

ATLAS OF THE HOLLOW WORLD

We are pleased to introduce to the dear readers a new section of our Mystaran Almanac; the Atlas of the Hollow World. In this chapter, we shall detail the information gathered about the various nations and empires found within the mysterious Hollow World that lies thousands of miles beneath our very feet.

Unfortunately, the Hollow World has just been proven real during the past year, and we therefore do not have very much information regarding the area yet. As mentioned in the chapter on correspondents, we will gladly take any information regarding this strange new world. Even now, we are trying to arrange interviews with the various members of the famous Karameikan Polar Expedition.

For now, we hope that you, the reader, will be satisfied with the description of the Kingdom of Nithia and the Azcan Empire which we have extracted and pieced together, with permission, from various sections of "Claransa's Travels to the Center of the World." For those of you who are fans of the literature, you will notice that what we have below seems to cannibalize her book. Indeed it does, and we make no apologies for it. The purpose of the Mystaran Almanac is to detail places and events, not Claransa's adventures (a fact that Claransa agrees, and even insists upon). Much of it has been edited out with only the pertinent information regarding Nithia or the Azcans kept. If you would like a real sample of Claransa's writing capabilities or just wish to read about her adventures, her book is available through most book merchants and libraries for the mere price of 10 gold pieces.

Just a reminder to the reader, the directions of East and West are reversed within the Hollow World so that they match those of the surface world. This is important when attempting to figure out the locations of the various nations.

Also, the information provided by Claransa is from almost a decade ago. The editors do not claim responsibility for any facts that are no longer valid due to the changes that have occurred in the past 10 years. More up to date information will be provided in future Almanacs as we receive it.

B.F.

AZCAN EMPIRE

Location: Hollow World, continent of Iciria, northern hemisphere, western coast.

Area: Unknown. Estimated to be between 500,000 and 900,000 sq. mi.

Population: Estimated to be approximately 3,000,000.

Languages: Oltec (Azcan dialect), Neathar.

Coinage: None (barter only).

Taxes: Forced military or other duties.

Government Type: Theocracy, with the King being a priest of Atzanteotl.

Industries: Agriculture (beans, corn, peppers).

Important Figures: King/Emperor Azcotica (human, male, Pr12 of Atzanteotl).

Flora and Fauna: Dinosaurs, monkeys, swine, snakes (including the azcan feathered viper), and great cats (especially the jaguar).

Description: by Claransa the Seer, during her visit in AC 1005. Note that only parts deemed important for you the reader were taken, and sections have been edited, deleted, and even rearranged from their previous order for brevity and/or clarity. If you would like to read more, I recommend purchasing a copy of "Claransa's Travels."

"As I travel through the lush jungle, I cannot help but imagine what these people must look like. I have heard many descriptions from the Neathar about the short, dark, burly humans called Azcans, and most of them seem to indicate that they are extremely savage and brutal, even to their own people and the land they live upon.

Still, at the moment, my main concern should be to get there alive. Right now, the jungle I am crossing is filled with various large reptiles, most of which could easily kill me by merely stepping upon me."

The Land

“This is my fourth day in this jungle, and nothing has changed very much. The area seems very flat, without any significant hills or mountain. Luckily, the vine-covered trees do not block the reddish sunlight from the stationary star above, preventing me from getting lost in the underbrush.”

“It also rains every day or two, making the climate very warm and humid. Fortunately for the Azcans, this allows them to cultivate maize and vegetables from the very poor soils cleared from the jungle by their slash and burn techniques.”

“The most northern part of the nation reaches far enough in latitude to include temperate forest. Here, the Azcans are fortunate enough to have rich soils and can harvest more than enough for their northern cities to thrive and even export food.”

“Here in the foothills of the World Spine, the southern border of the so-called Azcan Empire draws near. I find it only fitting that my journey through their nation finishes with a complete change in scenery as well as nation. The mountains are tall, the terrain rocky and jagged. Yet, despite the climate change, the Azcans are still present. In this area also claimed by the Schattenalfen elves, the Azcans maintain several gold mines, as well as mines for other precious metals. Considering that they use this gold only for jewelry, since they do not possess any coinage or currency, I find that this only tops the list of the things they do for pride and personal prestige. To risk war with an enemy so close just to be able to wear more jewelry is suicidal. Then again, the Azcans are nothing if not fatalistic.”

The People

“The Azcans are a savage and cruel bunch. I see now that this reputation, spoken so much about by the various peoples of the Hollow World, is well deserved. This race participates fully and whole-heartedly in human sacrifices to their Immortal Atzanteotl. In fact, just as often as not, the victims are volunteers who believe that such a sacrifice will guarantee them a great place in the afterlife.”

“The Azcans enjoy a game called Tlachtli, where commoners and slaves are forced to play. The game consists of getting a ball through a hoop at the other end of the field, and players are allowed to use any means necessary, and I do mean ANY means. Fatalities are not unknown, as the players play for keeps since the losing team is usually sacrificed to Atzanteotl.”

