

MYSTARAN ALMANAC101 5 & BOOK of FACTS

Volume VI, AC 1015 Mystara Mailing List Version 1.2

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

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The intent behind the Mystaran Almanac is to continue to keep alive the wonderful world of Mystara. It is therefore the compilation of ideas and suggestions from all members of the Mystara Mailing List, and not those of the staff and/or management of TSR. The mailing list can be found at:

Erreur! Signet non défini.

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

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Also, you are free to modify the contents of this Almanac as you see fit as well (after all, everyone has their own future for Mystara). We simply ask that, if you do so, please:

- 1- Change the title: we would like to keep the title "Mystaran Almanac" so people can find the rest of the series and know which material is the continuation of this particular group of authors' project. In other words, we are simply asking for the rights to the name "Mystaran Almanac."
- 2- Mention that you have modified it from the "Mystaran Almanac": in this case, say where it came from, and keep the original authors' names. Feel free to add a "modified by:" section at the top of that list. The writers have put a few hundreds hours each on this project, so please, give credit where credit is due.

For example, call it "Bob's Almanac of Mystara" with the subtitle "Modified by Bob from the Mystaran Almanac."

Of course, we won't police you or harass anyone who doesn't comply with this. We just ask that you do, please.

Now comes the debate on "canon" or "net-canon" material. We do not in any way claim that the Mystaran Almanac is the "online official future of Mystara!" We, the authors, write this product because we enjoy writing it. It is not our attempt to make our own personal home campaign the official version! It doesn't even always match OUR own campaigns as we are several authors who each put in their own ideas (often conflicting until a consensus is agreed upon). We also steal/accept ideas left and right from posts made by the members of the Mystaran Mailing List or other sites. So the names on the author list is by no mean the only people who have shaped this "future" Mystara; many people on the Mystara Mailing List have participated, whether they know it or not (Unfortunately, we often forget who the source of a given idea was, so the Special Thanks list is far from complete. If we missed you, sorry!).

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

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

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

The few times that stats are present, describing NPCs, the AD&D game stats were used. The main reason for this is the fact that potential new players will be used to the AD&D system, and the more of them that join Mystara, the better! Also, Mystara was completely converted to AD&D with their final projects, including Joshuan’s Almanac as well as the Karamikos, Glantri, and Savage Coast box sets (all copyright property of TSR). Should TSR revive Mystara, it will probably be in AD&D format as well.

Lastly, by now, all old D&D players should know how to convert back and forth between systems blindfolded. This is something the new AD&D players don’t know how to do.

All in all, this book is about Mystara, not the game system, so please don’t discard it because of that, but instead read it because it’s about Mystara!

Finally, the list of authors and contributors to this project:

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So, if you have any ideas or comments concerning this Almanac or events for AC 1016, please, feel free to contact the above people. For AC 1016, expect the addition of the Hule Region (under the control of Fabrizio Paoli). Also, the Sea of Dawn will probably have Andrew Theisen as its new main author.

Read on, and enjoy your year-long visit to the grand world of Mystara.

Michael Roy

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PREFACE

Dear Reader

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

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

Sadly, the release of the Almanac was delayed this year due to an unfortunate fire at Joshuan Gallidox Publishing. Still, no one was harmed, and only a bit of information was lost, so we can still present you with this Almanac, although a few months later than usual. For those of you who have been waiting impatiently for the release, we apologize.

Now, of course you must all be wondering what changes have been made to this year's Mystaran Almanac. Well, we still have our famous on-sight correspondents and letters to describe places and events. I firmly believe that such presentations make the descriptions all the more lively and interesting, giving the reader a better perspective on things, as well as insight on the people who present them to you. I continuously encourage our writers to dig more behind the scenes. Unfortunately, sometimes digging behind the scenes can be very dangerous and we cannot safely get all the information as to what is really going on. Despite this, the Mystaran Almanac is definitely the most precise and accurate account of last year's history that will ever be written.

The Mystaran Almanac is once more pleased to announce a live interview with one of the most talked about and important people of our time. This year, I must say, has one of my favorite interviews of all time!

As for changes, there is one I'm sure you'll notice. Since we are getting information from all around the world now, there is by far, way too much to write in the Known World section. This year, the Almanac has been divided into several parts, each representing a large fraction of our world. One deals with the Hollow World, another with the Savage Coast, and a third with the Old World. There are more, and I'm sure you'll agree with our divisions when you reach them.

