



BORDERLAND PROVINCES

Players Gazetteer

By Matthew J. Finch



FROG GOD
GAMES



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The Borderland Provinces

Players Gazetteer

Introduction

These are lands where the great tide of an empire is drawing back, leaving its old provinces to fend for themselves but still trying to hold its ancient grip upon them. Unlike the Sundered Kingdoms to the east, the Borderland Provinces are not plunged into chaos — at least, not yet.

It is an eternal truth that gaps left by the slow retreat of a decaying and decadent civilization are inevitably filled; either by young and vigorous new civilizations rising to offer new hopes and aspirations, or by a self-devouring maelstrom of war, pillage, plague, and barbarism. Such times are the knife-edges of history, where the deeds of heroes may shift the course of entire kingdoms. They are times of struggle and fear, times of desperation and wild hopes, times when legends are made.

And these times have arrived.

From the deep-infested halls of Rappan Athuk in the north, to the green depths of the Wiltangle Forest in the south, the imperial aspirations of the Kingdoms of Foere are crumbling, and their forces are in retreat. Unlike the Sundered Kingdoms farther to the east, where disaster and chaos reign unchecked, the lands bordering the March of Mountains have managed to cling tenaciously to social order. A new power is rising here, in the

western Plains of Suilley, to supplant and replace the decaying power of the Foerdewaith, namely the Kingdom of Suilley. Three hundred or so years ago, the Foerdewaith Lord-Governor of Suilley declared himself an independent king, and his nobles, mostly Foerdewaith themselves, succeeded in pushing back the armies of their own former empire, essentially stealing an entire kingdom for themselves. As the power of the distant Foere continued to decay in the rest of the provinces, Suilley has stepped into the gap. Over the generations, the “Stolen Kingdom” has slowly been increasing the loyalty and trust of its own citizens, gaining the fealty of more petty nobles in the hinterlands, and expanding its reach beyond the original borders of the province. In the last century, as all imperial authority collapsed and the imperial armies disappeared, many of Suilley’s neighboring provinces have thrown off all allegiance to the Kingdoms of Foere and sworn fealty to the King of Suilley instead, desperate to re-establish some kind of stability in their own lands. And so the present day dawns with the Kingdom of Suilley in sudden possession by default of a vast and disorganized patchwork of feudal realms. The kingdom has a relatively stable domain around the capital city of Manas but utterly lacks the resources to protect or govern all the realms now pleading to be pulled back from the edge of their own ruin by the hand of the Suilleyn King. To complicate the situation, not all of



THE LOST LANDS: BORDERLAND PROVINCES

the Borderland Provinces are comfortable with the rise of the Kingdom of Suilley, and some view Suilley as no less a foreign overlord than the Foere. Nevertheless, Suilley is perhaps the best hope of the Borderland Provinces if they wish to avoid the grim fate of the Sundered Kingdoms. The situation is dire, but Suilley and its allies are prepared to fight to keep the lamp of civilization burning here.

Before the Hyperborean Age

At the dawning of the Hyperborean Age in the Borderland Provinces, before the arrival of Polemarch Oerson and his legions 109 years before the start of the Imperial Record, the areas now known as the Borderland Provinces were almost entirely covered by primordial forest, the eastern extent of the Great Akadonian Forest.

Various neolithic human villages (the “Ancient Ones,” as they are usually called) were scattered about through the great forest, but the forest’s primary occupants were elves.

Coming of the Hyperboreans

The first great historical shift to take place in the western Plains of Sull came with the arrival of the Hyperboreans, who marched southward through the lands where Eastreach Province is now found. As the conquest of the Borderland Provinces region took hold, Hyperborean civilization did too, establishing the first great tide of civilization.

Rise and Fall of Foere

The initial arrival of the authority of the Kingdoms of Foere in the Borderland Provinces, beginning circa 2720 I.R., brought a new degree of prosperity to the region, making trade and travel safer, and lessening the tyranny and over-taxation imposed by petty feudal lords.

Upon the death of Overking Oessum VIII in the Fourth Great Crusade in 3207, and the loss of the Army of Light in the Forest of Hope three years later, the centuries of benefits brought by the Kingdoms of Foere began a slow process of collapse.

Suilleyn Secession

In the year 3222 of the Imperial Record, the Province of Suilley crowned its Lord-Governor, Ghienvais Pas, as Ghienvais I, King of Suilley. Perhaps matters might have gone differently if the Overking’s army had subdued the province quickly, but the course of the short war reversed all expectations when the Foerdewaith army was crushed at the Battle of Bullock’s Bale. With the great province of Suilley thrown into

the status of an independent realm in the midst of war and rebellion on all sides, the shape of events in the provinces was utterly and irrevocably changed. A new player had been forced to join the game, and the new player, the King of Suilley, stood in a strategic position at the geographic center of the provinces.

