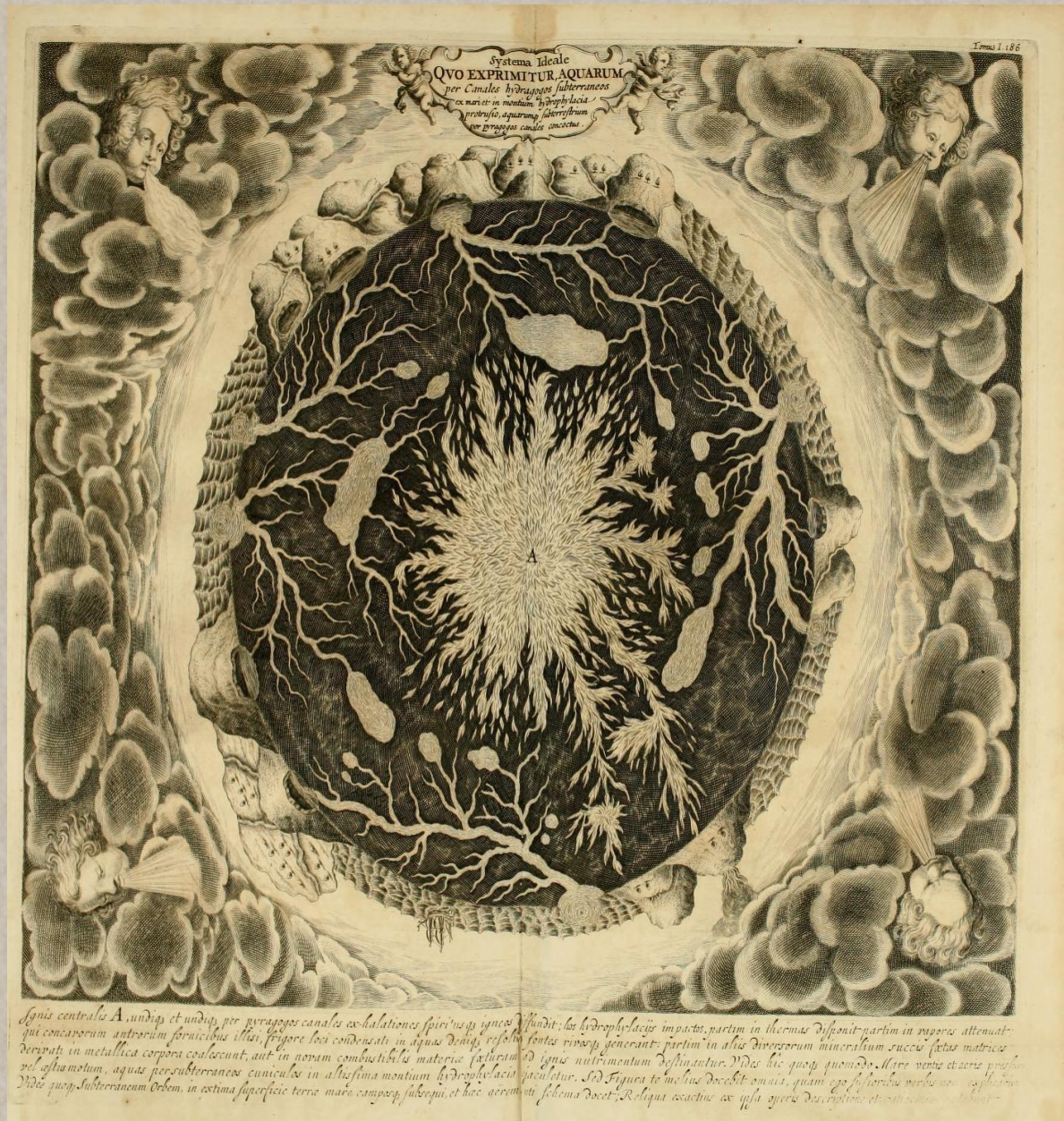


EXPEDITION :
AGARTHA DESCENT :
Scramble to the center of the Earth
2e

World Book



The year is 1875. It is an age of revolution, exploration, and empire. The discovery of deep caverns beneath the Earth threw the world into disarray a decade earlier, with the revelation of ancient cities and civilizations that dwell in vast underground layers, long lost to the waters of time.

Today, men, beasts, and machines move underground as colonial empires from the surface explore and exploit the territories that lie beneath their feet.

But Things live in the hollow layers of the earth: old dominions, monsters, and worse. Among them, the advanced and prosperous city-states of New Mu; the lost Kingdom of Atlantis and the Atlan Republic, long whispered of in myth and dreams; the prophecy worshiping priests of Lemuria who eat in the shade of ancient twilight; and below all that is known, amid the ice covered sunken isle of St. Helena, Napoleon broods in silence.

Great cities rise and armies march to challenge the old, as the world above moves to the worlds below. But the darkness is deep, and none know all that dwell beneath.



Glossary

Agartha : The Subterranean World as a whole.

Celestial Arch : The transparent dome miles above us, which holds Hyperborea at bay.

Colonial : Generic term for Surface folks while underground.

Corpsification : Variation of the Husking process.

Deep-Drunkness : Cave madness, sometimes going as far as resulting in physical alterations, mutations and possibly Husking.

Entrance : Access point between Layers. Some are simple tunnels, some are mystical passages.

Epigea : Generic term for the 2nd Layer (the Surface)

Epigean : Generic term for Surface folks

Husks : Zombies, but with a degree of (rapidly diminishing) intelligence. Not particularly fond of brains, but not picky either.

Hyperborea : The World Above. The actual "surface".

Layer : Earth is made of concentric Layers.

Loop : An ontological theory which hold that the discovery and exploration of Agartha by Epigeans

Surface : Our Layer, which is actually not the outermost, but the 2nd Layer.

Subhumans : Humans which have been mutated by their prolonged stay in the Subterranean.

Timeline

~5000 BC : Sinking of Atlantis

~4600 BC : Atlantis and Atlan reestablish contact. Start of the Eternal War.

~1600 BC : Various Mediterranean people are forced into Agartha following the many volcano eruptions of the Late Minoan period. Many eventually join Atlantis.

1542 : Arne Saknussemm leads an expedition and discovers Agartha, but all members are either lost or return insane and their account are discounted.

1799 : The French acquires the Rosetta Stone. Napoleon subsequently deciphers it and learns of the existence of Agartha.

1815 : Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon escapes and seeks refuge in Agartha.

1848 : Sicilian Revolution. The Carbonari, an ancient secret society with mysterious ties to the Janarae Cults enters an alliance with the southern Italian radicals and Freemasons and eventually takes its leadership. Cavaignac is elected President of France, and his government's diplomacy insures the survival of the Duosicilian Republic.

1849 : King Ferdinand II is sacrificed to the Etna volcano.

Establishment of the Duosicilian Republic (1st Abomination War).

1850 : Franz Joseph is murdered, Maximilian takes the Austro-Hungarian throne.

1851 : Conflict between Cavaignac and the conservative Assembly results in a royalist coup by General Changarnier.

1852 : Third Restoration under Henri V, with Philippe d'Orleans as heir.

1853-56 : Eastern War (Crimea). Henri V is too focused on countering Italian influence to lend support.

1854: Austrians align with the Ottomans. British begin Crimean campaign.

1855 : The Allies are stopped at the Chernaya River, and barely stop the Russians themselves over the Danube.

1856 : Crimean war ends in Allied humiliation. Russian secures the independence of the Danubian Principalities and Serbia, as well as assurances on Bulgarian autonomy.

1856 : Pius IX is assassinated, 2nd Roman revolt breaks out, Alexander IX is elected and calls for a Crusade.

1856-57 : Italian Crusade/2nd Abomination War. France & Allies lose, The sacrifice of most Swiss Guards and Cardinal Clement to evacuate the relics and other Cardinals ignites the faith of Catholics around the world. Pope moves to Avignon

1857 : The Sepoy Rebellion. Lemuria moves to support India which leads to a British defeat. Emperor Bahadur Shah II establishes the Neo-Mughal Empire.

1857-58 : Malcolmite resurgence

1858-60 : Global depression. France's defeat in the Crusade spirals into a prolonged economic and political crisis. The king's response is particularly heavy-handed.

July 1860 : The 2nd July Revolution is aborted by the Fall of Paris.

1860 : The Duosicilians sacrifice thousands of dissidents, aristocrats and political prisoners to the Volcano Spirits. The Stromboli Entrance is revealed.

1860-1864 : Parisians are left fending for themselves and incorporate the Deepfolk survivors of the villages crushed by the Sinking.

1863 : Lidenbrock-Bjelke expedition.

1863 : Paris repels an invasion led by the Atlan exile Philobastres

1864 : Julius Verne's Expedition reaches Fallen Paris and comes back.

1864 : Foundation of Sicilia Terza in the 4th Layer by the Italians.

1864 : Massacre of the Manchus of Beijing. Hong Xiuquian ascends to "Heaven" and return.

1865 : First French elections involving Paris, a new Constitution makes France a Parliamentary Republic.

February 1865 : The British seize Iceland for its Entrance.

April 1865 : Prussia and Italy declare war against Austria. (4th Abomination War). However a number of social and political issues begin plaguing the Italians, which prevents the war from escalating too quickly.

June 1865 : Unsure of its military after the Crimean disaster, Maximilian I seeks a political compromise which the Italian leadership is only too eager to accept. Austria will pay the Italians a hefty price for access to the Stromboli entrance in exchange for Venetia and Trentino. On the other hand, Italy will renounce any further claims to the Austria territory, and reform itself into a Monarchy. After a short but bloody civil war, Francesco Crispi becomes first Tyrant Francesco I. The Pope excommunicate

Maximilian I. Creation of the Imperial Church. Increase in anti-Habsburg nationalism in the general austrian population.

