

Hand-Drawn Map Tutorial (for the Artistically Challenged)

by Gidde@CartographersGuild.com

This tutorial covers a technique for hand-drawn mapping that is based more on determination than talent (for I have no innate artistic talent – hence the title).

Credit for the drawing style goes to Ironmetal250 @ the Cartographer's Guild; his tutorial at <http://www.cartographersguild.com/showthread.php?5664-Award-Winner-Hand-drawn-mtns.-and-other-stylistic-map-elements-for-use-in-PS-GIMP> made it possible for me to even accomplish this.

I'm including some techniques here from RobA @ the Cartographer's Guild (specifically his tutorial at <http://www.cartographersguild.com/showthread.php?533-Tutorial-Creating-old-weathered-paper-using-the-Gimp>) for creating the parchment background. If you'd like to weather your parchment more than I do here, I suggest you follow his entire tutorial rather than just the few steps of it I use. It gives fantastic results.

Finally, to paraphrase from someone very wise in the art of cartography, the best way to make something look hand-drawn is to actually hand-draw it. This takes a LOT of time, however, so for many steps in this tutorial I'm going to give both the time-consuming way to do the step, and a “cheater” way, to do it more quickly. The cheater way doesn't look quite as good, but it will make a comparable map in considerably less time.

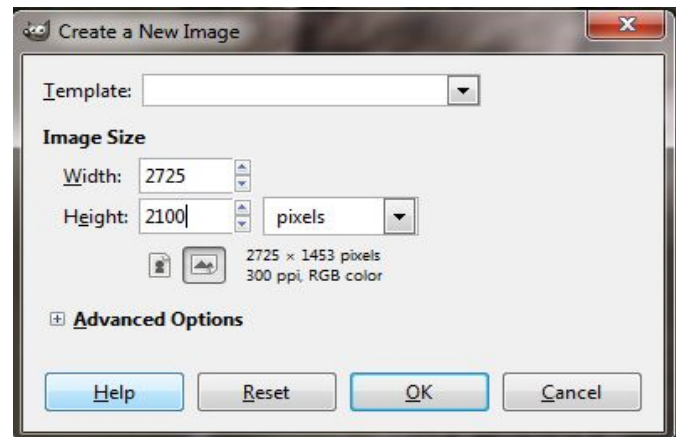
So, let's roll up our sleeves and get to work. First, gather the tools you'll need.

Tools

- The Gnu Image Manipulation Program (GIMP): This is free, open-source software and can be obtained at <http://www.gimp.org>
- A tablet input device is extremely handy but not strictly necessary. For tapering of rivers without a tablet, try this script: <http://www.cartographersguild.com/showthread.php?3011-Award-Winner-Tapered-Rivers-in-GIMP&highlight=tapering+rivers> by RobA@ the Cartographer's Guild. I haven't used it myself, since I taper rivers with the tablet, but everything RobA touches turns to gold (at least within GIMP) so I'm sure it will give great results.
- If you plan on doing any of the “cheater” steps, you'll need the brush packs posted with this tutorial.
- If you have Adobe Photoshop, that's what I use for text on the map, although it can be done in the GIMP, or in Inkscape.

Creating the Image

Now that you have the tools you'll need, let's open up the GIMP and get started. The size of your drawing is completely dependent on what it is you're drawing. The sizes of brushes and so on that I mention later work well for a scale of 40mi/50px; if your map is a smaller scale (more area to less pixels) you'll want the symbols to be smaller, and at a larger scale (less area to more pixels) you'll want them bigger.



For the tutorial, I'm going to do a zoom-in of the nation of Astera from my Nyviltæra map, at 40mi/50px. This is an area that covers roughly 1700 miles by 1200 miles, so I'm going to make my map size 2125 x 1500, and add a few hundred pixels all the way around for a border. So my new GIMP image will be 2725 x 2100 pixels. From the File menu select New... and enter the size of your

drawing. (If you don't already have a scaled map to go from, 2000x2000 is a good size to start with.)

Defining Your Coast

The first step in creating your map is making a Land channel which differentiates land from sea. If you don't have a scanned sketch, or zoomed-in map that you're working from, skip to step 3 on the next page.

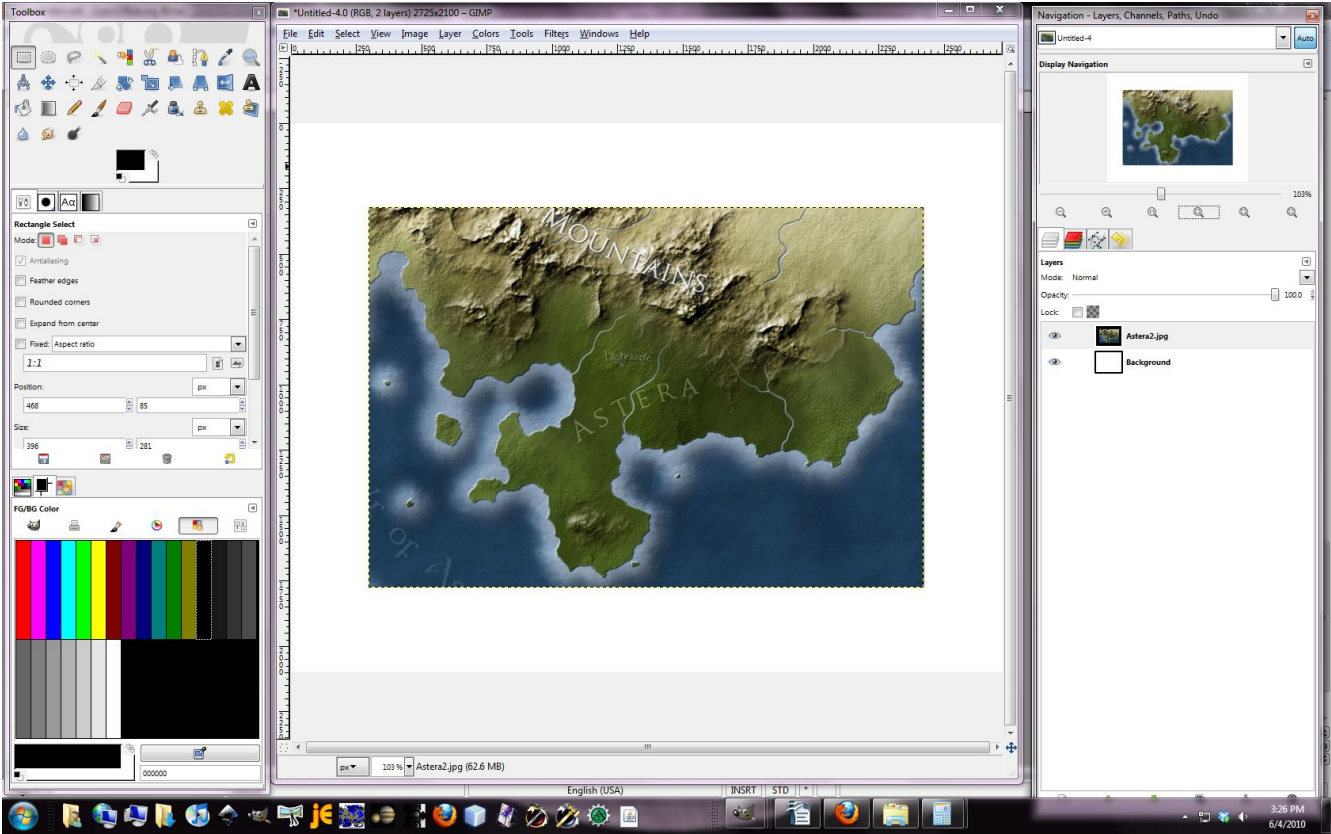
Step 1. Import your base map.

Open the base map file as a layer (File → Open as Layers...). This will automatically center the new layer on the map. It will also automatically select the new layer.

Step 2. Scale the base map layer.


Using the Scale Layer function (Layer → Scale Layer...), scale your base map layer to your new image size – 600px in either direction (to leave room for your border). Your image with its scaled base should look something like this:

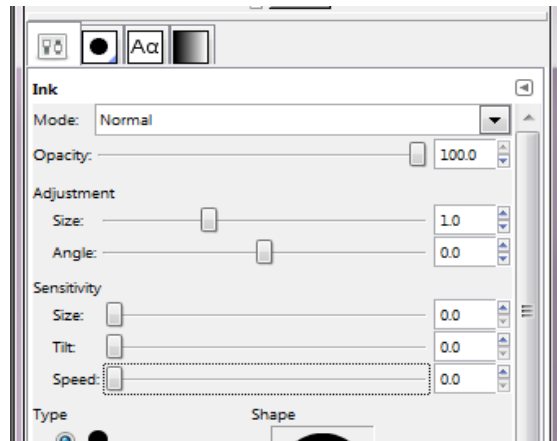
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Step 3. Sketch in your coastline. (If you don't have a base map, start here and free-sketch it.)

Create a new layer (Layer → New Layer...) and under Fill Type, check the Transparency box. From now on, I'll shorten that to just "Create a new transparent layer" – you'll be doing this often. The name of this layer doesn't matter, it's just a scratch layer.


Grab the ink tool from your toolbox () and set the size to 1 and the sensitivity options all to 0.



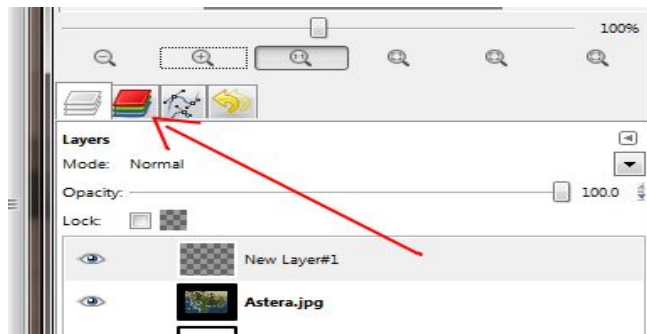
Draw in your coast, allowing your hand to shake (giving it a nice, hand-drawn feel and a realistic bumpiness to the coastline). This may be more comfortable if you zoom in to 200% or so. Draw in lakes as well, but not rivers (we'll do those a bit later). Here's what a piece mine looks like (with the base map still showing).