Finally, we received mountains of letters and comments from you the reader, and have done our very best to fix all the mistakes you have pointed out, or add details that were left out, and so on. Again, thanks everyone for your comments!

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the new and improved Mystaran Almanac, AC 1015 edition. It would also be my pleasure to hear from you, gentle readers, on your opinions of our presentation and content.

*Belzamith Fingertackles, Co-Editor
Mystaran Almanac
Mirros, Karameikos
Thaumont, AC 1016*

To the reader

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

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

Once again, I would have loved to include descriptions of the military forces and their tactics as well, but most governments took a dim view at seeing such information published and made sure we didn't.

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

And to those of you responsible for burning down Joshuan Gallidox Publishing, I know who you are, so you better be expecting company!

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Almanac Format

First of all, who should read this material. That's simple. Anyone who has interest in the world of Mystara. Of course, some need a more specific answer than this. As such, all the Atlas Sections (of the Old World, Norwold,...) can be read by both Players and DMs of Mystara. The information given is general, usually common knowledge, and often slightly biased by the correspondents' point of view. Of course, this means that the information is not always 100% accurate, so players be warned: individual DMs might not accept the descriptions of any given place, changing it to suit their needs and campaign. And they're within their rights! After all, who said that the correspondent wasn't a complete fraud? DMs may want to limit the PCs' knowledge to just one area of Mystara (after all, why should someone from the Old World know anything about the Savage Coast?).

The Mystaran Miscellanea section is left to the DM's judgement as to whether or not his players know this information. As such, merchant PCs should have access to the Economica part, while superstitious PCs will probably know their horoscope.

The timeline section, dealing with events for the year of AC 1015 is for the DM's eyes only. It reveals certain secrets that players are just not meant to know unless they discover them the hard way. Of course, this only makes it easier for DMs to change any timeline event to match events that are occurring in their own world of Mystara.

The format used throughout the Mystaran Almanac is similar to the various previous Almanacs in this line. As such, each nation will have an entry which will give a brief summary of location, size, population, languages, coins, taxes, industries, and flora and fauna.

There is also a section which lists the names of important people at any given entry. The format is as follows:

Name (title or occupation, race, gender, class/level)

Class/level is presented in the form of a letter (or more) followed by a number, such as F6 or T12. The number indicates level, while the letter represents the class according to the following legend:

F = Fighter	M = Mage
Pa = Paladin	M(ab) = Abjurer
R = Ranger	M(co) = Conjurer
T = Thief	M(di) = Diviner
B = Bard	M(en) = Enchanter
C = Cleric	M(il) = Illusionist
P = Priest	M(in) = Invoker
P(dr) = Druid	M(ne) = Necromancer
P(cr) = Crusader	M(tr) = Transmuter
P(de) = Defender	WD = Witch-Doctor
P(mk) = Monk	P(?) = other Specialty Priest

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

Finally, a new section on Further Reading is also given. We strongly recommend purchasing all the wonderful books and adventurer modules on Mystara, as they truly give a much deeper understanding and description than this Almanac can ever give.

Nation descriptions will, as before, have a brief intro section from the correspondent, a section on the land and another on the people of the land. Now, many will have already heard these descriptions several times over. What do you expect? There are only so many ways to describe a given place and its cultures. In fact, entries which have been repeated from last or previous years might actually have paragraphs with the exact same text, word for word. We, the editors, saw no reason to change a description that is already accurate.

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

Finally, the last sections give us a peek at places that are highly recommended, either to visit or avoid. For this section, we made an effort to have something new to talk about, since each nation probably has more Don't Miss sites that could possibly fit in this entire Almanac.

Dorrik Stonecleaver

THE PEOPLE OF MYSTARA

Various intelligent beings live on - and in - Mystara. No almanac of the world could ever be complete without at least describing the major races that one can encounter during her travels. This section will therefore give a brief overview of the most important known intelligent species that have helped shape the history of Mystara. There are obviously more sentient races than those listed, but these are by far the more common.

Humans

Humans come in all shapes and sizes, without really any common theme to unite them. Historians claim that all the humans on Mystara are descendants from three ancient races of humans: the Neathar, Oltec, and Tangor. A fourth major race, the Alphetians, arrived on our world just over 2,000 years ago, and have also contributed to the various cultures now found today. With such a short lifespan (compared to demi-humans), humans have evolved rapidly and there are now more races of humans on Mystara than one can possibly keep track of.

