



OTHER MINDS

The Unofficial Role - Playing Magazine for JRR Tolkien's Middle-earth and beyond

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The Hidden Circle © by Jenny Dolfen, used with permission of the artist

Maben, the High Priest at the *Temple of Justice* confers with Eríben da Moigh - his most brilliant student about the best strategy to approach the the new and powerful war chief of newly-formed Clan Arait. It is the year TA 1943 and it is a time of high hopes that the age-old injustices will finally been repaid to the haughty Dúnedain.

Sitting by is Derna, the grandmother of Erfbhen and not yet fully convinced that the path of action is wise. She ponders whether her passionate granddaughter is doing the right thing but has found no answer yet.

Submissions

You can submit your contributions by sending them via email to

submissions@omzine.org

Please send as plain text for all text contributions. For artwork and maps, please send the files as .PNG or .JPEG/JPG (**please no TIFF or GIF**) at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and no greater than 600 dpi. If your file is too large to send by email (more than a couple of MB), then you can create an account on the Other Minds website

<http://othermindsmagazine.com>

and upload your contribution there. Then send us an email notifying us of your submission on the website.

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Other Minds Magazine is an unofficial fan-based publication (both online and sometimes in print) created for those who love to role play in J.R.R. Tolkien's world of Middle-earth (and beyond) using any game system they wish. This magazine provides original scholarly articles of interest to Tolkien enthusiasts whether they are role playing gamers or not. There is no affiliation between the creators of this publication and any current or previous owners of the Tolkien copyrights, including but not limited to Sophisticated Games, Cubicle 7, Decipher, Mithril Miniatures, The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Tolkien Enterprises, the Tolkien Estate, New Line Cinema, or any other Tolkien license holders. This publication is 100% free and Other Minds Magazine does not accept any kind of financial reimbursement in any way. Online issues are available in PDF format at

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Two red dice are shown on a light brown, textured surface. The die on the left is tilted, showing faces with 1, 2, and 3 dots. The die on the right is more upright, showing faces with 4, 5, and 6 dots.

EDITORIAL:

READY FOR ANOTHER ROUND!

Other Minds, Issue 18 is finally ready and available for download (otherwise you wouldn't be able to read this of course...). Originally the aim was to have it ready by the end of 2017, but real life intervened (as so often) and thus it has been delayed – and I hope the gap has not become too long.

After we passed our 10-year jubilee last year with #17, this Issue is the first one of the new decade and I'm eager to see what it will bring for the future of *Other Minds*.

Now, let's get straight to the most important stuff – the content. This time, we have a really great variety of contributions that are certainly worth the wait.

In terms of gaming systems, TOR is again our focus, but there is also some content catering to the MERP fans out there. Beside that we'd also welcome contributions for other systems in the future, namely *Adventures in Middle-earth*. So if you feel you have something worth sharing with a greater audience, don't hesitate to contact us.

This brings us to the most important question – what to expect in this Issue of *Other Minds*?

The first ones are two reviews of TOR publications. The first is **Review – Bree** by José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa who takes a good look about this iconic region of Eriador.

Following in its footsteps is **Review – Horse-lords of Rohan** (by myself). This campaign supplement covers one of Middle-earth's most popular regions and here we take a closer look at its content.

Next in line is Tom Davies' take on the theme of the legendary MERP supplement *The Court of Ardor*. ***The Court of Ardor & the Book of Linsûl*** is a suggestion to introduce more Tolkienesque elements into this module, which had some very innovative ideas, but stretched Tolkien's canon considerably – even in its time.

Tom's second contribution ***The Book of Linsûl*** is the companion to the more scholarly-orientated first part and represents the eponymous book that provides characters in a game with some in-world knowledge about the Court – if they are able to get their hands on a copy ...).

Long-time contributor Paul Kirk's takes an innovative new look on an old *White Dwarf* adventure with ***The Gloomweaver Awakened***. This was published back in the day for MERP, but here it is re-imagined in a wholly new way for use with TOR. Be prepared to deal with one of the greatest Evils ever to walk in Middle-earth!

The last contribution brings also to its conclusion a series that began started in Issue 13 – analysing the demographics of the human realms in the Northwest of Middle-earth. With ***The Demographics of Dor 'Wathui and Dunland*** I make some suggestions for the supposed changes in the population dynamics of this region plus some political and military information on its people.

This is it for now. I wish you all lots of fun and enjoyment reading this latest Issue of *Other Minds*. Keep also an eye on our Facebook page for any news or announcement. Good bye for now and see you all – and perhaps some new readers – in Issue 19!

For the *Other Minds* team
Thomas Morwinsky
March 2018



"Then Ilúvatar said to them: 'Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony together a Great Music. And since I have kindled you with the Flame Imperishable, ye shall show forth your powers in adorning this theme, each with his own thoughts and devices, if he will. But I will sit and hearken, and be glad that through you great beauty has been awakened into song.'"

- Ainulindalë (The Music of the Ainur)

The Silmarillion

by J.R.R. Tolkien

Listen to music by the many musicians around the world
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Middle-earth Radio make available four different Internet radio streams dedicated to the audio and music inspired by the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

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See the lengthy list of inspired music at the Tolkien Music website: www.tolkien-music.com

Tune in today and listen at:

www.middle-earthradio.com

THE ROAD GOES EVER ON

Certainly it reminds me [Frodo] very much of Bilbo in the last years, before he went away. He used often to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was its tributary. "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to..."

—*The Lord of the Rings. Book I (A Shortcut to Mushrooms)*

There are many paths on the internet waiting to take you somewhere for Tolkien gaming. The vast reaches of the worldwide community harbour numerous roads and paths—some dangerous and some not—but it also has many havens of lore and respite where the weary traveller or loremaster seeking knowledge may find what he is looking for. In order to aid people on their journeys, this column of *Other Minds* (not exactly new, but with a new name) which will be a regular feature from now on offers a quick overview and pointer to potentially interesting Tolkien roleplaying-related websites.

For each site we give you a short description of its primary purpose and content to give you an overview for better judging how it might meet your needs.

The following list does not claim to be exhaustive or representative. In fact, I believe it is only a beginning. All the content of these pages is the responsibility of their owners. They are organised according to their primary gaming focus (e.g. TOR, MERP or whatever else) and, within each category, in alphabetical order.

This listing is intended to be "living", i.e. constantly evolving and updating. So, **if you know any other sites that present information of value for Tolkien gamers, do contact us at feedback@othermindsmagazine.com so we can include it here for others to enjoy as well.**

The following abbreviations are used:

TOR—*The One Ring* by Cubicle 7 and Sophisticated Gams. The current licensed game from 2011 onwards.

LotRRPG—*The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* by Decipher. The licensee from 2002 to 2007.

MERP—*Middle-earth Roleplaying* by Iron Crown Enterprises. The licensee from 1982 to 1999.

TOR AND AME

Common skills and cultural baseline: some light analysis on the distribution of skills within cultures from the first TOR core book: <http://thechamberofmazarbuldnd.blogspot.com/2012/02/common-skills-cultural-baseline.html>

El Anillo Unico: A spanish fan-site dedicated to *The One Ring* by Cubicle 7 (see below for their presence). <http://elanillounico.tumblr.com/>

UPDATED **Facebook TOR group:** This has grown further and has now (February 2018) 607 members. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/222560297824158/>

NEW **Facebook AME group:** This is an unofficial group for *Adventures in Middle-earth (AME)*, the D&D 5th ed. Version of the TOR supplements. It has already 440 members (February 2018). <http://www.facebook.com/groups/222560297824158/>

Glorelendil's online resources: Designed for maximum usability with the PDF's of the TOR supplements as well as an excellent online calculating tools.

<http://nameless-castle-5228.herokuapp.com/>

<http://thawing-shore-2005.herokuapp.com/>

<http://lit-oasis-7482.herokuapp.com/>

NEW

Hall of Fire: This is a re-branded variant of the webzine, that was formerly publishing stuff for *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* (see *Inside Information* for more details on this).

https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_YG4IU49eRjU0FXOXBycDNmLVU

The One Ring – Adventures over the Edge of the Wild (TOR): Cubicle 7 published this latest instalment of roleplaying games set in Middle-earth. They have a great and very active forum as well, where you can find a lot of support and tips around the game.

Publisher site for TOR:

<http://www.cubicle7.co.uk/our-games/the-one-ring/>

Forum:

<http://forums.cubicle7.co.uk/viewforum.php?f=7>

Resources:

<http://forums.cubicle7.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=9&sid=966c8d10995ba3df2b3876cea1ade15d>

NEW

Adventures in Middle-earth (AME): Cubicle 7 publishes this new game based on the D&D 5th ed. Rules. It translates some core TOR features into this game that serves those who prefer classic D&D for their games. The content of the book so far is the same as in TOR, but with mechanics adjusted to the system.

Publisher site for AME:

<http://cubicle7.co.uk/our-games/adventures-in-middle-earth/>

Forum:

<http://forums.cubicle7.co.uk/viewforum.php?f=60>

FAQ: <http://forums.cubicle7.co.uk/viewtopic.php?f=60&t=6608>

LotRRPG

Darkshire: Some useful resources. <http://www.darkshire.net/jhkim/rpg/lordoftherings/>

UPDATED

Facebook LotRRPG sites: First an interest page. Not much to see, but you can “like” it. The second one is a closed group about actual gaming, but now membership has decreased to 2 people.

[http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Lord-of-the-Rings-Roleplaying-](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Lord-of-the-Rings-Roleplaying-Game/135039343195996)

[Game/135039343195996](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Lord-of-the-Rings-Roleplaying-Game/135039343195996)

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/jmezlotrrpgg/>

MERP

I.C.E. product listing: Contains a listing of MERP products for reference.

<http://www.icwebring.com/ice-products>

Facebook MERP groups: There are several groups/sites dedicated to MERP here.

NEW

Middle-earth Roleplaying by Iron Crown Enterprises is a recent discovery, but has already 294 members.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1614785935491947/>

The second one, *Middle-earth Roleplaying*, has at least a bit of more info (though still quite little).

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Middle-earth-Role-Playing/108714242486460>

MERP UK is a closed group dealing with “untold stories” in Tolkien’s world. You can find it here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/231370666959142/>

UPDATED

It seems I overlooked this one. Nothing new here for years though. Only 12 members left.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/5519656692/>

Lindëfíron: A campaign log and resources for a mid-Third Age campaign set in the Northwest. Made with great love for detail. The artwork, especially the maps, is awesome.

<http://www.lindefirion.net>

Sub-page “Project Pelargir”: <http://wiki.lindefirion.net/ProjectPelargir>

Loren Rosson’s Blog “The Busybody”: A blog with reviews (“retrospectives”) of a selection of old and long out-of-print MERP modules. The relevant section is named “Middle-earth Retrospectives” and can be found on the left side of the links section (you have to scroll down a bit). <http://lorenrosson.blogspot.com>

MERP printing edition reference: A great reference for all the editorial changes and different printings of MERP 1st edition. If you are interested in the various editions of MERP up to 1992 (i.e. 1st ed.), this one is for you! Online again at a new site.

http://www.icewebring.com/MERP_Print_Ref/PrintingEditionReference.html

MERP Wikia: A Wiki-based collection of articles detailing the MERP canon and expanding it. There is some info on other sources like the LotRRPG (depending on subject), but the focus is the published MERP canon and its expansion by fans. Highly valuable for everyone focussing on the MERP canon.

http://merp.wikia.com/wiki/Middle-earth_Role_Playing_Wiki

SYSTEM-NEUTRAL OR MIXED

Fan-sourcebooks: This Yahoo group (formerly fan-modules) was founded in 2001 after the demise of *Other Hands*. Here you can find a great variety of fan-made material for a lot of topics. Game system and canon focus is MERP, though not exclusively. <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules>

UPDATED

Facebook *Other Minds* group: We are happy to greet new fans, so don’t hesitate to swing by and become a member. Since last Issue, our membership has increased by 96 people! (total of 452 by March 2018)! <http://www.facebook.com/groups/othermindsmagazine>

Gondica: Blog of former MERP author Anders Blixt with some of his Middle-earth stuff on it.

<https://gondica.wordpress.com/>

Iron Crown Enterprises: Publishers of HARP. Visit their website. The logo is downloaded through Wikipedia under Fair Use:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_\(logo\).png#/media/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_\(logo\).png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_(logo).png#/media/File:High_Adventure_Role_Playing_(logo).png)

<http://ironcrown.com/>

MERP.com: The site devoted to roleplaying in Middle-earth (though **not** exclusively or even primarily ICE’s MERP as the title may suggest). It contains a vast vault of useful information and gaming material.

<http://www.merp.com>

Tower Hills, The: A webpage centered upon (Hårn and) Middle-earth.

http://www.towerhills.me/middle_earth/



Facebook group on Middle-earth tabletop games (in german): A Facebook interest group for tabletop roleplaying games set in Middle-earth, independent of a specific system. .

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/209367129217255/>



Mittelerde-Rollenspiel: A site devoted to tabletop roleplaying games set in Tolkien’s Middle-earth for all german speakers exclusively.

<http://www.mittelerde-rollenspiel.de/>

TOLKIEN STUFF IN GENERAL

Ardalambion: One of the best sites dealing with Tolkien’s languages. You may need to get used to the colour scheme, though. <http://folk.uib.no/hnohf/>



Compañía, La: A spanish site with a forum and dedicated to Tolkien in general (including books, movies and RPG's). Looks quite good, though due to my lack in Spanish I can't say much about it.

<http://www.lacompania.net>



Deutsche Tolkienengesellschaft (German Tolkien Society): Similar to the Tolkien Society (see below), this site is about the furtherance of Tolkien scholarship and analysis in general.

<http://www.tolkienengesellschaft.de/>

The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship: A Special Interest Group of the Mythopoetic Society, this (and its journals) is the place for you if you're looking for information and lore about Tolkien's invented languages. <http://www.elvish.org/>

The Encyclopedia of Arda: A good encyclopedic website about Tolkien's world.

<http://www.glyphweb.com/arda>



Gernot Katzer's History of Middle-earth site (German): A good site describing the essentials of the *History of Middle-earth* series. Link updated! <http://gernot-katzers-spice-pages.com/tolkien/home.html>

Grey Havens, The: One of the oldest reference sites on the web that is still in business.

<http://tolkien.cro.net/>



Tolkienforum (German): A good forum covering all aspects of Tolkien lore and fandom.

<http://www.tolkienforum.de>

Tolkien Forum, The (English): A good English forum on many aspects of Tolkien

<http://www.thetolkienforum.com/>

Tolkien Gateway: A good wiki site with an encyclopedia on many topics Tolkien and Middle-earth

http://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Main_Page

Tolkien Society: The site for everyone interested in the more scholarly and academic treatment of all things Tolkien. <http://www.tolkiensociety.org/>

Wikipedia Portal "Middle-earth": Even Wikipedia has a whole section dedicated to Tolkien and his myth. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Middle-earth>

ARTWORK

Antti Autio: See his fascinating artwork at <http://aautio.deviantart.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE

Sergio Artigas (Artigas): You can browse through his inspiring art in deviantart: <http://artigas.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Onur Bakar: Find more of his art on <http://bakarov.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Matej Cadil (neral85): Found on deviantart at <http://neral85.deviantart.com>

Nacho Fernandez Castro: Visit his site on <http://www.nachocastro.es/>

Thomas Cole: Famous american romantic painter. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cole

Dead01: If you're into exploring the darker side of Middle-earth, this one is for you! See it at <http://dead01.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Jenny Dolfen (Goldseven): A great german artist who focuses on the Eldar of the First Age. Her watercolour images are fantastic. You can also buy prints in several versions and sizes as well as originals. <https://goldseven.wordpress.com/> or <https://www.patreon.com/jennydolfen>

Nacho Fernandez Castro (NachoCastro): See his page at <http://nachocastro.deviantart.com/>

Katherine Carina Chmiel-Gugulska (Kasiopeia): Found on <http://kasiopea.art.pl/>

Anke Eißmann: She is one the greatest Tolkien illustrators. Check her art out at <http://www.anke.edoras-art.de>

IN THIS ISSUE

Olanda Fang-Surdenas (Wynahiros): See her art on <http://wynahiros.deviantart.com>

Wouter Florusse (woutart): Check out his page on <http://woutart.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Caspar David Friedrich: Famous romantic painter. See the Wikipedia page for examples of his work: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caspar_David_Friedrich

Raymond E. Gaustadness (shockbolt): You can find his fine work on <http://www.digitalartwork.no/>

Olga G (steamey): Her beautiful art can be found at <http://steamey.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Daniel Govar: A great artist whose website can be found at <http://danielgovar.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE

Gin Hardiarso: He focusses on a theme popular in Fantasy - Warrior Women. He does it, however, unusually well since his subjects are not bikini-armoured amazons, but realistic heroines. Check his work out under <https://gambargin.deviantart.com/>

John Hodgson: The primary artist and artistic director for *The One Ring*. It's no wonder that the game is so well received (beside the good rules) if you look at his art: <http://jonhodgson.deviantart.com/gallery/>

John Howe: The second of the great Tolkien artists that allowed the use of his artwork within our pages. Check out his great index. <http://www.john-howe.com/>

Thomas Jedrusek: One of the illustrators of *The One Ring*. see his page at <http://www.morano.pl/>

Milek Jakubiec (EthicallyChallenged): Thanks for giving permission to use your work! See more at <http://ethicallychallenged.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Pierre Joubert: A well-known illustrator of youths' books. See his official page (in french) at <http://www.pierre-joubert.org/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Liga Klavina (liga-marta): Check out her awesome art at <http://liga-marta.deviantart.com/>

Joona Kujanen (Tulikoura): Find his amazing art at <http://tulikoura.deviantart.com/>

Elena Kukanova: Check it out on <http://ekukanova.deviantart.com/>

Olga Kukhtenkova: You can find her work on the Tolkien Gateway <http://fan.theonering.net/~rolozo/cgi-bin/rolozo.cgi/collection/kukhtenkova>

IN THIS ISSUE

JLazarus: Find him and his numerous diverse historic warriors under <https://jlazaruseb.deviantart.com/>

Alan Lee: The third of the famous Tolkien artists. <https://www.facebook.com/alan.lee.5496>

Carl-Friedrich Lessing: A famous romantic painter. See his Wikipedia article at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Friedrich_Lessing

Angus McBride: The famous illustrator of numerous historical books as well as MERP. The Facebook page of his estate can be found under <https://www.facebook.com/mcbrideangus/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Turner Mohan: Find out more of his excellent work at <http://www.mohan-art.com>.

Ted Nasmith: The official site of renowned Tolkien artist Ted Nasmith, who was so kind in allowing us to use so much of his artwork within *Other Minds*. For more information, see <http://www.tednasmith.com/>

Gabriel Oliveira: Found at <http://think0.deviantart.com/>

Abe Papakhian: Check out his artwork at <http://abepapakhian.deviantart.com>.

Jereme Peabody (jipeabody): Find more of this skilled artist at <http://jipeabody.deviantart.com>

Pegasusandco: Very well worth a look. <http://pegasusandco.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Daniel Pilla: Great stuff. See it at <http://danpilla.deviantart.com/>

IN THIS ISSUE

Jan Pospisil (merlkir): One of our "old" artists, whose images we have used already in past issues. Check him out at <http://merlkir.deviantart.com>

Peter Xavier Price (peet): A new artist in OM. See him at www.facebook.com/peterxavierprice

Rolozo: Among the oldest artwork-related sites around
<http://fan.theonering.net/~rolozo/cgi-bin/rolozo.cgi/news>

Carlos Gordo Sacristán: A spanish artist, unfortunately by now I have no homepage for him.

Shyangell: A visit to her very enjoyable page is always worth it. See more at
<http://shyangell.deviantart.com/>

Tara Rueping: Find her great work on <http://www.trueping.com>.

Sampsy Rydman: He has published fantastic maps and a great campaign, especially maps. See him at
<http://www.lindefirion.net/>

IN THIS ISSUE **Ari Suonpää:** Please visit his beautiful art at <https://www.facebook.com/artofarisuonpaa>

Danik Tomy: Another great artist that can be found at deviantart. His section is at
<http://danikyaroslavtomy.deviantart.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE **Tuuliky:** As a regular OM reader, you will know her great work already. It may be found at
<http://tuuliky.deviantart.com>.

IN THIS ISSUE **Maciej Zagorski:** An artists specialising in maps. Find more at
<https://www.patreon.com/user?u=2863325>

OTHER STUFF THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTING FOR ROLEPLAYING IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Facebook “Fans of Mithril Miniatures” group: Lots of photos of painted minis plus some awesome dioramas. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/107518272188/>

Frothers Unite miniature forum: It is related to miniatures for sure! See also the article of *Middle-earth in miniature* in this Issue.
[http://deartonyblair.blogspot.com.es/\(it+is+about+miniatures,+I+swear\)](http://deartonyblair.blogspot.com.es/(it+is+about+miniatures,+I+swear)).

Games Workshop: If you are interested in miniatures made according to the movie design, then the Games Workshop miniature line (for skirmish-level tabletop wargaming) is for you.
<http://www.games-workshop.com>

Many Mithril Pages: A site run by fans of Mithril Miniatures (see next entry). Here you can find extensive information and fan support for both current and out-of-stock minis.
<http://mmp.faerylands.eu/index.php>

Mithril Miniatures: They have been producing Middle-earth figurines since 1988; thus being one of the oldest still in business. They now have a general line (though diminished in volume compared to earlier times; in fact practically non-existing anymore) and an exclusive fellowship one which anyone can buy too, but the Fellowship members may vote on the next figures to be made. They also have a board which is mostly miniatures-centered but some general Middle-earth related information can be found as well.
<http://www.mithril.ie>
Forum: <http://mithrilfigures.proboards19.com/index.cgi>

Wargames Terrain: Looking for the latest tabletop miniature wargaming and roleplaying news? Make sure to check out the Wargame News and Terrain Blog which is daily covering new miniatures, tabletop scenery and wargame rules from companies worldwide. Venture into the magnificent world of tabletop miniature wargaming and engage in fantasy, science fiction and historical warfare on your miniature tabletop battlefield. Check them out at <http://wargameterrain.blogspot.com> and Twitter [@wnt_news](https://twitter.com/wnt_news)

Check the full review of the soon to be released Northstar Miniatures plastic Dwarf Infantry and prepare to field epic Tolkienesque and folkloric inspired dwarf armies and roleplaying dwarf adventurers soon.
http://wargameterrain.blogspot.com/2017/04/northstar-miniatures-plastic-fantasy_30.html

NEW **Facebook “Wargaming in Middle-earth” group:** Lots of photos of painted minis with no default manufacturer or style. In a way, it mirrors *Other Minds’* approach; only in the field of miniatures.
https://www.facebook.com/groups/151243738922969/?hc_location=group

INSIDE INFORMATION

PLANNED CONTRIBUTIONS

Over the last Issues José Enrique provided us with excellent regular contributions about miniatures for Middle-earth gaming – or just for visual enjoyment. Originally, we had planned to include the next instalment of this series in OM18, but unfortunately the Elves – the subject of this instalment – will have to wait until OM19. Given their longevity and patience, this shouldn't be a major problem. In the meantime, I hope that our human readers will find the same stoicism for the time being and enjoy the rest of OM18's content.

Similarly, I had planned to include a piece on the rulers and history of divided Arnor (with a focus on the early and middle years until about the 16th century of the Third Age). However, it grew in the making and quickly got beyond a simple page with a few kings' names and dates. Consequently, I'll postpone that as well and push it to OM19. The good point is that by this way we already have two contributions for that Issue already bagged!

HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE REBORN!

You might remember *The Hall of Fire* (HoF) – a webzine that published fan-stuff for Decipher's *Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* from 2003 to 2008 (see also the *The Road Goes Ever On* section in past Issues of *Other Minds*). In autumn last year, some of the old staff have revitalized the brand, but switched systems and now publish exclusively TOR (and probably AME in the future) content. The first Issue was published in September 2017, and the second followed last December. The plan is to have a bi-monthly release schedule for further Issues.

You should have an eye on the TOR forum to get the most recent information and announcements on this new webzine. As of now, there is no official website for it. You can download the Issues on a Google Drive folder. Please check out *The Road Goes Ever On* section for the links to both the TOR forum and possible updates on HoF.

OTHER MINDS IN TOP10 OF BEST RPG MAGAZINES!

The Blog of the “Shop on the Borderlands” has put up a list of its Top10 RPG magazines ever. All of these are professional productions (past and present), apart from one – *Other Minds*! We come in on place 6 of the list. Of course we are very proud that our fan-based publication has made into a list of professional magazines that all have (or had) a dedicated production staff and company behind it.

You can find this list at
<https://www.shopontheborderlands.co.uk/2013/12/top-10-rpg-mags/>.

NEW ARTISTS

Regular readers will know that we are always happy to announce a new artist for *Other Minds*. This time round we are proud to announce that works from five new artists will be displayed in this Issue. We are greatly indebted to all of them for granting us permission to use their excellent works here. You can find links to their respective websites in the “artists” section on pages 10 and 11 of this Issue. The artists are (in alphabetical order):

Gin Hardiarso (Gambargin) focuses on female warriors - and **not** in the fantasy cliché of bikini-style armour!

Liga Klavina (LiigaKlavina) makes great works that are rooted in the world of faerie. Be sure to visit her great work.

J. Lazarus (JLazarusEB) does first and foremost warriors from various ages - primarily ancient and medieval.

Dan Pilla (DanPilla) makes great work, and you will surely recognize some of the characters he has drawn so far.

Vincent Pompetti (VincentPompetti) makes historical artwork, with a strong focus (but not exclusive) on ancient themes in the context of Caesar's conquest of Gaul.

REVIEW: BREE

Reviewer: José Enrique Vacas de la Rosa
(arthadan@gmail.com)

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review



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Product in Short

Title	Bree
Author	Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Jon Hodgson, Francesco Nepitello
Artwork	Andrew Hepworth, John Hodgson, Sam Manley, Jan Pospisil, Scott Purdy
Publisher	Cubicle 7
Year published	2017
Pages	112
Price	\$ 34.99
Gaming usability	★★★★★
Presentation & atmosphere	★★★★★
Middle-earth lore	★★★★★
Overall score	★★★★★
Available from	
http://cubicle7.co.uk/buy-now/ http://cubicle7.co.uk/find-a-shop/	

GENERAL

This supplement features a description of the Bree-land, a new Heroic Culture, the Men of Bree and three adventures set in that region. 26 pages (23%) deal with Bree-land itself (6 alone for the *Prancing Pony*), 2 (2%) with adventure advice, 10 (9%) with new cultures and 65 (59%) with the three adventures. The remaining pages go to introductory topics and the index.

THE BREE-LAND AND BREE-LANDERS

The first part reminds me of the Lake-town Guide included with the Loremaster screen, as it describes a relatively small area and a related Heroic Culture.

We are given an overview of the history of the region and then a description of the main locations: Staddle, Combe, Archet and Bree itself, but also some new ones to spice things up, like a secret clearing in the Chetwood used as a campsite by the Wandering Companies or an abandoned mansion built by a Brandybuck. Following the format used in previous supplements, we are also provided with some game stats for important Loremaster characters.

With *Bree* I get the same feeling I had when reading *The Heart of the Wild*: I enjoy the information offered, but it are the hinted clues, insinuating there to be even more interesting things, that makes it all the more enjoyable. We read, for example, that the Schoolmistress of Bree 'came up the Greenway five years ago, pursued by strange men'. This springs several questions, as to why was she being chased? Is her job just a facade of something darker? Where did she come from in the first place? And so on, and so forth - you get the point. Details like this drag you right into the setting even before playing and help the Loremaster to add extra depth to his characters.

The settlements of Staddle, Combe and Archet are described in such a way that every one of them has some distinctive features, rendering them unique. The proud and important Hobbit family in Staddle, the melancholy of the gloomy Combe, the secretive folk of Archet... all these places briefly named in the *Lord of the Rings* come to life here, despite the fact that maps and further details are missing.

And then we come to Bree, starting with one of those beautiful maps by Mr. Hodgson (see image below). This chapter cuts to the chase, starting with



an in-depth description of the Prancing Pony (again with a map; see next page). Every room is described, we have the innkeeper game stats (to be used for Barliman or his father Barnabas, depending on your game's temporal setting) and a quite

useful table to randomly generate common room guests. Then we have a description of the city's different areas, in the same colourful style as the rest. At first I liked the attempt to add variety to Bree with the refugees from flooded Tharbad who built their new houses in Bree's East Row from stones salvaged from their ruined former homes in Tharbad. It seemed to suit the setting (salvaging part of the destroyed past) and thus felt plausible and very atmospheric. But on second thought this positive feeling faded away: The distance between Tharbad and Bree by the Greenway is about 220 miles; more or less two weeks of travel (more if you have to walk and carry much equipment and pull carts yourself), and I find hard to believe the refugees would take lots of stones to build new houses when relocat-

ing to Bree. They were just left homeless by a flood that destroyed their existence. In such a situation, stones don't sound like primary items to take with you. Things like food, tools, weapons, blankets, tents, furniture, some wood etc. are much more vital for further survival (remember that that part of Eriador is deserted at this time - so no stops at nice inns along the way). And returning to Tharbad after arrival in Bree just to collect stones (remember - you still have to carry that heavy stuff somehow more than 200 miles through wilderness) does not make much sense either, especially as there is a local and easily accessible quarry on the south side of Bree-hill that is even described in some detail (p.15). That this "stone-scavenging" from a source hundreds of miles away is even promoted as "common sense" (p.15) is all the more hard to swallow. This is one of the points lore-wise I find quite odd and detrimental to the otherwise good idea of refugees from Tharbad finding a new home here.

Finally we have some adventure plot suggestions, new Fellowship Phase Undertakings (you can send letters!) and the Men of Bree Heroic Culture (and rules to create Bree Hobbits). I must confess I am not excited about these - there is nothing wrong rules-wise, but I do not find the background of this culture especially appealing. Nevertheless, more variety is always welcome.

The Adventures

The three adventures featured in this supplement can be easily linked and played as a small campaign or the can be played separately. Indeed they take up the majority of the whole supplement. I will offer a brief overview of the plot, but even if I am not giving away important plot details, I suggest you stop reading if you plan to play any of these.

Old Bones and Skin is an adventure well woven into the Middle-earth tapestry, as it is inspired by Sam Gamgee's song. In fact, if played in the right time-setting this adventure could very well be the origin of that song. Hats off to the authors for such clever integration!

A Bree-lander has passed away. In his youth he went adventuring with shady tomb-robbers and kept a treasure map all his life. Now his nephew wants the map and his formers associates are back in town looking for it as well. Things get complicated when a particularly old and nasty Troll accidentally steals the map. An interesting adventure with several plot turns and varied scenarios.

In *Strange men, strange roads* the heroes are tasked with finding the killer of a Ranger in the Forsaken Inn. The murderer must be part of a caravan heading to Bree, so they will have to investigate all the caravan members, as they are all potential suspects. Upon arrival to Bree, many things will happen, as the murder weapon is not a common one. I like the investigation part, as it offers variety to the standard roleplaying scenarios and the outcome is quite exciting.

In the last adventure, *Holed up in Staddle* the heroes must use their wits to rescue a whole Hobbit family kidnapped by a villain and his henchmen. Should they take the direct approach, many innocents will die, so they will need to gather information on the guards and infiltrate carefully. To further complicate things, one of the hostages is poisoned by the villain, so the latter cannot be killed before finding a cure. It is worth noting that this is a big family living in a huge *smial*, offering an unusual setting for the adventure. And speaking of unusual things, here we have some sort of 'evil Hobbits' called Oakmen which I am not quite fond about. I think they do not blend smoothly enough in the setting, although I have to admit they offer a nice change from the common enemies and they are not utterly out of place.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Bree is a pretty useful book of an emblematic location, which I recommend. The illustrations set the right mood and are a perfect complement to the text, and the Bree map is great. The only thing that made me raise my eyebrows was the illustration of a swineherd dressed in white and yellow. Do not take me wrong, I know I am being picky here, but he looks like a nobleman with expensive and clean clothes of bright colours herding swine – which is quite odd in my opinion.

Regarding integration with other supplements like *Rivendell* I have to say this is pretty much a standalone, which is a bit disappointing. There is not a single Loremaster character featured in *Rivendell* present here and none of the adventures used any location contained in that book, with the exception of *Old Bones and Skin* which partially happens in the South Downs (but all the information needed for the adventure is provided in the *Bree* supplement). The same lack of cross-referencing or integration holds true for *Ruins of the North* as well. Some integration between the three books (perhaps using some Ranger characters or The Company of the Wain) would have been nice, as it would have given more sense of continuity and integration to adventures happening in 30th century -Eriador.



The Prancing Pony

- 1: Common-room
- 2: Tap room
- 3: Private rooms
- 4: Rooms for the night
- 5: Bath house
- 6: Stables
- 7: Kitchens
- 8: Brewery
- 9: Private chambers: Innkeeper
- 10: Private chambers: Staff
- 11: Cellar
- 12: Pantry
- 13: Thatched room/storage
- 14: Well
- 15: Communal sleeping rooms

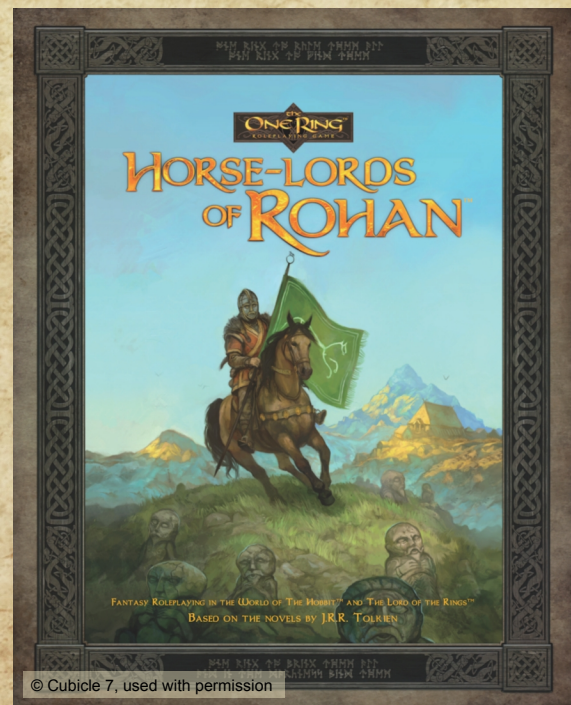
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REVIEW: HORSE- LORDS OF ROHAN

Reviewer: Thomas Morwinsky
(tolwen@gmx.de)

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review



GENERAL

Horse-lords of Rohan is the long-awaited expansion of *The One Ring* that leads us to the plains of Rohan and its iconic inhabitants – the Rohirrim. It not only covers its core content (Rohan and its people), but also the Forest of Fangorn, Isengard and Dunland plus its inhabitants.

About 34% of the book (55 pages) cover Rohan itself, ca. 14% (23 pages) are devoted to Fangorn, 5% (8 pages) deal with Dunland and its people, while 15% (24 pages) are given to Isengard. 25% (40 pages) are reserved for mechanical data (monsters, new cultures & rules). The remaining pages cover introductory topics and the index.

ROHAN

This section gives a nice overview of the land of the Rohirrim. The reader is immediately immersed in the tone and mood as if reading Tolkien's stories. Both parts – the section on history and the one covering the regions – detail colourful descriptions as well as characters fitting for the realm. Here it is worth noting that the default time for the book is TA 2960, revolving around the first years of Thengel's reign, when he still has to deal with the ill legacy of his father Fengel under whose rule avarice, greed and other human failures ruled in the Riddermark.

Product in Short

Title	Horse-lords of Rohan
Author	Shane Ivey, Andrew Kenrick, T.S. Luikart, Francesco Nepitello and James M. Spahn
Artwork	Andrew Hepworth, Jon Hodgson, Jason Juta, Sam Manley, Jeremy McHugh, Jan Pospíšil and Egil Thompson
Publisher	Cubicle 7
Year published	2017
Pages	144
Price	\$ 39.99
Gaming usability	★★★★★
Presentation & atmosphere	★★★★★
Middle-earth lore	★★★★★
Overall score	★★★★★
Available from	
http://cubicle7.co.uk/buy-now/ http://cubicle7.co.uk/find-a-shop/	

Without going into much detail, the history and regions' sections give a good overview and are well researched. They provide LM and players alike with ample material to set a game in the Riddermark. Especially detailed descriptions of major LM characters are given ample room here while the descriptions of Rohan and its institutions (and places) remain relatively cursory, because it is not necessary for the style of TOR. For someone interested in more details of the realm, this material could be somewhat superficial.

As someone who was and is always especially interested in the background of a setting, two details were especially interesting to me: In the context of Wulf's War in the mid-28th century Tolkien reports that the Dunlendings were supported by the Corsairs and that Easterlings invaded Rohan at the same time. The latter is found in this supplement, while the former is missing. In the context of the close connection between Dunland's history with Rohan, this is a bit puzzling.

