

Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons

Player's Secrets of

TUARHIEVEL



BIRTHRIGHT

DOMAIN SOURCEBOOK

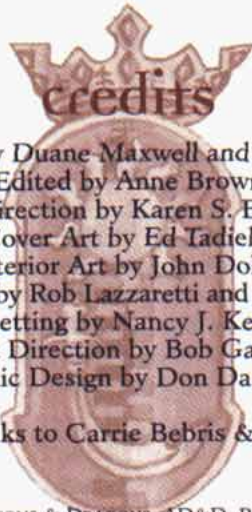


by Duane Maxwell and Steve Miller



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Designed by Duane Maxwell and Steve Miller
 Edited by Anne Brown
 Creative Direction by Karen S. Boomgarden
 Cover Art by Ed Tadiello
 Interior Art by John Dollar
 Cartography by Rob Lazzaretti and Dennis Kauth
 Typesetting by Nancy J. Kerkstra
 Art Direction by Bob Galica
 Graphic Design by Don Danowski

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TSR, Inc.
 201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
 Lake Geneva
 WI 53147
 USA



TSR Ltd.
 120 Church End
 Cherry Hinton
 Cambridge CB1 3LB
 United Kingdom

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Welcome to Tuarhievel, the last elven realm in the Aelvinnwode. This ancient land holds a culture that predates human presence on Cerilia. But the march of time has worn elven traditions thin, and now the nation is threatened with destruction from within and without. Only the most cunning of characters will be able to save Tuarhievel from the downfall that seems inevitable.

what you need to play

This accessory is for use with the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign setting; you or your Dungeon Master should have the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set. The *Player's Handbook* is also required to use this material. Much of the material in this book can be used in any campaign setting to add color and detail to an elven kingdom.

how to use this domain sourcebook

This sourcebook was designed with the assumption that players *might* or *might not* wish to play the regent of Tuarhievel. Much of this material is geared toward playing an elven noble who rules a province *within the domain*. In this case, you will be on one side of the nation's current struggle: keeping the kingdom intact for the day when the heir of Prince Phileraene will take her seat on the Thorn Throne, or thrusting Phileraene's human consort and her unborn child from power and attempting to chart a path to a new age of elven glory.

You may also choose to assume the role of regent, thus becoming the target of intrigues. Perhaps the threats to Phileraene's mistress become so severe that she must go into hiding with the future ruler of Tuarhievel.

As with all game accessories, feel free to ignore or alter any material that doesn't fit your character. Consult with your DM to customize this material to fit your own campaign.

This book explores Tuarhievel, providing information about the people, towns, and sites of interest. Once you've read this sourcebook, pass it to your DM and tell him what you want to keep or change. The DM has the right to veto any changes or add a few of his own.

a letter from savane mhoried

To those who love Tuarhievel, You know me as the Prince's First Consort, Savane. Possibly you have heard less flattering titles attached to my name, the least of which would be "human trollop" and "defiler of the Thorn Throne." I am painfully aware of the opinions that are held of me and my unborn child among many members of the Council of the Moon. "What right does a human have to sit on the Thorn Throne, and how can we permit a half-breed to assume it after her?" they ask.

I do not presume to claim that I am the better of any elf of this land, but I have been charged with the custodianship of the child of Prince Phileraene's birthright by your liege and mine. My regency will end on the day that child comes of age, or when our liege has his freedom from the Gorgon and returns from Kal-Saitharak. For now, however, I ask that you support me in my efforts to carry out the final command of a great ruler whom both you and I love more than life itself, Phileraene, Prince of Tuarhievel. He invested me with his bloodline when the Gorgon issued his ultimatum, not to spite the worthy elves of this land, but to protect them.

If you have attended recent sessions of the Council of the Moon, you have heard much talk about the glory days of the elven people, a time when the forest reached from sea to sea and elves were the undisputed masters of all the land. You have heard passionate speeches about the end of your civilization, and that the end is embodied by my presence on the throne. You have heard much talk about the baby I carry, and that no self-respecting elf should ever need to call a half-breed *Queen*.

Perhaps there is some truth to these speeches.

Perhaps Prince

Phileraene committed the greatest of betrayals when he chose me to rule in his stead. I do not believe this to be true, nor do I believe my child will be unfit to guide the people of Tuarhievel into their eternal futures. She may not be gifted with your immortality—my human frailty has seen to that—but the blood of Phileraene flows through her veins. That alone is enough to compensate for any weaknesses she may earn from me!

I hope you share my thoughts in these matters. But even if you don't—even if you agree with Rhuandice Tuarlachiem that Phileraene stained the honor of all elves when he placed me on the Thorn Throne—I would at least ask you to consider this: House Tuarlachiem is

an overview of tuarhievel

vehement in its desire to take all authority from the Thorn Throne and invest in individual nobles. Further, they would drive all humans from these forests, and the

gheallie Sidbe is the muscle with which they hope to accomplish this. The result may well be that this land will be split into seven kingdoms. A divided Tuarhievel will not survive, nor will this nation continue to exist if humans are violently driven from its borders and we make enemies of all. Between the Gorgon and vengeful humans, the beautiful forests will be reduced to smoldering ash and our bodies will serve as nourishment for the new trees that will grow here some day.

I have some allies. You have no doubt heard that Tara, the disowned wife of the Gorgon himself, supports me in this matter. But what you may not have heard is that several members of the *taelinri* support my attempts to carry on the legacy of Phileraene, as feeble as my efforts may be at present. But, with the support of individuals such as you, I will someday pass the authority along to Tuarhievel's rightful ruler—either my beloved or his child. In the meantime, I hope that you will continue your support of the Thorn Throne, not for me, but for the rightful heir who is growing in my womb. I ask you to stand by me, and help me learn the ways of your beautiful, eternal people, inferior though I may be. I am not your enemy. Help me keep Tuarhievel alive for the future.

Tuarhievel Timeline (all dates from the Tuarish calendar)

Unknown: Elves spring from the union of earth, water, fire, and air.

-13,089: Sidhe Braelachhiem unites tribes of what eventually will be known as the Aelvinnwode into one nation. The Golden Age of elven culture begins.

-12,500 to -8,000: Dwarves emerge from the depths of the earth, only to be dominated by the elves. Dwarves eventually retreat into the mountains again.

-1,700: Elves enslave the primitive kobolds and goblins of the Stonecrown mountains, teaching them civilization.

-700 to -500: The kobolds rebel, retreating into the mountains south of the Aelvinnwode, building impenetrable underground warrens.

0: The birth of Tuar, future queen.

237-294: Massive goblin uprising during which Sidhe Braelachhiem is killed. Individual powerful elves proclaim themselves lords over portions of the forest. End of the Golden Age.

295 to 456: The Humanoid Wars. Tuar

manages to secure a haven for the elves (the lands later known as Tuarhievel) against the humanoids. She is declared Queen Tuar.

956: Tuar, with the aid of several forest-dwelling creatures, constructs the living artifact known as the Thorn Throne.

2,004: The first humans reach Tuarhievel. Elves and humans agree to share the forests.

2,332 to 2,648: Having forgotten the arrangement their ancestors made with the elves, the humans begin to clear-cut forests and drive elves away. Tuar and other elven rulers establish the *gheallie Sidhe* knighthood.

2,700 to 3,178: The elves are swayed by Azrai to take their battle out of the forests and into the human lands. The decline of elven culture is accelerated.

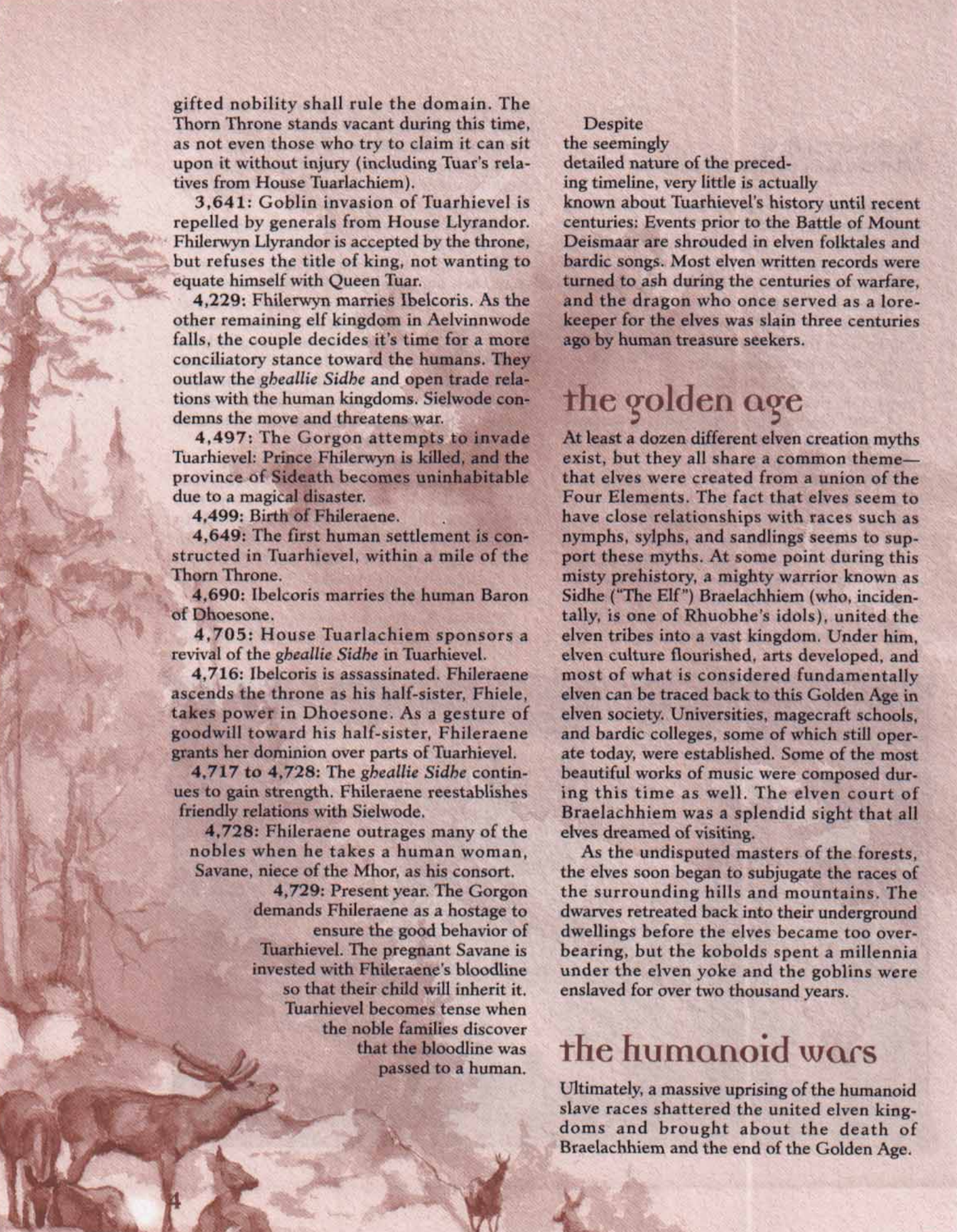
3,203: The War of Shadow begins.

3,205: Battle of Deismaar. Tuar recognizes the error the elves have committed, and in a stirring speech, causes most elven warlords to sweep across the field and join the human forces opposing Azrai. Tuar vanishes during the battle and is presumed slain. Tuarhievel is named in her honor.

3,206 to 3,640: The powerful of Tuarhievel squabble over who of the new breed of divinely

history





gifted nobility shall rule the domain. The Thorn Throne stands vacant during this time, as not even those who try to claim it can sit upon it without injury (including Tuar's relatives from House Tuarlachiem).

3,641: Goblin invasion of Tuarhievel is repelled by generals from House Llyrandor. Philerwyn Llyrandor is accepted by the throne, but refuses the title of king, not wanting to equate himself with Queen Tuar.

4,229: Philerwyn marries Ibelcoris. As the other remaining elf kingdom in Aelvinnwode falls, the couple decides it's time for a more conciliatory stance toward the humans. They outlaw the *gheallie Sidhe* and open trade relations with the human kingdoms. Sielwode condemns the move and threatens war.

4,497: The Gorgon attempts to invade Tuarhievel: Prince Philerwyn is killed, and the province of Sideath becomes uninhabitable due to a magical disaster.

4,499: Birth of Phileraene.

4,649: The first human settlement is constructed in Tuarhievel, within a mile of the Thorn Throne.

4,690: Ibelcoris marries the human Baron of Dhoesone.

4,705: House Tuarlachiem sponsors a revival of the *gheallie Sidhe* in Tuarhievel.

4,716: Ibelcoris is assassinated. Phileraene ascends the throne as his half-sister, Fhiele, takes power in Dhoesone. As a gesture of goodwill toward his half-sister, Phileraene grants her dominion over parts of Tuarhievel.

4,717 to 4,728: The *gheallie Sidhe* continues to gain strength. Phileraene reestablishes friendly relations with Sielwode.

4,728: Phileraene outrages many of the nobles when he takes a human woman, Savane, niece of the Mhor, as his consort.

4,729: Present year. The Gorgon demands Phileraene as a hostage to ensure the good behavior of Tuarhievel. The pregnant Savane is invested with Phileraene's bloodline so that their child will inherit it. Tuarhievel becomes tense when the noble families discover that the bloodline was passed to a human.

Despite the seemingly detailed nature of the preceding timeline, very little is actually known about Tuarhievel's history until recent centuries: Events prior to the Battle of Mount Deismaar are shrouded in elven folktales and bardic songs. Most elven written records were turned to ash during the centuries of warfare, and the dragon who once served as a lorekeeper for the elves was slain three centuries ago by human treasure seekers.

the golden age

At least a dozen different elven creation myths exist, but they all share a common theme—that elves were created from a union of the Four Elements. The fact that elves seem to have close relationships with races such as nymphs, sylphs, and sandlings seems to support these myths. At some point during this misty prehistory, a mighty warrior known as Sidhe ("The Elf") Braelachhiem (who, incidentally, is one of Rhuobhe's idols), united the elven tribes into a vast kingdom. Under him, elven culture flourished, arts developed, and most of what is considered fundamentally elven can be traced back to this Golden Age in elven society. Universities, magecraft schools, and bardic colleges, some of which still operate today, were established. Some of the most beautiful works of music were composed during this time as well. The elven court of Braelachhiem was a splendid sight that all elves dreamed of visiting.