“They seem to have a very strict and detailed hierarchy within their society, yet at the same time, anyone of any social class can rise from the lowest to the highest, or vice versa, rather easily. This has mainly to do with combat and fighting prowess, which is in high regard by all Azcans. Another sure-fire way to gain prestige is to join the ranks of the priests of Atzanteotl.”

“Most of the commoners wear breechlouts, or a short tunic-like dress for the females. Sandals are very rare, unless in a rocky region. Such simple clothing is permissible because their climate requires nothing more from them to survive. Many also like to wear headbands. Colors are simple; almost everyone wears an off-white cloth. It seems to do otherwise is a signal of rank. Bright colors, such as red and turquoise are a sure sign of nobility. The nobles also wear excessive decorations, such as furs, gold, silver, exotic feathers, and the like.”

“The goal of every Azcan, besides attaining personal wealth and glory, is to fulfill the Azcan dream. This is, of course, nothing short of world domination.”

“And nothing gets in their way. The current King, Azcotica, received the crown upon assassinating his father Moctaplan and his older brother Tenpocatliotl just a few months ago. There is no proof of such deeds, but everyone seems to know it. The fact that the Azcans can follow such a ruler despite knowing what he has done goes a long way to show what cruelty they can tolerate.”

Don't Miss

[The editors of the Almanac would recommend missing the entire Azcan Empire at all cost. It seems that they sacrifice almost all visitors to their nation for the glory of Atzanteotl. Claransa was only able to visit because her magic enabled her to pass as one of them, thereby eliminating most potential problems. Still if one insists on going, the following extracts seem to indicate a few things worth seeing. Ed.]

“Finally, there I was, but a few more minutes from Chitlacan, the capital of the Azcan Empire.”

“The largest and most impressive building [in Chitlacan. Ed.] is a stepped pyramid dedicated to Atzanteotl. This is where the daily sacrifices to Atzanteotl take place. The building must be at least 200' tall and probably twice as long along the base. At the top is the actual shrine to their Immortal which contains the sacrificial altar and basin. I would love to get a closer look, but there are several squads of Azcan warriors guarding every possible access to the pyramid.”

“I must say, I enjoyed watching this game of Tlachtlí. The eagerness and desire to win by all players makes it a very exciting game without any dull moments or stops in activity. The huge Tlachtlí court is also a sight to see, capable of holding several hundred spectators, as well as the occasional visit from the King himself and his court.” [Ed. Note: This was her opinion of the game before learning what happened to the losers.]

NITHIA (Kingdom of)

Location: Hollow World, continent of Iciria, southern hemisphere, eastern reaches.

Area: 687,277 sq. mi.

Population: 4,000,000, including 350,000 in the capital of Tarthis.

Languages: Nithian, Neathar.

Coinage: Eye (gp), hawk (sp), beetle (cp).

Taxes: 25% income tax, 5% salt tax (sale tax) on water.

Government Type: Monarchy, but all Kings and Queens must be clerics.

Industries: Agriculture (Nithia has abundant growing seasons; it produces enough grain to feed the nation and have surplus for trade), gold mining.

Important Figures: Pharaoh Ramose IV (human, male, Pr15 of Rathanos), Queen Tafiri (human, female, Pr12 of Pflarr) [Ed. Note: Current information seems to indicate that Tafiri is now dead and that the following people have attained positions of importance: Queen Senkha (human, female, M12/Pr4 of Rathanos), King Al-Belak (human, male, T12), Djemun (human, female, T15), Vizier of Internal Security Nikita-Ahmed (human, female, F18), King Khnemet-urt (human, male, Pr9 of Pflarr), and Permon (human, male, C8, the only non-specialty priest in Rathanos’s clergy).].

Flora and Fauna: Among the many monsters and animals are animal herds (oxen, horses, sheep, goats), giant ants, rock baboons, bandits, giant (scarab) beetles, camels, carrion crawlers, lions, dragons, efreet, gargantuans, gargoyles, gelatinous cubes, ghouls, gnolls, liches, giant lizards, manscorpions, mummies, purple worms, rats, rocs, flame salamanders, scorpions, skeletons, snakes, sphinxes, living statues, stirges, and zombies.

Description: by Claransa the Seer, during her visit in AC 1006. Note that only parts deemed important for you the reader were taken, and sections have been edited, deleted, and even rearranged from their previous order for brevity and/or clarity. If you would like to read more, I recommend purchasing a copy of “Claransa’s Travels.”

“After the long talk with Trubiyar [A Jennite friend Claransa met on her travels. Ed.] about the lands surrounding the plains of his people, I decided that Nithia would be the next place for me to visit. The story of how the land was once green, but then the sun came crashing into it and turned it into a desert is one that any mage or sage in mythology and history cannot ignore. It seems that after the area became a desert, a civilization of dark-skinned people called the Nithians appeared just as mysteriously.”

“They apparently have huge stone monuments, most of which are used to entomb their dead as well as all his living relatives. Could this be another sacrificial culture similar to the Azcans I visited... well, way back. With these never ending days, I have lost all track of time.”