Recent Years

The various locales in the Borderland Provinces have encountered different problems and opportunities from the slow erosion of Foerdewaith dominance. Some areas, Endhome in particular, have benefitted greatly. Suilley is faced with the problems of becoming an imperial power far too quickly. Eastreach and Aachen are collapsing from within, for different reasons. Exeter Province is isolated and calcifying, and Keston Province has been shattered by slow military response to border threats. Toullen works to recover from the unchecked disaster of the Fiend Rains, supported only by the inadequate assistance Suilley can manage to scrape together. The situation is by no means irretrievable; given time and peace, the Borderland Provinces have a good chance of riding out the turbulence of Foere’s retreating tide. On the other hand, any catastrophe, war, or powerful assault by the forces of evil could throw the provinces into a bloody and tumultuous dark age.

Religion

The predominant religious pantheon in the Borderland Provinces is the array of Hyperborean gods brought to the continent by the invaders 109 years before the beginning of the Imperial Record. Thyr, Solanus, Mithras, Jamboor, Telophus, Kamien, Yenomesh, Ceres, and Pan all have long-standing temples and dedicated followers throughout the region. After the end of the Hyperborean Age, the Foerdewaith invasion of the Borderland Provinces brought a second group of gods, including Archeillus, Quell, and Belon the Wise.

More recently, some of the popular gods of Bard’s Gate have established followings, particularly in the northern part of the Borderlands. Sefagreth, a Hyperborean deity not previously well-known in the Borderland Provinces since Hyperborean times, has rapidly gained worshippers among the merchants and townsfolk. Most significant is the growth of the sun-cult of Mitra. In Foere and Bard’s Gate, Mitra is becoming the predominant sun-god, supplanting the now rapidly-eroding Church of Solanus. Mitra is well known in the Borderland Provinces at this point, but Solanus is generally still considered the “real” goddess of the sun. However, the growing weakness of the Church in Reme and Bard’s Gate is felt far away from these centers of civilization. The temples of Solanus in the Borderland Provinces are receiving fewer acolytes to train, less funding for buildings and good works, and less political support from the powers-that-be in the great trading cities.

Lost Lands Timeline of the Borderland Provinces

| Imperial Record (I.R.) | Erylle Cycle (E.C.) | Huun Chronicle (H.C.) |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Arrival of the Hyperborean Empire in the Borderland and Beyond | | |
| -109 | 6376 | Polemarch Oerson leads Hyperborean Legion out of Boros and into Akados |
| -102 | 6383 | Wild elves drive Hyperboreans from forest; Legion advances along forest’s edge passing through region that will become the Sundered Kingdoms |
| -92 | 6393 | Elven high lords gather elven host; Oerson’s Perilous March begins |
| -91 | 6394 | Elves defeated by human and mountain dwarf alliance at Lake Crimmormere |
| -88 | 6397 | Oerson’s advance checked at Helcynngae Peninsula; Legion withdraws into hills between March of Mountains and Forlorn Mountains; Stronghold Hjerrin erected in Lorremach Highhills |

