about the placement near Threshold. 1985 more clearly specifies that the *"area is [...] in the Cruth Mountains **on the river northwest of Threshold**. The Barkel and Krayzen Mountains are extensions of the Cruth Mountains."*

This detail clarifies what is meant by 1987's vague references to TRaa being only several hours north of Threshold but also "west of Threshold." In fact, the 1985 version explicitly says that the Threshold placement is aligned with "the river northwest of Threshold." Which explains what is meant by north and west. Basically, the entrance to the Forest of Carm is north of Threshold, but The Rock is to the west (northwest) of Threshold. Without the fuller information from the original module, we wouldn't know that the Krevilan River is equated to the River Foamfire.

- 1987 Placement Clue #6: Compared to the 1983 map of Karameikos, on the 1987 map, Threshold has apparently* shifted approximately 12 miles to the northeast.

* (I say "apparently", because that is a straightforward interpretation; but a valid case could be made that the town wasn't shifted. But rather that it was just depicted in the next available hex, for the sake of "artistic clarity" in a hex-centric format. Nevertheless, in later depictions—even in maps that weren't hex-based—the town seemed to have shifted.)

Let's see how it fits. I'll paste Official Placement #2 directly onto the 1987 map from B1-9. Though Threshold has shifted 12 miles northeast, its location is still a "few hours south" of the entrance of the Forest of Carm. So there's no need to shift TRaa map. And doing so would break Michael Malone's equation of Krevilan and Foamfire rivers.



- 1987 Placement Clue #7: The 1987 map re-draws the shape of the River Foamfire yet again.

On the map above, I left the 1983 version of Threshold and the River Foamfire visible as a transparent layer. Basically the 1987 map mangles the rivers into hex-shaped monstrosities. Which means these hexicentric 1987 river shapes are just “artistic licence” for hexy “presentation purposes.” They don’t really reflect the accurate, natural river shapes.

And so (though not shown here) the B10 (1986) shape of the River Foamfire remains the foremost Official depiction even into 1987 and onward.

- 1987 Placement Clue #8: Even in a “cheap inn” in Threshold, “anyone” (=everyone) “such as tavern patrons or innkeepers”) knows about and highly respect both Jenlar Temlin and Lirdrium Arkayz, and everyone knows that Arkayz is a philosopher, sage, and advisor. “Anyone” (everyone) knows directions to The Manor.

As you're finishing breakfast at a cheap inn in Threshold, a traveler walks into the common room. In a loud voice he says,

If player characters ask others (such as tavern patrons or innkeepers) about Jenlar Temlin or Lirdrium Arkayz, they will be told that both are highly respected. Arkayz is a philosopher, sage, and advisor. The characters can get directions to The Manor from anyone they ask.

Relevant data: Therefore, The Manor and its inhabitants must be situated near enough to Threshold to be familiar to everyone in town. The Manor must be in the Threshold local region, not far off.

So there you have “Official Placement #6.” It is identical to Official Placement #2 from 1985, and also identical to the continued existence of Placement #2 on the B10 map throughout 1986, as I illustrated in the previous chapter. The only seeming difference is that, in 1987, the town of Threshold has (apparently) moved! But this fact does not affect the equation or positioning of the Krevilan with the Foamfire.

So basically, we see three eras of placement:

- August 1985 to March 1986: During this period, there are simultaneously five different Official placements, representing five different Official continuities of the World of Urt: Earth’s Age of Magic. (And also Official Placement #0, where TRaa is a standalone mini-setting, about which nothing further is known.)
- February 1986 to May 1987: B10 is published, which doesn’t change or interfere with the primary placement (on the Wardle River). But B10 does result in a challenging puzzle with regard to Official Placement #2 (the Foamfire=Krevilan placement)—even though its still a secondary placement.
- June 1987 onward: When B1-9 is published, the Foamfire placement becomes paramount, as the only Official placement going forward. Since later trumps earlier, this placement remains til the end of Mystara’s publishing arc in 1996.

The fact that TRaa wasn’t actually depicted on maps was a logistical oversight, which our research article tries to rectify. Just because an Official indication was obtrusely worded, difficult to cartographically render, and mostly forgotten by subsequent designers, and by fans...doesn’t mean it didn’t happen.

July 1990 to Present: The Rock is retroactively copied to another planet—from the World of Earth to the World of Mystara

There's an oft-overlooked aspect of the BECMI campaign setting which is relevant if we are trying to suss out all of the Official continuities of The Rock adventure area. Namely, of all the TSR worlds, this setting was unique in that, over the course of its publishing arc, the design teams enacted a (partially accidental, partially intentional) stealth shift and reboot...to another planet!

In 1986, in the gold box Immortals Set, the World of Urt—the default setting of BECMI D&D—was explicitly said to be our own Earth during a prehistoric *Age of Magic*. In fact, it's a little known fact that the *Age of Magic* was an official name for the setting as a whole.

Therefore, when the The Rock adventure area was published, this area—including its five parallel placements—was located on prehistoric Earth/Urt, or rather, five different parallel Earths. However, the primary (first-listed) Earth placement was the Wardle River placement (from August 1985 through May 1987).

In June 1987, B1-9 was published, which made the River Foamfire the primary placement. Still, all five of these variants of The Rock were official parallels of the World of Urt: The Age of Magic.

However, this prehistoric Earth-based setting was gradually deprecated, partly due to institutional forgetfulness by the Basic D&D design team, and partly due to some accidental and intentional revisions and statements by Aaron Allston and Bruce Heard. Which, all together, finally shifted the lens to a different, non-Earth world...the World of Mystara.

Folks are mostly unaware of the Earth: Age of Magic setting, and how it was “stealth replaced” by the World of Mystara, when then became the main legacy timeline. But for educational purposes, here are some of the key shifts from Earth to Mystara:

1. In January 1990, the first episode of the *Voyage of the Princess Ark* fiction series stated that the Master Set world map was ‘Wrong, Wrong, Wrong!’ Most everything outside of the Known World was retroactively reinterpreted in a comic light. However, technically, this was still the prehistoric Earth/Urt Age of Magic—but with the world’s “political map” comically reconceived by Bruce Heard; in stark contrast to Mentzer’s implied/intended interpretation of the world map (see my interview with Mentzer here, about the countries of Brasol, Cestia, Pelatan, etc.: <https://www.pandius.com/fmentzer.html>).

So this first episode of the VotPA established yet another parallel world of prehistoric Earth/Urt: The Age of Magic. This didn’t affect the status quo with regard to The Rock adventure area on the River Foamfire (since June 1987).

2. However, six months later, in July 1990, the *Hollow World Campaign Set* was published. Due to an accidental but drastic and Official shift in map projection (from Mollweide to Robinson) and concomitant cropping, this world’s ocean became much, much smaller than Urt/Earth’s ocean.

Also, Allston explicitly gave this world an Officially tiny diameter: 6,190 miles...which is less than half the diameter of the Earth! (12,756 miles)

Which means that—accidental or not—Allston’s world *is not Earth*, at any time—prehistoric or not. Prior to the publication of the HWCS, the sparse indications about Urt as being the real-world ancient Earth can reasonably be assumed to be valid, since nothing contradicted it. But clearly, at this point in Basic D&D’s multi-decades-long product arc, the design team no longer held any intention or awareness of retaining continuity with the very sparse mentions of the Earth: Age of Magic conceit from the old Mentzerian gold box.

Allston’s innovative introduction of the tiny planetary diameter finally nixed that conceit. But even at this point, if just the Hollow World concept had been introduced, without the shrinkage of the planetary diameter, then HWCS world still could have been interpreted to be simply a prehistoric Hollow Earth during our Age of Magic. However, due to the Officially smaller diameter, Allston’s planet could no longer reasonably be interpreted to be a prehistoric Earth.

So a new official D&D planet (not Earth) was born. Since older products and modules continued to be referred to, it is assumed that previous BECMI books were retroactively deemed to be part of this planet as well—but only to the extent that they didn’t conflict with the new information presented in the HWCS. Since that was TSR policy: later sources trump earlier contradictions.

Also, due to this same policy, going forward, when retroactively constructing the World of Mystara in 1990 out of previous products, there's no reason that the World of Mystara would dip into obsoleted conceptions (e.g. all five alternate placements of the The Rock from 1985). The 1990 birth of Mystara would just draw from the latest version (1987). In other words, in the World of Mystara, only the Foamfire placement is Official.

(Or rather, technically, since both B8 and B1-9 are presumably still Official for Mystara, the indications within B1-9 that the original module is still relevant for expanding the adventure, would still result in the four other alternative placements in Mystara as well. Which means four other Official parallel versions of Mystara. But there's no question that for the World of Mystara, only the last-published placement is primary.)

However, there is something which affects the Mystaran version of TRaa to a greater extent. Which definitely makes this version of The Rock an inherently a different parallel world than the previous six placements. Namely, my understanding is that the TRaa map would need to be significantly shrunk in order to fit the new (tiny) planetary diameter! So the World of Mystara's version of TRaa does have a different scale than the World of Earth's version of TRaa.

At first, this newly designed planet had no name. "Urt"—though apparently forgotten by the design team—could still hypothetically be used as the official Druidic name for the planet, in all incarnations of the setting, even through the AD&D 2E era and beyond. But "The Known World" is possibly the most fitting name for this world from July 1990 until the name "Mystara" appeared 13 months later, since the back cover of the HWCS uses the term for the whole planet: "THE KNOWN WORLD: IT ISN'T FLAT, BUT IT IS HOLLOW."

3. In August 1991, DRAGON magazine #172, the name "Mystara" first appeared in print. Now this small planet, less than half the size of Earth, has a name.
4. In July 1992, *Wrath of Immortals* was published, which drastically revised the gold box Immortals cosmology—in a retroactive way which assumed the D&D Multiverse was always like that. As for Urt/Earth, the entry for the Immortal Terra gives one of her aliases as "Mother Earth." However, that does nothing to really restore the prehistoric *Earth: Age of Magic* conceit, which is really a different setting and parallel world, distinct from Mystara. WotI is the last of a series of "nails in the coffin" of the *World of Urt: The Age of Magic* campaign setting.