As the undisputed masters of the forests, the elves soon began to subjugate the races of the surrounding hills and mountains. The dwarves retreated back into their underground dwellings before the elves became too overbearing, but the kobolds spent a millennia under the elven yoke and the goblins were enslaved for over two thousand years.

the humanoid wars

Ultimately, a massive uprising of the humanoid slave races shattered the united elven kingdoms and brought about the death of Braelachhiem and the end of the Golden Age.

The kobolds were the first to rebel against elven domination. They fled to the mountains where they created impenetrable underground warrens. But not until the goblins rebelled were the elves seriously threatened. Aided by orogs and other races such as trolls, the goblins waged all-out war against their former slave masters. Upon the death of Braelachhiem, elven nobles started squabbling among themselves. The united kingdom disintegrated into countless tiny fiefdoms, each of which claimed to be the new elven court.

Divided among themselves, the elves had difficulty dealing with the marauding humanoids until a young female elf named Tuar convinced the noble families of Breadonal (the descendants of Braelachhiem), Dhoelachnal, Sideath, and Llyrandor to pool their resources and form a united realm against the goblins. Under Tuar's leadership, they mustered armies that eventually secured the region now known as Tuarhievel against the raiders. At the urging of Siebharrinn, Master of House Sideath, and Philerwyn, Master of House Llyrandor, Tuar was named "Queen of Tuarhievel."

Tuar's rulership was further affirmed by the other forest races, who united to create a symbol of her authority: the Thorn Throne. Under Tuar's loving guidance, this living artifact grew to form a massive building which still serves as the center of Tuarhievel's government.

the years of the shadow

When the fleeing humans reached the elven lands, Tuar welcomed them into the safe haven of Tuarhievel. Within the space of two human generations, the humans were no longer content co-existing with the elves, and instead wished to claim their lands. Tuar and other elven rulers founded an elven order of knights, the *gheallie Sidhe*, to safeguard the borders from human incursions.

Unfortunately, the pressure of humans and goblins was too much for many weaker elven nations; within a few centuries, much of the forests had been destroyed and replaced with fields of wheat and barley.

As a result, Azrai had no trouble convincing Tuar that the war should be taken out of the forest and into the human lands. Tuar, aided by General Rhuobhe Manslayer of House Llyrandor, launched all-out assaults on surrounding human lands. Eventually, all armies descended upon Mount Deismaar for a final confrontation. Here, Tuar had a change of heart, and through stirring oratory, managed to convince most of her brethren that they were on the "wrong side" of this conflict. Rhuobhe was unswayed, and elf battled elf as the old gods gave up their existences to stop Azrai. Tuar's body was never found, and Tuarhievel was given the name known today in her honor.

the present era

The Thorn Throne stood vacant for over four centuries; the artifact would not accept anyone as ruler of Tuarhievel—not even the descendants of Tuar herself, House Tuarlachiem. The nobles squabbled amongst themselves again. When the goblins renewed their hostilities, most nobles refused to defend anything but their own lands unless they would first be recognized as Tuarhievel's ruler. Only Philerwyn of House Llyrandor committed



forces to defend the borders . . . and it was Fhilerwyn that the Thorn Throne eventually accepted as ruler of the nation. The humble elf lord nonetheless felt dwarfed by the accomplishments of Tuar. In order to avoid the appearance of attempting to overshadow her, he assumed the title of *Prince* of Tuarhievel. This has become an established title for rulers of Tuarhievel: while female rulers are *queens*, male rulers are recognized as *princes*.

Once on the throne, Fhilerwyn took steps toward normalizing relations with the humans—who, he feared, would break the elves if his people did not learn to bend. His first step was to formally disconnect Rhuobhe Manslayer from any claims to titles and holdings of Llyrandor. But as Fhilerwyn was trying to bring peace, the Gorgon's armies smashed into Tuarhievel as part of the awnshegh's desire to rule the known world. The army was repelled, but at great cost: Fhilerwyn was killed defending Cymryr, and the entire province of Sideath was made uninhabitable when Lord Siebharrinn, one of the mightiest wizards in all of Cerilia, unleashed the horrors of the Shadow World on the massive advancing army.

When Siebharrinn's spell ended, the goblin army was gone, and none of those who marched with it would ever menace the elves again. However, every other sentient creature in Sideath was gone as well; only Siebharrinn remained. To this day, he is the only creature that can exist in Sideath—no living creature can bear to stay in the realm for any time. Those who enter the land unbidden are summarily turned away by the archmage, who

wishes only to be left alone. Sporadic communiqués with the Thorn Throne indicate that he is searching for a way to restore the lost people of Sideath to the world of the living, and that Siebharrinn now refers to himself as the "Master of Lychgate."

Upon Fhilerwyn's death, his wife Ibelcoris assumed rulership of Tuarhievel. During her years on the throne, she continued to expand relations with the humans. She eventually married a human—the ruler of Dhoesone, a land where elves and humans lived

in uneasy truce. House

Tuarlachiem saw this arrangement as a betrayal of all that is elven and began sponsoring violent antihuman efforts. The culmination of these protests might, in fact, have been the assassination of Ibelcoris roughly a decade ago.

If antihuman elves were behind Ibelcoris' death, then their efforts backfired: Her children, Fhileraene (her son by Fhilerwyn) and Fhiele (her daughter by the Baron of Dhoesone), assumed the leadership of Tuarhievel and Dhoesone and continued to expand elven and human relations. As a gesture of goodwill and a symbol that House Llyrandor still controlled all of Tuarhievel through the Thorn Throne, Fhileraene even granted Fhiele Dhoesone shared authority over some of the provinces where House Tuarlachiem was strongest. Tuarlachiem, still stinging from losing power, became increasingly critical of the Thorn Throne and House Llyrandor.

Prince Fhileraene's fascination with humankind continued to grow, until ultimately he took the human woman named Savane as his consort. At the same time, however, Fhileraene took steps to limit the ability of human merchants to drain resources from Tuarhievel by encouraging halflings and elves to establish guilds of their own.

Recently, the Gorgon threatened to invade Tuarhievel again, claiming that the Master of Lychgate was sending armies of undead into his lands. He further demanded that Fhileraene travel to the Gorgon's Crown to negotiate peace. Fhileraene had no choice but to do as the Gorgon demanded. At the urging of his good friend and adviser Llytha Damaan, however, Fhileraene first divested himself of his bloodline. Through the divestiture ceremony, he transferred his bloodline to his human consort, Savane. His last act before traveling to the Gorgon's Crown was to appear before the Council of the Moon with a *taelinir* and inform the council that his consort was carrying his baby daughter. Fhileraene declared that Savane would be the regent of the land until either he returned, or the child came of age to rule.

geography

Tuarhievel is entirely covered by old-growth forests consisting of oaks, maples, and evergreens. The terrain is crisscrossed by streams and dotted with elven settlements, rolling hills, and hidden homes of a number of rare creatures. The northern and western borders are delineated by the Ruide River and its tributary, the Bhindwassie. The southern and eastern borders are marked by the forests, giving way to the foothills and mountains of the Gorgon's domains.

climate

Summers in Tuarhievel are cool, with temperatures rarely going higher than 85°F. Winters are frequently harsh, however, with heavy snowfall and temperatures as low as -5°F. The forests are covered in snow for almost three months out of the year. Heavy rains in the spring, when coupled with snowmelt from the southern mountains, often cause both the Bhindwassie and Ruide to overflow. Flooding is occasionally severe, but the elven settlements in the south, built high in oldgrowth oak trees, are barely affected. Residents in the north, where the oak trees rapidly give way to pines, know the warning signs of flooding and move to higher ground.

topography

From south to north, Tuarhievel is a land of rolling hills that give way to flatlands. From the foothills of the Stonecrown Mountains and the Gorgon's Crown to the floodplains along the Ruide River, the land is covered with forest.

As mentioned, the land is crisscrossed by many streams and small rivers. The most notable of these is the Sivandlys, which flows from the base of the Thorn Throne to the Ruide. In some places, the stream widens and slows to form marshy lakes.

The only lake in the domain worth mention

is the Dhoenaghmiere. This body of water, created by underground springs and snow runoff, is nestled between two steep hills that appear as if they might have been one at some time in history. Called Sidhebhuke ("Elf's Cradle"), one legend holds that this is the site from where the elven race sprang, a place where earth, water, air, and fire all converged, sundering the hill when the elves sprang from the elements.

Few actual roads exist in Tuarhievel, but the domain is crossed by what best resemble deer trails. (These paths are so obscure that only elves native to the forest, rangers, or characters with the Tracking proficiency are able to identify them.) The domain's single true road leads from Cariele's capital of Caerlinien to Tuaranreigh, the home of the Throne Thorn.

flora and fauna

The southern provinces of Bhindraith, Cwmbheir, Llyrandor, and Sideath are covered by oldgrowth forests consisting of maple and oak trees. Toward the north, these hardwood trees give way to pine trees, particularly in Braethindyr and Dhoneaghmiere. Small areas in Cwmbheir have been cleared to allow for the cultivation of crops. Here, humans grow wheat and barley, while the elves operate vineyards.

A wide variety of normal small animals such as mice, squirrels, rabbits, foxes, deer, bats, and birds can be found in Tuarhievel. Predators such as wolves and bears might be encountered, as well as more fearsome monstrous creatures such as trolls and perytons. Some provinces have recurring difficulties with kobold raiders, while others face threats from banshees, spectres, and other restless spirits of those slain in the many passionate clashes between human, humanoid, and elf. In some regions, the native elven population is the greatest threat. Riders of the *gheallie Sidhe* are an ever-present threat to all nonelves in the land.



cwmbheir

The site of Tuarhievel's seat of power, this is the most populous province in Tuarhievel. Home to over 31,000 elves, 1,000 half-elves, 200 humans, and a handful of halflings, it is the destination of most humans who venture into the domain. The northern part of the province is mostly flat; here, the forest briefly gives way to elven vineyards and small human farm fields. In the south, the land rises into the foothills of the Stonecrown Mountains. Few threats lie in this province aside from the backstabbing politicians of the elven court. Even humans are relatively safe here, as many who dwell in Cwmbheir are foreign dignitaries whose harassment would create incidents of a kind that the backers of the *gheallie Sidhe* are not prepared to confront.

settlements

The single road in Tuarhievel terminates here, in Tuaranreigh, a large, sprawling town consisting of typical elven dwellings. Houses are nestled high in the ancient trees, with catwalks connecting them. Below, wooden houses constructed by human merchants and diplomatic missions are maintained. To many humans, Tuaranreigh appears more like a collection of villages than an actual city, but the elves see it as a carefully planned pattern of dwellings and paths radiating from the Thorn Throne at the heart of the city.

Many elven nobles maintain small estates in Tuaranreigh, so they may be close to the regent during extended sessions of the Council of the Moon. The finest craftsmen and artists in Tuarhievel may also be found here, as may a sizable number of the realm's battlemages. Most wizards, however, live in the more desolate foothills of the Stonecrown Mountains, where they have near-total solitude except for the occasional goblin raiding party. The wizards are essentially the border-watch in this area, and they destroy goblin raiders without mercy.

Two of the greater houses share dominion over this province: House Llyrandor (the family currently ruling Tuarhievel) and House Tuarlachiem (the family of Tuarhievel's first ruler, Queen Tuar).

the thorn throne

The name Thorn Throne actually refers to two things: the living artifact that is the only recognized claim to rulership of Tuarhievel, and the hill upon which it stands. The throne itself was created by Queen Tuar with the aid of a group of dryads, nymphs, sylphs, and sandlings. It is imbued with a precognitive sense that allows it to know whether a regent will be a proper caretaker of Tuarhievel and its people. *Should someone attempt to sit on the throne who is not recognized by the living artifact as the rightful and suitable ruler of Tuarhievel, the thorns on the back and seat of the chair extend to pierce the individual.* Sometimes the throne merely injures pretenders, but it has claimed the lives of at least three elves.

The Thorn Throne perches in a splendid arboretum within the royal palace, at the head of the Unity River. The four races that united to construct the throne each have representatives living in the arboretum. With help from the ruler of Tuarhievel, they ensure that the throne is maintained and healthy. The arboretum serves as the council chamber, and during the winter, it is kept free of snow by servants. In winter, the Thorn Throne is a stark and barren sight, but in summer's full bloom, its beauty leaves humans awestruck and causes the hearts of elves to soar.

avallaigh

This province is covered by oak trees in the south, which give way to tangled pine forests along the Ruide River. The low hills of the province flatten into plains near the river as well.

The Trade Road crosses through Avallaigh, tracing the province line between it and Bhindraith, then branches off toward Dhoesone near the community of Dagasim.

Because of the strong human presence along the Trade Road, the *gheallie Sidhe* is very active in the province, raiding into Dhoesone and Cariele and ensuring that not

all caravans reach their destinations. Aside from marauding elves, dangers in this realm include the wandering, vengeful spirits of slain elves and humans (*banshees and wraiths*), as well as a group of nymphs whose leader has a fascination for humans. They dwell near Cariele Bridge, and have been known to lure handsome caravan guards away from their fellows. Many a human male has grown old while under the charms of these dryads.