PLAYERS GAZETEER

| Imperial Record (I.R.) | Erylle Cycle (E.C.) | Huon Chronicle (H.C.) | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| -83 | 6402 | | Construction of Helwall begun, Legion breeds horses on plains east of Lorremach Highhills |
| -73 | 6412 | | Helwall completed, Heldring contained on peninsula; Exeter Province established, foundations laid for forts at Albor Broce and Sylvos |
| -69 | 6416 | | Town of Sessilbridge established |
| -28 | 6457 | | Death of Oerson |
| -17 | 6468 | | Monarchs of Boros send episcopi to Akados |
| -11 | 6474 | | Hyperborean Rebellion; Construction begins on Tower of Oerson |
| -2 | 6483 | | Tower of Oerson completed |
| 1 | 6485 | | Battle of Hummaemidon; Birth of Imperial Record |
| 128 | 6612 | | Hyperboreans colonize Insula Extremis, battle Heldring on Helcynngae Peninsula |
| 212 | 6696 | | Hill dwarves of Irkaina teach ironworking to Hyperboreans |
| 288 | 6772 | | Stratego Verin and his Legion destroyed by Heldring in Peninsular Campaign; Militias raised from Helwall to Apothasalos fearing Heldring attack; Coastal forts erected south of Matagost Range to guard against sea invasion, forts of Albor Broce and Sylvos expanded |
| 687 | 7171 | | Beginning of Pax Hyperborea |
| 1491 | 7975 | | The Great Darkness covers waters of Gulf of Akados region for three years; sea trade to the north ceases |
| 1492 | 7976 | | Small port of Endhome becomes hub of trade on eastern coast, grows to be known as "Trading Capital of the Continent" |
| 2491 | 8975 | | Poles of Boros shift; Goitre emerges, forming Tempest Meridians; Ice sheet begins forming over continent of Boros and World Roof |
| 2496 | 8980 | 1 | Tower of Oerson destroyed; Wildfires ravage Curgantium and spread across Akados, burning Plains of Sullley and Matagost Forest; Refugees flee across Dardanal Strait to Ramthion Island; Endhome spared devastation |
| 2499 | 8983 | 4 | Imperial Court relocated to Tircople; Western empire abandoned by Hyperboreans; Chaos descends among survivors of Sullley Plain and Matagost Peninsula End of the Hyperborean Age in the Provinces |
| 2516 | 9000 | 21 | Hyperboreans withdraw from Akados; Heldring cross the Helwall, forts of Sylvos and Albor Broce destroyed |
| 2517 | 9001 | 22 | Heldring longships land on Ramthion Island and subjugate the populace; Heldring land in Southvale but cannot breach walls of Penmorome; Heldring advance checked at Stronghold Hjerrin in the south and withdraw to Exeter Province |
| 2521 | 9005 | 26 | Unnamed local chieftain brings Heldring mercenaries to Insula Extremis; Heldring conquer all of Southvale but Penmorome |
| 2527 | 9011 | 32 | Most Heldring in Exeter Province withdraw to Helcynngae Peninsula to take part in invasion of Insula Extremis |
| 2560 | 9044 | 65 | Daan forms his Cataphracts in service to Hyperborea |
| 2566 | 9050 | 71 | Daan acclaimed as Polemarch of Insula Extremis |
| 2576 | 9060 | 81 | Daan defeats Heldring at Battle of Agedium |
| 2581 | 9065 | 86 | Daan's Legion marches on Tircople, passing through Plains of Sullley |
| 2584 | 9068 | 89 | Daan falls as he destroys the lich-queen Trystecce; Few warriors return home to Plains of Sullley |
| 2585 | 9069 | 90 | Daanites withdraw to Ynys Cymagh; Daanites name the rest of the world as Lloegyrr—the Lost Lands |
| 2632 | 9116 | 137 | Last Hyperboreans quietly disappear from Tircople |
| 2690 | 9174 | 195 | Knights of Macobert formed, mounted upon destriers bred in eastern Sullley Rise of the Kingdom of Foere |
| 2698 | 9182 | 203 | King Macobert begins uniting Akados as Kingdom of Foere |
| 2720 | 9204 | 225 | Province of Aachen established extending to the Great Bridge |
| 2744 | 9228 | 249 | Macobert crowned Overking of the Hyperborean Monarchy of the Foerdewaith |
| 2745 | 9229 | 250 | Foerdewaith provinces of Sullley and Matagost established |