Hypothetically, though forgotten by current WotC designers and by most aficionados, the Age of Magic campaign setting, as published, still Officially exists in the ancient prehistoric past of D&D Earth...that is, the world seen in various TSR/WotC Earth-based campaign models or parallel Earth timelines: the Historical Reference Earth, d20 Past, Legends of Sherwood 3E (from DRAGON magazine), Gothic Earth, Boot Hill, Dawn Patrol, Gangbusters, Dark • Matter, Urban Arcana, Gamma World, Star*Drive, and so forth. The Forgotten Realms Fandom Wiki acknowledges that the BECMi Age of Magic is a depiction of the same D&D Earth from which came the earthly immigrants to Toril (e.g. Earth Egyptians to Mulhorand): <https://forgottenrealms.fandom.com/wiki/Earth#Magic>

In summary: this tiny World of Mystara exists as a distinct world, which is similar to, but significantly different from the World of Earth/Urt: The Age of Magic.

1. February 1985 to May 1987 (incl. B8, B10, GAZ1): The World of Earth/Urt: The Age of Magic. The five Official Placements of The Rock means there are five parallel Urts, of which the Wardle River placement is primary (first-listed).
2. June 1987 to June 1990 (B1-9). The World of Earth/Urt: The Age of Magic. The primary placement is the River Foamfire.
3. July 1990 onward (HWCS). The World of Mystara. The primary placement is the River Foamfire, and the map scale is shrunk due to the smaller planetary size.

The Rock in other metatextual realities (edition shifts)

Though TRaa has not been officially stated out in anything other than BECMI, there are at least a few sparse Official Mystara materials in all subsequent editions—which means that the TRaa exists in those Mystaras as well.

In the D&D Multiverse, edition shifts and conversions into or out of a rules edition *have a subtle in-world effect*, which Forgotten Realms sources refer to as the *Metatext*, and which Bruce Heard referred to as a *Reality Shift* (an Immortal-level spell). The wider World of Mystara has been depicted in other Metatexts.

All this to say: since Mystara itself exists in all post-BECMI editions of the D&D Multiverse, The Rock adventure area also Officially exists “off screen” in all of the subsequent editions. These are distinct parallel versions of TRaa...since even if everything were to be re-statted as closely to the original as possible, the stats of each edition have significantly different in-world effects. For example, with regard to the pre-generated PCs in B8: a 5E wizard is going to have a lot more spells than a BECMI magic-user of the same level. Also the art style (e.g. the visual depiction of Harpies) may differ significantly from edition to edition.

Here are just a few notes (not comprehensive) which affirm that Mystara (and thus TRaa) exists in these other Metatextual realities:

- AD&D 1E: The Rock would exist in this reality of Earth: The Age of Magic, with the same five Official Placements, but with AD&D 1E stats. As with the BECMI version, the Wardle River placement would be primary (from 1985 to 1986) until the River Foamfire placement becomes primary in 1987.
 - In February 1985 (six months before the publication of B8), in *ACA: The Book of Marvelous Magic*, we see an Alternate World Gate (an AD&D bard’s lute) which presumably leads to the 1E version of Urt/Earth: The Age of Magic.
 - In June 1988, with *GAZ7: The Northern Reaches*, the gazetteers began to include an Official 1E conversion guide. This continued through December 1988, with *GAZ10: The Orcs of Thar*.
- AD&D 2E: Since we only see this world post-1987, The Rock would only be located in the Official River Foamfire Placement, but with AD&D 2E stats. However, due to the timeframe which straddles the change from Earth to “tiny Mystara”, we would see a couple different versions:
 - 1) When official 2E stats materials first appear in February 1989, this would be the World of Earth/Urt: Age of Magic, with The Rock located on the River Foamfire, but with AD&D 2E stats.
 - 2) When the HWCS comes out in July 1990 (and this tiny-sized new non-Earth planet is named Mystara in August 1991), this would be the World of Mystara, with The Rock located on the River Foamfire, but with the scale shrunk to fit the small-diameter planet, and with AD&D 2E stats.

Here are the key 2E Mystara publishing dates:

- In February 1989, in *GAZ11: The Republic of Darokin*, the gazetteers began to include an Official 2E conversion guide.
- In October 1991, the *Rules Cyclopedia* included an extensive AD&D 2E conversion appendix. This appendix also affirmed that the translation of a character from the Basic D&D reality to the AD&D 2E reality is an actual “in-world” event.
- As late as September 1992, with *PC4: Night Howlers*, we still see Official 2E conversion guides included.
- 1994-1995: Mystara 2E boxed sets
- 1994-1995: Red Steel boxed sets
- 1996: Savage Coast downloads
- Rules Cyclopedia D&D (including the Black Box and Wrath of the Immortals)
 - In April 1991, the Black Box was published, followed by the Rules Cyclopedia in October 1991. This was the heyday edition for the Allstonian/Heardian World of Mystara.
 - Since the previously-published HWCS (July 1990) was the dividing line between Earth and Mystara, the Mentzerian *Earth: The Age of Magic* setting was never depicted in this edition—only the small planet of Mystara.
 - Therefore, The Rock in this reality only uses Mystara’s Official River Foamfire Placement, and would be shrunk to match the smaller planet size (as would all subsequent editions); but it would be re-statted in

accordance with the Rules Cyclopedia. Though BECM and RC D&D are nearly identical, there are a few differences.

- D&D 3.0E. e.g. Official stats for Duke Stefan were published by WotC: <https://pandius.com/stefan.html> A 3.0E version of The Rock would exist, with the Official River Foamfire Placement.
 - One minor note: based on analogy with Lizard-Men, the Chameleon Men and Rock Men would be called “Chameleonfolk” and “Rockfolk” in 3E onward.
- D&D 3.5E: e.g. “Kill Bargle” DUNGEON magazine. A 3.5E version of The Rock would exist, with the Official River Foamfire Placement, and “small Mystara” scale.
- D&D 4E. Fourth Edition Bargle stats were published in a WotC website article: <https://web.archive.org/web/20130710150259/w%77w.wizards.com/DnD/Article.aspx?x=dnd/4alum/20081017a>. A 4E version of The Rock would exist, with the Official River Foamfire Placement, and “small Mystara” scale.
- D&D 5.0E. Mystara is mentioned in the 2014 DMG p.68. A 5.0E version of The Rock would exist, with the Official River Foamfire Placement, and “small Mystara” scale.
- D&D 5.2E. Mystara has a chapter in the 2024 *Worlds and Realms* book. A 5.2E version of The Rock would exist, with the Official River Foamfire Placement, and “small Mystara” scale.

All this to say, hypothetically, different edition-specific realities of The Rock exist, but were not actually published.

In this section, we looked at two depictions of the area north of Threshold: in B8 and in B10. And we suggest that this could reasonably be interpreted as a continuity split. But we also show hypothetically what it would mean for the two depictions to be physically merged into one (admittedly awkward) map.

Yet at this point in the conversation, I still am not committing to one solution or the other. When asking the question of “what would be the most archeptal, most richly synthesized, primary legacy continuity”, this is where—when necessary—I allow myself to shift from pure “scholarship” to creative synthesis.

But before I offer my own solution, let’s look at how other aficionados have addressed this conundrum so far.

Aficionado placements of The Rock

My teenage self: making sense of the geography of B10 and “The Hall of Rock” (c.1988)

In the late ‘80s, I ran B10 and B1-9 for my brothers. This was around 1987/1988, so I was around 13 or 14 years old. As far as I recall, I ran B10 first, and then “The Hall of Rock.” I recall trying to (frustratingly) figure out how the maps fit together. After running the lovingly crafted B10, I thought it was pretty lame that B1-9 contained just a cheap photocopied black & white hex map which didn’t even show where the adventures are located!

When I ran “The Hall of Rock”, I recall following the instructions which state that the PCs reach the Forest of Carm via “several hours” travel north from Threshold—presumably directly through mountains north of town. And then, at the end of the adventure, the party made their way down the Krevilan River...which I decided was somehow the River Foamfire from B10.

The best that my mind settled on was a vague supposition that the Krevilan/Foamfire river valley was lined with a single crest of mountains on either side—to the east and west; but that the rest of “The Hall of Rock” map existed just beyond the edge of the two crestlines, just out of sight.

I vaguely recall proclaiming to my younger brother: “Yeah, this river is the same river that you used to reach the Lost Valley of Hutaaka.” The party made their way down the valley, to their Threshold home without further comment or incident. In other words, I handwaved it.

But...this experience of imagining B10 and “The Hall of Rock” occurred in the same play-space north of Threshold, did affirm my present-day willingness to delve into mapping out what that could actually look like.

Matthew Levy's "Timeline concerning the city of Tuma"

(Mystara Mailing List, February 11th 1998)

<https://pandius.com/tuma.html>

In the late '90s when I discovered the Mystara Mailing List, I was astounded to see Matthew Levy's timeline of Tuma. On the MML someone had stated: "The only one that wasn't ever really placed (to my knowledge) is B8: Journey to the Rock, which is pretty much just a generic module."

To which Levy firmly replied:

"Wrong. B8 was placed in southeastern Darokin, just to the north of the eastern Five Shires where those two rivers start in the Cruth mountains that flow west through the forest to Darokin city ... these two rivers are the two that show up in the module."