October 1865 : Foundation of New Kirkwall in the 3rd Layer by the British.

1866 : France begins the construction of a series of elevators linking the Surface to Fallen Paris.

March 1867 : New Mu invades and captures Hokkaido.

1868 : Parisian Riots over economic issues presented by the reintegration result in an attempted terrorist attack on the Tower and the assassination of several preminent engineers. Eiffel takes over the construction project.

1868 : Foundation of the Pillar-City of Errum as capital of the Yazata Assembly of Sky-Clans.

1968 : Foundation of the Agarthan Society

1968 : Foundation of Maximiliana in the 4th Layer by the Austro-Hungarians

1968 : Foundation of Franklin in the 3rd Layer by the Americans.

1969-70 : Corruption scandals and several ministerial crisis allow the French Monarchist to regain popularity.

1870 : Completion of the Eiffel Tower

1870 : Foundation of Kitezh in the 3rd Layer by the Tsardom

1870 : Foundation of Wallace Point in the 4th Layer by the British.

1871 : Foundation of San Ignacio in the 4th Layer by the Holy League

1871 : Conflict erupt in Bulgaria over violation of its autonomy by the Ottomans. The Tsardom declares war on the Ottomans and Turkey and swiftly breaks both. Belligerents meet in Fallen Paris A few months later, Murad V makes a coup and becomes Sultan.

1871 : Foundation of Ys, Guyenne-Basse and {XYZ} in the 3rd Layer by the French

1872 : Italian Invasion of Ethiopia over a newly discovered entrance.

1872-73 : The Necropolis Event. Desperate to return his new Empire to its former glory, Murad V descends into Agartha and return with an army of undead.

1873 : French Campaign in Tonkin vs Lemuria

1874 : Tunisian and Greek expeditions in the aftermath of the Necropolis Event.

1874 : Foundation of Valdiagartsk in the 4th Layer by the Tsardom

1874 : Foundation of Fort Wellington in the 5th Layer by the British

1875 : A La Ombre plot is uncovered in France's military. Charles L.N.B. is initially implicated but later acquitted.

1875 : Foundation of Libertalia

1875 : Foundation of New Alamo in the 4th Layer by the Americans

1875 : Foundation of Ezana in the 3rd Layer by the Holy League

1876 : Ethiopian Crusade

1877 : Foundation of Kagoshima-No-Yomi in the 3rd Layer by the Satsuma Domain.



Metaphysics & Ontology

The world no longer makes sense.

For most, the illusion that was reality was shattered in 186x with the Fall of Paris and its subsequent rediscovery. For the educated it was perhaps the Lidenbrock Expedition and the much published exploits of Julius Vernes. In retrospect, perhaps it is the disappearance of Bonaparte after the loss of Waterloo that should be marked as the onset of the lifting of the veil.

Whatever ends up the starting point of the new Era, suffice to say that we are no longer in the same world as our fathers and grandfathers. Academics throughout the world are still debating the truth and implications of the discovery of Agartha and Hyperborea. So far, what we know for a fact :

- The Earth's strata are shaped as concentric Layers, which each have large openings hospitable to life (up to a point). This underground is commonly referred to as Agartha.

- The surface is, in fact, not the surface. Space a psychic sea, and there is a transparent ceiling high above holding it. This overworld is referred to as Hyperborea.

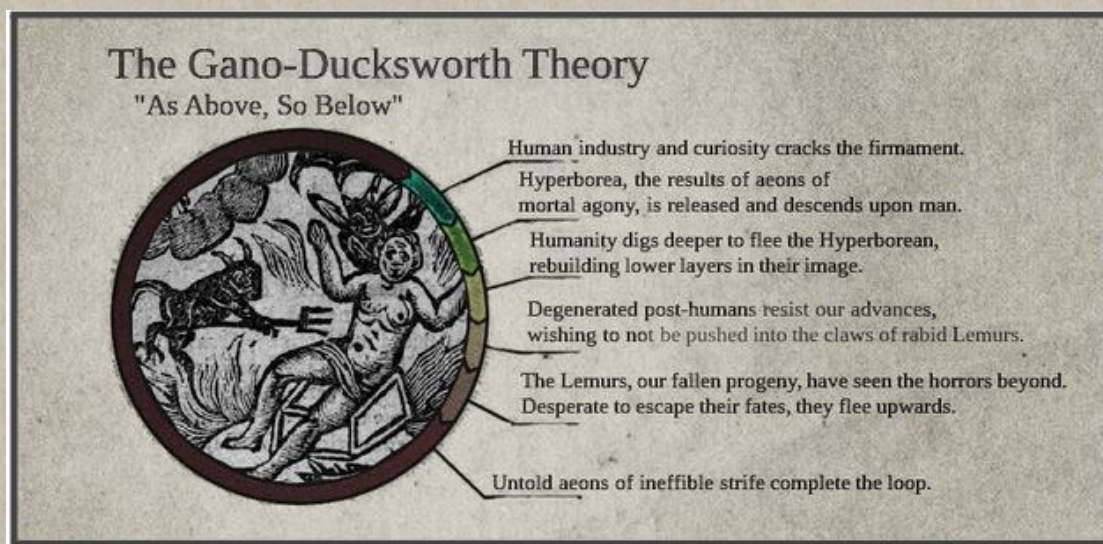
- The rules of physics and logic appears to shift in some areas, and more so the deeper you venture. Similarly, frequent travels though the depths have been shown to cause physical and mental sicknesses, commonly known as Deep-Drunkness

As can be expected in the decade that follows such a revelation, scores of theories, ranging from folklore to academic, have appeared to replace our previous understanding of the world and universe.

The Gano-Duckworth Theory

Commonly referred to as “The Loop” theory, it holds that the world’s geographical and historical processes are set into a predetermined cycle that repeats itself indefinitely. Whatever form of civilization that emerges in the 2nd Layer becomes Hyperborea’s natural prey, and seeking to escape from their predation, take refuge in the lower Layers. It posits that many beings encountered in the underground are in truth the degenerated remnants of such previous populations. As Humanity explores the depths, it increasingly loses its grip on reality and suffers the effect of Deep-Drunkness. Eventually, this madness triggers the final invasion of Hyperborea and Humanity’s escape from them into whatever lays beyond the 9th Layer, at which point Humanity would itself become part of Hyperborea.

It is unclear how widespread the sincere belief in this theory is, however it is definitely the most debated by current academics, and the one which seems to have the most support from the Agarthan Society.



The Twin-Arrow Theory

Many religious institutions are still obstinately refusing to acknowledge the reality of Agartha and Hyperborea. Between the rise of volcanic worship, the many reports of Christian-derived Agarthan cults and an Hyperborean invasion linked to an artifact owned by Jesuits, the Catholic Church didn't get this luxury. The Twin-Arrow Theory is the attempt to reinterpret Catholic Dogma in this light.

While a complex hermeneutic is currently in development by Catholic officials and intellectuals, in its current form it must be admitted that the term "Theory" is overly generous. It states, quite simply, that Humanity has offended God, either through choking the Heavens through pollution or by attempting to send a ship to the Moon (the first Arrow), and that God is punishing us by unleashing the Hyperboreans on us (the second Arrow).



The Volcanic Formation Theory

World & Factions

1st Layer The Firmament



Space is not a vast empty expanse. It is a Layer, albeit a unique one in almost every aspect. The void of space itself is an optical illusion caused by the interaction between the stuff of the Psychic Sea and the transparent dome which stands miles above our heads. In its higher concentration, far above the spheres and planetoids upon which the Hyperboreans have built their dystopian cities, this “Psychic Sea” proves just as lethal to direct exposure as the cold emptiness of space.

Hyperborea is not simply a civilization. Rather, it is a collection of civilizations which, if the Loop theory is to be believed, represent the inhuman end point of the historico-ontological process. These make-up more or less homogeneous factions, each with its own structure and goals. As Hyperboreans do not engage in much exchanges with anyone who isn't already one of them, the classification used to refer to these are purely descriptive, and originates mostly from the Miskatonic Institute's own research into the matter.

Hyperwar Cults account for the majority of the damage and casualty caused by raids. These seem to consist of roving bands of psychotic aliens, united by little else than a fanatical dedication to causing pain and misery through violent means. They show very little interest anything that isn't warfare, to a point which may be perceived as counterproductive by other Firmament factions.

In addition to the many terrible warmachines fielded by Hyperboreans, various robotic entities can often be spied walking along the Firmament's armies. Unknown to their would-be victims, these are "living", conscious Machinemen, albeit ones possessed by a dark and cold mind. It is almost a mercy to be captured by these, as the hyperrationalism which characterize these mechanical beings has led them to view torture as a detached process to be optimized rather than an art form.

The Ubermen stands on the opposite side of the spectrum. Obsessed with the biological application of Emanation-based metasciences, [...]

To many, the most iconic Hyperborean faction however will remain the Historicals. Rather than a race of beings, the term refers to a small collection of individuals handpicked from this Loop's cycle and either elevated or recreated into an Hyperborean being. Expert posits that this is the result of other Hyperboreans being so removed from their prey's conditions that they may have a difficult time understanding how to maximize the trauma they cause. As such, they occasionally select whoever among the Loop's 2nd Layer denizen show the greatest propensity for both mass-casualty and cruelty. These are afforded great respect and power within Hyperborean society, despite their lowly origin, as they inevitably show a natural affinity for Emanation mastery.



2nd Layer The British Empire

Napoleon's gambit and subsequent failure in the early 1800s left Britain in the lead of the Great Game, and it has worked hard ever since to maintain this position. Although the Tsardom has risen as a challenger, and Britain's colonies have faced some territorial losses lately, the Empire currently stand as the first world power. The issues that plagued France and the Continent mostly turned out to benefit the British, and while the loss of the Indian colony certainly hurt, it has compensated by reaching further into Agartha than most other Colonial faction.