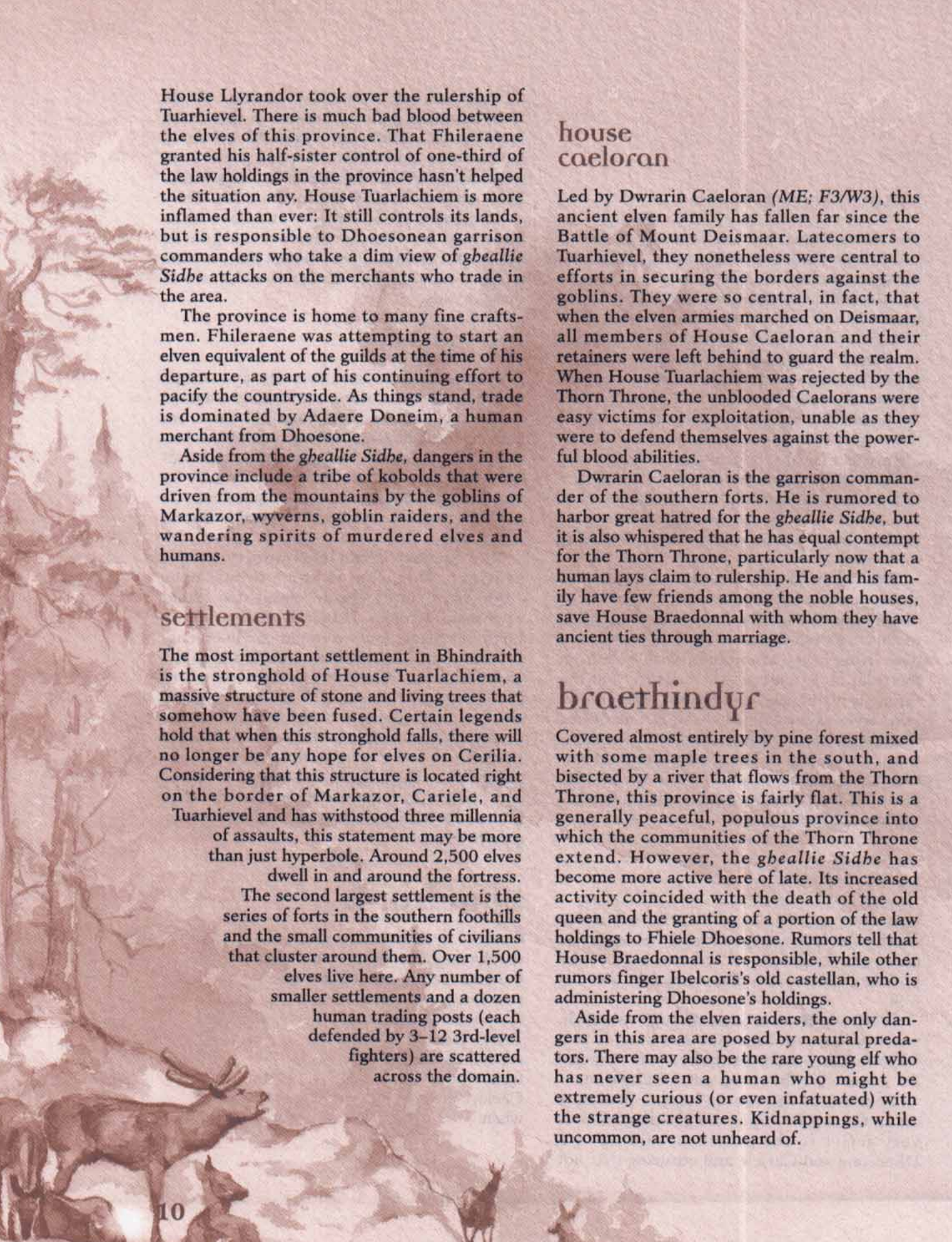
settlements

Human merchants have several way-stations and trading posts along the heavily traveled road that leads to the Thorn Throne from Cariele and Dhoesone. These tiny human settlements are usually well guarded (1–10 2nd-level fighters), but are subject to attacks by the *gheallie Sidhe*. They are the equivalent of a guild (2) that is controlled by Mheallie Bireon of Cariele.

The largest elven community in the province, Dagasim, is home to just over 3,000 elves, and is the ancestral stronghold of House Damaan. House Damaan, led by Llytha Damaan, a close friend of Phileraene, governs some of the province on behalf of the Thorn Throne. Shortly before he departed to the Gorgon's Crown, Phileraene granted much of the authority to decide the direction of the province to his half-sister, Fhiele Dhoesone. Some speculate that this slight soured the relationship between the prince and Llytha, his longtime supporter, and that House Damaan is secretly assisting the *gheallie Sidhe*.

bhindraith

Covered by heavy forest that thins as the domain reaches the foothills of the Stonecrown Mountains, this province is the current seat of the powerful elven house Tuarlachiem. It wrested control of this province from House Caeloran when



House Llyrandor took over the rulership of Tuarhievel. There is much bad blood between the elves of this province. That Phileraene granted his half-sister control of one-third of the law holdings in the province hasn't helped the situation any. House Tuarlachiem is more inflamed than ever: It still controls its lands, but is responsible to Dhoesonean garrison commanders who take a dim view of *gheallie Sidhe* attacks on the merchants who trade in the area.

The province is home to many fine craftsmen. Phileraene was attempting to start an elven equivalent of the guilds at the time of his departure, as part of his continuing effort to pacify the countryside. As things stand, trade is dominated by Adaere Doneim, a human merchant from Dhoesone.

Aside from the *gheallie Sidhe*, dangers in the province include a tribe of kobolds that were driven from the mountains by the goblins of Markazor, wyverns, goblin raiders, and the wandering spirits of murdered elves and humans.

settlements

The most important settlement in Bhindraith is the stronghold of House Tuarlachiem, a massive structure of stone and living trees that somehow have been fused. Certain legends hold that when this stronghold falls, there will no longer be any hope for elves on Cerilia. Considering that this structure is located right on the border of Markazor, Cariele, and

Tuarhievel and has withstood three millennia of assaults, this statement may be more than just hyperbole. Around 2,500 elves dwell in and around the fortress.

The second largest settlement is the series of forts in the southern foothills and the small communities of civilians that cluster around them. Over 1,500

elves live here. Any number of smaller settlements and a dozen human trading posts (each defended by 3–12 3rd-level fighters) are scattered across the domain.

house caeloran

Led by Dwrrarin Caeloran (*ME; F3/W3*), this ancient elven family has fallen far since the Battle of Mount Deismaar. Latecomers to Tuarhievel, they nonetheless were central to efforts in securing the borders against the goblins. They were so central, in fact, that when the elven armies marched on Deismaar, all members of House Caeloran and their retainers were left behind to guard the realm. When House Tuarlachiem was rejected by the Thorn Throne, the unblooded Caelorans were easy victims for exploitation, unable as they were to defend themselves against the powerful blood abilities.

Dwrrarin Caeloran is the garrison commander of the southern forts. He is rumored to harbor great hatred for the *gheallie Sidhe*, but it is also whispered that he has equal contempt for the Thorn Throne, particularly now that a human lays claim to rulership. He and his family have few friends among the noble houses, save House Braedonnal with whom they have ancient ties through marriage.

braethindyr

Covered almost entirely by pine forest mixed with some maple trees in the south, and bisected by a river that flows from the Thorn Throne, this province is fairly flat. This is a generally peaceful, populous province into which the communities of the Thorn Throne extend. However, the *gheallie Sidhe* has become more active here of late. Its increased activity coincided with the death of the old queen and the granting of a portion of the law holdings to Fhiele Dhoesone. Rumors tell that House Braedonnal is responsible, while other rumors finger Ibelcoris's old castellan, who is administering Dhoesone's holdings.

Aside from the elven raiders, the only dangers in this area are posed by natural predators. There may also be the rare young elf who has never seen a human who might be extremely curious (or even infatuated) with the strange creatures. Kidnappings, while uncommon, are not unheard of.

settlements

Roughly 6,000 elves dwell in the south, while an additional 3,000 elves and half-elves live scattered across the rest of the province. Additionally, a settlement of 500 halflings has established a comical mirror of the Thorn Throne. They serve the elven noble houses, primarily as court jesters. Human merchants deal extensively with the elven craftsmen in the area.

dryad's meadow

Dryad's Meadow is perhaps one of the more unusual manifestations of *mebhaighl* in all of Cerilia: An ancient, semi-sentient tree serves as the nexus of several ley lines. A dryad is the loving companion of this creature.

Mistletoe cut from this area is purported to be very powerful, and the tree is said to be a source of great nature lore. It is not uncommon for druids to risk both the wrath of the *gheallie Sidhe* and the charm of the dryad to reach the area.

cymryr

Flat in the western reaches and rising to hills in the east and the north, the dense forests (which are mostly oak with some evergreens mixed in) make the heart of this province the most tranquil of all of Tuarhievel. Political upheaval has no effect here. No permanent human presence exists here. The elves live much as they have for millennia—in such close harmony with nature that even the most sharp-eyed of human rangers might think that *this part of the kingdom was uninhabited* until he stumbled upon an elven settlement. Dryads and nymphs dwell in fair numbers in this area, along with at least one forest giant. No young elf in this region is accustomed to seeing humans, and will likely view them as great curiosities should they see them. The nobles of House Peranwyr want to keep it that way.

settlements

Nearly 6,000 elves live here in blissful peace, although the occasional older elf remembers the elven glory days and holds resentment toward humans. These elves live in graceful



treehouses that blend perfectly with the environment. There are those who say that some of the younger elves have never actually touched the ground.

In the hilly northeast provinces, clear signs of habitation are evident in the form of border forts. The military of the Thorn Throne maintains a constant vigilance against the Gorgon, under the leadership of Connal Peranwyr (ME; F5/W5). Skirmishes with goblin and orog raiders occur regularly, but the monstrous invaders rarely make it as far as the walls of the fortifications, which have been magically shaped from trees. Between the troops rotating in and out and the towns built to support them, 2,000 additional elves live here. A halfling settlement also exists, whose members behave in a very martial fashion and who are prepared to strike against the Gorgon's troops whenever the elven lines are tested. Their number is estimated at 1,000.

Dhoneaghmiere

Dhoneaghmiere features pine-covered hills that level out to plain in the bend of the Ruide River. This province is much like Cymryr, in that no permanent human presence and no *gheallie Sidhe* agitators exist. Just 3,000 scattered elves (in groups of 30 to 300) live close to nature in this province. Unlike their neighbors in Cymryr, these elves have no curiosity about humans and will throw them in the icy waters of the Ruide if they catch them.

The only dangerous creatures here are goblin and orog raiders (and the elves, if you happen to be human).

settlements

The only large concentration of elves lies near the broken hills of Sidhebhuke. If the elves who dwell here encounter humans, they kill them on sight. The root of these elves' hatred of humans can be traced to an overgrown ruin about a mile from the lake. This was once the

location of an elven school where young elves would come to learn ancient lore from a dragon. Unlike most of his kind, the dragon was more than happy to share his great wisdom with the younger races. Unfortunately, a band of humans slew the dragon in an attempt to steal his treasure, thus destroying what was actually one of Tuarhievel's greatest treasures. The humans did not live to even revel over their defeat of the great beast; the elves literally tore them limb from limb. Rumors of the dragon's undiscovered treasure still reach human ears, and when rogues and cash-strapped regents come looking for the loot, they are treated like the humans who slew the dragon.

The ruins of the school and the surrounding area are inhabited by 1,500 elves. One of the most revered of the taelinri, Gylvain Taeline, was originally of House Dhoelachnal, and still lives among them whenever possible.

Llyrandor

Covered in ancient oak trees and with foothills to the north and south, this province is bisected by a valley that is roughly bowl-shaped. Little of note stands here, since this is the homeland of House Llyrandor. The house has paid the province little mind since taking the Thorn Throne. This is perhaps one of the wildest and most desolate regions of Tuarhievel, with paths so obscure that even rangers have difficulty detecting them. Many of the elves who live here are not the kind who want to be disturbed (nor are they the kind who any sane person would *want* to disturb). In addition to the elven residents, it is not at all uncommon to encounter almost any form of noncorporeal undead in the dense forests. The source of these restless spirits is generally attributed to the battles waged against the goblins or the experiments of wizards who foolishly tried to explore the Shadow World.

settlements

Most of the settlements in Llyrandor have fallen into disrepair, since many elves have deserted the region. This exodus was the

result of two

factors: first, House

Llyrandor and its retainers

relocated to Tuaranreigh, taking a great number of servants and others along; second, many others fled the area due to the closeness to the mysterious province of Sideath. Nonetheless, a dozen or so scattered wizard compounds remain in the area. These reclusive elven wizards are generally assumed to have come here to be close to the site where the Master of Lychgate caused the greatest magical catastrophe since Deismaar in his effort to repel the Gorgon's advancing army. However, rumors state that some of them are also dealing directly with the Master of Lychgate and probing into the Shadow World for reasons only they understand. The growing numbers of roaming shadows, wraiths, and banshees seem to support this theory. Some estimate that 500 elves dwell in the wizard compounds, and they serve admirably as border guards, taking a dim view of their projects being disturbed by filthy goblins and other invaders. Aside from the undead and the goblins, eccentric elven wizards are the greatest threat to visitors.

Additionally, a town of 1,000 or so elves lies in the eastern part of the province. This is the remnant of the support settlement of a vast garrison that was once stationed at a now-poorly-maintained series of fortifications. These were constructed after the Gorgon's last attempt to invade Tuarhievel, but once it became apparent what devastation had been wrought in Sideath, the Thorn Throne deemed that there was no need to garrison it with more than a token force. The elves stationed here are generally "lifers" in the military—professionals who don't mind peace and quiet. However, boredom does strike occasionally and these guards stage impromptu raids into Markazor.

sideath

Although both the Thorn Throne and Kal-Saitharak claim the wooded hills of Sideath as their land, neither government has any presence here. The archmage Siebharrinn is the province's undisputed master, and he is the only sentient creature in the entire area.

As detailed in the history section, Siebharrinn unleashed magics of nightmarish proportions to halt the Gorgon's army when it threatened this land. Now, Sideath apparently exists more in the Shadow World than Cerilia. Few have traveled into Sideath since that fateful day, but those who have done so report that while the forests of Tuarhievel are usually alive with the sounds of birds and other animals, Sideath is eerily silent. The shadows are deeper, and where the sun shines, the light is so bright as to cause eyes to water and sting. A sense of unreality surrounds the place, and more than one group has ventured in and never returned.

Exactly what lies at the heart of Sideath is unknown. Communications from Siebharrinn have been sporadic over the last few centuries, but he claims that he is working to bring back the elves that he blasted into the Shadow World. Some advisers to the Thorn Throne have made a bold suggestion: that persuading the Master of Lychgate (as he is now commonly called) to reveal the secrets of the spells he used against the Gorgon might allow a brave wizard to unleash those magics at the heart of the Gorgon's Crown, thus ending a great evil in the land.

In human terms, elven politics seem difficult to comprehend. The political attitudes of the Sidhelien differ noticeably from those of humans. Humans manage their domains with an immediacy which the elves do not share. This is not to say that the elves of Tuarhievel and other domains are not capable of rapid action when circumstances require it. Rather, they are much more aware of the long-term goals they set for themselves. Human rulers live such comparatively short lives that they often cannot achieve their political objectives. When a new ruler comes to power, the political goals of a domain invariably change. Elves, on the other hand, tend to focus more on goals that require more time to come to fruition.

