

EXPEDITION: AGARTHA DESCENT

SCRAMBLE TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

THIS IS A TL;DR DOC FOR SETTING NEWCOMERS
REFER TO MAIN LORE DOC FOR MORE IN DEPTH INFO

Introduction

We cracked the Earth with our industry. We breached the Firmament with our smoke and smog. Carried by our ambition, our enemy, we dug deeper. Those things below, which we unearthed, pushed back.

Horrors beyond horror, pale and furious faces in the dark, met us with open claws and jagged bites. Empires below, emboldened by unholy prophecy, rejoiced at the influx of new sacrifices for the forces they worshipped. But, we saw the glittering gold beyond their fortifications. We saw the powers they wielded, and wished to know more. We heard whispers of the wish-granting depths, and needed to seize them.

Our ambition, our enemy, pulled us deeper.

EXPEDITION: AGARTHA DESCENT is a tabletop wargame set loosely in the 1870s, taking inspiration from Jules Verne and other pre-WWI science fiction.

Caverns large enough to host jungles and oceans form the battlefields. Colonial surface forces pry for wealth and resources and territory. Deep dwellers, their empires, persist in wars against each other even through these new foreign threats.

And beyond all knowledge, all nightmarish dreams, minds immeasurably superior to ours watch these events with envious eyes, plotting, and waiting.

A Condensed Timeline

1815: Napoleon I is defeated at Waterloo. He is imprisoned on the lonely Isle of St Helena, and disappears from history.

1848: The Revolutions of 1848 rock Europe. A pagan Volcanist cult spreads through Southern Italy, leading to The First Abomination War.

1856: Pope Pius IX is assassinated and Rome is besieged, falling to the armies of the Duosicilian Republic. The crusaders briefly retake it, but are routed in 1857. The Holy See relocated to Avignon.

1857: India rises up in rebellion, and expels the East India Company. Rumours of prophets and holy men using magic to defeat British armies are suppressed.

1860: The Republic of Italy is declared. Mass sacrifices follow. Paris is swallowed by the earth.

1861: The Titanium King rises to power in the Atlan Republic.

1863: The Lidenbrock-Bjelke Expedition enters Mount Snaefellsjokull in Iceland and emerges in Stromboli, revealing the existence of a Hollow Earth.

1864: The British seize Iceland, and begin constructing a canal to the Third Layer. Contact is made with Fallen Paris. Taiping Rebels take Beijing, and Hong Xiuquan returns after ascending to “Heaven”

1866: Revolution in Atlantis, Perseus II is elected king.

1868: The Volcanists seize absolute power in Italy and crown the first Tyrant of Naples. The war-battered Austrians decide to cooperate with the new Italian regime to get access to the Hollow Earth entrance in Stromboli. Avignon-Vienna schism in the Catholic church.

1870: The Eiffel Tower, a massive elevator linking Paris to the surface, is completed. The Paraguayan Incident begins, and after defeating the otherworldly forces the US forms the Pan-American Containment Treaty (PACT) with the surviving South American nations.

1874: The Necropolis Event occurs in the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul sinks part way between the layers, and a month later an immortal army of undead arises, uniting the sickly nation by force. The Dead Man of Europe is born.

1877: The Satsuma Rebellion occurs, and the island of Kyushu is sunk.

The Layers

The Earth is hollow, made up of multiple different layers wherein the factions dwell. Most dwell underground at varying depths, with the Colonial factions located on the “surface”. Above them is the firmament, Hyperborea, a strange and terrible place of great pain and suffering. There are nine “known” layers to the world, though some say there are deeper levels, and others claim what is above is below and what is below is above. None know all that dwell beneath...

The First Layer - HYP ERBOREA

The Second Layer - Earth/Epigea. Changed significantly from the revelations of Agartha.

The Third Layer - Home to native tribes and the Neanderthal city states, plus Ile de Paris and the colonies of the Epigean nations. Main feature is a vast inland sea the size of a continent.

The Fourth Layer - Home to Atlan and the New Mu. Atlan and the New Mu are engaged in a fierce war for a strategically important pass. More colonies also located here. Environment is predominantly deserts and volcanic fields.

The Fifth Layer - A waterworld and the location of Atlantis. Several islands and archipelagos dot this layer.

The Sixth Layer - Home of Lemuria, squatting and worshipping in the shadow of Ancient Lemuria. Ruins dot the landscape from civilisations of long ago.

The Seventh Layer - The Home of Old Mu. A dark city, full of dark things. The Unknown Khan and Mother Unknown hold court here. Few return unchanged.

The Eighth Layer -

*Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean...*

The Ninth Layer - Kokytos. L'Ombre, Napoleon I, dwells amidst the ice.

Factions

Colonial

British Empire

- The British and French are the two relatively standard everyman factions. Prospected deeper than other surface factions, but their hasty expansions left them without stable logistics in higher layers.
- Some extra advanced technology for the time period. See main lore doc for more details.
- Facing significant unrest in colonial territories. Lost India, but have compensated somewhat by exploring Agartha.

French Republic

- Paris collapsed into the underground. Eiffel Tower is a massive cargo lift and elevator from Agartha to Epigea. This is the globe's most well-established logistics hub for transport between the two.
- Rely on weird vernian technologies and adapting to the underworld.