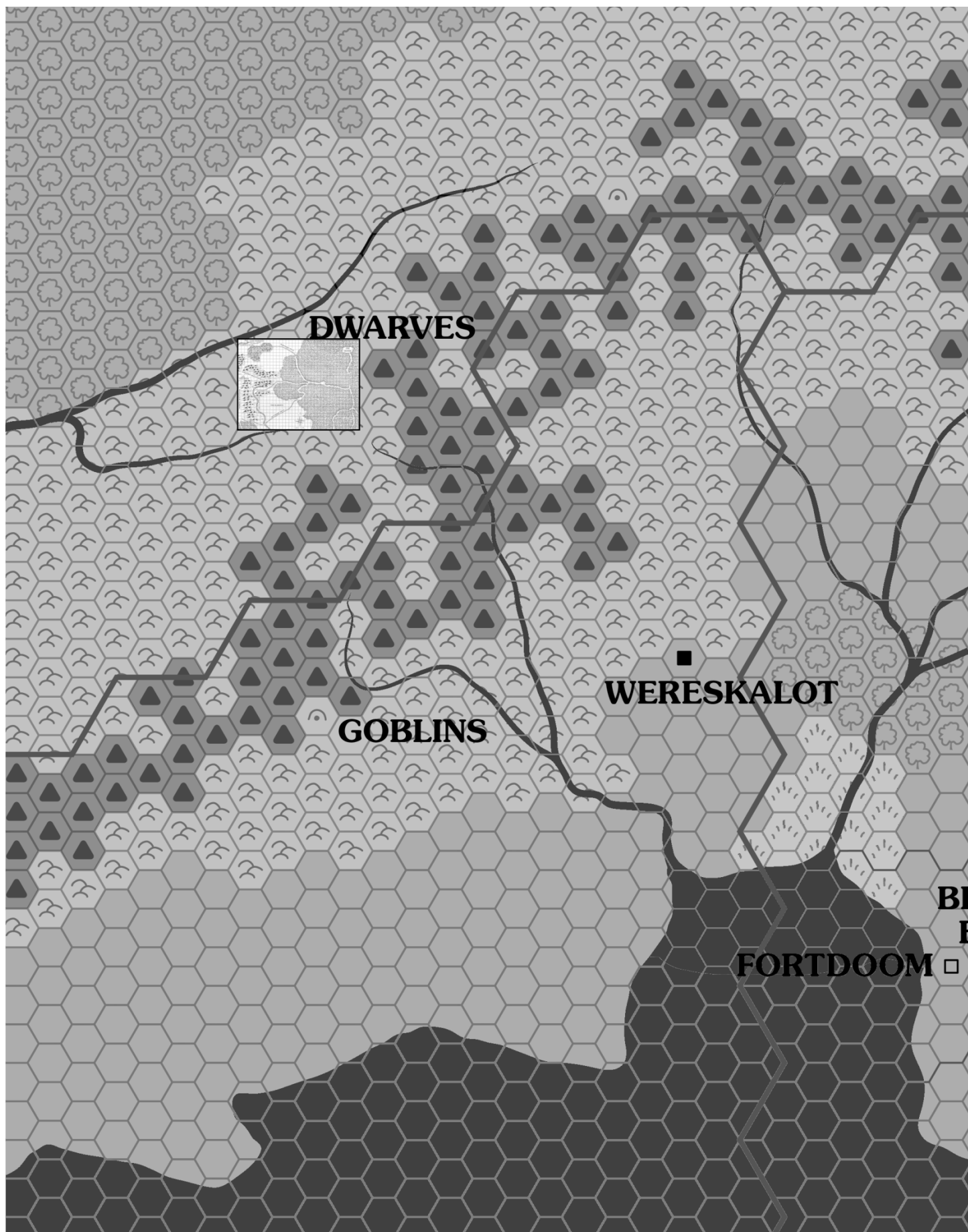
At the time, I assumed that Levy had access to the original B8 module, and was reading straight from the text. So I assumed that he had the Official placement on hand. And I assumed that the Threshold placement was simply an editorial change for B1-9. This was before the time of the PDFs, so there was no way to fact check, since the original B8 was pretty rare.

In retrospect, Levy's statement is incorrect. His placement is his own innovation, not supported by the text of B8 or B1-9.

Here is approximately where Levy places TRaa on the Expert Set map: with the Krevilan River and the Neshonan River equated to the (later named) Greyhare River and Helleck River, respectively:



On the 1981 Expert Set map, Levy's placement would be here:



Source: <https://mystara.thorfmads.com/expert-karamikos-6-1981/> (Modified to make black & white.)

Which leads to a research question: Did Michael Malone base TRaa map on the 1981 map of Karamaikos/Darokin?

The answer is almost certainly “no.” Because, if he had used the 1981 map, the shapes of the two rivers would have been closer, and 1981’s hilly hexes which cover the area would have been taken into account. So it looks like the presence of two rivers on the 1981 map, and the presence of two rivers on the 1985 TRaa map are sheer coincidence. They are not shaped similarly. Furthermore, Malone does not refer to this location in the text. In this vicinity, Malone only refers to “the river northwest of Wereskalot”—which is the Wardle River.

* * *

As a side note, we can also take a look at how Levy’s placement lines up with the much later 1989 map from *GAZ11: The Republic of Darokin*. Note: the rivers on the GAZ11 map are warped into hexagonal shapes to match the hex grid; and so are not necessarily more authentically shaped than the 1981/1983 Expert Set maps.

Having said that, on this 1989 map, the two rivers, the western hilly terrain (i.e. the Barkel and Krayzen Mountains) and the eastern forested terrain do match up nicely with TRaa map. However...this appears to be a complete coincidence, since GAZ11 doesn’t mention the B8 adventure or locales in any way. This GAZ11 map didn’t exist when B8 or B1-9 were published in 1985 and 1987.



What are we to make of Levy's placement? Perhaps Levy was loosely interpreting the statement from B8 with regard to Official Placement #1: "The area is in the Cruth Mountains, on the river northwest of Wereskalot."

Because it's true that Levy's placement is on a river northwest of Wereskalot. But B8 doesn't say "a river" or "any river northwest of Wereskalot"...it says "the river northwest of Wereskalot." Which can only be reasonably interpreted to be the Wardle River, immediately northwest of Wereskalot.

Due to the authoritative way in which Levy proclaimed the Grayhare River location, and due to the admittedly neat way that the terrain does line up quite nicely, and due to this being the pre-PDF era when B8 was not easily accessible for fact-checking, at that time Levy posted that in 1998, I wrongly assumed that Levy's interpretation was a close representation of B8's official statement.

Only later do we see that—though a nice match terrain-wise—Levy's placement is his own innovation.

David Keyser's comments (Mystara Mailing List, December 23rd, 2004)

<https://pandius.com/WotC/955471.htm>

"I don't have the reference in front of me, but the MML a few years ago suggested in Darokin near the Shire border, south of the Westron Road. It requires you to invert directions on the B8 map, **north becomes south, and east becomes west. That lines up the mountains correctly.**

"That is where I put it when I used it, but Sind might be a better choice.

[...]

"Matthew Levy did a short article with a timeline which made a decent attempt to fit the module B8 into Darokin, you can find the article at the Vaults. I liked his ideas so much I took it and ran with it, integrating some adventures in south and east Darokin with B8 and it became one of the earlier themes in my campaign.

"When I ran the adventure I used the northern trail (**inverted it became the southern trail**), and the western(**east**) trail."

My analysis:

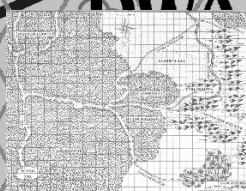
- I don't know whose MML post Keyser is referring to. Not sure if he means Levy.
- I am not sure which of the two river systems near the Darokin—Shire border he's referring to. And I don't see how flipping the map north-south and east-west makes the fit better. I understand he was trying to make the B8 mountains to be in the east, instead of the west. Okay. But why also flip the map north-south? And given the scale, the two rivers don't seem to match the Expert Set map of Darokin at all. Maybe Keyser was only trying to line up the mountains(???)
- But, in any case, here are three very tentative guesses on my part: (???)

Map on the following page: Three approximate guesses as to David Keyser's fan-placement. Please note TRaa is flipped both horizontally and vertically!

Lastly, David suggested that Sind might be a better placement, though he didn't use it in his own campaign. I assume he interpreted the culture of The Manor to be M-Indian. Though in my analysis (as presented in the first section of this document), I would argue an M-Arabian culture.



DWARVES



■
WERESKAI

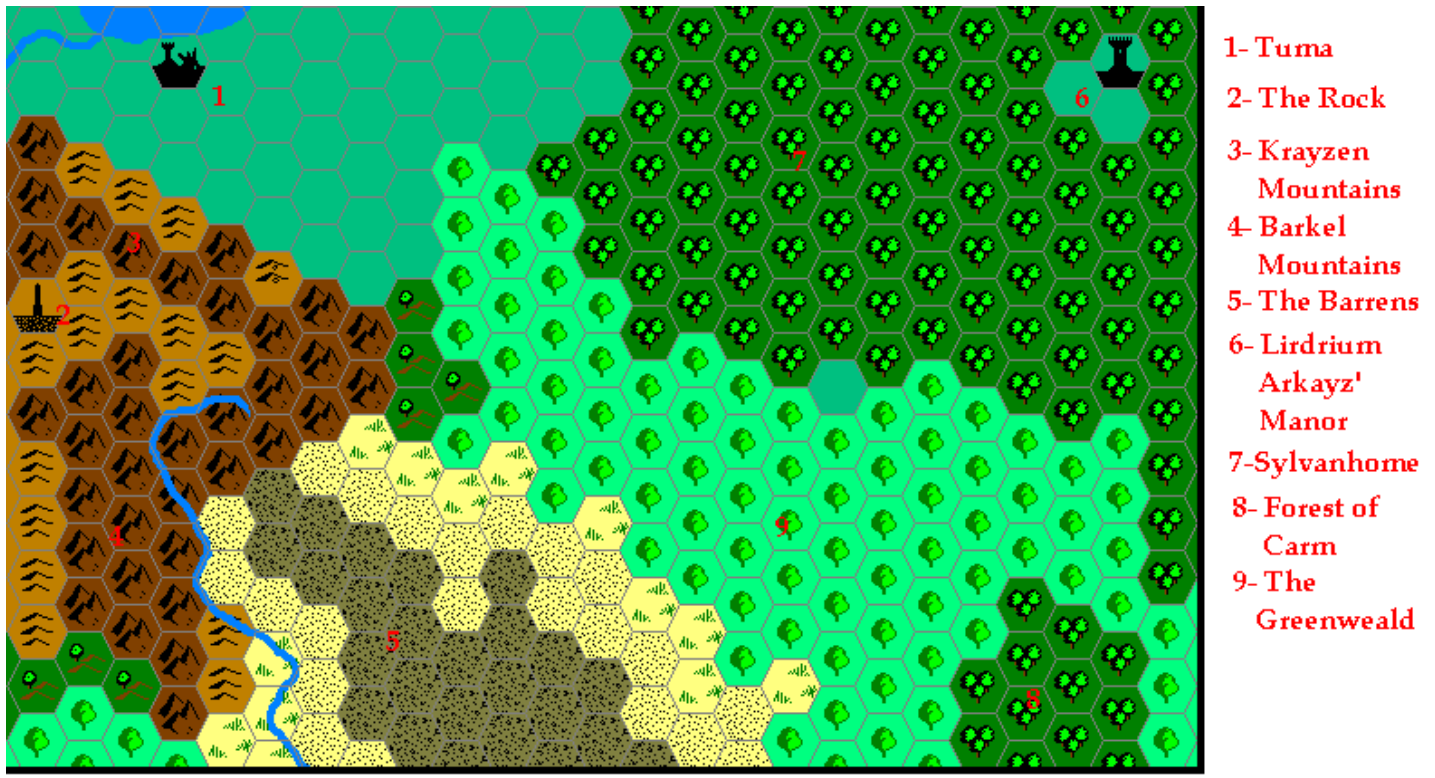
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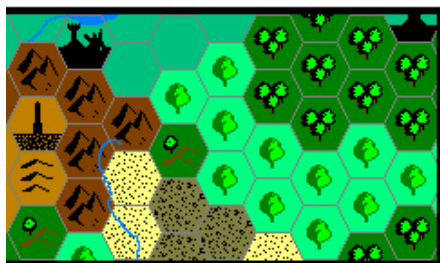
Andrew Theisen's Hex Maps of Journey to the Rock (July 3rd, 2004)