To many Epigeans, Crown subject or not, Britain remains the one herald of normalcy and rationality in these uncertain times. Americans would obviously not voice these opinions publicly, or Frenchmen too proudly, but most are learning to appreciate the Englishmen dogged obstinacy in the face of the current madness. This newfound sense of cooperation does not mean Britain has been spared its share of geopolitical crisis, however. Most recently, the discovery of the Halifax Entrance and refusal to allow Canada to enter PACT nearly brought it and America to blows, and caused a short-lived cold war along the Canadian border. Even tho the conflict came to a resolution without escalating too much, many observers have noted how the Leaden Duke's used of newly-developed Prediction Engines allowed him to

Iceland

A cold volcanic land, and one of the most secure places in all the British Empire. Seized in 186x in a brief war with Denmark, it is now under the control of the Leaden Duke, Lord Edward Cunningham, 1st Lord of the Admiralty. Fortress Iceland, as some of the locals call it, is the primary British entrance to Agartha with the Snaefellsjokull canal allowing the quick movement of men, equipment, and even the mighty ironclad battleships of the Royal Navy to the Third Layer. But there are whispers in parliament that Lord Edward is becoming too powerful, and many a jealous eye looks toward those black shores and thinks of schemes and plans...

Doggerland

Parts of Doggerland resurfaced as an island in the North Sea. It was revealed to possess several ancient ruins of unknown origins, deep pits and cliffs and fossilized forest; among them is a perilous route across barren lifeless cliff faces 100 kilometers down to the peaks of the Third Layer. Adding to the danger are various Wyrms, Lemurs and other creatures infesting the island.



France (to be reworked)

To many, the Fall of Paris was seen as a mercy killing for a Nation that had been on the losing end of conflicts since 1812. The rising threat of pagan Italy, the loss of France's status as a colonial challenger to Britain and the general European ire at its large population of socialists quickly eclipsed the earlier exploits of la Grande Armee.

The disappearance of the capital almost succeeded in finishing it off. With a large part of the highest governmental offices gone all at once, socialists took over the south of the country, while the rest descended into chaos. The remaining members of government and of the military presented the threat of Italian encroachment to the English Crown as a common enemy, which eventually allowed Marshall Macmahon to retake the country with the support of the British Army. The Second Restoration managed to bring back a semblance of order, but at the cost of letting Macmahon cover the land in blood and naming himself Regent.

The USA

The discovery of the Deep and Firmanent forced every Surface nation to take a stance toward this new reality. Some, like the Italians and Ottomans, embraced it fully, becoming a warped caricature of themselves in the process. Others, like France and Satsuma, fell victim to events that they could not hope to escape unscathed, but figured out a way to adapt. Britain alone stands as a paragon of cold rationality, refusing to allow the newfound strangeness of the world to affect it.

America could be said to be a midpoint between Britain's doggedness and France's adaptability. Between the Hyperborean Raid during the Paraguayan War, the Mu attack on New York and the recent resolution of the Fenian Crisis, the Reconstruction Period has not been easy for the Americans. Yet, the underground also brought its share of opportunities. The 3rd Layer opened itself as a natural continuation of the push toward California, diluting the attention of the Federal government toward the Surface's own South West. This resulted in creating an open space for ex-confederates to settle far away from the authorities, and sustaining the age of the Wild West beyond its natural lifespan. A few eccentric individuals went as far as reintroducing Saur to the Surface. At the same time, the demand for brave (or foolish) explorers opened up the path for both Aborigines and Abolitionists to assist the government's efforts in taming Agarthia.

Italy (to be done)

Taiping



In 1864, after the dreadful massacre of the Manchus of Beijing, Hong Xiuquan, the younger brother of Christ, ascended to heaven and came back wrong.

Ever since, the cooler heads of the Taiping movement, represented by the government of Hong Rengan (himself essentially a mainline Protestant), have had to thread a terrible needle. Several, in fact. They seek to pursue a reformist program of modernization, urgently needed to preserve their country's independence and rebuild its prosperity; to secure the recognition and respect of a largely hostile West without compromising their principles, offending the masses, or becoming puppets; and to harness the indispensable popularity and terrible power of a beloved leader who now terrifies and disturbs them—all while keeping him happy enough not to kill them.

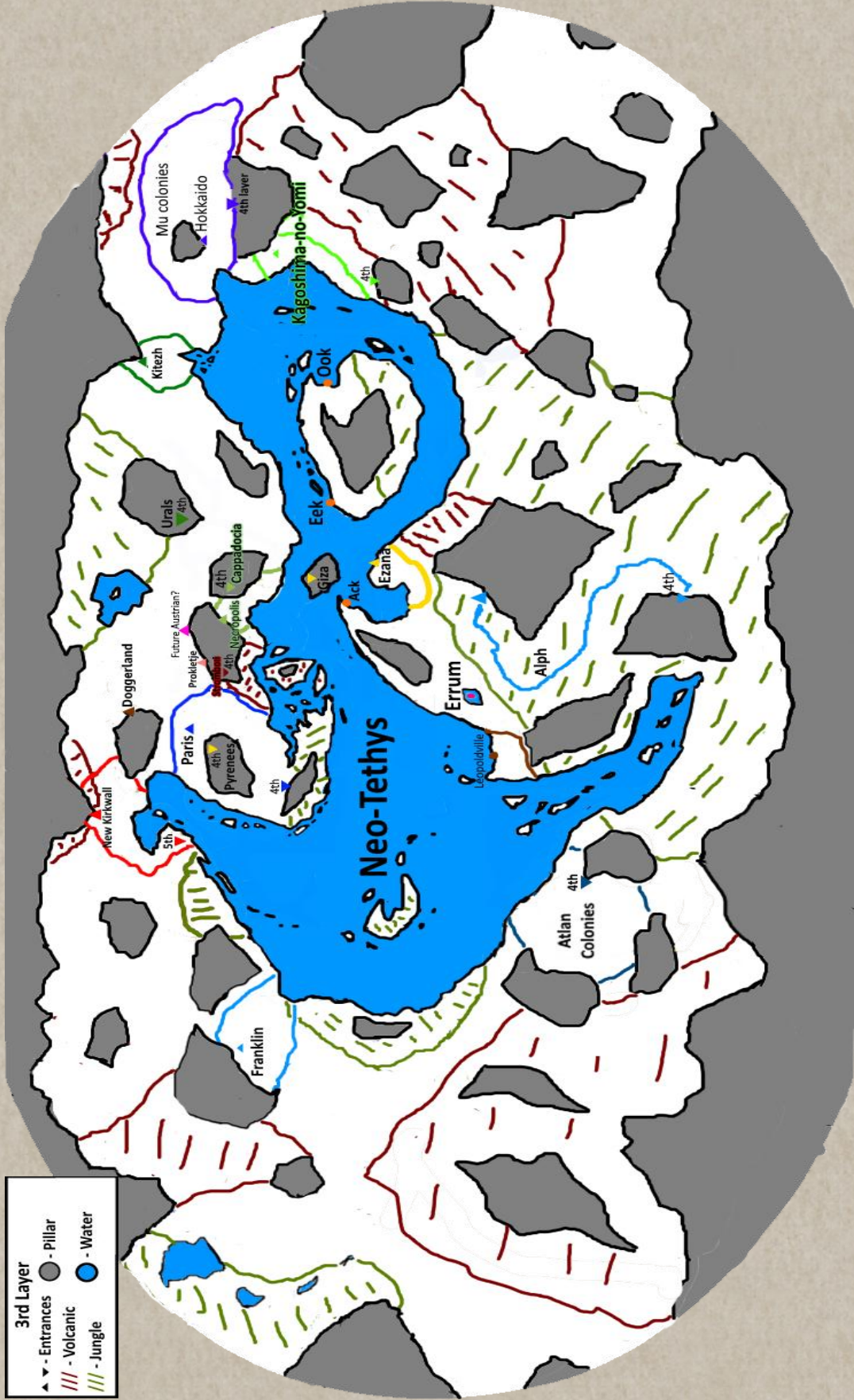
Beneath it all lies the existential dread of Hyperborean influence—to be reduced, concealed, denied, at least by Hong Rengan's faction. But do they need it more than they would like to admit? Can they yet turn back from the abyss above?

Meanwhile, within the Forbidden City, the New King broods and changes. In his visions of heaven, he used to see his dead children—but no longer. Now, the things he sees are too terrible,

too wonderful. Deep down, he doubts his ability to fulfill God's plan. Deep down, he knows something is wrong.

The Ottoman Empire (to be done)

3rd layer



The landscape of the 3rd Layer is characterized by wider and higher openings than any other Layers, and as such resembles the Surface the most. In many places, its Ceiling will be hidden behind a screen of clouds, leaving only the Pillars as indication that one is in Agartha.

Fallen Paris

When Paris fell, the city was in the middle of a revolt. Suddenly the people on both sides of the barricades found themselves trapped in the darkness, struggling to survive in a strange and hostile land. Almost immediately they were under the attack by the Deepfolk survivors, whose settlements were destroyed by the collapsed Ile-de-France. The revolutionaries, the royalist troops sent to suppress them, and regular men and women from every walk of life now had to reconcile their differences and fight side by side.

After repelling the initial onslaught, Parisians came together to elect the Municipal Council and the Executive Committee. There was much work set before the new municipal government: tending to the wounded, securing provisions, training and arming the militias, erecting fortifications and so forth, all while heavily pressed for time and resources. The government had to resort to some drastic measures, like implementing strict rationing. Parisians even had to resort to hunting the animals that escaped from the city zoo, not to mention all the dogs, cats and rats. The government also took over the running of the city's industries. Initially Paris was run almost like a Bronze Age palace economy, but gradually currency recovered from the Bank of France was reintroduced. Virtually every citizen was expected to fight if need arose and due to manpower shortages even the Parisian women often had to take up arms. Yet by coming together the people of Paris triumphed over great adversity.