Humans can be found on all the continents of Mystara, and seem to have adapted to almost any climate. As mentioned, there are too many races of humans to describe fully, but the two most common are the Thyatians with their olive complexion and dark hair as well as the Common Alphetians with coppery complexions and brown or red hair.

If there is anything that can be said to generalize humans is that they are all unique. Racial unity is rare, and only takes place when there is a non-human threat close by. Otherwise, they fight more often amongst themselves than with other races.

Dwarves

The dwarves of Mystara, often called Rockborn Dwarves, all came from the same source: the mountains of Rockhome. They claim that Kagyar - their patron Immortal - created them circa BC 1800, and they have since spread throughout the continent of Brun. Some have even sailed across the sea and made their homes in the land of the now sunken continent of Alphetia [in the former nation of Stoutfellow. Ed.]. Whether the dwarves have colonized other continents during the past remains to be discovered.

Dwarves are lawful beings who only change their ways of life after a very, very long period of time. Every dwarven colony still speaks the exact same dialect of Dengar that is still used in Rockhome. The same holds true for their physical characteristics: all dwarves on Mystara are still identical to their racial ancestors. Rockborn Dwarves are the only race of Dwarves that exist on the surface of Mystara.

Rockborn Dwarves are stocky and muscular with a deep tan or light brown skin, often with ruddy cheeks. Their hair is often black, gray, or brown, with similar colors for their bright eyes. They vary in height between 4 and 4½ feet. [AD&D: Rockborn Dwarves are considered to be the Hill Dwarves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Dwarves.]

A second race of Dwarves, the Kogolor Dwarves, have been found in the Hollow World. There doesn't appear to be any connection between these dwarves and Rockborn Dwarves. Their description is still unknown to the authors of this Almanac.

Elves

The elves claim that they were born from the soul of Mystara and the Immortal Ordana several thousand years ago. At first, guardian spirits of the land watched over them, but then one day they were let free to inhabit the world of Mystara. Some sages speculate that the ancient elves were actually colonists from another world, much like the Alphetians. The departure of the "guardian spirits" is interpreted as a loss of contact with their homeworld. Elves scoff at this idea, however.

Five main races of elves exist on Mystara: the Aquarendi, the Ee'ar, the Shadow Elves, the Shiye Elves, and the Sylvan Elves. Sages claim that all except the Shadow Elves evolved [or arrived, depending on the sage. Ed.] while the elves were still watched over by the "guardian spirits." In general, elves stand about 5 feet in height, are more slender than humans, and have pointed ears.

The most common race of elves encountered are the Sylvan Elves who are named after their legendary homeland, the Sylvan Realms. Sylvan elves have either pale blond hair and blue eyes, or dark hair and intense green eyes. A few clans have red hair, and grey is also not unheard of. Unlike all other elven races, Sylvan Elves can grow mustaches and beards, a trait that is often noticed on the elves of Belcadiz. Sylvan Elves are scattered throughout the continent of Brun and Davania, and almost all the elven clans found in the Old World and the Savage Coast are Sylvan Elves. Sylvan Elves prefer the simple life and live high up in the trees of many forests. Some clans have different attitudes, however. The Belcadiz of Glantri enjoy prestige, reputation and living in human-styled houses, while the Meditor and Verdier elves of Minrothad love money and are renown sailors. The Sylvan Elves of the Savage Coast have actually abandoned all elven ways and adapted the lifestyles of the nations they live in. [AD&D: Sylvan Elves are considered to be the High Elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.]

The Aquarendi are an aquatic race of elves that inhabit the various seas of our world. Gill slits in their neck permit them to breath while underwater. They have webs between their fingers and toes, and small fins on their ankles. Green and blue hair is common among the sea elves, although brown or black have been spotted on rare occasions. Skin colors range from light tan for those living near the shore to bright green or blue for those living deep beneath the sea. [AD&D: Aquarendi are considered to be the Sea Elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.]