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| Imperial Record (I.R.) | Erylle Cycle (E.C.) | Huun Chronicle (H.C.) | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 2751 | 9235 | 256 | Province of Burgundia established to maintain garrison forts at Salyos and Parthos; Construction begins on city of Trevi |
| 2762 | 9246 | 267 | Overking Macobert and his Knights march on sealed city of Penmorome; Province of Southvale created |
| 2763 | 9247 | 268 | Construction begins on imperial capital at Courghais |
| 2765 | 9249 | 270 | Death of Macobert; Son Magnusson succeeds to the throne; Issuance of Eastreach Decree; Provinces of Eastreach and Pontus Tinigal established |
| 2768 | 9252 | 273 | Overking Magnusson completes imperial capital at Courghais |
| 2776 | 9260 | 281 | Death of Magnusson I; Grandson Magnusson II succeeds to the Throne |
| 2781 | 9265 | 286 | Red Plague strikes Kingdoms of Foere; One quarter of the population of the central lands dies, including Magnusson II; Son Osbert I succeeds to the throne |
| 2797 | 9281 | 302 | Red Plague returns and strikes central Kingdoms of Foere again; Much of the kingdom's central territories are depopulated due to the high death toll; Plague claims Overking Osbert I, who is succeeded by his son, Osbert II |
| 2801 | 9285 | 306 | Heldring armies cross Helwall again and roam along the March of Mountains, burning settlements and slaughtering their inhabitants; Overking Osbert II gathers a small army and marches south from Courghais to meet the Heldring in battle |
| 2802 | 9286 | 307 | Mitra appears to Overking Osbert II in the Hearthglen and predicts victory over the Heldring; Osbert builds a shrine to the Sun Father; Osbert II defeats Heldring at Oescreheit Downs, Helcynngae Peninsula pacified; Exeter Province split into Exeter and Cereduin provinces; Trebes constructed on ruins of Sylvos; War hero and nephew of Osbert II, Claud Oberhammer, given rulership of Troye and named Duke of the Rampart, Battle-Duke, and Sword of the Foerdewaith; Tradition of Dukes of the Rampart as Battle-Duke begins |
| 2803 | 9287 | 308 | Construction begun on garrison town of Kingston; Keston Province established |
| 2805 | 9289 | 310 | Ramthion Island petitions for entry into Kingdom of Foere; Province of Ramthion created |
| 2822 | 9306 | 327 | County of Vourdon created |
| 2843 | 9327 | 348 | Twin royal heirs Kennet and Cale born to Overking Paulus |
| 2856 | 9340 | 361 | County of Toulle established |
| 2858 | 9342 | 363 | Cale abdicates claim to throne and given port of Reme |
| 2970 | 9454 | 475 | Huun besiege Tircople, overrun part of Crusader States; Overking Yurid gathers Crusader army at Pontus Tinigal and Tros Zoas to sail for Khemit, march overland to Tircople; In absence of forces on Crusade in the East, the vampire lord known as the Singed Man rises in the Duchy of Kear and conquers it, ruling as its Infernal Tyrant |
| 2971 | 9455 | 476 | Second Great Crusade breaks Siege of Tircople and drives Huun from Sacred Table |
| 2977 | 9461 | 482 | Battle-Duke Ormand of the Rampart charged with freeing Kear from the Singed Man, Foerdewaith army crushed by the Infernal Tyrant of Kear at Seilo Ford, Battle-Duke Ormand slain and rises as vampire spawn in the Singed Man's service |
| 2983 | 9467 | 488 | The vampire Ormand expands enslaved Realm of Kear from Eber to Tarry; Foere and Castorhage dispute political responsibility and neither raises further forces to try and dislodge the Infernal Tyrant |
| 3030 | 9514 | 535 | Founding of trade city of Bard's Gate at King's Bridge |
| 3128 | 9612 | 633 | Sir Varral the Blessed destroys the Singed Man and Duke Ormand, freeing Realm of Kear; Duchy of Kear reconstituted under Foerdewaith Crown with nephew of overking given title in Eber |
| 3199 | 9683 | 704 | Overking Oessum VIII calls for Fourth Great Crusade; Armies and fleet gather at Endhome to sail for Crusader Coast |
| 3207 | 9691 | 712 | Huun defeated at Battle of The Sickles; Overking Oessum slain; Graeltor crowned overking |
| 3208 | 9692 | 713 | Army of Light marches on temple-city of Tsar; Desolation of Tsar created |
| 3213 | 9697 | 718 | Foerdewaith Wars of Succession begin; Ramthion Island breaks from empire |
| 3215 | 9699 | 720 | Grand Admiral of Pontus Tinigal withdraws from Foere, declares himself Emperor of the Oceans Blue; Kingdom of Oceanus established on Pontos Island |