When the Deepfolk struck again, they were ready. Not only were the Parisians able to fend off the new attacks, they were soon chasing the attackers to their hideouts. They could very well have destroyed what was left of the Deepfolk, but following some successful attempts at wordless parley that resulted in an exchange of captives, some voices called for mercy and peace. As

the language of the strange underground people was partially deciphered, it became clear that the Deepfolk had their homes destroyed, just like the Parisians have. They were also frightened and fighting for their lives - their myths and legends foretold cities falling from the Undersky as the first sign of the coming end of the world, and they took the Parisians for "demons" that would bring it about. In the end, the two peoples came to an understanding. The Christmas Truce of 1861 saw the Deepfolk welcomed into the city, forming Parisian Intégrés community. The first generation of Agarthan Métis was born soon afterwards. To this day the Intégrés and their descendants enjoy a privileged status among the other French colonial subjects and can fairly easily get naturalized as French citizens.

In their years of separation from France, the people of Paris would go on to face many other challenges, as Yazata raiders, hungry Gorg hordes, Morlock swarms, rampaging dinosaurs and other foes would attack the city. The Lost Years, as this period came to be called, gave rise to many stories of heroism, ingenuity and survival, like the Defense of Fort d'Issy of 1861 and the Great Tyrannosaur Hunt of 1862. In the Flight from Zalmun, the same year, Parisian captives led by young Leon Gambetta escaped from the Yazata sky fortress by stealing one of their aircrafts.

But the hardest of trials came in 1863, when the city faced the invasion by the renegade Atlan general Philobastres and his host of loyal Atlan warriors, Deepfolk followers and slaves and Yazata, Mu and Apemen mercenaries. Parisian militias and their Deepfolk and Amazon allies waged a guerilla war through the countryside as Philobastres' army marched towards the city, harassing the enemy with traps, ambushes and hit-and-run attacks by the bicycle troops and the skyriders. When the invaders entered Montmartre, the Parisians fought at the barricades and assaulted the foes from the rooftops and the alleyways. As they retreated, squads of women known as pétroleuses poured oil and set the city on fire. In the end of the Battle of Paris, Gargantua, the city's first tame diplodocus, stampeded through the enemy ranks, trampling Philobastres, but was mortally wounded in the process. A statue dedicated to Gargantua and this victory now stands on the Montmartre hill.

Paris remains a highly autonomous city, a bit of a world onto itself, and the Parisians value this autonomy very much. By the 70s they had developed their own peculiar identity and culture, shaped by their shared (and undeniably traumatic) experience of survival and cultural exchange with the Agarthans, from their peculiar slang to their scandalous social mores, like letting women serve in the armed forces, to the many local superstitions. The Catholic Church is particularly concerned by the heretical practices of the Parisian faithful, like the cult venerating prince Philippe as a martyr and the patron saint of the city (he was Comte de Paris, after all) with strange rituals of undeniably Deepfolk origins.

The city is still ruled by the Council and the Committee, which invariably has the representatives from the opposing political factions share executive power. Paris is generally a republican stronghold, flanked by the socialists on the left, and the Bonapartists on the right, but some enclaves of royalism remain, and all of them inevitably come to blows in the political arena. This means that few decisions are made without some prolonged and heated debates. The Parisians themselves treat this “rugged cosmopolitanism” as a part of their history of coming together in the face of adversity and a point of pride, even if they personally hate the people they disagree with.

The city was rebuilt and renovated in a style similar to the Pombaline reconstruction of Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755, giving it its modern look. Yet some districts remain slums full of ruined and makeshift housing and infested with the infamous Parisian gangs.

Basse-Guyenne (French colony)

New Kirkwall (British colony)

Kitezha (Tsardom colony)

The Satsuma Domain

The Satsuma Domain is perhaps the strangest curiosity of all the colonial settlements in Agartha. Originally one of the most powerful and prosperous domains in all Japan, a rebellion against the authority of the Meiji government broke out in 1877, and after a brief conflict, the entire island of Kyushu sunk into the third layer by unknown means. It is a land that does not recognise the authority of the Emperor or Meiji Japan; instead, it is ruled by the Samurai, men who have preserved their traditional way of life and Bushido code, adapting well to their new surroundings by remaking Satsuma into an independent kingdom and taking the local dinosaurs as mounts. Now that they have their paradise, the Samurai have no trouble working with the Meiji forces, and many Japanese expeditions are aided by a Samurai Saur Rider in their travels underground.

Ys (French colony)

Yazata Assembly of Sky-Clans

The inhabitants of the "Roof" section of the lower Layers are collectively known as Sky-People. Their origin are lost in time, but likely originate from some of the earliest waves of Epigeal migration of Agartha. The Pillars and giant stalactites offer many opportunities to settle and expand upon, and to many, the inherent dangers of settling so high above the void is a worthy trade for the dangers represented by Saur, Lemurs and Apemen. The Sky-Clans have embraced both the risks and opportunities offered by the Sky and the Roof, and in the same way that Atlantis rules the Underground's seas, the Sky-People rule its skies.

The Sky-Clans have no known or claimed uniform culture or ethnic origin, but have overtime acquired a shared aesthetic and societal structure, reminiscent of ancient Mesopotamia. This coincides with a very recent push for centralization and a nascent shared national identity, centered around the 3rd Layer Pillar-City of Errum.

The natural isolation of the Sky-Clans is both a boon and a curse that has shaped much of its society. No other Underground nation has been capable of mounting anything resembling a sustained military campaign against them, leading the denizens of the Roof

to claim that the Sky and the Roof have blessed them with an eternal peace. This stark contrast from the Floor's brutal conditions also explains in part why Sky-People see other Agarthan and even Epigeans with such low opinions. While the Sky-Clans maintain order and a strict rule of law within their own communities, outside, anything goes. Seemingly refined nobles who care only for breeding the largest Cloudelleafint within Errum's walls will not hesitate to partake in raiding and piracy as soon as he leaves them. The difference between a Sky-Clan raider and an Atlan one, however, is that the Sky-Clan one specifically seeks a fast way to profit, while the Atlan one seeks labour and nothing else. As such even skywaymen and Sky-Pirates may be more amenable than many other Agarthans. More than one encounter between Colonials and and Sky-Clan or Sky-Pirates started as a slave raid and ended with economic negotiations and feasting, with or without bloodshed.

With its low population and its natural frontiers, the newly formed Yazata Assembly cannot afford to maintain a large military, or even keep training the one it has. Any action it undertake requires it to shore up its ranks with Sky-Pirates, Sky-Gorgs or Neanderthal mercenaries. What it lacks in troop quality however it more than makes up for through its complete domination of the skies. Sky-People have long ago developed and honed the technology behind balloons and dirigibles, and keep a small force of relatively large airships to defend its airspace and mercantile interests.

4th Layer



Atlan



Survivors from one of the military colonies of Old Atlantis in what is now known as the Yucatan peninsula, they were cut off from the motherland during the Fall. Their account of the Hyperborean war and the Sinking, while similar to the Atlantean, bears a great deal of inconsistencies and conflicting details, leaving both quite puzzled. According to them, their ancestors took refuge under the Earth as Atlantis sank and the Hyperboreans ravaged the Surface, eventually settling in what is now known as the Fourth Layer. This confuses the Atlanteans greatly, who rather record that both fell together in the same cataclysmic event. It must also be said that this would be the only time a Layer Shift passed through multiple Layers...

Centuries of separation led to cultural differences, most apparent in the name - "Atlan" - a regional dialect for "Atlantean". Almost no trace of Old Atlantis remained in "Fallen Mesoamerica" when 400 years later atlantean Expeditions from the 5th reestablished contact to them.

The Eternal War with Atlantis was sparked shortly thereafter, when Atlantis demanded that the Atlans resume their relationship as a colonial outgrowth. Atlanteans don't like talking about it, but it was, in fact, them who, still seeing themselves as the metropole, demanded that the Atlans submit to them and struck the first blow when they did not. But the more Atlans fought, the more men they lost, the more they needed in the mines, the less essentials they had to go around, the more freedom got in the way of survival. The Atlan Republic gradually shifted into a much darker, harder place.

The militarism and disregard for the value of human life which is so characteristic of Atlan has reached a new peak in contemporary times. Indeed, the Atlans have lived under a Republic for most of their history separate from Atlantis. This changed with the Titanium King's rise to power, a rather recent development, and many still remember the time before his reign: some with nostalgia and some with contempt.

The Titanium King was once but a general, fighting tirelessly to protect the Republic. In [####] he decided it needed to be protected from itself first. There was no room for debate, petty squabbles and other pleasantries, all had to fall in line and devote themselves fully to the war effort. And while many understandably find the way the King runs things quite objectionable, it does get results. The Republic was brought from the brink of destruction to becoming equal to their long lost brethren, who once thought to rule over them.

The Republic itself kept its name and stylings throughout this coup, however much of its functioning was streamlined. The King and the aristocracy were merged completely with the military hierarchy, with aristocratic titles conjoined with rank. To compensate for the harsh demand of the Republic, laws were enacted so that a lowly slave soldier could eventually become an Aristocrat in the Republic (if they survive, which is a pretty big if) - something most people in "democratic" Atlantis couldn't even dream of. Even the King's power is arguably not so absolute - he has been known to begrudgingly "postpone" a military expedition

or two after incessant pleading from the court and his generals. Nevertheless, it is still a rather hellish place to live for anyone besides the warrior-elites.



New Mu



New Mu is a front-facing group of city-states Old Mu uses to communicate with the Colonials. New Mu denizens seem human enough, but some are known to have strange inhuman features. New Mu send their dead to Old Mu through grotesque intermediaries known as Tallymen. This is presented as a peculiar New Mu funerary ritual. Nobody actually knows what is done to them there.