<https://mystara.thorfbmaps.com/cthulhudrew-journey-to-the-rock-1/>

Andrew converted the ½-mile grid map to a 1-mile hex map and an 8-mile hex map:



1 hex = 1 mile ↑



1 hex = 8 miles
←

Hex Map of Module B8: Journey to the Rock

By Andrew "Cthulhudrew" Theisen
7/3/2004

Andrew Theisen's further comments (Mystara Mailing List, December 25th 2004)

<https://pandius.com/MML/mystara-l/2004-274.txt>

Next let's look at Andrew comments on the MML in 2004:

"In the back of the module, they give two suggested possible locations for it- either in the Cruth Mtns (nw of Wereskalot or nw of Threshold), or else in Darokin (n of Lake Amsorak). It is included in B1-9, but **no location is given (or even suggested)** and at least one other adventure doesn't take place in Karameikos (the Lost City), so it doesn't necessarily have to be set there, either.

"Someone on the MMB mentioned that **he reversed the North and South directions of the map and placed it in SE Darokin, with the rivers flowing into the Helleck River near Hinmeet/Hendry.**

"In any case, the difficulty with placing it is twofold- 1) the scale given on the map (1/2 mi per square) makes it fit a rather large area (as shown in the 8 mi hex version) and thus 2) trying to fit it into areas that are already mapped out at that scale is difficult.

"Of course, there's no reason why it couldn't be done, with some tweaking. **I've tentatively fit it into Nagpuri, north of the plateau, in the middle region that got chopped out of the Atruaghin map-** but even there it requires a few tweaks (it doesn't quite match the 24 mile/hex version of the Sind region). I'm still looking at some regions of the Known World where it could fit, too.

"No particular reason, of course, just thought it would be interesting to try and do it. :)"

My analysis:

- Andrew gives a recap of the 1985 Official placements, but he fails to mention that in every instance, Malone explicitly aligned the Krevilan River with an existing river on the Expert Set maps.
- It's not true that in B-9 "no location is given (or even suggested)". Please see my summary of the Placement Clues earlier in this document.
- It sounds like Theisen decided on Nagpuri, in eastern Sind, north of the Atruaghin Clans, as the location of TRaa in his campaign. You can see maps of Nagpuri here: <https://mystara.thorfmads.com/?s=Nagpuri>

Andrew Theisen's "Mystara Modules and Placement" notes from 2007.

<https://pandius.com/modules.html#b>

This is a sort of reference chart, which provides Official placement notes gleaned from hard-to-find modules (especially pre-PDF era). Can we expect Theisen to stick close to the source texts?

In this case, unfortunately: "no."

Here's Theisen's entry for B8:

B8: Journey to the Rock

Location: Several hours north of Threshold, Karameikos.

Location Notes: B1-9 suggests placing the adventure in the Threshold region. The module itself suggests placing it northwest of Threshold, in the Cruth Mountains northwest of Wereskalot (Five Shires), or in the mountains and hills north of Lake Amsorak (Darokin).

Time Period: Any

Staging Suggestions: Given the history and geography of the module, it is difficult to easily drop into any location in Mystara. The suggested locations do not fit terribly well. Placing it somewhere near the Savage Coast or Sind might fit better.

Continuity Problems: The terrain around the Manor and Hall of the Rock do not fit in well with the suggested locations. A fan map fitting the module to the northeast of Threshold is available on the Mystara Message Boards.

References: B1-9 (p.14)

Let's comb through these notes, line by line:

- *"Several hours north of Threshold, Karamaikos."*
[True. So far, so good. However, Theisen overlooked the indication that TRaa is also described as being "west of Threshold."]
- *"B1-9 suggests placing the adventure in the Threshold region."*
[True enough. But it might be good to reiterate: north and west of Threshold.]
- *"The [B8] module itself suggests placing it northwest of Threshold, in the Cruth Mountains northwest of Weraskalot (Five Shires), or in the mountains and hills north of Lake Amsorak (Darokin)."*
[Here I feel that Theisen did readers a disservice. Because it was important to note that Michael Malone explicitly lined TRaa map up with the rivers on the Expert Set maps. In all five Official Placements, Malone uses the Krevilan River as the anchor point, equating it to one of the rivers on the Expert Set maps. But Theisen just says: "the module itself suggests placing it northwest of Threshold"; whereas Malone actually said: "on the river northwest of Threshold."]
- *"Time Period: Any"*
[This may be a nitpick, but I prefer that Theisen would be clearer about distinguishing between what the modules actually say, versus his personal interpretation. Because the later Gazetteer-era sources explicitly stated that the modules (including B8 and B1-9) are assumed to take place in AC 1000 unless otherwise specified. And B9 provided no indications otherwise. So a more 'canonically' clear answer would be: "Assumed AC 1000." If Theisen then wanted to provide further interpretations, he could say: "But no events in the module necessitate a particular time period."]
- *"Staging Suggestions: Given the history and geography of the module, it is difficult to easily drop into any location in Mystara. The suggested locations do not fit terribly well."*
[This has been true. But I think that fans' misunderstanding of Malone's intent for the map to fit into a carved out valley "in the mountain or hill terrain" has made this harder than it could have been. Because we are used to trying to *match up the terrain and vegetation on both maps*—whereas Malone was always saying that *the B8 map would trump the small-scale maps, and thereby result in drawing a valley which is enveloped in the mountains (or hills)*. Though the issue was also complicated by the incongruous development of the area north of Threshold in B10.]
- *"Placing it somewhere near the Savage Coast or Sind might fit better."*
[Okay, so I applaud Theisen for offering his own placements. Yet it would have been even better if he had explained why. And even better: if he has offered exact locations, rather than vague sub-continent-sized suggestions! Why the Savage Coast? Why Sind? The latter was possibly inspired by David Keyser's earlier suggestion of Sind.]
- *"Continuity Problems: The terrain around the Manor and Hall of the Rock do not fit in well with the suggested locations. A fan map fitting the module to the northeast of Threshold is available on the Mystara Message Boards."*
[Okay, the difficulty of matching the terrain is noted again. Theisen then points out the northeastern placement by Simone Neri (2007): <https://pandius.com/thrshld.html>]
- *"References: B1-9 (p.14)"*
[Theisen left out the locational reference on B1-9 page 6: *"The first [route] has the players operating west of Threshold."* And p.15, where it says that anyone/everyone in Threshold knows about The Manor and its master. And also the reference on p.23 to The Hall of Rock being located generally between Threshold and the Caverns of Quasqueton, which also suggests a western-oriented location for the Hall of Rock.]

The follow sections of this Research Document are unfinished, as of March 29, 2025.

Let's look at two of the nicest looking fan-placements: Simone Neri's northeastern placement, and Robin's northwestern placement.

First off, both made a beautiful, functional map. Both maps would be of service to potentially any DM, depending on what they have going on in the west or east of Karameikos.

Simone's tally:

- Approximately honored the clue that the area is located "several hours" north of Threshold. He shifted it to northeast, but still approximately in the "several hours" range.
- Approximately honored the clue that "everyone" in Threshold knows about The Manor and its occupants. Since the area is still close-ish to Threshold.
- Simone didn't honor the clue that the area is "west of Threshold" on the adventure flowchart.
- Nor the clue about the Caverns of Quasqueton being on the way from The Rock to Luhn.

Robin's tally:

- Honored that the clue that the area is "west of Threshold" on the adventure flowchart.
- Honored the clue about the Caverns of Quasqueton are on the way from The Rock to Luhn.
- Didn't address the clue that the area is "several hours" north of Threshold.
- Didn't address the clue that everyone ("anyone") in Threshold knows about The Manor and its inhabitants. Because the Gustos River is pretty far to be a source of gossip among all of the townsfolk of Threshold.

Simone Neri's "Detail of the Threshold Region" (2007)

<https://pandius.com/thrshld.html>

<https://pandius.com/karhstry.html>

WHERE IS TUMA?

Map with the possible placement of Tuma

Adventure module B8 – Journey to the Rock, introduced the ancient city of Tuma and its background. Even though the module had a generic setting, it gave some suggestion on how to include its scenario and background in the Known World setting. Two options were given here: the first was to place Tuma in the mountain or hill region north of Lake Amsorak in Darokin; the second was to place the scenario in the mountain country west of Wereskalot, in the Five Shires, or west of Threshold, in Karameikos.