The second is the layout of Edoras in the book. The general layout is vaguely reminiscent of the movie version of the place. While there is nothing at all wrong or strange with it from an artistic point of view (in fact the artwork is stunning; see image below), it is small – way too small in my opinion (even without a scale given). Apart from Meduseld, it has 58 houses (yes, it is quite easy to count them). This makes the **capital city** of the



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mighty realm of Rohan considerably smaller than the **village** (it is explicitly labelled as such by Tolkien) of Bree in deserted Eriador (100 houses of men – plus Hobbit holes; *The Lord of the Rings, At the sign of the Prancing Pony*). For comparison, the Edoras from *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* is approximately three times as big, not to speak of the even much bigger one from *MERP*.

The land is described as in previous books with the main features like wildlife and characters of note amply covered. But this section differs somewhat from previous TOR publications, as it becomes clear that the effects of the Shadow are different here compared to Wilderland. In Rhovanion, the Enemy can generally be fought directly (represented by spiders, orcs etc.), as it is easy to identify good and bad. In Rohan however, evil runs deeper and in a more subtle way. Orcs or other creatures of the Shadow are a very rare sight here (especially in the populous regions) and the Shadow works more through deception and manipulation of mundane human failings and shortcomings rather than by deploying obviously evil creatures. In my opinion, this is a very interesting variation to the otherwise rather easy black-and-white schemes and settings in other TOR books.

FANGORN

This section is very well written and provides us with all the necessary information for gaming. We are provided with lots of ideas for travelling in this enchanted forest and its wondrous inhabitants. Here TOR's strengths in preferring mood over detail and lore play out and make this section one of my favourites in the whole book. It also manages to generate a lot of interesting hooks and ideas for this location which is one of the least explored in the Northwest (at least as far as mortals – and Elves – are concerned).

Given the facts by Tolkien, adventuring in Fangorn certainly isn't one of the most likely things, but when it happens, the information provided here will be invaluable.

DUNLAND

This short section certainly is a gem of the book – alas it is much too short in my opinion. Here it might have been better to give the region and people more room in a separate book. Still it gives a short historical overview and nice characters to interact with. As with the Rohan section, there are no further details on the (supposed) internal structures of the "realm", the politics, factions or cultural habits. However, the few pages are well used and give a good (albeit much too brief) overview of this often overlooked or unjustly vilified culture.

ISENGARD

The next part covers Isengard – and with a very strong focus on the standard campaign timeframe in the 30th century TA. Despite some small inconsistencies (in one instance it is mentioned that only about two or three dozen people form the ‘folk of Isengard’, while another passage speaks of ‘countless workers’ working beneath Isengard), this part is very useful for any LM wishing to include Saruman in his campaign. Extensive information on the fortress, the White Wizard, and the Orthanc itself give you everything you might want to run a game here.

OVERALL

Overall I really liked this book. For the “Gaming usability” I deduct a point since this book has not so much actual gaming stuff (e.g. adventures) than hooks for later adventures. These will surely follow in the announced *Oaths of the Riddermark*. For me the best part was the way how it handled an area that is not constantly threatened by obviously evil creatures and where resistance against the Shadow can be measured by the number of such monsters slain. Thus the aspects of normal human failings are given greater room than in the other books of the series.



MONSTERS, CULTURES & RULES

As usual in TOR supplements, a good part of the book is reserved for extra rules specific to the region covered by the book. All this serves its purpose well and both the Dunlendings and the Rohirrim are provided with good culture-specific items and abilities. The downside is that one only gets the full range of playable cultures piecemeal and a good part of new books is devoted to new mechanics (and thus not available for more details of the region itself), but that is a decision that has been made long ago for TOR and everyone knows that.

Everyone should realise that as usual in the TOR series, you don’t get an in-depth description of the realm, its factions, politics, economy, settlements etc. but mostly material that is directly useful for a campaign (i.e. prominent places or people the heroes might encounter) but little beyond this. If this is what you’re looking for, *Horse-lords of Rohan* will be a great enrichment for your games – and in the end gaming is the primary reason here.

THE COURT OF ARDOR & THE BOOK OF LINSÛL —

AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE A MERP MODULE MORE 'TOLKIENESQUE'

By Tom Davies

(tomdav2001@yahoo.com.au)

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This article picks up the theme of one of MERP's oldest - and legendary - campaign supplements. Although the original supplement has generally been out of stock since the late '80s (or early '90s at the latest) it remained one of the most popular and influential ones. This is probably due to its unusual setting in the Far south of Middle-earth, far away from the Realms-in-Exile and the struggle of the West against the Shadow.

Despite being an undoubtly cool setting for a high powered campaign, it has been criticised for being quite 'un-tolkienistic' in its approach. The main goal of this article (and its accompanying one containing the actual 'Book of Linsûl' aim to address this.

However, to make most of these two articles you should own - or at least have working knowledge of - the original book to be able to put everything in the right context.

supplementary
stuff



BACKGROUND

A long time ago back in the 80's, I became familiar with ICE's *Middle Earth Role Playing* as the first role-playing game that claimed to be dedicated to the world that Tolkien had brilliantly brought to life in his stories. So, I bought up most of the modules, and was particularly entranced with the maps, especially of strange regions either not or only briefly mentioned by Tolkien. One of my favourites was a module called *The Court of Ardor*, one of the earlier ones (1983).

Why was this module great (IMHO)? It had an epic feel to it that was sadly lacking in many other published adventures of that time. The quest to prevent a group of evil elves from destroying the Sun & Moon was as epic as anything written by the Professor. It was set in a region that was completely new and separate from the traditional setting most Tolkien readers are familiar with, with lots of strange lands and names. I liked this because most of the players I was familiar with (including myself) hated having any restrictions placed on them just because "it wasn't canon". Running a game set in Ardor would have solved this problem for me.

However, I never got around to running any game set in Ardor or especially the main plot of this module, partly because I got stuck with the problem of: How do you get the player-characters from the traditional NW part of Middle-earth all the way down to where Ardor lies in the Far South? Not to mention what you give the PC's to do 'on the way down south'. Therefore I 'dumped' the module into the 'too hard' basket for years. It was only when I started writing my Fourth Age Campaign and dealing with Fourth Age events that I could see a way to resolving this problem, by creating a 'Chase type' quest where the PC's pursue one of the Enemy's servants, finally confronting this adversary at the ruins of the Citadel!

With renewed interest, I went back to reading the Ardor module and so stumbled over the issues I had with the module itself. I also read the revised version¹ and felt that my issues had not been addressed. What were my main concerns?

¹ Available on the fan modules website.

ISSUES WITH 'THE COURT OF ARDOR' MODULE

The central plot of the module

This of course means that the male child of Ardana must kill his mother and stop the ritual from taking place [...] So have the Valar granted a chance for the forces of good to prevail..

— *The Court of Ardor in southern Middle-earth, p.11*

The whole campaign idea being that the PC's mission is to aid the male child (Moran) in his quest. Apart from the (minor) issue of having an NPC being the central character of a campaign, by this time I had read a lot more of Tolkien's works. Nowhere in any of his writings does he ever suggest or countenance the doing of bad deeds for 'the greater good', or 'the end justifies the means' – in fact his main themes emphasise the opposite – thus Gandalf's words remembered by Frodo about Pity with regards to Gollum:

Deserves death! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some die that deserve life. Can you give that to them? Then be not too eager to deal out death in the name of justice, fearing for your own safety.

— *The Lord of the Rings. The taming of Sméagol*

Good characters in Tolkien's writings never contemplate using the Enemy's own methods; if they do they end up 'fallen', witness Saruman as an example. So this central idea of the module needed to be reworked somehow. Yet when I looked at the discussions on the revision of the Ardor module, nowhere was this considered as a serious issue!

The lack of 'Why'

By this I mean that when you read *The Court of Ardor* from a Gamemaster's viewpoint, it seems to be written like a lot of D&D modules I have read – there is a lot of good stuff in there to explain the 'how', something or someone is there, but no 'Why' – and yet this is just what a GM needs, as you can bet that at least one curious player is going to ask a question such as: "How come the Citadel was never discovered by the great mariners of Koronandë (or Númenor) in over two thousand years, even though they had a base on the island of Ardinak?"

The Court of Ardor as a group of 'evil' High Elves!

According to the module, there are: 12 Council members, 8 of whom are Noldor, 1 Half-elf, 1 Sinda & 2 Demons(!). Then there are 9 more Noldor, 5 Silvan Elves and 7 Sinda elves that are considered Court members. Then there are 3 more Noldor, 44 Sinda (mainly guards), 7 Silvan guards and 133 other elves (mainly guards), making a grand total of 20 Noldor, 45 Sindar, 12 Silvan + 133 = 210 supposedly 'bad' elves.

Quite a lot I would have thought, given that another main theme of Tolkien was that no elves willingly served the Enemy. So I checked if there was any attempt to explain this in the module, and there was, but these passages also created further issues:

Long ago in the dim past of Endor Elven lords came to this southerly area [...] the Elves loved it and named it Ardor [...] Many centuries passed [...] until the Shadow fell upon the land and many of the strong were seduced by the clever words of servants of the Black Enemy.

— *The Court of Ardor in southern Middle-earth, p.11*

All well and good, but this passage implies that the original elven inhabitants were corrupted into serving the Court, so they could not be Noldor, Sindar or Silvan elves, they had to be Avari, as this area was settled by Avari 'many centuries in the past'. Or there needed to be some really good reasons for why (in particular) the Noldor would choose to serve The Enemy. But the only other explanation given is:

Let it be said here that, for the most part, Elves cannot be corrupted into 'evil' as such. They can be corrupted by clever words, and convinced of things which are not so. In this way Ardana... convinced many of the Elves that her plan was what was best for them, that the glaring lights in the sky were 'evil' contrivances designed to block out the light of Elbereth's stars [...] Ardana herself was lured into this belief [...] fanatical in her belief she became, and her fervent self-assurance was contagious [...]

— *The Court of Ardor in southern Middle-earth, p.11*

Then there are the discussions over the revised module that examines this issue:

Chris Seeman: *A brief rejoinder to Morben's and Doug's postings on the issue of Elves not serving Morgoth or Sauron: Tolkien's intent, as I understand it, is NOT that Elves could not go bad, but rather that no self-respecting evil Elf would stoop so low as to serve Sauron or Morgoth. In their own mind, Elves are a master race, and any entity—be he even a Vala—who would presume to cozen or act as their superior is by definition an enemy and a rival.*

Lowell R. Matthews: *And in that sense the Court of Ardor does *not* violate this rule of no service. Basically, while all of the Court members serve Morgoth's cause of bringing about the downfall of Sun and Moon, they do so for their own reasons. This is especially true of Ardana the very twisted Astrologer, who hates the Sun and Moon because they interfere with her precious stars.*

Morben Moriantemur: *It does make sense, besides, Morgoth promised the Court huge amounts of power if they performed the ritual (some side-effect from the actual ritual).*

— **Fan-modules repository.**
Ardor files

This is the only discussion I am aware of on the issue of 'Bad Elves' prior to the revised module. In my view they addressed none of my concerns. I don't agree with Chris Seeman's interpretation of evil Elves seeing themselves as a 'master race' and would like to know where he got this interpretation from. You could possibly argue that this viewpoint existed for the House of Fëanor within the Noldor, but I find this attitude hard to believe for other Noldor or indeed other elves.

In regards to Lowell R. Matthews' comment, what reasons then are given for their agreeing to serve, apart from Morgoth's promise of power? Only in Ardana's case are they detailed. I looked in vain for some more detail on the background history of the other Court members (this is part of Issue #2 I discussed above). It seems its up to the GM to provide convincing reasons for why over 200 elves 'turned bad'.

I also felt that even in Ardana's case this did not seem a convincing enough explanation for how she could be so passionate to serve Morgoth. Lowell had this to say about Ardana:

Lowell R. Matthews: *The only thing I can think of is that he must have purchased Ardana's loyalty in Aman sometime after his imprisonment but well before his open revolt.*

— **Fan-modules repository.**
Ardor files

This quote gave me the beginnings of an idea that most of Morgoth's Noldor followers were already serving him in Aman.

So then I looked at the revised *Ardor* module to see if it added anything:

The Court of Ardor consists entirely of elves who for the greater part serve him because they think this organization is the only one which seeks solely elven goals.Indeed, this goal is an extreme form of an all-time elvish longing: to order all things according to their own wishes and needs, halting the change of the world...

— **Fan-modules repository.**
Ardor files

So the revised version gives two more reasons:

- The Court exists to pursue elven goals. Good enough, but what about the majority of elves in the area being Avari (not Noldor or Sindar). How do they feel about the Court?
- The goal of destroying the sun and moon can be seen as an extreme form of the elvish desire to preserve and slow change (as per the Rings of Power).

This is also good, but again I felt this explained more why the Avari would serve the Court but did not seem a good enough explanation for those Noldor who had experienced Valinor, or for the Sindar who had lived under Thingol.

So how to explain the existence of a group of evil elves in a more Tolkienesque fashion? For this I required more inspiration.

The land of Ardor and communication with Morgoth

The region of Ardor lay thousands of miles south of where their Master was in the Far North. Why so far away? And secondly, everything I have read about Morgoth suggested that paranoia was one of his main traits. I certainly couldn't see him consenting to such a plan or even dreaming up such a plan in the first place, there had to be other reasons for why he would agree to letting such a group travel away from his immediate control.

And this led me to my initial inspiration for my campaign – there must have been some way for Ardana (at a minimum) to communicate with her master many miles to the north. She could communicate with the other members of the Court through the Deck of Cards, but I felt there was no way Morgoth would have agreed to the plan unless the Court had some way of communicating with him. But, there is this passage in both the original and revised versions:

There is also, on an iron pedestal, a sculpture of solid smoky glass in the form and size of a large human skull. When Morgoth lived this skull had immense powers, which only Ardana could tap.

— *The Court of Ardor in southern Middle-earth*, p.33

Apart from this being another example of Issue #2 above, this passage gave me my idea: what if this item was how Ardana communicated with Morgoth? That would explain why it gave immense powers to her, not to mention how it would help explain the problem of her persuading others to join the Court etc. and ruling as the Queen of the Court over so many powerful individuals.

The 'high level' of the campaign

This is a minor concern, but The Court of Ardor I felt had ridiculously high levels of the NPCs, accompanying treasure etc., such that the module needs to come with the disclaimer "for high-level PC's only!"

I felt that these issues still needed to be resolved before I felt comfortable enough to run an adventure in the area, and it seemed my feelings were shared by others: "*The Court of Ardor was undeniably cool, but it was also undeniably inappropriate to Middle-earth.*"¹

Interestingly, the issue that seemed to give the writers most concern at the time was the idea that Morgoth could father children. At the time I agreed with a number of writers who felt that if any of the Valar were to have children it would be Morgoth (not to mention Tolkien's earliest ideas about the Ainur, where they actually did have children – see *Book of Lost Tales*).

With the publication of *Morgoth's Ring* Tolkien had changed his views, stating that such a thing could only be possible with Eru consent. I still thought it possible for Eru to allow such a thing, given the fact that Ardana gives birth to two children not one. This was completely unexpected and not to the Court's plans. I liked the idea that this was Eru meddling with Morgoth and the Court's plan.

INSPIRATION FOR THE "BOOK OF LINSÛL"

Tolkien's idea of a 'rediscovered' ancient eyewitness account

One of Tolkien's main themes is that of 'rediscovered history' – i.e. works such as *The Hobbit* & *The Lord of the Rings* came from earlier written accounts by Bilbo & Frodo Baggins in a work he refers to as *The Red Book of Westmarch*.

In the *Court of Ardor* module is a reference to an aid for the Player Characters:

The text 'The Book of Andraax' was written in fact by the (male) Fëatur, and copies can be found in various Court holds and in out-of-the-way places, large libraries etc.

— *The Court of Ardor in southern Middle-earth*, p.48

This player's aid is a view of the Court of Ardor as seen by the male Fëatur. This made me wonder: what if there were other accounts of the Court? And then I had a more radical idea: maybe the whole module can be explained as being excerpts from *The Book of Andraax* (and other antagonistic accounts). Supposing there existed an account of the Court that gave a different viewpoint, this became the germ of the idea for *The Book of Linsûl*.

¹ <http://grogardian.blogspot.com.au/2010/10/retrospective-court-of-ardor>.

'Quendi and Eldar' in The History of Middle-earth Volume X and Name Calling: Group Identity and the Other among First Age Elves

I found my missing piece of inspiration after reading the essay *Quendi and Eldar* and the accompanying article by Angelica. At the time I was just looking for as much information as I could find about the Avari elves (as I had thought that Tolkien had written very little about them). The issue of the Avari becomes important (IMHO) in the Fourth Age, and I believed that a mission is actually sent from the West to help all elves that had elected to stay in Middle-earth become reconciled to their fate of Fading.¹ Some excerpts from this essay I found particularly illuminating:

There also existed two old compounds containing 'kwendi': kala-kwendi and mori-kwendi, the Light-folk and the Dark-folk. These terms go back... to the time of the debate among the Quendi concerning the invitation of the Valar. They were evidently made by the party favourable to Oromë... 'mori-kwendi' may have referred to the glooms and the clouds dimming the stars during the War of the Valar and Melkor, so that the term from the beginning had a tinge of scorn, implying that such folk were not averse to the shadows of Melkor upon Middle-earth... the latter were regarded as greatly inferior to the Kalaquendi...

— *The History of Middle-earth, Vol. XI. Quendi and Eldar*

So Tolkien notes that from the time of the debate on, the unity of the Elves was gone, and notably those Elves who decided to march west regarded those who stayed behind negatively, as though they were lacking insight or being tainted or of less wisdom in some way. Importantly, these feelings persisted up until the time these groups encountered one another again in Beleriand².

The Avari thus remained the chief examples of Moerbin. Any individual Avar who joined with or was admitted among the Sindar became a Calben, but the Avar in general remained secretive, hostile to the Eldar and untrustworthy. [...] They [the Avari] were actually unfriendly to the Noldor, and jealous of their more exalted kin, whom they accused of arrogance. This ill-feeling descended in part from the bitterness of the Debate before the March of the Eldar began, and was no doubt later increased by the machinations of Morgoth, but it also throws some light upon the temperament of the Noldor in general and of Fëanor in particular... the Teleri... asserted that most of the Noldor in Aman were in heart Avari and returned to Middle-earth when they discovered their mistake, they needed room to quarrel in [...]

— *The History of Middle-earth, Vol. XI. Quendi and Eldar*

These passages confirm the importance of the Separation in Elvish History, and shed light on the difficulties Maedhros and others were facing when trying to accomplish unity between the various Elves in Beleriand, despite the various negative perceptions that were still held between the Elven groups. For myself I began to see a way to explain the Court: the genesis of it really began in Aman with a few committed Noldor followers of Morgoth. I found this easier to explain as I felt that Morgoth would have more Noldor followers in Aman when he was still of pleasing appearance and manners and while some Noldor in Aman were dissatisfied with their lot (as per the Teleri's assertions) and thus hearkened to Morgoth's words more readily (as Tolkien mentions in the *Silmarillion*). I could also easily imagine some of these to be as arrogant and haughty as Fëanor's sons were, and thus also desiring power and realms to rule.

That the Avari were considered savage, uncultured and uncivilised by the Noldor and Sindar was also important, especially the perception that they could easily turn traitor. But how did they see the situation themselves? Tolkien's own notes shed light on this (continued on next page):

These passages explain why Oropher and Thranduil rejected their own society and become rulers of

¹ These were called the *Eldennori*, see my Fourth Age Chronology in *Other Minds* Issue #9

² Angelica: *Name Calling: Group Identity and the Other Among First Age Elves*, by Angelica, p.1.; <http://www.silmarillionwritersguild.org/reference/essays.php>

The implication that as opposed to Celbin the Moerbin were allies of Morgoth... was untrue with regard to the Avari. No elf of any kind ever sided with Morgoth of free will, though under torture, the stress of great fear or deluded by lies they might obey his commands, but this applied also to Celbin. The 'Dark-elves', however, often were hostile and even treacherous in their dealings with the Sindar and Noldor... they were, it seems, filled with an inherent bitterness against the Eldar, whom they regarded as deserters of their kin... in Beleriand this feeling was increased by envy and by resentment of their lordliness...

This resentment on the part of the Avari is illustrated by the history of the word 'kwendi'... it was frequently to be found in Avarin dialects... it meant the names that the Avari gave to themselves... they continued to call themselves 'the People', regarding those who went away as deserters...

— *The History of Middle-earth,*
Vol. XI. Quendi and Eldar

the Wood-elves. They rejected everything the 'Western' Elves stood for and embraced the Avar way of life, obviously these individuals (and perhaps there were others) were ashamed of the way their brethren treated other elves.

This line of thought led me back to Ardana and the problem of the Court as a bunch of High Elves 'lording' over Avari. But perhaps the Court acted more like the Alliance that Maedhros had set up to besiege Angband, a loose Alliance with many of the individuals preferring to 'do their own thing' and carving out little fiefs for themselves. As for the problem of loyal Avari, I felt that this was solved by giving Ardana a better explanation for why she 'fell': that she was in love with Morgoth (who was beautiful to behold during his captivity¹). This meant that she did not share the prejudices of the other Noldor in regards to other elves. With these thoughts I then wrote the Book of Linsûl (see below).

¹ Can't recall where I read this, but I do recall it being said that the Valar had stated to the elves in Aman that Melkor had of old been considered the most beautiful of them all.

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF LINSÛL

History of the Book²

Roundabout the year 1705 of the Third Age, the Court of Ardor fails to successfully complete the Ritual. Linsûl the Bard (the official Court historian) is one of the few to survive, she makes her way north and arrives in the city of Bûr Esmer, where she meets and befriends a minor priestess of the Cult of Ishttra (the Sister Goddess of Ladnoca in the Haruze pantheon) named Syrsi Arrani. With Linsûl's aid and knowledge Syrsi and her family overthrow the ruling authorities, becoming the new rulers, with Syrsi acknowledged as the First Sister.

Between this coup and the time when Syrsi mysteriously disappears twelve years later (accompanied according to legend by Linsûl) *The Book of Linsûl* appears in the city for the first time, and copies then begin to spread. Once it reaches Gondor it is regarded as a forbidden book. Testimony from Sisters from the Cult of Ishttra suggest that the book was written by Syrsi Arrani herself, based on conversations she had with Linsûl. Enemies of the Arrani family attacked the Cult's 'elvish ways' (implying that Syrsi was too devoted to the 'Elf woman' as Linsûl was known), and later burned copies of the books when they briefly held power. But it is very likely that copies of the book were distributed by the activities of Syrsi's main disciple Savyé, who did a lot of missionary work in Bellakar and is said to have met King Telumehtar of Gondor. Although the Sisters of Ishttra were permitted to continue working in Harondor and Near Harad, the book remained forbidden in Gondor and realms friendly to it.

This situation changed with the arrival of the Eldennori³ in Middle-earth and their mission to reconcile elves to their fate in the Fourth Age. Because of the Court's legacy they met the most troubles in the region formerly known as Ardor. Rumours even reached loremasters that the Dark Elves (and many humans) continued to worship 'The Dark Lady' and refused to listen to the Eldennori who travelled in that area. It was then that Loremasters began to consider that *The Book of Linsûl* might contain more truth than had originally been considered.

² *The Sisters of Ishttra* by Susan Cory, p.3. (Available on the fan modules website).

³ An elven group from my own *Fourth Age Chronology*: *They returned in 4A 409 from Aman under the Vanya Elf Inglaur Ingwiel and arrive at Mithlond. Their main purpose was to establish contacts with all remaining elven communities throughout Middle-earth, and to help slow the fading of the Elves.*

The 'pre-amble', Ardana & Morgoth

Given Tolkien's idea of writing his works by eye-witnesses, I used this style for the 'pre-amble' of the book, which is a justification of the Court and its aims. I felt this was important as a way of showing players that what is 'good' and what 'evil' is not so clear cut, and to give players an inkling of how the 'Dark Elves' felt about perceptions such as of Linsûl by her mistress Rilia as a 'lowly Dark-elf' (see the previous comments on them). Whether this was actually true or not is beside the point. The key here is that the Avari believed this, and this was why they resented the 'good' elves such as the Eldennori, they simply didn't see them as the good guys!

For them Ardana was he Dark Lady, in their eyes only slightly below Elbereth herself. I had to come up with a more detailed and convincing explanation (than is given in the modules) as to why Ardana was able to have so many willing to follow her. I had the idea that she was as close to Elbereth as Fëanor was to Aulë (i.e. a servant who – sometimes – surpassed the master in knowledge and works). Thus she would appear as even more impressive than the Lady Galadriel, leading to the idea that she had a similar personality as Fëanor. So this led to my plan that the destruction of the Sun and Moon was her idea and not Morgoth's. This way it was easier for Morgoth to agree to (given Tolkien's mentionings that Morgoth did try to attack the Moon and failed), and it also serves as a better explanation as to why the various ingredients are necessary.

It was also important to provide a reason as to why Morgoth would want progeny. This seemed obvious to me as most great conquerors want to leave something of themselves behind, for Morgoth it would be another way of weaving his dispersed spirit into Middle-earth and also help to gain mastery over the Firstborn. So the idea for the Court comes from this: who should accompany Ardana and guard Morgoth's heir? In addition I sought for a good reason why the male Fëatur was able to get away with his deception: Ardana wasn't interested in looking after her children, nor did she bother about the independency of the Lords and their little kingdoms (something that must have weakened the Court), making it easier for the male Fëatur to interrupt the Ritual. Thus the idea that on the actual day of the Ritual many of the Court were absent. As a further factor of weakening I thought Ardana would regard Sauron as a servant, which explains Taurclax's betrayal of the Court.

The Court profiles: the Noldor & Sindar

I was pretty disappointed with the profiles given of the main NPC's in *The Court of Ardor* (as per Issue #2 above), so one of the main inspirations for this work was to give more detailed profiles to make it easier for GM's to roleplay these important and mighty NPCs. Straightaway I thought it made sense to divide them into those who began to follow Morgoth in Aman and those who followed him later in Middle-earth.

I kept the concept of Cambragol as being 'really evil' as per *The Court of Ardor*, but gave an explanation for the 'why'. This also helped explain why he is a master of unarmed combat. From *'I, Claudius'*¹ by Robert Graves came the idea that Morgoth liked to have Cambragol around as it made him 'feel virtuous', and the Fëatur twins sparked the idea that Morgoth loved to surround himself with 'freaks', which really befits his personality. I also preferred to change the interpretation for the male Fëatur's repentance, seen by Linsûl as someone who can't be trusted.

In regards to those Noldor who joined the Court in Middle-earth I tried to show (following Tolkien's lead) how most joined 'deluded by lies' (promises of realms to rule) out of free will, and also how each one explained the mission to themselves. Thus Morthaur wants to see the Sun & Moon destroyed as the fulfillment of a great experiment. I changed Morthaur's history into being a prisoner in Angband, which makes more sense than him already residing in Ardor. That way Ardana could already have known him in Aman realising his usefulness for building the Citadel etc. Similarly with Ardûval, his presence was easier to explain as an 'assistant' to Ardana who needed to stay at the Observatory in order for the Ritual to succeed. Furthermore I explained which Lords were Noldor and regarded themselves as racially superior and which did not.

As the reader can see I have cut back the number of Noldor drastically, as in my view this helped explain which Court members were on the Ruling Council and which were not. I have also used the character of Rilia to underline the Noldor's desire for ruling their own realms (which I think Tolkien briefly alludes to in *The Silmarillion*). I hope the reader can also see that each Court member was chosen because they had special useful skills or powers. Thus Rilia's specialty lay with the nseen orld, which is why she brought 'her own demon'

¹ The relationship between Tiberius and Caligula is the inspiration here.

with her. With Valmorgul and Gorthaur I felt that they would grow to prefer their alternate identities more than their own (as alternates they are the effective rulers, whereas at the Citadel they are just one among equals). I have changed Taurclax from Sinda to Avar as this made more sense as to whom Morgoth would choose to spy on the rest of the Court, and that so Khelekar was made counter-spy by Ardana (something very much to Morgoth's liking. In addition to this I give reason why Taurclax made a bargain with he Winds of Taurang (Issue #2 again!).

I added the idea of Valkrist joining the Court later only because they desperately needed aid, but kept the module's idea that he was half-elven. I explained his personality and view of the mission through the fact that he was regarded as inferior by the pure-blooded Noldor of the Court.

The Court profiles: the Dark Elves

My general idea was that unless there was some convincing explanation (see above), the majority of Elves in the Court of Ardor should be Avari who were in the area when Ardana and the others arrived. I decided that they are wrongly called Noldor because of Court propaganda, and I introduced their one motivation for following: Avari like Linsûl who felt rejected by the Three of Tyr-Ar Rana (the previous elven rulers of the region). I also introduced the idea of degrees of status: those of Nelyar blood being inferior to Tatyar elves, and so on, and the idea of Court titles as a way for Ardana to defuse conflict.

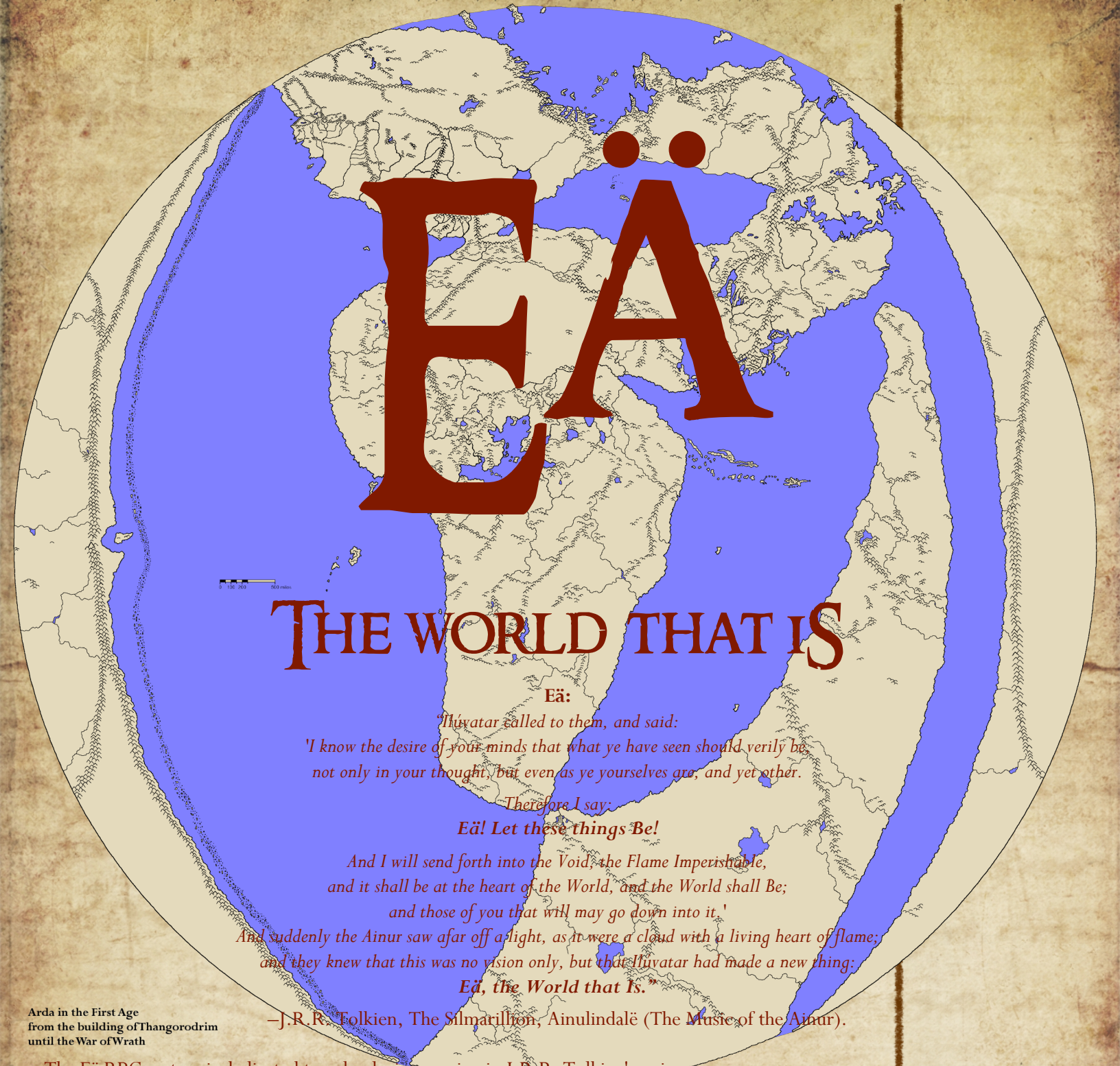
The Morgoth Crystal

As mentioned above, the inspiration for this item was the need for some sort of means of communication between Ardana & Morgoth. So I searched for fitting items and found an article about 'Tokens of Morgoth' in an issue of Hall of Fire:

The Tokens of Morgoth are quite potent and utterly evil items. They were created during the Early Ages by Morgoth to give the leaders of his mortal armies authority over those that they lead and also bind them to his will. In the days when Morgoth was at the height of his powers, he had created many of these items. They take the form of small clay or carved stone totems, and can be of almost any shape. Fortunately, these items were as fragile as the materials they were made from, and many have been destroyed over time. There are still a few scattered about Middle Earth in the hands of evil, or waiting for someone to discover them and unleash their powers.

—The Hall of Fire, Issue 73, p. 3

When I read this I thought it entirely possible that such an item could also be made of glass or a crystalline substance. This led to thoughts of the *palantiri* and Morthaur's important role in the Court as a smith only slightly less skilled than Fëanor. So I decided that the Morgoth Crystal was similar, possibly even made of the same substance as the Silmarils. I added the last sentence as a hint to the PC's of my current campaign: that in the Fourth Age the Enemy's servant searches the ruins of the Citadel for the Crystal and the Gems of Unlight.



Arda in the First Age
from the building of Thangorodrim
until the War of Wrath

—J.R.R. Tolkien, The Silmarillion, Ainulindalë (The Music of the Ainur).

The Eä RPG system is dedicated to role playing gaming in J.R.R. Tolkien's universe.
Eä d20 is currently well along in it's development with the "Races & Cultures" tome nearing completion. Eä d20 is the adaptation of the Open D20 (D&D 3.5) role-playing gaming system modified to more accurately fit the "feel" of Tolkien's Middle-earth.
Tomes of lore include:

- Races & Cultures (near completion)
- Magic in Middle-earth (core mechanics complete, conversion charts in progress)
- Destinies & Lore (Classes, Skills, Feats, etc. - in early stages)
- Creatures & Monsters (Ancalagon through Zigurim) (planned)
- Valar & Maiar (Includes Vala, Maia, Istari, Lords and Characters of Renown) (planned)

THE BOOK OF LINSÛL

By Tom Davies

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This piece of internal history is closely linked to the preceding article about basic topics of the Court of Ardor.

This contribution now goes a step further and provides a piece of inj-world knowledge that reports of the Court and its activities.

In this respect it should be viewed as something written with limited knowledge and thus perhaps “wrong” on several subjects - either on purpose or due to lack of knowledge. It can be used as a great source of information for Gamemasters wishing to introduce archaic lore to their characters in a campaign.

supplementary
stuff



The Book of Linsûl is an infamous tome purportedly written by the former Court of Ardor member Linsûl the Avarin Loremaster after the Court of Ardor was defeated – the book is regarded as forbidden by most cultures (including Gondor) as it paints the Court and Ardana in particular in a sympathetic light, unlike official histories of the Court. The work came to be known through the Sisters of Ishtira in Bur Esmer (who Linsûl aided after the Court’s failure).

It is still regarded as a valuable source of information by Loremasters as much of what it says has been confirmed as accurate, except for Linsûl’s obvious bias against her former mistress Rilia, who she virtually accuses of being one of those responsible for the Court’s failure, whereas most historians agree that the Court was defeated by the heroic opposition of the Blue Circle and them being able to convince Moran to kill his mother (although there is still dispute whether he actually did so). Below are the entries for most of the important characters as written in The are so revealing.

I have been called many names, although I now know that I will be remembered as Linsûl of the Court of Ardor, an evil elf serving an evil cause according to the “official histories”. So, why should I write this book at all? History is written by the winners, it is said, but I am hoping that at least some copies of my work survive, so that later elves can make better judgements and (hopefully) not be blinded by racial hatred, like so many of the Court.

There, I ‘ve said it – the Court’s mission failed because of racial prejudices, not because of the actions of ‘heroic opponents’ such as the Blue Circle and others as the “official histories” would have us believe.