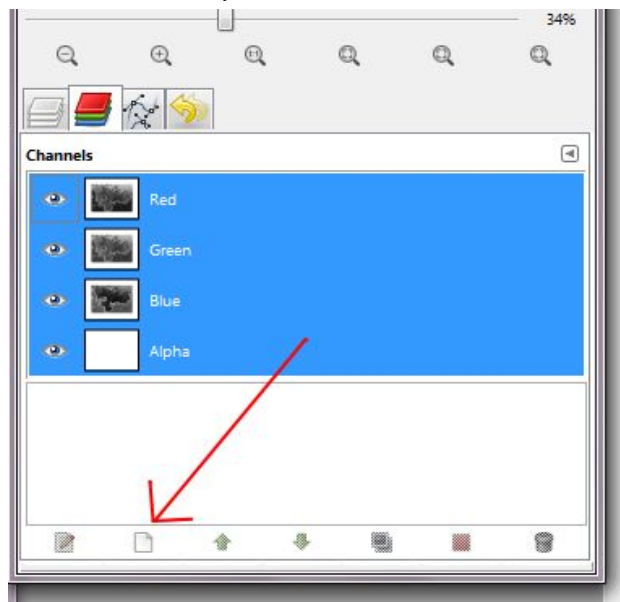
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See where the coastline just goes off into the white nothingness? That's to make sure there's no gap between the border line we're drawing next and the coastline. We want the fuzzy select tool to do its job later. To draw that box, stay on the same layer you drew the coastline on, and change the tool to the Rectangular Select tool. ().

Draw a box around your map area with it, and stroke your selection (Edit → Stroke Selection), changing the stroke thickness to 1. Invert the selection (Select → Invert), then save this selection as a channel (we'll use it later to make the border). Go to the Channel dialog:

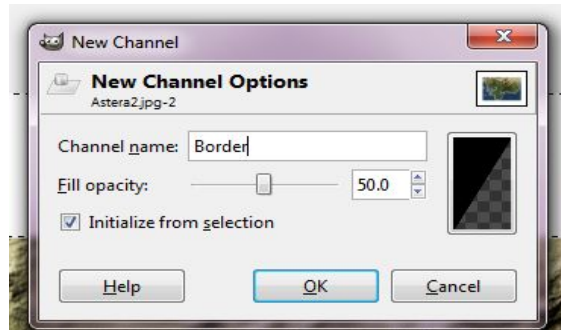


And click the add channel button at the very bottom of it.

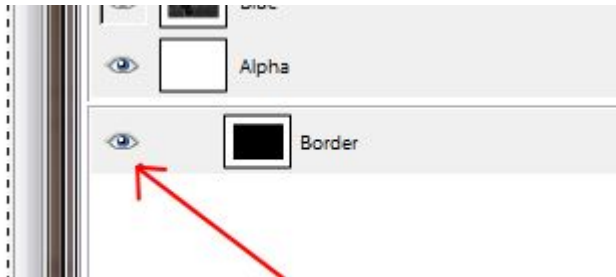


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Name the new channel “Border” and make sure the Initialize from Selection checkbox is checked.



Now we have a new channel, and we need to hide it so that it doesn't darken our screen. Click the eye next to the Border channel in the Channel dialog.

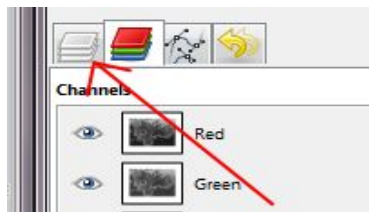


That's another process we'll be using often. From now on, I'll shorten that whole thing to “Save your selection as a channel named Border.”

Now that we've saved the selection, we can deselect it and get on with our coastline.

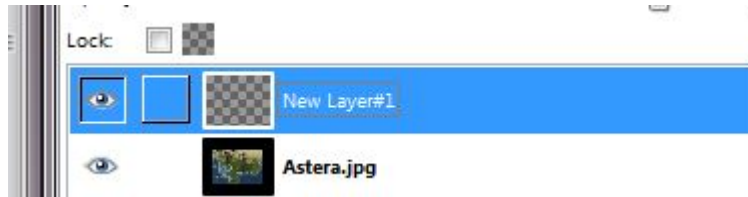
Step 4. Make a “Sea” Channel from our Coastline sketch.


In most other tutorials, this step would be backwards; usually we make a Land channel which excludes the sea. For this map, we aren't filling the land, but we are filling the sea, which makes a Sea channel more useful in the long run. Adding our Border channel changed our selected layer to the new Border channel, so switch back to that layer by clicking on the Layers Dialog.



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and then the sketch layer (which is probably still just called “New Layer”). It will highlight in blue when you click it.




Now grab the Fuzzy Select tool from your toolbox () and make sure that Sample Merged is unchecked. Your threshold should have defaulted to 15; that's fine. Click somewhere in the sea, and you will see marching ants along your coast's edge. If you have any lakes, or additional areas of sea, hold the shift button while you click inside them, to add them to the selection. Once all your water bodies are selected, save the selection to a channel named Sea. The coastline sketch layer can now be deleted (Layer → Delete Layer).

Step 5. The final Coastline stroke

Add a new transparent layer and name it Coastline. This will be your final coastline. You should still have your sea selection on; stroke the selection, this time changing the stroke to “Stroke with a paint tool” (Ink). This probably seems a little redundant, but now our coastline stroke will match our sea channel (rather than being a few pixels off of it). Now deselect (Select → None).

Roughing in Terrain

Now that we have our coastline set, we need to give ourselves a basic idea of where terrain will go. Create a new transparent layer named MountainArea. Grab the paintbrush tool () and change to the fuzzy circle 19 brush, and then scale it all the way up to 10 so we have a nice, big round brush. Use a color that says "mountain" to you (it won't be in our final, so it can be fuschia if it makes you happy, but don't use black, white or gray). Now just paint in where you think mountains need to go. Here's mine (I used a bright red).



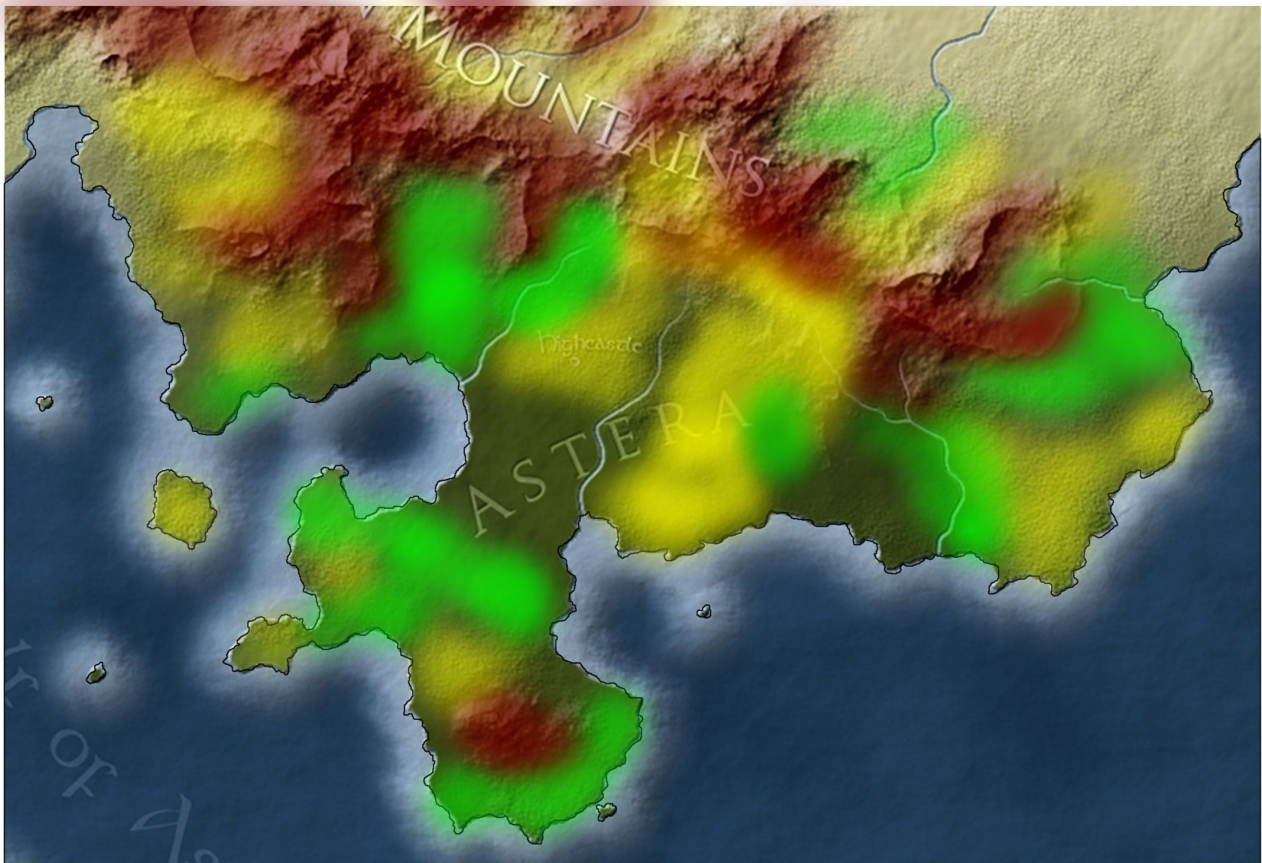
Now make another transparent layer, call it HillArea, and drag it to just beneath MountainArea on the layer stack. This is so that if the two overlap, the mountains will trump the hills. Pick a different color, and paint in hilly areas. Remember that although mountains have foothills, your map will look odd (and too busy) if mountains are completely surrounded by hills. Try to cover no more than half of the mountain borders with hill areas.

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Make a new transparent layer (ForestArea) and pick a new color, and put this one between the hills and mountains layers. Again, paint in the areas where you want forests.

Repeat this process for any other terrain types (such as swamps) that you'll want on your map. This tutorial, however, will only cover forests, hills and mountains.

My finished terrain sketch:



Astera happens to be both very hilly and sparsely populated; for a “normal” map you may want to leave more space for humans to live (and therefore leave more unpainted here), and probably less hills than are shown. Also, this is just to give you a rough idea of where your terrain goes; there's no reason the whole green area needs to be covered in forest, for example.