“It was agreed then, and the next day the two of us set off toward the land of Trubiyar’s enemies. I hope that he will keep his word and behave while there, as the last thing I need is to be caught in the middle of a racial war.”

The Land

“The land of Nithia is a bleak and scorched place. Despite the eternal red sun being in the exact same position as it is for anywhere else within the Hollow World, the climate here is tremendously warmer than just several miles west. The sky is completely clear of clouds, and I doubt it has rained here in days...err sleeps.

Vegetation is practically non-existent, but there is more to this desert than just sand. There are several rocky outcroppings, forming walls and canyons, as well as badlands and barren broken lands. Exposed rocks have been eroded by hundreds and thousands of years of wind and sand, taking unique and sometimes interesting shapes.”

“The farmlands and grasslands surround us now. It seems we are but a march away from the famous River Nithia which apparently cuts the kingdom of Nithia in two. This large river is the source of all life for the Nithians, as well as everything else that lives in this desert.”

“It seems that along the shores of this huge river, a normal, agriculture-sustaining land is available for the peasants and slaves to work on. Despite their claim to the vast area of desert beyond, here lies the true nation of Nithia.”

“Tarthis is built on the banks of the River Nithia, right where the first division of the huge delta takes place. The city has a sun-dried brick wall surrounding it, ample defense in case of an attack from the neighboring Jennites or Tanagoro.

“Most dwellings are also made with the same mud bricks, as well as the occasional stone, and thatched roofs. The rich, however, live in huge stone palaces with giant statues of sphinxes or their Immortals everywhere.”

“I find it truly impressive that such a primitive culture has mastered such techniques of irrigation. The fact that water can be attained from various wells within the city, as well as a sewer system to take care of the refuse and waste is a clear sign of excellent scholars, engineers, and leadership.”

The People

“Like all the other cultures I’ve encountered so far, the Nithians are rather unique in their customs and habits.”

“The commoner among the Nithians wears a simple loin cloth or a sleeveless linen dress if female. Some unfortunate slaves wear nothing at all but a belt. The upper classes, including the priests, wear more or less the same garments, just with better fabric and brighter colors. They also wear an immense amount of gold and jewelry, of which the Nithians have managed to create various interesting specimens. I have acquired one of their bracelets, which I think I shall keep.”

“The Pharaoh of the Nithians is always a cleric, and is considered by the people to be an actual Immortal avatar of the Immortal in question.

The religion also holds power elsewhere, as they are responsible for collecting the taxes and performing the death rights upon the burial of the dead. In fact, it is believed that the truly faithful to the Immortals will one day return among the living, hence the fact that they perform special ceremonies to keep their bodies intact and the burial of their belongings with them.”

“The rich of Nithia build gigantic pyramids whose only purpose is to serve as their tomb once they are dead. Apparently, this helps achieve a greater place in the afterlife and hence improves the chances of returning to the living on the “great day” to come. Once dead, the rich man is buried with everything he holds dear, from his valuables to his relatives and favorite slaves. In fact, most consider it an honor to be buried alive in such pyramids with their master. Of a peculiar note, they also store food in the pyramid, so that the souls will not starve on their journey into the afterlife.”

Don’t Miss

“The one building that I truly miss, having been forced to leave Tarthis, is the Library of Mysteries. This huge stone building is filled with ancient scrolls and books that must date back for at least 3 or 4 thousand years. So much could be learned from extensive studies of the information that might be within the halls of the library. Rumors abound that some of them are even magical and show the secrets to great power.

One thing that amazes me, however, is the similarities between the Nithians and the Alphetian Thothians back on the Isle of Dawn. Even their language is very similar. I cannot help but wonder if the Thothians and Nithians are somehow related.”

“The Great Pyramid housing the tomb of Rasiris, stands just over 500 feet into the air. The structure appears a bright white under the sun as a layer of white limestone covers the blocks of granite that actually make it up. And that is just one pyramid here in the Necropolis of Tarthis, burial ground of the Pharaohs.”

“When I was told that anything could be found in the Grand Marketplace, for a price, I didn’t believe him. Now I can see the truth in Trubiyar’s words. This huge, open-air market, must cover several hundred square feet and have merchant stalls or tents everywhere. Various merchants from other cultures seem almost welcome here, selling their goods just like any Nithian merchant.

Another commodity that can be bought here at the Grand Marketplace is information. Apparently, word gets around quickly in the hand of the right people, and, with the proper contacts, which can all be found in the marketplace, one can also be privileged with the information, for a price, of course.”

TIMELINE FOR THE HOLLOW WORLD, AC 1013

Since there is lacking in detail of the nations in this section, we have therefore found a substitute to fill in the void. We now have at least two brave souls who have journeyed to the Hollow World and returned with information on what has happened for the past two years.

These individuals, however, wish to remain anonymous, as they fear reprisal from the Alphetians, who have claimed the North Polar Opening as theirs, which is the route they use to get to the Hollow World.