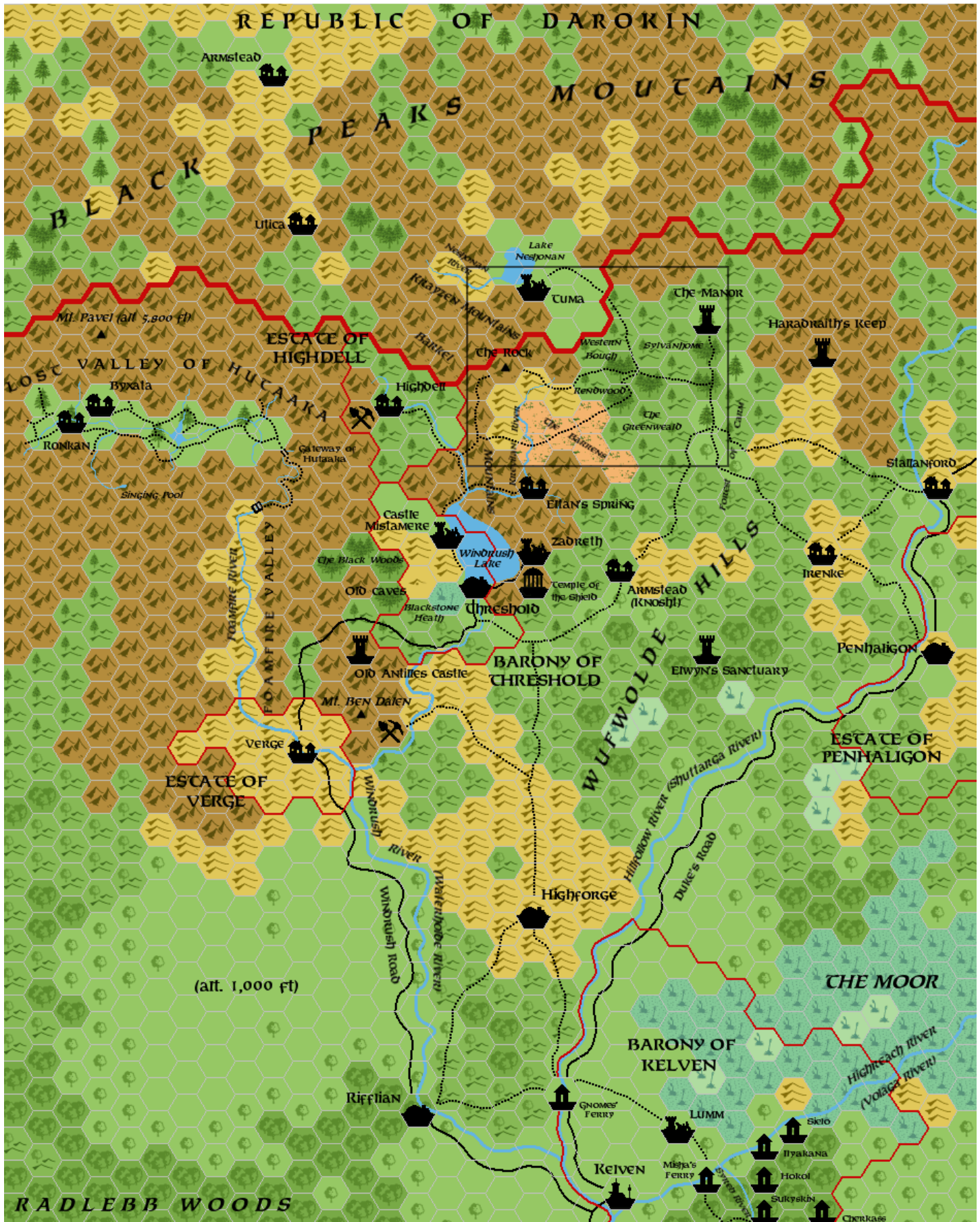
The later adventure module B1-9 – In Search of Adventure, supported B8's second choice by placing Tuma in Karameikos' mountains, but had the Journey to the Rock adventure start in the area north of Threshold.

Placing Tuma's setting is not so easy, because the area's map featured in B8 is quite large (about three 8-miles hexes from west to east, and two from north to south) and placing it north of Threshold would alter the terrain featured in GAZ1's and other supplements' maps. The best choice seems thus to place B8's map north-east of Threshold – looking at GAZ1's 8-miles per hex map of the Grand Duchy, it would be found beyond the mountain hexes that surround Threshold in the north-east, in the hill hexes that border that border the Republic of Darokin. This way, the whole adventure area would be split between Karameikos (where Arkayz' manor, the wooded lands west of it, The Barrens and Barkel Mountains would be found) and Darokin (where the ancient site of Tuma, Lake Neshonan, and Krayzen Mountains would be located).

The choice to have Tuma in Karameikos seems better, not only because it is supported by a later module (B1-9), but also because it is easier to integrate this scenario with the existing setting. The names of ancient Tuman kings featured in B8 (Alcidaxes, Belkazar, Calobanes, and Delophenes) have a vague Greek or Middle Eastern flavor, and thus can naturally be linked with the ancient Taymora and Traldar cultures which existed in the Karameikan region. The rise and fall of Tuma, moreover, can be merged easily with the history of Karameikos, in particular with the ages before and after the Great Beastmen Invasion, which were left quite vague by official supplements.

Thus, this article (and also the accompanying article about Karameikos' demography) assumes that Tuma was located in the mountains of Karameikos

In 2007 Simone Neri made a nice map of the Threshold region which placed TRaa northeast of Threshold. The black rectangle showing TRaa is added by me:



First, let's gather Neri's explanations:

- August 15th, 2006: The B8 area has been put in the more favorable position "north of Threshold" (B1-9, which is the most recent source about the area - the original B8's suggested placement was instead west of Threshold): rather distant from large communities and in hilly hexes (it would have been rather difficult indeed to put the area in mountainous hexes). The trails from the B8 map have been connected to other logical spots in the map above. I think it could be reasonable to connect Tuma and The Manor with other Darokin features thought trails that cross the mountain range through showed mountain passes.
- I seem to recall, from my own map of Tuma (which was in one of the threads here a while back, but I don't see on Shawn's page, so maybe he didn't put it up there- I'll have to send it on over to be posted on the Vaults), that the region shown in B8 is actually a bit larger than it would seem here on your map, but then, Tuma has always been kind of an 800 lb. gorilla in terms of trying to place it anywhere, so I kind of like what you've done with it. It fits better than where I was thinking of putting it, at least as you have blended them together here.

I like the inclusion of Tuma and its surroundings, yet wasn't Tuma supposed to be west of Threshold?

- That's what B8 says when suggesting where to position Tuma and its surroundings; however B1-9 suggests a position more or less "north" of Threshold. I've chosen the latter source because it's the more recent and because placing the B8 area in the Cruth Mountains west of Threshold would force me to change the terrain type of some hexes on the 8-miles-map of GAZ1.

Moreover, I've assumed River Krevilan from B8 to be the same river that goes north from Eltan's Springs (from KKoA).

The area showed on B8 map seems to be about three hexes long in W-E direction and 1.75 hexes high in N-S direction; I think these sizes are more or less the same in the map I've posted. The only other possibility, as Shane suggested, would be to place the whole Tuma area north-west of Threshold (as B8 says), where the Achelos River flows down of the Cruth Mountains, but this way we'll have to change the terrain type of some hexes, as I said.

Andrew: Seeing the 8 mile overlay puts it in more perspective, but it still seems a bit off to me; of course, I may have gotten the scale wrong when I put my own map together (seems to me the hexes there were at 1 or 2 miles per square or so, IIRC.)

Me: I do like how you portrayed the problematic Tuma area. Just to mention some other factors: another problem with using the Achelos River, is that the Caverns of Quasqueton from B1 are located where the river comes out of the mountains, so it might be too close to pack in another adventure site. Another option would be to slightly modify the shape of the Gustos or Magos rivers to fit the Krevilan River (though much of the surrounding terrain hexes would need to be changed - possibly into a Lost Valley of Hutaaka-style valley surrounded by mountains). Another option I've heard is to use the area in southern Darokin east of Hendry ([here](#)) which has rivers (Greyhare = Krevilan) and hills similar in shape to the B8 setting. Problems with this placement is that it'd be best to keep all the Basic adventures in Karameikos (except for Cynidicea), and not have so far for the PCs to travel through wilderness, mountains, and the Five Shires just to reach the B8 adventure site. I'm not sure what to do about this, just sifting through ideas. Like I said, your solution looks pretty good.

Yes, as you said I also prefer to keep B8 in Karameikos; moreover, I'd rather give precedence to B1-9, which is the more recent of the "old" B modules.

Next, my analysis of Neri's placement:

1. Neri was trying to make the terrain of TRaa match the terrain of the existing map of Karameikos. Which would necessitate a mountainous area to the west, but an open forested area to the east. Neri therefore chose a location based on terrain.
2. But please note that matching the terrain *was not the principle which Michael Malone used*, since Malone intended for TRaa terrain to trump the existing hex map, and to simply surround TRaa with "mountain or

hill terrain.” Malone always just used the Krevilan River for aligning to an existing river on the Expert Set maps, and assumed that TRaa terrain would override whatever terrain was shown on the Expert Set maps, though he always chose a locale which would necessitate that the entire TRaa map be entirely or almost entirely surrounded by mountains or hills.

3. Neri honored two of the indications from B1-9, since 1) he placed TRaa “several hours” north of Threshold, and 2) he placed TRaa close enough to Threshold that ordinary citizens of Threshold would be familiar with The Manor.
4. However, Neri failed to honor the other indication from B1-9, that TRaa is located “west of Threshold” on the Adventure Flowchart.
5. Neri also did not honor the indication from the 1985 Threshold placement, which explicitly equated the Krevilan River with the (later named) River Foamfire (“the river northwest of Threshold”).
6. Neri failed to include the “small village” two miles south of the Forest of Carm.
7. Neri failed to include the woods in the southwestern corner of TRaa map.
8. As a side note: From an Official perspective, the settlement of Highdell on Neri’s map is misplaced. The 1983 Expert Set p.39 says:

“The trade route between Specularum and Selenica passes through Kelven; the well-worn riverside trail leads [...] north (to the small mountain outpost of Highdell, at the river’s beginnings).”

So Officially, Highdell is located way over in the northeast, on the Duke’s Road in Darokin. Not north of Threshold. I only mention this because reconciling the location of TRaa north of Threshold is hard enough without adding unnecessary locations!

9. The scale of Neri’s version doesn’t quite match the scale of TRaa map. His version is somewhat enlarged (covering about 16 miles north-south instead of the original’s 14 miles north-south). See Neri’s area (which I outlined in black) versus the expected scale (the overlaid transparency). See the following map.
10. Also several of the landscape features are moderately skewed in shape and placement relative to the original map.