Rivers

Now that we have a basic idea of where our terrain is going, we're ready to place rivers. If you don't already have rivers on your map (or have only the really big ones, like I do), put smaller rivers in natural drainage pathways from the mountains (and/or hills) to the sea. Make sure your rivers join as they go toward the sea, rather than split, and they'll taper from their starting points to their mouths.

*Exception: if you have placed swampy areas, rivers do crazy things in swamps. Check out places like the Mississippi delta, or the Everglades, for inspiration ... but limit these crazy things to the swamps; in the normal course of things, rivers follow the "join and get bigger as they move toward the ocean" rule.

Step1. Add tapered rivers (Start split)

If you don't have a tablet ... here's where you'll want to detour and follow RobA's script/tutorial for tapering rivers. Put them on their own transparent layer (called, not surprisingly, Rivers), draw them in black, and make them 7px or so at their widest. Once it's finished, run a gaussian blur (Filters → Blur → Gaussian Blur) with a size of 1 on the layer.

If you do have a tablet ... grab your ink tool and set the size to 5. Under sensitivity set pressure to 1.0 (tilt and speed don't matter unless you have a fancy tablet, in which case set them to whatever you like). Make a new transparent layer called Rivers, and draw squiggly rivers to your heart's content. Extend them right out into the ocean so that you don't have to worry about ending them in the right place; I've found it's easier to start light and end heavy, which doesn't lend itself to an abrupt stop.

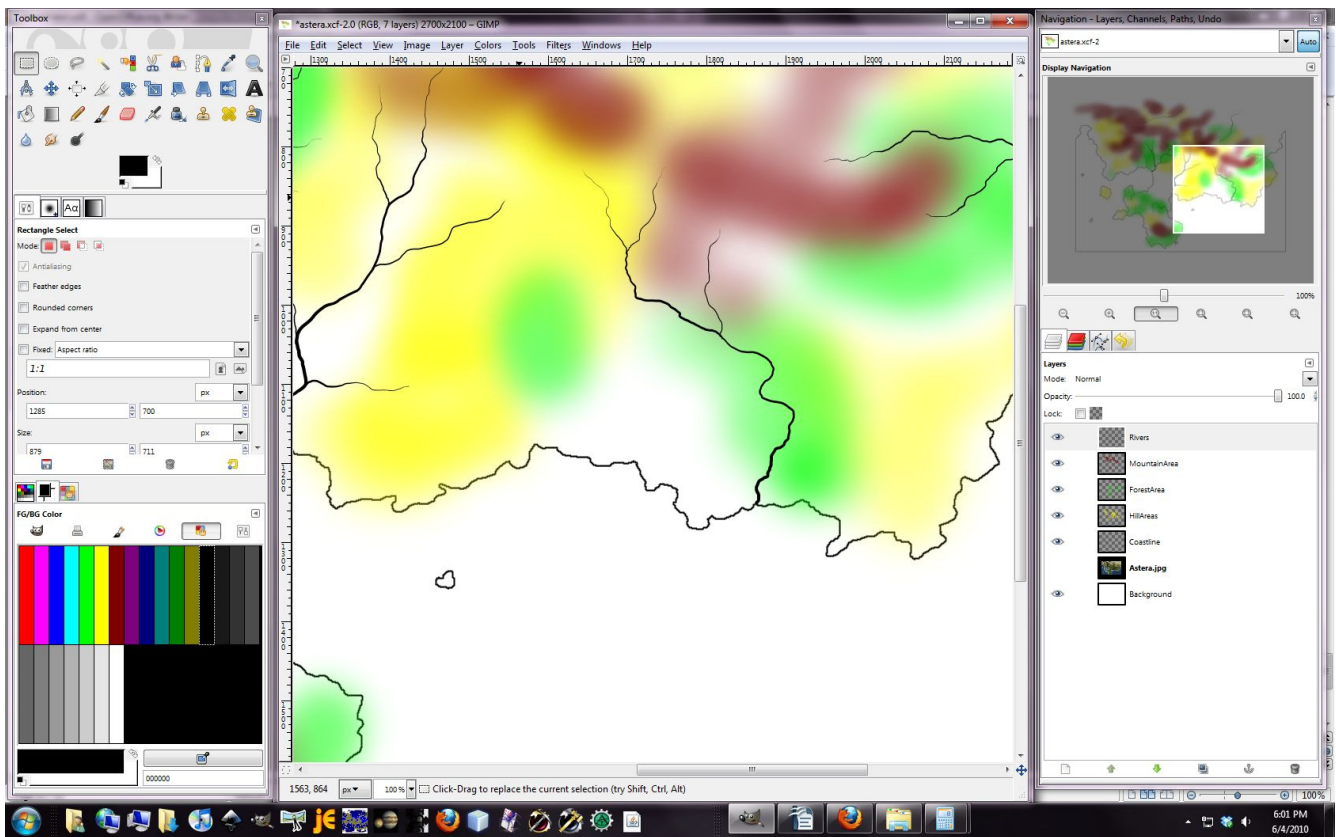
(End split)

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Step 2. Clean up the edges

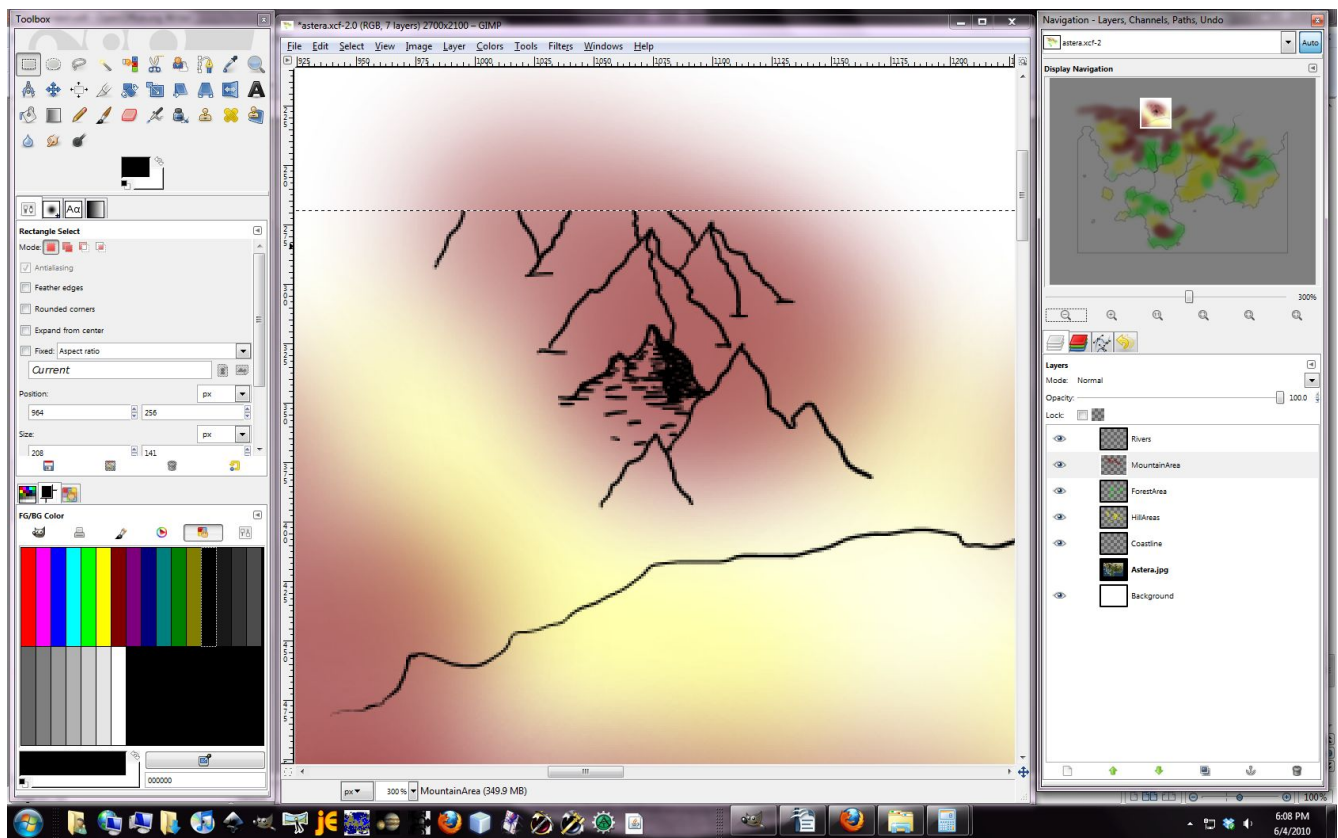
Right-click on the River layer in the layers dialog, and click “Add Layer Mask...”. Check the box next to channel, select Sea in the dropdown, check the Invert Layer Mask checkbox, and hit Ok. Next, right-click the River layer again, and click Apply Layer Mask.

I've hidden the base map now, since I have just about everything I needed off of it. With the base layer hidden (click the eye next to it), your map should be looking something like this:



Mountains

If you're planning on drawing all of the mountains and shading by hand, this is where the true fun (read: hard, long work) begins. Pick a shading style (I used the tutorial by Ironmetal250 that I liked on the first page of the tutorial), create a new transparent layer named mountains, and start drawing them over your MountainArea color. For the mountains in the Velaedin Empire map, this is what I did, using the ink tool at size 1 and pressure sensitivity 0.5 (and at 300% dot-for-dot zoom). It looks something like this in process:



OR ...