PLAYERS GAZETEER

| Imperial Record (I.R.) | Erylle Cycle (E.C.) | Huon Chronicle (H.C.) | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 3216 | 9700 | 721 | Earl of Swordport mockingly declares himself Monarch of the Moonsilver Sea, assassinated by agents of Oceanus |
| 3217 | 9701 | 722 | Imperial fleet gathers at Highreach to attack Kingdom of Oceanus; Foerdewaith fleet defeated at Battle of Kapichi Point; City-state of Endhome declares neutrality, Foerdewaith garrison expelled |
| 3218 | 9702 | 723 | Foerdewaith army marches on Endhome; Army of Burgundia paid off by Oceanus and Endhome, surprises imperial army with flanking maneuver; Imperial army withdraws to Troye without bloodshed; Oceander army occupies Endhome |
| 3221 | 9705 | 726 | Imperial garrisons withdrawn from Salyos and Parthos; Kingdom of Burgundia declares its independence |
| 3222 | 9706 | 727 | Kingdom of Suilley declares independence; Eastern region of Suilley erupts in civil war; Foere attacks western Suilley |
| 3223 | 9707 | 728 | Foerdewaith army defeated by Suilley at Battle of Bullocks Bale |
| 3226 | 9710 | 731 | Matagost erupts into civil war; Suilley armies withdraw from Gundlock Hills drawing new eastern border at Trader's Way |
| 3312 | 9796 | 817 | Kingdom of Oceanus demands fealty from Burgundia, Southvale, and Ramthion Island; Invades Matagost Peninsula quickly ending civil war and bringing its factions to heel; Southvale surrenders; Ramthion refuses; Burgundia agrees to pay tribute to Pontus Tinigal to avoid invasion, calls to Foere for aid with promise of fealty; Suilley attacks troops sent by Foere to assist Burgundia; Foere withdraws beyond The Rampart and names region east of Suilley the District of Sunderland |
| 3330 | 9814 | 835 | Church of Mitra constructs Morninghaven Sanitorium in Hearthglen at Osbert's shrine |
| 3333 | 9817 | 838 | Burgundia and Oceanus reach peace agreement; Oceanus firmly controls Matagost, Southvale, and much of Sunderland |
| 3336 | 9820 | 841 | Keston Province and County of Toullen change their allegiance to Kingdom of Suilley |
| 3337 | 9821 | 842 | Oceander army marches from Matagost for Troye |
| 3338 | 9822 | 843 | Foerdewaith army defeats Oceanders soundly at Battle of the King's Road; Oceander forces withdraw back across Sunderland |
| 3339 | 9823 | 844 | Oceanus and Foere sign non-aggression treaty |
| 3400 | 9884 | 905 | Rappan Athuk: The Dungeon of Graves discovered in Forest of Hope |
| 3423 | 9907 | 928 | Merchants of Endhome establish Grollek's Grove as trading post between four nation-states: Endhome, Sunderland, Suilley, and Duchy of the Rampart |
| 3436 | 9920 | 941 | Captain Aldrin Shaw of Eastwych deserts from the navy of Foere, relocates to Swordport; Begins to gather small fleet of freebooters; Shaw's estate at Stormshield seized by governor of Eastwych |
| 3439 | 9923 | 944 | Unseasonal torrential rains begin to fall on the eastern slopes of the March of Mountains, the rains continue virtually nonstop causing extensive flooding, washout of roads, and undermining of city walls and building foundations; Duchy of the Rampart, Kingdom of Suilley, County of Vourdon, Keston Province, and County of Toullen are hardest hit |
| 3442 | 9926 | 947 | Captain Shaw's fleet driven from Swordport by earl's dragoons; Flees to Razor Sea |
| 3443 | 9930 | 951 | The rains have continued for four years; Casualties from flooding and mudslides have reached the tens of thousands, the destruction of property is on a massive scale, and trade on the South Road has virtually been brought to a halt, causing economic recession in the lands east of the mountains; The noted scholar and philosopher Osobar of Vermis declares the rains to be the work of the forces of Darkness and calls them the Fiend Rains, he predicts they will continue for another 13 years; The strange blind mystic Lun of the Mountain calls the rain Ryna's Tears, but she gives no explanation why; Lun says the rains will end in 6 more years |
| 3446 | 9930 | 951 | Captain Shaw destroys small Foerdewaith colony on Razor Coast and founds Port Shaw |
| 3449 | 9933 | 954 | After 10 years, the Fiend Rains come to an end; The Borderland Provinces begin to dry out and dig themselves out of the mud; Drainage to the lowlands of the Hearthglen have become a spreading marsh that is eventually known as the Creeping Mire |
| 3451 | 9935 | 956 | Oceanus opens trade relations with Port Shaw |

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|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 3455 | 9939 | 960 | The Creeping Mire continues to grow and attracts dangerous inhabitants, making the road to Morninghaven Sanatorium perilous; Mitran pilgrims begin to disappear from the Swamp Road en route to Morninghaven |
| 3466 | 9959 | 980 | Unable to guarantee the safety of its pilgrims, the Church of Mitra sells Morninghaven Sanatorium to Baronet Wilbane Osterkleg, who turns it into a prison for the criminally insane |
| 3486 | 9970 | 991 | Keston Province assumes control of Morninghaven Sanatorium after arrest of Baronet Osterkleg |
| 3506 | 9990 | 1011 | Humanoid and barbaric human raiders descend from Wilderland Hills and burn village of Bynum; Beginning of Wilderlands Clan War; County of Toullen sends small contingent of troops to assist Keston |
| 3507 | 9991 | 1012 | Kingdom of Suilley commits troops to assist beleaguered army of Keston Province against the Wilderlands clans; Exeter fortifies Albor Broce against incursions by the clans |
| 3509 | 9993 | 1014 | County of Vourdon and Exeter Province send assistance to Keston and Suilley troops; General Cormien wins Battle of Broch Tarna, breaking the strength of the hill clans and sending their margoyle masters fleeing back into the Forlorn Mountains |
| 3515 | 9999 | 1020 | King Ovar defeats Huun in Gulf of Akados and at Bard's Gate and pursues them into Irkainian Desert |
| 3517 | 10,001 | 1022 | Current year; Rumors of Ovar's return from Irkaina |

Countries and Realms

Aachen Province

(AWK-in or AH-khin)

Overview

Aachen Province remains loyal to the Kingdom of Foere, and is ruled by a Lord-Governor appointed by the Overking. It is a relatively peaceful province, but travelers should take note that there is a great deal of unrest among the nobility, dissatisfaction with the distant rulership of Foere. Order in the province is beginning to decay, as outside trade dwindles due to high taxes at the border, and the pressure of this decline is already affecting the farmers and peasantry.