The origins and makeup of New Mu are very diverse, with every city-state having its own history and culture. Many of the New Mu groups are former Deep-Folk tribes who swore fealty to the grim emissaries of Old Mu, while some claim to be descendants of more recent migrants from the Surface, mainly from the steppes of Eurasia and the Pacific.

The city-states form a confederation with rotating supreme leadership, each city-state possessing a great degree of

autonomy. Beyond the city-states the great steppes and deserts of the Layer are home to the numerous nomadic groups pledging allegiance to them. Conflicts between the cities and/or the nomads are not uncommon, but are prevented from erupting into all-out wars by the interference of Old Mu and the threat of outlander encroachment.

Despite the Khan and Mother Unknown's frequent visit and hands on approach to ruling, New Mu cities in the 4th often goes years without a visit from Old Mu representatives. The difficulties this provokes in unifying Mu's operation has recently been evidenced by the New Mu Diving Initiative. War against Atlan began to turn around against Mu's favour in the late 1850s, which corresponded with the Khan's prolonged absence from the area, coastal cities around the Dalai Sea

5th Layer
(Map to be done)

Atlantis



To most Epigeans, the existence of Atlantis and its survival stands as the one positive change brought forth by Agartha. Mentions of the Underground still summon terrifying imagery of rampaging Saur and savage headhunter to most a few decades after its discovery. Atlantis, in stark contrast, is seen as a glorious, rich and cultured civilization, and reaching it is often the very reason why one dares to face Saur and Neanderthals (and much worse) in the first place.

Its Fall at the culmination of an Hyperborean raid, estimated to be about 7000 years ago, is an event shrouded in many mysteries and controversies. Even by the very flexible standards or Agarthan logic, it does not make much sense. It affected not only the city of Atlantis itself, but many of its remote colonies, including Atlan. Perhaps then it was targeted and artificially engineered by the Hyperboreans themselves? The Firmament's denizen surely have such terrible technology, but this would seem to be counterproductive to their efforts. And while there are geographical traces left by the event on the 4th, none can be found on the 3rd. Atlanteans themselves have wrapped whatever fragments of ancient lore they kept in religious garbs, integrating it into the various Titanic cults, and most Atlanteans would likely not recognize an Hyperborean Tripod as the herald of doom that it is.

Atlantean culture has obviously changed enormously since the days of Old Atlantis, as no society can remain the same for 7 millennia. Despite this, multiple subsequent waves of emigration from around the Mediterranean insured it kept a distinctly “ancient Greece” aesthetic.

Its technology has equally advanced, and in the case of naval and submarine development, has even surpassed that of Epigeans Nations. Agarthan Science proved to be the element that missed from ancient and medieval alchemy and medicine, which finally established themselves into stable practices.

The wonderment of Colonials toward Atlantis does not mean that every encounter between the two has gone peacefully, however. The Akritai corps stand vigilantly at all of the Sunken City’s frontiers, ready to respond to any would-be trespassers. In particular, Atlantean mastery over the Underground’s waters clashes directly with Britain’s geopolitical strategy. The Crown’s Admiralty has so far not been willing to compromise, and British-aligned expeditions are more likely to fire or be fired upon by the defenders of Atlantis than by many other Agarthans.

6th Layer

Lemuria



More than any other Deepfolk nation, Lemuria stands as a testament to the possibility of conquering the underground. Descended from proto-aryan migration following their displacement in [xxxx] by [xyz], the ancestors of modern day Lemurians roamed through the 3rd and 4th Layers for centuries, guided by the immortal First Prophet Ozymandias. This would eventually lead them to the ruins of Old Lemuria, long dead already, but still replete with ancient secrets and lost Agarthan Science.

Over time, Lemurian society would find itself redefined by this corpus of esoteric knowledge and practices, known as Inner Chi Cultivation. To scholars, prophets and priests, Inner Chi Cultivation is the manipulation of a flow of energy carried by the Inner Sun's light and absorbed into the body through breathing, which then feeds our Vrill-Chakras. Doing so can either close or open these focal points and, with care, enable near supernatural intellectual or physical feats. To most uneducated, it stands as a

rigorous regimen of physical, social and spiritual practices and restrictions which aim at strengthening its adherent as well as protecting them from the effects of degeneracy. While many aspects centers around physical exercises or meditation, a large part of it remains dedicated at reinforcing a specific mindset in its practitioners, one which Outlanders have found very difficult to understand.

For example, slavery is considered to be highly perverse, and yet, it would seem to the outside observer that the majority of Lemurians are completely subservient to warriors or priests. This is because Lemurians are brought up to see titles and class not as an institution to be relied on, but as assertion of the actual, current power relation between them and the servants. A slave *could* be a stronger, more intelligent man than its master, a servant however could not, otherwise he would not accept to serve. This very fine distinction has caused a few awkward moments between Lemurians and Abolitionists.

Another example, and one which is highly distressing to Epigeans, is the ease with which seemingly friendly Lemurians will turn on each other. Their culture is replete with tales of two brotherly heroes who accomplish great deeds together until one stabs the other in the back, quite often literally and seemingly without any qualms. What is missed in the hermeneutic of these stories by Epigeans is that to Lemurians, the betrayal always follows a specific logic, and is always justified.

Contact between Epigeans and Lemurians has always been notoriously hazardous, if sometimes very rewarding. The tenets of Inner Chi Cultivation makes most of its higher social class difficult to tempt with monetary or material gains. Technology is mostly seen as a crutch for the weak, and industrialization would endanger too many through constant and depressing menial work. Warriors have similarly shown no desire to acquire firearms.

7th Layer

Old Mu



Old Mu is an ancient, reclusive monarchy of eldritch monsters from the deepest depths, degenerated subhumans and those few Deepfolks foolish enough to seek them out and pledge loyalty to them. Described as a tenebrous, hellish place even by the emissaries of Old Mu who call it home, no Epigean is known to have returned from a “visit” to its home in the 7th Layer. Lemurians, with their typical disregard for danger, attempted on multiple occasion to colonize it, each eventually failing. It is now a tradition for its shamans and greatest warriors to brave its dangers and return with the hide of one of its monstrous inhabitants. On the occasions these are willing to boast about such dangerous treks to Outlanders, they describe a ruined metropolis of impossible size, overtaken by the long dead roots of giant mushroom forests, in which the Mu courtiers and priests go about their affairs, unfazed by their crumbling environment. To

hear them, Old Mu is a dying civilization clinging on to their last breath.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Old Mu can still be found pulling the strings behind many events that are facing both Colonials and other Deepfolks. And thanks to the tithes paid by the expanding New Mu cities, the royalty's coffers have never been so full (both in gold and corpses, which seems to be very valuable to them, for an unknown reason).

It is ruled by an ancient duo of powerful Shadow-born beings, named the Nameless Khan and the Mother Unknown. Contrary to other members of Mu "royalty", these two involve themselves directly into the day to day affairs of New Mu, and are often visiting the higher Layers while wearing a human form. Enough reports of battles involving the Khan and what happens when he is sufficiently wounded exists that most Colonial power accept their supernatural origin as a fact. Whispers traded in the best informed (or most schizophrenic) Epigean esoteric circles suggests the Nameless Khan and Mother Unknown have long ago made a pact with an entity from the Void beyond the Firmament, known as the Star Ancestor. They see the known "fixed" reality as something akin to a prison and the Void beyond it as a key to liberation. If this is true, it would be logical that in this they are in opposition to the more conventional eldritch forces which participates in the Loop.

Many of the denizens of Old Mu escape classification, being too unique or simply impossible to describe. The subhumans and Deepfolks from New Mu sent there always come back changed, both physically and spiritually, as Mu royals apparently enjoy experimenting on live humans through alchemy and grafting. Imaterii and Elois will also be seen walking (or phasing through) the streets. In some rare occasions, envoys from the Psysaur Clans will visit the Palace, heralding another Mu military campaign headed by a Saur stampede. Apart from these, Morlocs are the most common sight, having long ago struck alliances with the eldritch royalty.

8th Layer
9th Layer
Minor Factions

La Ombre (to be redone)



Napoleon first learned of the deeper mysteries of the world during his campaign in Egypt. It is known that he encountered something monstrous under the Pyramid of Giza, although not much else is on record of that event (some anon is still working on a piece of fiction on it). In addition, he later deciphers the Rosetta Stone and figures out it contains a map of Entrances to Agartha. 1815 happens but this time he had a backup plan ready, and so he escapes during the trip to St. Helena, seeking refuge underground.

After months if not years of wandering caves and fighting savages, he ends up in Lemuria. The Corsican's charisma and military genius quickly wins him the friendship of the Deepfolks, who begin initiating him to the secret of Prophecy and Cultivation. Showing great potential in both, Napoleon quickly falls into another messianic ego trip, as he had before when he thought he would go to India and be welcomed as a God. However, a growing part of the Lemurian priesthood soon begin aggressively lobbying against him, going as far as assassination attempts. Prophecies targeting Napoleon himself either always fails or show a blinding light that scorches the prophet's mind. To the Lemurians, this is the sign of the Fatebreaker, their highest possible crime, somewhat equivalent to being the anti-Christ for Christians. Napoleon is driven in exile even deeper, but his newfound power has given him renewed purpose. He will syncretize all the Agarthan Sciences, learn as much of the true nature of the world, before he can return to the Surface and finally teaches Europe its proper place.

At this point some of his most loyal soldiers, who figured out his escape plan and the location of the Entrance he used, miraculously manages to find him and swear to follow him wherever he goes. It is not known if Napoleon then taught them Cultivation secrets, or if they changed due to the trip in the Deep, but they are no longer fully human. These will become known as the Oldest Guard, and remains to this day his most trusted agents. The following years were spent digging deeper and meeting more horrors, either befriending them or beating them and stealing their power. In this Napoleon started competing with Lost King Malcolm, who was essentially doing the same thing. But the accumulation of power allowed him to piece together the puzzle in a way that no one had before. He now understood the Loop.