The “Cheater Way”

Step 1. Install brushes

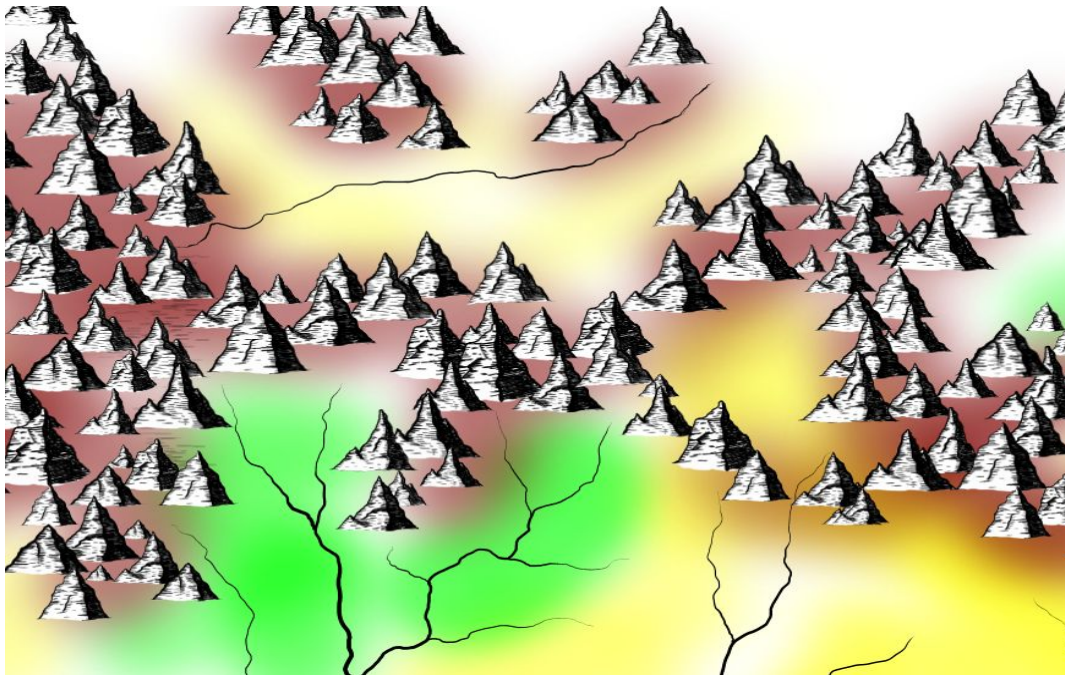
Hopefully you have the brushes from the brush pack posted with this tut; if not, go grab them and install them by placing them in your [user]/.gimp-2.6/brushes/ directory. Once they're in the directory, restart the GIMP to have them show up in your brush list.

Step 2. Mountains

Create a new transparent layer and name it Mountains. Grab the paintbrush tool (if you don't already have it on), and get the Gidde's Mountain Brushes brush. Set the scale to 1. Under Brush Dynamics, set Size to Random and uncheck (if it's checked) the Pressure-Opacity box. Make sure the Apply Jitter box is unchecked. (Note: you can use jitter if you want, but I find I get better results with more exact mountain placement.) Now go to town with your brush over the mountain-colored areas. Alternatively, you could uncheck the Size-Random box, start with scale 1 on the inside of your range, and place successively smaller sets of mountains. I like random, myself.

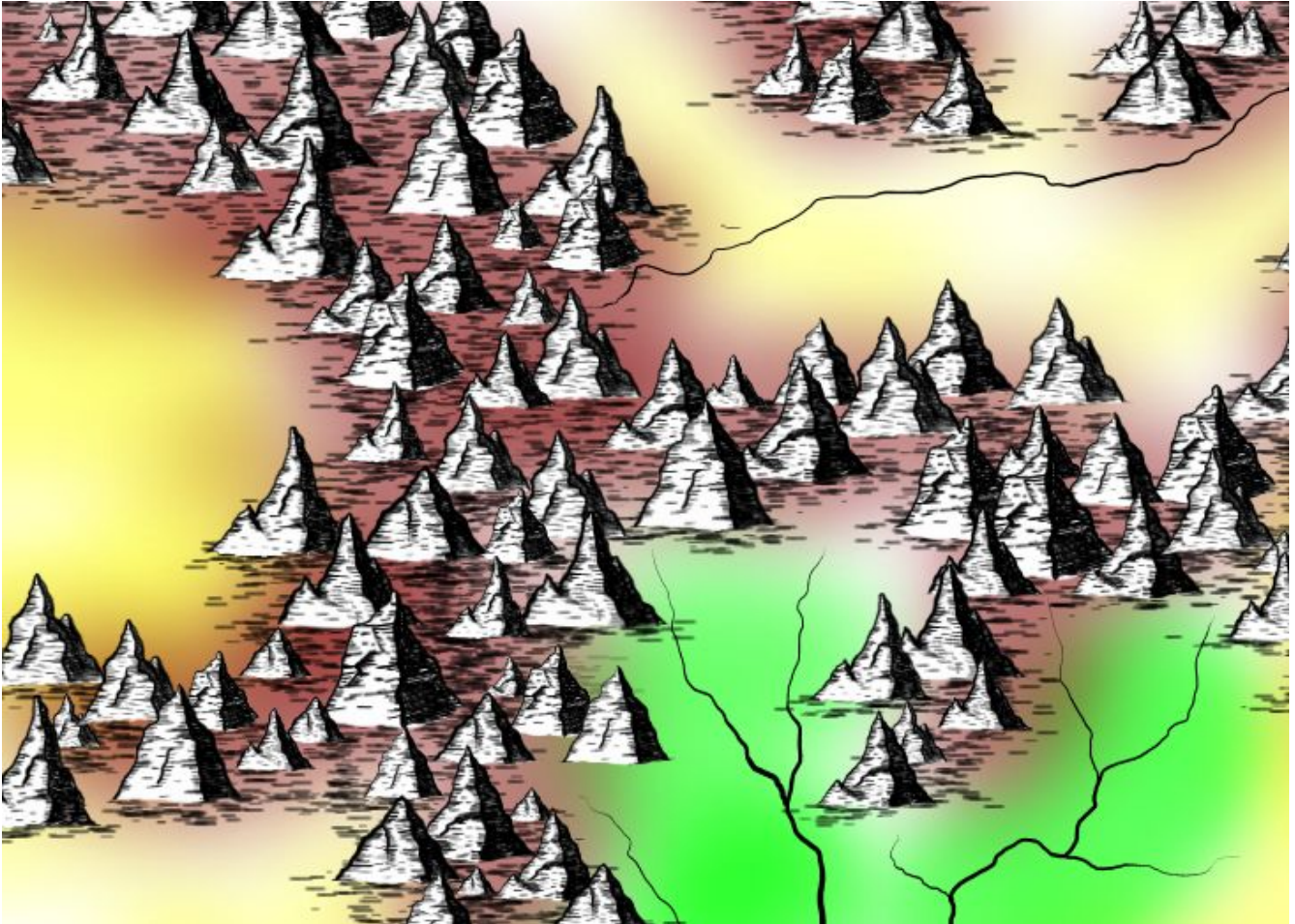
Step 3. Wow, that looks horrid!

Yeah, it does – but it gets better after the next couple of steps, I promise. Your horrible-looking mountain ranges should now look something like this:



Step 4. Shading

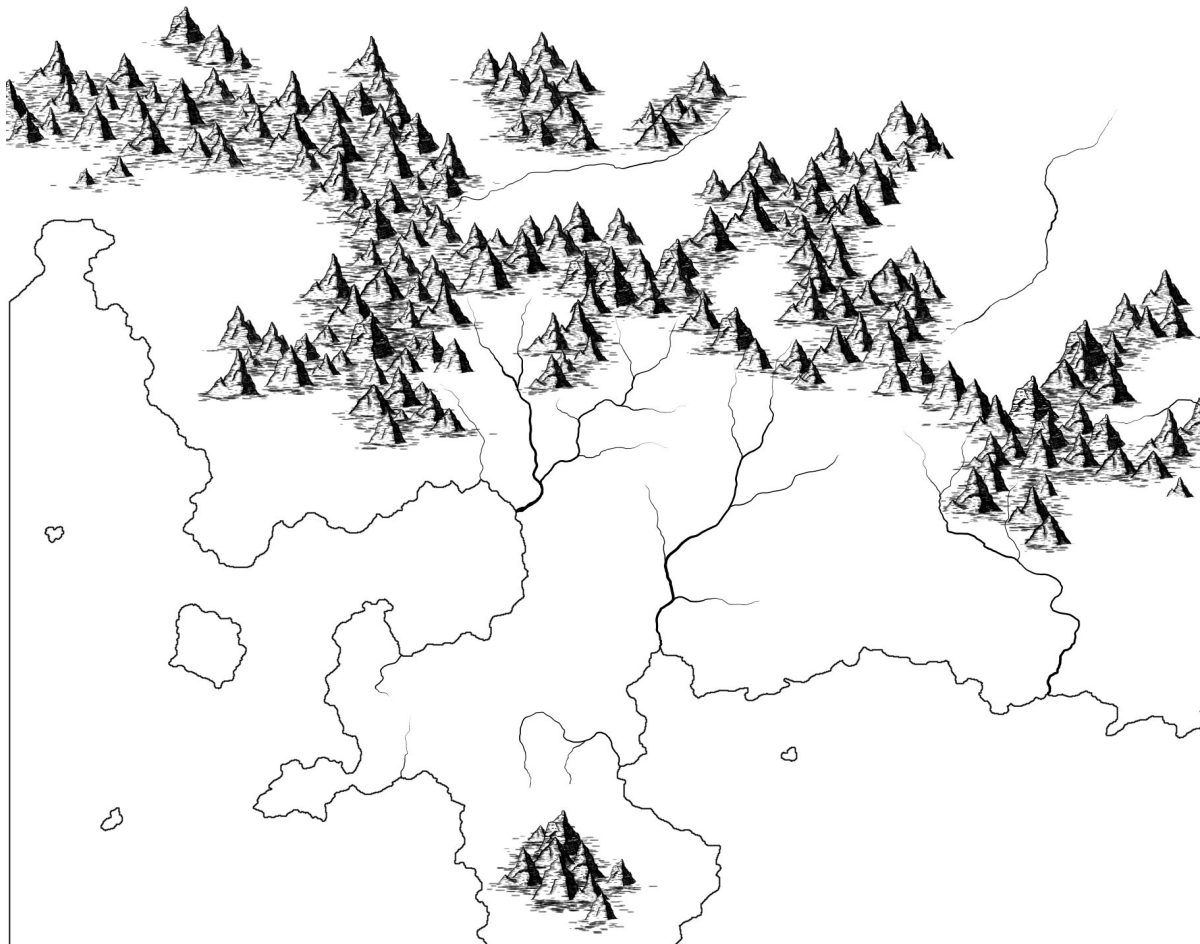
Create a new transparent layer named Mountain Shading and place it under the Mountains layer on the layer stack. Keep the Paintbrush tool, but grab the Gidde's Horizontal Line brush. Set the scale to 0.5, keep the Size random (or make it random if you didn't use random for the last step), and check the Apply Jitter box. Set the Amount to 5 (the max). Now liberally paint those horizontal lines all through and around the mountains. Pay special attention to right beneath each mountain symbol. It should look like this when you're done.