Capital: Vermis (32,500)

Notable Settlements: Aixé (8,600), Dlante (5,329), Gretspaan (1,167)

Ruler: Lord-Governor Theriven the Leopard

Government: feudalism (vassal of Foere)

Resources: grain, wool, cloth, manufactured goods, cotton, furs, gems, silver

Borders and Lands

Aachen Province is found immediately to the west of Eastreach Province, in the Aachen Gap between the Mons Terminus range and the Cretian Mountains.

The native Aachenlanders were absorbed into the Kingdoms of Foere when the province was established by King Macobert in the year 2720 I.R. At that time, the Aachenlanders were a loose affiliation of tribes having been previously united under the Hyperborean Empire, sharing a common language and trading among each other fairly peacefully. The rule of Foere incorporated these tribes into a working feudal arrangement that has worked well to protect the area and foster trade.

Trade and Commerce

As with the western region of Eastreach, Aachen is fairly well populated, with numerous farming towns and trading villages. A fairly extensive network of passable roads in the province allows even the smallest settlements access to large markets, so farms are generally large and prosperous in the Aachen heartlands. The people are generally friendly to wayfarers as long as such vagrants are presentable, polite, and not bristling with weaponry.

Loyalties and Diplomacy

Aachen is connected by high roads almost directly to the Overking's capital at Courghais, and remains loyal to the Kingdom of Foere. As such, the province is administered by a Lord-Governor on behalf of the Overking.

A vast number of the landsgrafs in Aachen resent the unequal bargain being given to them by the Royal Court, which is to pay high taxes in exchange for slight assistance. They hear of the power of the nobles in free Suilley, and look across the borders to see the riches of a predatory nobility in Eastreach Province; and they compare it to their own role as providers to a hungry, desperate, foreign empire. To most of them, the reason for the difference is obvious: It is the hand of Foere that keeps them weak. In short, lines are being drawn, but they are still faint. The pot simmers, but the heat remains low.

As a general rule for understanding the government of Aachen:

- If it is a high road, a bridge, or a court of law, a Regional Governor is in charge of it.
- If it is a city, the mayor reports to the Lord-Governor and to no one else (although the Regional Governor still runs the court system).
- If it is a town, it either reports to the Lord-Governor as a city (a "free town"), or is governed by a noble as part of the feudal system, although the courts remain under the supervision of the Regional Governor.
- If it is a piece of land, a wagon-trail, or a village, a noble of some rank is in charge.

The province has seven major partitions ruled by Regional Governors who are appointed by the royal court in Foere in the same manner as the Lord-Governor, each of whom administers the roads, courts, and some of the towns across a wide region. Within the regional governorships, but reporting directly to the Lord-Governor, are well-defined feudal landgraves, each ruled by a noble lord bearing the title of "landsgraf," who administers the countryside (but not the courts or roads) over an area roughly 50 miles across. Local barons, in fealty to the landsgrafs, govern at the lowest level of the hierarchy. Most barons have the double responsibility

of maintaining a court for the governor, while owing military and tithe duties to the landsgraf. These baronies can be of wildly varying sizes; many are little more than a small castle surrounded by a mile or so of dreary wilderness; others might encompass a small town and several miles of fertile farmland.

Wilderness and Adventure

The relative stability of Aachen as a province should not be understood to suggest that the countryside is nothing but a placid expanse of fields and cheerful peasants, although many such places exist, especially in the heartlands. Many forests spread through the region, harboring beasts dire and strange, and there are countless areas in Aachen that have either never been tamed or that have been allowed to return to the wild. In particular, the lower reaches and foothills of the Cretians and the Mons Terminus mountain ranges are home to bandits and monsters alike. Settlements in these remote areas cling grimly to their existence in the face of these threats, receiving only sporadic, halfhearted support from those who boast of the province's stability.

The wilder parts of Aachen are home to tigers, which can be a threat to herding communities. The tigers of Aachen are spotted rather than the striped varieties more commonly found in lands of the East, most likely a strain that has survived from the days when the land was covered with great forests.

Aixe

(ECKS, or ah-YEEKS-uh)

Population 8,600

The walled island-city of Aixe is known as the "Gateway to Foere." It is the best-known city of the Aachenland other than the capital, Vermis. Lots of trade passes through the city because it is a major intersection of stone-paved high roads.

Cross Cut Road

A poorly constructed high road connecting Aachen and Eastreach Provinces. Not all of it is stone, and as it cuts through forests, trees are uncomfortably close to the road. However, it is considerably better than rural roads and trails. There are also roadside inns scattered along its length, although these are not as frequent as on the old Hyperborean roads.