This caused him to redefine his goal entirely. The Great Game is in truth nothing but a schoolyard game of tag in comparison to the inevitable threat of Hyperborea. Perhaps Napoleon was struck by the deep immorality of it all, or perhaps existing in a world where history reset itself and his place in it would be forgotten by design was just too much for his ego. His plans shifted from rebuilding an army fueled by Agarthan Science in order to come back up to finding a way to break the Loop and delay the Hyperborean invasion as much as possible while doing so. The forces he had accumulated were shifted from military applications to more

covert operations, focusing on spying, assassination and corruption rather than actual land conquest. La Ombre, as the organisation named itself, behaves in many ways a lot more like a criminal organisation than a would be Nation.

Latest news on him known by Colonial intelligence tracking his movements is that he marched with the majority of his forces on Mother Unknown's Palace in the 8th Layer, and he hasn't been seen since. Many dare to hope that after nearly a decade without any more activity, this means the Emperor finally died. In truth we know that he did beat Mother Unknown (very unconventionally, its left open ended but I really like the shitposted idea that he seduced her and she simply allowed them to pass through), was allowed to leave the Palace with his force and enter the 9th Layer. As opposed to the cosmic horrors of the 8th, the 9th seemed like picnic. Nothing terrible attacked them, the caves soon opened up on a sea... on the middle of which stood a perfect replica of St. Helena. As if struck by a spell, Napoleon ordered his troops to camp, he walked into the small house, picked up a chair and brought it to the beach, where he's been sitting his days ever since.

The Lost Men

The decade following the rise of pagan Italy saw a strong flare up of demands for Scottish independence. Many of the Catholics felt that the British Crown should have set aside its difference with the Church and supported it right away in 1851. While the Twin Arrow Theory was not yet formulated, for many Scots, it was the simplest and most obvious explanation for the current state of the world.

These tensions escalated further when Highlanders veterans started being rotated back from India in the 50s. Repressing other independence movements didn't sit well with many soldiers and officers who themselves shared similar notions.

A central figure soon emerged as a rallying point for these burgeoning rebels. One of the most outspoken and charismatic officers of the regiment had apparently a distant claim to the House of Stuart. Styling himself "King Malcolm", more as a publicity stunt for the rebellion than a proper claim to the Scottish Crown, proved to be a very effective way in drawing both the attention of potential allies and that of the British intelligence. King Malcolm was quickly captured and held in a Glasgow jail for a week before armed rebels were able to mount a raid to free him. News of his treatment and of the more general repression against Scottish Catholics that ensued sufficed to push Rome to reach out and offer their support to the rebellion.

British intelligence posit that the Church must have gifted Agarthan artefacts to the rebels, and that this would be how King Malcolm began his quest for Agarthan Science. They have no direct proof for this other than the seemingly supernatural ease with which King Malcolm's rebels began avoiding capture after his escape.

In the next four years, the "Malcolmite Resurgence" would see the rebels grow from a large band of outlaws to a proper force, apparently able to attack and retreat into thin air within moments. The fall of Rome and the success of the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 finally convinced King Malcolm to step out in the open and publicly call for widespread resistance to the British rule, however this could not have come at a worst time. The Indian's success forced the British to consider the possibility of losing surface colonies as they focused much of their efforts underground. This might be ultimately acceptable with India, but not with Scotland.

Additionally, Avignon's support immediately dried up as the French, unwilling to risk their current alliance with Britain, applied pressure for them to stop.

Left in the open and without supplies or recruits, the Crown's logistical superiority began to grind down the rebels. Eventually, even one of King Malcolm's own raids, until then all victorious, failed and the King was reported missing. Without leadership, the Rebellion was over before the end of 1858.

Yet King Malcolm still lives, having sought refuge in the Underground, where he assembles his forces once more. He has now struck an unknown deal with the Shadows for a portion of their power, and many attacks on both Colonials (British or others) and Deepfolks have been attributed to him and his mercenary force. Even more worrying to the British are the rumors that hold that he has met Napoleon, briefly fought with him and then walked away. Regardless of the reason, the similarities in the methods taken by the two figures are too close for the Crown's comfort, and even the simple potential of an alliance between the two rivals is seen as enough justification to send military expeditions to scour any area where mentions of the King surfaces.

The Warfare Apologists

As with most things, the story of The Warfare Apologists begins with Napoleon. More accurately, their story begins with his defeat. A vast class of aristocratic officers found themselves without a war to fight, for the first time in decades. Many of these well educated men began to write about war instead, or teach their successors in the new military academies. War may not have changed greatly yet, but the way these officers thought about it had. It was becoming a science, an art.

These “artists” published many works, they corresponded with each other, met for drinks and debate and jovial kriegspiel late into the night. They formed an odd sort of brotherhood, joined by their shared social status and passion for war. Crimea and the Indian Revolt served as a testing ground for their new ideas, keenly observed even from as far away as West Point in the Americas.

After 1860 however, war began to sour for the academic officers. Previously it had been a distant concern, something which occurred in India or China or Turkey, now it became a personal matter. Where once German officers had traded letters, now they traded shells, where once American students had shared a classroom, they now shared a battlefield. From Paraguay to Prussia brother had turned against brother. To many of the officers the whole thing began to seem pointless and absurd.

A sensible sort of man would turn his back on warfare as a whole, but these men had dedicated their lives to its study. Most could not shake the belief that their causes were just, that the blade they thrust into their brother's chest was righteous. A few however, decided that the problem was not with war, but moreso the reasons for fighting it. Looking at the new philosophies of existentialism for guidance, corps of officers from across the world left their respective nations behind, reasoning that the science of warfare as they saw it could not be limited to the ultimately meaningless concerns of nations.

By the mid 1870s, the loose fraternity had organized. The Warfare Apologists are known officially by dozens of names in dozens of nations (The Fraternity of Jingo, Students of Inazō [稲造の学生], The Tacticturn Ones [Die großen Schweigenden], etc.) but nonetheless share a philosophy and network. They believe that the reasons for fighting a war are irrelevant and absurd, and that

meaning is bought from the act of fighting itself. Speaking charitably, one could say they value courage, martial prowess, and knowledge. Away from their ears (And guns) however, most sane people agree they are borderline sociopaths with no loyalties to anyone or anything except eachother.

In most large cities nowadays a sort of gentlemen club can be found. A well stocked library, a quiet bar and a large weapons exhibit usually mark the place. Men in disparate and symbolless uniforms mill about, debating philosophies and current events. Most are open to be hired, so long as you need an army trained or led. If a war is proving to be interesting enough they'll tend to crop up on their own, volunteering their services or quietly infiltrating the lower ranks to observe. If a general doesn't mind losing men an Apologist in the ranks can be quite a boon to an ailing force.

If a war proves unique, the Apologists bring their own forces. Largely these consist of nationless men, sometimes those who followed their officers in the initial desertions, sometimes those who joined after for the training or philosophy. Kentuckians fight shoulder to shoulder with Serbs, exiled Italians and failed Malcomites share drinks in the camps of the Existentialists. Unfortunately, while the officers of the Apologists certainly appreciate their men, they do not spare them any more suffering than they would any other force. To do otherwise would show that same sort of meaningless factionalism they opposed in the first place, or so they claim. Some say that the Existentialist officers hold a sense of superiority over their men, considering any man without a commission as a lesser being at best.

With the opening of Agarthia and the conclusion of the Paraguayan War, the organization has started to show signs of tension. Many Existentialists have led expeditions down, to observe new ways of Warfighting or offer their services to Agarthan powers. The Atlan Republic has proven especially tantalizing to the Apologists, though attempts at contact have been difficult. Others meanwhile have looked to the skies, noting the similarities between their own favored tactics and those which led to the incursion in Paraguay. A concerning number have attempted to discover or even recreate such an event, and more than a few have made their way to China to eagerly take part in the Heavenly events there. Debates march late into the night over which focus is more fitting for the organization, with more and more men picking a side.

These two groups, dubbed informally by outsiders the lower and upper Existentialists, remain on friendly terms for now. But history has clearly shown that these men can turn against their brothers in the name of ideology, and it is certainly not impossible that the bonds forged by the Apologists thus far may be broken, just as they were before.

Denizens of the Deep

Amazons



As Humanity moved below the Surface, it found itself subjected to forces it had never encountered before, both material and metaphysical. Epigean scholars have produced countless charts of Deepfolks de-evolution, most contradictory, however all have in common one thing. Each of them fail to figure out where to put Amazons.

This is somewhat understandable. “Degenerated” is simply not the word that comes to mind to Colonials when they meet these 6 1/2 foot tall athletic women. Beside their height, their athleticism, aggressiveness and beauty are universally above average in comparison to Epigean women, has led surface biologists to posit that they constitute a subgenus of Humanity. This is supported by the fact that no male Amazon has ever been seen, as well as the utmost secrecy with which Amazons treat their pregnancy. Rumors about the difficult relationship between Gorgs (and the fact that no Gorg female has even been seen) further complicate the matter.

Most Amazon settlements have been found in the 3rd Layer’s jungles, where they seem to thrive. These make valued trade partners to the Colonials, both for their proximity and the welcoming disposition of its inhabitants. Amazons may be fierce

and quick to resort to violence, but they almost never attack unprovoked or fail to give warnings. Fallen Paris in particular seemingly seeks out every new Amazon tribe they hear about. Other Deepfolks have varied outlooks on these warrior beauties. Sky-Clans and Atlantis generally attempt to establish trade routes to the villages they find. Amazon slaves are unsurprisingly among the highest valued commodities Atlan trades internally. New Mu is torn between its desire to further its economic goals and the constant demands of the various Saur Knight Orders for worthy targets to attack. Economically, Amazons are renown jewelers and can apparently find gemstones and precious ore where no one else could. They also tame some of the most dangerous Saur of the 3rd and trade them. A successful trade mission to such villages are often considered more profitable than those with Agarthan Nations proper. Wars between the more powerful Deepfolk nations and Amazons tend to be ugly affairs, costly in comparison to the potential territorial gain. The warrior women are preternatural experts at guerilla warfare and rarely find themselves in a conflict outside of a known environment. It should be noted that while Amazons are very hospitable toward Epigeans (until given a reason not to be), they hold other subhumans in utter contempt, and will nearly always kill Apemen, Gorgs, Murlocs and Lemurs on sight. Epigean colonies in Agartha have in the past hired Amazons as mercenaries when faced with undesirable neighbors of this kind.



