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The Siege Perilous

Hawkwind's Gazeteer: Sosaria

Authored by Michael S / Chgowiz (chgowiz@gmail.com)

An interpretation of the Ultima: Age of Darkness Games (1-3)
using Swords & Wizardry Whitebox and Swords & Wizardry Companion

These rules and settings use content from the first three Ultima CRPG games: Ultima I – The First Age of Darkness, Ultima II – Revenge of the Enchantress and Ultima III – Exodus. These three games were released from 1980 through 1983 and formed the basis for the wildly popular Ultima series and the Ultima On-line MMORPG.

Any content stemming from the Ultima games is used without permission and all copyrights, registered trademarks and licenses are property of Electronic Arts and Origin Systems. I am doing this interpretation as a fan derivative work. I hold no license to any content save the adaptations to the Swords & Wizardry Whitebox rules that are my own. The sole purpose of this work is to add to the pleasure and experience of the Ultima world and to bring new fans to enjoy the fantastic story and setting that was created almost 30 years ago.

Introduction

It was 1979 when Richard Garriot, then a high school student in Texas, published a video game called *Akalabeth*. Created to bring his interest in the most popular RPG game to the computer screen, Richard could not have predicted that his little game would go on to spawn a series of computer role playing games (CRPGs), first as single-player games and then as one of the first major massive-multiplayer-online-RPG games (MMORPGs), spanning 30 years of publication and countless.

I discovered the worlds of Ultima in 1983, playing both Ultima 2 and Ultima 3 on a Commodore 64 computer. I was enthralled with the complex (at the time) world and intricate setting. I was a fan of the Ultima games up till the late 1980s. I never quite rediscovered the magic in the later games, although they were very complex and interesting. It was my first love, the Age of Darkness (Ultima 1, 2 and 3) that inspired me and influenced my preference in role playing games and settings alike.

In 2008, when I began playing the world's most popular RPG after a 10 year hiatus, my first attempt at a campaign was to recreate Ultima, using the third edition rules of the popular RPG. It was a disaster! What I had come up with would have quickly fallen apart and I was inspired to rediscover the older versions of the RPG that I had played in the late 1970s/early 1980s. That led me to the "retroclones" – rewrites and updates of the earlier versions of the RPG using the Open Game License and a fair amount of cheek – and I have been gaming with them since.

"The Siege Perilous" is my "love letter" back to the early days of CRPGs, when tabletop RPGs were simpler, the CRPGs were opening our eyes to a new form of entertainment and my dreams were inspired to explore the world of Sosaria. Utilizing the free and open version of "Swords & Wizardry White Box" – a retroclone of the original 1972 version of the world's most popular RPG - I attempted to design a set of rules that would allow a Game Referee and players to explore the Age of Darkness, using an amalgam of the races, classes, monsters and magic of the first three games.

It should be said that these rules do not enforce the "canon" that has been persisted through all 9 games and the MMORPG. Rather, these rules provide a framework, based on my interpretation of the first 3 Ultimas. These Gazeteers reflect certain assumptions and adaptations I've made to the Ultima universe as I've constructed my campaign using these rules:

1. There is one known land mass – Sosaria. I compressed the 4 continents of Ultima 1 into one (mainly to make the merging of elements between Ultima 1 and Ultima 3 consistent). I assigned the ruler of Castle Rondorin in the Lands of Feudal Lords to the city of Montor. I assigned Shamino over the lands surrounding Fawn. I moved the White King (from the White Castle in the Lands of Darkness and Despair/Serpent Isle) to become the ruler over the NE area which contains Grey. There are other lands to be discovered! I just haven't created them yet.

2. There are some changes from the Ultima 1 Lands of Lord British - I left the original Mt. Drash in place between Britannia and Grey. I exchanged positions of "Death's Awakening" and "Dungeon of Montor". I also renamed the "Mines of Mt. Drash II" to "Mines of Montor".

3. The world exists in the situation as presented at the beginning of Ultima 1. Mondain threatens Sosaria with war as he seeks immortality. Lord British and the other four Lords are the most powerful forces against Mondain. Minax is currently his student and lover and together, they are already working on Exodus.

It is my hope that other Game Masters will be inspired by these Gazeteers to play in Ultima and create their own versions of Sosaria. The game is certainly open and light enough to adapt to any Age and an enterprising Game Referee can find many resources for playing a more recent version of Ultima.