How do I know? I saw and witnessed it firsthand, especially from my former mistress Rilia – in her eyes I was just a ‘dark elf’, and that meant lowly, good-for-nothing and not to be trusted. Yet I found out a lot of information for her because I was ‘lowly’, which I can now divulge to others. Was the Court and its mission ‘evil’? That depends on who you ask –most of us Kinn Lai elves [one of the Avari tribes – Ed.] hated the Sun & Moon and gladly looked forward to the return of a world lit only by starlight – they call such elves “the Khêlnor” now. I only knew one elf I would actually call ‘evil’ – that was Cambragol, Ardana’s ‘Fixer’ – but even he had a few redeeming features. Most of the Court could be

called misguided perhaps (including myself), but most of us truly believed that what we were doing was for good. The Court's reputation has also suffered from lies put about by its enemies, such as the one that Morelen had to be sacrificed in order to complete the ritual – this was not true- the ritual only required some of her blood, not her life! But I remember Lady Ardana telling me one time “she was not concerned about what her enemies thought” – one of her few faults...

People forget how convincing and impressive Lady Ardana was – I recall how she came to speak to me and others, absolutely convinced of the rightness of her mission and thus her mission was also right for us – these new lights in the sky were ‘evil’, blotting out Elbereth's stars. She also, as I said, didn't care that we were ‘Moriquendi’ (unlike most of the Lords), even though I was a Tatyā elf and thus distantly related to them. Convinced by Ardana, I rejected my people and joined the Court, although had I known beforehand that Rilia would be my mistress I might have had second thoughts. I was given the title of ‘The Harper’ as I was the most musically gifted of them all, but I was often travelling as Rilia preferred sending me around to ‘find out what was going on’ whilst she stayed in Naurilindol – I soon realised (as did the other ‘lesser elves’) that I would never be granted a fief of my own, because although Lady Ardana was in charge, the Ardan Council (which met to discuss the important decisions) was dominated by the Noldo lords and would only rarely consent to having a Dark Elf rule a fief. Which leads me to another myth, the oath of loyalty to the Court required by Ardana – this oath was only like that from a vassal to his lord (it was never as binding as the Oath of Fēanor), and it was actually only meant as an oath of service as part of being given high office within the Court – thus Valmorgūl's oath was that of a Warden, etc.. But as I hope to make clear many of these lords broke their oath of service over the years anyway...

“... I should mention this to you the reader – I have never been to Aman and don't intend to. The information provided here about Aman is what I gleaned from discussions (and overhearing) with other Court members.”

[The following information is taken from the Book of Linsûl, to contrast with what is given by official histories- Ed.]

COURT OF ARDOR: MEMBERS

The Exiles

[Linsûl calls ‘The Exiles’ those Court members who followed Melkor in Aman and were thus trusted by him the most – she does not consider the other elven members true Exiles, this is part of her Avari bias against the other Noldor- Ed].

Ardana - ‘The Lady’



Lady of Nan Elmoth © by Liga Klavina; used with permission

It all started with the Lady Ardana, and indeed there would not have been any Court without her – she was the fulcrum, the reason why so many proud individuals stayed with the Court. She was of noble blood, beautiful and distantly related to Fēanor himself, and indeed shared his obsessive pursuit of perfection – for her this was the stars and the heavens– she became (and still is in my view) the pre-eminent astrologer that has ever been – without her knowledge the scheme to destroy the Sun and Moon would never have been put into practice, as she was the one who declared that only at the island of Dirsûlinor [now called Ardinâk] could such an attempt be made– and it was she not Melkor who declared what else would be necessary for the ritual [this refers to the attempt to bring down the Sun & Moon, attempted initially in the First Age and again in the Third Age – Ed.]. If one thinks about it this makes perfect sense – who else (except perhaps Ilmarë) knew as much as Varda about the movements of the heavens and the stars? For in Aman she had been (prior to Melkor's release) Varda's follower, and had even surpassed her in some areas (just as Fēanor did with Aulë). But her life changed forever when she saw

Melkor for the first time. For those of us who never saw Aman we only knew Melkor as he Dark Lord – harsh, cruel and dreadfully ugly, like an orc or one of his Balrog servants. But I have been told by Ardana and others that Melkor was once the fairest of all, in both visage and speech he was breathtakingly beautiful to behold

[this has been confirmed by the Valar as well –Ed].

The Lady confessed to me that she had offered herself to Melkor even that first night, she was that smitten by him – he refused, but remembered her offer later. So she took to following him around whenever he let her – she has mentioned to me that Manwë and Varda together (and others) tried to dissuade her and ‘bring her back to what they thought she should be doing’, but (like most of us elves when we get passionate about something) she felt that her life now was to be near Melkor. Later she was joined following Melkor around by Cambragol and the Fëatur. She was told by Melkor that fateful night *[when Melkor attacked the two trees –Ed.]* to attend the feast as ‘he would be attending later’, she declared to me that she knew nothing of his plans. She also confessed to me that she, Cambragol & the Fëatur tried to follow Melkor in his escape, but were foiled by the Unlight that Ungoliant had put about the two of them. So she & the other Exiles were delighted when Feanor began his rebellion and were one of the first to join, but she has declared to me that neither herself nor the other Exiles shed any blood in Aman after the rebellion *[the Kinslaying at Alqualondë – Ed.]*.

The Exiles left the other Noldor as soon as they could and made their way to Angband – initially they were imprisoned for a time and each of them was questioned by Melkor, who she noted ‘was much changed’ – the Lady was convinced that this

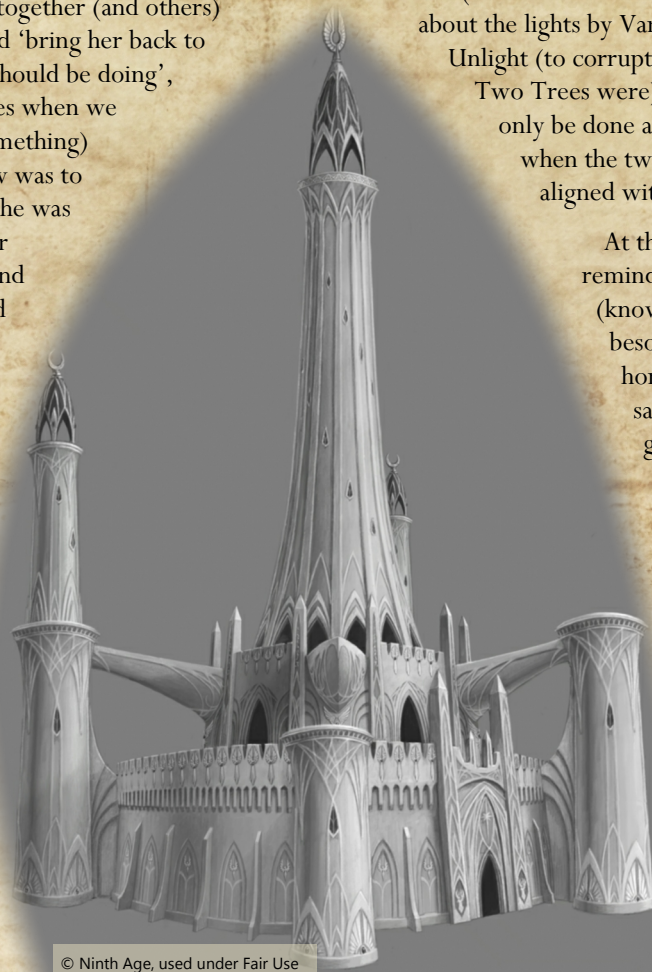
change in her ‘beloved’ (her words) was due to those ‘horrid jewels’ which is the term she always used for the Silmarils, but they all soon proved their loyalty, and indeed Melkor used them to test the loyalty of other elves who claimed to follow him.

She was mildly upset when the Moon arose for the first time, but was horrified at her first sight of the Sun, ‘completely blotting out her beloved stars from sight’. When she learned of Melkor’s failed attack on the Moon, she upbraided him, saying that she could have told him beforehand that he would fail. So he asked her how she would bring down these lights. So she told him she would need ‘Valarin blood’ (to counter the wards that would be set about the lights by Varda and others), some Unlight (to corrupt the lights just as the Two Trees were) and especially it could only be done at ‘a place and time when the two lights are properly aligned with each other’.

At this point Melkor reminded her of her offer (knowing that she was still besotted despite his now horrible appearance) and said that he would not give her ‘his blood’ but instead ‘his seed’, to provide progeny ‘in order to give his majesty and spirit to the Elves and a heir for far-away lands’ (his words according to the Lady). This heir would thus have the noblest possible blood, and Ardana could raise him until ‘he would be ready when the time comes’, and then com-

manded Ardana to go away and determine when and where this would be, whilst he gave some thought to who could accompany Ardana on this mission – thus the idea for the Court of Ardor was born.

I learned from spending much time with the Lady that because she saw ‘everybody including herself’ as lesser in her eyes compared to Melkor, she did not share the prejudices of her folk and thus saw myself and others for who we really were, not who



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we appeared to be, so she was rarely deceived in person. However, she was so obsessed by her mission that she often failed to notice the various plots and subplots that were going on, or dismissed them as unimportant. This was particularly so with the conduct of the Male Fëatur and his spending more time with her children Morelen and Moran than she did herself. When I brought this to her attention she would say things such as 'but he is much better at looking after children than me' or 'I have no time to do mothering'. This was why she failed or dismissed from her notice the tendency of the Lords to rule their little fiefs and only give lip service to the Court as it suited them.

In my view her greatest achievement was to get the unswerving loyalty of those who were not Noldor – Kinn Lai elves like myself, human followers such as the lowly guards and servants of the various Ardan holds, even the demons sent by Melkor were all treated as important by her. Most of us 'lesser folk' would gladly have died in her place – it is my shame that I fled the citadel when the attack came. Subsequently I discovered that I was not alone – most of the Lords were conspicuous through their absence on that day, when their presence was needed most! The Lords never understood that Ardana & the Court were what held them together – without them they were just little independent kingdoms that were soon defeated by the Blue Circle [*this was another name for the Luingon Alliance, the organisation set up to oppose the Court – Ed.*].

Her greatest mistake was not being more tyrannical with the Lords. Instead she let them go and rule their independent little realms, and so as time went on the Court itself became less important – this was not true at the first time the ritual was attempted [*during the First Age – Ed.*], but with the passing of years each Lord became more and more independent and resented any interference by the Court, my mistress Rilia not the least of these. Almost as serious a mistake was her way of treating Sauron and his representatives as 'servants' – one can understand why she did it (as she always viewed him that way), but it was bad policy for the Court, and it was no surprise when the Court was betrayed by Taurclax, even though she knew he was Sauron's lackey.

Cambragol - 'The Monk'



The only elf I met who I would regard as truly evil, he was in Aman a follower of Tulkas but committed a crime for which Tulkas cast him out (the Lady said he murdered another elf during a wrestling combat). No elf was more self-centred, ambitious or conscious of his bloodline (he was of the House of Finrod, with the blond hair and blue eyes of that House) than he himself - not even Fëanor. The Lady told me that she often thought that Melkor 'took him on' because he actually felt virtuous by comparison! In fact they had very similar personalities: there was a flaw in Cambragol that he had from birth – there was no compassion or mercy in him, instead he took delight in causing pain.

Yet he had a few redeeming features – he had unswerving loyalty towards Ardana and her cause. As he wasn't the intellectual type she used him as her 'fixer' or bodyguard, to provide intimidation and muscle when needed. The other Lords all dreaded a visit from the 'mad monk' as he was often called (behind his back of course). He also was (unlike Melkor) brave to a fault, which is why he was killed putting his body before hers when the Attack came during the ritual.

Fëatur (both) - The Illusionist & The Mirror



Dream © by Liga Kļaviņa, used with permission

For many years in Aman the Fëatur twins were pupils of the Fëanturi (Mandos & Lórien) and thus knew much about spirits, they were also related to Camragol being also of the House of Finrod with golden hair, but they both had unusual amber eyes. The Lady told me that Melkor loved to have them around him because they were attractive, but also because she thought it was a sly dig by Melkor against Mandos (whom Melkor hated).

Now according to most histories the male Fëatur fled to Angband with Morgoth and the Silmarils, but this is just another of his lies [*we think this is a reference to his Book of Andraax - Ed.*] – he was an inveterate liar, but because he went back to the Valar and grovelled and begged for mercy, they believed him! His sister remained steadfastly loyal to Ardana and the Court, yet Ardana was quite happy for the brother to remain at Court bringing up her children (thus poisoning their minds against her). All four (Ardana's children as well) died in the collapse of the citadel after Ardana's death.

[*this is not necessarily true – it is believed that Morlan survived - Ed.*]

The Kaukareldar

[*This was the term used for those elves that escaped (or were released) from Angband, they were regarded as 'Bent Eldar' because they often turned out to be traitors serving the Dark Lord, and this was certainly true of those who joined the Court. Linsûl uses the term for those Noldor who joined Ardana in Middle-earth, although she indicates that most of them did so of their own free will - Ed.*].

Morthaur - 'The Lord'



Celebrimbor © by Jenny Dolfen, used with permission

The first Noldor elf to join Ardana's mission in Angband was Morthaur – he was very similar to Fëanor in loving crafts and designs [*he crafted the Morgoth Crystal which was similar to Fëanor's palantíri – Ed.*]. Ardana consulted him on the scheme early on and achieved his release

from prison. Morthaur loved the idea because it meant he could bring to reality the many designs and schemes he had, it was his genius that saw the citadel and the other Ardan holds built. He rarely left the citadel once it was built as bravery was not one of his strengths, but he was very loyal to Ardana's mission. He admitted to me once that he wanted to see it done 'for curiosity', as if the world was one giant laboratory to him. He died when confronted by Val-morgûl, who used the ritual as an excuse to get rid of his hated rival.

Ardūval - 'The Stargazer'



Evil in his heart © by Peter Xavier Price, used with permission

Ardūval was in Middle-earth the second Noldor elf to join Ardana, hardly a difficult decision for him since he himself was a very gifted astrologer second only to Ardana herself and they knew each other well even in Aman, so when Ardana found out he was a prisoner in Angband

she had him released. He was very willing to join in as he felt little love for the 'new lights' himself, since 'they made his research harder so that is why he wanted them out of the way'. Indeed he had a very scholarly mind (similar to Morthaur), so he was perfect for the job of staying at the observatory of Menelcarca (something to do with calibration of the alignment as Lady Ardana explained it to me, but I never really understood what she was talking about). As far as I know he may still be there, as he rarely left the observatory and could not on the day of the ritual [it is believed that he is still there – Ed.].

Mornaur - 'The Lord of Staves'



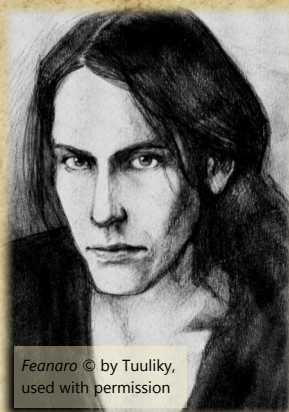
Noldolante Part I - Losgar © by Tuuliky, used with permission

He was a fiery Noldor elf, quick to kindle with enthusiasm and equally swift to anger, he was also the first who joined Ardana's mission on the promise of 'being granted realms to rule' and was also the first that Ardana warned Melkor about, since he was not truly loyal toward Ardana's mission. But he was a

genius at war (which is why Melkor suggested him to Ardana), indeed his greatest triumph was to incite the Múmakani to war against the Kirani of Tuktan.

But he ruled Ithilkir from the beginning as though it was his own private fief, not to mention the pride he took in wearing his own sigil (this was an inverted triangle behind a flaming staff), and rarely bothered to come to the Court. I once overheard him say that he never acted without considering what Valkrist would do, whom he saw as his main rival. He also had the typically haughty Noldor attitude, especially with those he considered 'beneath him' which for him was just about everybody. As far as I know he still rules Ithilkir and still plots to defeat Valkrist as I write.

Valmorgûl - 'The Magician'



Feanaro © by Tuuliky, used with permission

Another elf like Mornaur who was promised great realms to rule in the South and another one responsible for the Court's failure – he was recommended to Ardana by Melkor and appointed the Warden of the citadel since no one knew more about the art [this being *The Art of Magic*]

than him, yet he let his hatred of Morthaur take precedence over his duty, and used the ritual as an excuse to kill his rival. This meant that he left all security arrangements on that day to Taurclax. Another reason for his failure was that he preferred his other role as 'The Magician' and began staying at Sarûl rather than performing his duty at the citadel. He also got distracted by setting traps for Laurrë Menelrana, who as the son of Chrys Menelrana Valmorgûl wanted to kill him personally (as Chrys had removed his left arm in a duel long before). The Lady told me that he had also tried more than once to influence the Council to elect him as their leader, as if they would ever consent to being led by him! He was hated by all of us 'lesser folk'. Not only did he make no secret of his racial superiority (another tall, blonde Noldo of the House of Finrod), but he would also kill a servant or an underling for something as trivial as a dropped cup. I understand that he survived the collapse of the citadel (having a handy escape route) and still rules Tantûrak in his guise as the "Magician".

Rilīa - 'The Sorceress'

No one thirsted for a realm of their own more than my former mistress, Rilīa. According to what I have heard she was released from prison by Melkor



Elf sketch © by Onur Bakar, used with permission

himself when she was found ordering around one of his Balrogs! She was always demanding, impatient and loved to others, but she also had a 'gift' for communicating with spirits on the their side – she sent Sauron's

Undead servant Ji Indûr [one of the Ringwraiths – Ed.] away

on a minor errand as he was powerless against her. I will say this much in her favour: she ruled Naurindol well with a strong hand (so different to Ardana), but she often made excuses to be absent from the Court, and I often thought that she only put up with me because others thought we were related due to our similar appearance (a coincidence she loved). This is why she insisted I wear similar clothes to hers (she was almost as vain as Cambragol). She brought Lesh Y with her when she joined the Court, and was responsible for murdering Eldarion because she believed he had 'slighted her'. Ironically she died during the collapse of the citadel, as the ritual required her special gifts to proceed.

Gorthaur - 'The High Priest'

Gorthaur was another Noldo with too much self-love and not enough loyalty to the Court. Somehow, what was done to him in Angband



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made him a fervent worshipper of Melkor and rabid on performing 'rituals for the Master', so he was a natural choice of Melkor's to accompany Ardana to look after all ritual matters. But then a

fateful decision was made by the whole Court, which was to disguise him as the human god Amaav so the Court could sway this warlike people – this decision worked for the Court at that time, but it changed Gorthaur – just like Valmorgûl, it seemed that he grew to prefer his new role as 'God', and as time went on he came to the citadel less and less, and was noticeably absent for the most important ritual of all! During the few times I spoke with him he seemed to think that he should be 'in charge' since he started to believe himself that he was a God indeed! He may well still be in Aurax-Dur listening to his human worshippers.

Taurclax and Khelekar - The 'Untitled' and the 'Scholar'

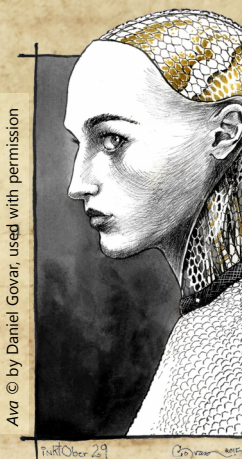
These two are usually seen as a team, since they both joined Ardana's mission just before she set out



Celeborn © by Līga Klavina, used with permission

on the long ship journey south and because they stayed at Taurang together and were hardly ever seen apart from each other. But in fact they could not have been more different. Taurclax was a Dark Elf related to Eöl who shared his sentiments against the Noldor, thus Melkor

regarded him as the perfect spy within the Court. But of



Ava © by Daniel Govar, used with permission

course the Lady knew why Taurclax was selected by Melkor, it was her genius to set a 'counter-spy' on him – this was Khelekar, strange albino Noldo who had been released from prison by Melkor because of his appearance (Melkor loved freaks) and because he had a lot of useful knowledge of

the southern lands. He also loved books and reading very much— indeed, he was largely responsible for the birth of the book trade in the South.

Taurclax took his duty literally, as he began reporting to the new Dark Lord Sauron after the first failed attempt at the ritual. I once overheard him complain to the Lady that he had no 'official title' within the Court, but he did not complain again after the Lady pointed out to him that calling him 'The Spy' would not work in public, even if most of the Court knew who he was. But she also underestimated him, such as on the fateful Day when he ensured that Morlan and his associates could sneak into the citadel undetected. Somehow he also made a bargain with the palace demons that are now called the Winds of Taurang. According to rumours he had (like Melkor) given part of his real self to the demons in exchange for their aid and because of this his realm was the most secure and independent of them all. With his 'bargain' he was able to gain extra powers and in return they were able to take proper form, usually as slender figures that were clothed in black. As far as I know he escaped the collapse of the citadel and went back to his tree fortress of Taurang, and maybe Khelekar is still there too, criticising Taurclax as ever.

Valkrist - The Lord of Arms

Valkrist was the last to join Ardana's mission before they sailed to the southlands. I was told (in the strictest confidence) that he joined because he had saved the party from an attack by humans when



Gold Mace © by Daniel Govar, used with permission

the ship had to dock for repairs (he killed most of the attackers by himself), he was one of the greatest warriors to walk Middle-earth, probably good enough to match against Fingolfin the High King himself, and the only individual to defeat both

Mornaur and Cambragol in single combat (which earned him their enmity). Yet unlike most of the Court he was very self-effacing and was consistent in his support and duty. The irony is that he was only half-elven and of Sindarin blood and was therefore regarded as 'lesser' by the other Lords (though never to his face of course). But he confessed to me once that his tainted background had driven him to prove others wrong and that he didn't care about the Court's mission as such. But he had sworn an oath to the Lady and that mattered to him (unlike some of the other Lords!). As time went by he also was guilty of ignoring the Court in favour of his own fief, as he seemed to love nothing more than flying on the Falcons at Tirgoroth. He died when the citadel collapsed, having slain many of the invaders himself.

The Dark Elves

[These were those elves that joined the Court in the Southlands, many were wrongly called Noldor in other sources. This was due to the propaganda of the Court itself. These elves joined for various reasons, some like Linsûl herself did so because they felt rejected by the three Elven lords of Ty-Ar-Rana who governed the elves prior to the coming of The Court. What Linsûl makes clear is that only on rare occasions were they granted equal status with the Noldor members, even though some of them were Tatyar elves - Ed.].

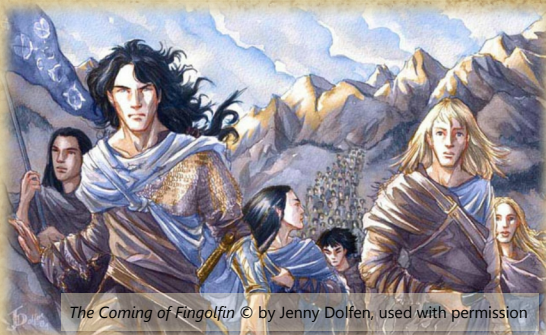
Valgûn & Persuivious - 'The Thief'

A classic example of how we Moriquendi were overlooked by most of the Court. Valgûn was a quiet, even-tempered elf who was (unlike me) able to calm Rilia down now and then, but being a Dark Elf and also female and tiny, the only recognition she received was to be given the title of the 'Court's Thief'. She frequently went on espionage missions for the Court, often with Persuivious. The two of them did much in aiding the Court to neutralize its enemies, yet Rilia never liked her being absent from Naurilindol (she valued her calm counsel but would never admit it). Persuivious was not even given a title (he was of Nelyar blood so was even lower), he preferred to be on missions with Valgûn or anywhere other than near Cambragol.

Sirnaur & - 'The Lady of Staves' & Valnaur - 'The Knight of Staves'

One of the ways that Ardana defused conflict within the Court was to give out empty titles such as 'Lord of Swords' or 'Lady of Staves' to us Dark Elves, to camouflage the fact that they were not Council members and thus not really involved in decisions. So Sirnaur was called 'Lady of Staves' even though Rilia ruled Naurilindol with an iron fist and the same goes for the other titles given out. The real lords were the members of the Ardan Council as I've said. Occasionally one of us 'assistants' would get to rule briefly, but such things would only be temporary. This was probably why Sirnaur (a Tatyar elf) preferred to be close to the volcano, she was very thin and frail and preferred the heat, and why Valnaur preferred to focus on his duties as Captain of the Guard or his appearance - he loved wearing bright coloured clothes and was encouraged to do so by Rilia.

Sûlherok, Sûldun, Etendor & Vairesul



These four all resided at Tirgoroth under Valkrist, where they were treated better than others. Sûlherok was the herald of the Court, responsible for delivering messages from one Lord to another, so he was often the target of unwarranted outbursts, especially from Rilia, although I know that he was locked in the dungeon of Mirisgroth by Cambragol once! I don't know what happened to them.

Palandor

Although Palandor was nominally a resident of Ithilkir, he stayed there as little as he could, disliking Mornaur (which was understandable). So he took to wandering all over the lands, often with Valglin & Persuvious. He was of the Nelya people.

Camring, Taurion & Vallin

These three stayed at Aurax-Dur but were often out as none of them liked staying with Gorthaur the 'mad priest'. Camring was the healer of the Court so he would often be required elsewhere, and he also tried to stay near the citadel as he loved Morelen deeply (I don't know how she felt about him). Taurion loved the forest and therefore preferred to stay outdoors as often as possible. Vallin loved the sea so she was usually found on boats or near the water.

Silion & Sarkarxe

These two were not Dark Elves, instead they were Sindar that accompanied Taurclax (who promised them wealth and power) but were treated as if they were Dark Elves. They were not at all happy at being given subservient roles within the Court, so they constantly tried to undermine Taurclax' position – this aided the Court as it kept Taurclax busy and minimised his plotting.

Yavëkamða, Ardaron, Tirial & Valandor

These four resided at Angkiryä with the Fëatur, they were all Tatyä Elves. Yavëkamða has been erroneously blamed by others for being a traitor to the Court. She was in fact fooled by the male Fëatur like we all were. If he could fool the Valar themselves, what chance did we elves have of seeing through his lies? As the Court's surgeon she actually helped Valmorgûl to survive after his duel with Chrys Menelrana by fashioning an artificial arm for him, not that



this changed his attitude towards her much! Sadly she died in the collapse. Ardaron was like Taurion and preferred being out in the forests. Tirial's notable achievement was to get trained by Cambragol in the art of fighting without weapons.

Valandor was the most 'Noldor-like' of us Dark Elves – he constantly fretted over his appearance and got his servants to dress him in more flamboyant clothes. And he was paranoid that everyone coveted his position (a not uncommon trait for many in the Court!).

Arduin

Being a gifted seer, he was appointed as assistant to Ardûval at Menelcarca.

Curliodor & Valsûl

These two were based in Mirisgroth and were often in charge as Cambragol preferred to spend most of his time at the citadel. They preferred this arrangement as well.

The Demons: Morfuin & Lesh Y

'The Lord Demon' as Morfuin was called could be as bad tempered as Rilia, he was appointed to Ardana from the beginning of her mission by Melkor as a bodyguard, being one of Melkor's Balrogs (though of lesser stature). So, naturally he wielded the whip and sword and was a master of fire magic. He was sent back to the Void after Ardana's death. Lesh Y or Airatano, as he is also known, was also a fire spirit but very different - being calm and having served the Vala Aulë in ancient times he liked nothing more than making things. He was also the Court's smith; he was banished to the Void after Rilia's death who had summoned him.



Flame of Udûn © by Daniel Govar, used with permission

THE GREAT LORD'S CRYSTAL

[This is the Morgoth Crystal, supposedly lost in the sea when the citadel collapsed - Ed.].



© Crystal skull at the Musée du quai Branly, Paris

When Melkor returned to Middle-earth from Aman, he had many servants wandering all over the lands. And it was a problem for him to keep in touch with them. At first he gave out small tokens so others would recognise their keepers' authority, but he always wanted something better. When Ardana's mission was planned, he was concerned that they would be too far away for communication purposes. This is where Morthaur's genius came in, for he crafted the crystal (in the likeness of a bust of Melkor's head) after some time in Melkor's company. I think he was also influenced by what Fëanor had done in Aman with 'seeing-stones' for indeed the crystal is made from the same substance as those stones. The crystal could then be used to communicate with Melkor no matter how far away, so that Ardana in the Far South was still able to keep Melkor abreast of certain events. The crystal lost its purpose with the first failure of the Court and Melkor's banishment into the Void.

But I recall Morthaur once saying to me that the crystal could even communicate to Melkor beyond the doors of light, if the barriers between Arda and the Void were somehow weakened.

[this last paragraph is intended as a clue for player characters]



THE GLOOMWEAVER AWAKENED

A REIMAGINING OF THE THEMES PRESENTED IN 'THE DAWN OF UNLIGHT' BY GRAHAM STAPLEHURST

By Paul 'Halbarad' Kirk
(paulkirk187@gmail.com)
based on an adventure by
Graham Staplehurst

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Regular OM contributor Paul Kirk has done it again and provides us with a fascinating adventure for The One Ring roleplaying game. This time he re-juvenated an old magazine adventure from White Dwarf magazine, authored by the legendary Graham Staplehurst.

We are greatly indebted to Graham for giving us permission to use his adventure as a basis for the new, re-imagined look of the same theme.

adventure



PREFACE

Back at the dawn of the Third Age, Graham Staplehurst was renowned as an author of settings and adventures for MERP, then the licensed Middle earth Roleplaying game, published by Iron Crown Enterprises (ICE). One of my favourite adventures that was penned by this prolific scribe was named *The Dawn of Unlight* and it was published in White Dwarf magazine #64 in TA 1985. It was, in fact, my first foray into roleplaying in the world as described by Professor J.R.R. Tolkien and I retain fond memories of how suitably epic and 'Tolkienesque' it felt after several years of hack'n'slash dungeon crawls with 1st Edition AD&D.

Ever since the release of the *Heart of the Wild* and *Darkening of Mirkwood* supplements for TOR, I have been pondering how this adventure might fit, as written, into that campaign. Finally, I had to concede defeat as I realised that Graham's vision of Mirkwood differed to that currently envisaged by Gareth Ryder Hanrahan and Francesco Nepitello.

The basic concept for the adventure, however, was sound and I decided instead to attempt a reimagining of the adventure so that it could fit into both the current setting and the proposed timeline of the *Darkening of Mirkwood*.

As with the original adventure, it involves buying into the small¹ conceit that the entity known as Ungoliant is not dead and gone and that in the right circumstances, she might be able to return to Middle-earth. It also accepts the veracity of some early writings by Tolkien where he indicated that the great hero, Eärendil, slew Ungoliant.² This was then, seemingly, discarded and two later references to her eventual fate were put forward: The first and most widely accepted is that she simply consumed herself. The second is that she still exists to this day, in the far south lands. My version of events lifts a little from each of these references to build my own 'truth of the matter.'

So, a big thank you to Graham Staplehurst, whose original adventure inspired this homage, to Richard Harrison for his support and to Thomas Morwinsky for hosting it in Other Minds.

¹ Or big – depending on your preferences concerning canon.

² His rôle in the legendarium was then very different than in the later versions.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

- **Where** - The adventure takes place in the Narrows of the Forest, in Southern Mirkwood and the East Bight.
- **What** - The fellowship are tasked with journeying to Sunstead, to bring news of the deaths of several of their warriors.
- **Who** - The Shade of Ungoliant has stirred from her slumber in the depths of Mirkwood and has entered into alliance with the Sorceress of Mirkwood.
- **Why** - The alliance will allow the Sorceress to have her revenge upon Sauron and will give Ungoliant physical form once more.
- **When** - If the adventure is to be played as a part of the Darkening of Mirkwood campaign, it would work best if set in TA 2949. Ceawin of Sunstead has made himself and his people known to the Woodmen at the Rhosgobel Folkmoot in TA 2948 and other events begin to affect their lands in the East Bight from TA 2951. Otherwise, it can be set at any time after the Necromancer has departed Dol Guldur for Mordor.

IMPORTANT

THE NOT SO SUBTLE MAGIC OF MIDDLE EARTH

Please do not read any further, unless you are a Loremaster. The information in the next few paragraphs is for Loremaster's only.

At the, hopefully, epic conclusion of this adventure, the Heroes are likely to find themselves in confrontation with one of the great ancient evils of Middle Earth. It is entirely possible, that players being players, they will miss the hints on the possible (and pivotal!) use of the white jewelled ring.

If this is the case and they have neither listened to Radagast's advice nor attempted to wield it atop the Elf Lord's *haudh*, then it is time to drop the subtlety. Proximity to Ungoliant will cause the Ring to flare of its own volition as Middle-earth's inherent magic takes over.

Wisdom Tests all around at this point at TN12 will allow you as LM to describe the scene as the growing black cloud (that somewhat resembles the Mind Flayer from *Stranger Things*, Season 2) seems to recoil and shrink away momentarily from the light of the ring, before another of the twinkling jewels goes dark and the shadow looms resurgent. The successful Wisdom tests mentioned above let players discover that the creature/shadow seems to be susceptible to the light of the ring

Be sure to inform your players of the rules for how to obtain a magical result from an enchanted object: They must make a successful skill test and then spend a point of Hope. The test in question is Awe and the Shadow Entity's Hate is reduced as if the wielder was using the Forward Stance: Intimidate Foe Combat task. Once its Hate is reduced to zero, it is defeated.

BACKGROUND

The Fate of Ungoliant

The creature, or entity, known as Ungoliant fled from Nan Dungortheb, before the War of Wrath and the breaking of Beleriand, into the south of the world. She was caught up with and wounded, near unto death, by the great hero Earendil and was forced to flee north and east to escape her pursuer. Finally, exhausted and famished, she crept into the deepest caves beneath the mountains of Greenwood the Great to hide until she was recovered.

But her brood had abandoned her and she dwelt there, alone in the dark. Weakened and unable to leave her sanctuary for fear of the vengeance of the Elves, she is finally believed to have consumed herself in her uttermost famine.

Yet, Ungoliant was not truly dead. Her mortal shell remained hidden, deep beneath the Mountains of Mirkwood where it had calcified into black rock and her shade lingered, much diminished in power if not in malice.

At the beginning of the Second Age she was weak, weaker than she had ever been, with only a vague awareness of the wider world and what was happening there. She was conscious of the rise of Sauron but was afraid of his power after the forging of the One Ring. Thus it was that she lurked in the deep dark places until, finally, the Dark Lord was defeated and his Ring of Power lost.

At the dawn of the Third Age, she sensed that the time of the Elves began to run out. Their mighty Lords and Heroes were no more, their armies were shattered and only a handful of sanctuaries remaining. She called out to her brood and they came to her, a mere handful at first, but increasingly more as the centuries passed.

The Coming of the Necromancer

She was immediately aware of the arrival of the Shadow in the Greenwood and recognised him for who he was. Without the power of the One, Ungoliant believed that she could make this Necromancer subservient to her will and force him to return her to physical form. Her emissaries approached Dol Guldur, but Sauron was afraid and knew that without the One Ring, he might well become her pawn; and he was unwilling to meet with her envoys.

Eventually, the spiders began to congregate in ever greater numbers and in conjunction with the gathering forces of the Necromancer, they gradually forced the Elves out of the southern and central

regions of the forest. It was at this time that Greenwood the Great became known as Mirkwood.

At the same time, the Northmen of Rhovanion had carved the Bight from the eastern wall of Mirkwood but were faced with increasing hostility from the Parliament of Spiders and the Necromancer as they encroached upon their respective territories. Even so, such were the numbers of these Northmen and their skill at arms, that their expansion through to the Anduin Vale was only halted when many of their warriors departed to fight in Gondor's Kin-strife.

Meanwhile, the Elves had fought many skirmishes during their long retreat, never realising that they faced two terrible enemies lurking beneath the boughs of the darkening woodlands. They were likewise hostile to the Northmen who felled the forest trees in their thousands and would not join with them against their common foes. Occasionally, circumstance forced them into temporary alliance, though the attitude that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' never lasted long. Agreement between the Northmen and the Wood Elves rarely lasted beyond the resolution of any immediate danger. The relations of the Elves and these Northmen were very cold and short of war – were it not for the common enemy.

It was in the early years of the 16th century of the Third Age, that a skirmish was fought in the region that had become known as the Narrows of the Forest. A patrol of Wood Elves were beset by goblins near the edge of the East Bight. Their Captain, Caranfael, had in his possession a family heirloom, a ring of white gold, set with a white jewel that sparkled like pure starlight and flared brightly in the presence of servants of darkness, filling them with doubt and dismay.

A party of Northmen woodcutters were close enough to witness the flaring light of this *Ring of Oropher* but arrived too late to save Caranfael and his followers. They were, however, able to drive off the remaining goblins before the bodies of the Elves were robbed.

Their leader instructed a *haudh* to be raised over the bodies of the fallen Elf warriors and their valuables left upon them. Due to the strained relations with the Elves he did not believe that Northman envoys would be welcomed by Thranduil's people. He was no friend to the Elves either and had little inclination to make such an approach in any case. As a compromise – and since they were honorable folk – they were also loath to rob the fallen Elves. Instead, they gave them a burial according to Northman customs. A *haudh* was raised and Caranfael and his comrades laid to rest there.