The Ee'aar are a rare race of winged elves that inhabit the western end of the Savage Coast and the Arm of the Immortals. They look much as the Sylvan Elves, except appear much more delicate and with more angular facial features. Of course, they also have large feathered wings with a wingspan of at least 10 feet. They usually have white or silver hair, although black and grey are not uncommon. Their wings are the same color as their hair. Eyes tend to be amber, violet, or deep green. [AD&D: Ee'aar are the Avariel, or Winged Elves, of Mystara, as described in the Complete Book of Elves.]

The Shadow Elves are a mysterious race of underground elves. They have gray skin and white hair, and their philosophies appear to be much different than other elves. To date, not much is known about them. Shadow Elves inhabit the nation of Aengmor in the Old World with rumors of a large Empire deep beneath the ground. The nation of Schattenalfheim in the Hollow World is also composed of Shadow Elves. [There is no AD&D counterpart for the Shadow Elf. AD&D stats are given on TSR's homepage.]

Finally, the Shiye Elves are slightly taller than other elves. When the elves left their ancient homeland, the Shiye Elves went with the Sylvan Elves and helped create the Sylvan Realms. But the differences in philosophies, especially the Shiye's xenophobia, eventually caused them to leave. Their new migration brought them to the continent of Alpathia where they founded Shiye-Lawr, the largest nation of Shiye Elves. They usually have silver hair and amber eyes, although a few rare Shiye Elves have pale golden hair and violet eyes. They are more reclusive than Sylvan Elves, and live a much more ordered life than their chaotic cousins. Shiye Elves are found throughout Alpathian territories such as Norwold and Bellissaria. Also, one colony of Shiye Elves seems to have settled in Eusdria on the Savage Coast. [AD&D: Shiye Elves are considered to be the Grey Elves of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Elves.]

Gnomes

Like dwarves, gnomes claim they were created by their patron Immortal - Garal Glitterlode - who also placed them in the mountains of the area now known as Rockhome. Unlike the dwarves, however, gnomish colonization of the rest of the world wasn't so successful. Only when they colonized areas with the dwarves [such as Highforge in Karameikos or Stoutfellow in Alpathia. Ed.] did their colonies survive. Seeing how they couldn't forge nations on the ground, the gnomes of Mystara built Serraine, their wondrous flying city, and there they remain to this day. Still, small scattered communities can still be found in the Old World and Norwold. Elsewhere, gnomes do not seem to be present.

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

Gnomes stand about 3 feet tall and have rather pronounced noses of which they are quite proud. They have either pale blond or red hair, which often turns white as they age. Their skin ranges from dark tan to woody brown, and they usually have bright blue eyes. [AD&D: Mystaran Gnomes are considered to be the Rock Gnomes of Mystara as described in the Complete Book of Gnomes and Halflings. Sky Gnomes enjoy inventing things, and are similar to Tinker Gnomes, but have more common sense and less chances of exploding inventions. Serraine does fly, after all!]

Goblinoids

Goblinoids is a generic term used to describe various barbaric races seemingly related to goblins. There are far too many types of goblinoids to describe here, and many volumes at the very least would be required. Suffice to say that the following goblinoid species are present on Mystara: bugbear, gnoll, goblin, half-ogre, half-orc, hobgoblin, kobold, ogre, orc, and troll. Of those mentioned above, kobolds seem limited to the Old World, while the rest can be found in all areas of Mystara.

Within each species of goblinoid there are several dozen to hundred of races. For example, in the Broken Lands, there are three races of orcs: Yellow Orcs, Red Orcs, and the Hyborean Common Orc. Several hundred other orc races exist outside the Broken Lands. [AD&D: Stats for these goblinoids can be found in the Complete Book of Humanoids.]

Half-Elves

Half-elves are so rare in the Old World as to be almost legendary [in fact, if playing D&D, they don't exist at all. Ed.]. Many sages believe that a Mystaran Elf/Mystaran Human couple somehow have a harder time at producing offspring than is reportedly possible on other worlds. When they do, the result is invariably a half-elf [or a human with elven blood or elf with human blood if playing a pure D&D game; see GAZ 5 - The Elves of Alfheim for more details. Ed.]. Strangely enough, half-elves are more common on the Savage Coast. Some speculate Immortal involvement, others a side effect of the Red Curse [two possible reasons for having half-elves on the Savage Coast in a pure D&D game. Ed.]. Half-elves are unknown in the rest of the world.