This particular Gazeteer focuses on the Northwest area of Sosaria – the Perinia peninsula. This is the area that my players in my campaign will find themselves starting in. Another break from how the Ultima games opened (usually the players were taken to Lord British immediately or found themselves very close to his castle) but one that I find useful.

Enjoy and may your journeys in Sosaria be as wonderful as mine have been! – Michael S.

TO MY LIEGE LORD BRITISH, I send you greetings! It is my most fervent wish that your health is good and that those notes and maps reach you in good order. I send them out with my most trusted guards, for the information here is far more valuable than my own safety. It seems that such safety is not to be taken for granted these days!

AFTER RECEIVING YOUR DECREE that I should survey the lands in preparation for war, I have travelled first to the lands of Perinia, ruled by the withdrawn and dour "Lost King" Menthric in his castle. The treasure that you had the foresight to send with me (and all of it reached our destination, despite the depredations of bandits along the way) was the key to being granted permission to travel his lands.

IT IS MY SAD DUTY TO REPORT that the once fair farmlands of Perinia and the lovely city of Yew suffer at the hands of evil – attacks are frequent and death lurks all about in the form of monsters, foul brigands and bestials that seek to do Mondain's bidding. The Perinian mountains echo with war horns and the orcish drumbeats thumped throughout our travels in those far reaches.

STILL, AMID THE DARKNESS IS LIGHT for the people of the region are truly friendly and just, proudly serving their Liege the Lost King and upholding his laws and virtues as their own. If it were not for the banners and shields that boasted the heraldry of Menthric and the "Lost King", I might think that these lands were your own.

MAY YOU FIND these notes and maps to your satisfaction, my liege. If there are any areas that are unclear, please allow me the chance to clarify and enlighten you on any missing facts.

I remain your most obedient servant,

*HAWKWIND*

Geography of Sosaria

The Lands of Sosaria are divided in 5 regions, each roughly equal in size. Each region has a main city and many other locations within it. North is to the top of the map.

Clockwise from the NW corner:

- The Peninsula of Perinia

- Dragonsreach and the mountains of the Serpent's Spine

- The Lands of Montor

- The Dark Forests

- Britannia (center)

The scale of this map is 25 miles per hex. By this measure, Sosaria is roughly 1,250 miles going N/S and 1,425 going E/W.
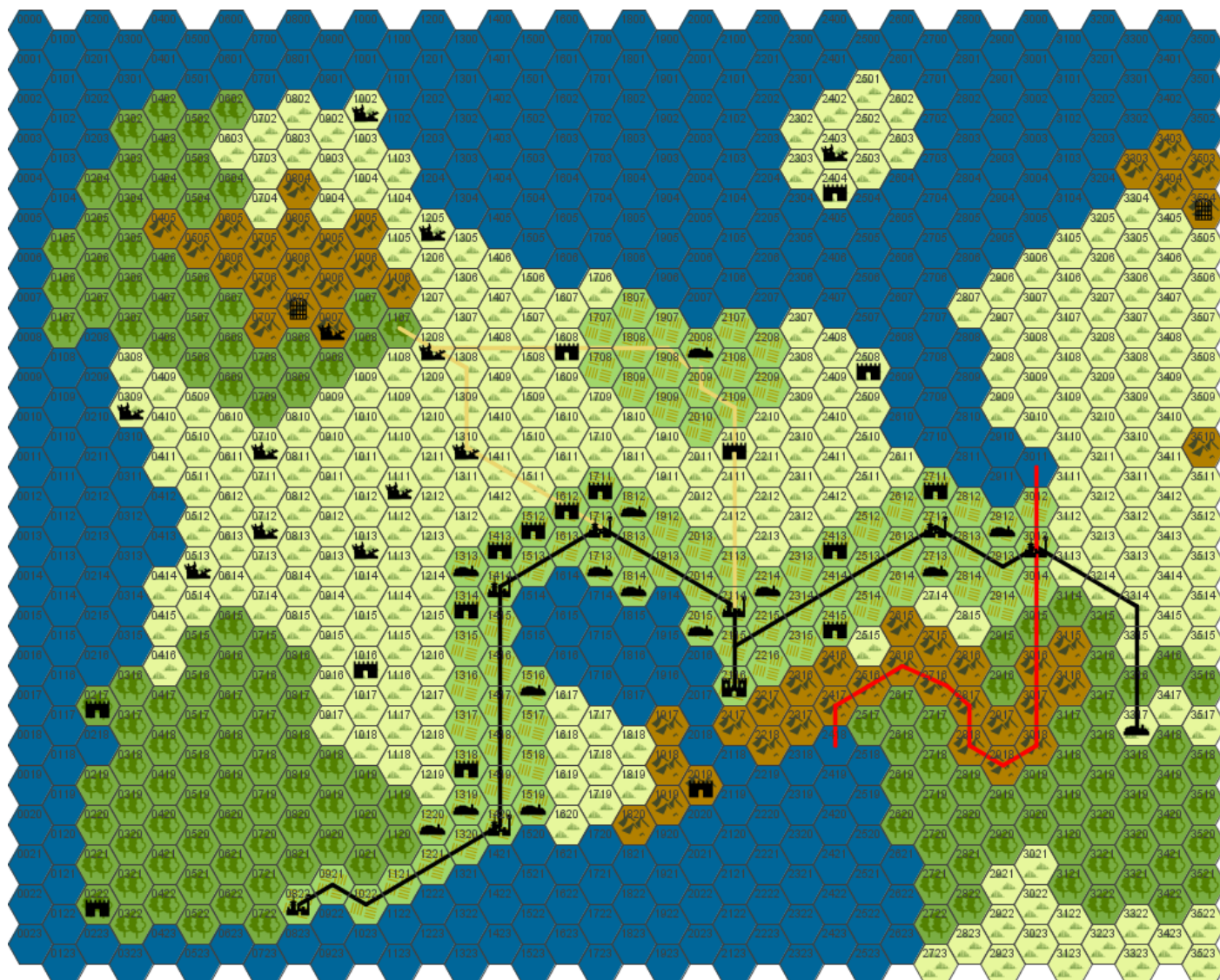
Geography