THE RING OF OROPHER

A white Jewel, mined from under the mountains of Mirkwood when they were called the Calenorodrim, set in a band of white gold. The phrase 'I will be the light to hold back the darkness' is etched upon the exterior of the ring in Elvish script. These rings were presented by King Oropher to his Captains before the Host of Greenwood marched to join the last alliance of men and elves. Caranfael's grandfather, Celebôr, was one such captain and one of those pitiful few who returned home in the aftermath of the battle before the Black Gate.

It is a **Wondrous Artefact** providing a Major Blessing to **Awe**.

If a Hope point is spent for a Magical Result on a Successful **Awe** Test, the white gem flares with a brilliant white light.

It cannot be wielded by any servant of evil. Any being with **Hate** who touches the Ring of Oropher will sustain Endurance Damage equal to their Hate score in each round that they remain in contact with it. The damage sustained does not reduce along with Hate expenditure. If the Ring is picked up using gloves, gauntlets or carried in a pouch, the ring may be safely transported by such creatures.

¹ *haudh* is a Sindarin word meaning "funeral mound" (J.R.R. Tolkien, "Quenya Phonology", in *Parma Eldalamberon XIX*, edited by Christopher Gilson), p. 91

THE SORCERESS OF MIRKWOOD



Faerie Night © by Līga Klavina, used with permission

within the White Jewels of Galenorodrim are the key to resurrecting the Shade of Ungoliant.

Within these gems can be found the sustenance that Ungoliant needs to consume to regain her strength and take physical form once more.

The Sorceress set the Parliament of the Spiders and the Wildmen of Mirkwood two tasks; they were to bring the calcified and pitiful (compared to her original size and power) remains of Ungoliant to Southern Mirkwood and to search Mirkwood and its mountains for the white jewels. Goblin miners have reopened ancient delves beneath the Mountains of Mirkwood. They have had some small success and a small casket of uncut stones has made its way to Minas Raug, to join those other few that are being looted from Elf tombs throughout Mirkwood by the Wildmen.

Zimraphel, herself, journeyed to Laketown in the guise of a dignitary from Dorwinion. Her own mission was to find a gemcutter with the skill to cut and polish the newly mined gemstones for the ritual.

The black stone that is Ungoliant has been transported to Southern Mirkwood and it stands in the new Wildmen settlement of Ungurth Môr. Zimraphel secretly fears the treachery of the spiders and does not want to enact her sorcery in their stronghold at the Heart of Mirkwood, but she does not want to complete the ritual too close to Minas Raug either.

Statistics for the Sorceress are provided in the Bestiary at the end of the adventure.

Many years later, following the departure of the Necromancer from Dol Guldur, Ungoliant's minions made an approach to the Sorceress of Minas Raug, who readily agreed to an alliance.

Zimraphel was well versed in the Necromantic arts and realised quickly that the light contained

The Folk of Sunstead

These are a group of Northmen, related to both the Woodmen and Beornings, who previously lived in the West Nether Vales of Anduin. They appear in the TOR supplements 'The Heart of the Wild' and 'The Darkening of Mirkwood'.

In years gone by, farming communities existed upon the plains of the Western Nether Vales, near the banks of the River Anduin. The Folk of these settlements had existed peacefully with their Leofring neighbours for several centuries and considered the riders' stronghold of Dwarrowhall to be the principal market for their goods.

The sack of Dwarrowhall in TA 2940 led to these farming folk packing up and fleeing their homes. They crossed the Great River, bringing with them their livestock and such of their belongings as they could carry.

Their Chieftain marched his people around the southern borders of Mirkwood to reclaim the ancient lands of the East Bight. Despite warnings of dire consequences from Radagast, Lord Ceawulf would not be swayed from his chosen path.

The journey was long and fraught with danger and they were greatly reduced in number by the time they reached the East Bight. Ceawulf himself had been slain in a battle with goblins who spilled out from the shadow haunted eaves of the forest and the leadership of his folk had passed to his son, Ceawin.

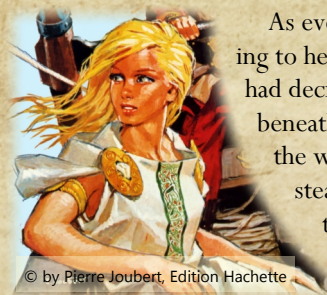
They built a settlement there and called it Sunstead. The Great Hall, they named Sigelseld. Life would be hard in the East Bight but, with the goblins soundly defeated, there are few enemies to fear and in the year TA 2948, with their settlement now well established, Ceawin of Sunstead decided to cross the Narrows of the Forest, to notify the Brown Wizard that they yet lived and to request the friendship of the Woodmen of the Forest Eaves.

Clotilda, daughter of Clovic

Clotilda, known as 'Tilda' to her parents, is a ten year old girl with an adventurous spirit and the unerring instinct to find trouble. Usually though, this is nothing that her own skills and luck cannot extract her from.

Tilda's latest and greatest misadventure came when her father, Clovic, was given Chieftainship of a woodcutters settlement, near where the East Bight becomes the Narrows of the Forest. The settlement consisted of a half dozen wooden cabins and a

watchtower, surrounded by an earthen ramp and a wooden stockade. A score of men lived there, along with half as many women and children. The place was so small as to barely merit a name, though Clovic named it *Tildaswerth* and claimed that it would be an important town one day.



As ever, instead of attending to her daily chores, Tilda had decided to go exploring beneath the dark canopy of the woods. She was as stealthy and swift under the trees as any

Woodman of the Western Eaves,

with eyes like a hawk and ears like a fox.

She was surprised and somewhat alarmed to find a number of strange, savage looking, men digging their way into an ancient grassy mound, some miles to the west of *Tildaswerth*. The mound was clearly the burial haudh of a mighty warrior of yore. Her father and Lord Ceawin had told her that this land was once the home of powerful Northman Princes.

She elected to observe them, to see what they were up to, before reporting their presence to her father. After a short time, the wild men began to whoop and cheer as their leader raised his arm in the air. Suddenly, whatever it was that he grasped in his hand flared with a blinding light and the villain howled in pain, dropping it upon the grassy mound.

After a short time of further rummaging in the desecrated mound, the leader of the Wildmen used the point of his spear to push the item into a hide pouch before picking it up again.

Tilda was indignant and determined that she would regain the ill-gotten spoils from these tomb robbers. She would then give them to her father, in the belief that he would know best what to do with the stolen treasure.

After a tense and fearful night, hiding beneath the black boughs of Mirkwood, she crept into the camp of the wild men just before dawn and stole the pouch. She fled back through the forest towards her home but, despite her stealth and speed, it was not long before the Wild Men were upon her trail. It was only by the vigilance of her father who had led the men of the village to look for her by the light of the early dawn, that she was saved from capture (and possibly a worse fate) at the hands of these Wild Men.

Tilda was met with a clip around the ear and some terse words, followed by a relieved embrace

from her father. She told him of what she had witnessed and led the men of the settlement back to the haudh, where they discovered that it was not in fact the tomb of some forgotten Northman Prince but the ancient resting place of an Elf Noble.

Filled with dread that the Elves might take them to be the despoilers of the tomb, Clovic went to *Sigelseld* to inform Lord Ceawin of the events. Ceawin immediately dispatched a trio of his house warriors to take the ring and a letter to Rhosgobel. There, they would seek the advice of Radagast the Brown on what would be the best course of action.

Ungurth Môr

The village of Ungurth Môr lies a mere twenty miles from Sunstead, yet lying within the tangled and twisted boughs of Southern Mirkwood and hidden beyond the Corpse Wood, it may as well be upon the moon.

It is a temporary settlement and has become home to the Ghost Spider Clan of Wildmen, who have recently arrived from their previous hunting grounds, east of the Black Tarn, in the Heart of Mirkwood.

The Ghost Spider clan numbers more than a hundred individuals, roughly a third of whom are hunters and warriors. Their chieftain and shaman is called Gorloth Môg.

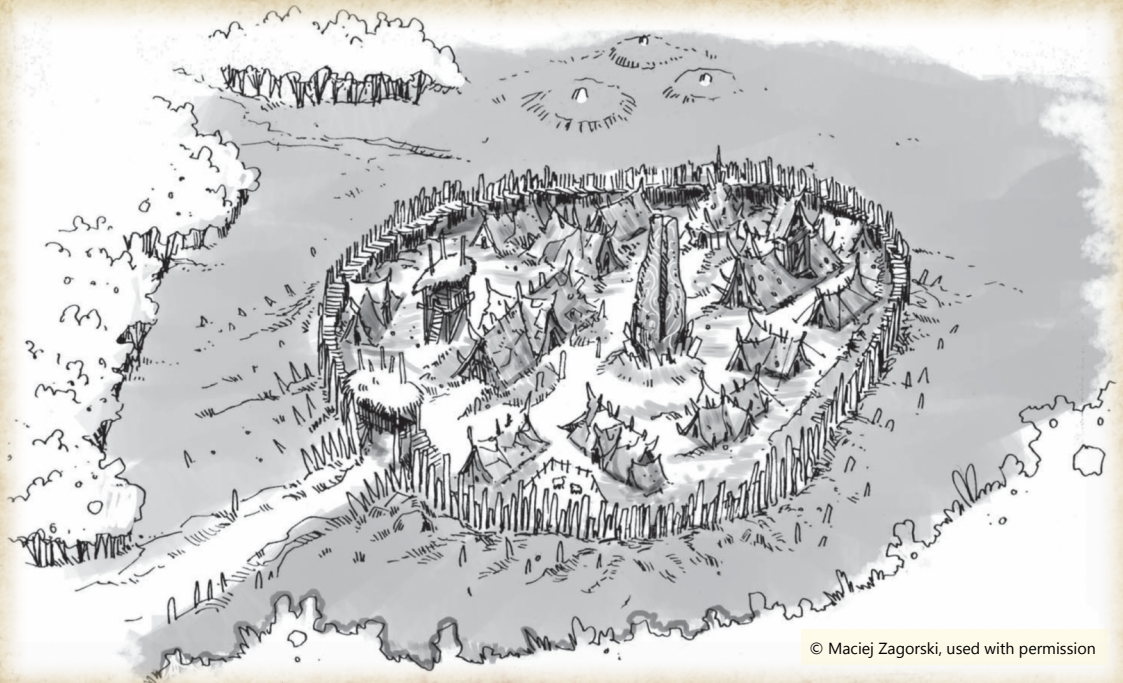
The village is built around a tall dolmen of oily black stone. This dolmen is the physical remains of

Ungoliant, calcified with age after her flight from Eärendil, over the Misty Mountains and into the depths of Greenwood the Great. It has been carried to this place at the behest of the Sorceress of Minas Raug and the Parliament of Spiders.

Gorloth Môg

The chieftain of the Ghost Spider clan is a powerful Shaman as well as a capable warrior. He deems himself to be blessed that the Shade of the Gloomweaver has chosen him to serve the Sorceress, the instrument by which she will return to the world of mortals. The Sorceress had instructed him to bring his folk south of the Narrows and to obtain, for her, the white jewels of the Elves. These could be found, she had claimed, in the burial mounds of the Elves that could be found, scattered, throughout the forest. They buried their belongings with them, she had also claimed and any other treasures that the Ghost Spiders found were theirs for the keeping.

He had found such a jewel as they were looking for too, but had managed to lose it almost immediately when a whelp of the Northmen had stolen it out from under his very nose. He had almost redeemed himself and caught the whelp, but was forced to withdraw when a group of warriors clad in leather and iron with long spears and sharp axes had appeared. Now the jewel was hidden within their stockade and he must petition the Sorceress for the strength to retrieve it. Her displeasure was obvious at this turn of events.



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PART 1 - TRAVELLERS FROM THE EAST

The Gloomweaver Awakens is assumed to take place in TA 2949. It makes the further assumption that the characters were present at Rhosgobel for the Folk Moot of TA 2948 and that they have remained among the Woodmen of Rhosgobel.

If not running the adventure in the suggested year, the Loremaster will need to develop his own reasons as to why the Fellowship would be in the village of Black Tarn. The betrothal feast of Amaleoda 'the Shieldmaiden' and Regnic 'The Russet Hound' of Rhosgobel might be delayed by several years as required, or it might be changed to the actual wedding ceremony. Another option might be the naming ceremony of their first child (or grand-child) if played at a much later date.

Representatives are present from each of the main Woodmen communities of the Forest Eaves, along with their retainers. The folk of Sunstead are absent and it is assumed by Amaleoda that, like the Folk of Mountain Hall, the distance must have been too great for them to travel at such short notice. Also present is the Fellowship, for whatever reason.

Black Tarn

Black Tarn village itself is small and unimpressive. There are a dozen family dwellings gathered around a village square with a nearly completed Longhouse. A ditch and wooden palisade surround the settlement, which would present little hindrance to determined raiders as there are simply not enough men to man them effectively. Still, it acts as a reasonable deterrent to the occasional wolves and goblins who pass by. A single watchtower stands over the entrance to the village upon it's northwestern flank. When the men of the village are not upon the Tarn, a dozen small boats for eel fishing are drawn up upon the stones of the lake-shore. A few animal pens are present for the villagers' livestock, mostly hogs, goats and a few chicken.

Depending on the events of the Folkmoot of 2948TA, Mogdred may be present as well. If he is present, he will spend the entire time glowering at Regnic of Rhosgobel. He wishes to strengthen his

own ties to the folk of Black Tarn and will seek to to outdo Regnic at any opportunity, in his own efforts to impress 'the Shieldmaiden'.

Regnic is known as 'the Russet Hound' for a reason however. He is as crafty and cunning as the fox from whom he takes his name and will not rise to the bait set by the Lord of the Tyrant's Hill, instead he will try to pull jokes on the dour and humourless Mogdred.

A Call for Help

It is the day before the betrothal feast. The women and children of the village venture out along the shores of the Black Tarn to gather the flowers of yellow and white water lilies to bring colour and beauty to the Great Hall for Amaleoda's ceremony of betrothal.

The men of the village are out upon the Tarn, fishing as usual, save for a handful of old greybeards who are shaving timbers of the almost complete Great Hall and a boy who stands guard in the wooden watchtower. The Representatives from Woodland Hall, Woodmen-town and Rhosgobel are gathered on the common ground before the Great Hall. They are placed at a long trestle table, listening to a Skald's poetry and enjoying a few mugs of ale in the Spring Sunshine.

(As previously noted, Mogdred of the Tyrant's Hill may also be present.)



Stranger in town © by arisuonpa, used with permission

The sound of a horn repeatedly blowing short sharp blasts comes from along the southern shore of the Black Tarn and moments later, women and children are rushing back into the village in panic. This is automatically recognised by any Woodmen as a distress call. Other characters may make a **Lore** test, **Battle** test or an **Insight** test at TN14 to deduce this. Invoking **Folklore** or **Mirkwood Lore** traits will also reveal this information.

The gathered Woodmen upon the common ground reach for their weapons alarmed. There are just over a score of Woodmen warriors currently in the village but, aside from Amaleoda 'the Shield Maiden', they are all members of retainers of the visiting dignitaries.

As one, the warriors start off in the direction of the horn but ‘the Russet Hound’ stops them all. He worries that this may be a trap, set to lure the men out of the village and leave it open to attack. He asks that the men of Woodland Hall and Woodmen town stand guard over the village while those of Rhosgobel accompany the Fellowship to investigate the sound of the horn. If the men of Tyrant’s Hill are present, he pointedly ignores them, leaving Mogdred to decide his own course of action.

Ingomer and Fridwald nod their assent to the plan and set their warriors to stand watch upon the village wall.

Accompanying the characters are Regnic and a trio of Woodmen of Rhosgobel named Ecwalda ‘the Archer’, Baldric ‘the Cunning’ and Hertmund ‘the Barrel’. Regnic attempts to persuade Amaleoda to remain behind, but ‘the Shieldmaiden’ pointedly ignores him and comes along.

It takes ten minutes of hurrying along the shore of the Tarn before the characters come upon a dead warrior lying among the reeds, his foes standing over his body, apparently searching for something.

If Mogdred is at the feast, then these foes are Orcs on a raid from Fenbridge Castle. They are standard Orc soldiers from the core rulebook and should be dealt with easily. If the adventure is set after the Dark Lord has revealed himself in Mordor, then the symbol of the Red Eye is daubed upon their shields. Otherwise, the Orcs have no distinguishing badges. Each member of the Fellowship will be faced with a single Orc soldier, while the ‘fog of war’ means that indeterminate numbers of others will be faced by the warriors of Rhosgobel (and of Tyrant’s Hill if they are present).

If Mogdred is not present at the betrothal feast, then the attackers are his men, though they wear no badges to identify themselves as such. These fellows are not accompanied by the savage hounds that typically accompany the servants of Tyrant’s Hill and are armed with axes and bows. Since the rejection of their master by the Woodmen, they have waited to wreak his revenge upon travellers between Sunstead and Black Tarn. There are five of these villains plus one for each member of the Fellowship.

Mogdred’s Brigands

Once the Fellowship has dealt with their opponents, the remaining villains will flee, leaving their dead in their wake. Ecwalda is wounded to near death and it will require a successful **Healing** Test at TN14 on the part of a member of the Fellowship to save his life.

Attribute Level	
3	
Endurance	Hate
16	3
Darry	Armour
3	1D+1
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 3
Movement, 2	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 3
Weapon Skills	
Axe	2
Dagger	1
Bow	2
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	
Leather Shirt, Cap of Iron and Leather, Axe, Bow, Dagger	

The Fellowship will discover that the dead warrior is a richly attired Sunsteader with a pair of equally dead companions, lying further back among the reeds. The three warriors sold their lives dearly though and so four dead foes are also to be found.

As the bodies brought back to Black Tarn, a **keen-eyed** character might spot that the richly attired warrior has a haversack about his neck. This haversack contains a small pouch with a ring of white gold set with a white jewel. There is also a sheet of parchment, its writing blurred out beyond recognition by the warrior’s fall into the water. Any member of the Fellowship who examines the ring closely will observe the etchings upon it (see the ring’s write-up above, for further information).

PART 2 - WORDS FROM THE WISE

Amaleoda immediately postpones her betrothal feast, much to the annoyance of Regnic and a moot is convened hastily. Mogdred, if he is present, is visibly heartened by this turn of events.

As the moot continues, it becomes obvious that the Sunsteaders were not on their way, unexpectedly, to the betrothal festivities. None of the dead warriors is Ceawin ‘the Generous’ and such a ring is a gift even beyond the wealth of Sunstead to give.

If the Fellowship does not suggest that they should take the ring to Rhosgobel for Radagast’s

counsel, then Regnic will suggest that course of action. It is dark however and the journey will have to wait until the following morning. It is a two day journey from the Black Tarn to Rhosgobel and when they arrive, it seems the Brown Wizard has been expecting them.

The journey from Black Tarn to Rhosgobel takes two days and will require a single **Travel** test vs TN14 to complete. Any character may invoke the **Mirkwood Lore** or **Hardy** traits for an automatic success.

Radagast the Brown

It is almost dark when the Fellowship arrives at 'Brown Hay' and the little gate in the thorny hedge, carved with a grinning face, opens of it's own volition to admit them. The Fellowship find themselves face to face with a bushy tailed red squirrel. Keen Eyed Heroes may spot that it wears a thin gold chain about its neck. With a theatrical bow, it requests the Fellowship to follow before bounding off past several cottages toward a copse of trees atop a low rise.

As they approach the hill, they see the path of crushed white stones leading beneath the boughs of trees close to a bubbling spring its water flowing from the hill into a pool shining silvery in the moonlight.

The path leads through the copse of trees for almost ten minutes before opening upon a small clearing with a thatched cottage to one side. Lights twinkle from the windows of the cottage, warm and welcoming in the darkness. The squirrel bounds across the clearing and up onto the thatch. A few moments later, the door to the cottage opens and the figure of Radagast appears, framed in the doorway by the lights within.

"Don't just stand there you fellows" he calls. Come in. The kettle is boiled and I am sure that you are famished after your journey."

It appears that the Brown Wizard has been expecting you.

Once within the cottage, the fellowship will realise that it appears somewhat larger from within than without. To say that it is untidy would be an understatement and the Wizard bustles around lifting piles of parchment from chairs and stools and shifting them onto a writing desk that is already overflowing. After a few moments, a collection of stools and rickety chairs are arranged around a small table near the fireplace with a warm crackling fire. A selection of simple food, bread and butter, cheese



Radagast © by Dan Pilla, used with permission

and fruit preserves is served. The stone flagged floor is strewn with straw and a large, grey hound lies stretched out before the hearth. Small birds are perched in the cottage rafters and other small animals seem to have nested in the gaps upon bookshelves and in any other available nook or cranny.

Radagast wraps his hand in a rag and lifts a kettle from the grate, before pouring boiling water into a large teapot.

"There now" he says, to no one in particular. "We'll just let it stand for a while. Tea is always better when it's allowed to stand"

This encounter with Radagast follows the normal procedure for Social Encounters. Radagast values Wisdom over Valour, with the initial Tolerance for the encounter set at the highest Wisdom Score among the Fellowship plus the highest Standing rating of any Woodmen in the party.

The Fellowship may now make preliminary **Insight** tests at TN14 to establish Encounter advantage dice.

Radagast is unimpressed by tales of Valour and social niceties. The attempted use of **Awe** will automatically fail and the use of **Courtesy** will be TN18. Radagast expects his visitors to be forthright in both speech and manner. He has received word that he is to travel to Isengard to meet with Saruman on a matter of great importance and has little time this evening for people who 'beat around the bushes'.

Regardless of the number of successes, Radagast will be willing to speak to the Fellowship about the ring that they brought from Black Tarn. The number of successes, before tolerance is exceeded, will indicate how much help he is willing to provide to the characters, should they request it. This help will come in the form of magical boons that he is normally reticent to provide. "Such boons as I can provide will draw the attention of the Shadow through their use and will let him know, in no uncertain terms, that you are friends to Radagast. Still, if you believe that my magic will help you more than it hinders, then I will consider your request. I will think upon what help I can provide that is suitable for your journey."

As soon as the tolerance is exceeded for the encounter, Radagast yawns loudly and insists it is time for all to retire for the night. He will indicate a door that the Fellowship has not yet noticed leading to rooms for each of them. They are welcome to stay for the night. The characters will find that the rooms are plain, comfortable and clean.

The following morning, Radagast will give to them a number of boons dependant on the number of Successes gained, before the Tolerance of the previous evening's encounter was exceeded. These boons are listed in 'A Darkness in the Marshes' from the Tales from Wilderland adventure anthology. The only boon that Radagast will not provide is the Storm Bag; he believes this to be excessive for the task at hand.

For those without access to Tales from Wilderland, I have included a pair of potential Magical Boons providing similar effects that could be used in place of the official list, or for supplementation.

- **Hunters Blessing** - Radagast provides the Fellowship's Huntsman with a charm that allows him to add a free Attribute Bonus to any use of the Hunting Skill.
- **Explorer's Blessing** - Radagast provides the Fellowship's Guide with a charm that allows him to add a free Attribute Bonus to any use of the Explore Skill.

Radagast is able to identify the white stone in the ring as a 'gem of Galenorodrim, a jewel of pure starlight', most likely mined from beneath the Mountains of Mirkwood in the days when it was known as Greenwood the Great.

As he peers closely at the ring, a look of deep concentration upon his face, he says:

"It is not of the First Age, neither is it the work of the smiths of Eregion, yet it is unmistakably Elvish."

He pauses for a moment and then continues. "That it contains an enchantment is beyond doubt. Though what that might be, I cannot be sure. It seems a good guess that the etchings are the key to both it's nature and it's intent."

He indicates the Elvish script to the Fellowship and explains it's meaning.

"I will be the light to hold back the darkness. Words for the Free peoples to live by, don't you think? I would think that such a Ring would be a mighty weapon if wielded as a weapon against darkness and shadow."

As to how the ring came into the hands of these Sunsteaders, Radagast has no idea. He suggests that the Fellowship takes it back across the Narrows, to speak with Ceawin and to advise him that it should be taken to Laketown, to be given to one of the Elves who live there. From there, it can then be returned to the treasury of King Thranduil. Radagast warns the Fellowship to caution Ceawin against keeping the Ring. "White Jewels such as the one mounted upon this ring have been the source of conflict between Elves and other folk in bygone days and we all should learn from past mistakes."

If asked, Radagast claims that he is unable to accompany the characters on this journey as he has received an urgent summons from the head of his order, Saruman of Isengard.

The following morning, the Fellowship is given a hearty breakfast before leaving. Their journey from Rhosgobel back to Black Tarn takes two days and requires a single **Travel** test vs TN14 to complete. Any character may invoke the **Mirkwood Lore** or **Hardy** traits for an automatic success.

PART 3 - The NARROWS OF THE FOREST

Upon returning to Black Tarn, the Fellowship finds that the assorted representatives of the Woodmen have remained there, waiting to hear the Wizard's wisdom.

Upon hearing the words of Radagast, food and supplies are gathered by the Folk of Black Tarn. Amaleoda informs the Fellowship that little game to eat can be found within the Narrows and precious little in the way of foraging. They must also carry extra water skins for the journey for much of the water they will encounter is not safe to drink.

A successful **Lore** test at TN14 or the possession of the **Mirkwood Lore** trait will confirm information.

The journey across the Narrows will take 11 days and requires 3 **Travel** tests at TN18 to complete. Failed **Travel** tests cost 3 points of Endurance due to overloading.

The land immediately to the south of Black Tarn Hall is a low lying area of wet woodland known as Black Tarn Fen. Close to the shore of the Tarn it is characterised by beds of tall reeds and dozens of small rivulets punctuated here and there by small stands of Willow trees. Further back from the shore, larger stands of Black Alder dominate the still sodden landscape.

It will require a successful **Explore** test from the guide at TN16 to successfully cross the Black Fen. Failure will delay them an entire day and each member of the Fellowship gains a point of Fatigue.

A Failure along with an **Eye of Sauron** means that the Fellowship has attracted the attention of a dangerous and predatory denizen of the Fen, the Fennorm.

Fennorm



The Fennorm, or Aelhûg as it is known in the tongue of the Elves, is believed to be an early and largely forgotten attempt by the Enemy to create Dragons. These hideous creatures are, thankfully, rare and those who yet exist are found in freshwater marshes, nesting upon dry ground amid the rivulets and water channels through the reeds. They are solitary and fiercely territorial but cowardly beasts, normally attacking from ambush, wrapping their coils about their victims to immobilise them before striking with their venomous fangs.

They are serpentine in appearance with iron hard scales and a dragonlike head, usually the size of a large constrictor snake. Rumours persist of a gigantic specimen that haunts the pools and meres of the Long Marshes where they lie beneath the rotten boughs of Mirkwood. None have ever witnessed this horrid monstrosity and lived to tell the tale. Only the marks of its passing, as found by Elf patrols, bear witness to its existence.

Attribute Level	
6	
Endurance	Hate
38	6
Darry	Armour
4	3D
Skills	
Personality, 1	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 2	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Bite	2*
Crush	3**
Special Abilities	
Concealing Mist ¹	Savage Assault ³
Craven (CB)	Snakelike Speed
Poison ²	Strike Fear
* Damage 6, Edge 'Eye of Sauron; Injury 14, called Shot Poison	
** Damage 12, Edge Eye of Sauron, Injury 12	
1 By spending a point of Hate, a Fennorm can emit a thick and cloaking fog that conceals it from its enemies for as many rounds as it has points of Hate remaining. Within the cloud, victims of the Fennorm may not take rearward stance and all attackers must roll the Feat Die twice on each attack, taking the lesser result of the two.	
2 The victim of a Fennorm's venomous bite must succeed at a TN14 Protection test or suffer immediate additional damage equal to half of its attribute score, each round until unconscious and dying.	
3 If a Fennorm hits an opponent with its Crush attack producing a greater success or better, it may immediately follow up with a Bite attack on the same target by spending a point of Hate.	



Sûlanar

These small white flowers are closely related to Simbelmynë and are widely believed to be repellant to creatures of Shadow. Undead creatures such as Woodwights and Fellhounds must expend a point of Hate for each round that they spend in contact with the delicate little flower.

In the middle of the night, the Fellowship's Look-out Man will hear a low and mournful howl coming from the east, on a successful **Awareness** test at TN12. The howl is answered by several more such howls, coming from the southeast. A small figure bursts into their camp; it is a girl child. She is dirty and disheveled, no more than ten summers old and she waves a small knife in defiance of any who attempt to approach her as she looks about frantically for a way to escape.

The Rivermaiden

Black Tarn Fen is the home of the Rivermaiden called Duskwater. The River Maiden and her two sisters are described at length in the Core Rulebook for the One Ring and are also featured in both the Heart of the Wild and the Darkening of Mirkwood supplements.

If the characters have successfully made the **Explore** test to cross the Fen, Duskwater will quietly observe them from afar and she will only be noticed by those who are actively watching. A Successful **Awareness** test at TN14 or the invoking of the **Keen Eyes** trait will reveal her presence. If they are blundering about in the Fen, she will approach with a smile and a pleasant greeting on the morning of the second day and offer to guide them across.

It should be noted by the Loremaster that Duskwater looks slightly different, in this encounter, to her appearance in the Darkening of Mirkwood campaign. She is not yet wearing the corselet of silver armor as described in the Darkening of Mirkwood. The events leading to this change in appearance have not yet occurred. She is completely naked, her modesty maintained only by the black tresses that seem to move of their own volition to disguise her nudity.

Once beyond Black Tarn Fen, the characters must cross a low range of wooded hills into a broad shallow valley that stretches east to west, right across Mirkwood. This part of the journey will take two whole days. A few spiders make their lair in these northernmost hills of the Narrows.

As the shadows lengthen on the first evening in this hilly country, the Fellowship will find themselves being stalked by one of the children of Tauler, a great Hunting Spider. This creature will follow at a distance and will only be spotted by a successful **Awareness** Test at TN18. Some time after the characters have settled down for the night and the guards are posted, the creature will attack out of darkness. This is an attempt by the Hunting Spider to *Ambush* the Fellowship and will follow the normal procedures for setting an ambush except that only a look-out can make the test to spot the attacker. Statistics for the Hunting Spider are found in both the Heart of the Wild and the Darkening of Mirkwood books.

Houls in the Night

Following this encounter, the journey will be uneventful until the tenth day when East Bight is approached, unless further encounters are generated as hazards by failed **Travel** tests.

In the early evening of day ten, the Fellowship notices that the trees are thinning out. They come upon a small clearing, dominated by a grassy mound carpeted with small white flowers. The characters are approaching from the west. Closer examination reveals that the mound is an ancient burial mound and that the eastern side of the mound has been partially dug up. A successful **Search** test at TN14 reveals scraps of moldering leather and a few bones scattered among the disturbed earth. Both bones and leather collapse into dust when touched.

A **Lore** test vs TN14, or the invoking of **Shadow Lore, Folklore, Gardening** or **Herbalism** will reveal that the small white flowers are known as King's Cup or Sûlanar, in the tongue of the Elves.

A pair of black shapes leap suddenly into the circle of light cast by the campfire. They are hounds, such as those bred by the Woodmen, but their coats are black as coal. Their skin seems to hang loosely from their bones and their eyes are ablaze with red fire. The stench that emanates from their moldering fur is choking in its vileness.

These creatures are Fell Hounds, created by Zimraphel in the pits beneath Minas Raug.

Fell Hound

While the Sorceress has managed to gather a small army of Orcs and evil Men under her banner, she has had little success in convincing the Warg packs of Southern Mirkwood to throw their lot in with her. In the depths beneath Minas Raug, she has created terrible travesties. Her raiders steal the pups of Mirkwood Hounds and bring them to her in her dark tower. There, these unfortunate creatures are terribly mistreated and tortured to sow the seeds of fear and hatred within them. Once they reach adulthood, they are slain and their bodies made receptacles for Fell Spirits, summoned by the Sorceress to increase her military strength.

They are dreadful creatures, coated in fur that is black and mouldering hanging loosely upon their bones. Their eyes glow red like balefires and a sulphurous reek threatens to choke their victims with its foulness. Fortunately, for the Free Folk, she seems to be limited in the number of these mockeries she can create at the same time.





Warg Riders © by Andres Canals, used with permission

can spend a point of Hope for a magical result. The resulting sphere of light will singe the hounds and scatters them into the night. Otherwise, several fearful hours will have to be endured as the creatures use their Dreadful Spells to lure them into leaving the small hillock. Eventually, if the Fellowship remain alive, the Fellhounds will withdraw with the coming of dawn.

Tildaswerth

After the withdrawal of the Fellhounds, the Fellowship may talk to the child.

This is a **Social Encounter**. Tilda has just witnessed the slaughter of her village and escaped the sinister attentions of the Sorceress. She trusts no one and getting information from her will be quite difficult, the exact amount resulting from the number of successes achieved before her Tolerance is exceeded.

Tilda is a very frightened child. She currently favours Valour over Wisdom as she needs warriors to save her and any that remain of her village.

The base Tolerance for the encounter is set at the highest Valour Score among the Fellowship.

If the characters defeated the Fellhounds, one may be added to the Tolerance Level.

If, however, the characters used the Ring of Oropher during the encounter with the Fell Hounds, Tilda will automatically assume the worst. She will believe that they have waylaid the warriors of Sunstead and stolen it from them. This will reduce the Tolerance of the encounter by one and means that their first task of this Social Encounter will be to convince her otherwise. A **Persuade** at TN14 will suffice, as might the use of any appropriate Traits. This success *will* count towards the overall total.

Persuade and **Inspire** tests are appropriate at TN14 during this encounter. Attempts to use **Awe** will require TN16 successes.

Insight Tests may be made as normal to gain Advantage Dice.

Use the table on the next page to determine the success level.

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
16	4
Darry	Armour
4	2D
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 2
Movement, 3	Custom, 1
Perception, 3	Vocation, 1
Weapon Skills	
Bite	2
Special Abilities	
Dreadful Spells*	Hate Sunlight
Foul Reek	Mournful Howl (strikes fear)
Great Leap	
* Mesmerizing Gaze: The Fell Hound's Eyes glow with red balefire, a fatal lure to the unwary. Any hero who meets their gaze directly is in grave danger. A character who fails a Corruption Test at TN16 finds themselves unable to tear their gaze away and drawn to follow the beast to whatever doom awaits them. Once enthralled, the character can only be revived by a successful Healing roll.	

After defeating the pair of hounds, further howling reveals that there are 'many' more on their way to descend upon the camp.

If the characters do not think of this themselves, the girl leads them to the mound that they discovered earlier where they prepare to make a stand against the Fellhounds. There will be one of the creatures for each member of the Fellowship.

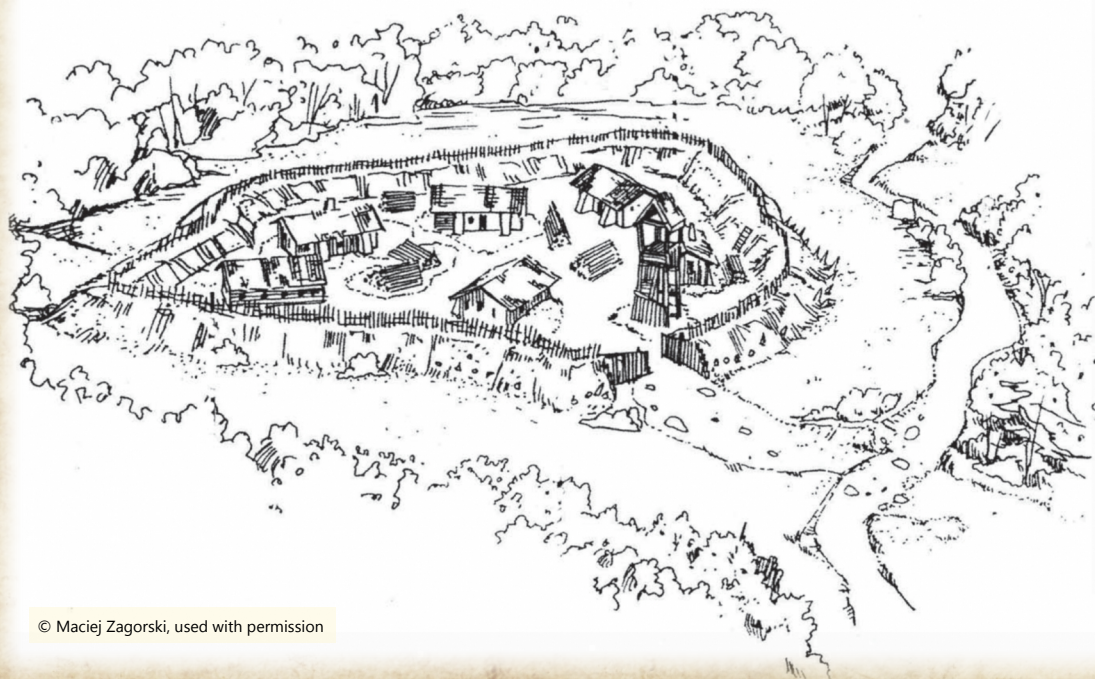
It is possible that the characters might attempt to use the Ring of Oropher at this point. A character who does so and succeeds at an **Awe** test at TN14

There is no smoke from burned homes. The characters will discover that save for a handful of curled up corpses of pale grey giant spiders, there are no bodies found. **Clever** or **Cunning** characters (**Battle**, **Insight** or **Riddle** test TN14) will realise that the men who accompanied the spider horde did not wish to draw undue attention.

with **Beast Lore**, **Enemy Lore (Spiders)** or who succeed at a **Lore** test at TN14 will conclude that the lack of corpses indicate that the Spiders probably carried them off and that there may well be survivors. Spiders are known to keep their food alive until they eat it. A **Hunting** test at TN16 will indicate the direction the raiders took when they left.