Dlante

(deLANT)

Population 5,329

A walled trading city on the Wain Road, known for beautifully embroidered textiles and strange customs regarding hats.

Elet

(EL-ət)

Population 1,540

An ordinary, small, roadside town at the base of a strategic mountain pass into the Yolbiac Vale. The Ghostwind Pass is only traversable during summer, and is choked with snow during the rest of the year.

Estuary Road

(Aachenland Portion)

The high road from Aixe to Eastgate, slowly decaying from lack of commerce. Travel is not entirely safe along this road, although it is certainly better than the wild expanses of the unguarded Trader's Way.

Great Bridge

This is an ancient Hyperborean bridge over the Great Amrin River, with fortresses on each bank.

One fortress is manned by the soldiery of Bard's Gate, the other by an Aachenlander garrison in service to the Overking of Foere (Gretspaan Citadel).

Gretspaan Citadel

The citadel is a border fortress and tax-collection site, also the seat of the Regional Governor of Gretspaan. Smuggling is extremely difficult at this border, not to suggest that one would ever do such an immoral thing, and especially not upriver or downriver where there are fewer guards.

Royal Vermis Road

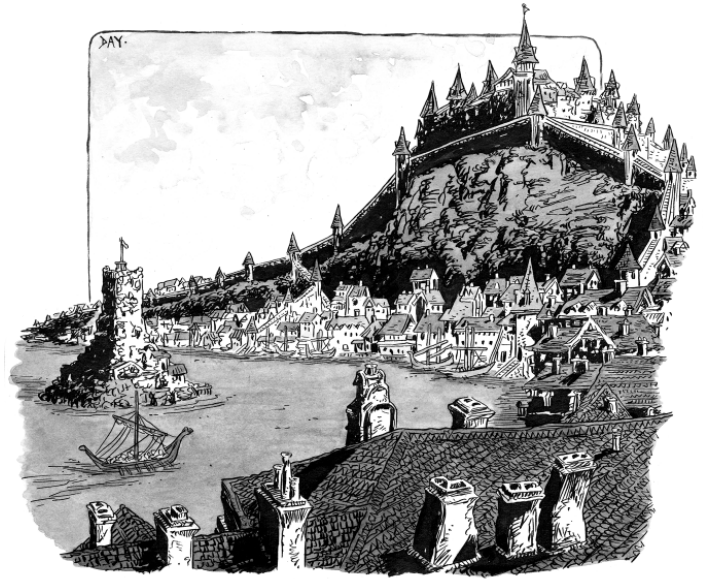
A safe and well-traveled high road, falling into disrepair and greater danger than in times past, when it was one of the safest roads in the Provinces.

Vermis

(VIRM-iss, sometimes WIRM-us)

Population 32,500

Vermis is the resplendent capital of Aachen Province, with a famed university. It is the major river-port on the Stoneheart River. Vast quantities of food and trade goods travel down to Vermis from the upriver farms and villages to feed the city's population, and trade goods find their way onto the city's riverboats, their great yellow sails proudly marked with the city's black dragon, boldly warning pirates not to incur the city's wrath.



Wain Road

(East-West Run)

A safe road, as roads go.

Amrin Estuary

Overview

The Amrin Estuary is dominated politically and commercially by the city of Bard's Gate, far upriver on the Great Amrin. With the exception of the Estuary's north bank, the area is prosperous and relatively safe. Eastgate is the dominant city of the area: the city patrols the main high roads, and the nobles are also organized into a League of Estuary Lords for mutual protection and benefit.

Capital: none (Bard's Gate controls both major cities)

Notable Settlements: Amrin Ferry (228), Eastgate (12,620), Telar Brindel (8,800)

Ruler: none

Government: semi-autonomy (suzerainty of Bard's Gate who controls the cities, the land is loosely governed by a League of Estuary Lords, all freeholders)

Resources: trade hub, fishing, foodstuffs, shipbuilding

Borders and Lands

The Estuary includes the city of Eastgate, the waters of the estuary itself, and also the lands ranging south from the shoreline to the region of the Trader's Way where the higher land of the coastline begins to drop into the vast watershed of the Gaelon River and its tributaries.

Trade and Commerce

All trade in the Amrin Estuary is dominated by the influence of Bard's Gate. The city of Eastgate is the avenue to the sea for Bard's Gate's extensive trade network, and the last leg of the Trader's Way runs along the south bank of the Estuary toward Telar Brindel and beyond that to Endhome.

Government

Other than in the cities of Eastgate and Telar Brindel, the countryside along the south bank of the Estuary has no centralized government. A number of feudal lords undertake the job of protecting their manors and freeholds, and serve as a barrier to keep southern brigands away from the Trader's Way.