Apemen & Neanderthals



Apemen are among the most common “intelligent” denizens of the Deep, and besides Saur, constitute the main source of threat for both Colonials and the more civilized Deepfolks of the 3rd and 4th Layers. The appellations ‘apeman’ and ‘neanderthal’ are used interchangeably, even by surface scientists, and serves to designate any stable form of human subgenus which regressed mostly according to the evolutionary vector it had previously followed.

Mostly, because just about every iteration and variation of the general primate form can be found among apemen. Some appear to simply be very hirsute caveman, while many are no more than monkeys with a more upright posture. Their intelligence is dedicated mostly to cunning and some measure of crude crafting, which in many cases seems much more advanced than what they should have developed. Experts have posited that this is evidence of a vestigial memory from more civilized times.

Notoriously territorial and prone to attacking those who wander too close to their borders, apemen holds little value as potential trade partners for anyone. They care for little besides crude weapons (which they are sure to eventually turn against their sellers) or meat (they are all cannibals). There are, of course, a few exceptions. At least three groups of Apemen have managed to organize themselves into what approximate a functional society, called the Neanderthal City States. While the Peerless Citadel of Ook, the Great Polis of Eek and the Serene Metropolis of Ack certainly do not live up to their names, the contrast with the

average Apeman community is striking. These are proper cities, with a level of culture and industrialization matching that of 15th-16th century Europe. Most Apemen found there are intelligent enough to understand Colonial language and even use it crudely, and they produce enough goods and raw material to justify trading with them. Their armies lack any form of firearms and suffer from poor discipline and training, but compensate through sheer numbers and the ferocity of the average apeman.

Regardless of their origin, the specimen gifted with higher cognitive skills often organize themselves in bands and sell their services as mercenaries to anyone able to endure their continued presence. Of these, Bleg of Ook is surely the most renown and terrifying. A general from the Peerless Citadel who was exiled for his bloodlust and the length at which he was willing to go to sate on the flesh of humans, he has since his fall dedicated himself to unlocking the secret of gunpowder and firearms, which he has achieved to some degree.

Gorgs

Lemurs



Primordial nightmares. Unnatural horrors. Obscenity made manifest. There is no end to the list of such syntagms invoked as feeble attempts to describe Lemurs.

According to Gano-Ducksworth theorist, History is set in a specific form which results in pushing the inhabitants of the 2nd Layer deeper, devolving as they seek to escape Hyperborea's predation. This has already happened and will happen again, and experts on Subhumanity often use this argument to underline deevolutionary relationship between Epigeans and the intelligent inhabitants of Agartha. Apemen, Amazons, Cyclops and even Gorgs are almost universally agreed to be descendants of current Surface folks, in a way or another. Only Lemurs differs in this.

In a way it would be comforting (but perhaps self-deluding) if Humanity did not contain the seed of such monstrosity. Most Lemurs share a similar shape and size to chimpanzees, albeit with long pointy horns and oversized claws and fangs. A certain number can grow seemingly indefinitely as they age, often sprouting a new set of limbs as they reach human size. Their most striking and aberrant feature however remains the small percentage of Lemurs which mouths splits their skull vertically. Their appearance, whatever it may be, always convey a deep malevolence, and this to a degree exceeding that of any other Subhuman.

Regardless of their physical form, Lemurs are considered to be universally evil, and with one or two badly known exception, have never given any reason to either Epigeans or Deepfolks to believe

otherwise. No one, not even Old Mu royalty, is safe from their predation, but they have been observed to hunt Colonial force they spot with particular zeal, often tracking them over days or weeks before attacking and leaving nothing but broken half devoured bodies. The general opinion is that they are mindless monsters, while experts rather believe that Lemur intelligence does vary greatly on the individual, quoting this specific hatred they have for Surface folks over Deepfolks as suggesting otherwise.

Lemurs have been found in every Layer including the 2nd, where they have been observed freely roaming on Doggerland. They do not seem to care for territorial gain in any other way than has hunting grounds, and do not build settlements. Low-ceiling badly lit tunnels and ruins are their preferred haunts.

Morlocs



Whenever an Epigeian insist that Subhumanity must be understood as a normal evolutionary process rather than the result of Agarthan Science, the usual counterargument offered is the mere existence of Morlocks. How could Humanity regress so far as to reach back beyond its mammalian origins, all the while keeping its humanoid shape and a portion of its intelligence? And why would this creature exhibit physical features from all kinds of underwater animals?

Essentially “fishmen”, Morlocks mostly have an upright human lower body covered in fish scales, while their faces are those of fishes. They are generally shorter than a human being, going as short as being barely above 3 feet, but the specie as a whole exhibit the same dysmorphism as many other Subhumans. They have an unusually weak constitution, sometimes dying to wounds that would not kill a human child. Most can breath both under and above water, and those who can’t are able to retain their breath long enough to be functional in each case. Individuals among a single social group (a ‘shoal’) tend to share the same features across.

Morlock society is almost always tribal, with power being disputed between a single warchief and one or many priests or

shamans, regardless of the (often very large) size of their population. Their intelligence is not particularly low, nor are they very aggressive, apart during their spawning season. In fact, seeking and reinforcing acceptance in a social group seems to be the main particularity of the Morlock psyche, and they are not particularly picky about the specie. This natural subservience and their prowess as divers makes them welcome addition to fishing crews, and a number of them have emigrated to the Surface, most settling in New-England ports. There is otherwise little advantage in establishing trade routes to Morlock settlements, as they have very little industry or even crafting. Those who do are more often interested in their skills as guides and extensive knowledge of underwater and underground ruins.

Morlocks are native to every Layers between the 3rd and the 7th usually clustered in wetlands and around large bodies of water. A significant number have sworn fealty to Old Mu royalty, and will assemble in large swarms when called by their deep masters. This, their heightened aggression during the peak of their heat cycle as well as their habit of eating just about anything, including each other and Colonials, explains why many Epigeans default to see Morlocks as pests to be wiped. The rumors that a number of surface folks have taken these monsters as mate and had children with them does not seem to dissuade these, and will only result in shaming those that dare speak of such an impossibly obscene degeneracy.

Other Entities

Wapaq & Ayahuasca



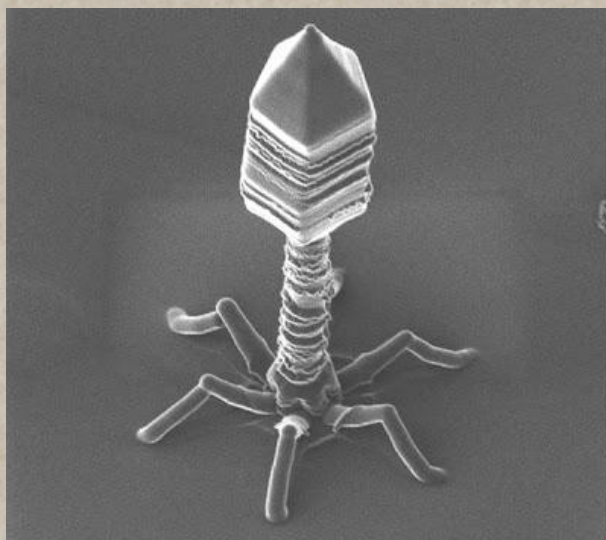
The Wapaq and Ayahuasca are representatives of a single fungal species operating in a manner reminiscent of hive insects. The Wapaq themselves, named by the Russians after the creatures from the Native Siberian mythology, look like mushrooms the size of a horse, sprouting a mass of tentacle-like appendages they use to move, grab objects and defend themselves. While they may look rather comical they should not be underestimated, as they move much faster than one might expect and their tentacles can crush bones with frightening ease. Their role is that of drones and soldiers, scouting for new colony sites, foraging and dealing with threats. Their intelligence is comparable to that of animals, and increases or diminishes based on the proximity to their Queen. The Wapaq Queen, also named Ayahuasca by the American explorers, is fully sapient and capable of psychic communication. It usually presents itself by projecting an illusion of an attractive and non-threatening member of the species it is in contact with. Ayahuasca alleviates Deep Drunkenness by its very presence and can even offer helpful advice, but those in close contact with it risk succumbing to its siren song. When they do they are compelled to join the Wapaq colony, where they remain in a state

of bliss until their bodies and minds are absorbed into its mycellium. It has been speculated that they might be the origin of the Siberian legends about mushroom people seducing humans and taking them away, also seen in the shamanic visions induced by the consumption of fly agaric.

The Wapaq flesh is known to alleviate the effects of Deep Drunkenness. While they can't be tamed, they can be captured and kept around long enough to butcher them when needed. The Tsardom pioneered hunting and capturing them in a somewhat stable and sustainable manner by stalking their foraging grounds.

Eloi

Imaterii



Mu influence is often compared to a spreading plague by the Deepfolks who haven't sworn loyalty to it. If Mu is a sickness, Imaterii are the infectious agents. Four to six spindly legs juts out of a central sphere, which is itself linked to a prismatic head by a coiled tube, usually standing up to about 10 feet tall. While their appearance alone is highly disturbing, the manner in which they appear is much worse, as they seem to be able to phase through any object or person at will.