The vast majority of the peninsula is rich farmland, the countryside dotted with baronies, manors, hamlets and villages. Agriculture is the main economy for Perinia. A large collection of Bobbit villages and clan centers are found along the northern shores and grasslands of Perinia.

The Perinian Mountains are home to several Dwarf clans who work mines. The inner-most mountains are dangerous territory, filled with all sorts of creatures and dangers. The famed and deadly Dungeon of Perinia is said to lie in these mountains but only the tight-lipped dwarfs know for sure. The forests to the west and south of the Mountains are home to very many Elves, living in their intricate tree villages.

The Perinian Forest, also known as the "Deep Forest", to the southwest is rich in wood used for the famous Perinian longbows and arrows, which serve as a another major trade. Not as many Elves live in these woods, but why, they will not say.

The Border Mountains nearest the bridge of land that connects the peninsula to the main land of Sosaria are less rugged than the Perinian mountains and are populated by nomadic clans of Barbarians. Some smaller tribes of goblins inhabit the caves and dark recesses of the Border Mountains as they reach into the Woodshire Forest.

Off the northern coast of Perinia lies the **mysterious island of "Fawn"**, although none are for certain why it is called that. Mysterious and beautiful ruins dot the island as do some of the more fantastic creatures (both benign and deadly) found in Sosaria.

Population

There are roughly 3 million human inhabitants of the Peninsula of Perina, located mainly along the main trade route that winds its way along the Border Mountains to the Castle of the Lost King, then following the coastline along the Britannic Bay which ends at the port city of Yew. The vast majority of this land is cultivated farmland.

The two main centers of commerce and power are found in the **city of Yew** and in the **Castle of the Lost King and its city**.

The vast majority of the population lives in the villages within the populated areas. A village will have from roughly 100 to 1000 residents. Each hex of cultivated land will contain from 3 to 4 villages.

Each hex that contains the major road has a town within it. The other towns (support towns, coastal towns) are noted on the map, and either support a city (through agricultural trade) or are a center for fish markets and coastal trade. Each town has a population of 4,000 to 5,000.

There are a total of 8 cities in Perinia, including the city of Yew and the city associated with the Castle of the Lost King. Yew has approximately 15,000 inhabitants. The other cities have approximately 9,000 to 10,000 residents.