Note. The reason we're using so much jitter is that is extremely easy for the non-artistic mind (read: mine) to want to evenly space those little lines. It looks much better if it's more random, and imperfect.

Step 5. Now can we make it not look horrible?

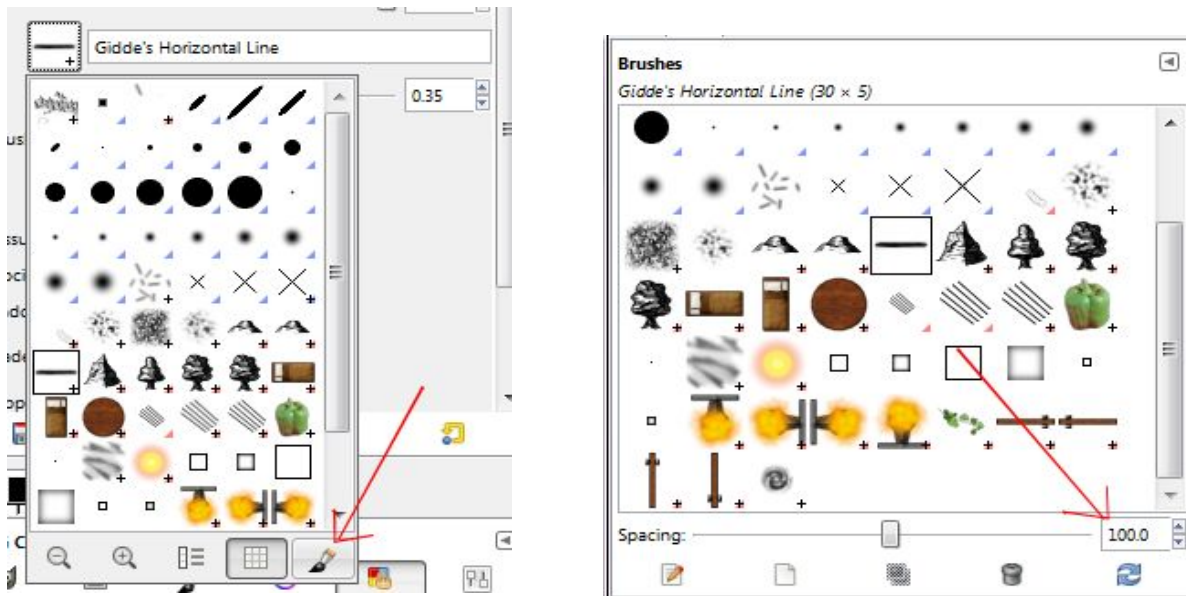
Yep. Now it's time for a little magic to turn this mess into hand-drawn beauty. Right-click on the Mountains layer (which should be directly above Mountain Shading) and click Merge Down. Now we have one layer that has both the mountains and their shading on it. To make sure, hide the Mountain Shading layer and the whole kit and kaboodle should disappear. Unhide it, and make all of the white transparent by changing the layer mode to Multiply. (**Note.** the insides of the mountains are still white so you can add more later; just put your layer mode back to normal and grab your brush again.) Now your mountains should look like this (and I hid all the weird colors so we could see just the parts that are finalized so far). Much more respectable! You may need to fix some things here and there (for instance, I got a corner of one stamp onto the side of another), or do some hand shading. But for all intents and purposes, the mountains are done.



Hills

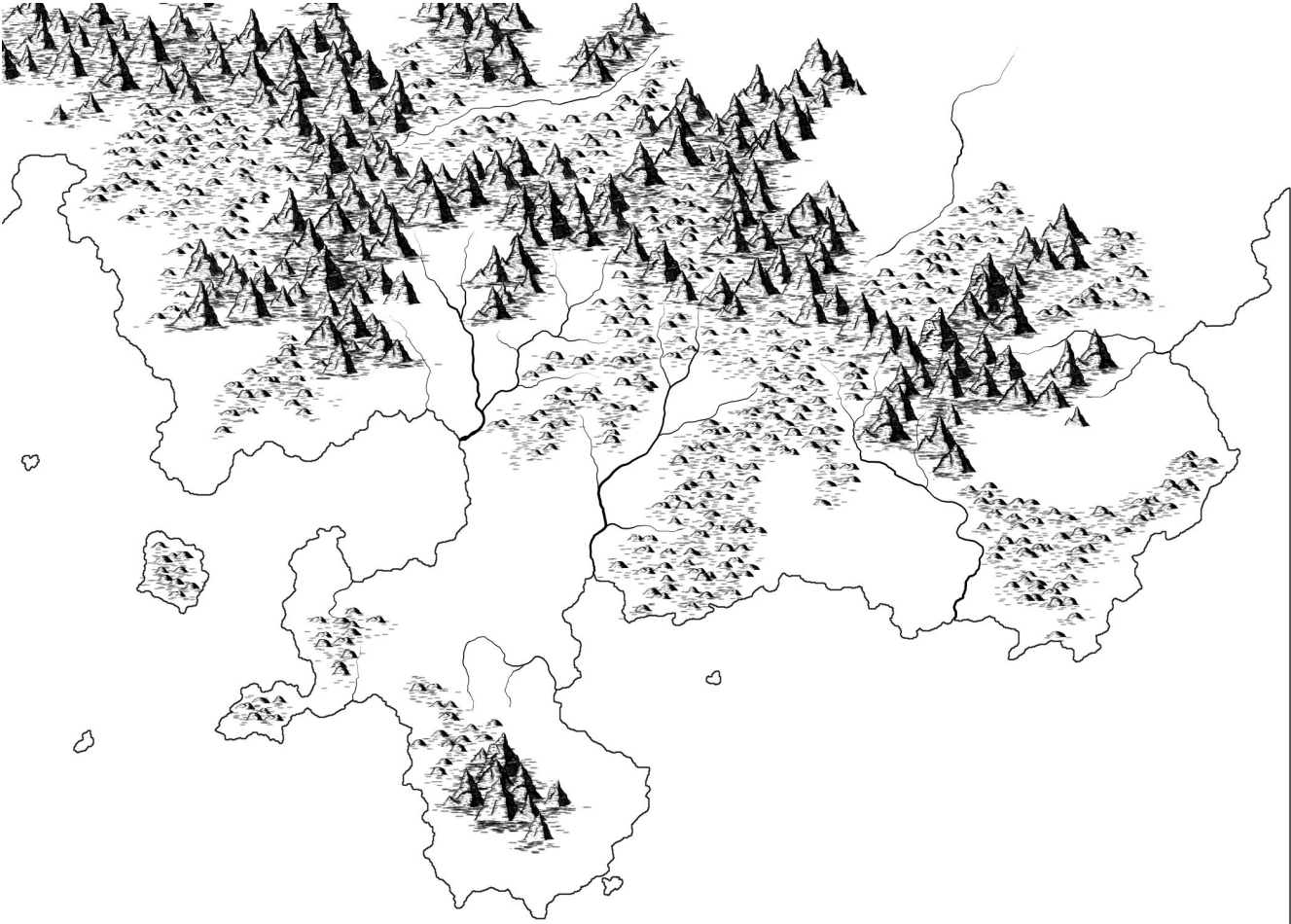
Repeat the mountain process for the hills, either by hand or using Gidde's Hill Brushes (scale .35, no random size, jitter 2.5).

- Create Hill layer beneath the Mountain layer, and stamp hills onto it where your hill colored areas are. Try not to place them too thickly; hills can get busy-looking very quickly.
- Create Hill Shading layer beneath the Hill layer, and spray horizontal lines. We want these lines to be a little more sparse than in the Mountains, so change your spacing to 200% by clicking on the brush icon and changing the spacing to 200% (see below). Remember to change your scale back to 0.5 and your jitter back up to 5.0.



- Shading on the Hills should also be a little lighter, so before you merge the Hills and Hill Shading layers, set the Hill Shading layer to 75% opacity.
- Merge the Hills layer down onto the Hill Shading Layer
- Change layer mode to Multiply.

We now have hills on our map!



Forests

The forests are done using the same process as the hills and mountains, but they're a little more time-consuming, as it takes some effort to get them to fall into nice looking patterns. For the Velaedin Empire map I placed each tree individually (using the tree brushes in the brush pack) and then hand-shaded everything. The following map is using the same cheater technique as above.

- Create new Forest layer and stamp trees onto it. I used a scale of 0.5 on the Deciduous tree set, with a jitter of 1.5 on the example below.
- Create a new Forest Shading layer, place below Forest layer, and paint shading with the Horizontal Line brush. We want the tree shading to be more subtle than hills or mountains, so set the size to .35 (and the jitter to 5 again), and reduce the Shading layer to 50% opacity.
- Merge the Forest layer down onto the Forest Shading layer
- Change layer mode to Multiply.

The example so far:



Roads and Cities

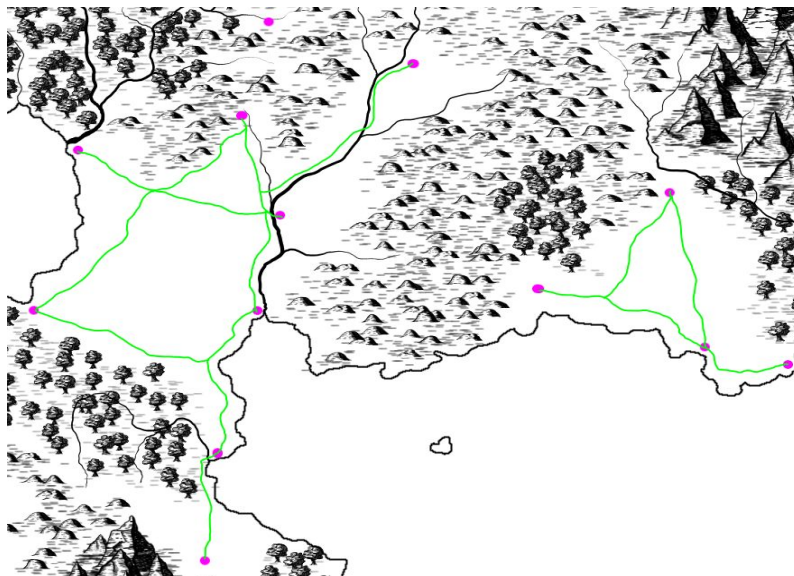
Step 1. City Placement

Place your cities according to water sources and resources that would drive people to settle in a given area. I also like to place them where it looks like an area got carved out of a forest. Make a scratch layer (City Scratch) and just place dots (I use the hard circle 11 paintbrush below) where cities will eventually go. We'll ink them in a final layer once we know where they're all going and the roads are down. For now, just put dots down – since they're not permanent and we're looking at an awful lot of black and white at the moment, pick a color that stands out for you. We're going to use them to place roads in the next step. (Note: You'll want to reset your scale to 1, turn off jitter and size randomness.)