United States

- An even mix between colonial technology and Agarthan powers.
- Versatile with a lot of sub-factions. Morlock allies and skin-changers with half-husked gunslingers and Saur Rough Riders.
- All-in on the Monroe Doctrine after the formation of the PACT and Paraguayan Exclusion Zone. Hoarding recovered artifacts, ostensibly so they are never used again.

Russian Empire

- The Tsardom throws emancipated serfs into the underground.
- Never explicitly referred to as Russia in-universe.

Ottoman Empire

- *Skeletal Legions*: Husked Janissaries, Necromancers, etc.
- The Dead Man of Europe
- Istanbul is a necropolis, resurrecting the dead from previous wars to embolden its armies, and even Husking its living citizens too.

Kingdom of Italy

- *Italian Volcano Pagans*: Lava summoners, magma surfers, etc.
- Sicilian liberal revolutionaries destroyed the Papacy and made pacts with voices in the Stromboli lava for wealth and power.
- Ruled by 13 Vulcan Lord demigods and a coven of witches

Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

- *Chinese Extremist Christian zealots using terracotta soldiers*
- The Taiping Rebellion ended in Taiping victory.
- Rip the souls of blasphemers out to power disposable terracotta soldiers and prosthetics.
- They're probably going to cause the deluge.

Denizens of the Deep

Kingdom of Atlantis

- Actually more democratic than the Atlan Republic
- Greco-Roman inspired wielders of ancient tech, alchemy, amphibious cavalry, lots of explosives
- Probably the most sane and humane Agarthan faction, despite having its share of problems. A dim light of hope in the darkness of the Deep.

The Atlan Republic

- Actually not a republic, but a military dictatorship
- Greco-Roman with some faint pre-Columbian influences.
- Aztec-Greek-Conquistador aesthetics in heavily armoured warriors.

- Titanium (*A new mythical material, mined from bones of dead Titans, not the chemical metal*) May also be the material in the firmament that holds back Hyperborea.
- Separated from Atlantis proper when it Fell. When they too ended up below, their reunification didn't go well.

Lemuria

- Mystic prophecy-calling wielders of mystery.
- GIMMICK: Prophecies
 - Powerful Prophecy Abilities give points of Madness when used
 - Prophecies have higher chances of backfiring with higher Madness.
- Vedic, with ties to India.
- Also Chinese Inner Alchemy and Fengshui
- Think New Age/Theosophy schizo mysticism, but real
- Big fans of sponsoring rebellions in any nation they're in conflict with.

Mu

- Unholy armies of the deep worshiping eldritch deities.
- Front-faction, "New Mu", presents itself as totally normal humanoids to the colonials.
- Old Mu is a nightmarish realm of changed former humans.
- Steppe nomad/Middle Eastern aesthetics.
- Invaded Japan through Hokkaido (with mixed success) and attacked New York (unsuccessfully)

Errum

- The "Skypeople" reside in stalactite city-states.
- Using Cloudelleafints and Skyspiders as mounts, as well as primitive aircrafts like balloons.
- Civilized nobility and priesthood ruling over tribal subjects both on the Roof and the Floor.

Others

- Napoleon, acting according to some unknown agenda that may either doom or save humanity.
- Corrupted remains of a failed Scottish rebellion.
- Morlocks.
- Stinker Gorgs, the most SOVL faction in existence.

The Firmament

Hyperborea

- We don't know yet.
- Some kind of apocalyptic demon army with siege trains and technicolor "Hyperwarrior" units.

- Just here to cause suffering and suffer.

The Game and Setting

<https://app.mediafire.com/us7vnek39dc6k> - 2e rules and faction books.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/14ZpHhEyUbjt-SCx2xuAd0lyh7Rs4J7rK5kHkljqykhk/> - 3e Rules, heavily WIP.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bRrxdD1BMLmcMDFeszwqg2Rcjrt8DDo7tjAxoOB6KQ8> - Main lore doc. Refer here for short fiction pieces and more detailed lore.

FAQ

Where is 1e?

Lost to time.

Why are there 4 editions but only 2 are playable?

Because the game designers had no idea what they were doing. Also there's a whole meta-narrative about this starting as a real wargame and not a gigantic shitpost.

How fun is the game?

Very! Several playtests have been completed over the past few months, and while balance is still WIP the game is playable and fun. The rules are not hard to learn, and you can always ask for a game or some help on our discord here:

<https://discord.gg/5qGJa5AGsn> (Note: The discord is SOLELY for playtests and organising games.)

Can I contribute?

Of course! We're always looking for new contributors, though be prepared to get some pushback on your ideas. Most needed are artists and people kitbashing and posting models, but anyone can hop into the threads and contribute a lore post or rules if they want to.

Can Atlan be retconned out already? The 2e split was an unneeded cash grab and they're a derivative rip-off of Atlantis.

No.

Why is Russia called the Tsardom?

It's a joke. You kinda had to be there.

Discussion stuff (noobs go away!)

tl;dr doc for newcomers

If this is just a basic introduction, should we not compress all the colonials into one? As in treat the colonials as one giant entity? To keep it simple.

I want an overview of all the playable factions, each described in between 1 to 3 sentences. So anyone can easily reference / get involved.

We could give an overview of Colonials as a whole, too, however.

Yeah alright that's fair.