Tilda falls to the ground and bursts into tears. She will tell the Fellowship the story of her stealing the Ring from one of the Wildmen and that the attack on her village was her fault. Her father had sent her over the wall to seek aid of Lord Ceawin, but the Fell Hounds had forced her west and away from Sunstead. Sunstead is a half days journey to the southeast of their current position. If the characters ask her to go to Sunstead, Tilda will refuse. She is not afraid and knows she can reach Sunstead long before night falls once more, but she feels responsible for the fate that has befallen her people and wants to accompany the Fellowship in the rescue. It will take a **Persuade** test at TN16 to change her mind. If the characters refuse to let Tilda accompany them, or coerce her rather than convince her to seek aid at Sunstead, she will follow them at a reasonable distance. **Awareness** tests can be made once every two hours to detect her. The TN for the test is based on an opposed roll of Tilda's Stealth score of 4 Dice.

Following the tracks left by the raiders is easy enough. They are not expecting any pursuit and are making no efforts to disguise their passage. A **Hunting** test is required at TN12. The hunt takes until afternoon of the following day.



PART 4 - INTO THE PARLOUR

By mid-afternoon, the Fellowship will discover a cave in a low hillside. The approach to the cave leads the Fellowship along the edge of a stagnant pool, coated with greenish black scum. This has become the lair of a horde of Attercops. These particular Attercops are of a sickly greyish white colour and are worshipped by the Wildmen of the Ghost Spiders clan. These creatures accompanied the Ghost Spider clan on their journey from the Heart of Mirkwood to their current home.

Most of the spiders have departed their lair for Ungurth Môr and the Sorceress' Rites of the Dark Moon. This is the time that Zimraphel believes the ritual to revitalise Ungoliant will have the greatest chance of success. A mere handful, remain to guard their newly stocked larder. There is a single Attercop for each member of the Fellowship.

Held captive within the caverns are almost a score of Tilda's folk, including her mother and her father. Each of the survivors is cocooned in wraps of sticky Spider silk. Once the Attercops have been dealt with, it will be easy enough to free these survivors. They will prove to be of limited use though, still suffering from the after-effects of the spider's venom. Lord Clovic however, will be able to tell them that the woman leading the attack on his village called herself the Sorceress of Minas Raug, the Lady of the Demon's Tower and that she was looking for the same ring that was sent across the forest to Radagast.

USING THE SORCERESS OF MIRKWOOD IN THIS ADVENTURE

It may prove extremely tempting for members of the Fellowship to attempt to slay the Sorceress during the encounter at Ungurth Môr. I would suggest that the Loremaster should try to discourage this course of action. Though the Sorceress plays no part in the Darkening of Mirkwood campaign, it is entirely possible that future TOR releases may expand upon her influence and that her death may well render future adventures obsolete in the Loremaster's campaign.

Zimraphel's bodyguards have the Shadow Ability: Thrall. They willingly place themselves between their mistress and any foe. It should also be remembered that unless the Fellowship is unusually large, they will be outnumbered during this encounter. Only the radiance of the Ring of Oropher will prevent them from being overrun. If they refrain from using its light to attack her, it is upto the Loremaster to determine who engages whom. There are many Attercops, Wildmen and Easterlings to be fought while Zimraphel makes her escape.

Any attempt to target Zimraphel using bows will attract a -4 modifier due to interference from Wildmen and the darkness that shrouds the Village.

Once within the relative safety of the light of the Ring, the Fellowship becomes blind to events beyond it's border. This means that characters cannot take Rearward Stance to target foes beyond the circle of light. Zimraphel will take this opportunity to withdraw from Ungurth Môr, in case there are any more interlopers about to launch an attack.

Finally, should a hero manage to somehow come into contact with her, Zimraphel has her dreadful spell Acquiesce. With this she can prevent attacks upon her person. If this does not work, then the Loremaster should be prepared to accept that the Sorceress' doom may be upon her and let the dice fall as they may.

As the ritual continues, the edges of the standing stone begin to blur as Ungoliant begins to take shape and the twinkling lights fade, one by one, from the small pile of white jewels arranged around its base. At this point, the situation may look pretty dire, but using the Ring of Oropher and spending Hope for a magical result may save the day.

PART 5 - THE DAWN OF UNLIGHT

The Gloomweaver Awakes

Having rescued the surviving villagers of Tildaswerth, the characters find that the sun has begun to set as they exit the caverns of the ghost spiders. Then, after a short time, the quiet of the night is broken by the ominous beating of drums from somewhere deeper in the forest. The drumming should hopefully inspire the Fellowship to investigate the source.

Getting to Ungurth Môr will take about an hour's walk through the benighted forest. Then then characters will find a village of crudely built huts surrounded by a wooden stockade. The village is dominated by a large, oily black, standing stone. A cluster of twinkling lights can be seen at its base.

Several score of the wild folk of Mirkwood are wildly cavorting, chanting with religious fervour, leaping and jigging while a half dozen more are incessantly beating drums. A dozen pale white spiders are perched on the roofs of the huts. All are enraptured by the proceedings and the imminent return of their dark mistress. The words of the chant are incomprehensible, only the occasional use of the word Ungoliant can be heard clearly.

A tall and imperious looking woman, with raven black hair and clad in robes of dark crimson sits upon a carved wooden chair. She is surrounded by half a dozen warriors of her retinue. She watches the proceedings with a look of disdain. Her part in the ritual is now completed and she awaits to see if her sorcery has been successful.

Their approach is easy for the gathered Wildmen and Attercops do not expect any interruptions and have foolishly neglected to place guards on the fringes of the village. Each of the characters must make a **Stealth** test at TN12 to get inside the village unnoticed. Only the fact that the Easterling Guards are vigilant in guarding their mistress, prevents the Fellowship from marching straight up to her. Hopefully though, the Fellowship will realise that this Sorceress is a foe to be tackled on another day and will get on with preventing the return of Ungoliant.

There are well over a score of hunter warriors left in the village, despite their losses against the Sunsteaders of Tildaswerth, but they are terrified by the light of the Ring of Oropher and will not involve themselves in the attack until it is clear that the Fellowship has failed in its attempts to prevent Ungoliant's resurrection.

The Shamanic Chieftain, Gorloth Môg, can force himself into the fray but he needs to spend a Hate Ppoint to do so. The Shaman suffers a -2 Combat Complication while the magical light of the ring shines.

The albino Attercops may also engage the Fellowship by spending a Hate Point each round to overcome their fear. The magical light of the Ring of Oropher seems to cause the Attercops great distress and discomfort and the Combat Complication suffered is -4 for them.

There are twelve white jewels twinkling around the base of the standing stone. By the time the Fellowship is able to intervene, four of these have already been devoured and the entity oUngoliant will have six Hate Points. These six points comprise the four that she has gained from consuming the jewels plus the two that she already had, which maintain her link to the world of Middle Earth.

DEFEATING UNGOLIANT

To defeat Ungoliant, the wielder of the Ring of Oropher must diminish her Hate points to zero using **Awe** at TN18 as described in the sidebar at the start of the adventure. A single jewel will be devoured by the Gloomweaver each combat round and once all twelve are consumed, the spirit of Ungoliant will be given substance. Her own distress, as caused by the burning Elf light of the Ring of Oropher gives her a complication of -4, but as she has no actual tests to make until she finally attains physical form, I have reduced the TN for the fellowship's **Awe** test in order to best represent this.

The first time that the Awe test fails, or that the Character wielding the Ring of Oropher refuses to spend a Hope point to achieve a Magical Effect, Ungoliant will use the Shadow Ability Fearsome. This forces the Fellowship to take Valour tests (TN14). She will use this ability only once though, as she knows that she must ingest the light of the jewels to take physical form and she does' not want to prolong her weakness as a spirit.

Ungoliant needs to accumulate 12 Hate Points to take her material form. Although I imagine Ungoliant to be virtually unassailable at full strength, her initial power at this time of rebirth is comparable to a Dragon.

Epilogue

There are three potential outcomes to this adventure:

Outcome One: Ungoliant defeated

The first and most desired is that the Fellowship is able to reduce Ungoliant's Hate Points to zero. In this event, the Light of Oropher forces her growing darkness back into the confines of the standing stone. The stone then collapses into a mound of black dust which will be blown away upon the wind as the morning sun rises over Ungurth Môr. The Fellowship may interpret this in any way they wish, but it is absolutely clear that they have defeated a mighty foe. This is a defeat from which Ungoliant may never recover and each character's maximum **Hope** points are permanently increased by one and their current **Hope** score is increased by half of their **Heart** Attribute value (rounded down).

Surviving Attercops and Wildmen will have been scattered by the defeat of their mother goddess and will cause the Fellowship no further problems. Later that day, the Fellowship will encounter a large company of Spearmen out of Sunstead. They are led by Lord Ceawin and Tilda is with them. After telling their tale, they are escorted back to Sigelseld where they find that Tilda's parents and Lord Ceawin are most generous with their rewards. Each receives a Princely gift worth 5 Points of Treasure and the opportunity to open Sunstead as a Sanctuary in the Fellowship phase.

Ceawin gratefully accepts the wisdom of Radagast and suggests that the Fellowship return the Ring of Oropher to the Halls of the Elvenking. This provides a handy link to a further adventure, later the same year. The adventure is called 'The Questing Beasts' and is the actual Darkening of Mirkwood campaign adventure for that year.

Outcome Two: Postponement

The second possibility is that the characters have done just enough to prevent the immediate resurrection of Ungoliant. While a victory of sorts, members of the Fellowship will gain neither the boost nor the return of Hope Points.

Many of their companions may be dead, gaining them each a Shadow point from this harrowing display of evil power and they will, have to make a Corruption test at TN14 to avoid gaining a second

Shadow Point. Mechanically speaking, Ungoliant has not gained enough Hate Points to achieve physical form, but neither have the efforts of the Fellowship completely drained her of Hate and so only banished her once more. So this is only a temporary setback to her plans. There will be more of the White Gems to be found in other mounds or mountain delvings and only the location of her summoning will need to be shifted to avoid the interference of Elves and Men. How long this will take and where the new location will be, are up to the Loremaster.

Fleeing through Mirkwood, the characters will eventually be rescued by a company of warriors led by Lord Ceawin and taken back to Sunstead. Ceawin will be extremely alarmed by their tale and will immediately send for the aid of Radagast. Upon his return from Isengard, he will be assisting Gandalf to track the creature known as Gollum, whom the Woodmen believe to be a ghost haunting their settlements. Following the revelations of the events at Ungurth Môr, the Wizards will cease their pursuit and return to Thranduil's Halls with the Fellowship.

Following the great hunt, described in 'Questing Beasts', Thranduil will agree to their proposition to send his warriors to help Sunstead in finding the sorceress and bringing an end to the return of Ungoliant.

Radagast will return to Rhosgobel, while Gandalf journeys to the Lonely Mountain to meet with Balin, before leaving for the Shire.

Outcome Three: Heroes defeated

The third and final possibility is that the Fellowship has failed to prevent the dawn of Unlight. In that case they are likely dead. If not, they are most likely prisoners of the sorceress at Minas Raug. Any characters who are held captive at Minas Raug will automatically gain two Shadow Points due to the knowledge of the far reaching consequences of their failure. They will also need to make a Corruption test at TN14 to avoid gaining a third. If any character has knowingly abandoned a companion to captivity, they will automatically gain a further Shadow Point. Ungoliant is comparatively weak at this point and scuttles back to her lair beneath the Mountains of Mirkwood to grow in strength. Eventually, she will be strong enough to face Sauron but for the present she waits. In the meantime, the fate of the One Ring will be decided and Sauron defeated, followed by the dawn of the Fourth Age.

BESTIARY

Zimraphel -
The Sorceress of Mirkwood



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As revealed in Heart of Mirkwood, Zimraphel is a Black Númenórean from the city of Umbar, far to the south. She desired to retain her youth and beauty and journeyed to Dol Guldur, where she hoped to find a way to cheat death. Her audacity amused

Sauron and he deigned to teach her the dark arts of Necromancy.

During his flight from the White Council in 2941TA, the Necromancer abandoned his minions to whatever fate awaited them. Zimraphel fled Dol Guldur and took up residence in the Tower of Minas Raug. Here she hid from the Wise while she plotted her rise to power and her revenge upon the master who deserted her.

There are none alive, save Sauron and the Sorceress herself, who know how many years she lived upon Arda. Were she inclined to reveal such information, she would claim that she sailed up the Anduin in a black boat during the reign of King Castamir.

Zimraphel is tall and imperious with a cruel cast to her features. Her physical appearance remains that of a beautiful, dark haired, woman in her mid to late thirties, but her soul has long since become old and withered.

Her corruption has doomed her to eventually fade and become a Fell Wraith in service of Sauron. Her previous desire for a Ring of Power has been replaced by an all-consuming obsession. She mistakenly believes that the possession of such an artifact would enable her to fend off her dreadful fate indefinitely, not realising that it would hasten it.

She has gathered several gangs of Orcs under her banner of the Crescent Moon and has recruited a company of mercenaries of Variags and other Easterlings of Rhûn. Her spies scour the banks of the Anduin and the Gladden Fields in search of the One

Ring. These villains profess their loyalty to Sauron, but act in the interests of their mistress. This subterfuge is needed as those who support the Dark Lord are many, in comparison to her meager numbers.

Zimraphel has allied herself with the Parliament of Spiders, only to serve her needs. The Spiders have promised to aid her in her search for a Ring of Power and with the support of Ungoliant, Zimraphel believes that she can have her revenge upon Sauron. She fears to perform the ritual inside the spiders' territory, but is wise enough not to resurrect a powerful entity such as Ungoliant upon her own doorstep. They have finally agreed upon a location for the ritual in the woods to the south of the East Bight, just west of the Corpse Wood.

Attribute Level	
5	
Endurance	Hate
20	8
Parry	Armour
5	1D
Skills	
Personality, 4	Survival, 3
Movement, 3	Custom, 3
Perception, 3	Vocation, 5
Weapon Skills	
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
Commanding Voice	Necromancer**
Dreadful Spells*	Wicked Cunning
* Dreadful Spell Acquiescence: If the target of this sorcery fails the Corruption test at TN14 it gains one Shadow Point. It also becomes unable to raise a hand against the spell's caster for a number of combat rounds equal to the caster's current Hate score. The target also becomes susceptible to suggestions of the spellcaster and will carry out almost any request short of harming itself or erstwhile allies	
** Necromancer: a creature with this Shadow Ability has the power to compel fell spirits to enter the bodies of the dead and imbue them with a corrupted semblance of life. The creature may never directly command more of these fell spirits than its Hate Points.	

Mercenaries of Minas Raug

Varangian Guard © by IlazarausEB, used with permission



These fellows are cruel and savage, recruited mainly from East-erling folk who dwell in lands beyond the rhovanian plain. They are kin to the Balchoth of old, well trained and fanatically loyal to Zimraphel, bearing her

symbol of a crescent moon emblazoned upon their shields.

They wear crimson armour, fashioned from leather scales and wield viciously curved sabers and short curved bows of horn. The sorceress is accompanied by at least six of them at any given time.

Attribute Level	
4	
Endurance	Hate
14	4
Darry	Armour
6 (4+2)	2D+4
Skills	
Personality, 2	Survival, 2
Movement, 2	Custom, 2
Perception, 2	Vocation, 2
Weapon Skills	
Bow	2
Sword	3
Dagger	2
Special Abilities	
No Quarter	Trained**
Thrall*	

* Thrall: This is the same Shadow Ability that is described in Heart of the Wild under the entry for Wild Men of Mirkwood, with the difference that the Sorceress's guards do not become Craven in the event that their mistress is slain or flees. Their thralldom is voluntary, having sworn to defend the beauteous Zimraphel, Mistress of Minas Raug.

** Trained: This Ability is described in the Riven-dell sourcebook for The One Ring.

Fell Hound



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While the Sorceress has managed to gather a small army of Orcs and evil Men under her banner, she had little success in convincing the Warg packs of Southern Mirkwood to ally themselves with her. Thus she turned to her own design: Her raiders steal the pups of Mirkwood Hounds and bring them to her in her dark tower. There, they are terribly mistreated and tortured to sow the seeds of fear and hatred within them. Once they reach adulthood, they are slain and their bodies made into receptacles for fell Spirits, summoned by the Sorceress.

They are dreadful creatures, coated in fur that is black and moldering and hanging loosely upon their bones. Their eyes glow red like balefires and a sulphurous reek threatens to choke their victims with its foulness. Fortunately, for the Free Folk, she seems to be limited in the number of these mockeries that she can create at the same time.

Their stats have already been given on page 51. Please check there for more details.

Balti, son of Baltun

Some time before the events of this adventure, but after the agreement was reached between the sorceress and the Parliament of Spiders, Zimraphel traveled to Laketown and presented herself as Siralynâ, a merchant princess from Dorwinion.

She claimed to seek the services of a gemcutter and used honeyed words to entice the Dwarf, Balti son of Baltun into her service. She had need, she claimed, of the unrivaled crafting skill of the Dwarves whom no other could match.



Balti was quite possibly the least able of the Dwarf artisans of Laketown, but he still exceeded the skill of all but the best among men. Here, in Laketown, he was a big fish in a small pond rather than the nobody he would be among the scores of far more skilled crafters under the mountain. He was however, a foolish fellow, susceptible to flattery and possessed of the famed avarice of his kinfolk. He was easily seduced by this beautiful woman's lies and by the gold rings that adorned her long fingers. He might not be the most skilled, but Balti planned on becoming very wealthy by accompanying her back into the East.

One of Balti's more redeeming qualities was that he was a good son to his father, the elderly and oft bemused, Baltun. Balti said that he would only go with Lady Siralynâ if his father could accompany them, as he could not bring himself to abandon the old fellow; Zimraphel readily agreed. The foolish Dwarf had just provided her with the leverage to force him to carry out his work, once he discovered that she was actually the dreaded 'Sorceress of Mirkwood'. Balti is now a prisoner in the workshops of Minas Raug, guarded night and day, toiling under duress to cut and polish the gems that her minions have mined from beneath the Mountains of Mirkwood. His father, poor old Baltun is chained in a deep dark dungeon, facing the threat of terrible torture should his son attempt to escape or fail to perform his task.

Balti plays no part in this adventure, but basic statistics are provided should enterprising Loremasters have their Fellowship enter Minas Raug in pursuit of the Sorceress.

Balti

Attribute Level: 3

Specialties: Smoking

Distinctive Features: Greedy, Loyal

Relevant Skills: Courtesy 2, Craft 2

Endurance: 3

Gorloth Môg - Ghost Spider Shaman

Gorloth Môg is short and squat with blue spirals tattooed upon his face and upper torso. His hair is matted, with small twigs and clay, into eight dreadlocks that hang loosely about his head like the dangling legs of a spider. He wears a cape of black fox fur about his shoulders and a Hide loincloth. A collection of pouches and clay bottles hang from a belt, made from an old rope. Assorted feathers, rabbits' feet and other such fetishes hang from a leather thong around his thick neck and he wields a flint capped Spear.

Attribute Level

3

Endurance

24

Dexterity

6

Hate

6

Armour

1D

Skills

Personality, 3

Movement, 3

Perception, 3

Survival, 2

Custom, 2

Vocation, 2

Weapon Skills

Spear

2

Special Abilities

Commanding Voice

Dreadful Spell*

Hatred (Elves)

Mirkwood Dweller

Poison Cloud

Thrall (Spiders)

* Dreadful Spell *Poison Cloud*: The wielder of this dreadful spell raises a clenched fist to his mouth and blows sharply through it releasing a Cloud of spores that envelope a single chosen target. The victim suffers from poisoning as if he had been stung by an Attercop.

** Thrall (Spiders) description is included in the stat block for Wildmen of Mirkwood in *The Heart of the Wild*.

Ungoliant - the Gloomweaver Awakened



Shelob © by Olanda Fong-Surdenas, used with permission

This is merely a representation of Ungoliant in her newly awakened state and I imagine that at the height of her power, she will be unassailable. If the Fellowship is unlucky enough to be forced into an encounter with her physical self at the adventure's close, this is the creature they will be up against.

Attribute Level	
10	
Endurance	Hate
120	12
DARRY	ARMOUR
10	3D
Skills	
<u>Personality</u> , 5	<u>Survival</u> , 3
<u>Movement</u> , 3	Custom, 3
Perception, 4	<u>Vocation</u> , 4
Weapon Skills	
<u>Beak</u>	5
<u>Ensnare</u>	4
Special Abilities	
Black Dread*	Hate Sunlight
Craven	Strike Fear
Darker than Darkness	Horrible Strength
Fearsome	Thick Hide
Great Size	Thing of Terror
* The rules for these Shadow Abilities can be found in the Rivendell sourcebook.	



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THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF DOR 'WATHUI AND DUNLAND

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This is the conclusion of the series about mannish demographics in the Northwest which started in OM13 with the article on Eriador. We have come back full circle to its adjacent region of Enedwaith with its inhabitants - the Dunlendings.

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"The Enedwaith (or Central Wilderness) was shared by the North and South Kingdoms, but was never settled by Númenóreans owing to the hostility of the Gwathuirim (Dunlendings), except in the fortified town and haven about the great bridge over the Greyflood at Tharbad."

— *The Peoples of Middle-earth*. 330

INTRODUCTION

The Men of Dunland have long been the subject of interest of gamers and Tolkien aficionados alike. This is partly due to their presence in *The Lord of the Rings* as antagonists of the heroes (namely at the battle of the Hornburg) and Tolkien's scarce hints about these people and their relations to the Edain.

Unfortunately these people have not received the same level of attention by Tolkien as, say, the Dúnedain or Rohirrim, but the existing scattered information fortunately is sufficient to allow us some reasonable extrapolations to expand our picture about their history, culture and demographics.

This essay is divided into several sections. It draws upon Tolkien's own thoughts and keeps as close as possible to these before developing original ideas and concepts, still based upon those of the Professor. Following some organizational notes about terminology the following topics are covered:

- A brief historical overview of the people of Dunland from the Second until the dawn of the Fourth Age
- Cultural peculiarities of the people covered
- The demographic and urbanisation developments of these people throughout the Third Age.

In addition to Tolkien's own information, we can draw upon some RPG material: MERP's *Dunland and the Southern Misty Mountains* module, written by Doty (1987; see "Selected Readings") as well as the recent *Horse-lords of Rohan* for TOR by Ivey et al. (2016; see "Selected Readings") provide new ideas. Clan names and their supposed area of habitation and additional features from both modules have been useful inspiration.

Also, the article *Oathbreakers and Dunlendings* from *Other Hands Magazine*, Issue 24 was of great value. Here the interested gamer may find a thorough analysis of all aspects mentioned by Tolkien, which concern this ethnic group. You can find links to these and other useful readings at the end of this article.

TERMINOLOGY

The terminology used for the ethnic group in question is a difficult one. In MERP they are colloquially labelled as “Dunlendings” and their homeland “Dunland”. Due to its rohirric origin, this appellation applies for the late-Third Age (e.g. after the Rohirrim’s arrival in Calenardhon in TA 2510), it is not appropriate for earlier times. Fortunately Tolkien gives us a name for these people, and though it is a name from the Second Age, it fits the Dúnedain’s needs quite well and is sufficient for these people throughout all their dealings (small as they were) with the Númenóreans. So, the following appellations are used interchangeably in this essay:

- *Daen*: MERP used this as an indigenous term for this ethnic group. In this discussion it is used with the same purpose; i.e. how they call themselves.
- *Dunfearan*: The supposed indigenous name of Dor ‘Wathui/Dunland.
- *Gwathuirim* (sing. *Gwathuir*): The Dúnadan name for the Daen.
- *Dor ‘Wathui*: The Dúnadan name for the area of later Dunland (the foothills of the south-eastern Misty Mountains).
- *Dunlendings*: The rohirric name for the Gwathuirim/Daen.
- *Dunland*: The term the Rohirrim use for Dor ‘Wathui/Dunfearan.



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THE GWATHUIRIM

The history of these people begins long before we encounter them as—supposedly—barbaric soldiers of Saruman’s army at the Battle of Helm’s Deep in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Their first appearance is in the first third of the Second Age in Eriador:

The native people [of haladic stock in Minhiriath and Enedwaith] were fairly numerous and warlike, but they were forest-dwellers, scattered communities without central leadership. They were in awe of the Númenóreans, but they did not become hostile until the tree-felling became devastating. Then they attacked and ambushed the Númenóreans when they could, and the Númenóreans treated them as enemies, [...] but now the Númenóreans drove great tracks and roads into the forests northwards and southwards from the Gwathló, and the native folk that survived fled from Minhiriath into the dark woods of the great Cape of Eryn Vorn, [...]. From Enedwaith they took refuge in the eastern mountains where afterwards was Dunland; [...]

—*Unfinished Tales. The History of Galadriel and Celeborn and Amroth King of Lórien; Appendix D*

Origins

Concerning the ethnic composition and most likely relationships to other existing and extinct mannish groups I refer to the superb work by Professor Chris Seeman in the aforementioned *Other Hands* article. Its details need not be repeated here but the results are used in this article. The key information and conclusions are:

- The Gwathuirim/Dunlendings are another branch of the larger ethnic group that also included the Haladin (the Second House of the Edain) in Beleriand and the Orodbedhrim (Oathbreakers) in the White Mountains as well as several sub-groups in Gondor and Eriador like the Breelanders (see scheme below).
- They constitute a significant (though by no means exclusive) portion of the original inhabitants of Eriador and much of later Gondor.
- The Breelanders are a branch of the Gwathuirim/Orodbedhrim that migrated northward into Eriador post-SA 1701 and pre-SA 3320.

- Celtic or celtic-styled words for names and places in Bree and Buckland make a “celtic” model the most probable for these people (and most faithful to Tolkien’s own ideas).

The family tree in Image 1 below depicts the relations of the various gwathuiric people over the course of time. The majority of the available information about these people refers to the Haladin, an offshoot branch that migrated in the First Age into Beleriand. Fortunately for us, the information we have for them can be a good model, as these people are reported as being generally very conservative and devoted to tradition:

They [the Haladin] did not willingly adopt new things or customs, and retained many practices that seemed strange to the Eldar and the other Atani, with whom they had few dealings except in war.

— *Unfinished Tales. The Drúedain*

The following diagram shows this reconstructed tree of the haladic people. Groups that are explicitly mentioned by Tolkien himself are shown in red boxes. The dashed line between the Orodbedhrim of the White Mountains and the Gwathuirim indicates that there was some limited migration and exchange between the two groups. In effect, the later Oathbreakers still represent the majority of the Orodbedhrim of the Ered Nimrais.

Even though the celtic model for the Dunlendings – based on the aforementioned linguistic hints – is a good base, we have to be careful with a too close identification of the Gwathuirim with historic Celts. According to Tolkien the Dunlendings who lived in the western slopes of the Southern Misty Mountains were a very rustic and relatively backward people.

They [the Dunlendings] were without body-armour, having only among them a few hauberks gained by theft or in loot. The Rohirrim had the advantage in being supplied by the metal-workers of Gondor. In Isengard as yet [the time of the War of the Ring] only the heavy and clumsy mail of the Orcs was made, by them for their own uses.

— *Unfinished Tales. The Battles of the Fords of Isen, Author’s Note 11*

This passage seems to suggest a relative low level of advanced equipment among the Gwathuirim/Dunlendings. Here we see a problem if the Dunlendings are simply equated with the Celts, as the latter were a very crafty people and produced items and equipment of high standards that was much sought after in the ancient world. This example clearly shows differences between the two people and the dangers of a simple equation with a historic culture/people.

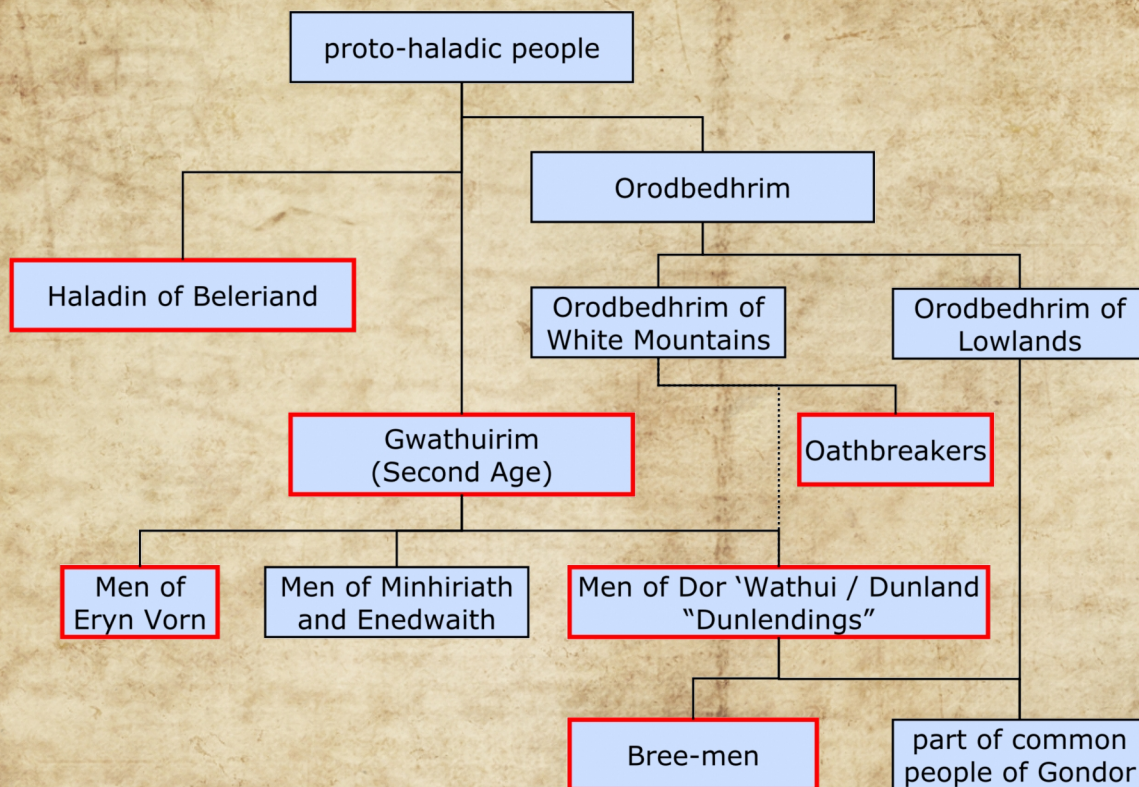


Image 1: Family tree of the haladic people (groups mentioned by J.R.R. Tolkien with red border)

A possible solution is to grant the Gwathuirim the latent talent for crafts, but their isolationism and unwillingness to cooperate with outsiders (especially the dominating Dúnedain and later the Rohirrim) robs them of the resources to really develop their potential. Therefore they lack the skill and resources to exploit mineral and ore deposits in the southern Hithaeglir, forcing the Gwathuirim to be economical with the few material resources at their disposal.

In the *Silmarillion* and the *Peoples of Middle-earth* we get a good description of the lifestyle of the haladic people: they are primarily wood-dwellers, living in scattered homesteads within the forests. In this sense, the eastern side of the southern Hithaeglir should be forested in significant parts for two reasons:

- first to give the Dunlendings/Gwathuirim room for their traditional lifestyle and
- second the forest allows them to remain a “secretive” people.

Thus the core territory in the southern Misty Mountains should be well-forested, even if less than Fangorn on the eastern side.

Evil or not

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Dunlendings appear as antagonists of the heroes and their allies, suggesting the dunnish warriors are a truly “evil” people (being in the service of Saruman and allied with his orcs). This impression is strengthened by a look into Appendix A, where the Rohirrim who – in the eyes of most readers – usually are perceived as exclusively good guys. They are reported to have long-lasting trouble with the Dunlendings, culminating in the invasion by Wulf (TA 2758/59) which led to near-disaster for the Rohirrim.

A closer look shows a more differentiated picture, where the enmity is not due to an implied evilness of the Dunlendings themselves, but unfortunate circumstances and the failings of men. It begins long ago in the Second Age, continues in the time of Gondor’s rule in this area (late Second Age to TA 2510) and finally ends with the Rohirrim (continued next column):

Thus it came about that the Númenórean term Middle Men was confused in its application: Its chief test was friendliness towards the West (to Elves and to Númenóreans), but it was actually applied usually only to Men whose stature and looks were similar to those of the Númenóreans, although this most important distinction of friendliness was not historically confined to peoples of one racial kind. [...] Also it must be said that unfriendliness to Númenóreans and their allies was not always due to the Shadow, but in later days to the actions of the Númenóreans themselves. Thus many of the forest-dwellers of the shorelands south of the Ered Luin, especially in Minhiriath, were as later historians recognized the kin of the Folk of Haleth; but they became bitter enemies of the Númenóreans, because of their ruthless treatment [of the Gwathuirim] and their devastation of the forests, and this hatred remained unappeased in their descendants, causing them to join with any enemies of Númenor. In the Third Age their survivors were the people known in Rohan as the Dunlendings.

—*The Peoples of Middle-earth.*
The Atani and their languages

This is a good example where Númenórean arrogance and hubris laid the foundations for an enmity that would last for more than 5,000 years. It seems that the driving rationale of Númenórean policy (at least in this case) is based on the *might is right* principle. The enmity was also carried on towards all friends of the Dúnedain (primarily the Rohirrim), as they also shared their views on the Gwathuirim’s claims and positions.

It is crucial to remember that these early wrongs do not give the Gwathuirim a *carte blanche* as poor victims of unjustified aggression, as they repaid any (perceived) wrongs in kind (at least as far as they could) and readily retaliated. Thus began a spiral of injustice and violence from both sides and eventually it did not matter who began with the wrongdoing, as both sides happily continued in their mutual dislike and violence. This continued with the Rohirrim and the important point to remember in this whole story is to keep in mind that although the Rohirrim aid the Númenóreans, this does not make them choirboys and “do-gooders”. Quite to the contrary, the Eorlingas as a people (notable exceptions prove the rule) exhibit a recurring strong streak of violence and vengeance against their (perceived) enemies (continued on next page):

*But under Brego and Aldor the Dunlendings were **rooted out again** and driven away beyond the Isen, and the Fords of Isen were guarded.*

—UT. The Battles of the Fords of Isen
(my emphasis)

The term “rooted out” hints at a merciless treatment, as it is usually applied to vermin or generally creatures deemed of small or no worth. In addition, the inclusion of the word “again” seems to imply that this was not the first instance where such action took place. And concerning the land grant of Cirion, naturally the Rohirrim assumed this to be their rightful land and consequently made short work of any people living there and not accepting the Northmen’s claim.

The tale of this conflict between the Rohirrim and Dunlendings is strongly reminiscent of real world history of Britain when the local Romano Celts had to deal with the – eventually successful – invasion of Britain by the germanic Anglo-Saxons: the indigenous people were gradually pushed back into more remote lands like Wales and Cornwall. The famous tale of King Arthur (the supposed celtic model king) is the best-known story about this time. Nicolle and McBride (1984; see “Selected Readings”) give a good overview of the possible historical events behind this and may give some inspiration for a campaign too. This includes numerous conflicts and a long-lasting tradition of cross-border raids. It is easy and tempting to apply the role of the Romano-Celts to the Dunlendings and that of the Anglo-Saxons to the Rohirrim. However, as with all real-world models for Middle-earth issues, caution is in order. The similarities remain striking though, as reported by Tolkien:

After the death of King Aldor, who had driven out the last of the Dunlendings and even raided their lands in Enedwaith by way of reprisal, the Dunlendings unmarked by Rohan but with the connivance of Isengard began to filter into northern Westfold again, making settlements in the mountain glens west and east of Isengard and even in the southern eaves of Fangorn. In the reign of Déor they became openly hostile, raiding the herds and studs of the Rohirrim in Westfold.

— UT. The Battles of the Fords of Isen

This very “real” trait of contempt towards alien people by the Rohirrim is also observable in their treatment of the Drúedain, who are hunted like animals by the Rohirrim:

‘But if you live after the Darkness, then leave Wild Men alone in the woods and do not hunt them like beasts any more’.

— The Lord of the Rings.
The Ride of the Rohirrim

All this does not remove any responsibility from the Gwathuirim/Dunlendings for any injustices they did themselves, but it puts this long-lasting conflict in a more differentiated light and removes the label of “evil and primitive barbarians” from these people to some degree.