Step 2. Roads

Grab the ink tool with size one and all sensitivity 0. Make a new transparent layer (Road Scratch) and pick another color that'll stand out. I end up using bright primary colors for these like pink, green, blue, but you can use whatever color you like (again, this isn't going to show up in our final draft, so it doesn't matter). Draw in roads connecting most of your major cities. They'll usually go around natural obstacles. Keep in mind, too, that rivers and seas are also natural roads, so if you have a town that's completely out of the way, but is on a river or the ocean, don't worry about placing a road to it. One exists, but it's probably not important enough to show on a map of this scale.

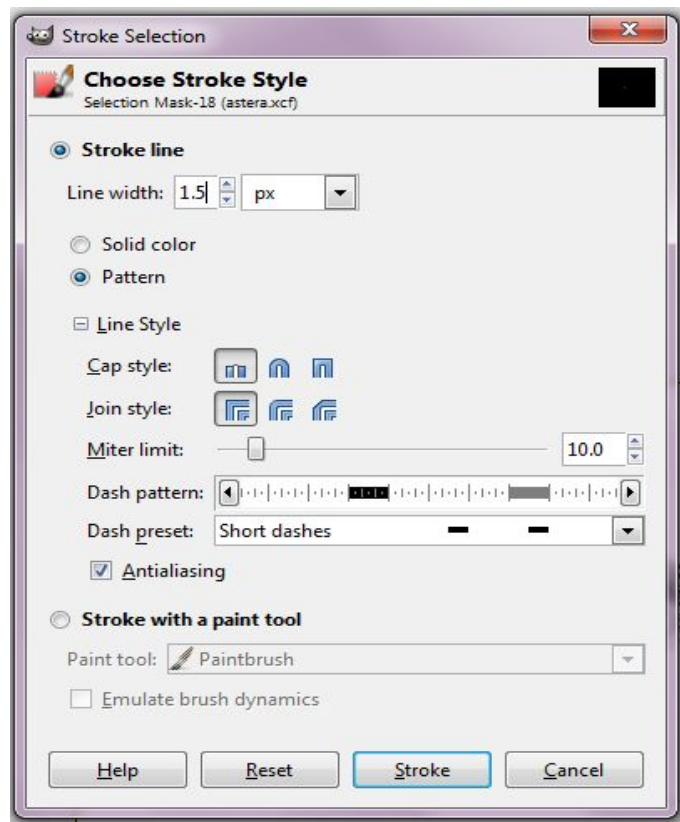
Here are my pink cities and green roads showing my 2 scratch layers here:



Step 3. Roads for Real

For the Velaedin Empire map, I used paths for my roads and stroked them with dots; if you're comfortable with a bezier pen, this is probably your best bet. How to use a bezier pen takes more practice than a tutorial, though, so here's a quick and dirty non-path method.

Right-click your Road Scratch layer and click Alpha to Selection.. Create a new layer, call it Roads and switch back to black from whatever color you were using. Edit → Stroke Selection, using the following settings:



For some reason, every time I did this, my stroke came out orange. No idea why. If that happens to you, do the following: (Select → None. Right-click the Road Scratch 2 layer and click Alpha to Selection. Fill the selection with black by dragging the black color box onto the drawing area).

Select → None.

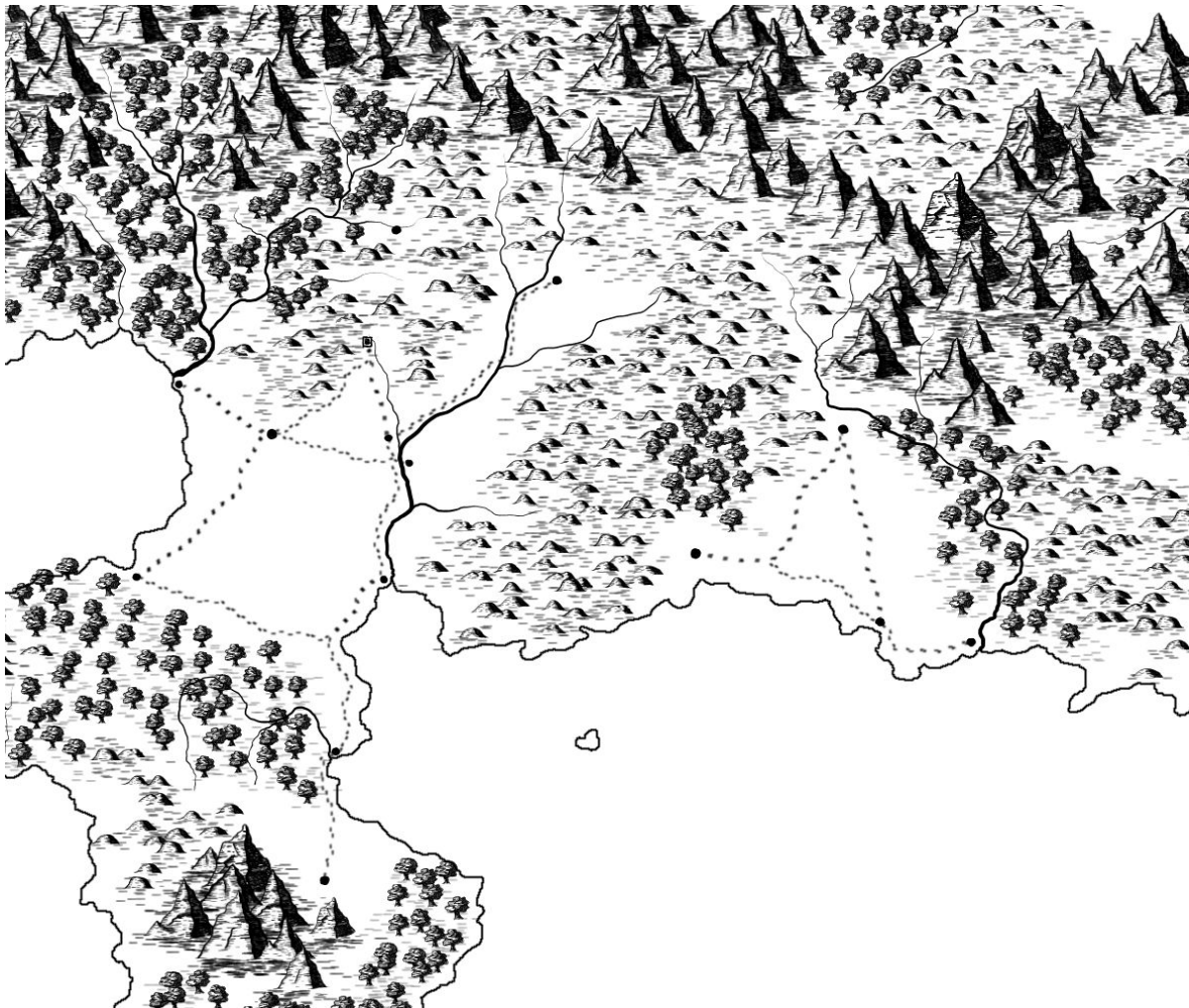
Filters → Blur → Gaussian Blur, 1.5px.

Delete the Road Scratch Layer.

Step 4. Cities for Real.

Now that we have our roads in place, we can put our cities down. I sandwich the roads in between the two city steps, because a lot of towns grow up around crossroads, bridges, fords, etc., so we'll want to add more cities and towns at those points as we finalize the cities. I'm going to use plain shapes for cities here; if you have little hand-drawn villages or houses, etc. to depict the cities with, feel free to stamp those on as well. The important thing for the look of the map, is that you don't have any exact edges. So draw the squares if you want squares, draw circles if you want circles, etc. As usual, use the ink tool; for this use a size 1 (sensitivity 0.5 pressure if you're using a tablet) works nicely. Create a new transparent layer for cities, draw them over your colored points of reference (in black ink), and delete your City Scratch layer.