Much of the elves' political concern centers on their survival as a viable people. They perceive humans as naturally aggressive; the elves feel they must defend what they have left or will otherwise disappear. Because of the seemingly erratic nature of human politics, elves are reluctant to believe that agreements with humans will last any longer than the life of the ruler who made the agreement (if that). They prefer self-reliance to alliance, and they make their political decisions accordingly. Humans view this attitude as aloofness and arrogance, but they are not able to see things as elves do.

politics in tuarhievel

The society of Tuarhievel seems in many ways to be close in basic form to human society. Its political structure is something that some human observers from surrounding states believe they can understand. They define Tuarhievel as an aristocracy. This assumption has come in part from their view of the deliberations in the Council of the Moon.

These discussions often erupt into heated

debates, and rarely does the regent do any more than listen. Because this is the only political arena humans have been allowed to see, they naturally have assumed that the aristocracy rules Tuarhievel. They are wrong, or at least have been until recent events changed the political balance of Tuarhievel. While Fhileraene sat on the throne, Tuarhievel's future was in his hands alone. His nobles advised; Fhileraene decided. The new regent, Savane of Mhoried, does not enjoy that luxury. She must rule with the consent of Tuarhievel's noble families.

elven politics and culture

Political power in Tuarhievel has always rested with the monarch because only the princes and queens have had

the right to control Tuarhievel's magic sources. The monarch is free to allow other blooded mages occasional access to those sources, but those mages do not actually control them. With the possible exception of House Tuarlachiem, which once controlled Tuarhievel's sources, no noble family in the domain has ever disputed the monarch's control of the land's magical might. Savane, upon her ascent to the throne, gained the right to control those sources as well. Unfortunately, she is not a mage, and is therefore unable to derive any political power from this control. This weakens her, and for the first time in Tuarhievel's history, an undercurrent of support has blossomed for the concept that the noble families of the domain be allowed to control the sources in their respective provinces.

Recently, Tuarhievel has become more of an aristocracy than ever before. With Fhileraene as a hostage of the Gorgon, the Council of the Moon seems to have taken over as the principal ruler of Tuarhievel. Although invested by Fhileraene as the regent of Tuarhievel, Savane's ascendance to the Thorn Throne has so antagonized some of the noble families of the domain that she cannot actually rule Tuarhievel the way Fhileraene did.

Savane derives support from persuasion rather than right. No one can dispute that the Thorn Throne accepted her; however, she knows better than to try to rule from its seat.

Since her ascent to the throne, on the single occasion that the Council of the Moon agreed to meet, Savane sat on a chair in front of the throne. Her message was clear: She considers herself merely a steward of the realm until her husband returns or her daughter is born. Her decision not to sit as an equal did much to undercut the support her enemies were winning among the more neutral of the powerful families of Tuarhievel.

Since her assumption of power, Savane has not shirked from making decisions concerning the security and future of the realm. She is determined to ensure that Tuarhievel passes to her daughter in the same or better condition as Fhilaraene left it when he invested her with his regency. To ease the affront she might cause by openly deciding what is best for Tuarhievel, she has been careful to see that the families loyal to the throne implement her decisions. This has co-opted those families into further supporting her, and dealt a subtle blow to her enemies by making them appear to oppose the realm rather than Savane. Those who have underestimated her so far are not likely to do so again.

Savane's investiture has split Tuarhievel into two mutually hostile factions. Although no elf

likes the idea that a human sits by right on the Thorn Throne, enough are loyal to the throne that they support Savane. Furthermore, they hope for the return of Fhilaraene, so they honor his choice of successor (for now, at least). That support may vanish if she exhibits any inclination to hold it for herself rather than for Fhilaraene's heir. It may also evaporate if Savane allows Tara, the Black Princess (see the NPC section) too much sway in Tuarhievel, for they fear Tara almost as much as they fear her estranged husband, the Gorgon. Until Fhilaraene's daughter is old enough to be named queen, Savane has the reluctant approval of the families that have traditionally supported the throne.

Unfortunately, those families can offer no more open support than can her two principal allies. The Black Princess would be a powerful supporter indeed if she were not associated so strongly with the Gorgon. Despite the legends that claim how much she hated her husband, she cannot escape her tainted past. Her arrival in Tuarhievel seems too coincidental for any to trust her motives. And Tara is too much the queen to stoop to proving herself to the elves of Tuarhievel. For the moment, Savane must keep Tara at arm's length.

Another ally, Rhuimach Taeline, has recently returned secretly from exile in Dhoesone,



Key

1=The Thorn Throne

2=Mount of Roses

3=Memorial to Tuar

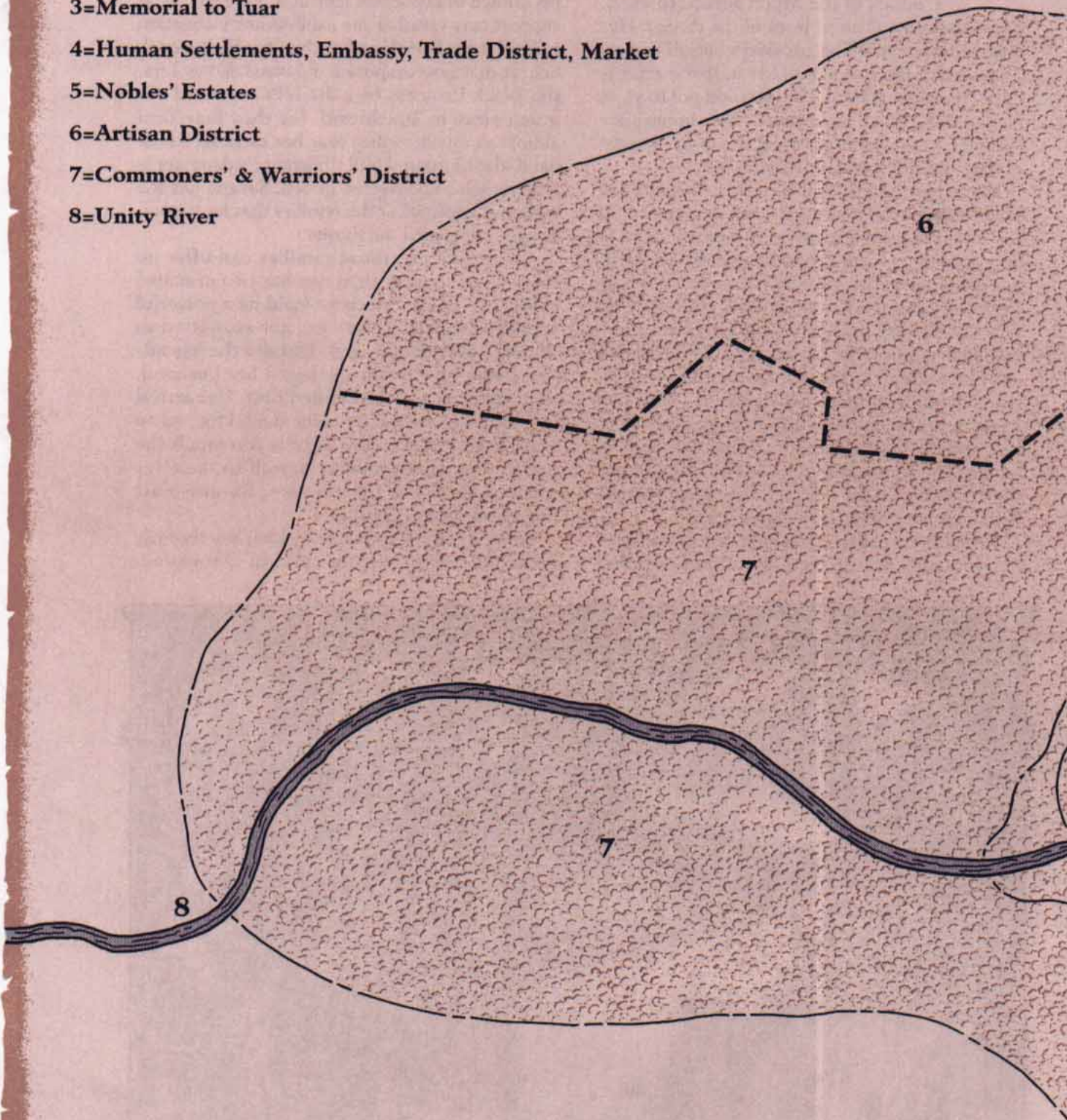
4=Human Settlements, Embassy, Trade District, Market

5=Nobles' Estates

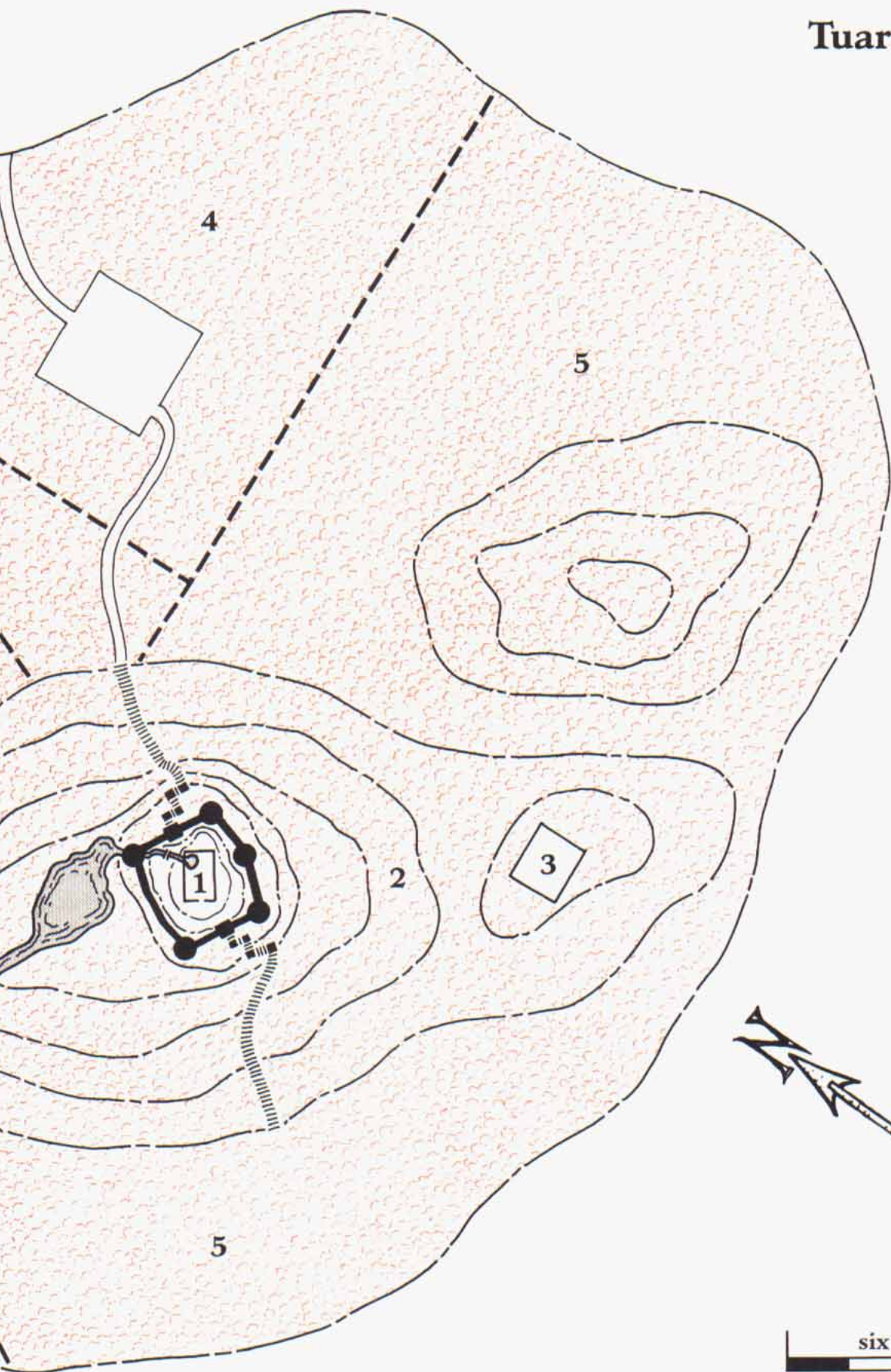
6=Artisan District

7=Commoners' & Warriors' District

8=Unity River



Tuaranreigh



six miles

where he was a captain of the baroness's Northern Archers. He is incapable of obvious support, for if he were discovered to have returned from his permanent exile, Savane's enemies would seize upon his assistance to her as further proof that Savane is trying to undermine Tuarhievel's stability by consorting with its enemies. He remains hidden, and Savane is left with seemingly little obvious support.

Savane's faction is opposed by Llytha Damaan, scion of House Damaan, and his allies. Llytha's only claim to the throne is that he knew the mind of its prince. He claims only to want to keep Tuarhievel on the course its prince has set, and who better to take this burden than the one person who was Fhileraene's constant companion and adviser? He hates the upstart Savane, viewing her as the harbinger of Tuarhievel's downfall. His claim to the stewardship of the throne is backed by House Tuarlachiem, who centuries ago held the throne until it rejected them. It is common knowledge that the house desires to regain its claim to the throne. Many elves of the other noble families believe that House Tuarlachiem's support of Llytha is nothing more than a temporary alliance destined to be ignored when Tuarlachiem feels it can make a bid for the throne. The Tuarlachiem matriarch, Rhuandice, is vehement in her hatred of the "unclean beast" that now sits on the throne. To her, the only way to deal with Savane is to kill her and her unborn brat.

Interestingly, Savane does not consider Rhuandice the most dangerous of her enemies (an observation which, if Rhuandice were to hear, would likely send her into a rage).

Savane fears Llytha far more. She is convinced that he betrayed Fhileraene to the Gorgon in order to be invested with his bloodline and ascend the throne.

Few families seem outwardly hostile toward Llytha, however. He is persuasive enough to deflect any such suspicion.

Furthermore, he has been capitalizing on the rumor that the arrival of the

Black Princess in Tuarhievel shortly after Savane ascended the throne was no coincidence. Savane knows that

Llytha probably does not believe these claims about Tara.

He is simply trying to remove the Black Princess as her most powerful ally, but so far, she has been able to do little to prevent it.

Savane's obvious weapon in Tuarhievel's internal political struggle is the threat presented by the Gorgon. Nothing would suit his plans better than a weak and internally divided Tuarhievel. The elves realize this, so they are careful not to go too far in their concentration on internal politics. Savane capitalizes on this concern to help stabilize her temporary reign. In this and other political decisions, she is quietly aided by Tara and Rhuimach.

the military

Perhaps no people are more aware of the danger presented by the Gorgon than the elves of Tuarhievel. They have suffered an invasion and countless raids by his forces, and they know that he would like to remove the thorn in his side that they represent. Without a strong, well-trained military, Tuarhievel would not likely exist as anything other than a puppet of the Gorgon.