In my opinion a key aspect of relations with these people is how they are approached. The Dúnedain and Rohirrim seem to have held them in contempt from the very beginning and never showed any sign of respect, preventing any reconciliation or improvement of relations. Of course this also applies to the Gwathuirim, but as a stubborn (and perhaps proud) people (like their adversaries) they likely thought that it was not their duty to initiate reconciliation. It took the intervention of the king-to-be Aragorn after the battle of Helm’s Deep to break this continuous and vicious cycle of contempt and violence. Only then it was possible to begin a new era for all three people.

That the Gwathuirim/Dunlendings were far from being “evil” or even under the Shadow is hinted at elsewhere: Both the Stoors and Durin’s Folk (at least a noteworthy part of it) lived in Dunland (or close by) and likely had peaceful relations with its folk. The Stoors lived from ca. TA 1150-1630 in or near Dunland:

c. 1150 The Stoors come over the Redhorn Pass and move to the Angle, or to Dunland.

c. 1630 They [the Hobbits moving to the Shire] are joined by Stoors coming up from Dunland.

— The Lord of the Rings.
Appendix B

It is remarkable that this co-existence lasted for almost 500 years – presumably without problems worth mentioning. In addition, as Chris Seeman already points out, these southern Stoors had adopted some parts of the dunnish language, and relations are thus unlikely to have been poor or stressed (continued next page):

This [the Hobbits' original language] was evidently a Mannish language of the upper Anduin, akin to that of the Rohirrim; though the southern Stoors appear to have adopted a language related to Dunlendish before they came north to the Shire.

— *The Lord of the Rings. Appendix F*

The *Lord of the Rings* gives us also some indirect insight into the dwarven relations with the Dunlendings:

They [Thrór, Thrain II and Thorin Oakenshield after the fall of Erebor] went away south with their family into long and homeless wandering. With them went also a small company of their kinsmen and faithful followers [to Dunland]
[...]

Then standing by the great stake, Thráin said to Thorin Oakenshield: 'Some would think this head dearly bought! At least we have given our kingdom for it. Will you come with me back to the anvil? Or will you beg your bread at proud doors?'

'To the anvil,' answered Thorin. 'The hammer will at least keep the arms strong, until they can wield sharper tools again.'

So Thráin and Thorin with what remained of their following (among whom were Balin and Glóin) returned to Dunland, and soon afterwards they removed and wandered in Eriador, until at last they made a home in exile in the east of the Ered Luin beyond the Lune.

— *The Lord of the Rings. Appendix A*

The beginning as well as the end of the settlement in Dunland are unclear. It seems clear though, that the period was relatively brief, as Thorin II left it some years after the Battle of Azanulbizar. Still it is interesting for several reasons. First, we have to question ourselves why the Dwarves chose this site (unrelated to any previous known dwarven settlements) in the first place. Here, the recent arrival of Saruman (a Maia of Aulë in disguise and supposed special dwarven friend) in Isengard may have played an important role. The second is Thráin's implied message that by returning to Dunland the Naugrim won't have to 'beg on proud doors', which brings us back to a sup-

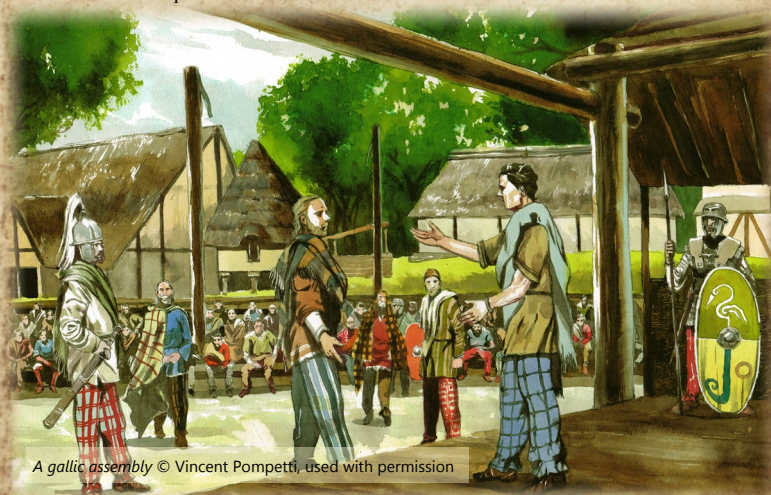
posed respectful relation of the Longbeards here with the Dunlendings in this time. It might be speculated that the two people viewed themselves as wronged and bereft of their inherited rights and thus were sympathetic to each other. As a side note, it would be interesting to know to whom these "proud doors" allude to. Together with the already mentioned presence of Saruman this is a nice motive for the choice of Dunland as a temporary abode.

As a bottom line, we can observe that both the Hobbits (in the person of Stoors) and the Longbeard Dwarves are doubtless honourable "Free People" who never allied themselves (or kept cordial relations) with people of the Shadow. That they did live in a – likely – good neighbourhood with the Gwathuirim/Dunlendings is a hint that if one approaches these people with respect, good (or at least peaceful) relations and neighbourhood are possible. It is reminiscent of the german proverb *Wie man in den Wald hineinruft, so schallt es heraus*¹ (What goes around, comes around): The way you treat other people, you will be treated by them – this is the quintessential conclusion that describes the mutual relationships of the Dúnedain, Rohirrim and Dunlendings for almost 5,000 years.

Government

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of Gwathuirim society is the lack of a central government. Therefore, Dor 'Wathui (and later Dunland) indeed is a "Land without Kings" – as labelled in *Horse-lords of Rohan*. The individual clans have a chief (male or female), who is the supreme authority in his clan – though he is also subject to the laws of the people and not an absolute monarch at all. In fact, he is expected to be successful in his office and if the general assembly of the clan votes to remove him from his position, he loses the chieftainship. Thus

¹ Literally: "How you shout into the forest, you will receive a like response".



A gallic assembly © Vincent Pompetti, used with permission

the Gwathuirim maintain a system of elected leadership throughout their history. For strong rulers, it is possible to establish some kind of hereditary tradition of chieftainship, but still this has to be acknowledged by the council of elders. Below this level, the individual clans are supposed to consist of several tribes.

There is also a “Great Council” with representatives of all clans, which acts as a body to decide matters that might concern all of their people.

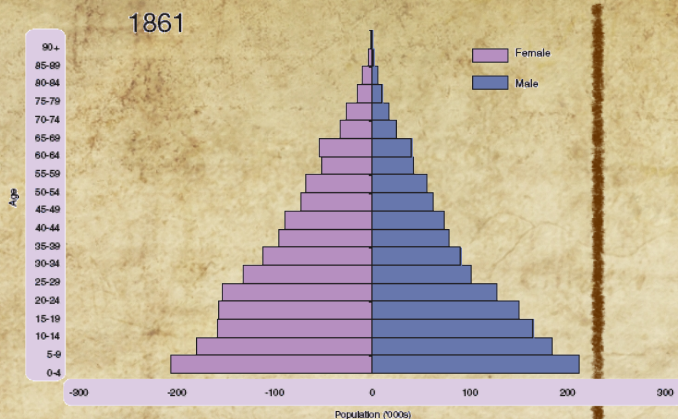
This decentralised leadership represents both strength and weakness for the Gwathuirim: First, it prevents them from acting coherently and coordinated towards a single goal. Almost always one or more clans disagree for various reasons on a given proposal, but it also prevents them from following a single, disastrous path.

Factions

Even though it may seem so to outsiders, the Gwathuirim are far from being a single, monolithic block of people. Their clan-based society is also a product of various backgrounds. Their dislike for the Dúnedain – and later the Rohirrim – is a common denominator, but the intensity varies. Generally, those clans who are primarily descended from the Orodbedhrim (and calling themselves *Daen Iontis*) tend to be the more aggressive ones and live in more southerly areas of Dor ‘Wathui. Those that are descended primarily from the forest-dwelling Gwathuirim of the Second Age (and calling themselves *Daen Lintis*) live more in the North and are more cautious when it comes to open war against the Dúnedain and Rohirrim. Beside their disdain for the Númenóreans and their allies they also remember their power which the Gwathuirim cannot hope to match. Among the *Daen Lintis*, the *Wise Women* exercise especially great influence, while their political influence on the *Daen Iontis* is much less pronounced (exceptions prove the rule of course).

Military

In the Daen society nearly every able-bodied man is eligible as warrior (at last theoretically). This creates the problem of how to assess the number of warriors of a given population. Fortunately the analysis of an (mostly) intact pre-industrial age pyramid is of great value here. The analysis of this age pyramid like the one in the next column¹ shows that c. 50% of the population is aged between 15 and 54 years. This number varies somewhat depending on



country and era, but for the purpose of this article, it provides a useful estimate and number to work with.

For convenience we may take this age group as the one which may be called upon for military service in times of (dire) need. Normally only the male part engages in war, reducing the military potential to c. 25% of the population. In a Daen society there are warrior-women as well, as reported for the Haladin (and not specific to this branch):

One of the strange practices [of the Haladin] spoken of was that many of their warriors were women, though few of these went abroad to fight in the great battles. This custom was evidently ancient¹; for their chieftainess Haleth was a renowned Amazon with a picked bodyguard of women.

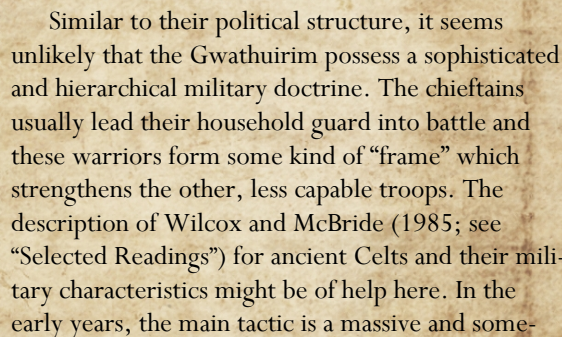
¹ Not due to their special situation in Beleriand, and maybe rather a cause of their small numbers than its result. They increased in numbers far more slowly than the other Atani, hardly more than was sufficient to replace the wastage of war; yet many of their women (who were fewer than the men) remained unwed.

— *Unfinished Tales. The Drúedain*

This might then lead to a theoretical military potential of perhaps ca. 35% of the overall population (i.e. adding a smaller number of fighting women). Here we have also to consider that the vast majority of these people are civilians with limited military experience and value: farmers, herders, craftsmen etc. In addition, many of the people are either the older ones that are past their prime or too young and inexperienced. Thus if we narrow the “military” age cohort to its core of the 20 to 34 year old ones, we end up at about 11% of the overall population (15% if we count in female warriors). Now, from these, only a fraction represents “real”

¹ The one used here is from Scotland for 1861: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/scotlands-population-2004-the-register-generals-annual-review-150stedition/j9085d05.htm>

For campaigns away from home, typically only a small fraction of its forces will be assembled for the reasons discussed before. A number of about 10 to 20% of the potential total muster seems right for any campaign in foreign territory.



Concerning numbers of Dunlending forces, the only hint with at least some tangible information we have can be found in *The Lord of the Rings*:

— *The Lord of the Rings.*
Flotsam and Jetsam

Now, this quote is quite vague, but the notion that there were “battalions” of men gives some base for an educated guess. A battalion consists of ca. 600 men¹. So, if we assume that the plural means perhaps the equivalent of 3 to 5 battalions, this would leave us with an average of ca. 2,500 Dunlendings in the army that attacked the Hornburg. The description of that battle also hints that the majority of Saruman’s troops were orcs. Fonstad (1991; see “Selected Readings”) estimates Saruman’s total forces at 10,000+. This fits well with the estimate based on the “battalion” information above².

¹ Though the word should not be taken too literally, Tolkien was familiar with military units (having served himself in WWI) and so the word “battalion” should indicate the scale of troops he is referring to.

2 More fell or were wounded in the Battles at the Fords of Isen against the Rohirrim and therefore not available now. Additionally, the Dunlendings are unlikely to have sent their whole manpower

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Here it is also important to remember that “high” and “low” population densities in this context are highly relative terms: A high population density in Dor ‘Wathui would be a rather low one in Gondor or Arthedain. Correspondingly, the size even of the major settlements in Dor ‘Wathui / Dunland is very small compared to those found in Gondor or Arnor. Only in Rhovanion do we find such small centres in significant numbers.

— *The Lord of the Rings. Helm's Deep*
(my emphasis)

HALADIN COMPARISON

Even though the comparison of the Haladin and Gwathuirim is useful, this comparison must be taken with some caution, as the two groups are not identical in their lifestyle. Still, it gives us an idea how a society consisting of hunters-and-gatherers (the most likely lifestyle in an area almost wholly forested; mixed with some herding) might look like. Based on Tolkien's Beleriand map (*Second Silmarillion* map) from *The History of Middle-earth, Vol. 5 – The Lost Road* (reproduced in *The History of Middle-earth, Vol. 11 – The War of the Jewels*), the Forest of Brethil covers an area of about 5,600 km² (2,200 mi²). This map is shown in the following image (the scale is 50 miles per square):



SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

In the eras of interest for this article, the settlement patterns of the Gwathuirim are relatively straightforward. Throughout the Third Age, they live in the vales and foothills on the western side of the southern Misty Mountains. At times, their territory extends south- and south-eastward. Especially the latter is the cause for much of the strife between them and the Dúnedain and later Rohirrim. One should remember though, that the Gwathuirim and their kin were the original inhabitants of the regions of Calenardhon west of the river Onodló and in their traditions they view themselves as the rightful owners of this land, regardless of any developments since that time.

Dor 'Wathui / Dunland

The core territory of our people in question is of course the area on the eastern side of the southern Misty Mountains. Even though they sometimes expand beyond it, this is the home of the majority of its people. There is little to discuss, as the territory is well-defined and undisputed.

Calenardhon / Westfold

It seems that the area of western Calenardhon (west-march, Westfold and part of Westemnet) in the distant past (the Second Age) had originally been settled by gwaithiric people. This is based on the geographic location of the two known areas of settlement (Dor 'Wathui / Dunland and the White Mountains). My demographic extrapolations in *Other Minds*, Issue 16 & 17 also follow this interpretation. The following quotes show the base for this reasoning:

[...] and in the hills of Dunland a remnant lingered of an old people, the former inhabitants of much of Gondor [...] Alien, too, or only remotely akin, was the language of the Dunlendings. These were a remnant of the peoples that had dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. The Dead Men of Dunharrow were of their kin. [...] Only in Dunland did Men of this race hold to their old speech and manners: a secret folk, unfriendly to the Dúnedain, hating the Rohirrim.

— *The Lord of the Rings*.
Appendix F

Over time, the people of gwaithiric descent in Calenardhon would become mixed to some extent with newcomers (Dúnedain and Northmen in their service) and when the presence of the kings waned, these people were again confronted with their distant cousins from Dor 'Wathui migrating eastward again:

When the days of the Kings ended (1975-2050) and the waning of Gondor began, they [the Dunlendings] ceased in fact to be subjects of Gondor; [...] But during the Watchful Peace (from 2063 to 2460) the people of Calenardhon dwindled [...] The garrisons of the forts [Isengard and the Hornburg] were not renewed, and were left to the care of local hereditary chieftains whose subjects were of more and more mixed blood. For the Dunlendings drifted steadily and unchecked over the Isen.

— *Unfinished Tales. The Battles of the Fords of Isen*

It seems likely that the Gwaithirim were intent on reclaiming their ancient lands (according to their view) when Gondor *de facto* pulled out of the area, giving the impression that it no longer cared about who crossed the western border and under which legal claim (at least as long as no open secession and takeover by force was attempted). Recognizing the military superiority of Gondor, they chose a strategy of quiet demographic change rather than by force.

Enedwaith

In *Other Minds*, Issue 16 I already discussed the tricky question about Enedwaith (including Dunland) being part of Gondor or not. Please check that Issue for more details. Here I apply those conclusions:

- Enedwaith was claimed *de iure* by Gondor, but never settled, controlled (e.g. collecting taxes) or otherwise *de facto* integrated into its realm.
- The only area where Gondor indeed had a vested interest was the Great Road, which was kept safe and in good order through a system of waystations by the South Kingdom. Beyond this narrow area, Gondor left the people in Enedwaith to their own devices.

In the foothills of the western side of the Misty Mountains lived the remnants of the people that the Rohirrim later called the Dunlendings: a sullen folk, akin to the ancient inhabitants of the While Mountain valleys whom Isildur cursed. They had little love of Gondor, but though hardy and bold enough were too few and too much in awe of the might of the Kings to trouble them, or to turn their eyes away from the East, whence all their chief perils came. The Dunlendings suffered, like all the peoples of Arnor and Gondor, in the Great Plague of the years 1636-7 of the Third Age, but less than most, since they dwelt apart and had few dealings with other men.

— *Unfinished Tales. The Battles of the Fords of Isen*

After the Kin-strife, the duty of securing the Great Road in Enedwaith falls mostly on the *Knight Wives*¹, a female warrior order based in Harnost (later called "Hornburg" and "Helm's Deep" by the Rohirrim). The fact that female warriors represent the power of Gondor in the area eased the relations with the Gwaithirim of Enedwaith somewhat since they honour the tradition of warrior-women themselves.

¹ For more details on the *Knight Wives*, see *Other Hands* #18.

Urbanisation

The urbanisation of Dor 'Wathui / Dunland is not even remotely comparable to that seen in Arnor or Gondor, but more like that in most of Rhovanion: The "centres" are small and generally more like large villages in size when Gondor's scale is applied. The centres are still extremely rural in character and possess very little of what might be called "urban" services or amenities (if they have such things at all).

DOR 'WATHUI / DUNLAND IN THE THIRD AGE

Overview

Even though the Gwathuirim/Dunlendings are said to be a people apart with little outside contacts (and thus supposedly a relative stable population), their demography experiences some changes over the course of time. The following eras have been chosen as representative for key events in the people's history and demographics. It follows largely the eras chosen in *Other Minds, Issues 16 & 17*, as the history of Dor 'Wathui / Dunland is so closely interwoven with western Calenardhon/Rohan.

- TA 250: The situation when the memories of the War of the Last Alliance have faded somewhat and peace has come to the Westlands. Gondor has now firmly established Calenardhon and has brought the remaining Gwathuirim there under its rule.
- TA 1400 – End of the heyday of Gondorian rule in the region
- TA 1640 – The aftermath of the Great Plague, default setting of MERP
- TA 2000 – Beginning of the decline of Calenardhon. The Gwathuirim's fortunes start to rise
- TA 2500 – Calenardhon is dangerously imbalanced population-wise, first apogee of dunnish influence in its western parts
- TA 2600 – Recently arrived Rohirrim have forcibly evicted all Dunlendings not willing to unconditionally accept the Northman rule
- TA 2740 – The second apogee of dunnish power and influence in Westfold
- TA 2900 – The situation after Saruman arrived and the Rohirrim consolidated their pre-eminence against the Dunlendings, compatible with the TOR and LotRRPG timeframes
- TA 3000 – The era of the War of the Ring, compatible with the TOR and LotRRPG timeframes



Haleth and her guardswomen © by Turner Mohan, used with permission

Wholly alien was the speech of the Wild Men of Drúadan Forest. Alien, too, or only remotely akin, was the language of the Dunlendings. These were a remnant of the peoples that had dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. The Dead Men of Dunharrow were of their kin.

—The Lord of the Rings. Appendix F

Year of the Third Age	Event
ca. 300	Tensions begin to rise with Gondor over the Great Road. Gwathuiric raiders begin to occasionally ambush Dúnadan traffic.
340	Open conflict erupts between Gondor and the Gwathuirim. Devastation of much of the lower reaches of Dor 'Wathui.
350	Gondor crushes all resistance and the Gwathuirim retreat towards the highlands and the mountains.
ca. 500	The Dwarves of Khazad-dûm begin to intensify contacts with the clans of Dor 'Wathui.
ca. 600	The Gwathuirim regularly trade with the Dwarves.
ca. 1150	Stoors begin to reach the northern reaches of Dor 'Wathui and befriend the local clans. They settle along the Glanduin.
ca. 1250	Dwarves, Stoors and Gwathuirim have established a local network and thrive.

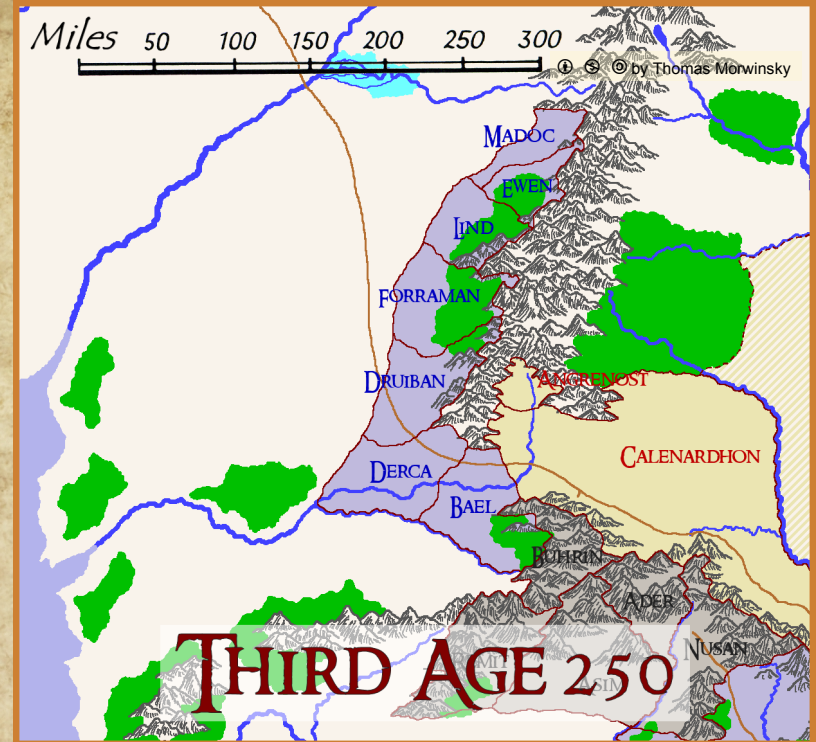
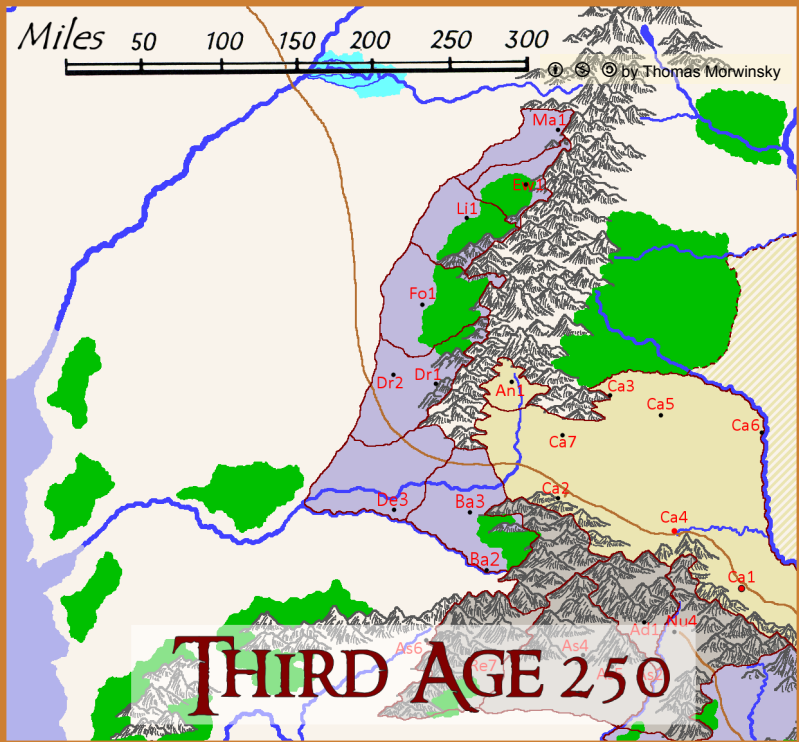
The first era is one where the Gwathuirim still maintain contacts with their kinfolk in the White Mountains. Their territory reaches from the Glanduin to the Isen and all the area of Rohan's west march of later times.

Despite the relatively large area, the population density is low (ca. 2.5 people per sq.km). The area between Adorn and Isen is also the most urbanised (relatively speaking) with two settlements exceeding 1,000 inhabitants.

The trade with the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm brings some high-quality equipment to the clans, while they supply mainly foodstuffs to the Dwarves.



Ethraid Engrin © by Matej Cadil, used with permission



Population numbers

The Gwathuirim are much dispersed in this time and the overall population density of their land is quite low. This reflects their clan-based decentralised organisation and leadership quite well.

Realm	Clan	Area (km2)	Unsettled Area (%)	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km2
Dor 'Wathui	Bael	9,700	63.7	30,600	1,900	32500	3.4
	Derca	9,300	73.7	21,100	1,400	22,500	2.4
	Druiban	8,900	70.9	19,200	1,100	20,200	2.3
	Forraman	9,300	66.5	16,300	900	17,200	1.8
	Lind	6,300	72.8	12,800	700	13,500	2.1
	Ewen	3,900	60.5	13,100	900	14,000	3.6
	Madoc	3,500	61.0	7,800	600	8,300	2.4
	total	50,900	67.1	120,900	7,500	128,200	2.5

Table 1: Population figures for Dor 'Wathui TA 250

Settlements

Contacts with Gondor exist, but are very rare as western Calenardhon isn't the focus of Gondorian politics in this time. The major cause of contacts is the Great Road which runs through Dor 'Wathui, but is closely guarded and kept in good repair by Gondor (and Arnor in northern Enedwaith).

#	Settlement	Clan	Population	Code
1	Rhagin	Bael	800	Ba2
2	Uleyn	Bael	1,100	Ba3
3	Gwenort	Derca	1,400	De3
4	Rys	Druiban	600	Dr1
5	Crade	Druiban	500	Dr2
6	Pande	Forraman	900	Fo1
7	Poskis	Lind	700	Li1
8	Blecanes	Ewen	900	Ew1
9	Dothall	Madoc	600	Ma1

Table 2: Major settlements in Dor 'Wathui TA 250

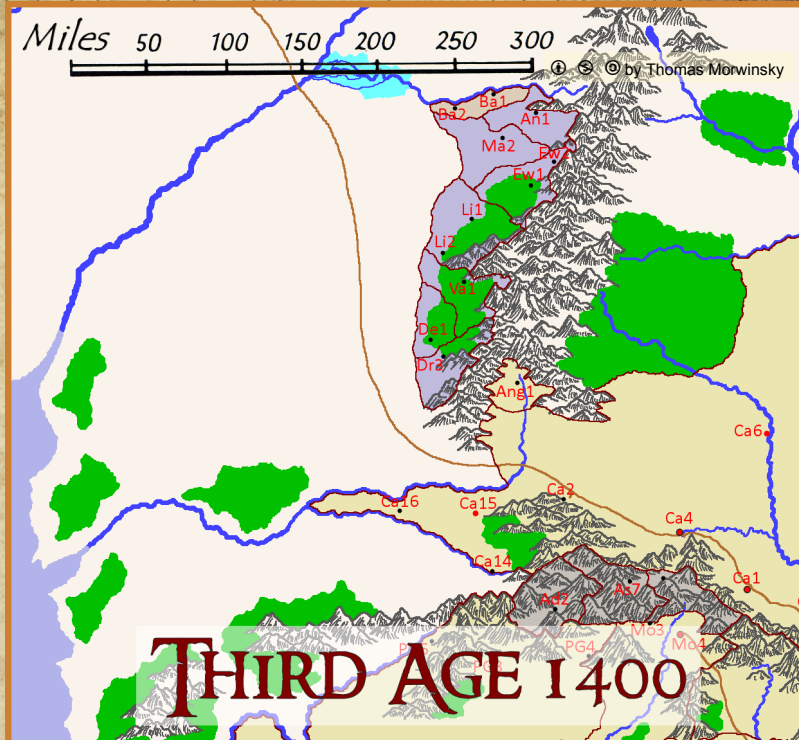
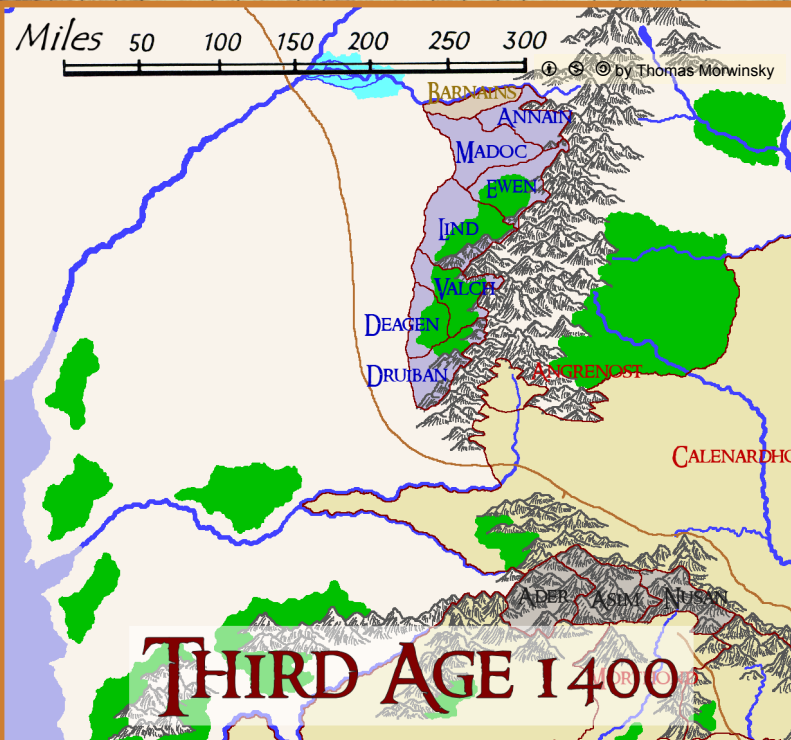
Even though *Uleyn* and *Gwenort* are the major settlements in this era, they are in decline. Before the War of the Last Alliance there were frequent contacts and trade between the Mountain Kingdom and Dor 'Wathui. This has decreased sharply since the Oathbreaking and the drastic decrease of the Oathbreakers' fortunes.

It was primarily the expansion of Gondorian power that forced the Gwathuirim into retreat towards the foothills of the southern Misty Mountains: Gondor would not tolerate any security issue concerning the Great Road, and in the ensuing local conflict, the Gwathuirim were soundly defeated. Those who did not flee to Dor 'Wathui either relocated to Calenardhon and submitted to Gondorian rule, moved to the coast or were killed.

In the South, Gondor keeps the Great Road in good repair and maintains a close network of waystations and small garrisons along its course. Due to past experience, the Gwathuirim generally don't interfere with the mighty southern neighbour and keep their distance, but have not forgotten the past.

Around the same time, the Knight Wives (S. *Arbeness*) are given the guardianship of the Gap of Calenardhon. This lasts for about four centuries and ensures a stable frontier on Gondor's western fringe. Relations improve somewhat when the Gwathuirim encounter these martial women – a tradition the Gwathuirim respect themselves too.

Year of the Third Age	Event
1409-1415	In the aftermath of the Second Northern War, refugees and stray bands of men and orcs even reach Dor 'Wathui before they are defeated.
1435-1440	Mercenaries of Castamir regularly raid Gwathuiric lands and the clans retaliate in kind.
1441	A host of Castamir's mercenaries is annihilated while invading the lands of clans Lind and Ewen.
1450	The Temple of Justice is founded
ca. 1470	Relations with Gondor restored to pre-Kin-strife level after the overthrow of Castamir and the establishment of the Knight-wives.
1628	Stoors begin to migrate to the newly founded Shire.
1630	The last Stoors leave the lands of Dunfearan.
1636	The Great Plague hits Dor 'Wathui. Losses in life remain comparatively low. The Temple of Justice begins to lose influence.
1637	The Gondorian garrison at Tharbad and strong detachments from Angrenost and Harnost suffer a disastrous defeat on a punitive expedition against Clan Lind.



Population numbers

Realm	Clan	Area (km ²)	Unsettled Area [%]	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km ²
Dor 'Wathui	Druiban	3,600	69.9	9,200	550	9,700	2.7
	Deagen	2,600	57.6	6,500	400	6,900	2.7
	Valch	3,600	56.1	10,000	600	10,600	2.9
	Lind	6,100	45.3	26,400	1,300	27,700	4.5
	Ewen	4,000	45.7	21,000	1,200	22,200	5.6
	Madoc	4,700	53.3	15,700	770	16,500	3.5
	Annain	3,100	46.0	9,500	580	10,100	3.3
	total	27,700	53.4	98,300	5,400	103,700	3.7
Stoors	Barnains	1600	41.9	11,100	1,200	12,200	7.6

Table 3: Population figures for Dor 'Wathui TA 1400

Settlements

#	Settlement	Realm	Clan	Population	Code
1	Tynne	Dor 'Wathui	Druiban	550	Dr3
2	Prugache	Dor 'Wathui	Deagen	400	De1
3	Mengre	Dor 'Wathui	Valch	600	Va1
4	Poskis	Dor 'Wathui	Lind	700	Li1
5	Bennwall	Dor 'Wathui	Lind	600	Li2
6	Blecanes	Dor 'Wathui	Ewen	700	Ew1
7	Neynos	Dor 'Wathui	Ewen	500	Ew2
8	Lithird	Dor 'Wathui	Madoc	770	Ma2
9	Gwitthyns	Dor 'Wathui	Annain	580	An1
10	Rouggedwy	Stoors	Banains	800	Ba1
11	Boghar	Stoors	Banains	400	Ba2

Table 4: Major settlements of Dor 'Wathui TA 1400

In the past centuries Gondor did not care much about the remote Gwathuirim, except for the rare circumstances when some warbands went over the border for cattle rustling or – seldom – some warriors (often under the *Temple of Justice's* influence) raided traffic on the Great Road.

This relative stability is also expressed in the major centres which have become more numerous, even though the overall territory has shrunk considerably since the last era. All settlements remain limited in size, with the bigger ones ranging mostly between 500 and 700 inhabitants.

Lithird in the North is a typical example of a major centre with about 770 souls calling it home. It is the town which keeps the closest contacts with the Stoors from both *Rouggedwy* and *Boghar*.

Blecanes is somewhat special, as this large (according to gwathuiric standards) settlement lies in a forested area. It is the settlement most reminiscent of the belerianic Minas Brethil in the forest of Brethil. In this respect, *Mengre* from clan Valch is similar in outlook

The Dunlendings suffered, like all the peoples of Arnor and Gondor, in the Great Plague of the years 1636-7 of the Third Age, but less than most, since they dwelt apart and had few dealings with other men.

— *Unfinished Tales. Cirion and Eorl and the friendship of Gondor and Rohan*

The pivotal event of this era is of course the aftermath of the great Plague. The Gwathuirim fared better than most people (especially neighbouring Cardolan and Calenardhon were hit extremely hard), but the disease also causes them to intensify their isolationistic behaviour. Contacts with the world beyond their borders lessen ever more.

Year of the Third Age	Event
ca. 1820	The fortunes of the Temple of Justice start to rise again.
ca. 1850-1940	The Great Road becomes less safe due to repeated attacks on travellers and sometimes waystations.
1942	Clan Druiban ceases to exist, being renamed into Arailt. Eynt Arailt becomes its chief.
1968	Alliance of Revenge forged. The clans unite to re-claim Calenardhon.
1968-69	The Gwathuirim War. Much of the logistic backbone of the Great Road in Enedwaith is destroyed.
1969	Eynt Arailt leads the Gwathuirim's invasion of western Calenardhon and is defeated.
1970-74	Downfall of the Temple of Justice and destruction of all its adherents.

In these early years, Gondor's control over the Great Road weakens (as does its traffic) and roving bands of Gwathuirim occasionally succeed in making booty on the road. The retaliating Gondorians mostly achieve only limited success. Overall the situation in central Enedwaith remains calm though.