Of interest to the editors of this Almanac, however, is the fact that the first owner, Rikard Prospero, had access to information on what befell in the Hollow World. If anyone can manage to discover what his source of information was, the editors of this Almanac would be very pleased to learn of it.

Anyway, here is a shortened timeline to detail events which occurred during the year AC 1013 within the Hollow World. We hope that you, the reader, will accept this as an apology for not publishing this information in last year's Almanac. Events in the Hollow World for the year AC 1014 can be found in the chapter of Current Events: AC 1014 along with the events from all around the world of Mystara.

NUWMONT AC 1013

"Emperor" Zandor, freed from temporal stasis thanks to the Day of Dread, demands that the guards holding him prisoner release him. Eventually, he is brought before Empress Eriadna. The sight of his mother drives him crazy, and he collapses to the ground, crying and screaming in terror as if his nightmares came true. Eriadna has him once more confined in a cell (which is proof against magical tampering despite Zandor having lost his spellcasting abilities) with heavy guard until she decides what to do with him.

NUWMONT AC 1013

Saa-ur Uhem is tried for impersonating the dead Pharaoh Ramose IV. Nikita-Ahmed, the vizier of Internal Security, and Permon, a cleric of Rathanos and close friend of Ramose, testify that he is indeed the Pharaoh. Plus, Ramose is carrying the Pharaoh's Crook and Flail, two artifacts that are handed down from Pharaoh to Pharaoh (see HWR2: The Kingdom of Nithia). Saa-ur Uhem is found guilty, the Crook and Flail evidence that he must have somehow been responsible for the death of the real Pharaoh. Ramose is sentenced to the mines for the rest of his life since Nithia has no death sentence as death brings you to the paradise afterlife, and is hence a gift, not a punishment (see HWR2). Still, the Pharaoh has the right of life or death on anyone at anytime, unlike standard magistrates and local rulers. But in this case, there is so much controversy and rumors of civil war that Senkha orders Ramose to the mines to avoid outbreaks of violence. The Crook and Flail are returned to Senkha.

Senkha came to the decision after deliberation with various other nobles, including King Al-Belak (who secretly wants to be Pharaoh himself), and various other nobles related to Ramose who are still upset at him for having executed Queen Tafiri. Also, Ramose was unable to cast any clerical spell despite the fact that he is a cleric of Rathanos (which he claims he lost because of his sentencing of Tafiri). The main factor was, however, the voices in her head that kept insisting he was an impostor.

Tension begins to rise in Tarthis and the kingdom of Nithia since many of the nobles were also convinced that it was indeed the true Ramose who has been sentenced to the mines. A civil war seems to be in the making.

NUWMONT, AC 1013

Empress Eriadna asks Prince Haldemar to explore the Hollow World and establish relationships with the nations below. She gives him all the various maps and notes that have been taken since AC 1010 when Alphetia first arrived in the Hollow World. Although Eriadna has sent exploration missions several times since the arrival of Alphetia in the Hollow World, she had ordered her explorers not to contact the natives and simply learn all they can from them as, having seen the Neathar's reaction to the Alphetians, she didn't want Alphetia to have even more enemies. Now, she believes it's necessary to make peaceful relations with all the nations below; the Karameikans escaped last year, and Eriadna believes it's only a matter of time before armies from the surface world arrive to try and conquer the lands. She wishes to have alliances with the various nations so they can all work together to safekeep the Hollow World. Haldemar was chosen because of the excellent job he did along the Savage Coast back on the surface world.

PCs can get involved thanks to the fact that Haldemar must replace a few crew members who quit/retire. This would mean that they take part in all further adventures of the Princess Ark. Among the new crew are a few Alphatians who can speak Neathar, the common tongue of the Hollow World. Since communication magic fails here in the hollow world, Haldemar begins to learn the language of the Neathar himself.

NUWMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark arrives in the city of Baraga, the “capital” of the Merry Pirates’ nation. There, Haldemar makes a few trade agreements with Necco the Black and is assured that Baraga, as well as all the other Merry Pirate ports, is a free port in which Alphatians can come and trade when they want.

Another Pirate Lord, however, eyes the Princess Ark and wants the flying ship for himself as it would make him the most powerful pirate in the area (boats being used by pirates, and with the Spell of Preservation having a looser hold on the Merry Pirates, this is acceptable in terms of the Bias of the Merry Pirates; see HW box set).

Haldemar is warned about the plot by Sebek-Komnut, a young Nithian male who joined the pirates, but found it not to his liking (because of cultural bias). He wishes to return to his homeland and asks for passage aboard the Princess Ark as repayment for his help. Haldemar agrees, but states that the Ark will stop at all the nations between here and Nithia. Sebek-Komnut doesn’t mind about the delay. Haldemar eventually learns that Sebek-Komnut is the son of some minor noble back in his homeland.

VATERMONT, AC 1013

Djemun, a close friend of Senkha (see HWR2: Nithia), has noticed that Senkha has been acting strange the past few cycles. Convinced that someone is manipulating Senkha to not accept Ramose for who he really is, she decides to help free the Pharaoh.