Tuarhievel's army has developed over centuries of nearly continual warfare with the Gorgon and other enemies. The army is relatively large when compared with the forces of many of the Anuirean domains, but against the militaries of her enemies, it seems almost inadequate. Tuarhievel's basic strategy is to use its knowledge of the land to move units quickly and covertly to places where they can strike at an invader, then fade into the forest. These attrition attacks are the principal tactic that defeated the Gorgon when last he invaded Tuarhievel. Traps and ambushes set along routes taken by invading armies cause the invader to slow down, allowing the quickly-moving elves to use hit-and-run tactics to confuse and harry their enemy.

The army consists of three units of cavalry (two deployed along the eastern border and one held in reserve) and seven units of archers (three along the eastern border, two along the southern border, and two in reserve). If the need arises, the ruler can call up two more units of cavalry and three more units of archers, to be sent where needed.

In addition, the personal retainers of the

various noble families are available in times of war; altogether, these retainers would form an additional unit of archers. Finally, the riders of the *gheallie Sidhe* may be considered. Little doubt exists that in an attack on Tuarhievel, they would be in the thick of the battle. Altogether, they would make up an additional unit of seasoned cavalry. Their politics and personal convictions may disgust some people, but no one questions their ferocity and battle skill.

To make up for the great numerical superiority of her enemies, Tuarhievel has learned to incorporate battle magic into her defensive plans like no other realm in Cerilia. Her battle mages use all aspects of both normal sorcery and realm magic to defend the nation.

Savane has maintained the tradition of allowing the domain's war mages access to Tuarhievel's sources. This is a risky political move, for many of them are scions of families who oppose her. It has been a deeply-rooted tradition that all of Tuarhievel's defenders renounce their ties to their kin while providing for the defense of the realm. This custom has survived despite millennia of trying times, and when Savane ascended to the Thorn Throne, the commander of the army was one of the first to pledge his honor in the defense of the realm.

Tuarhievel does not boast a great number of battle mages, but those who serve are very competent and well protected. The elves of Tuarhievel also have something of a secret weapon: a form of realm magic that relies on song. The exact nature of this magic is unknown outside of elven lands, but scholars believe that it relies on enchantment magic focusing mainly on emotion control. The elves have access to destructive magic, but are reluctant to use it in their own lands. Instead, they often concentrate on magic that saps the will of their enemies.

culture and religion

The elves of Cerilia do not worship gods. They are aware that the gods of Deismaar existed and that new gods descended from the deities destroyed in that

epic battle, but they do not pay homage to them. After their deception and betrayal by Azrai, the Sidhelien have been adamant in their refusal to worship the modern human gods. In this stance, Fhileraene and his predecessors have not differed from the other Sidhelien of Cerilia. Tuarhievel will not allow any temple holdings within the domain; even humans visiting the realm are warned not to discuss their religious ideologies within the realm. More than one proselytizing priest has become a victim of the *gheallie Sidhe*.

To the elves, spiritual development is the responsibility of the individual. The path an elf takes is a decision that only he or she can make. So strong is this belief that if an elf chooses to worship one of the human gods, so be it. The only restriction placed on such an individual is that of silence while within elven lands.

Within each elven community, however, there exist *taelinri*, or teachers, who act as both loremasters and philosophers. They study and record the past and reflect on what the future may bring. These teachers are highly respected among the Sidhelien, for their interpretations are what guide the emotional heart of the people. They are not priests, but in some ways serve a similar function. Very few humans know of the *taelinri* and the function they serve within elven society, and only a handful of them have ever been granted the honor of being allowed to meet one of them.

The *taelinri* come from all social classes and professions, with one exception: No elf who embraces the doctrines espoused by worshipers of the deities of other races may ever become a *taelinir*. It is as likely for an elven rogue to become a *taelinir* as it is for a philosophical scholar. This elite group has counted powerful mages and simple craftsmen among its number.

To become a *taelinir*, an elf must possess understanding, compassion, and vision. As a result, only elves of good alignment with Intelligence scores of 16 or better and Wisdom scores of 17 or better are likely to meet the demands of the extensive training, which focuses as much on direct experience as on study and contemplation. This regimen takes many years to complete; some have studied for decades, only to discover that they are still not ready for the tests of character necessary to accept themselves and to be accepted by others as *taelinri*.

Taelinri are rare. They are among the wisest and most insightful of elves, and they must freely give their wisdom to any elf who requests it. Few have the will to follow this path. As such, the taelinri are held in very high regard. This is true whether they tie themselves to a particular location or wander in search of new experiences. They are not nobles; indeed, aspirants from noble families must renounce claims to their inheritances before being accepted as taelinri. They are treated less as "important people" than as honored guests by both commoner and noble.

The philosophy taught by the taelinri consists of three basic beliefs. First, the elves believe they were formed as the result of the union of the four elements: earth, water, air, and fire. These elements naturally contest one another in an unending struggle for dominance. Within the elven spirit, they bring about the mood swings that characterize the elves. Individual elves are often influenced more heavily by one of the four elements, and it is the task of the taelinri to help them achieve a more harmonious balance.

The second aspect of elven philosophy is one that most annoys other races, especially humans. The elves believe that, as a result of their unique creation, they have a greater capacity to perceive the world around them and feel its inherent beauty. The intensity and range of their emotions are the results of both their origins and their immortality. As taught by the taelinri, these emotions allow them to perceive and create beauty unlike any other race. Their music, craftsmanship, and way of life demonstrate this capacity. Other races see this as cultural arrogance, but the elves accept it as a natural extension of their origin.

Third, the taelinri help their people achieve a sense of themselves as individuals. Perhaps no aspect of elven culture confuses other races more than the focus on the

individual.

The elves recognize that they can no more be ruled than can the four elements from which they sprang. They have never understood the human belief that to govern, one must rule.

art and entertainment

The elves of Tuarhievel prefer music, poetry, and dance over other art forms. The elves of the Aelvinnwode, in fact, first taught humans the bardic power of spell-song. These elves founded the colleges where bards learn their craft today. Perhaps more than any other race, elves understand the power of song. Whether a mournful ballad, a spirited reel, or a terrifying battle dirge, elven music has tremendous emotional impact.

The poetry of Tuarhievel is also renowned throughout the civilized world. Much of this exists in the form of song lyrics, but some of the most famous poems are spoken works. This is true of some of the poems written by the taelinri. Their teachings sometimes require that an individual reflect rather than express, and in such cases, song often has the opposite effect.

Not all elves are graced with the ability to create music and poetry, but nearly all possess the grace of movement that dance requires. Dance is an extremely old tradition among many races, but the elves first incorporated it into daily life. The elves of the ancient Aelvinnwode have taught dance to warriors for eons. In addition to providing a means of tension release when fire is ascendant in their personalities, it also teaches precision and economy of movement. Elves have never been a prolific race, so they can ill afford the loss of their warriors. Dance, along with skills such as juggling, are some of the means by which elven warriors perfect their battle skills.

npcs

savane

4th-level Anuirean ranger

S: 13
D: 17
C: 15
I: 17
W: 17
Ch: 16

AC: 1
hp: 34
MV: 12
THAC0: 17
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d8



Bloodline: Vorynn, major, 29.

Blood Abilities: Character reading, enhanced sense-precognition (major), unreadable thoughts.

Equipment: *Bracers of defense AC4, long sword +3.*

Description: Savane is the daughter of Shaene Mhoried and is the favorite niece of the Mhor. Although only 23 years old, she possesses a keen mind that gives her insights that others need decades to develop. She is small of build but well-muscled, and she usually wears her long, blond hair free of ornament.

Savane saw elves for the first time when she was twelve years old. An embassy of elves from Tuarhievel, led by Prince Phileraene, came to her uncle's court to visit and to discuss various matters of state. Like most Anuirean children, she had learned some of the legends of Cerilia that, in a happier time, the Sidhelien had told to the humans. These tales had always delighted her, and she became fascinated with elves.

A year ago, when Savane learned that Mhoried guilders were sending a trade mission to Tuarhievel through the guilds in Cariele, she disguised herself as a caravan scout and went along. The tales she had heard as a child, however, could not prepare her for what she found in Tuarhievel. She discovered a people at once passionate and aloof, courteous and mocking, delightful and dangerous.

Savane was introduced to Phileraene by the

leader of the merchants from Cariele, and she and Phileraene became very close over the course of the next year. Their relationship was looked upon by the elves of Tuarhievel as nothing more than an affair. They were taken completely by surprise, therefore, when Phileraene announced that Savane had agreed to be his consort and was pregnant with their child. Many of the older elves were saddened by their prince's decision, for they knew the heartache that inevitably follows when one of the immortal Sidhelien loves a human. Others were outraged that Phileraene should risk his immortal bloodline in a liaison with a human. House Tuarlachiem was particularly vehement in its rejection of Savane; it remains her principal enemy.

Throughout the storm of reaction to her lover's announcement, Savane has maintained her calm. Nothing could prepare her, however, for the responsibilities she inherited as a result of the Gorgon's imprisonment of Phileraene.

Only three months ago, Phileraene announced that Savane had agreed to become his consort; to her, this seems a lifetime. Now, she is alone in a strange and hostile land. She misses Phileraene terribly, but for the sake of her child's birthright, she will not give in to despair. Few of the elves of Tuarhievel know her, and her enemies believe they can scare her away from the Thorn Throne. They misjudge her. She did not ask for the responsibility of ruling Tuarhievel in Phileraene's absence, but since she has been chosen to do so, rule she will. Any lingering doubts she harbored vanished when the Thorn Throne accepted her as the legitimate ruler of Tuarhievel.

siebharrinn ("the lich")

20th-level elf mage

S: 11
D: 17
C: 12
I: 18
W: 17
Ch: 13

AC: -1
hp: 36
MV: 12
THAC0: 14
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d4



Bloodline: Anduiras, major, 27.

Blood Abilities: Healing (minor), detect life (great).

Equipment: Unknown.

Description/History: Siebharrinn is the lord of a part of the province of Sideath in what is now the realm of the Gorgon. Although Sideath technically belongs to the Gorgon, a small but strategically important valley once called Mar-Kilean ("the Vale") prevents even the Gorgon's rule: no power other than that of Siebharrinn holds sway.

The province was once part of Tuarhievel, but when the Gorgon invaded Tuarhievel two hundred years ago, he wrested Sideath from the elves—the only territory he could claim from that ill-fated expedition (and the victory was a costly one). The Gorgon had sent in regiments of goblins from the mountain provinces of Abattoir and Stone's End. These regiments heavily outnumbered the pitifully few defenders remaining in Sideath, for most of its warriors were occupied fighting the Gorgon's armies in Cymryr. Even Siebharrinn's magical power could not overcome the invaders.

Desperate to save his home and his people, Siebharrinn called upon powers best left undisturbed. Through a grueling ordeal lasting several days, he summoned the power of shadow, opening a rift into the Shadow World that he has since been unable to close completely. When the ritual was over, no creature was left alive in the vale. Plants were unaffected, but not a single animal, goblin, or elf was left. There were no remains to even suggest that a battle had ever occurred, and no sound of any creature could be heard anywhere. Only Siebharrinn escaped this fate, but he was no longer the person he once was; the ritual had irrevocably changed him.

From that day on, the mage has existed in both the real world and the Shadow World: The forces he unleashed have turned him into a creature neither living nor dead. Many scholars have speculated that he has become a sort of lich (hence his nickname), while others refer to him as a ghost. His hair is a dull black, his eyes are a pale blue, and his ash gray

skin and angular

features further accentuate

the starkness of his appearance. Since the battle, he has lived alone in his valley, now called Lychgate by the elves of Tuarhievel. He wanders the streets of its empty village, climbing its hills and listening in vain for the sound of even a single bird. His blood ability, detect life, serves as a daily reminder of what he has done, for now all he can detect is the sibilant whispers of the trees.

The elves of Tuarhievel view him with revulsion, and the armies of the Gorgon are utterly terrified of him and his realm. Even the Gorgon himself is not exactly sure what powers Siebharrinn has at his disposal; every scouting expedition he has ordered since the battle 200 years ago has disappeared. No animal will come near the valley; only the most foolhardy of people will attempt to enter this haunted place.

Siebharrinn wants only for others to leave him alone. He will not tolerate soldiers of the Gorgon's army entering the vale, nor will he allow the elves of Tuarhievel in his valley, for he considers them responsible for the forces he had to unleash to save his homeland. He has had no contact with his people since the battle.

tara, the black princess

10th-/10th-level awnshegh fighter/mage

S:	16
D:	17
C:	17
I:	18
W:	18
Ch:	19
AC:	-6 (7)
hp:	104
MV:	12
THAC0:	5
#AT:	2
Dmg:	1d8+9

Bloodline: Azrai, great, 56.

Blood Abilities: Enhanced sense—shadow sight (major), heightened ability (charisma),



battlewise, poison sense, iron will, charm aura (great), travel.

Equipment: Long sword +3, elven chainmail +4, shield +3.

Description/History: Called one of the most beautiful women of her age, the raven-haired Tara of Anuire was the victim of a god's desires. When Prince Raesene sought to make her his own, she spurned him, so he appealed to Azrai, his god, for aid. Azrai desired that Raesene beget an imperial line, so he lent him a measure of his divine aura, with which Raesene bent Tara to his will. Although Raesene had bent her, he had not broken her, and she nursed her hatred of him for centuries.

Virtually no word has been spoken of her in the centuries since Deismaar; conjecture has it that Tara escaped the Gorgon during his ill-fated expedition into the Aelvinnwode over two centuries ago. What she has done since that time, no one knows, for the world thought her dead until very recently, when she arrived in Tuarhievel.

When a pair of assassins, sent presumably by the *gheallie Sidhe*, tried to murder Savane, the Black Princess was the one who foiled the attempt on Savane's life, slaying the assassins in the process. When Savane asked her rescuer to remain as her personal bodyguard, Tara demurred. She revealed her identity, offered instead to be her ally, and waited for Savane's reaction. Savane, after overcoming her initial disbelief and surprise, reluctantly agreed. The two women have spent much time in secret discussions since then. Few know what it is they talk about, but it seems certain that Savane's mistrust of Tara dwindles with time.