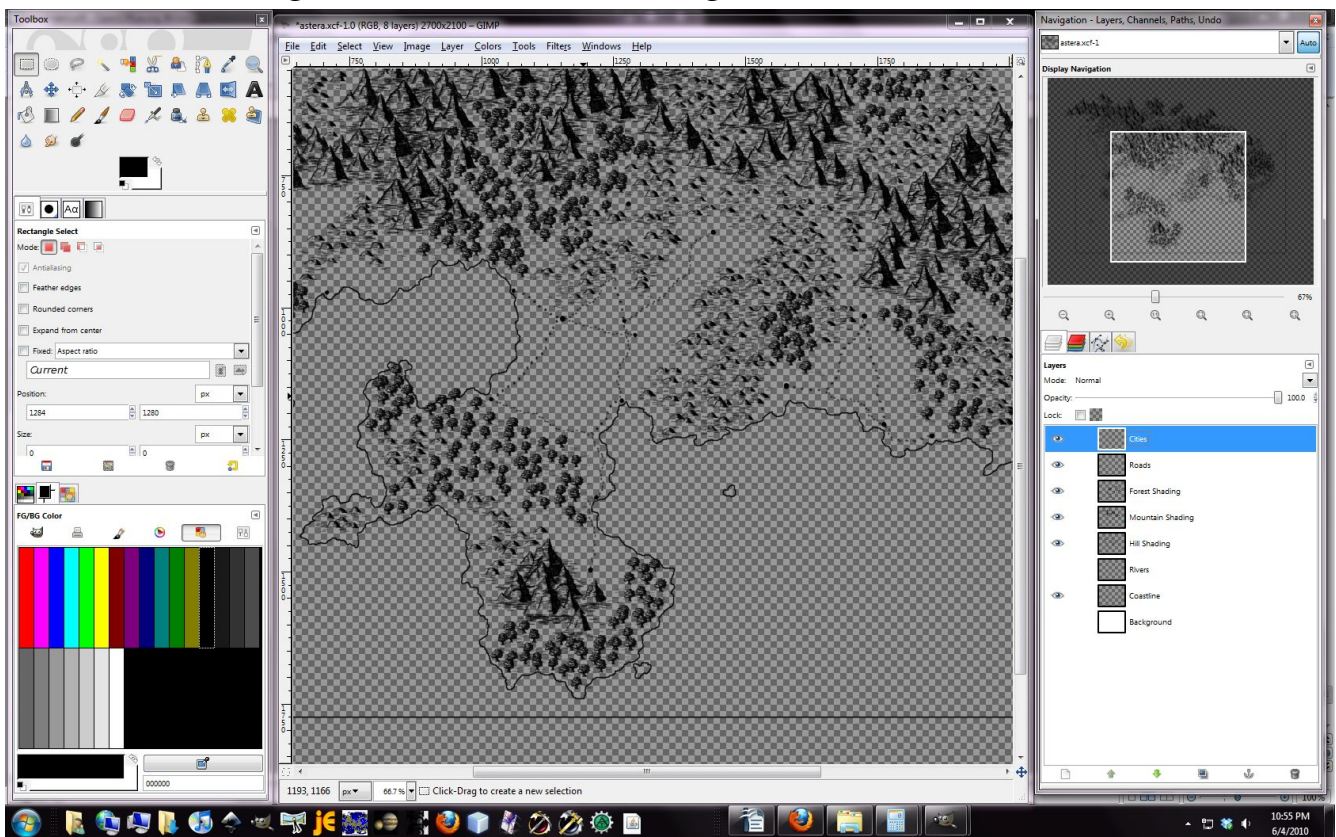
Here's mine with cities and roads:



The Border

Step 1. Layer Clean-up

We've reached a point where it will behoove us to merge some of our layers together. First, save a copy of your image with the layers intact (File → Save a Copy ...). Then delete your colored terrain area layers. You should now have (from top to bottom on your layer stack): Cities, Roads, Forest Shading, Mountain Shading, Hill Shading, Rivers, Coastline, Background. If you had a base map, that layer will be just above the background. Delete any extras you may have, then show all layers except Rivers, base, and background. It should look something like this:




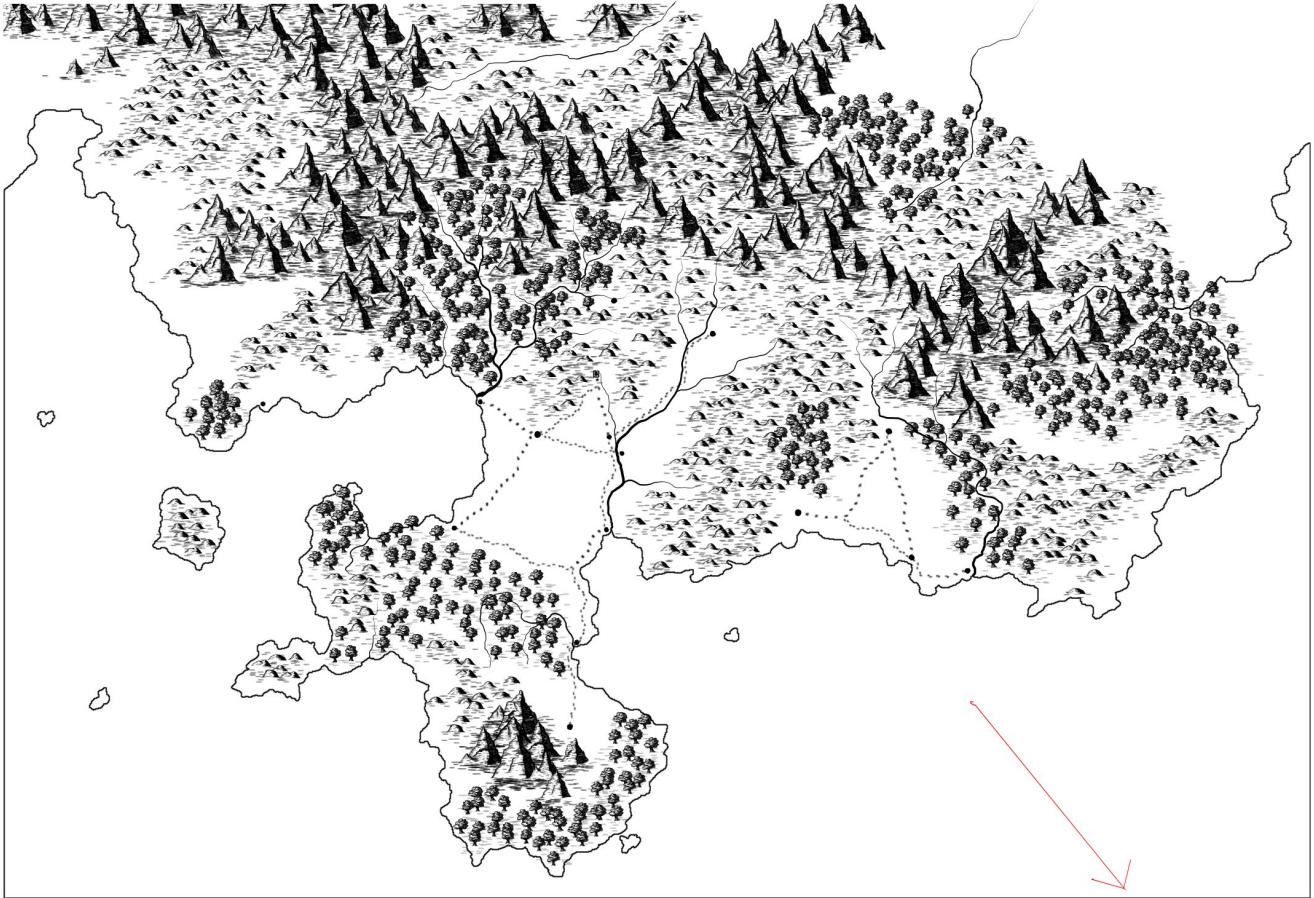
Merge your visible layers (Image → Merge Visible Layers...). The default settings are fine. Now you should have just Rivers, Coastline and Background. Show the Rivers and Background layers again.

Select the Coastline layer, and run a Color-To-Alpha on it (Layers → Transparency → Color to Alpha...). It defaults to white, which is fine. This gives us just black on a transparent background.

Step 2. Erase the stuff outside the lines.

Right-click on your Coastline layer, click Add Layer Mask... and add a layer mask of the Border layer with Invert Mask checked. Then do the same with the river layer.

Select the Coastline layer and erase () any lines that will double with the border from your Sea channel stroke.



Step 3. Add the border.

Create a new transparent layer, name it Border 1, and move it to the top of the layer stack. Go to the Channels dialog, right-click the Border channel, and click Channel to selection. Go back to the Layers dialog and select your Border layer again.

Make horizontal and vertical guides that line up with the borders, by clicking and dragging from the top and left rulers onto the drawing area. Select → None. Make sure View → Snap to Guides is checked, then grab the ink tool (Size 1, Pressure 0.5) and draw along the guides like you were using a straight edge on paper. What goes on the other side of those lines is a matter of taste and up to you. Just make sure that any straight lines are done by placing a guide and drawing it using the ink tool – any computer-generated straight lines are going to stick out like a sore thumb (and not bleed well when we bleed the ink later).

This completes the line drawing. The only “ink” left to do are the labels and any legend/scalebar/compass rose you like. I'm not going to cover the legend/scalebar/compass, since those are pretty much unique to each map. Just follow the straight-edge rule when you can, and when you can't, put a Gaussian blur of .05 to 1.0 on anything that looks too clean (you'll see it when you put it on the map next to all those Inked lines).

Here's what that border should look like. The imperfections are barely noticeable, but they're there – and if they weren't it would look strange. The Velaedin Empire WIP thread has a “perfect” border in much of it; check it out and you'll see what I mean.





Labels

I'm not going to cover labels in depth here; labeling is, again, pretty individual to each map. Some basic concepts to follow are below, though. If you have Photoshop, skip forward to the Photoshop section. If not, you have two options: Straight labels and labels curved to a Bezier path. Again, I'm not going to cover beziers in this tut, but if you're comfortable with them, follow the instructions for a straight label, make a path with the curve you want, then with the path selected, right-click the text and click Text Along Path. The fonts used below are Stonehenge and Optimus Princeps, both available from <http://www.dafont.com>.

Note. Many people use Inkscape for labeling; I tend to tear my hair out whenever I open Inkscape, so I'm not covering it here, but I've heard it makes great labels.

(Split Starts)

For pure GIMP users.

Use the text tool () to place labels and the rotate tool () to rotate them into the right places.

For Photoshop users.