The Bobbit lands on the northern coast of Perinia are cultivated as well, and there are 373,500 bobbits inhabiting shires and the main town of June.

x dwarfs live in the Perinian mountains
x barbarian/nomads live in the Border Mountains
x elves live in the Deep Woods and Perinian Mountain Forests

Political

Humans
Lost King – once part of the Council of Elders of Sosaria.
? Counties are the divisions within the Kingdom?
? Each County ruler has a council made up of mayors of cities, towns and influential land owners ?

Military

54 castles are located in settled areas. (Each hex w/town or city has a castle, 45 castles) The other castles in populated areas are marked on the map.

18 castles are located in remote areas, unsettled areas, or wilderness. 11 of the 18 are the ruined/abandoned castles. These all are noted on the map.

Trivia

Perinia supports 6,750,000 head of livestock: 4,590,000 fowl (e.g. chickens, geese, ducks) and 2,160,000 dairy and meat animals (e.g. cows, goats, pigs, sheep).

Locations in Perinia

City of Yew (Hex 0822)
The town of Yew has always been a rustic collection of spread-out buildings, markets, mills and living quarters, looking less like a city and more like an extended antique village. Sitting nestled between the sea and the Perinean Forest (also called the "Deep Forest" by some), much of Yew can be found in the Forest itself, with the harbor for ships at the coastline. Yew serves as the hub for shipping farm goods and wood to the other lands from Perina. Since the rise of Mondain, Yew has suffered constant raids from the Dungeon of Perina, leaving some of its outlying buildings burnt and razed.

1. Harbor/Docks (Dockmaster is important leader in Yew)
2. Marketplace (near docks)
3. Acater/Provisions (near docks) - "Rations Unlimited"
4. 5 Taverns (near docks) - "Mary's Midway"
5. 2 Inns (near docks)
6. Shipwrights, Fishermen (near docks)
7. Blacksmith (near docks)
8. Woodsmiths
9. Weaponsmith – "The Duelo Shop" (Quarterstaff, Shortbow, Longbow, Crossbow, arrows, bolts)
10. Armorsmith - "Defense Specialities Unlimited" (Leather, Studded Leather)
11. Bowyer
12. Alchemy/Apothecary
13. Sage (important leader in Yew)
14. Hedge wizard or two
15. Temple of Light – "Circle of Light"
16. Transportation - "O.K. New and Used Transport" – Provides some options like horses and carts - A caravan that will travel to the Castle of the Lost King starts from here as well. (safety in numbers) Caravan to Paws - 100gp (if Bandit camp is eliminated, this goes down to 50gp)

The Circle of Light was an important feature of Yew in the time of Ultima III. It is a circle made of lava and water, constantly monitored by four clerics. Praying in the middle of it gave the Stranger the password for the Great Earth Serpent: "EVOCARE".

Pub: "Mary's Midway"
Meal/Drink - 5gp

If the PCs enter the bar, they'll find it's not quite as populated as other pubs in the other towns have been. Additionally, the food is very spare and very expensive. People are quietly murmuring and the lady at the bar looks very unhappy. See Rat problem quest.

Town of Verthedge (Hex 0921)

Town of Rosegate (Hex 1022)

Town of Breckbank (Hex 1121)

Town of Chesapple (Hex 1220)
Support town for City of Yew

Town of Bridgestead (Hex 1221)

Town of Berrywich (Hex 1313)
Support town for City of Highmont

Town of Raymere (Hex 1319)
Support town for city of Southfalcon

Town of Highmont (Hex 1320)

City of Highmont (Hex 1414)

Town of Mormead (Hex 1415)

Town of Southwood (Hex 1416)

Town of Old Bayton (Hex 1417)

Town of Eaglevale (Hex 1418)

Town of Lynddale (Hex 1419)

City of Southfalcon (Hex 1420)

Town of Cherryferry (Hex 1513)

Town of Bankton Island (Hex 1516)

Town of Coveway (Hex 1519)

Town of Milvania Grove (Hex 1613)

City of Esterwynne (Hex 1712)

Town of Coveway (Hex 1713)

Town of Falconedge (Hex 1812)
Support town for City of Esterwynne

Town of Holdsgate (Hex 1813)

Town of Daywalk Cove (Hex 1814)

Town of Layneview (Hex 1913)

Town of East Groveshire (Hex 2014)

Town of Bald Bay (Hex 2015)

Town of Newbye (Hex 2113)

City of Linden (Hex 2114)

Town of Wellwick (Hex 2115)

Castle of Lost King (Hex 2116)
The Castle of the Lost King is a bit worse for the wear. The walls are a combination of wooden structures and some stoneworks. There is a Great Hall made of wood and stone. Most of the guard towers are rocks and stone piles with wood huts on top. The main courtyard is a large muddy area with wooden barracks and support buildings. There is an obviously very old structure which serves as the sanctuary (and is the location of entry to the older tunnels under the Castle).