Half-elves appear like a mix between their human and elven ancestors, hence can have a large variety of appearances. A look through both the human and elven races can give an idea of the possibilities. Despite this, half-elves are considered to be of one race: Half-Elven [or Half-Human if you're talking to an elf. Ed.]. Unlike most other worlds, half-elves aren't treated with total scorn by the elves of Mystara; they are so rare that most are curious about half-elves and will gladly accept their company for a while just to learn more about them.

Hin (Halflings)

The Hin, often called Halflings by other races, are a small folk who enjoy a good life. Hin have no knowledge of their creation or arrival, although historians trace them back to the original elven homeland, leading them to speculate they "appeared" [that is, were created or arrived from another world. Ed.] with the elves. Hin tend to blend in with the surrounding communities rather than create their own. Most Hin are therefore found in human nations. The Five Shires of the Old World and the city-state of Leeha in Norwold are the only known true Hin communities. On the Savage Coast, they have been completely absorbed into the local nations.

Hin rarely grow larger than 3 feet in height. They have ruddy complexions, sandy to dark-brown hair, and blue or hazel eyes. Their faces are small and childlike when compared to a human. Hin also have thick hair atop each foot. [AD&D: Hin are considered to be the Hairfoot Halflings of Mystara, as described in the PHB and Complete Book of Gnomes and Halflings.]

Lupins

Lupins are race of dog-people that have spread over the world of Mystara. The origins of the lupins are unclear; some believe they are merely a type of more civilized gnolls, and if this were the case, then gnolls would be a race of lupins and not goblinoids. Others think that they are the descendants of the Hutaakans, a race created by the Immortal Pflarr during the height of the Nithian Empire. Because of this belief, some lupin have returned to worshipping Pflarr, and this has caused much trouble in the lupin nation of Renardy.

Over the centuries, lupins have scattered over most of Brun and the rest of Mystara, evolving into several different races. Like humans and other short-lived species, there are too many races of lupins to mention here, just as there are far too many breeds of dogs to describe in a couple of paragraphs. I shall therefore limit this entry to naming a few and giving a general location where they can be found.

Grand Bloodhound are excellent trackers from the nation of Renardy, while the Carrasquito are a small breed that live in El Grande Carrascal of the Savage Coast. The Ogrish Chow-Chow was once a slave race to the ogre-magi of Ochalea but are now free. The Foxfolk is scattered throughout Brun, while the Glantrian Mountaineer is limited to the Glantrian Alps. The Heldann Shepherd are a goat and sheep raising race found in the Heldannic Territories.

Many, many more exist, especially cross-breeds and mongrels (as they are called). For a more complete list and better descriptions, I strongly recommend an article written by Raman Nabonidus of the Princess Ark. The article is entitled "Lupins of the Mystara setting" and can be found in Dragon Magazine #237.

Rakasta

The Rakasta are a race of cat-like beings who also claim that a patron Immortal created them. This time, it is the Immortal Ka who transformed a cat into a human when it fell in love with her master. But when Ba-steh [the human/cat in question. Ed.] still behaved like a cat, Ka instead transformed her and her human lover into cat-people: the first Rakasta. When this happened is still unknown, but it is believed to have occurred prior to the Great Rain of Fire, explaining how they have since spread throughout most of the world [and even beyond if you believe they have a colony on an invisible moon. Ed.]. They have adapted to various climates and evolved into several sub-races.

Rakasta are mainly wild, and most have fled lands that were colonized by humans, and as such are almost unheard of in the Old World. Rakasta have one nation on the Savage Coast [Bellayne. Ed.], but beyond that are mostly scattered tribes throughout the world. Like all short-lived races (that is, those of less than 100 years), rakasta have evolved rapidly and many races now apparently exist in the wild, so below we'll only describe those who often come in contact with the rest of the civilized world. In general, rakasta are man-sized, but weight easily two or three times as much. One noticeable difference in the fact that rakasta need 12 hours of sleep per day.

The Msongo, also known as the Fast Runners, have a coarse coat varying from yellowish-gray to golden. A reddish-fawn with small dark spots is also common among them. They are tall and lanky, but can achieve great speeds when running. The Msongo are known to inhabit the Meghala Kimata grasslands of Davania, the Steps of Jen of Skothar, and on the Thothian Plateau on the Isle of Dawn.

The Jakar are found in the rainforests of the Arm of the Immortals. They have beautiful spotted coats which are prized by Vilaverdan hunters. Not much is known about them except that most Vilaverdians hunting the Jakar fail to return from their expeditions.