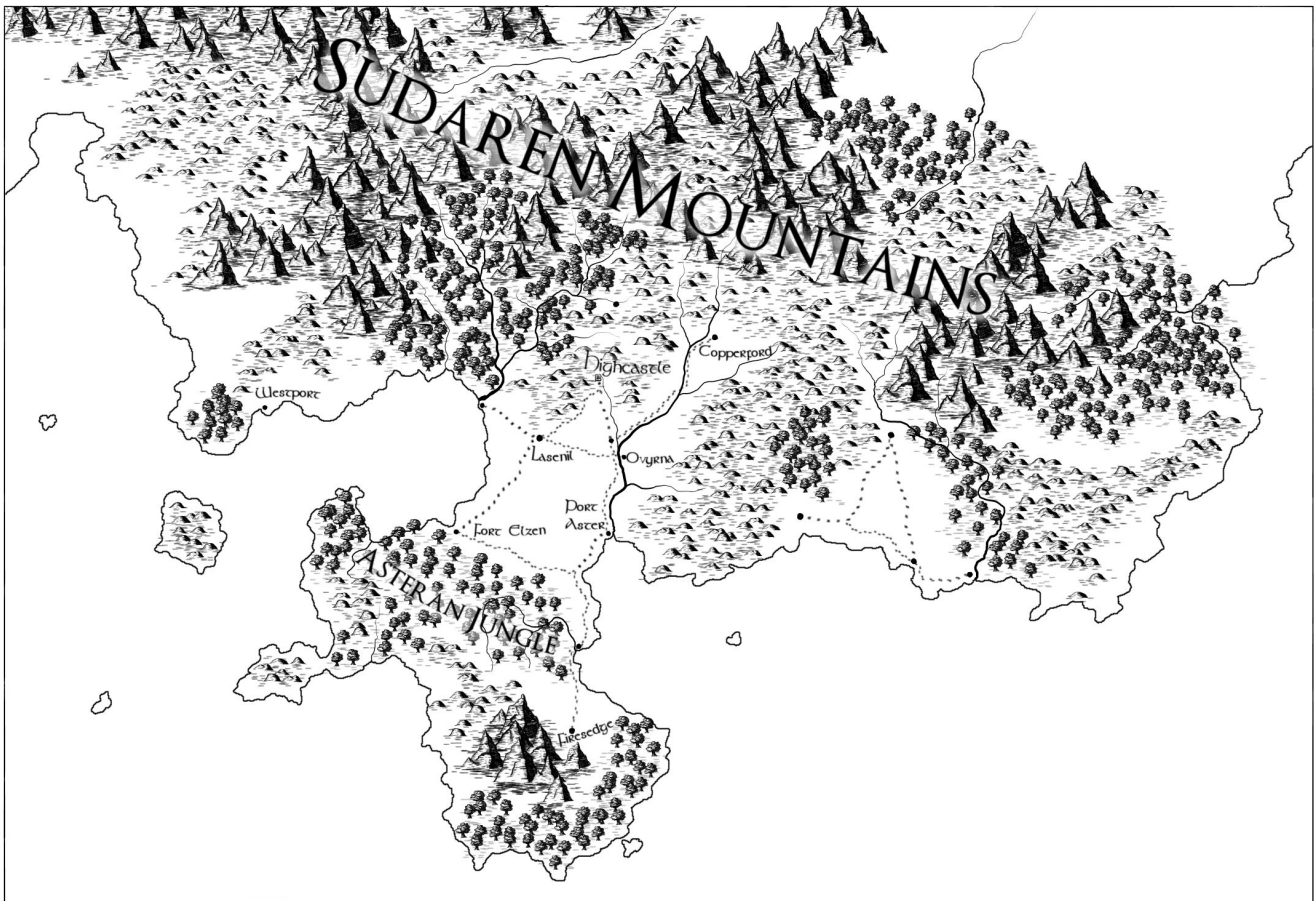
I like curved text. For the Velaedin Empire map (and that below) all of the text is curved individually, using the Arc curve function at between 5 and 10 degrees, depending on the text and where it goes. To put the text on the map, I save a copy of the GIMP map as a jpg, which I then open in Photoshop, put the labels on, and then save the labels (only the labels) into a png, which I then open as a layer in GIMP (File → Open as Layers ...). It's a bit of a pain, but it gives the best results I've been able to obtain so far.

(End Split)

Hand-Drawn Map Tutorial (for the Artistically Challenged) by Gidde @ the Cartographer's Guild

Save a copy with your layers intact, and merge all of your text onto one layer (if it's not already). Use a gaussian blur of 1px on this layer. Once you have the labels in place and on their own transparent layer in GIMP, select the Coastline layer's mask by clicking on it (it's the box to the right of the layer itself), and using a fuzzy paintbrush and low opacity, paint in black underneath the writing to partially "erase" the terrain below. Right-click on the Rivers layer, click Alpha to Selection and save this selection to a channel for coloring the rivers in the next section. Then merge all of your layers with ink on them (all except the base map, which can probably now be deleted, and the white background). Rename the new, merged layer to Ink by double clicking on it.

I didn't add all the labels this map would normally require, but you should get the idea; here's my map to this point.



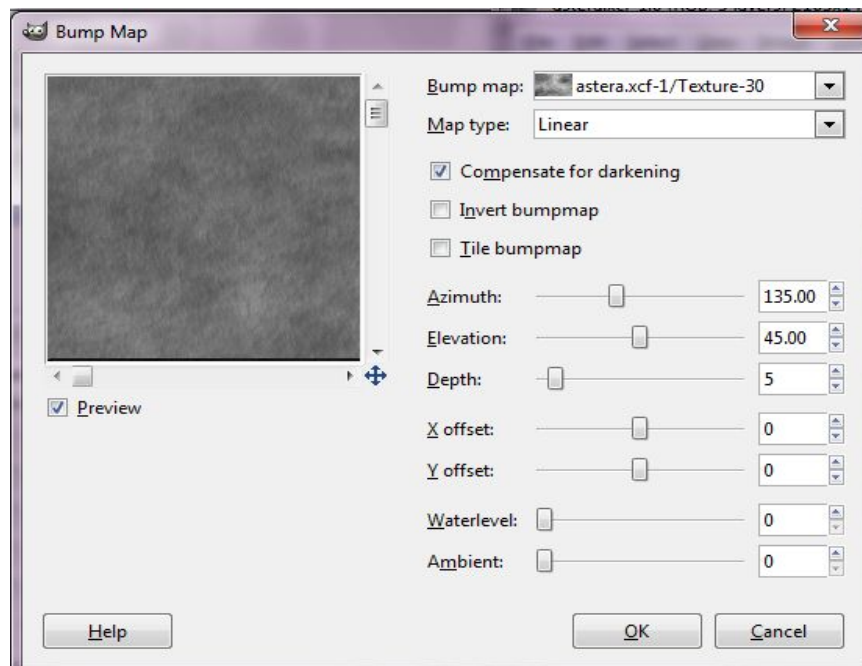
Next we finally add some color and texture!

Texture

The following is entirely stolen from RobA at the Cartographer's Guild. For his entire (excellent) tutorial on this subject as well as effects to “age” the parchment, go to

<http://www.cartographersguild.com/showthread.php?533-Tutorial-Creating-old-weathered-paper-using-the-Gimp>. I'm including it here only to prevent folks from having to stop and look up a different tutorial.

- Fill the Background with a tan color (RobA suggests 208, 193, 162 (or #d0c1a2).
- Add a new layer just above the Background layer and name it Texture.
- On the texture layer, fill with Plasma (Filters → Render → Clouds → Plasma)
- Desaturate (Colors → Desaturate). I use Average, but you may like the other settings.
- Bump Map the Texture layer, using itself as a map. RobA suggests the following settings.



- Set the Texture layer's mode to Overlay. You may need to duplicate this layer to get the look you want; I did in the example. If it goes from too little to too much, play with the opacity of the duplicate until it looks right.

The sample so far:



Color

Now let's get some color on this map!

Step 1. The Sea

Create a new transparent layer, call it Sea Color 1 and move it to the top of the layer stack. Add a layer mask (Channel: Sea, not inverted) and click the layer again to deselect the mask. Grab a dark slate-blue (I use #4e5d7c below) for your foreground color and fill the layer with this color. Then change the layer mode to Multiply and the opacity to 23%.

Create a new transparent layer, call it Sea Color 2, and add a layer mask again (Channel: Sea, not inverted). Go to the channel dialog, right-click the Sea channel, and click Channel to Selection. Go to the layers dialog and reselect the Sea Color 2 layer. Stroke the selection with a 15px solid line. Apply a 50px gaussian blur, then set the layer mode to Multiply. Select → None.

Step 2. Mountains

Create a new transparent layer, call it Mountain Color. Grab a big round fuzzy paintbrush (if you have a tablet check Pressure-Opacity; if not, use a random Opacity – we want an uneven cover for this). I use a size 19 at scale 5. Change your foreground color to a dark brown (I use #564c2d) and paint over all of your mountains (don't be exact; do this very quickly). Add a layer mask (Channel: Border, inverted), then apply it (right-click your Mountain Color layer and click Apply Mask). Add and apply another mask for the Sea layer (inverted). Grab the Select by Color tool, make sure Sample Merged is unchecked and the threshold is set to 0, and select an area you didn't paint. Then invert the selection. Apply a gaussian blur of 50px, then Select → None, and change the layer mode to Hard Light and the opacity to 50%.

Step 3. Hills

Create a new transparent layer, call it Hill Color. Repeat the fuzzy brush paint using a slightly lighter brown (I use #5b4d21). Add and apply masks for both the Border and Sea channels (both inverted), select the transparent area, invert the selection and apply a 50px gaussian blur. Change the layer mode to Hard Light and the opacity to 40%.

Step 4. Forests

Create a new transparent layer, call it Forest Color, and repeat the fuzzy brush paint, this time using a dark green (#5b6831). Again, add and apply Sea and Border channel layer masks, select the transparent area, invert and blur. Set the layer opacity to 18%. Duplicate this layer (Layer → Duplicate Layer). Set the new layer's mode to multiply.

Step 5. Rivers

Create a new transparent layer, call it River Color. Add a layer mask (Sea, inverted). Switch to the channels dialog and grab the Borders layer as a selection. Switch back to the layers dialog and select the mask for the River Color layer. Fill the selection with black. Now switch back to the channels dialog and pick up the Rivers channel as a selection. Switch back to the layers dialog, select the River color layer. Change the foreground color to the same color you used for the sea color (#4e5d7c) and Stroke the selection with a 5px solid line. Select → None. Apply a gaussian blur of 15px, then change the layer mode to Multiply and the opacity to 50%.

Our color is done! Just one section to go. Here's the sample so far:



Bleed, Ink, Bleed!

The last step is to “bleed” the ink so that it looks more like real ink on parchment and less like pixels. Move your Ink layer to the top of the stack and duplicate it three times (so you'll have Ink, Ink Copy, Ink Copy#1 and Ink Copy#2).

Leave the Ink layer alone in case you need to start over; just hide it for now.

Layer: Ink Copy

Change the layer mode to Grain Merge, and the opacity to 50%. Make sure you don't have anything selected, then use a 5px gaussian blur and a Spread (Filter → Noise → Spread) of 3px.

Layer: Ink Copy#1

Change the layer mode to Grain Merge, and the opacity to 55%. Apply a 5px spread and then a 2px gaussian blur.

Layer: Ink Copy#2

Set the layer mode to multiply and the opacity to 64%.

Your ink should now look something like this.



Done!

Save your masterpiece as a .jpg and upload it for the rest of the guild to enjoy! Here is the finished sample.