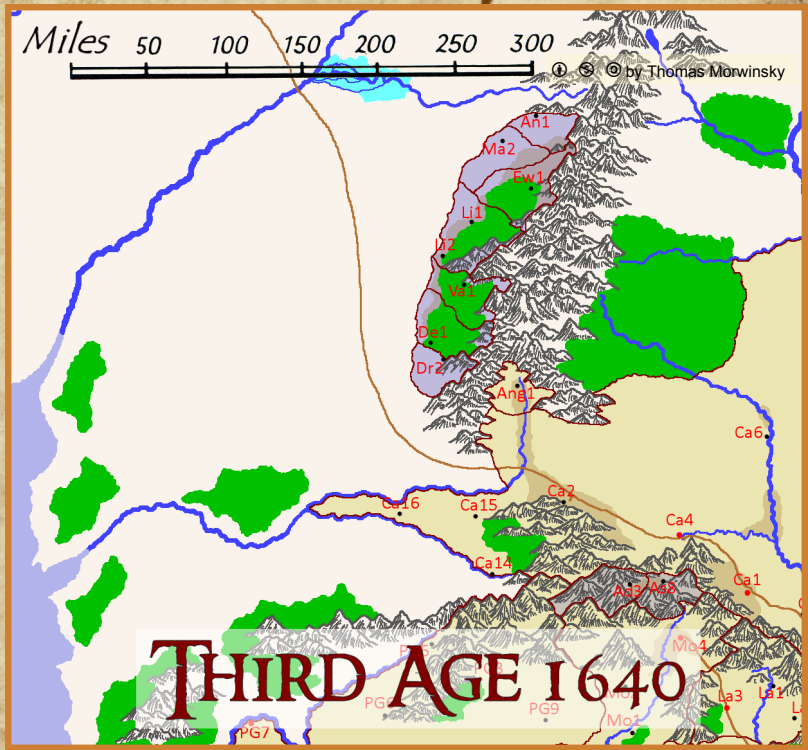
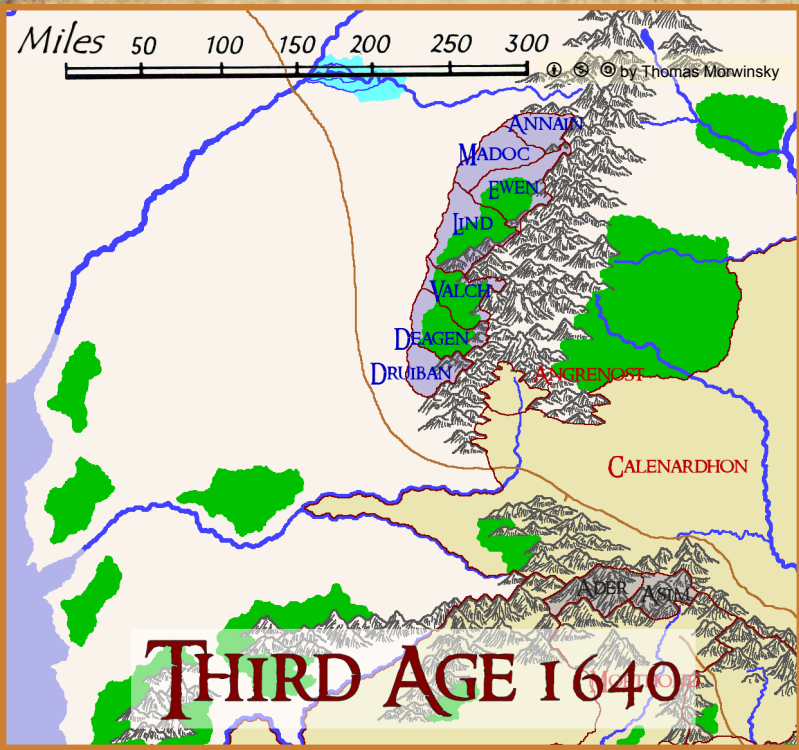
Later in the 19th century, the *Temple of Justice*, who had only negligible influence among the clans for a long time, is able to gain power and influence. In the first half of the 20th century, Arailt Dilan, the chief of the Arailt tribe of the same name within Clan Druiban, challenges the Clan Chief. In the ensuing power struggle, Arailt prevails and becomes new chief. He is however, murdered soon after by a warrior of the old chief's guard. Dilan's young son Eynt assumes the chieftainship by defeating all who challenge his claim. Under his rule, the already expanded territory of the clan is even further enlarged. He also renames the clan in honour of his father – and as a sign for a new era – into Arailt. He allies with the young Wise-woman and greatest

student of the *Temple of Justice*, Eribhen da Moigh, for the purpose of ousting the Dúnedain from Enedwaith and later Calenardhon. The *Alliance of Revenge* is formed by many clans.

A few years later their efforts bear first fruits, when the southern clans intensify raiding of the Great Road. As Gondor is pre-occupied with the war against the Wainriders at this time, these raids lead to considerable decrease in traffic along the roads. Several of the fortified waystations are taken and razed. In TA 1944, when the *Arbeness* leave for the East to support the king in the Third Wainrider War, the Great Road is only guarded by their depleted few remaining forces. Raids on the Great Road intensify, with many more waystations being razed over the next months. After the crowning of Eärnil II in TA 1945 and the end of the succession crisis it still takes years to stabilize the realm. In western Calenardhon, the end of the Knight-wives in the Wainrider War greatly weakens Gondor's position. In TA 1968 Eribhen da Moigh forges an alliance of the most powerful tribes in a bid to completely destroy the link between Arthedain and Gondor and seize control of western Calenardhon. The plan to eradicate the presence of the despised Dúnedain in Enedwaith works with even more waystations going up in flames. When the Gwathuirim host invades Calenardhon the following year, they are challenged by Gondor's forces. Their leader Eynt Arailt is killed when his troops are engaged by Gondor's host coming from Harnost and then later attacked in the rear by the forces coming down from Angrenost. In the aftermath of the disaster, Eribhen discovers that the *Temple of Justice* is a tool of Angmar and that the Gwathuirim have been used as its unwitting pawns. As a result, she leads a campaign that completely eradicates the Temple and its adherents from Dor 'Wathui and lays the foundations for a fierce rejection of the Shadow among her people. Despite her earlier failings and for her faithfulness to her people, Eribhen is later remembered as the greatest heroine of the Daen. Her legacy serves her people well in the coming centuries when the Shadow's agents try to win the Daen as allies, by exploiting the age-old animosity against the Dúnedain, but failing due to Eribhen's legacy. It is only much later that Saruman with its unparalleled skill of persuasion appears, that they almost fall for this trap a second time.

Even though the remnants of the Gwathuirim army quickly scatter and retreat into the Highlands after Dilan's defeat, the damage to the remaining infrastructure of the Great Road is considerable and contributes to Eärnil's decision 5 years later to send his reinforcements for Arthedain via ship: The task of maintaining a large army in a now mostly empty

territory and the ever-present danger of guerrilla attacks from Gwathuirim or Angmarian forces while traversing Eriador's wide open lands make this the only choice.



Realm	Clan	Area (km²)	Unsettled Area [%]	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km²
Dor 'Wathui	Druiban	2,400	58.0	6,900	400	7,300	3.0
	Deagen	3,500	59.7	9,300	430	9,700	2.8
	Valch	3,000	60.3	8,100	380	8,500	2.8
	Lind	5,000	48.3	21,100	960	22,100	4.4
	Ewen	4,100	50.1	17,600	850	18,500	4.5
	Madoc	3,100	55.0	9,900	500	10,400	3.4
	Annain	2,000	49.5	5,900	310	6,300	3.2
total		23,100	54.4	78,800	3,830	82,800	3.6

Table 5: Population figures for Dor 'Wathui TA 1640

Settlements

Dunfearan's settlements have equally suffered as the overall population. Its already small centres have dwindled even further, with the focus on the larger ones among the central and northern clans.

The average size of the major settlements has decreased further, with the majority ranging between 400 and 500 inhabitants.

#	Settlement	Clan	Population	Code
1	Tynne	Druiban	400	Dr3
2	Prugache	Deagen	430	De1
3	Mengre	Valch	380	Va1
4	Poskis	Lind	500	Li1
5	Bennwall	Lind	460	Li2
6	Blecanes	Ewen	850	Ew1
7	Lithird	Madoc	500	Ma2
8	Gwitthyns	Annain	310	An1

Table 6: Major settlements of Dor 'Wathui TA 1640

Bennwall is noteworthy as the home of the great Eribhen da Moigh – the greatest heroine of the Daen in this age of the world.

Blecanes stands out with its population of 800. Its chieftain strictly enforced the seclusion from outsiders, thus reducing the chances of the disease coming here. In this he was successful and now Blecanes is the greatest centre in Dunfearan.

But during the Watchful Peace (from 2063 to 2460) the people of **Calenardhon** dwindled: the more vigorous, year by year, went eastward to hold the line of the Anduin; those that remained became rustic and **far removed from the concerns of Minas Tirith**. The garrisons of the forts [Angrenost and Harnost] were not renewed, and were left to the care of local hereditary chieftains whose subjects were of more and more mixed blood. For the Dunlendings drifted steadily and unchecked over the Isen.

— **Unfinished Tales. Cirion and Eorl and the friendship of Gondor and Rohan** (my emphasis)

This era is characterised by the rising fortunes of the Gwathuirim. Around its beginning the might of Gondor is still unchecked but it becomes defensive, especially with the end of the Knight-wives in the Third Wainrider War. Since the fall of Arthedain, the Kings (and later the Stewards) also give less attention to the region – especially in the face of mounting trouble on the eastern and southern borders. Compared to the constantly threatened eastern and southern borders, the area around the Gap of Calenardhon becomes a quiet backwater of little interest to Minas Tirith. With it comes a sharp drop in the allocation of resources such as regular replacement of troops and the keys of Orthanc were retained by the Steward while the local garrison still held the fortress of Angrenost as a bulwark against the West. Accordingly the rotation of the Captains of Angrenost becomes ever more irregular until by ca. TA 2300 it had fully ceased altogether and these offices became hereditary.

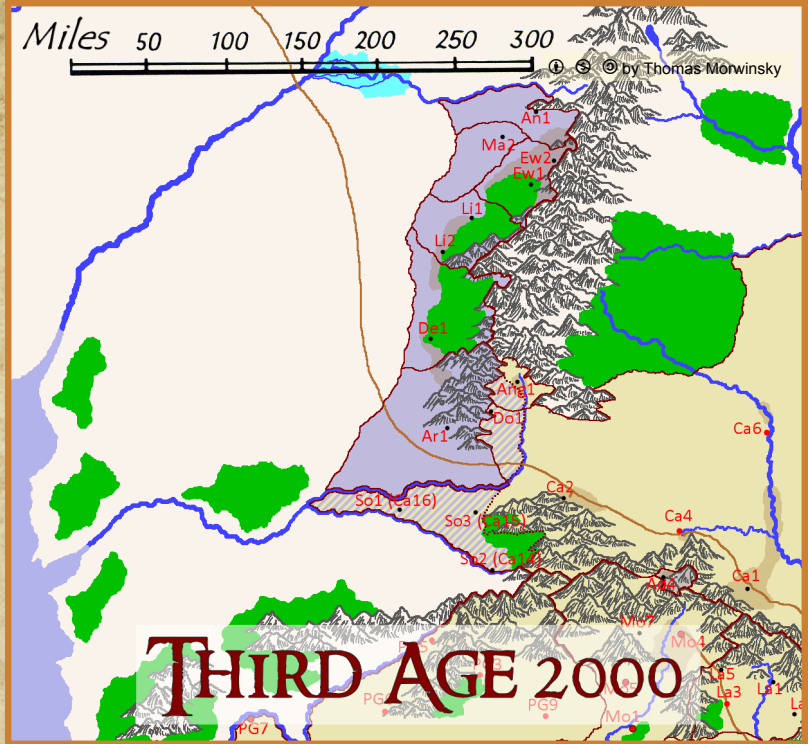
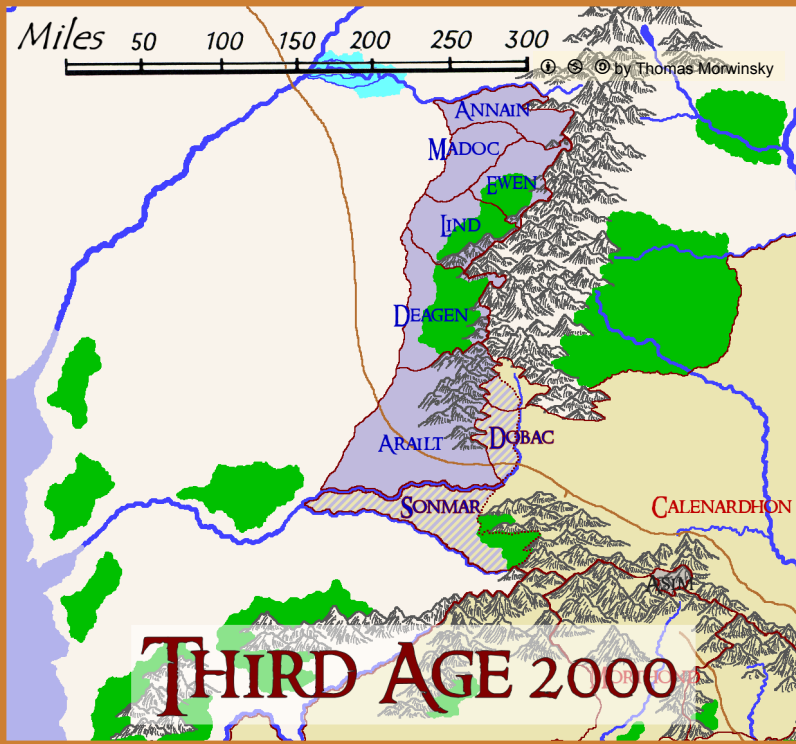
The Gwathuirim soon become aware of the situation and slowly they occupy the space vacated by Gondor – but this time peacefully rather than by

arms. Bit by bit the Daen-Folk begins to (re-)settle western Calenardhon in small groups with the consent of the local Gondorian captains who are happy to have new people tending the land, since the eastward migration of the Gondorian population towards the Anduin empties the land around the Gap of Calenardhon (see the respective articles in *Other Minds, Issues 16 & 17*). The Gwathuirim work the land, thereby becoming *de iure* citizens of Gondor and encourage more of their relatives to follow.

This is a very slow process, but it remains steady and by about TA 2400 people mostly of gwathuiric descent form the majority of the population in western Calenardhon. They also mingle with the local families of the people of Angrenost, thus slowly changing its ethnic composition too. Only the family of the Captain retains a relatively pure Gondorian heritage. The driving force behind this settlement process are the Clans Deagen and especially Arailt. New Clans are formed in the newly “won” territories: Dobac west of Isen and south of Angrenost and Sonmar in the land between the rivers Adorn and Angren. The area becomes gwathuiric in all but its name. The northern clans are more reluctant in actively supporting these ventures. With this creeping demographic changes come also changes in loyalty, and while the people of western Calenardhon (or in gwathuiric eyes; Clans Dobac, Sonmar and later Gáetir, Eogbann and Menan) never rebel against Gondor or declare independence, Minas Tirith’s disinterest reaffirm their perception that Gondor has given up this land which is now worked by the Gwathuirim (again). During the 22nd century Clan Sonmar splits up and the western branch becomes the new Clan Gáetir (D. “Spear-land”).

In the north of Dunfearan, Clan Ewen leads the faction that favours non-interference with Gondor. Due to the success of Clan Arailt in settling the increasingly empty parts of western Calenardhon, they grudgingly acknowledge Arailt’s leadership in the South.

Year of the Third Age	Event
2055	After the disappearance of King Eärnur II, the first Ruling Steward Mardil locks Orthanc and takes the keys to Minas Tirith. The fortress of Angrenost remains occupied.
ca. 2070	The Gwathuirim begin to slowly settle the area between rivers Adorn and Angren.
2087	Clan Sonmar founded south of the Angren.
ca. 2150	Clan Dobac forms on the territory of Angrenost and east of Clan Arailt.
2161	Clan Gáetir splits off from Sonmar. It will dominate the area for the rest of this Age.
ca. 2300	The Lord of Angrenost has become a hereditary institution.
ca. 2400	Western Calenardhon is ethnically almost entirely gwathuiric. Gondor’s direct influence is reduced to the area around the fortress of Harnost.



Realm	Clan	Area (km ²)	Unsettled Area [%]	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km ²
Dor 'Wathui	Sonmar	8,900	58.8	22,000	900	22,800	2.6
	Arailt	18,900	68.0	24,800	1,100	25,900	1.4
	Dobac	3,700	51.7	14,500	600	15,100	4.1
	Deagen	9,100	59.6	20,400	900	21,400	2.4
	Lind	6,300	45.6	24,800	1,200	26,000	4.1
	Ewen	4,900	46.1	22,600	1,200	23,900	4.9
	Madoc	4,400	54.5	12,000	550	12,500	2.8
	Annain	5,000	46.3	14,400	700	15,100	3.0
	total	61,200	53.8	155,500	7,150	162,700	2.7

Table 7: Population figures for Dor 'Wathui TA 2000

Population numbers

The aftereffects of the Great Plague have been overcome, and the population now far exceeds the pre-Plague level – greatly due to the enlargement of the gwaithuirc territory. The total population has almost doubled since its nadir, but due to the much larger territory, population density has dropped.

Dunfearan's settlements have significantly recovered since the last era. Both the absolute size of the individual settlements and their overall numbers have increased; the latter by 50% – showing the rising fortunes of the clans.

#	Settlement	Clan	Population	Code
1	Byrins	Sonmar	1,500 (900)	So1 (Ca 16)
2	Eyrans	Sonmar	1,500 (0)	So2 (Ca14)
3	Athais	Sonmar	2,300 (0)	So3 (Ca15)
4	Larach Call	Arailt	900	Ar1
5	Woode	Dobac	600	Do1
6	Prugache	Deagen	800	De1
7	Poskis	Lind	700	Li1
8	Bennwall	Lind	500	Li2
9	Blecanes	Ewen	400	Ew1
10	Neynos	Ewen	800	Ew2
11	Lithird	Madoc	500	Ma2
12	Geitthyns	Annain	700	An1

Table 8: Major settlements of Dor 'Wathui TA 2000

Settlements

The average size of the major settlements has increased significantly, with the majority ranging between 500 and 800 inhabitants.

Byrins and *Eyrans* are two big settlements that now belong to greater Dunfearan. The gwaithuirc population had always been strong in this remote corner of Gondor, and now its people openly ally themselves with the clans to the North.

Athais has developed into the major centre of the clans. The vigour brought by the retreat of Gondorian interest and the increasing Daen fortunes make this settlement the hub of all activity in the Gap of Calenardhon.

But under Brego and Aldor the Dunlendings were rooted out again and driven away beyond the Isen, and the Fords of Isen were guarded.

—UT. The Battles of the Fords of Isen

Year of the Third Age	Event
2510	Great meeting of all the Clans in Angrenost, Balchoth invasion of Calenardhon. The Great Catastrophe.
2550	Beginning of the eviction of the survivors of the Great Catastrophe still living east of the Isen.
2565	Remnants of Clan Menan fully expelled from their land.
2573	The Rohirrim start to remove remnants of Clan Dobac from their lands.

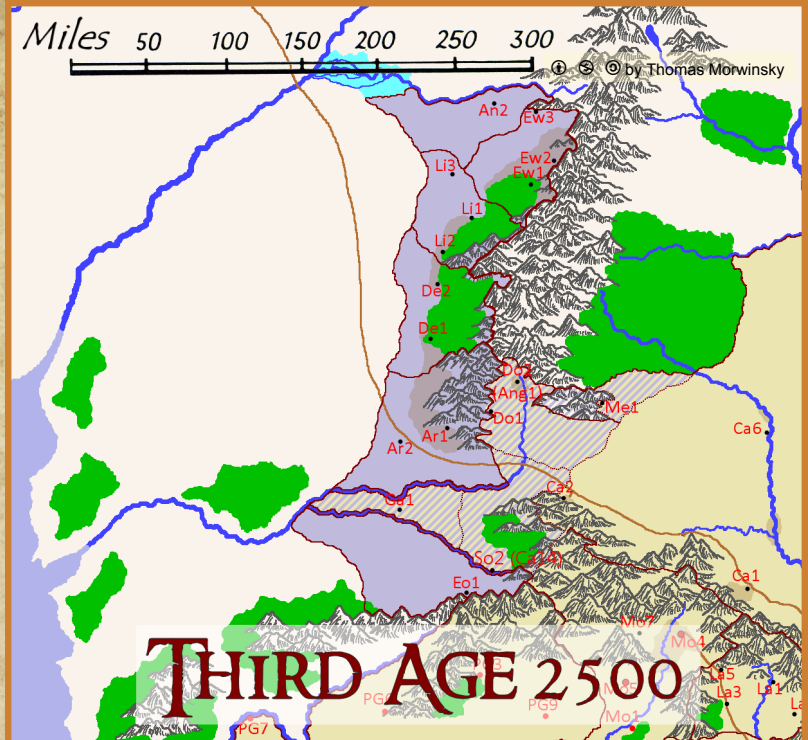
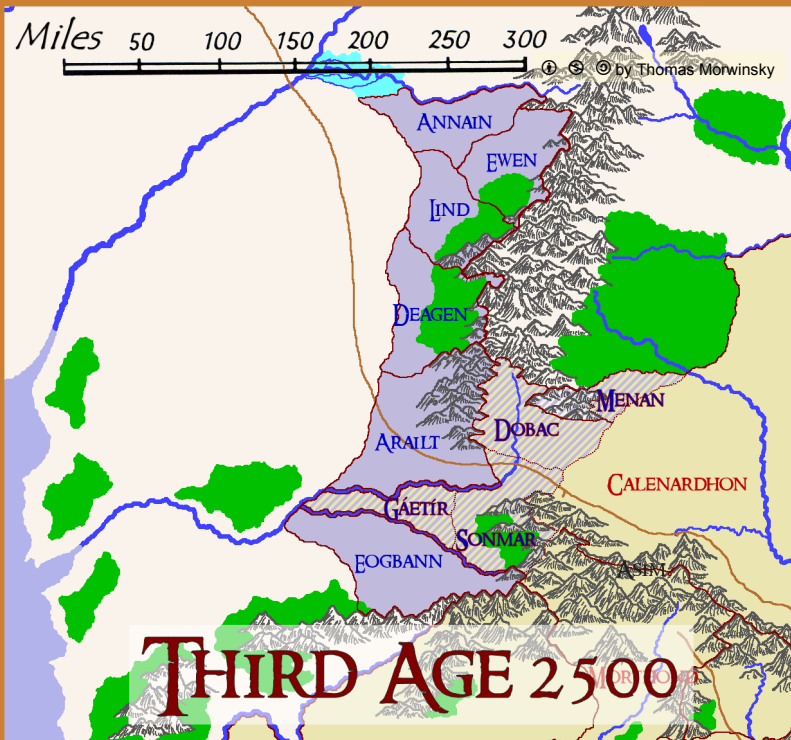
The start of the 26th century sees the apogee of the Daen fortunes. They form the bulk of the still relatively few people in this region. Even though they now represent the majority of western Calenardhon’s population, the absolute demographic numbers remain rather low. The “new” clan territories east of the Isen are also those with the lowest population densities, which makes them especially vulnerable to the Balchoth invasion in the early 26th century. When the Easterlings invade northern Gondor in TA 2510, they don’t only come close to overpowering Steward Cirion’s army in the North, but their vastly superior numbers also allow them to send several strong raiding hosts deep into Calenardhon to wreak havoc in the enemy’s hinterland (similar to a medieval *chevauchée*). This causes great loss of lives among the scattered remnants of Calenardhon’s population. For the eastern Gwathuirim it also proves to be their doom: The marauding Easterlings easily destroy most of the weakly defended (according to Balchoth standards) settlements. Large numbers of the Gwathuirim are slaughtered and the few survivors flee west- and southward. The enemy reaches as far as Angrenost and Harnost, where they briefly besiege the garrisons and refugees there. By chance representatives of all the clans meet near Haer Cadarn (Angrenost) to decide on the further policies of the Daen people when the Balchoth

invade. When news of the approaching enemy reaches them, most of the delegates depart hastily, only to be caught in the open by the Easterlings near the Fords of Isen and killed to a man. After the victory of Parth Celebrant, the Éothéod sweep south and defeat these roving bands of Balchoth over the course of the next weeks. The price for the Daen was already paid though and when the dust settles they find themselves in a land given to these new outsiders who expel the last few and traumatized survivors of the onslaught from their fathers’ land. In addition, many of their lords and chieftains have perished against the Balchoth which bereaves the clans of strong leadership in these critical days. To the Gwathuirim it looked like now one invader was simply replaced by another to seal their doom. Full of bitterness and unable to put up serious resistance, the Gwathuirim retreat westward, mourning the dead and the theft of their land. Just the Gwathuirim in Haer Cadarn survive as a bulwark for the future.

Many survivors from Calenardhon find a new home among the southern clans (especially Araitl, Gáetir and Eogbann). These events find their way into Daen history as the *Great Catastrophe*. Later it was seen that many people had only been scattered and eventually returned to their homes, but the rule of the Rohirrim lay heavy upon them, and over time, they are all forcefully expelled when the Strawheads claimed this land for themselves.

Population numbers

The demographics are now dominated by the ousting of the remaining Daen after the disaster of TA 2510. Even though at first some remain in their ancestral lands, later on the Rohirrim begin to displace them when they claim these lands for their own use. The great loss of life not only disrupts the settlement patterns west of Isen, but also the adjacent lands from Eogbann, who lose people and territory as well.



Realm	Clan	Area (km²)	Unsettled Area [%]	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km²
Dor 'Wathui	Menan	4.7	73,8	6.100	300	6.400	1,4
	Dobac	9.000	72,3	16.900	1.100	18.000	2,0
	Sonmar	10300	72,0	14.500	600	15.000	1,5
	Gáetír	4.800	72,0	8.700	400	9.100	1,9
	Eogbann	14.200	66,0	21.800	900	22.600	1,6
	Arailt	18.100	65,3	34.300	1.700	36.000	2,0
	Deagen	11.400	59,6	25.100	1.200	26.300	2,3
	Lind	8.900	49,9	28.800	1.400	30.200	3,4
	Ewen	8.900	53,5	30.900	1.700	32.600	3,7
	Annain	8.200	65,0	15.800	650	16.400	2,0
	total	98.5	64,9	202.900	9.900	212.600	2,2

Table 9: Population figures for Dor 'Wathui TA 2500

Settlements

Dunfearan's settlements now represent the apogee shortly before the *Great Catastrophe*. Hopes are high for the future – only to fall into a bottomless pit following the Easterling invasion. The major settlements have again increased somewhat in size, but still they remain limited.

Haer Cadarn (Angrenost) has a special status. The fortress is still manned by a Gondorian garrison, but its heritage is mixed. Only the lord and his family retain a relatively pure Gondorian lineage. Though still being loyal to Gondor, the fortress' garrison is sympathetic to the Gwathuirim living around. Thus it is not part of clan Dobac as such, but harbours strong and friendly ties with the clan.

Eyrans has a "split" status: A great part of the town is still Gondorian (800 people), while a similarly numerous fraction of Gwathuirim has settled

#	Settlement	fief	Population	Code
1	Heyrrid	Menan	300	Me1
2	Woode	Dobac	300	Do1
3	Haer Cadarn (Angrenost)	(Dobac)	800	Do2 (Ang1)
4	Eyrans	Sonmar	1,400 (600)	So2 (Ca14)
5	Byrins	Gáetír	400	Ga1 (Ca 16)
6	Ginhoes	Eogbann	900	Eo1
7	Larach Call	Arailt	800	Ar1
8	Dun Pravithe	Arailt	900	Ar2
9	Prugache	Deagen	800	De1
10	Blanhain	Deagen	400	De2
11	Poskis	Lind	600	Li1
12	Bennwall	Lind	300	Li2
13	Dary	Lind	500	Li3
14	Blecanes	Ewen	700	Ew1
15	Neynos	Ewen	600	Ew2
16	Geitthyns	Ewen	400	Ew3
17	Cruwenn	Annain	650	An2

Table 10: Major settlements of Dor 'Wathui TA 2500

here as well (600 people). The ethnic character of the town changes towards the Daen people, something the local Gondorian lord sees with doubts.

Ginhoes is the southernmost centre of the Daen. It serves as sister town to *Eyrans*.

Byrins is now a completely gwathuiric town which serves as an important crossroads for communication between the northern and southern clans.

Dun Pravithe is the largest purely gwathuiric settlement in this time. It reflects the status and power of clan Arailt and is a symbol of the Daen's downfall soon thereafter.

After the death of King Aldor, who had driven out the last of the Dunlendings and even raided their lands in Enedwaith by way of reprisal, the Dunlendings unmarked by Rohan but with the connivance of Isengard began to filter into northern Westfold again, [...] In the reign of Déor they became openly hostile, raiding the herds and studs of the Rohirrim in Westfold.

— UT. The Battles of the Fords of Isen

Year of the Third Age	Event
2605	The Rohirrim begin to drive out the Daen from the eastern bank of the Isen.
2620	In order to create a "buffer zone" and in retaliation for continued resistance, the Rohirrim begin to conduct extensive punitive raids west of Isen. Clan Arailt bears the brunt of these attacks.
2640	The last people of clan Dobac are driven from the eastern side of the river Angren. Westemnet and Westfold are now "ethnically cleansed" from Dunlendings by the Rohirrim.
ca. 2650	Clan Arailt is defeated and dispersed. Its remnants retreat into the Highlands. The other clans lend much help to limit the depredations of the Rohirrim.
2695	Apart from clans Ewen and Annain, the Daen agree on the <i>Alliance of Banhain</i> to fight back the Rohirrim.
2695-99	The lands west of Isen are made safe again. Raids from the Rohirrim lessen significantly.
2700-2710	The clans frequently raid into Rohan.
2707	The last Gondorian captain of Angrenost dies without an heir. The local people with strong gwaithuirc roots remain.
2710	Exiles from clan Dobac seize Angrenost (Haer Cadarn) and make it their chief settlement.

The 27th century marks a nadir of the dunnish fortunes. Clan Gáetir has to submit to the advancing Rohirrim, but they are still not fully subdued, giving them a somewhat "in between" status: Neither an integral part of Rohan nor a free clan of Dunland. Eogbann also decreases in size; mostly due to the attacks of the Rohirrim. Clans Dobac and Arailt have fared the worst by far from reprisal raids of the Rohirrim: While the territory of the former is only very sparsely settled due to repeated attacks by the Eorlingas, the majority of the area of Arailt is also open to Rohirrim raids, which makes life there precarious. The mighty Arailt have suffered a disastrous fall from power at the hands of the "Strawheads". Formerly proud Dun Pravithe now is a mere shadow of itself, razed by the Rohirrim and only partially rebuilt on a much more modest scale. The only relatively safe area for Arailt is their northernmost reaches west of the Misty Mountains, where several

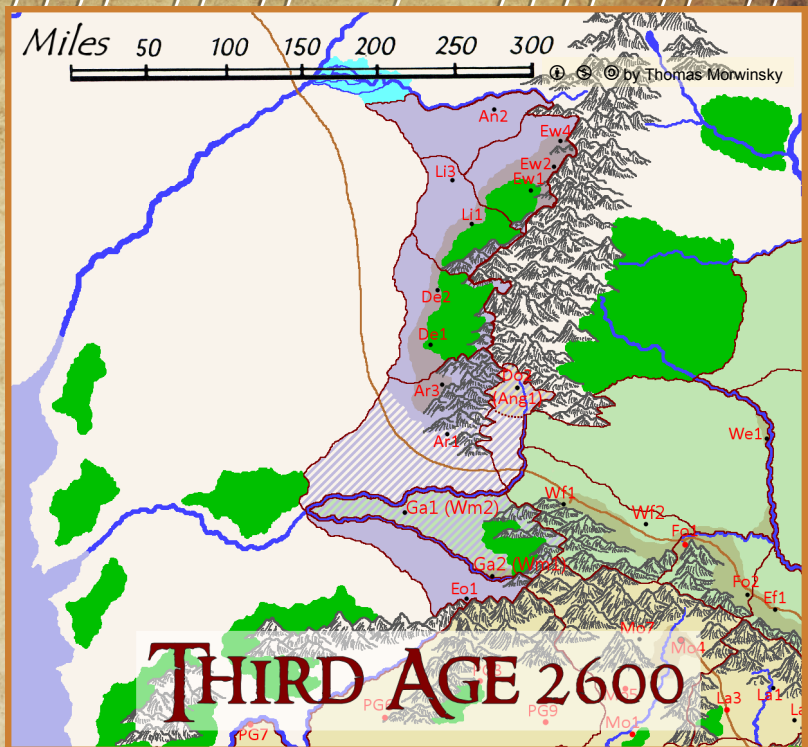
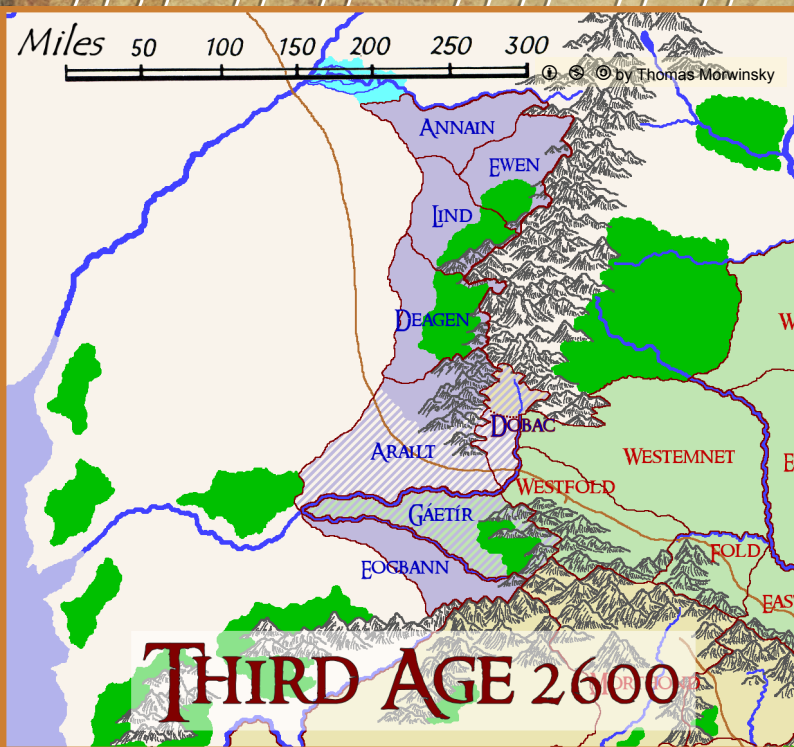
mountain refuges serve as shelters when the Rohirrim come with fire and sword.

In the North, clan Ewen is the leader of the faction that sees its non-interference justified. In Gáetir, a noble family holds great power in the southeast, near the source of the Adorn. This powerful family counts both noble Daen as well as Rohirrim among its ancestors and will dominate politics in the area for decades to come.

Since neither Rohan nor Gondor gave heed to this far corner [Angrenost] of the realm, it was not known until later what had happened there. The line of the Gondorian chieftains of Angrenost had failed, and the command of the fortress passed into the hands of a family of the [local] people. These, as has been said, were already long before of mixed blood, and they were now more friendly disposed to the Dunlendings than to the "wild Northmen" who had usurped the land; with Minas Tirith far away they no longer had any concern [...] As was later known, the Dunlendings, having been admitted as friends, had seized the Ring of Isengard, slaying the few survivors of its ancient guards who were not (as were most) willing, to merge with the Dunlendish fold.

— UT. The Battles of the Fords of Isen

Late in the 27th century, the Daen once again are able to secure their lands by the means of the *Alliance of Banhain*. This union is one of the rare events where the clans agree on common action. Stiffening resistance and mounting losses west of the Isen convince the Rohirrim, who are not interested in extensive and protracted warfare beyond their borders, to cease their raids. After the western bank of the Isen is again safely under dunnish control, the clans eventually begin to probe into Westfold and Westemnet. In this they are supported by the garrison of Angrenost, who deems Rohan's policy under Brego and Aldor excessive and unnecessarily vengeful. Thus they largely welcome the official takeover of the fortress by clan Dobac in TA 2710 following the last Gondorian captain's death without an heir a few years earlier.



Population numbers

Realm	Clan	Area (km²)	Unsettled Area (%)	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km²
Dunland	Dobac	4,500	77.5	5,300	300	5,600	1.2
	Gáétir	11,100	55.7	34,500	2,100	36,600	3.3
	Eogbann	7,500	61.8	15,800	600	16,500	2.2
	Arailt	21,600	79.6	22,300	1,100	23,300	1.1
	Deagen	11,100	54.7	31,800	1,600	33,400	3.0
	Lind	8,700	49.2	29,600	1,500	31,100	3.6
	Ewen	8,700	49.2	34,800	2,000	36,800	4.2
	Annain	8,000	61.5	20,100	800	20,900	2.6
total		81,200	61.1	194,200	10,000	204,200	2.5

Table 11: Population figures for Dunland TA 2600

This time sees both a low point for the Daen, when Rohan launches destructive raids deep into their territory and much of the southern lands become almost depopulated. Consequently, the population numbers are now lower than 100 years earlier. From the early 27th century onward, this trend is reversed though.

Settlements

In the early and mid-27th century, Dunfearan's settlements suffer especially in the South as many settlements of Clans Arailt and Dobac are razed. Towards the end of the century things change when they are able to secure their position once more and offer serious resistance against the Rohirrim.

Eyrans in Gáétir is the home of the most powerful noble here. His family is of mixed descent, but is

#	Settlement	Clan	Population	Code
1	Haer Cadarn (Isengard)	Dobac	300	Do2 (Ang1)
2	Eyrans	Gáétir	1,100	Ga2 (Wm1)
3	Byrins	Gáétir	1,000	Ga1 (Wm2)
4	Ginhoes	Eogbann	600	Eo1
5	Larach Call	Arailt	500	Ar1
6	Dayches	Arailt	600	Ar3
7	Prugache	Deagen	800	De1
8	Blanhain	Deagen	800	De2
9	Poskis	Lind	600	Li1
10	Dary	Lind	900	Li3
11	Blecanes	Ewen	700	Ew1
12	Neynos	Ewen	700	Ew2
13	Cnethoes	Ewen	600	Ew4
14	Cruwenn	Annain	800	An2

Table 12: Major settlements of Dunland TA 2600

accepted as a chief among the Gáétir clan as well as being a lord of Rohan.