She talks with Nikita-Ahmed, who then makes a public announcement to Senkha for Djemun (since Djemun prefers to be behind the scene). Nikita-Ahmed claims she can prove that Ramose is indeed who he claims to be. She will find the Book of Amon, which only Pharaohs can read (artifact presented in HWR2). If Ramose can read it, then he is indeed the Pharaoh. If he goes insane, then he is not the Pharaoh.

Unable to refuse such a proposal because of the unrest in Nithia, Senkha agrees to the test. But Nikita-Ahmed must find the sacred book on her own, which has been lost for centuries, without help of royal funds. Until then, Ramose will be held prisoner in a cell, safe from injuries in the mines, but still unable to go anywhere or cause trouble. Nikita-Ahmed agrees.

Djemun and Permon join Nikita-Ahmed in her quest, and although the trio are rather powerful, they are also rather old (youngest being in his 50’s). So Nikita-Ahmed gathers younger adventurers and heroes to help her (PC involvement at this point is possible). Their first task is to find the possible location of the Book of Amon. For that, they contact the Priesthood of Pflarr (experts on magical items) and do research in the Library of Mysteries.

Ahmed leaves a few of her trusted officers in charge as she doesn’t plan on performing her duties until her quest is done. She leaves explicit instructions to protect Ramose in his cell as she believes that unknown forces will try to have him killed before she returns with the Book of Amon (she’s right; Thanatos and Ranivorus will do all they can to have the Pharaoh killed).

VATERMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark flies over the Schattenalfen Caverns to the east (HW directions) of the Merry Pirates and Traldar (having mistakenly believed the Traldar were part of the Merry Pirates). There, the Ark is approached by a squad of flapsail-riders. The Schattenalfen captain of the squad, Trylthyn (presented in HW boxed set), demands that the Princess Ark leave the Schattenalfen territories. Haldemar manages to convince the air-captain to escort the Princess Ark to the capital so that he can talk with the Queen of the Schattenalfen on behalf of the Empire of Alphatia.

Along the way, the group is attacked by a red dragon desiring to claim control of the air they are flying in. The dragon proves to be no match for the Princess Ark and her magical weapons, and soon flees. Trylthyn is impressed by the abilities of the humans, and envies their camaraderie which is not present in his own race.

At Issarthyl, Prince Haldemar and his party descend into the capital city a mile below ground. There, after attempting peaceful discussions and proposals, Queen Catriata throws one of her tantrums when she learns that there are elves in Alphatia who enjoy living on the “surface” world. She orders that Haldemar and his escorts be imprisoned, then executed.

Trylthyn, having seen a glimpse of the life of the humans, decides that he likes their ways over the ways of Atzanteotl and his fellow Schattenalfen. He frees Haldemar and his group, and they make it back to the surface and the Princess Ark. Haldemar accepts Trylthyn in his group as he once did, long ago, for Myojo.

The Princess Ark flees northeastward with several flapsails and Schattenalfen in pursuit.

VATERMONT, AC 1014

Al-Belak, King of the Southern Kingdom of Nithia, begins courting Pharaoh Senkha. He believes that marrying her will give him the power he needs to make himself the next Pharaoh.

THAUMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark manages to evade its pursuers. However, the Ark was damaged by several spells from the spellcasting elves who chased them. Haldemar orders the ship to land for repairs. They land at the edge of the Malpheggi Swamp.

After a few days of repairs, a group of lizardmen approaches the ship. The two groups seem to get along peacefully until the lizardmen spot Sebek-Komnut. At the sight of the Nithian, they are instantly reminded of the plague that struck them back in AC 1012 (PWA2). They attack the crew of the Ark, believing that they will bring the plague back to their people again. Haldemar is forced to take the Ark to the air again.

They set sail toward the northeast again, this time for the town of Haldemar where they can finish repairing the Princess Ark in a proper skyship berth.

Haldemar is rather disappointed by his lack of success for peaceful relations twice in a row. They land in Haldemar and repair the Ark.

THAUMONT, AC 1013

Nikita-Ahmed and her group discover clues about the Book of Amon that seem to lead to the town of Ranak, the ancient capital of the Nithian Empire. They head for the town by the means of Nikita-Ahmed's floating chariot (HWR2).

Once there, the group begins exploring the libraries of Ranak, as well as visiting the centers of magical research that are present there. After a long search and finding the right contacts, they learn of an ancient magical storage area deep beneath the city in the ruins of the old Ranak which the current one is built over.

They eventually find the room after roaming the underground catacombs and discover many ancient magical items and spells, but not the Book of Amon. Still, they find evidence that the Book of Amon was in Ranak, but was taken away during the height of the Tarthis-Ranak war. It is believed that fiends summoned by Hathep stole the book during the fighting in Ranak and fled with it. The final papers indicate that Pharaoh Kifara had managed to relocate the Book of Amon in the Tower of Sekhaba and was planning on retrieving it. There is no further mention of the artifact or anything else afterwards (Kifara, as well as the entire city of Ranak, was then destroyed by the magic of the followers of Hathep, ending the Tarthis-Ranak war, before she could reclaim the artifact).