<https://pandius.com/tuma.html>

<https://www.pandius.com/b810mrge.html>

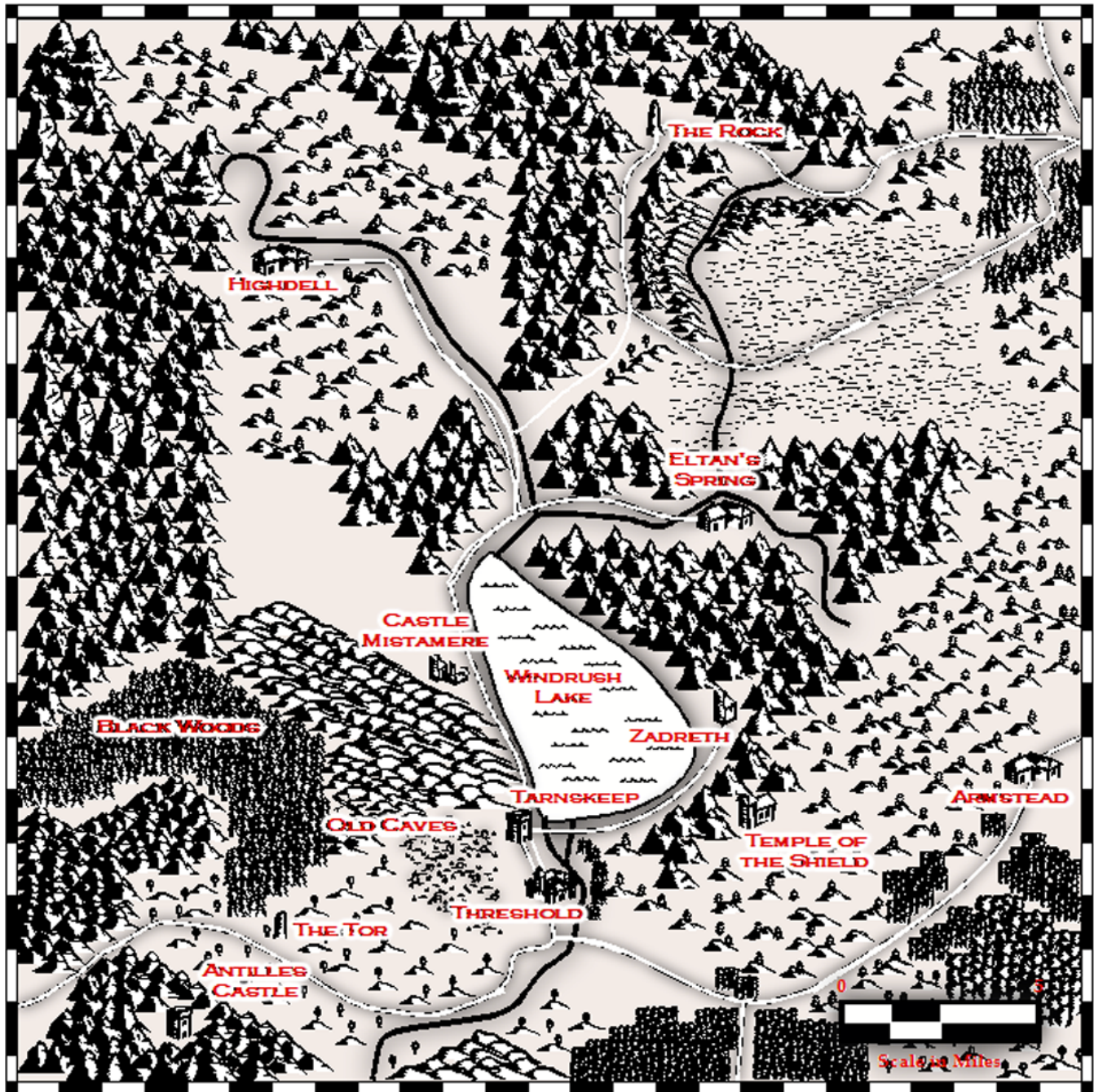
<https://pandius.com/TM01luluInterior.pdf>

Before we move on to Robin's also excellent map of TRaa, let's have a look at nice map which derived from Simone Neri's:

Roderick Dale's "Map of Northern Karamikos" (2011)

<https://ooh-shiny-complex.blogspot.com/2011/08/map-of-northern-karamikos-more.html>

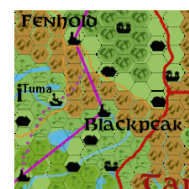
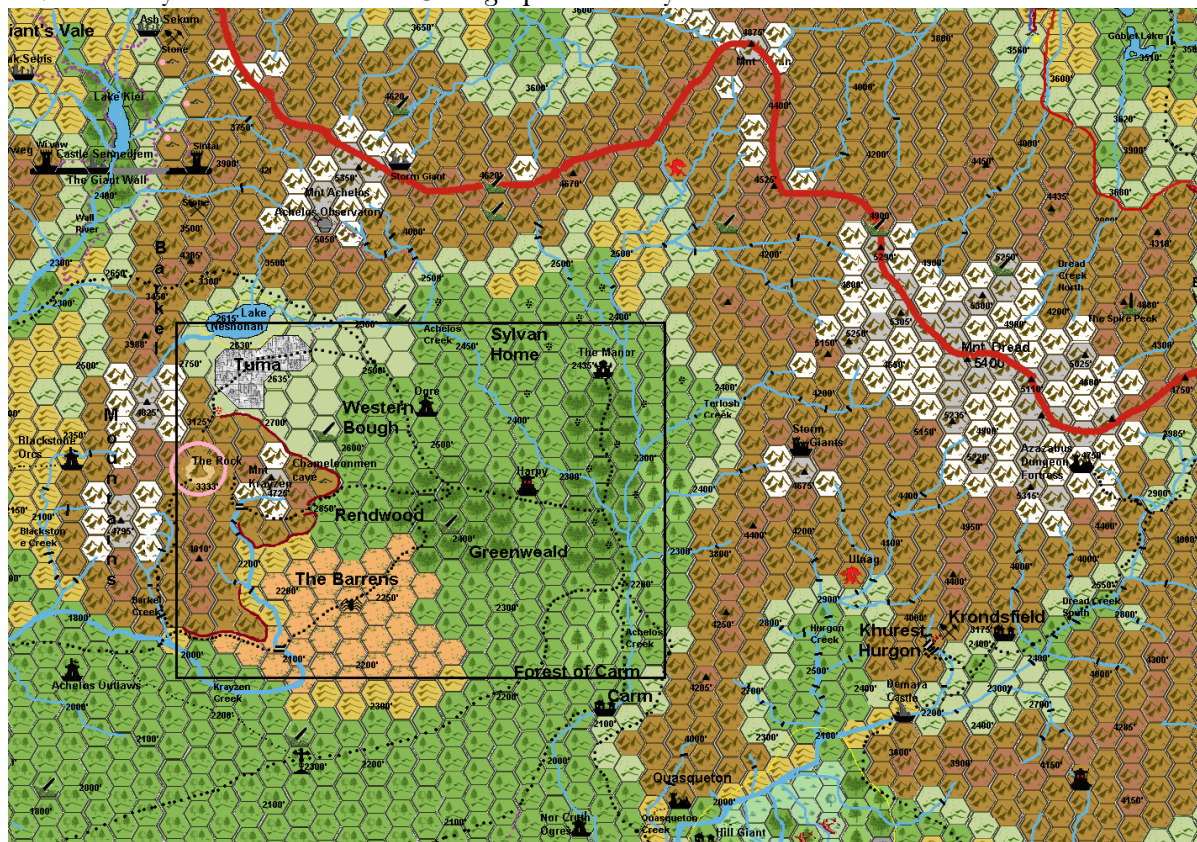
Roderick "Ruaridh" Dale made a nice map of Northern Karamikos using Campaign Cartographer 3. It is clearly based on Simone Neri's.



Robin's 1-Mile Hex Map

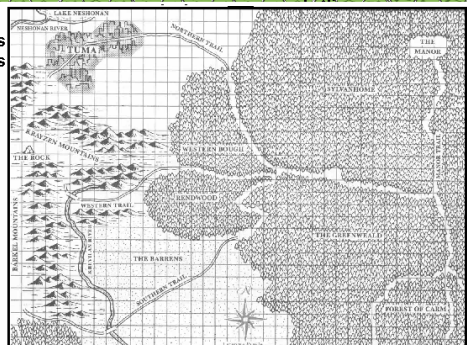
<https://pandius.com/tumalocn.html>

Robin is truly one of the Master Cartographers of Mystara.



Overlap map 1750 BC

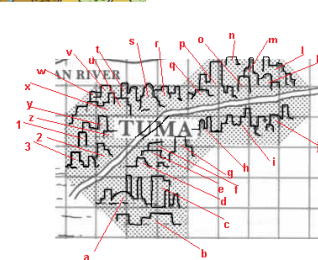
Central
Karamaikos
1mile hexes



X1
(not to scale)
6mile Hexes



B8
(to scale)
1/2 mile
squares



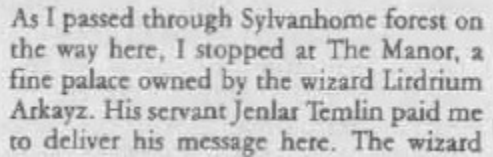
HWCS Urt becomes Mystara, retroactive.

Placement Clue #5: In 1987, when B1-9 was compiled, a new map—the 8-mile GAZ1 hex map—was available to them for describing the location of the JtTR map. However, on this new map, Threshold is in a different location—shifted two hexes northeast—compared to the two maps which were available to the 1985 B8 designers. Therefore references to relative locations vis-à-vis “Threshold” may mean different things between the two versions of JtTR in 1985 and 1987.

On the following page, we see the map from the back matter of B1-9. The fact that the editors didn’t bother with actually placing all of the adventures on the map was a huge missed opportunity. Personal note: even as a kid, I felt cheated when I pored over this map, trying to find out where the sites were located! It was an expensive book, but this map felt like a just a cheap black and white photocopy, without even showing the important things...like where the dungeons are located!

- 1987 Placement Clue #7: It is likely that there is an unmarked path leading north from The Manor. Because Hakeem the Merchant “passed through” Sylvanhome forest and “stopped at The Manor.” According to the map, only the northern portion of the forested area is named “Sylvanhome”, whereas the southwestern portion is named the “Greenwald” and the southeastern portion is named “The Forest of Carm.” Hakeem didn’t say he was passing through the Forest of Carm or the Greenwald and then stopped by The Manor. He could’ve said that, which would mean he had looped up from the southwest or southeast. But he specifically said he “passed through” the Sylvanhome, which only refers to the north.

Though it’s conceivable that Hakeem trailblazed through a pathless wilderness, this is unlikely due to his description as a “Merchant” and due to the fact that he is travelling on a mule.