The Black Princess's arrival in Tuarhievel and her subsequent declaration of alliance with Savane has thrown the domain into even more disarray than did Fhileraene's investiture of Savane. Many of the elven families do not believe that the woman is really Tara, although few are willing to test her temper, considering how easily she destroyed the assassins sent to kill Savane. Others, believing that the ebony-skinned woman is who she claims, see Savane's alliance with her as an alliance with the Gorgon himself. Tara appears unconcerned with these speculations, for she does nothing to alleviate those fears. Perhaps Savane knows Tara's ultimate goals and reasons for aiding her, but she has chosen to respect Tara's desire for privacy. Thus, no one else knows whether to trust the Black Princess.



Llytha Damaan

6th-/6th-level elf mage/thief

S: 13
D: 18
C: 15
I: 18
W: 15
Ch: 17

AC: 1
hp: 27
MV: 12
THAC0: 15
#AT: 2
Dmg: 1d6+3



Bloodline: Brenna, minor, 24.

Blood Abilities: Alertness, persuasion.

Equipment: Matched pair of *short swords* +3, *elven chainmail* +2.

Description/History: Among the most vocal of Savane's opponents is the scion of House Damaan, Llytha Damaan, who had been Prince Phileraene's most trusted companion for centuries. From the time they played together as children, they were nearly inseparable. They learned magic under the same teacher, studied the business of statecraft together, and fought side by side in defense of Tuarhievel. When Phileraene ascended the Thorn Throne, it was only natural that his friend Llytha Damaan become his chief counselor.

Now it is whispered by some that Llytha himself made the deal with the Gorgon that resulted in Phileraene's capture and imprisonment. Anyone who knows him scoffs at this ridiculous idea, for no one loved the prince more than Llytha did, and no one wept more than Llytha when Phileraene departed for the Gorgon's Crown. But the rumors persist.

Nearly everyone expected that the prince would invest Llytha with his bloodline before he gave himself over to the Gorgon. No one was more shocked than Llytha when Phileraene invested Savane instead. Perhaps, rumor said, Phileraene realized at the last moment that his best friend was his betrayer. By investing Savane, rumor argued, the prince cheated the Gorgon of his bloodthirst and Llytha of the consummation of his ambition.

But how can Llytha have been the one who did such a terrible thing? Who had been a loyal and true companion to the prince since they

were children? Who dragged the prince out from under the furious blows of the orog champion at the battle for Cymryr? And who took those wounds upon himself instead, nearly dying as a result? But then consider, who is it who seems likely to gain the most from Phileraene's imprisonment?

Llytha has made it his chief goal to remove Savane from the throne. He is tireless in his efforts to awaken opposition to her rule. He portrays her as an evil seductress bent on destroying Tuarhievel. When asked for proof, he points to the timely arrival of Tara as Savane's protector as evidence that the two conspired to remove Phileraene from the Thorn Throne as a precursor to an attack on Tuarhievel by their master, the Gorgon. Many listen to him. Not enough are yet in his camp to see that justice is done, but soon, he insists, soon. His good friends from House Tuarlachiem will only help him bring about the usurper's downfall, for who better to defend the realm than those who truly understand the culture and ancient traditions of Tuarhievel?

Rhuandice Tuarlachiem

9th-level elf fighter

S: 17
D: 17
C: 15
I: 14
W: 11
Ch: 15

AC: -2
hp: 73
MV: 12
THAC0: 11
#AT: 2
Dmg: 1d8+7



Bloodline: Basaia, great, 56.

Blood Abilities: Heightened ability (intelligence), divine wrath, resistance (great), animal affinity—eagle (great).

Equipment: *Long sword* +4, *elven chainmail* +4.

Description/History: Rhuandice Tuarlachiem has devoted her life to defending against incursions into the Aelvinnwode. She has spent centuries tracking down and killing any who despoil the forest. To her, the Aelvinnwode belongs to the elves, and only the Sidheliem can be trusted

to protect the forest from harm. The humans have deforested most of the southern half of the continent, and still they come. Treaties with them are worthless, for they cannot be trusted to honor their agreements. They must receive equal punishment for what they destroy; it is the only way they will learn.

Rhuandice hates humans, but she reserves her greatest hatred for goblins and other evil humanoids. For years, she was Tuarhievel's chief war captain. When humanoids from the Gorgon's Crown or Markazor raided into Tuarhievel, Rhuandice led the reprisals against them. She trapped the raiders from the Gorgon's Crown in valleys and ambushed them from the high ground. She even led her soldiers into Markazor, where they put entire villages and encampments to the sword.

Rhuandice's enemies saw her as some sort of avenging spirit. She soon learned, however, that her efforts to defend Tuarhievel were being undermined. When Queen Ibelcoris began opening Tuarhievel's borders to humans, she erased all of Rhuandice's accomplishments. Rhuandice secretly began to summon warriors to her, and together, they reformed the *gheallie Sidhe*. Since then, she has directed her considerable energies against human incursions into Tuarhievel. To her, the ultimate insult came when Phileraene placed a human upon the Thorn Throne. Rhuandice considers it her duty to erase that stain upon elven honor.

Bloodline: Reynir, major, 30.

Blood Abilities: Direction sense, animal affinity—wolves (major), enhanced sense.

Equipment: *Leather armor +3, bastard sword +2 (giant slayer).*

Description/History: Rhuimach Taeline is a scion of House Tuarlachie, but is not welcomed by its current matriarch. Rhuimach's father (Rhuandice's son) became enamored with a human noblewoman from Dhoesone. Rhuimach was born in Dhoesone and came to Tuarhievel as a young boy to learn of his father's people. Rhuandice was enraged that her son brought a half-breed into her household, but Queen Ibelcoris took a liking to him; he became her ward in Tuaranreigh. She sent him to Gylvain Taeline to learn the path of the taelinri. He spent many years in study, and 20 years ago was the first half-elf to become a taelinir. By tradition, he gave up his last name and adopted Taeline instead.

Ibelcoris had meant for Rhuimach to become an adviser to her son, Prince Phileraene. Rhuimach's cousin, Llytha Damaan, feared that the half-breed would try to steer Phileraene toward a more conciliatory stance toward humans, so he engineered his cousin's banishment by falsely accusing him of the murder of the head of a human trade delegation. Embarrassed by the incident but unwilling to accept that Rhuimach could have done such thing, despite the evidence presented against him, Phileraene ordered him to leave Tuarhievel within a day.

Rhuimach spent the last decade in Dhoesone, using his tactical skills to keep the inhabitants of the Giantdowns at bay. With Savane's ascension to the throne, Rhuimach has secretly returned to Tuarhievel to help advise her. Few know he is back, and for the moment, he prefers to keep it that way.

rhuimach taeline

6th-level half-elf ranger

S: 15
D: 17
C: 17
I: 15
W: 16
Ch: 14

AC: 2
hp: 54
MV: 12
THAC0: 15
#AT: 1
Dmg: 1d8 +2



Regent holdings in Tuarhievel are viewed somewhat differently than they are in human domains. Most obviously, no temple holdings exist anywhere in the domain, and most guild holdings are controlled by outsiders. Tuarhievel's law holdings are not completely controlled by her regent. In addition, Phileraene's half-sister, Fhiele of Dhoesone, maintains lands within Tuarhievel as well.

Where Tuarhievel differs most from other realms is in her regent's absolute control over source holdings. These holdings are what make the regent so powerful. By themselves, they ensure that outside powers with interests in the domain are far less powerful than they might be in another realm. Few foreign regents are willing to arouse the wrath of a sorcerer with so much power to draw upon. As a result of this control, Tuarhievel has been a fairly stable domain, at least until recent events stirred things up. As it stands now, Savane (or a suitable PC regent) controls the same holdings as did Phileraene, but future events may alter this status quo.

sources

The most important holdings in Tuarhievel are sources. For countless centuries, Tuarhievel's might has rested upon control of its sources, and throughout the centuries, that control has been exercised solely by the regent. Tuarhievel is primarily wild country, and her rulers keep it that way.

This is especially important now that human trade stations are beginning to appear in the domain, for the elves fear that humans may despoil the land, robbing Tuarhievel of its magical might.

Only the Sidhelien live in harmony with their surroundings, so only the Sidhelien can be trusted to guard those surroundings.

With the Gorgon's armies on their border, the elves know the importance of their magical might to the defense of their realm and

their way of life. Traditionally, the regent has allowed elven mages in the domain access to its sources, especially in times of war. Regents have denied this right to others, including many mages of other elf realms. Ley lines to other realms do not exist, for the elves forbid any drain of their precious mebhaighl.

One of the principal sources of magical power in Tuarhievel is the Thorn Throne. A semi-sentient living artifact, the Thorn Throne is one of Tuarhievel's greatest treasures. Among its lesser powers is its ability to judge whether an heir is fit to rule the domain. Every heir's investiture ceremony requires that the heir seat herself on the throne. If she is a true heir and of the right character to rule the domain, she may sit unharmed. If she is unacceptable, she will be pierced by thorns. For the first time in history, a human has been accepted by the throne as Tuarhievel's rightful ruler.

The throne's true power comes from its ability to channel mebhaighl from the land for the regent. From the throne, a regent can unleash mighty magics if necessary, but the throne seems to favor more subtle magics. Elven scholars have suggested that the throne channels mebhaighl even without the guidance or knowledge of the regent. No one has proven this, and it remains unlikely that anyone will do so since the effects, when present, are so subtle as to be undetectable.

Control of this artifact is at the heart of the conflict between Savane and her enemies. Even more than the right to rule Tuarhievel, House Tuarlachim wants to regain control of the domain's magical strength. The aid they give to Llytha Damaan is only a means to that end. House Tuarlachim believes that, with the power of realm's sources behind them, they would be able to reclaim the Aelvinnwode from the goblins and humans and defeat any attempt by the Gorgon to destroy Tuarhievel.

Savane faces a difficult problem. For the first time in many years, a regent who has no magical skill sits on the Thorn Throne. Savane controls the sources of Tuarhievel, but she has no ability to tap them. Despite her current

holdings

inability to collect regency from Tuarhievel's magical sources, Savane has no intention of giving House Tuarlachim even the slightest control over them; she refuses to allow her weakness to become Rhuandice's strength.

Even Savane's taelinir, Gylvain, is unable to use realm magic, for he divested himself of his bloodline to become one of the taelinri. In addition, she cannot allow an ally like the Black Princess unrestricted access to these sources, for the outrage would cripple her weak political hold over Tuarhievel. Since she has become regent, she has allowed mages who are not opposed to her access to the sources, and has refused such access to the houses arrayed against her. She is aware that Tuarhievel's sources are a key prize in the succession dispute, and she is determined to pass them intact to her daughter.

Although technically no longer part of Tuarhievel, the province of Sideath in the Gorgon's Crown requires a special note regarding its magical sources. The BIRTHRIGHT

boxed set states that the Gorgon controls a level 5 source in the province, and the remaining 2 levels are uncontrolled. This is not precisely true. Although "the Lich" does not tap those 2 levels of magical power, his control of the vale gives him access to them. Most of his power comes from the Shadow World (the level of source he can tap there is unknown, but is thought to be very powerful, at least rivalling that of the province of Sideath), so he does not need to tap the vale's magical energy. Furthermore, he does not wish to arouse the Gorgon's anger by blatantly demonstrating that the Gorgon does not control the vale.

So far, the Gorgon has not found it necessary to contest "the Lich" for control of the vale, and Siebharrinn seems to want to keep it that way. The elves of Tuarhievel are keenly interested in information about Sideath's sources, especially those derived from the Shadow World, for they do not want to face that power if ever they anger Siebharrinn—or worse, if the Gorgon ever gains control of the vale.



law

Savane, regent of Tuarhieval, together with Fhiele Dhoesone, Baroness of Dhoesone, reign over the law holdings of Tuarhieval. As the current regent, Savane controls the same holdings as did Phileraene. The political situation inside Tuarhieval is much more fluid now, however. With the battle lines drawn between two factions, control of these holdings may suddenly shift, depending on the relative political success of the two sides.

Currently, Fhiele Dhoesone rules 5 levels of law inside Tuarhieval; the rest belong to Savane. The baroness's holdings lie in the western provinces and in the capital province. These holdings were granted to her by her brother, Prince Phileraene. In the past, the baroness has done little other than draw light tax revenue; she had relinquished actual political control to her half-brother, Prince Phileraene.

Since Phileraene's imprisonment, agitators within Tuarhieval have demanded that Fhiele relinquish control of her law holdings. Since the baroness's lands lie in provinces where the *gheallie Sidhe* is strong, some of these demands have taken a violent turn. Fhiele Dhoesone has not yet responded in kind, but she is becoming increasingly frustrated. Her lands have few defenders, so she must rely on Savane for aid against the growing number of raids.

Savane faces her own problems, however. Tied into the attacks on Fhiele Dhoesone's holdings is a general attempt by Llytha Damaan and his supporters to wrest control of as many of Tuarhieval's holdings as possible. So far, this has not degenerated into open rebellion; fear of the Gorgon will likely prevent it from becoming so. Damaan uses persuasion and suggestion to sway others to his side. Some of his allies are less subtle. House Tuarlachiem, in particular, sees Phileraene's disappearance as an opportunity to reassert their ancient claim to the Thorn Throne. They feel that if Savane is out of the

picture, no half-breed child of hers will inherit her regency, and the throne will have little choice but to accept Tuarlachiem's claim.

Other families, among them those who have long been loyal to House Llyrandor, are still loyal to the throne. They may not like the idea of Savane as their regent, but they feel they should honor Phileraene's choice. Their support is aimed less at her and more at the throne itself. Furthermore, she passed the throne's test; for now, they will support her. That support may disappear quickly if Savane shows indications of wishing to be anything more than a caretaker in her regency. The lands they own are thus Savane's, at least for the moment.

guilds

If a blind spot exists in elven control of Tuarhieval, it is in economics. Perhaps it is a characteristic of the elves that they do not consider the acquisition of profit a valuable goal. The Sidhelien are not motivated to accumulate wealth or to get the best out of a transaction. Deals come and deals go; they are in no hurry to act upon them. This may explain Phileraene's seeming indifference to foreign guilds having control of part of Tuarhieval's economy. Savane, on the other hand, is not so blasé about it. She means to regain the economic reins of Tuarhieval. Doing so will give her a measure of power that Phileraene never had; this power may make up for her tenuous hold on the realm's law and source holdings.