The group then begins their search in locating the Tower of Sekhaba.

FLAURMONT, AC 1013

Having finished repairs on the Princess Ark, Haldemar once again sets course for Nithia. He plans on passing through the lands of the Oltecs and Kogolor dwarves first.

They pass over the Oltec Hills and talk to the locals in the first village they spot (Bitac). From them, they learn about the local customs and the location of Manac, the capital of their Kingdom. The Ark sets course for Manac. There, Haldemar meets with Monpac the Sunwatcher, The Oltec (King). After peaceful talks and participation in a few local customs of story-telling as well as playing wooden musical instruments, The Oltec declares that they accept anyone in their lands that comes in peace.

FLAURMONT, AC 1013

Having heard rumors that the Tower of Sekhaba is located in the Realm of Silence, Nikita-Ahmed and her party equip themselves and travel out into the broken lands northeast of Ranak.

On the way out of town, they are attacked by mercenaries, but manage to defeat/evade them. Unknown to them, the mercenaries were sent by the ruler of Ranak, King Al-Belak, as he wants the old Pharaoh out of his way so he can be the new Pharaoh.

In the Realm of Silence, the group encounters various desert creatures, strange monoliths, and abandoned pyramids, but still do not manage to find the Tower of Sekhaba yet.

FLAURMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark passes by the huge Mt. Ronani and approaches the dwarven realm of Kogolor. An away team goes down to visit the kingdom below. Much to the surprise of the Alphasians, the dwarven cities are mostly above ground and easy to spot. They head to the capital city of Kolmstat and talk with the receptive, friendly, and open dwarves (another surprise to the Alphasians). Kolmstat is then attacked by a daring raid of a war-party from the Krugel Hordes. Haldemar and the Princess Ark help in the defense of the dwarven city, and hence King Bilfric III declares that Alphasians will be warmly accepted allies of the Kogolor Dwarves.

YARTHMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark flies above the Brute-Men lands. Since these neanderthals do not make any villages or structures, the Ark fails to locate any signs of civilization, so moves on toward the south and Nithia.

YARTHMONT, AC 1013

Nikita-Ahmed and her party discover the Tower of Sekhaba. There, they confront the priests of Thanatos. After various clashes and a hair-raising battle, the group manages to flee with the Book of Amon. But not without cost; various members of the party have been killed, including Permon, Ramose's close friend. Djemun has also succumbed to the maddening effects of the Tower (actually a Burrower; see HWR2). Nikita-Ahmed is forced to take care of her insane companion as they flee back through the desert.

Eventually, they make it back to the River Nithia, and to the village of Ker-nome. Nikita-Ahmed leaves the mad Djemun in the hand of the villagers as she rushes back to Tarthis.

YARTHMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark arrives at Tarthis, the capital of Nithia. There, Haldemar learns that Sebek-Komnut is one of Pharaoh Ramose IV's sons.

Sebek-Komnut learns what has happened and demands to see his father. He has forgiven him after all those years for the execution of his mother.

Meanwhile, Pharaoh Senkha is reluctant to make any deals with Haldemar, and hence Alphasia, because the voices in her head warn her against it.

Agents of Ranivorus kidnap Sebek-Komnut, and secretly send word to Ramose that if he does not kill himself, they will kill his son (since they are unable to bypass Nikita-Ahmed's guards to kill him themselves). The crew of the Ark learns of Sebek-Komnut's disappearance and free him from the evil priests, hence saving Ramose.

YARTHMONT, AC 1013

Nikita-Ahmed arrives back in Tarthis and presents the Book of Amon to Pharaoh Senkha and the nobles of Nithia. Prince Haldemar of Alphasia is also there to witness the events unfolding.

Ramose is brought to the royal court, and is presented with the Book of Amon, which he reads. He does not go insane, proving that he is indeed the real Pharaoh. He demands that Senkha relinquish the title of Pharaoh at once, returning the rightful rulership of Nithia to him.

However, Senkha takes the Book of Amon and reads it as well. Having been declared the rightful Pharaoh in ceremonies given by the priests of Pflarr and Rathanos, she is also unaffected by the book.

There now appears to be two Pharaohs, and many of the nobles begin taking sides. The priesthood back Senkha, as Ramose has apparently lost favor with Rathanos, and therefore does not deserve to rule Nithia. King Al-Belak also supports Senkha (although for hopes of personal gain rather than any loyalty). Ramose has most of the military support because of Nikita-Ahmed, as well as the support of King Khnemet-urt of the Delta Region. Ramose also gains the

support of many of the lesser nobles and commoners as he has returned from the dead, and that should be proof enough he has the blessings of the Immortals.

Sebek-Komnut asks Haldemar, and Alpathia, to join the side of his father. Haldemar informs that he cannot take sides in an internal conflict. Sebek-Komnut is disappointed in him, and Alpathia. Despite the fact that Haldemar will not support him, Ramose does not hold a grudge, having become a calmer man over the years. He states that he understands Alpathia's position, and asks him to leave Nithia. Ramose will be glad to make negotiations with Alpathia once the internal problems are over and asks that he return later. Haldemar thanks Ramose, and the Princess Ark leaves Tarthis.