Mountain Rakasta are the most common rakasta of the Savage Coast, and have also been spotted in the remote wilderness of Norwold. Their fur varies from plain grey-brown to reddish and even black. A tribe of mountain rakasta is rumored to inhabit the Kurish Massif, and if this is true, they are the only known rakasta in the Old World.

Many other races of rakasta exist, and those seeking more information should look up the "Rakasta of Mystara," written by Raman Nabonidus of the Princess Ark. [This article can be found in Dragon Magazine #247. Ed.]

Dorrik Stonecleaver

THE IMMORTALS

The people of Mystara worship powerful beings known as Immortals. These beings fill in the same roles as Gods (or Powers) would on another world, and most religions focus on the desires of the Immortals. The main difference between Immortals and Gods are that the Immortals were once mortal that have since advanced to a state of being far beyond their former peers by accomplishing deeds of heroic proportion.

Some claim that the Immortals are merely another family or collection of gods. The name Immortal merely refers to the group of Mystaran deities, much like Olympians refers to the gods of the Greek people, and Aesir is the name of the Norse powers. Or, perhaps the cultures of Mystara simply developed the term Immortal instead of God. Some reverse the same debate, stating that Gods and Powers are merely other terms used to describe Immortals.

Other sages state that Immortals are not Gods. They are powerful beings akin to Gods and Powers, and are definitely deities in their own rights, but they are not the same. They use the fact that Immortals have been slain by very powerful mortals on rare occasions, while Gods simply cannot be slain by mortals.

Regardless, whatever the Immortals truly are simply does not matter to most people. They are more powerful than mortals can imagine. They serve as the basis of faith and grant clerics and priests their spells. With their powers and priests, they manipulate the world into outcomes that they favor. Anything beyond that is probably beyond mortal comprehension anyway.

Belzamith Fingertackles

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MYSTARA

By now, most readers would have heard various rumors and fairy tales about how our world is a large hollow sphere floating in the emptiness of the void. In this void are also the sun, Matera, the stars, and a few other planets discovered by astronomers.

Well it seems those rumors are indeed true. Several groups have reportedly successfully crossed the large polar opening into the Hollow World, each reporting that it looks like the inside of a sphere with an eternal red sun within. Also, by recently laying my hands on a copy of certain sections of Captain Haldemar of the Princess Ark's logbook, even an outside description of Mystara from the void only serves to further validate this belief.

Prospero, the owner and author of the Poor Wizard Almanacs (property of TSR), claims that Mystara has a diameter of 6,190 miles, giving it a circumference of 16,352 miles. The three volumes also state the entire Hollow World is approximately 3,790 miles in diameter. The polar openings are supposedly 774 miles in diameter at their narrowest point, 1,030 miles in diameter on the Hollow World's side and 1,548 miles in diameter on the outer world's side. The crust is about 1,200 miles thick.

Now, where this information comes from is still unknown to the authors of the Mystaran Almanac, and Prospero refuses to reveal his sources. Most sages we have brought this knowledge to admit that the values do seem reasonable. It should be noted, however, that Julinius Dicrodion, a renown Thyatian map-maker, claims that the values are wrong and that Mystara is actually much larger than that. He is currently organizing and financing several map-making expeditions to try and prove his point. Other map-makers scoff at his, as they say, "ludicrous" idea.

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

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

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

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

Now, with the physical description of Mystara as a whole done with, it is time to start examining various areas in closer detail. We, the authors of the Mystaran Almanac, have decided to divide the known sections of Mystara into 6 separate areas. Each sector differs both geographically and sometimes even culturally from one another. Admittedly, each zone does vary considerably in cultures, as anyone can plainly see that Ethengarians are in no way similar to the mages of Glantri. Overall, however, there is a somewhat different tone, or atmosphere, in each zone of Mystara. At least, we the authors believe so.

The heart of civilization, which includes the fine nations of Karameikos and the Five Shires is known as the Old World. The less civilized and more frontier area covered with the dreaded Red Curse is called the Savage Coast. The lands of feudalism to the north fall in the area of Norwold. The islands of the Sea of Dawn create another sector, while the large open waters of the New Alpathian Confederate Empire will be called the Alpathian Sea. Finally, the colonies of Davania fall into the area now known as the Jungle Coast.

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

Belzamith Fingertackles