Savane is likely to get quite a fight from Mheallie Bireon of Cariele and Adaere Doneim of Dhoesone, however. Mheallie Bireon, in particular, is a master of fighting trade wars, so Savane will certainly have her hands full. The Black Princess would likely make a powerful ally and adviser against the foreign guilds, but Savane must remain careful about involving Tara for fear of alienating the elves of Tuarhieval. Much of her work against the foreign guilds must, in the end, come down to her own skills. She currently favors the idea of encouraging Tuarhieval's halflings

to take an active role in the domain's economic matters. If she is able to help them become established and keeps them competing with one another, then no one will be able to exercise the sort of control over the realm's economy that the foreign guilds seem ready to attempt.

temples

As mentioned, no temple holdings exist anywhere within Tuarhievel. Elves have long memories; following Deismaar, they vowed never again to interact with human gods. A rare individual elf may choose to worship one of the gods, but no organized human religious institution may exist anywhere within the domain. The rulers of Tuarhievel have tolerated human priests in their realm only as long as they remained silent on the topic of their religious beliefs.

Savane is under considerable pressure by various of the human faiths to allow the establishment of small religious holdings. So far, these human priests have been unsuccessful. Savane is aware that the eyes of Tuarhievel's people are upon her in this matter, and she has chosen not to do anything that seems to challenge their cultural traditions.

Three principal human churches desire access to Tuarhievel. The first is Haelyn's Bastion of Truth. It hopes to bring the elves out of the darkness of their past association with Azrai. Two enterprising crusaders of truth came to Tuaranreigh recently, where they arrogantly announced that they had arrived to establish the first of many temples dedicated to Haelyn, and that all would be welcome. They followed this announcement with a demand to meet with Savane to work out the details.

Savane ordered these upstarts arrested and escorted under heavy guard to the border with Dhoesone, where they were warned never to return. She did this as much out of concern for their safety as for any other reason, for several elves at court seemed ready to kill them. Her expulsion of the pair underscored her decision not to disrupt elven cultural traditions during

her stewardship of Tuarhievel. So far, no further attempts have been made by the church to reenter the domain, but Savane knows that their interest remains.

Another church seeking a foothold in Tuarhievel is the Northern Reformed Church of Sarimie. Savane is less sure of their goals, but she suspects that they are linked to foreign guilds attempting to expand their control of Tuarhievel's economy. They met the same flat refusal as did Haelyn's Bastion of Truth.

The third church interested in establishing a holding within Tuarhievel is the Oaken Grove of Aeric. It has been the least offensive of the three. This church is the one that Savane herself follows, so her decision regarding them is more difficult. This is further complicated by her acquaintance with some of the druids. Savane believes that several similarities exist between elven cultural beliefs and those practiced by Aeric's druids. For now, she has kept them out of Tuarhievel, but the decision has not been easy to live with.

The holdings chart from *Ruins of Empire* is reprinted here for convenience.

Province	Law	Temples	Guilds	Sources
Avallaigh (2/6)	FD (1) Sa (0)	-	MB (2)	Sa (5)
Bhindraith (2/6)	Sa (1)	-	MB (2) Sa (0)	Sa (4)
Braethindyr (4/5)	FD (2) Sa (2)	-	AD (2) Sa (2)	Sa (4)
Cwmbheir (6/5)	Sa (4) FD (2)	-	AD (3) MB (2) Sa (0)	Sa (5)
Cymryr (3/5)	Sa (2)	-	-	Sa (5)
Dhoneaghmiere (3/5)	Sa (2)	-	-	Sa (5)
Llyrandor (2/6)	Sa (2)	-	-	Sa (6)

Abbreviations: FD=Fhiele Dhoesone (Dhoesone); MB=Mheallie Bireon (Stonecrown Coster, Source of the Maesil, Northlands Exchange); Sa=Savane (Tuarhievel); AD=Adaere Doneim (Northern Imports and Exports).

phantom tales

rumors

he's alive!

Savane received word recently that Fhileraene might be alive. An ambassador from Mhoried came to Tuaranreigh two weeks ago, claiming to have been sent to Kal-Saitharak on behalf of the Mhor to attempt to negotiate the cessation of hostilities between Mhoried and Markazor. The negotiations were ultimately fruitless, for the Gorgon was not in a talking mood.

While the emissary was there, however, he spied a battered elf in a cage suspended from the ceiling of the Gorgon's audience chamber. The cage was so small that the elf had to sit with his knees drawn tightly to his chest. The elf looked at his surcoat, smiled weakly, and seemed about to speak when the Gorgon entered the room. When the Gorgon saw the ambassador looking at the cage, he said that the idea of the cage appealed to him, for it had a certain poetic justice. The ambassador only learned what that meant when he returned to Mhoried and discovered that this was one of Rhuobhe Manslayer's favorite punishments for his human captives. He realized that the elf he saw in the cage was likely Fhileraene. He was not in good condition, but he was alive.

the fifth column

A persistent rumor is spreading that Savane and the Black Princess are part of a plot by the Gorgon to bring about the destruction of Tuarhievel. Savane seduced the prince into investing her with his bloodline so that she could open the gates of the realm to her master. The Black Princess arrived later to plan the campaign of attack against Tuarhievel, for the Gorgon knows how formidable the realm's defenses are. The Gorgon has wanted for centuries to remove this thorn in his side, but he has been unable to accomplish anything militarily. He plotted to send his two witches to create such chaos that the realm would become easy prey for the Gorgon's armies.

As silly as this rumor sounds, certain people within Tuarhievel believe it. Despite

the political capital gained by the opposition through the spread of this rumor, they claim they are not responsible for it. So far, it has not caused any trouble, but if it were to take root with a significant portion of the population, it could create the chaos that it purports the "two witches" were sent to create.

tunnel rats

An increasing number of goblin raids out of Markazor have been perpetrated since Fhileraene's imprisonment. The goblins have dug tunnels between the two realms along the border; an elven patrol sent in to investigate was decimated. Only two scouts returned from the tunnels, and both were out of their minds with fear. The only information the local commanders could glean was a reference to a horrifying creature living deep below the ground.

return of the king

Rumors persist that Rhuobhe plans to return to his ancestral homeland. Emissaries from his kingdom have recently been seen in Bhindraith, where they spoke with Rhuandice Tuarlachim and Llytha Damaan. What was said in that meeting is unknown, but when the pair emerged to bid their visitors farewell, neither was smiling; Damaan in particular looked somewhat ill. Their visitors disappeared shortly after leaving the Tuarlachim village, so no information was forthcoming from them.

doors into shadow

The mages situated along the border between Llyrandor and Sideath believe they have discovered the secret to the power that Siebharrinn unleashed two centuries ago when the Gorgon sent his forces into Tuarhievel. Two wizards are dead as a result of their study of the connections with the Shadow World, but the survivors believe that Siebharrinn released a small bit of the magical might of the Evanescence, the barrier ward that exists to separate this world from the world of Shadow. In the past, all assumed that the barrier between the two was something magically physical that could be weakened. Only recently did they theorize that it is a source of magical energy.

The wizards believe that a portion of this energy was released when Siebharrinn called

upon the energies of the Shadow World. The depletion of the Evanescence's energy caused the separation between the two worlds to disappear. But the mages have discovered that the Evanescence may be rebuilding itself. They cannot be certain, because they cannot reach any location where they can study it more closely.

guild war

Mheallie Bireon has apparently made her move to consolidate her hold on trade in the northern portions of Anuire. Gaelin Thuried of the Upper Anuire Traders guild was badly injured in a recent attack on his home, and other merchants' holdings have been targeted as well. Only Mheallie Bireon's Stonecrown Coster seems immune to these assaults, so most speculation points to her as their instigator. So far, this conflict has not spilled over into Tuarhievel, but the idea that the Stonecrown Coster may be attempting to squeeze out other mercantile holdings may make it difficult for Savane to establish trade guilds more benevolent to the domain of Tuarhievel.

secrets

When Phileraene invested Savane with his bloodline and regency, he also gave her information about some of Tuarhievel's political dealings. Since she has become the steward of the throne, she has become aware of other secrets as well.

kiergard

For many years, Tuarhievel has been sending military aid to the rebels in Kiergard to keep them strong enough to occupy some of the Gorgon's troops. This aid exits Tuarhievel through unwitting merchants from Cariele, is picked up by an unknown guild in Mhoried, and is finally shipped through the Points East Trading Guild in Elinie. The guild, in turn, transports it to the border of the Sielwode, where elves of that realm retrieve it. How this aid is delivered to the rebels is unknown, but speculation exists that the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik may be involved. Only the unknown guild in Mhoried and the Queen of the Sielwode know of the origin of the aid. All others in the chain of transactions are merely merchants paid for their shipping services. So far, there is no indication that the Gorgon knows where the Kiergard rebels get their aid.

spies

For years, Tuarhievel has been loyally served by a small but important group of scouts and spies. Some of these are elves, but most are from the halfling population that calls Tuarhievel home. Far more adept at being ignored by humans than are elves, these halflings travel abroad and gather information about the actions of other domains. This information gets back to Tuarhievel quickly by some unknown means. As a result, the regents of Tuarhievel are very well informed about the activities of their counterparts in other realms.

The halfling who controls this effort is called "the Fisherman." The Fisherman is not a nickname; rather, it is a title that has been passed down through generations of halfling spymasters. The few outsiders who have heard rumors of the Fisherman believe him to be an ancient elf. Since the Fisherman never leaves the realm once he or she gains the title, no one in the rest of the world is the wiser.

The halfling who currently holds this title is a matronly female. She has offered her services to Savane, but has warned her that her people work only to gain information about foreign governments. She has sworn an oath never to become involved in internal matters, and she intends to abide by that oath.

the heir to the thorn throne

Seers have recently met with Savane to discuss the child she carries. Rumor has it that the omens they have observed concerning her daughter's birth are very favorable; in fact, omens as powerful as these have not been observed in over a thousand years.

Furthermore, they fully believe that the baby, due to be born in four months, will inherit the full bloodline of her father, Prince Phileraene (Reynir, great, 55). The only announcement that Savane has made regarding this is that she has decided to name the child Dannagh. Midwives say that Savane chose the name unaware of the legend of Dannagh (the beloved heroine of an old elven ballad), and they believe this will bring the child favor in years to come.

Some of the following advice may seem to apply only if Savane sits on the Thorn Throne. Whether a PC regent ascends the Thorn Throne or Savane keeps her hold on it, the problems facing the regent of Tuarhievel are the same. Obviously, if Savane agrees to step down to make way for a compromise regent (such as a PC elf), at least some of the internal difficulties can be more easily addressed.

dealing with the gorgon

That Tuarhievel has remained independent despite its proximity to the Gorgon's Crown for the past two thousand years is no accident. The elves of Tuarhievel have used a combination of diplomacy and military strength to safeguard that independence.

Use military assets wisely. Tuarhievel's strategy has been to use her army only in defense of the domain. The army has virtually no experience in offensive war; the rare foray into the Giantdowns is nothing more than a punitive raid to discourage future liberties within the borders of Tuarhievel. The units that have been sent to Dhoesone have strict instructions only to help defend the baroness's domain.

Elven units do not enter the Gorgon's Crown, even in reprisal, for fear of starting a war they may not win. Against the Gorgon's puppet, the domain of Markazor, they are considerably less restrained. The land just inside the border is a desolate wasteland as a result of the reprisals against the goblins. So far, the Gorgon has not seen fit to avenge his ally, the Queen of Markazor, but anything other than reprisal raids will undoubtedly unleash a response from his forces.

Along with this emphasis on a defensive strategy, avoid involvement in human politics. The Gorgon has not turned his gaze to Tuarhievel in over two centuries. If the elves were to ally themselves openly with the humans of Anuire, his tolerance would likely end. The

strategy

Gorgon sees the Iron Throne of Anuire as his birthright, and he will see a defensive alliance between Tuarhievel and any of the Anuirean domains as a challenge to that claim. His response will almost certainly be war, and the closest state to his domain will bear the brunt of his rage.

The aid sent to the rebels of Kiergard is risky. If the Gorgon discovers the source of this aid, he may choose war as a demonstration of his intolerance. On the other hand, the rebels tie up several units of his troops—units which may tip the balance in his favor if he were to launch an attack westward. Furthermore, he may already know the source of that aid, for he is one of the most powerful mages on the continent.

keep the realm unified

Tied to the policy of avoiding conflict with the Gorgon is another policy: keeping Tuarhievel unified. If the Gorgon senses weakness, he will strike. If the internal problems so divide the realm that civil war seems imminent, the wolf will certainly be at the door. Assuming that Savane or a compromise regent is in power, this situation will be difficult, but not impossible.

Gaining control of Tuarhievel's economy will go a long way in securing the realm, as well as ensuring a PC regent's acceptance by the people of the domain. The regent's interest must then turn to defending the realm, even if its citizens are of a different race. Defending their interests defends the regent, and helps secure the crown.

This defense of the realm's interests must include defense of the elven way of life. This will probably pose no problems for a PC elf regent, but if the PCs are human regents of lesser holdings within the realm and Savane remains on the throne, they will have to assist her in learning elven ways. Finding common ground between the two factions may help ease tensions.



Noble Houses of Tuarhievel

In the intense political climate of Tuarhievel, participants cannot hope to succeed unless they understand the position of each house with regard to the elf-versus-human issues. More important is the understanding of each house's opinion with regard to the Savane controversy.

Tuarhievel's ruling families are divided into major and minor houses. The major houses earn their distinction because they were the founding families of Tuarhievel and control one or more provinces within the nation. The minor houses are, for the most part, landless.

Five major houses and nine minor ones are recognized. Each house has one representative who sits on the Council of the Moon. The minor houses each ally with one of the major houses in most things economic and political; the list that follows organizes the houses by whom they follow.

Each major house is identified as *traditional*, *neutral*, or *progressive*. *Traditional* houses generally agitate in favor of the *gheallie Sidhe* and toward thrusting humans from elven lands. *Progressive* houses usually argue in favor of stronger ties with human neighbors. *Neutral* houses involve themselves only in issues that are clearly internal matters of Tuarhievel.