This ability makes them highly useful in their role as envoys and ambassadors of Old Mu to its distant vassals of New Mu, and it is in this capacity that most Epigeans will meet them. Those who decide to attack instead of parleying will learn very quickly however that they are not defenseless. Imaterii seems to have an intrinsic understanding of Agarthan Science and, when threatened, will use this knowledge to display fearsome powers, often shooting disintegrating rays from their "head", or "grabbing" someone and phasing them halfway through the floor before leaving them there.

Surface academics are at a complete loss in classifying these entities, so much so that the prevailing opinions are divided between them having an entirely artificial origin, perhaps having been created specifically for their purpose, and them originating initially from the Hidden Layer or beyond the Void.

Shadows



Star Ancestor



Volcano Spirits

Sometimes, the lava screams. On occasion, it screams at you, in languages you don't know but can understand. Though, hidden in the magma, they have never been seen, their desires and influences are clear. They want sacrifice, and grant power. And, rarely, if you fulfil those desires, and bring them joy by abusing that power, the Lava Spirits scream with you.

Those blessed by these strange beings suffer no pain from heat, and it harms them little. They burn like steel, rather than men. Greater servants can call upon these spirits to move and manipulate the lava around them, or even call promissory eruptions or greater events, at equally great cost.

No scholar has yet to make a strong claim as to the origin of these creatures. Some say they are projections of the will of those who want to believe in them. Others claim they're ancient forces, just like much from Agartha. The theory of the Italians, who most often commune with them, is that these are the spirits of their ancestors returned to grant them power.

Anomalies



As previously stated, the rules of reality tend to bend and eventually break as one goes deeper into Agartha. This is exemplified not only by the spiritual and physical effects on living beings, but also by the frequent anomalous experiences of Deepfolks and Epigeans alike as they explore the underground. Many of these are tied to specific locales, while others are bound to physical objects, or seemingly happen at random. Theories as to what provokes these 'anomalies' abound, ranging from the religious to the metaphysical. Adherents to the Gano-Ducksworth Loop theory tend to assert that a force analogous to pressure applies itself on reality as a whole as it is contained within more Layers, and that this force is as well responsible for Deep-Drunkness, Husking and Corpsification. Regardless of the truth, that these anomalies cause nearly as many losses to colonial efforts as attacks from the Underground's denizens and fauna is a fact acknowledged by almost all Epigean powers. France, Britain and the USA in particular have an agreement to share efforts in documenting and mapping every anomaly they discover (once each power has thoroughly studied and assessed the anomaly's potential for application, of course).

Amber



Ambers are the most commonly encountered anomaly, and luckily, the easiest to spot and avoid. These take the form of small bright fires seemingly lighting up on the ground, walls or ceilings of a cave without any fuel. As they do not manifest in an occupied space, burn at high temperatures when they start or spread even when in contact with flammable material, they represent very little danger at this stage. It is only when an amber begins to compress, burn redder and with more of an audible crackle that care needs to be taken, as it is a sign it is reaching toward the end of its "lifecycle". Eventually, the anomaly reaches a point where its size can no longer contain its energy and expands rapidly into a bright orange deflagration, typically causing death or grievous injury to those within two to three meters of it, and light to severe burns to those up to ten meters. Ambers cannot be handled physically or used in industry, they are pure flames. Pouring water on an nascent amber is the simplest and most obvious way to neutralize it, but this is generally done only in colonized areas, camps or around frequently roads, as the rest of the time one can usually tell immediately by looking at it if an amber is anywhere near exploding, and when it isn't you can safely walk right by it.

Chromatic Shifts

On appearance the most inoffensive of anomalies, Chromatic Shifts are quite simply areas of the underground where lighting conditions are considered unusual, even by the standard set by the Inner Sun. This may take the appearance of a different hue or tonality, hardly perceivable with the naked eye or through photography, or of the presence of weird visual artifacts, sometimes completely overtaking a person's visual field and rendering them incapable of any spatial navigation. Chromatic Shifts are nearly always associated with a specific area, often extending over miles.

Emanations

Entrances



Entrances are most of the time not anomalous, or at least not overtly so, but enough are that they are often mentioned alongside other anomalies by Epigeans. Those which are anomalous fall into two categories, either as artificial, created long ago by some eldritch entity through long lost Agarthan Science and used through some complex ritual or sacrifice, or as a very large and mostly stable Fold or Tear.

Fold



Epigeans have learned to deal with the extremely contradictory reports they get on distance and time necessary for travel underground by blaming these inaccuracies on folds. The term has been used to describes both specific experiences of time&space loss/compression during travels which have not been reproduced as well as areas where these seems to happen consistently, and thus a proper classification is still in the works.

Simply put, a fold is an instance of travel which takes either less or more time and distance to travel than it should otherwise. Stable geographical folds that accelerates travel have long ago become one of the main geopolitical tension point in Agartha, as they greatly facilitate travel and trade, and Colonials have recently begun putting additional focus on acquiring intelligence on them from other Deepfolks.

It is sometimes claimed by eccentric scholars that all travel underground involves some degree of folding. Paris for example, should have taken weeks if not months to reach its current depth at any speed that would not have left the city in small pieces. This is of course the point at which proponents of the Twin Arrow Theory like to remind these lunatics that God doing it seems a simpler and more likely explanation for these mysteries.

Flash



When Epigeans embark on their first trek underground and read on the dangers of anomalies, they usually picture gory scenes of bodies pulled apart by gravitational forces, or spontaneously combusting. Some anomalies are not immediately or obviously harmful, yet continued exposition to them end up having dire consequences.

Flashes are the primary example of this. Small floating sparks of tangible light may sometimes be found in the lower Layers, usually beyond the 5th. Often mistaken for spores, the spark clouds however hold no direct effect on health. They will however rhythmically release an intense electrical light, accompanied by a very short exploding noise. Flashes seems to ignite in response to movement or contact, and absent of these will remain dormant. Once ignited, it will “flash” every minute or so, and trigger other sparks in the cloud, leading to an accelerating cascade. Despite its intensity and resemblance to an explosion, it is again physically harmless. Many have also reported a strange sensation of movement in their head, as if something passed from one ear to the other. The danger comes from venturing forth or remaining for an extended period of time in an area filled with flashes, as only a few hours or days of exposition to the stroboscopic madness can suffice to induce something akin to shell shock into even the most resolute and experienced soldier.

Tear

Apart from Star Ancestor's Trails and perhaps Entrances, Tears are the rarest form of anomaly found in the underground. Taking the form of a shimmering silvery or black surface floating a few feet above ground, Tears can easily be mistaken for a mirage at a distance. This illusion dissipates as one approaches it, as one will notice how consistent and localized it is. Upon touch, the material it is made up of will extend to cover whatever it came in contact with, a highly distressing experience.

Unless contact is interrupted, this will continue until the 'liquid silver' of the Tear swallows the object or person entirely, at which point it is pulled into the anomaly proper. In each case another Tear will then spit out whatever was swallowed by the first, allowing for instantaneous travel over seemingly unrestricted distances.

There is a number of reasons why Tears are not sought after more than Entrances or even Folds by either Epigeans or Deepfolks. First, their stability tends to erode over time and use, leading to them eventually collapsing a few years after their birth. Second, there is no way to test a Tear without actually sending someone through it and hoping they will come back. Third, the experience is incredibly disturbing, often described as akin to being waterboarded while standing.

There is no theoretical limit to the distance linking two tears together, and although no one has ever claimed to visit Hyperborea through one, this might simply be the result of its inhabitants preventing the return trip. Perhaps this is why rumors of rare Tears being able to lead to the mystical Hidden Layer are so common.

Time Trap

The term Time Trap refers both to a large variety of localized temporal anomalies, of which the Time Veil is the most well known. The distinction between a Time Trap and a Fold sometimes remain purely academic, as the least dangerous Time Traps end up having the same effect, lost time, as a negative Fold.

The effect and visual manifestation of a Time Trap varies a lot, but is always associated with its size, as smaller Time Traps necessarily have more dire effects than the bigger ones. In some cases they will appear as “bubbles” in which whatever gets caught will either move or age at a different rate. Larger ones, like the Time Veil, are not visible and cover entire geographical regions. In these, the alteration to normal temporal conditions can be very “slight”, to the point of being unnoticed by those in or out in most circumstances. Some of these Time Traps can even be commodified by the least scrupulous Epigeans or Deepfolks, such as the Atlan mines of Neonikomedeia, located in the Pillar south of Maximiliana, where days can randomly add an hour or two, which the slaves have to keep working.

The aforementioned Time Veil, located in the 4th Layer, deserves a special mention. Thought to cover the entire Layer, it acts akin as a spider web for time travelers. As these are notoriously unwilling to share any information regarding its scientific principles, Epigeans who know about the Time Veil regardless know very little about how it interact with such miraculous technology. Does the Time Veil trap any and every time traveler, regardless of their starting or ending point, or simply those that “pass” over the current date? Does spatial travel account in this? Are the travelers able to return to their time if they somehow escaped the 4th Layer with their time machine and left from, say, the 3rd ? These questions have cost respectable scientists and eclectic nutjobs alike many nights.

Star Ancestor's Trail

Apart from the eldritch Royalty of Old Mu, no one has ever encountered the Star Ancestor directly. Epigeans and Deepfolks have however both come across the disturbing Trail of its passage.

It is believed that the Star Ancestor, being from across the Void, cannot simply enter and exist completely within reality. Either that, or it simply does not want to, if 'want' is even something it does. Rather, he takes a portion of the Void with it as it goes, and thus its movement in our plane of existence simply erases anything that stands in its path. The sheer size of the tunnels it digs through the Layers in its visits is the only ...

The vacuum it leaves behind is not simply physical emptiness, it is as much psychological and spiritual. Anyone trekking through a Trail will report that the intensity of any experience seems to lessen, awareness grows dimmer and any action eventually becomes difficult to take.