Although Ramose has the guards necessary to capture/kill the usurpers right now, he does not act as he loves Senkha and believes she is simply misguided somehow. He tries to talk her out of an armed conflict, but fails. Senkha and her group leave Tarthis, unopposed by Ramose, and head for Ranak. Civil war seems about to break loose on the nation once more.

KLARMONT, AC 1013

As feared, Nithia falls into civil war as the Delta Region Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom fight to put their own Pharaoh on the throne.

Ramose is saddened by the way things have turned out, as he despises the pointless deaths that will be caused by the needless fighting. The war is a long one and continues to this day.

KLARMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark arrives over the area of the Tanagoro Plains. An away team, including Haldemar, goes down to the ground below and explores around (reason: flying ships tend to scare primitive natives). They are greeted in a small village defensively, but peacefully. After talks with the local ruler, they learn of the location of the Togoro (great king of Tanagoro).

The Ark leaves and locates the village of the Togoro. There, Haldemar (with his away team again) talks with Korolo Togoro. The Togoro seems to be interested in finding ways to store food and water more efficiently. Leo, the gnome engineer of the Princess Ark, attempts to show them various methods, but Korolo dislikes all of them (because of cultural bias). Still, Korolo Togoro appreciates the help the Alpathians have tried to give the Tanagoro. He welcomes Alpathians to his lands provided they obey their customs and come in peace.

Haldemar exchanges various items of interest to the Tanagoro (such as food and water) for a batch of their wheat-beer, which the crew finds very potent and enjoyable!

From Korolo Togoro, Haldemar learns of the other great warriors to the south called the Jennites. Not shown on any of the maps given to him by Empress Eriadna, he decides to explore the southern plains.

KLARMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark hovers over the Jennite Plains. An away team led by Haldemar goes down and explores around and locates the Jennite village of Saniladar, named after their chieftain. Upon being given gifts by Saniladar, Haldemar offers something of his in return, and is accepted by the village.

The village is then raided by another village which it had raided a few sleeps ago. Jennites being worshippers of Tarastia always get revenge when they can, and so feuds tend to last forever. The crew of the Ark are forced to help defend the village from the Jennite cavalry just to stay alive. Their help earns them the respect of the villagers of Saniladar. Haldemar is viewed with awe and some fear at his display of the control of the forces of nature, such as fire and lightning (as combat magic is not available in the Hollow World).

FELMONT, AC 1013

Haldemar and his team attempt to visit another Jennite village only to discover that their helping the clan of Saniladar has earned them the enmity of the other clans around them as the Saniladar has raided all of them various times. His team is attacked, and a few crew members are taken prisoner.

Haldemar brings the Princess Ark directly to the village which has his captured men, only to find out that they have already been executed, as the Jennites do with prisoners of war. Disgusted with the barbaric and savage ways of the Jennites, Haldemar orders the Princess Ark to head west, toward what his maps indicate should be the Milenian Empire.

FELMONT, AC 1013

While sailing over the Sea of Yr, the Princess Ark passes several islands that they decide to investigate. There, they encounter a culture of Broken Ones (described in the AD&D Monstrous Manual, p.30)

These creatures, humanoids made out of animal parts, were the creation of an Alphantian mage in Blackheart about 250 years ago. They wound up hating their Alphantian master and killed him. The other mages of Blackheart soon encountered these raiding Broken Ones and banded together to exterminate them. An unknown Immortal took pity on them and transported them here to this island in the Hollow World where they could live in peace.

The Broken Ones have a deep hatred for their creators, and hence tormentors (according to them), the Alphantians. Prince Haldemar, when identified as an Alphantian, is attacked by the creatures. The Princess Ark away team barely makes it back to the Ark. They then leave this island, hoping to never have to return.

FYRMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark passes over a Nithian-style town on the western coast of the Sea of Yr. Intrigued, Haldemar orders the Ark in to investigate and make contact.

There, Haldemar meets with Uart-neter Semsu, the ruler of the town of Lothar. The lord of Lothar learns about the civil war brewing back in Tarthis. He had lost all contact with Ramose IV when he was captured by Senkha's guards for impersonating the Pharaoh.

Within Lothar, Haldemar encounters a Nithian who asks him various questions about his flying ship and Alphantia. At first, Haldemar is happy to talk about his homeland, but then begins to become suspicious as this stranger wants to know all he possibly can. He has some of his men follow the scholar back to his place. They discover he is indeed a scholar of various lands and cultures, as well as history. His symbol, which is carved over his front door, is a lighthouse.

Haldemar then leaves Lothar and continues on his way to the Milenian Empire, despite warning from Uart-neter Semsu claiming that the Milenians are all barbarians that cannot be trusted.

Uart-neter Semsu sends troops back to help Pharaoh Ramose, whom he truly believes has Immortal support in his rulership.