Byrins is the second major town in Gáétir and also much larger than most of northern clans' cities.

Prugache and Blanhain in Deagen now are the main towns in the Daen core lands. Here the plans for re-claiming the western lands are made. Blanhain is also the place of the great clan meeting resulting in the *Alliance of Blanhain* to stop rohirric raids.

Cruwenn is one of the most important towns of the northern clans. Even though they join the Alliance of Blanhain, they remain sceptical of an extended conflict with the Rohirrim and an agenda of the southern clans to claim overlordship (or even kingship) over the clans. The resulting *Pact of Cruwenn* obliges clans Ewen and Annain to mutual support against any threat – foreign or domestic.

Helm Hammerhand [...] was a grim man of great strength [...] There was at that time a man named Freca, who claimed descent from King Fréawine, though he had, men said, much Dunlendish blood, and was dark-haired [...]

[Helm speaking] “Freca, your folly has grown with your belly. You talk of a staff! If Helm dislikes a crooked staff that is thrust on him, he breaks it. So!” With that he smote Freca such a blow with his fist that he fell back stunned, and died soon after.

Helm then proclaimed Freca’s son and near kin the king’s enemies; and they fled, for at once Helm sent many men riding to the west marches.

— *The Lord of the Rings. Appendix A*

Year of the Third Age	Event
2754	King Helm kills Freca of Eyrans and declares his son Wulf and family outlaw. The latter flee to clan Deagen.
2758	Wulf’s War: Supported by troops from Isengard, he leads a Daen army over the Isen. King Helm of Rohan is soundly defeated. Wulf takes Edoras. Beginning of the Long Winter.
2759	Death of Helm. Wulf is killed in Edoras by Fréaláf. Rout of the Daen army. Siege of Isengard. Saruman takes up residence there.
2772	Refugees of Durin’s Folk led by Thrór found the mansion of Gindabaz.
2793-99	War of the Orcs and Dwarves. The Daen lend support to the Dwarves.
2825	Gindabaz abandoned by Thráin II and Thorin II Oakenshield
ca. 2830	Saruman begins to turn his thoughts towards finding the One Ring. He starts to take Daen people into his service.
2872-77	The Rohirrim conquer the territory of clan Gâetir. Saruman’s efforts of reconciliation finally fail.

The middle of the 28th century sees both the triumph and deep fall of the Daen. Freca, the powerful lord of Eyrans with descent from both the Daen and Rohir side maintains close ties to clans Arailt, Deagen and especially Eogbann where he owns extensive tracts of land. He considers himself as some kind of arbitrator between the two cultures and demands appropriate respect and influence at the court in Edoras. With this he fails when Helm Hammerhand kills him in a vengeful and cruel mood, declaring his son and family outlaw and confiscating his lands.

Wulf and his family escape the spiteful king’s bloodhounds and finds refuge in Prugache – clan Deagen’s main centre. From here he plans his revenge. For some time before these events, Corsairs from Umbar had made expeditions to the

coasts of Eriador and Enedwaith in search of markets for their goods as well as allies against Gondor and its friends. Seeing his chance, Wulf intensifies these contacts, promising to organise wide support in Dunland for a war against Rohan. In turn the Corsairs agree to supply him with arms, armour and men for his planned campaign. This support is mainly coordinated from the Corsairs’ trading post in Tharbad. From TA 2755-58 Wulf develops his plans and assembles an alliance of almost all clans for his planned all-out war against the hated Helm Hammerhand and his people. Only clans Annain and Ewen stay beside and don’t join the alliance.

The revenge comes during the summer of TA 2758, when the Corsairs attack Gondor’s coasts on a broad front, preventing it from lending any significant help to Rohan. In addition, the Bozorgana once again attack Rohan from the East, forcing it to split its forces between east and west. The Corsair raids and the Easterling invasion are the signal for Wulf to marche his army southward, to the Fords of Isen and simultaneously from Isengard. King Helm is caught in this pincer movement and suffers a crushing defeat. With the remnants of his force, he retreats to the Hornburg, and Wulf leaves a strong detachment to keep the king bottled up in his fortress. His main force advances towards Edoras, where Haleth, Helm’s son leads the defence. Haleth dies here, defending the great doors of Meduseld as the last man standing.

Afterwards Wulf resides in Meduseld, planning the re-distribution of the ancient Daen lands to their “rightful” owners and also negotiating with the Bozorgana about their share of the booty. The folk of Rohan largely retreats into the mountain while the Dunlendings and Easterlings control the Lowlands. Shortly thereafter, the Long Winter begins early and ends all further military movement through severe frost and snow. The winter lasts unusually long and before the end of the year the besieged Rohirrim suffer heavily through hunger and exposure. Eventually Helm himself dies in the frost and all seems lost for the Eorlingas. At that time

Helm's sister-son Fréaláf leads a small party and enters Meduseld in a surprise-raid during which he kills Wulf in single combat. Thus died the man who came closest to being a "king" in Dunland. Soon thereafter winter breaks and Gondor is able to send strong forces to Rohan's aid. The Daen army is utterly defeated and its scattered remnants flee in disorder over the Isen and into the fortress of Isengard. Here they are besieged until lack of food forces them to surrender later in TA 2759.

Following these events shortly, Saruman the White offers to take residence in Isengard and protect it against all enemies of Gondor and Rohan. Steward Beren happily agrees. Saruman brings rich gifts to the coronation of Rohan's new king Fréaláf. But the White Wizard has other plans as well: Knowing of the continuing enmity between the Rohirrim and Dunlendings, he hopes to act as a mediator in their conflict and thus bring peace and perhaps reconciliation to this part of the Northwest (in addition of access to Isengard's *palantír*). By that way, he hopes, the forces of the Free Peoples might be strengthened in their struggle against the Shadow. In this time his goals are genuinely good as he has not yet begun his descent into darkness. He is impressed by the performance of the Dunlendings, who were able to decisively defeat the Rohirrim, given a strong leadership and centralised command (and improved equipment). He sends envoys to the clans and speaks there himself, trying to convince the Daen of his genuine care for their interests, as well as bringing about a peaceful solution with the Rohirrim. His success is limited, but at least he manages to limit further hate and vengeance among the Daen. His words are received most favourably among clans Ewen and Annain who were opposed to Wulf's war in the first place. From these clans will come later his most reliable servants.

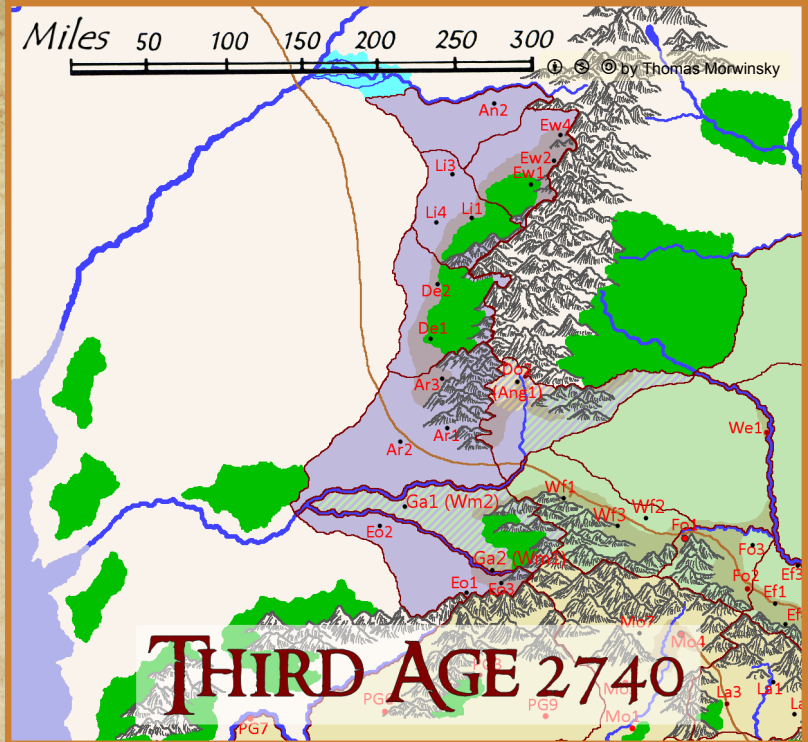
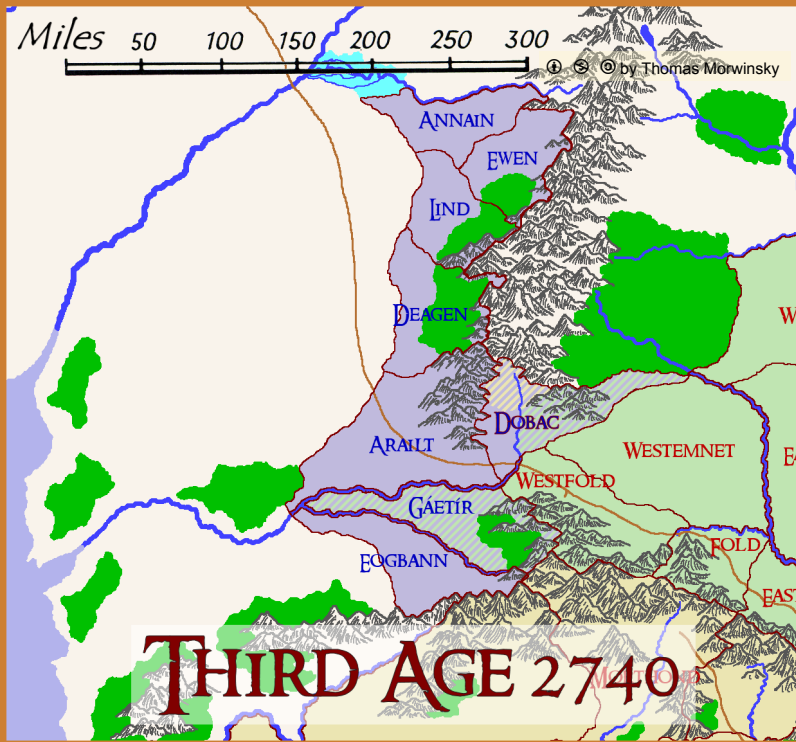
Not long after Saruman takes up residence in Isengard, refugees from Erebor arrive in the region. Due to the close friendship and support that the White Wizard showed to the Naugrim in the past, they choose a new dwelling near his home. In addition, the Longbeards' tale of forceful eviction from their home by a vastly superior enemy stirs sympathy among the Daen. They agree to let the Dwarves build a home within a natural cave complex in the mountains on the border of clan Deagen's territory. Thrór's people receive great aid from both the clans and the White Wizard in this time of need. In turn, the Dwarves trade many finished goods (often arms and armour) to the Daen clans. Even if this remains limited, it is the cause for wealth and influence within the clans themselves. After the War of the Dwarves and Orcs, Thráin II and Thorin Oakenshield eventually depart with their people for the Ered Luin. This is a blow to Saruman's plans in building a strong centre of resistance of the Free Peoples in this area.

Later in the 29th century, the Rohirrim have regained their strength while the Daen remain comparably weak. King Folcwine sees his position of power and leads a successful campaign for the control of clan Gætir's lands (west-march in the Rohirrim's view). Beside the tactical win, this also immediately nullifies all of Saruman's small gains towards a reconciliation or at least peaceful cooperation between the two people. Thus the Daen's hatred for the Rohirrim is allowed to swell and live on.

The Long Winter and the following reprisals of the Rohirrim are targeted especially against clan Eogbann, who was seen as a main supporter of Freca and Wulf – and who owned much land here and were related to its chief. As a result of these attacks, its territory shrinks considerably over the course of the 29th century until only a remnant in the uttermost west remains.



Gaul soldier © by Vincent Pompetti, used with permission



Realm	Clan	Area (km²)	Unsettled Area (%)	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km²
Dunland	Dobac	11,100	59.9	25,600	1,300	26,900	2.4
	Gáetir	11,100	51.1	47,400	3,000	50,400	4.5
	Eogbann	9,800	52.2	29,200	1,300	30,500	3.1
	Araitl	21,600	70.4	34,000	1,700	35,700	1.7
	Daegen	11,100	57.2	32,500	1,900	34,400	3.1
	Lind	8,700	49.2	34,600	1,700	36,300	4.2
	Ewen	8,700	49.2	36,900	2,100	39,000	4.5
	Annain	8,000	58.0	23,500	1,100	24,600	3.1
	total	90,100	55.9	263,700	14,100	277,800	3.1

Table 13: Population figures for Dunland TA 2740

Population numbers

At the beginning of this pivotal era, the numbers of the clans are high, as years of relative peace led to a significant population growth. Then comes Wulf's War and soon thereafter the Long Winter grips the region. Combined, they cause the death of countless people among the Daen and the Rohirrim. Supplies begin to run out around the end of the year (2758), but snow and ice persist until March. Without outside help, the clans suffer tremendously. When the winter subsides, the emaciated clan warriors cannot put up serious resistance against Gondor's forces sent to relieve Rohan. The few survivors of Wulf's army return to a reeling land.

Settlements

The urbanisation patterns of this era are very similar to those of the previous one, only the settlements tend to be a bit larger. The lands of clan Gáetir ("West-march" in Rohan's view) are especially populous.

#	Settlement	Clan	Population	Code
1	Haer Cadarn (Isengard)	Dobac	1,200	Do2 (Ang1)
2	Eyrans (Frecasburg)	Gáetir	1,600	Ga2 (Wm1)
3	Byrins	Gáetir	1,400	Ga1 (Wm2)
4	Ginhoes	Eogbann	600	Eo1
5	Cedde	Eogbann	400	Eo2
6	Gwachos	Eogbann	400	Eo3
7	Larach Call	Araitl	700	Ar1
8	Dun Pravithe	Araitl	550	Ar2
9	Dayches	Araitl	450	Ar3
10	Prugache	Daegen	1,000	De1
11	Blanhain	Daegen	900	De2
12	Poskis	Lind	500	Li1
13	Dary	Lind	750	Li3
14	Pennwann	Lind	500	Li4
15	Blecanes	Ewen	750	Ew1
16	Neynos	Ewen	700	Ew2
17	Cnethoes	Ewen	700	Ew4
18	Cruwenn	Annain	1,050	An2

Table 14: Major settlements of Dunland TA 2740

Eyrans in Gáetir is the home of its most powerful noble. Inofficially it is also called *Frecasburg*, after its lord. After his death, the town is officially re-named to honour their great lord who was treacherously killed by the vicious Helm Hammerhand.

Byrins as the second major town in Gáetir reflects the stronger demography of this land compared to the clans in the North.

Haer Cadarn (Isengard) is now firmly in the hands of clan Dobac and they have transformed it into a great fortress of the Daen. Its possession is a key strategic asset in their upcoming struggle with the Rohirrim.

Folcwine [r. 2864-2903]. When he became king the Rohirrim had recovered their strength. He reconquered the west-march (between Adorn and Isen) that Dunlendings had occupied.

— *The Lord of the Rings. Appendix A*

— *The Lord of the Rings. Appendix A*

Year of the Third Age	Event
2903	Fengel becomes king of Rohan. Rohirric rule for clan Gáetir becomes more tight.
ca. 2910	Saruman begins to recruit men among the clans in numbers.
ca. 2950	Saruman begins to encourage raids into Westfold and Westemnet.
2953	Saruman claims Isengard for himself.
2980	Clans Ewen and Annain are united
2995	Treaty of Meynir. Saruman starts to employ Dunlendings systematically.

In contrast to the previous highly dynamic era, the 30th century is largely a time of quiet and respite for the Daen clans. Shortly before this time, clan Gáetir has lost its independence to the Rohirrim. The first half of the 30th century is shaped by the rule of King Fengel in Rohan (r. 2903-53). It is characterised by greed, envy and vengefulness among the Rohirrim. In general, Fengel manages to bring out all the more negative traits of his people. Naturally, the Daen often become victims of these policies and Fengel's time is bitterly remembered especially by clan Gáetir. Though they still maintain close contacts with their northern cousins, their land is now regularly patrolled by the Rohirrim, who do not hesitate to hunt down anyone they deem suspect of hostile behaviour. Instead of regular trials, summary execution of such suspects is the norm rather than the exception. The men chosen for this kind of work stem mostly from eastern Rohan and hold the Daen in a very low opinion: Fengel deliberately chooses these people to control the west-march and clan Gáetir now feels like being occupied by an aggressor.

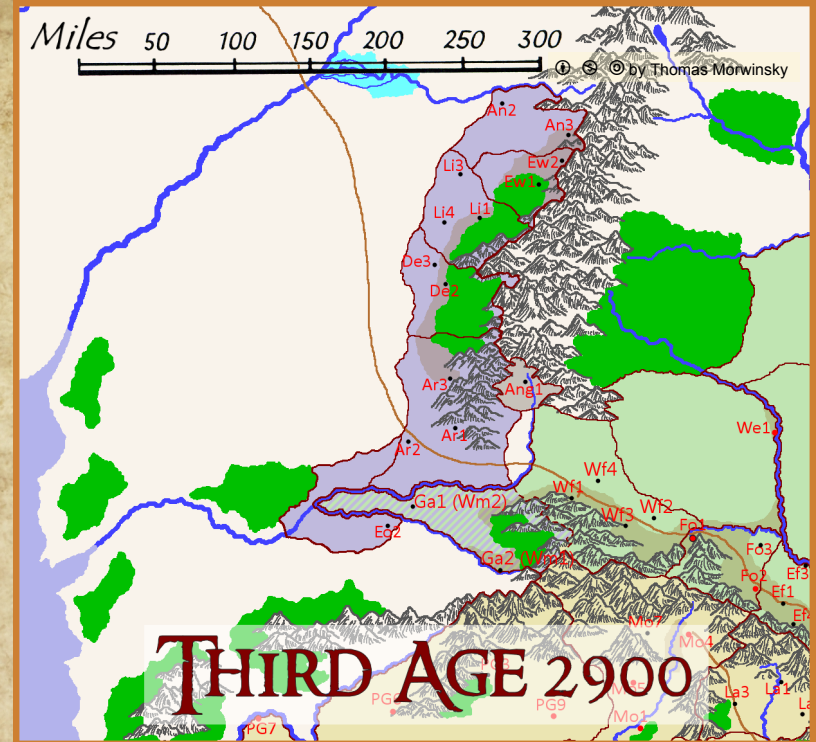
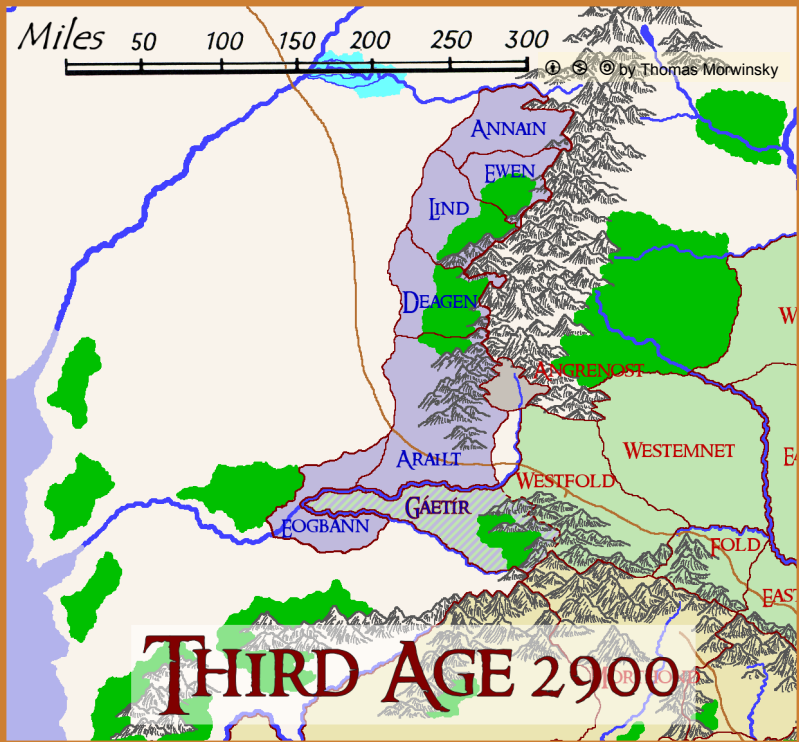
of superior power. These dark times will long be remembered in Dunland.

It is in this time that Saruman begins to recruit more men to his service and he especially strives to convince the Daen that he is both a good lord and acts on their behalf for an eventual revenge on the Rohirrim. At first this is done secretly, but by ca. TA 2950 he communicates his views more open to trusted men. Again, most of the recruits come from clans Annain and Ewen, for they value Saruman the most for his mediating (even if unsuccessful) role in the past. Shortly after the crowning of Thengel, Saruman secretly encourages the border clans to begin raiding into Westfold and Westemnet again.

The late 30th century also sees the merging of clans Ewen and Annain unite into a single, more powerful clan (an extremely rare event in Daen history). This was helped by a succession crisis in both clans, and a marriage of members of the clan chiefs formed the basis for a united clan. Saruman also promotes a strong leader among his most loyal supporters.

In TA 2995 Saruman manages to broker the *Treaty of Meynwir*, in which the clans agree to support Saruman with troops in case he deems them necessary for their revenge. In order not to raise any suspicions among the Rohirrim, the treaty is not communicated outside of Dunfearan. He in turn agrees to lend increased support to the Daen. He sees great potential in them, given the right training. However, he plans to limit the knowledge he is willing to share, to keep the Daen dependent on his continued support.





Realm	Clan	Area (km²)	Unsettled Area (%)	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km²
Dunland	Gáetír	11,100	50,8	39,600	2,600	42,100	3.8
	Eogbann	7,200	57,5	15,200	700	15,900	2.2
	Arailt	20,000	59,8	46,900	2,400	49,200	2.5
	Deagen	8,500	58,2	21,700	1,200	22,900	2.7
	Lind	8,800	49,5	32,700	1,800	34,500	3.9
	Ewen	5,400	49,2	21,400	1,300	22,700	4.2
	Annain	7,400	55,5	25,900	1,200	27,200	3.7
	total	68,400	54,3	203,400	11,200	214,500	3.1
	total w.o. Gáetír	57,300	54,9	163,800	8,600	172,400	3.0

Table 15: Population figures for Dunland TA 2900

Population numbers

Te losses of Wulf's War and especially the Long Winter afterwards hit the clans extremely hard. Even 140 years after these events, the total numbers are almost a quarter below their former levels. Given the now tight control of the west-march by the Rohirrim, the numbers of the clans able to act on their own account is even lower. The Daen have not forgotten the past, but they also realize their limited options to act upon it. Some see Saruman the White as a potential ally, given his long-standing interest in their affairs.

#	Settlement	Clan	Population	Code
1	Frecasburg	Gáetír	1,200	Ga2 (Wm1)
2	Byrins	Gáetír	1,400	Ga1 (Wm2)
3	Cedde	Eogbann	700	Eo2
4	Larach Call	Arailt	900	Ar1
5	Dun Pravithe	Arailt	800	Ar2
6	Dayches	Arailt	650	Ar3
7	Meynwir	Deagen	750	De3
8	Blanhain	Deagen	500	De2
9	Poskis	Lind	500	Li1
10	Dary	Lind	750	Li3
11	Pennwann	Lind	550	Li4
12	Blecanes	Ewen	500	Ew1
13	Neynos	Ewen	800	Ew2
14	Cruwenn	Annain	850	An2
15	Cnethoes	Annain	400	An3

Table 16: Major settlements of Dunland TA 2900

Settlements

With one exception, the urbanisation patterns of this era are very similar to its predecessor. The main difference is the loss of much of clan Eogbann's land and settlements.

Frecasburg in Gáetír is now the official name of former Eyrans. Its people and lord are under tight control and surveillance of the King, something they are very uncomfortable with.

Meynwir is the place of the seminal pact made by the clans and Saruman. It is seen by many as the beginning of a new age.

And there were battalions of Men, too. Many of them carried torches, and in the flare I could see their faces. Most of them were ordinary men, rather tall and dark-haired, and grim but not particularly evil-looking.

— *The Lord of the Rings. Flotsam and Jetsam*

Year of the Third Age	Event
3013	Cegwar Gwyde arrives in Isengard.
3018	Saruman informs the clans that the time for their final revenge is drawing near.
3019	Battles of the Fords of Isen and Helm's Deep. Aragorn releases the captured Dunlendings go home freely. The clans send an embassy to the Crowning of Elessar.

This time sees the culmination of the long-lasting conflict of the clans with the Rohirrim. In preparation for the expected war, Saruman begins a great armament at the end of the 30th century in Isengard. In order to quickly raise a large army, he chooses to breed orcs – who need a lot of equipment. This task completely absorbs the capacity of Isengard's – greatly enlarged – forges, but the Wizard is also aware of the generally poor equipment of his dunnish servants/allies:

They [the Dunlendings] were without body-armour, having only among them a few hauberks gained by theft or in loot [...] In Isengard as yet only the heavy and clumsy mail of the Orcs was made, by them for their own uses.

— *UT. The Battles of the Fords of Isen*

Therefore, around TA 3010 he begins to teach promising students crafting skills. He also trains many Daen in mining to satisfy his ever-growing needs of workforce for the acquisition of raw materials. At first, the low number of students and the time to train them limit the overall impact of this programme. However, it serves as an excellent tool to demonstrate the clans his willingness to lend genuine aid, thereby strengthening their loyalty.

The most important event in this context takes place in the year 3013, when a young man named Cegwar Gwyde from clan Annain was presented to the Wizard as a new smith candidate. The youngster showed great talent and due to his skill, Saruman himself takes him as a pupil rather than delegating this to a subordinate. However, Cegwar not only has a sharp mind and eagerly absorbs everything



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taught to him, but his gaze goes far deeper than Saruman anticipates or notices. That way the young man learns much more than intended by the Wizard. His apprenticeship ends some years later and according to Saruman's wishes, he returns to his clan to train smiths himself. That way, he escapes the disaster that soon thereafter engulfs Saruman and Isengard. Even though the further tale goes beyond the scope of demographics, it is important for his people and shall be told in short here. He becomes the founder of a new tradition of metalworking skills among his people. Eventually he trains many students and his skills rival (and often exceed) those of the best metalworkers of Gondor. When he dies many years later, he is greatly mourned by his people. His tale though is one of intended evil eventually turning to a much greater good (arming the Dunlendings and using them as tools in Saruman's war) when his legacy greatly aids his people for a brighter future in the Fourth Age. Eventually they overcome old hatred and backwardness. It is one of those instances foretold by Eru Ilúvatar to the Ainur at the beginning of all things:

For he that attempteth this [alter the Great Music, deviate from Eru's plan and thus be evil] shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined.

— *The Silmarillion. Ainulindalë*

Before these later events, the Dunlendings do not profit much from Saruman's training, as it had not yet reached a quantity that would make a difference on the battlefield. Saruman's help proved valuable, and many also admired his ability to keep genuinely evil creatures like orcs under control.

Many others did not approve the Wizard's use of orcs, but they accepted it grudgingly to keep alive their dream of re-gaining their old lands at last. It was in this time that doubts arose among clan Annain about the intentions of Saruman, but due to his success and power of voice, they were not able to do anything about it.

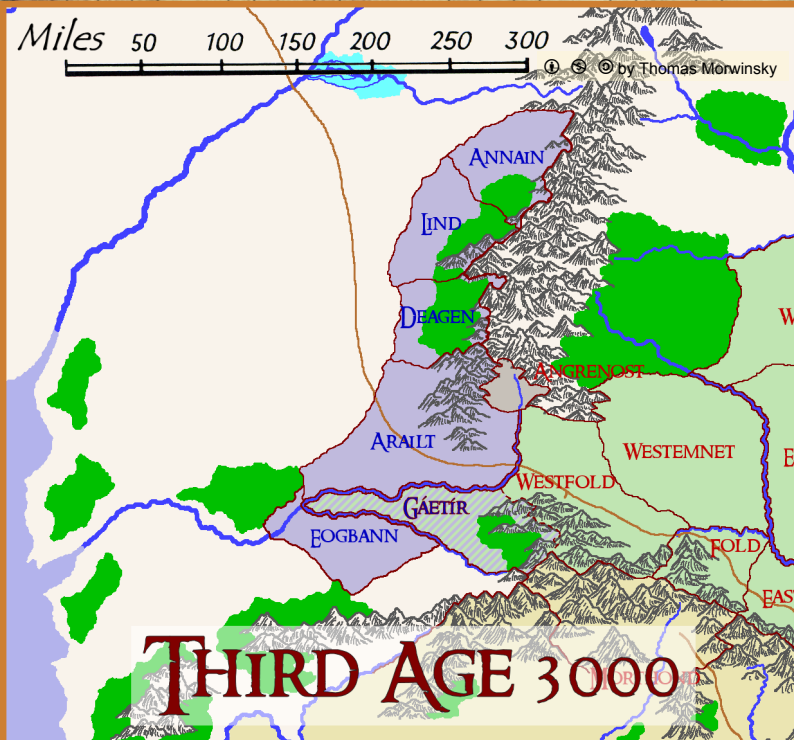
When war finally came in TA 3019, at first everything seemed to be successful like Wulf's early victories, but the total defeat at Helm's Deep proved to be an unexpected new chance for the Daen. As Aragorn recognized them to be not genuinely evil men, he managed to convince the Rohirrim to let them go home under condition they won't take up arms against Rohan or Gondor anymore.

Together with newly developing skills this proved to be the foundation for a new age in this

region. In the War of the Ring, it was primarily the aggressive clan Arailt that suffered the greatest losses. When the survivors from the Battle of Helm's Deep returned home and reported their tale, it became clear to the Daen that they had been deeply betrayed by someone they deemed their friend. This is especially felt in clan Annain, who had strongly argued for the support of the Wizard. Seeing their loyalty and goodwill betrayed, they became the most vocal promotors for peace with their old enemies in Rohan and Gondor. Their misuse as pawns in Saruman's game and the genuine clemency and wisdom of Aragorn convinced its chieftain and elders that the time for a new beginning has come indeed. Combined with their new-found pre-eminence in crafts and material, they are able to convince the other clans that the time to break the vicious cycle of the past has arrived.



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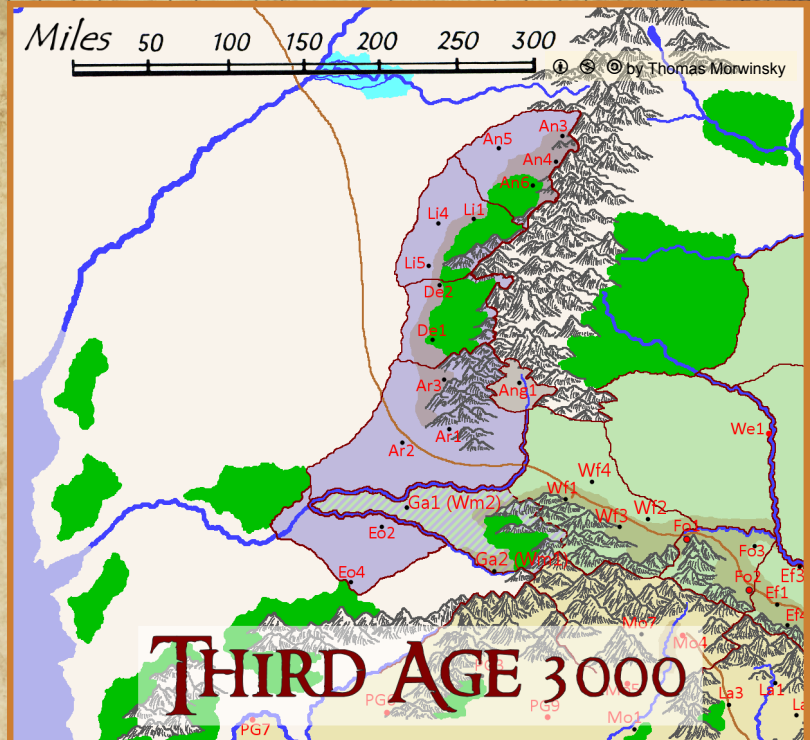


Population numbers

Realm	Clan	Area (km²)	Unsettled Area (%)	Rural Pop.	Urban Pop.	Overall Pop.	Overall pop. per km²
Dunland	Gaétir	11,100	50.8	40,300	2,600	42,900	3.9
	Eogbann	9,000	53.3	23,200	1,200	24,300	2.7
	Arailt	23,200	59.9	50,400	2,700	53,100	2.3
	Deagen	7,900	55.8	23,200	1,400	24,600	3.1
	Lind	10,200	49.4	40,200	2,200	42,400	4.2
	Annain	9,500	51.7	38,000	2,200	40,200	4.2
	total	70,900	53.5	215,300	12,300	227,500	3.2
	total w.o. Gaétir	59,800	54.0	175,000	9,700	184,600	3.1

Table 17: Population figures for Dunland TA 3000

Now Gaétir is no longer strictly controlled as in Fengel's time, but the long years of continuous rohirric rule have left their mark on the clan, who slowly begins to detach itself from Dunfearan. This is a creeping and subtle process during which they remain strongly opposed to the Rohirrim, at least to outsiders. In this time it seems questionable whether they would ever again join in an alliance with the other clans. An independent bid for their own interests is another thing though, and this causes them to look favourably on Saruman's offers. This way they also work with the northern clans, but on their own behalf – which is an important point in these times. The lord of Frecasburg holds much influence in the clan, even though he and his people are of largely mixed blood. It is them who have championed this middle position. These mixed people are often called "Easterners" by the more pure-blooded Daen of the clan. Time seems ripe for another conflict with the Rohirrim.



Settlements

#	Settlement	Realm	Clan	Population	Code
1	Frecasburg	Rohan (Dor 'Wathui)	Gaétir	1,200	Ga2 (Wm1)
2	Byrins	Rohan (Dor 'Wathui)	Gaétir	1,400	Ga1 (Wm2)
3	Cedde	Dor 'Wathui	Eogbann	700	Eo2
4	Reddorch	Dor 'Wathui	Eogbann	500	Eo4
5	Larach Call	Dor 'Wathui	Arailt	1,100	Ar1
6	Dun Pravithe	Dor 'Wathui	Arailt	800	Ar2
7	Dayches	Dor 'Wathui	Arailt	650	Ar3
8	Prugache	Dor 'Wathui	Deagen	650	De1
9	Blanhain	Dor 'Wathui	Deagen	750	De2
10	Poskis	Dor 'Wathui	Lind	600	Li1
11	Pennwann	Dor 'Wathui	Lind	700	Li4
12	Meynwir	Dor 'Wathui	Lind	900	Li5
13	Blecanes	Dor 'Wathui	Annain	500	An6
14	Neynos	Dor 'Wathui	Annain	800	An4
15	Ceidos	Dor 'Wathui	Annain	600	An5
16	Cnethoes	Dor 'Wathui	Annain	400	An3

The urbanisation patterns of this era are very similar to those of the previous one.

Frecasburg in Gaétir has grown in power and its lord is dominating the clan's policies, even though the chief resides in Byrins. However, the prospect of an independent entity brought up by the "Easterners" also appeals to their clan's chief.

Larach Call serves as the main staging area for Daen wishing to serve Saruman. It is also the power centre of clan Arailt – the one most eager for final revenge upon the Rohirrim.

Neynos in the north serves as the main centre of the recently formed united clan Annain.

In the days that followed his crowning the King sat on his throne in the Hall of the Kings and pronounced his judgements. And embassies came from many lands and peoples, from the East and the South, and from the borders of Mirkwood, and from Dunland in the west [...]

The Fourth Age is a time introducing great changes to this region. As already told, the wisdom and clemency of Aragorn initiated a fundamental change that would re-shape the history of the Daen forever. The old hatred finally came to an end, and even though it would still take many years to vanish completely, its destructive power was broken. The re-ordering of the West also includes the official designation of all the boundaries. The Daen were given the whole of Enedwaith to live in friendship with Rohan and the Reunited Kingdom and acknowledging the formal overlordship of the latter, but under their own laws and chieftains.

Over the next two centuries, the crafting skills taught by Saruman were developed further and the legacy of Cegwar the Smith became the foundation

for a rich and skilled tradition. In addition, the clans gained the approval of the Longbeards (by assistance of Gimli in Aglarond) to re-open old Gindabaz and mine its resources. Combined with the emerging craft culture, this proves to be the basis of new riches and pride for the clans. No longer were the Daen a poorly equipped people, but now their products become sought-after even by their former enemies, who praise their quality.

Eventually, this also leads to an ever-increasing centralisation of power and eventually a king is crowned. And the relations with their neighbours also slowly develop from peace to respect and even alliances and friendship. It will be the people of Dor 'Wathui that are going play an important part in the Northwest later during this age.



A celtic dinner © by Vincent Pompetti, used with permission

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