As I passed through Sylvanhome forest on the way here, I stopped at The Manor, a fine palace owned by the wizard Lirdrium Arkayz. His servant Jenlar Temlin paid me to deliver his message here. The wizard

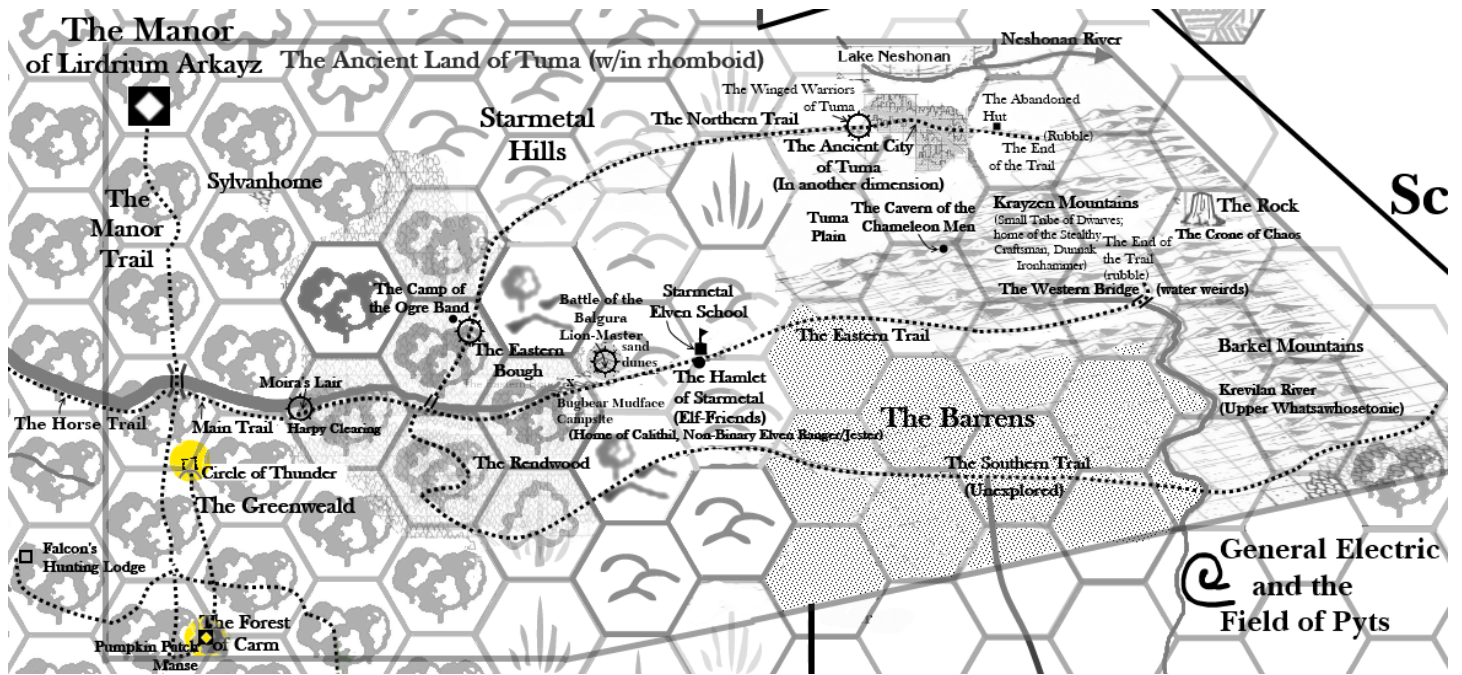
In my homemade campaign setting: The Shared Lands (2019-2024)

In recent years, I facilitated a campaign with multiple co-DMs. We patched together a world, one adventure at a time. This world is not Mystara, but does contain several BECMI adventure sites, including *Journey to The Rock*. The campaign started in January 2019 and continued til fall 2024. Now in hiatus due to some ‘real life’ factors.

In our Shared Lands campaign, I ran *Journey to The Rock* twice as a LARP, once at Art-Omi sculpture park in Ghent, N.Y. and another time at a friend’s forested land in Steubenville, N.Y.

I can honestly say I love the adventure. Quirky, random, sparse, weird mix of Arabian-fey-futuristic. But some amazing and diverse sights! It’s what you make of it!

Here’s a map of the “known world” of the Shared Lands, and a close-up of The Rock adventure area—which I flipped east-west and bent into a rhomboid in order to fit our existing geography. (The yellow highlights are just there to show what areas were updated in the last update.)



The Bounded Plane / Pocket Universe / Island Plane / Half-World / Demiplane / Fey Realm option (2025)

Lastly, I'd like to offer what is, for me, one of the two most satisfactory options, along with the previously outlined Foamfire placement. But this option has little overt support in Official sources.

Namely, this option would be to say that The Rock adventure area is, in BECMI terms: a Bounded Plane, a Pocket Universe. In WotI terms, an Island Plane. In AD&D 2E terms, a Half-World. In 3E terms, a Demiplane (the term meant something different in earlier editions). In 4E and 5E terms, a Fey Realm.

Here is the slender circumstantial support for this:

- TRaa seems to have only a tenuous and effervescent relationship to with the Prime Plane. For example, it has five Official placements.
- TRaa's default presentation is as a mini-setting unconnected to the Expert Set map, or any other world. This is similar in tenor to a Pocket Universe.
- TRaa has an otherworldly vibe, centered on the mysterious Lirdrium Arkayz and the other-dimensional futuristic City of Tuma.
- TRaa has a pretty strong "fey" vibe, such as the Sylvanhome. (Since 3E, "Sylvan" has been the name for the Faerie language). Sylvanhome is home to elves and sprites. The Greenweald is an alteration of the "Greenwood"—a term which associated with Fey. Even the Chrono of Chaos has a fey-like vibe, since in later editions, Hags were classified as a type of Fey. Gnomes are also associated with the Fey in later editions.
- Though TRaa has an Official placement in Mystara on the River Foamfire (which I sussed out thoroughly earlier in this document), it

As for the nature of this Pocket Dimension, there are some relevant precedents:

- BECMI: "Bounded" Plane and Pocket Universe
- The Wrath of the Immortals cosmology: Island Plane
- In the 2E Die Vecna Die cosmological adventure, the term "Half-World" is introduced for areas which are essentially local adventure sites which are bounded by a void.
- In 3E, Demiplanes are not necessarily attached solely to the Ethereal Plane.
- 4E and 5E introduced the concept of a Fey Realm, which is one step removed from the Prime Plane.
- There are a few other places in the BECMI product line which also would benefit from this treatment. Areas which were Officially but only ephemerally placed in the Known World, and their geography didn't really match the map. Namely, the orange-cover version of the Palace of the Silver Princess and its Surrounding Lands, the swamp of Isle of Rostenos from AC2: Combat Shield and Mini-Adventure, and

The "Other Lost Valley" Option

The Averaged Terrain Option

The Subtle Teleportation Option.

The Extradimensional/Faerie/Feywild Option. This placement would only be feasible if the entire map actually existed in a parallel dimension, such as Faerie (4E/5E Feywild). And the journey into the Forest of Carm subtly shi. This sort of nicely parallels the suggestion to shift the Barony of Gulluvia and the Surrounding Lands, and the Isle of the Hideous One into Ravenloft

BECMI: The Pocket Universe of The Rock (Gold Box, DMs Guide, p.2)

RC/WotI: The Island Plane of The Rock (WotI, p.118)

AD&D2E: The Demiplane of The Rock

3E: The Half-World of The Rock

4E:

5E: The Fey Domain of The Rock

Premise:

Premise: If B10 had not overwritten that area, B8 could still be there, directly north of Threshold. Also, though their location is unmapped, Reynald's Estate (a Karameikan border fied) and the "small town" of Utica (in Darokin, 10 miles north of the border) from DUNGEON magazine #42 are also in that vicinity. (It may be noted that Zendrolion's Highdell is incorrectly placed in this area, when the 1981

C

Paraverse where

B8: August 1985

B10: February 1986

Hills and Mountains.

(remembering that
there isn't much concealment available in the
Barrens). p.20
rough land of jagged rocks
and hot sand
The trail narrows as you enter the rugged
foothills of the Barkel Mountains.

he description of the first route of the Adventure Flow Chart:

*"The first [route] has the players operating **west of Threshold**. It begins with an elementary dungeon exploration [Castle Caldwell], picks up **with a short overland expedition** [The Hall of Rock], continues to the town of Luln (with a wicked little surprise for the players) [The Great Escape], then comes back along the Westron Road to Specularum."* B1-9, p.6

This western orientation vaguely echoes the various westerly suggested placements from B8 (N.W. of Wereskalot, N.W. of Threshold, Lake Amsorak).

Also note that the westerly indication (from the Adventure Flow Chart explanation) and northerly indication (from the starting point of the adventure) aren't necessarily exclusive, since the Forest of Carm (proper) is on the eastern edge of the B8 Adventure Map. So the Forest of Carm could be north of Threshold, which would make the Hall of Rock northwest of Threshold.

One straightforward interpretation of "designer's intent" is that B1-9 appears to have simply chosen the Foamfire River location from B8.

It could be argued whether the "small village" is Threshold or not. Threshold's a town, not a village. And the "small village" is only 2 miles directly south of the edge of the Forest of Carm map, whereas Threshold is "several hours" south. It doesn't take several hours to walk 2 miles, much less on horseback (and there are horse rules in B8). Which would mean that the "small village" is closer to the Forest of Carm than Threshold.

However, 2 miles could be a "several hours" walk if heavily encumbered. And plotwise, both the "small village" and Threshold serve the same role in B8 and B1-9.

Yet, as written, the small village is more likely distinct from Threshold.

Or the "small village" may not exist in the B1-9 paraverse.

Which leads to the problem of how to adapt B8 to the area northwest of Threshold! With the Foamfire River equated to the Krevilan River.

Especially since the B8 Adventure Map is a whopping 14 miles (N-S) x 19 miles (E-W)!

One solution is take the word of B8 and B1-9 as canonical as any other, and simply overlay it, and drastically meld the terrain onto the map of Karameikos, with Krevilan/Foamfire as the anchor point.

Another solution would be to say that the whole B8 Adventure Map is located in Faerie / the Feywild. The adventure does have a bit of an otherworldly vibe. And also fits with the fact that B8 is explicitly presented as not "integrated" onto the Expert Map. Faerie is not "integrated" with the earthly world either.

In any case, I haven't yet seen an aficionado map which has fully honored and accounted for the Official statements in regard to placement.

Fan placements:

Darokin: "I don't have the reference in front of me, but the MML a few years ago suggested in Darokin near the Shire border, south of the Westron Road. It requires you to invert directions on the B8 map, north becomes south, and east becomes west. That lines up the mountains correctly.

Sind:

That is where I put it when I used it, but Sind might be a better choice.

Matthew Levy did a short article with a timeline which made a decent attempt to fit the module B8 into Darokin, you can find the article at the Vaults. I liked his ideas so much I took it and ran with it, integrating some adventures in south and east Darokin with B8 and it became one of the earlier themes in my campaign.