FYRMONT, AC 1013

A village in the Traldar lands is destroyed by a huge 12-headed hydra. The neighboring villagers quickly grab their weapons and go on a hydra hunt, like any brave hero would do. To the Traldar, this is just another opportunity for their adventurers to prove that they are great heroes!

FYRMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark arrives at Corisa, the capital of the Milenian Empire. At first, things are a little hectic, as the Milenians believe that the Princess Ark is a Heldannic Warbird, having returned once more to cause trouble (events described in HWR3: Milenian Empire). It is soon discovered that they are from Alphantia, and not Heldannic Knights. Trade negotiations are made with the Senate, which are only too happy to agree with Alphantia's policies of keeping the Heldannic Knights and other nations (Haldemar does not mention they are from the surface) from taking over the Hollow World.

AMBYRMONT, AC 1013

Before leaving Corisa, Haldemar is approached by an old man calling himself Trokalikos of Laroun (HW boxed set). The man claims he simply wants to learn more about the world and asks to join the Ark for her voyages around the Hollow World. When asked what he will give in return, Trokalikos mentions his vast knowledge of the various cultures around here, as well as his ability to speak most of the languages. Haldemar, having had to learn Neathar and use that primitive language to communicate with everyone is rather interested in this advantage, so he hires the old Milenian.

The Princess Ark heads northward, toward the Traldar Kingdoms, since Trokalikos has corrected him, indicating that they are not part of the Merry Pirate cities. Haldemar is impressed at the knowledge of the old Milenian.

AMBYRMONT, AC 1013

King Dogrel of the Alphatian Neatharum, having picked enough loyal troops to his rule, and not the Alphatian Empire, sets his long awaited plan into motion. He sends his soldiers out into the Neathar Lands, far enough from the town of Haldemar so as not to be noticed by other Alphatians, to capture and enslave as many Neathar as possible. He wants to use them to make a larger and more prosperous nation than the Alphatian Neatharum which has been denied expansion, and hence power, because of Empress Eriadna when she made a peace treaty with the Neathar. He has secretly hated the Empress ever since. Now he wants to try and make his own kingdom independent from Alphatia.

The location chosen by Dogrel and his men is at the lake where the Torolai River meets the Great Mud River. One skyship is given to them to retain easy contact with the new town. There, they begin enslaving the Torolai Neathar in the plains to the north, as well as Valgrai Neathar in the forests to the northwest, around the mountain chain.

AMBYRMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark flies over the lands of the Kubitts, not knowing there is a culture of diminutive people hidden in the trees below.

SVIFTMONT, AC 1013

The Princess Ark arrives in the Traldar Kingdoms. Trokalikos directs them to the city of Coresco. Before King Tiradon of Coresco will deal with Haldemar, he has to prove to them that he is a respectable hero, and is therefore asked to participate in a hydra hunt. The 12-headed hydra that destroyed one of the smaller villages a couple of months ago has yet to be destroyed.

It turned out that the hydra was a Lernaean hydra (for each head severed, two more grow back, unless flames are applied to seal the wound. They have a maximum of 12 heads.), and they have been unable to defeat it. It just kept regrowing its heads. Also, this particular specimen seems to be rather cunning (INT 8), and can even spit out poisonous gases from each head. The Traldar believe that the hydra must be the creation of some evil curse, as they have never seen one with such powers before. Because of its uniqueness, the locals quickly call the beast the Coresco Hydra.

The crew of the Ark participates in the hunt. The creature is soon brought down thanks to the advanced magic of the Alphatians, including the good use of a Fireball spell to seal off all the heads and prevent them from regrowing.

King Tiradon gives the Alphatians respect for their acts of bravery, and accepts to trade with them. Trokalikos warns Haldemar that the Traldar are fickle people, and their leaders, usually warlords, come and go. This village might be peaceful now, but could just as easily declare war on the Alphatians the next time they come by, especially if another leader has seized the throne since then.

The Princess Ark sets sail westward, intent on following the islands that belt the equator of the ocean (Anathy Archipelago), since the Alphatians already know about the Azcans to the north who continuously raid the Alphatian Neatharum.

EIRMONT, AC 1013

Traldar adventurers, curious as to where the famous Coresco Hydra came from, begin backtracking the creature's trail to its original lair.

KALDMONT, AC 1013

The Traldar discover that the hydra was released from an ancient shrine to Halav. The shrine has apparently been desecrated by Schattenalfen, and hence the Coresco Hydra attacked the elves. Carefully searching the shrine shows that an artifact is apparently missing. A count of the footprints and Schattenalfen elf bodies reveals that some of them survived. The Traldar believe that the Schattenalfen must have that artifact, whatever it might be, and the hydra was to punish them for not protecting it.

The adventurers return to Coresco and inform everyone about their findings. Many bands of heroes decide to take on a quest to find that artifact and return it to its rightful resting place. The various groups all head out toward the land of the underground elves.

King Tiradon prepares the city of Coresco for a possible war against the Schattenalfen.