House Llyrandor (current ruling family, progressive)

Caeloran
Gylvain
Sidranal

Tuarlachiem (former ruling family, traditional)

Damaan (Note: Was aligned with Llyrandor before
Savane became regent)
Takalereihn
Takenya

Braedonnal (progressive)

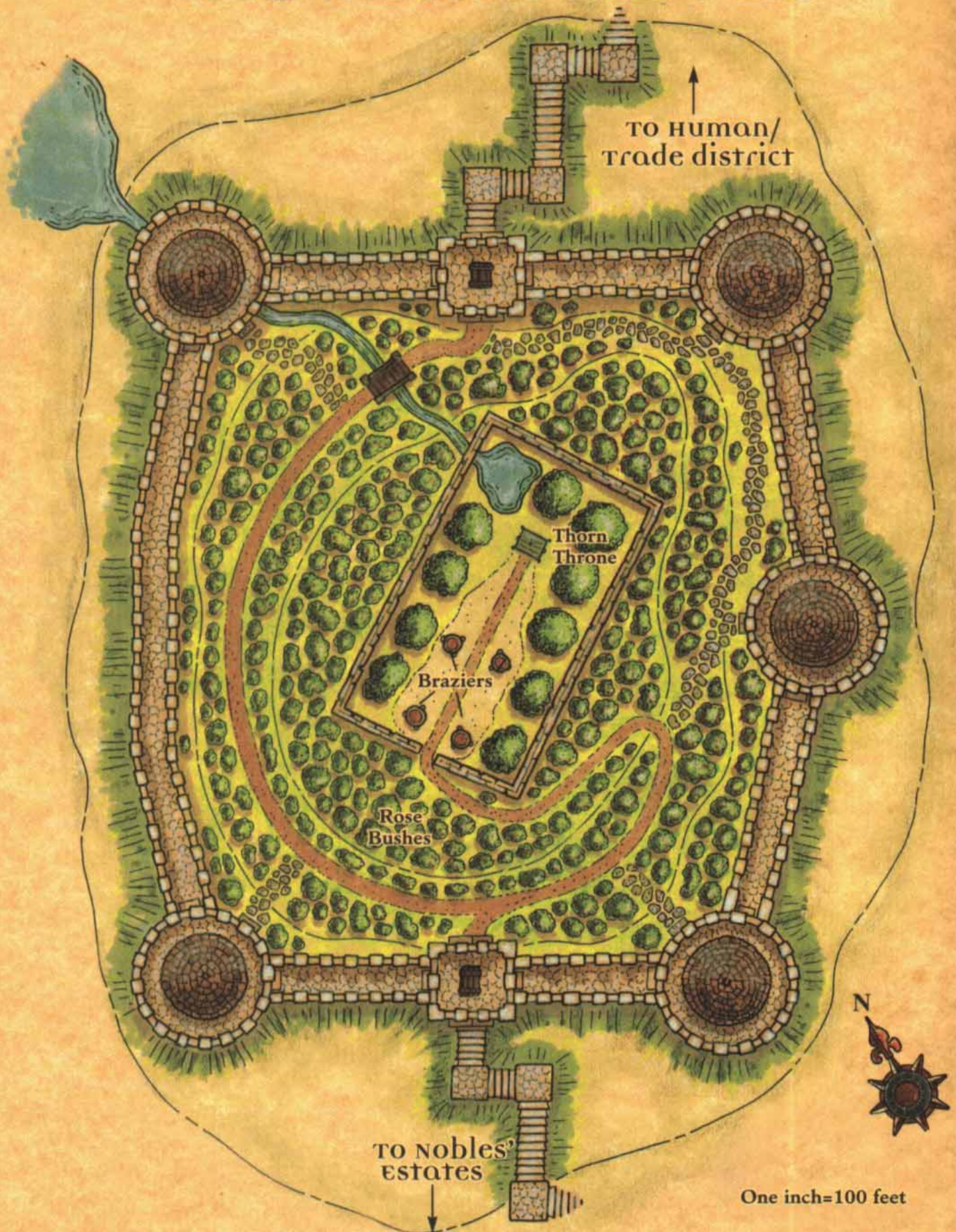
Haldanah

Dhoelachnal (neutral)

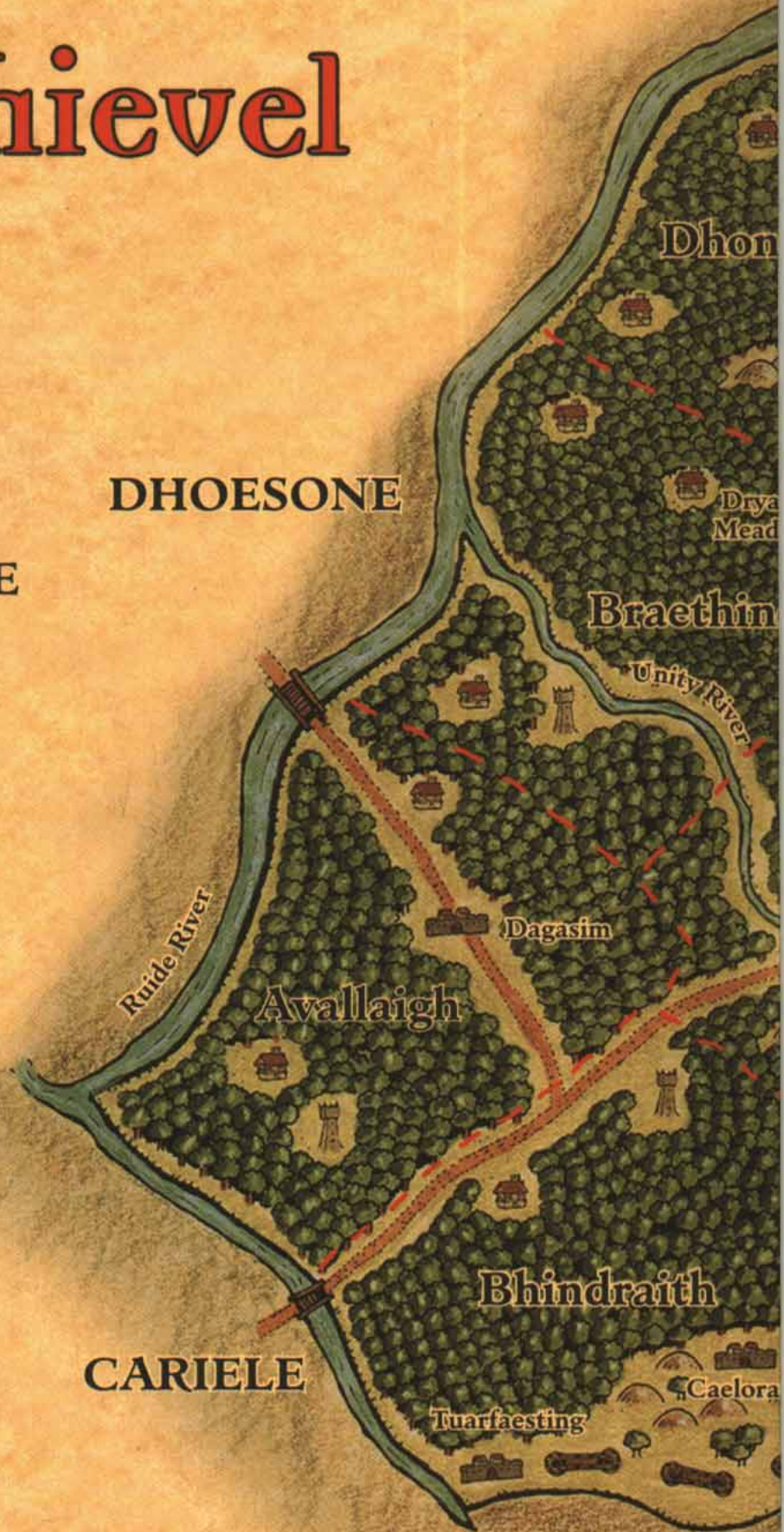
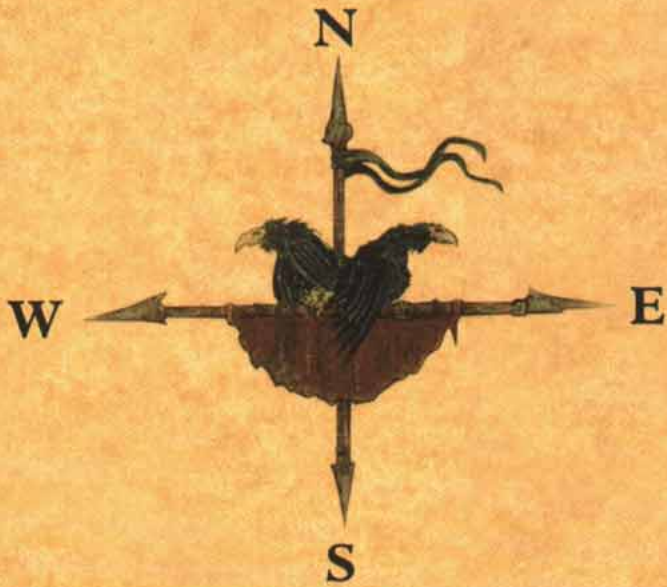
Peranwyr (neutral)

Sideath (left all but powerless in the wake of the Sideath disaster; neutral)

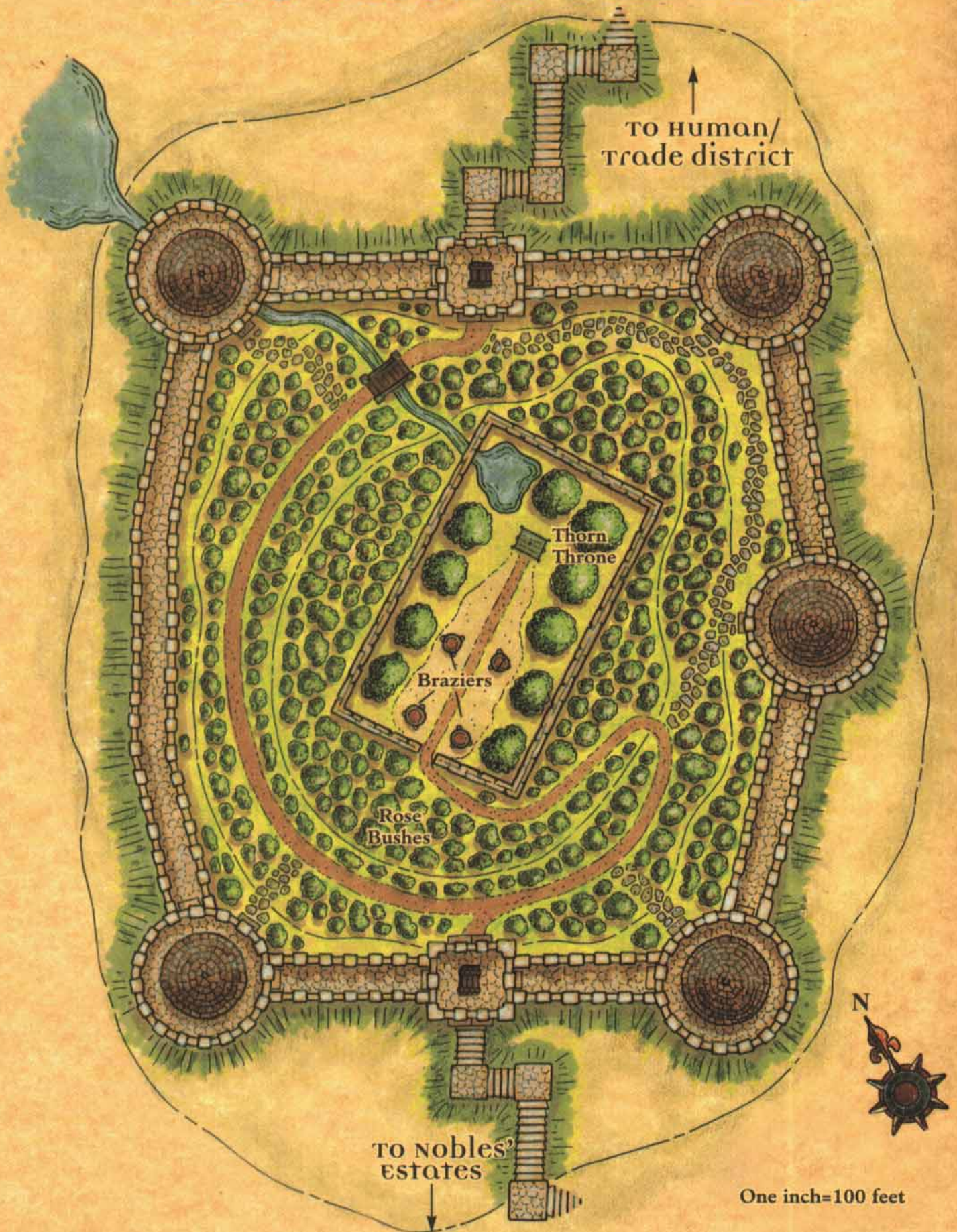
The Thorn Throne



Tuarhievel



The Thorn Throne



Player's Secrets of

TUARHIEVEL



DOMAIN SOURCEBOOK

by Duane Maxwell and Steve Miller

Before the humans descended on Cerilia, the continent was virtually untouched, inhabited only by those who understood how to live in harmony with nature. Since the human incursion, however, the natives have been forced to realign themselves with their homelands and their neighbors. No group has felt the effects of these maneuverings as much as the elves, who now engage in a daily struggle to keep a hold on their lands, fight off human interests, and preserve their heritage.

In Tuarhievel, matters have recently gotten worse. Prince Phileraene has disappeared after being coerced into answering a summons from the Gorgon—but before he went away, he transferred his bloodline to his consort, a human female named Savane Mhoried. Many of the elves of Tuarhievel consider this act to have been a betrayal of their heritage, even though the interim regent has promised to pass the bloodline to her yet unborn child as soon as that child comes of age. But in the meantime, the elven nation is in upheaval. The land needs a strong leader to prevent traditional values from clashing with the needs of the nation, lest it be torn apart. Can your character walk the fine line between tradition and necessity to unify Tuarhievel?

This BIRTHRIGHT™ domain sourcebook is designed for players who wish to take part in the rulership of Tuarhievel, either as the regent or as the leader of one of the domain's noble families. This information is invaluable to anyone who might wish to approach Tuarhievel as a political ally or embark on adventures in the area.

TSR, Inc.
201 Sheridan Springs Rd.
Lake Geneva
WI 53147
U.S.A.



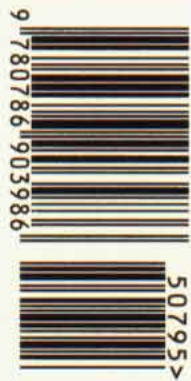
TSR Ltd.
120 Church End
Cherry Hinton
Cambridge CB1 3LB
United Kingdom

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