<https://thepiazza.org.uk/bb/viewtopic.php?p=299460&hilit=b8+paraverse#p299460>

<https://pandius.com/karhstry.html>

Adventure module B8 – Journey to the Rock, introduced the ancient city of Tuma and its background. Even though the module had a generic setting, it gave some suggestion on how to include its scenario and background in the Known World setting. Two options were given here: the first was to place Tuma in the mountain or hill region north of Lake Amsorak in Darokin; the second was to place the scenario in the mountain country west of Weraskalot [editor: specifically “on the river northwest of Weraskalot”], in the Five Shires [though misstated to be Karameikos], or west of Threshold [editor: specifically “on the river northwest of Threshold”], in Karameikos. The later adventure module B1-9 – In Search of Adventure, supported B8’s second choice by placing Tuma in Karameikos' mountains, but had the Journey to the Rock adventure start in the area north of Threshold.

Placing Tuma's setting is not so easy, because the area's map featured in B8 is quite large (about three 8-miles hexes from west to east, and two from north to south) and placing it north of Threshold would alter the terrain featured in GAZI's and other supplements' maps. The best choice seems thus to place B8's map north-east of Threshold – looking at GAZI's 8-miles per hex map of the Grand Duchy, it would be found beyond the mountain hexes that surround Threshold in the north-east, in the hill hexes that border that border the Republic of Darokin. This way, the whole adventure area would be split between Karameikos (where Arkayz' manor, the wooded lands west of it, The Barrens and Barkel Mountains would be found) and Darokin (where the ancient site of Tuma, Lake Neshonan, and Krayzen Mountains would be located).

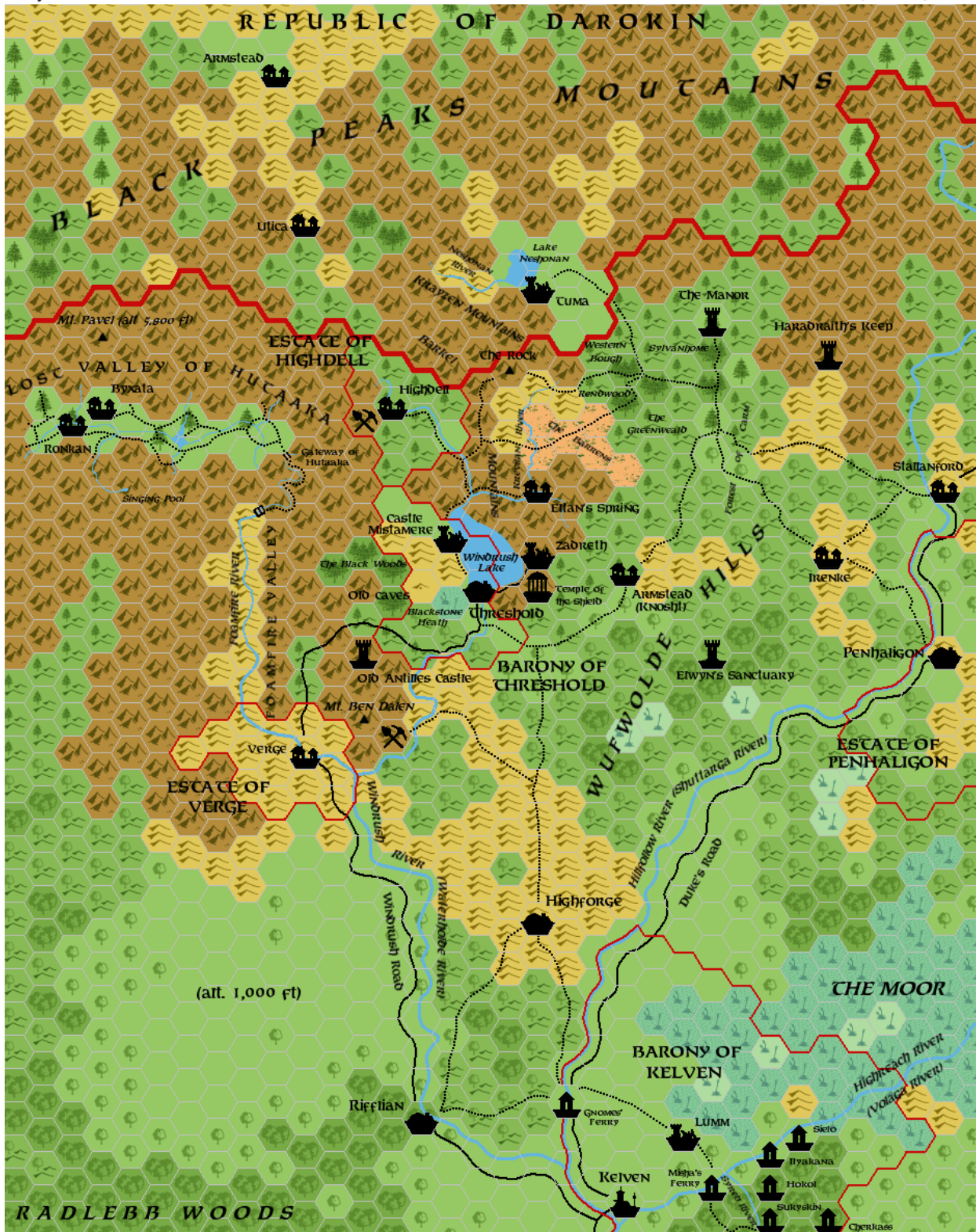
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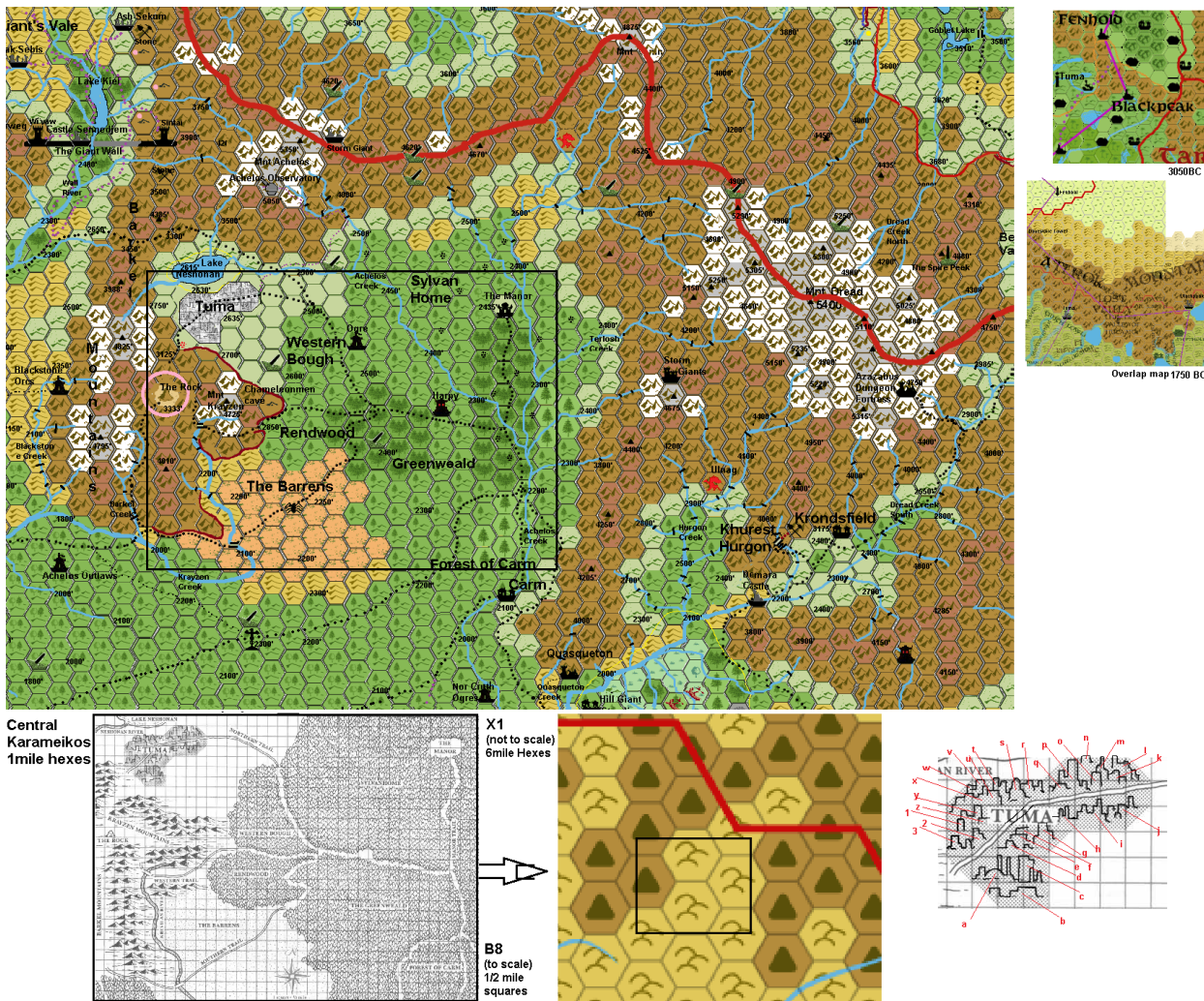


GRAND DUCHY OF KARAMEIKOS

THRESHOLD AND SURROUNDINGS

Scale: 1 hex = 2.7 Miles





Here are some basic, straightforward principles:

1. Malone's five placements are intended to slot right into the Expert Set map, with minimal elaboration. So any extensions of TRaa should be absolutely minimal.
2. Artistically, just by looking at the shape and trend of the eaves of the forest, and other features which extend off the edge of the map (such as Lake Neshonan), it's obvious that the mountain/hill wall is not right there at the rectangular edge of the map.
3. We know that the unnamed "small village" where the adventure starts is exactly two miles south of the trailhead beyond the edge of the map.
4. It would be fitting for this Official two mile distance to be the approximate edge of the mountain/hill wall as well.
5. What shape should the valley be? The most economical would be an oblong—a natural rectangle with clipped and rounded corners.
6. There is already such a oblong shape on the map: the shape of the clearing where The Manor is situated.
7. Therefore, I suggest that this oblong shape (of The Manor clearing) be enlarged to serve as a guideline when drawing the mountainous (or hilly) edge of TRaa as a whole.