The hill that the castle sits on are known to hide ancient ruins that were constructed long ago, perhaps by the Elder Sosarians. When the beast attacks began taking their toll on the farms and foodstores, Menthric began stockpiling foodstuffs in case things got worse. Unfortunately, they have gotten very bad, and he is beginning to run out of food for the refugees living in Yew and the castle.

Rurik
- Recover dwarven hall (after 2.3)

Cleric
- Seek out Pillars of Protection (Dex bonus)

1. Armorsmith (in service to Lord of castle)
2. Weaponsmith (in service to Lord of castle)
3. Bowyer (in service to Lord of castle)
4. 1 Inn/Tavern
5. Marketplace (flea market/farmers market)

6. Chapel of Faith (older temple) - NPC Priest
7. Sage (in service to Lord of castle) - NPC
8. Lord of the Castle - "The Lost King" - NPC

Upon the death of the "Lost King", a successor is selected by the Priest of the Chapel and the currently serving Sage of the Castle. The pool of eligible to serve at the post is drawn from the soldiers and citizens from the Perinian lands who've served in distinction. They assume the title as their name. Legend has it that the first King, "He who was Lost", ventured into the strange tunnels found beneath the castle and never returned. These tunnels have been blocked off for generations.

Town of Bymill (Hex 2214)
Support town for City of Linden

Town of Dorkeep (Hex 2215)

Town of Blackbush (Hex 2314)

Town of Greymill (Hex 2414)

Town of Foxport (Hex 2513)

Town of Hartside (Hex 2613)

City of White Dell (Hex 2712)

Town of Linbridge (Hex 2713)
Support town for City of White Dell

Town of Willowmount (Hex 2813)

Town of Perrysbrook (Hex 2912)
Support town for Valburn

Town of Deermoor (Hex 2913)

City of Valburn (Hex 3013)

Map Locations

Hex key

Encounter Tables

Random Wilderness Encounters:
Type: (1d6)
1: Monster
2 - 3: Bestial
4 - 5: Men/NPCs
6: Special

Wilderness Random Encounter Tables for Perinia

Monsters (2d6)
2: Griffon (HD 7) #:1-4
3: Giant Bat (HD 4) #:1-4
4: Giant Viper (HD 4) #:1-4
5: Bear (HD 4) #:1 - 4
6: Giant Rats (HD1) #:2 - 12
7: Viper (HD1) #:2 - 12
8: Skeletons (HD1) #:2 - 12
9: Ghoul (HD 2) #:1 - 6
10: Pincher (HD 2) #:1 - 6
11: Wraiths (HD 4) #:1 - 4
12: Wyverns (HD 8) #:1

Bestial (2d6)
2: VR/R
3-4: Unc
5 - 8: C
9 - 10: Unc
11: R
12: VR

Men (2d6)
2: VR/R
3-4: Unc
5 - 8: C
9 - 10: Unc
11: R
12: VR

Special (2d6)
2: Set piece - Bestial encampment
3-4: Unc
5 - 8: C
9 - 10: Unc
11: Set piece - Battle scene between Bestials and Knights
12: Set piece - Bestials attacking a farmstead

Personages and Notables

Current Lost King: Menthric
Menthric, Lord of the castle and the lands around Yew is a sad and pragmatic man, watching his farms and lands ravaged by the beast hordes. He regrets the necessity of harsh action but he is facing hard times and little in the way of hope. Land and foodstocks have been severely depleted and the people are very close to reaching a breaking point. A few more days or weeks and there will be little food left. Menthric has even considered the desperate possibility of raiding Lord British's northern fields, as he believes in his despair that Lord British is as selfish and self-centered as the other Lords and won't help. Menthric is desperate for hope, but has little faith that it will come.