Wilderness and Adventure

The south bank of the Amrin Estuary is ordinarily a peaceful area protected by the League of Estuary Lords and potential reinforcements from the garrisons at Eastgate and Telar Brindel. However, there always seem to be minor problems breaking out that go unresolved by one baron or another. Monsters or bandits occasionally attack villages; strange diseases break out when a traveler on the Trader's Way brings along a strange sickness from afar; and from time to time, there is a violent border dispute between some of the Estuary Lords themselves. Nevertheless, with the exception of the Duskmoon Hills, this is a pastoral and pleasant region.

Amrin Ferry

Population 228

Amrin Ferry is a small ferryboat community, serving the route to a dangerous, seldom-traveled high road. Hopefully one is traveling from north to south here, rather than in the less prudent direction of south to north.

Eastgate

Population 18,900 (3,700 in winter)

A large city dominating the mouth of the Great Amrin River, avenue to the high seas for the merchants of Bard's Gate. When the river surface freezes into massive, dangerous ice floes, the crowded city virtually empties out until the trade season begins again. Eastgate is, for all intents and purposes, a colony of the distant city of Bard's Gate. Eastgate is by no means an equal competitor with Endhome for the sea trade, but growth continues with the increasing power of Eastgate's patron city, Bard's Gate.

Estuary Road

(Eastgate Portion)

A safe road patrolled by Eastgate's cavalry. This safety ends abruptly at the border of Eastreach Province, however, so keep an eye out for the milestones along the way.

Telar Brindel

(TEL-are BRIN-del)

Population 8,800

Telar Brindel is the sea port of the Bard's Gate navy, with good shipyards for mercantile vessels. The admiral at Telar Brindel has the authority to issue letters of marque, an official permission to hunt pirates without being accused of piracy oneself. As with Eastgate, this city is an outpost of the city of Bard's Gate.

Eastreach Province

Overview

Eastreach Province loosely maintains its status as a province of the Kingdoms of Foere, giving fealty to the throne in Courghais (the capital of Foere). As such, Eastreach marks the northeasternmost extent of the Foerdewaith realms. The province is governed by a Lord-Governor sent from the Overking's Court. Eastreach has always suffered from fragmentation and decentralization in a complex feudal system, and the social order is now suffering very badly from corruption fueled by bribes from Bard's Gate. Internal travel is grinding almost to a halt due to "tolls" charged by petty barons, and as rural settlements become more isolated, the wilderness is beginning to creep back into civilized areas.



Capital: Carterscroft (17,721)

Notable Settlements: Eastwych (26,204), Drownboat Crossing (4,287)

Ruler: Lord-Governor Meridiac of Courghais

Government: feudalism (vassal of Foere)

Resources: grain, foodstuffs, trade hub, livestock, fishing, salt, shipbuilding, timber

The central and western lands of Eastreach are relatively populated and stable, with several farming and trading towns along the major roads. Southeast Eastreach is but lightly populated, and in the Forest of Hope and along the coast of the Sinnar Ocean there are virtually no settlements at all.

Trade and Commerce

Eastreach Province, although it remains loyal to the Kingdoms of Foere, is on extremely good terms with the mercantile and political emissaries of Bard's Gate. Along the eastern coast, the Coast Road and Lowwater Road are far worse maintained than the three great roads that intersect in Carterscroft. Patrols here are sporadic and unenergetic.

All of Eastreach Province's governance beneath the Lord-Governor is (theoretically, in any case) a feudal pyramid with the Overking of Foere at the top, dukes below the Overking, barons pledging fealty to the dukes, and knights, in turn, whose feudal obligations are due to the barons. Eastreach is a patchwork of fiefdoms and freeholds, with only marginal interference by the greater nobles in the affairs of their vassals. As one might expect, the application of the laws varies wildly from one barony to another.

Corruption and internal division are slowly eroding Eastreach Province, although the process is too gradual to be obvious. Land is beginning to go fallow in some places, forests are no longer patrolled, and the risky business of smuggling is becoming more common than ordinary trade. To foreigners, the creeping rot in Eastreach is fairly apparent, but the solution is much less clear.

Wilderness and Adventure

Eastreach Province is no longer as productive as it once was under the rule of Foere, and wilderness is beginning to encroach even upon areas once deemed completely safe. The eastern half of Eastreach Province is never particularly safe to begin with, and small communities in the east are actually finding themselves isolated from trade and protection, left to fend for themselves. This is particularly true in the belt of land between the Great Amrin River and the Forest of Hope. In addition to the obvious adventurers' destination of Rappan Athuk, the whole of eastern Eastreach offers plenty of scope for wandering adventurers to fight monsters, rescue villages, and even for higher-level characters to take a village under their wing as a freehold. New castles are needed, for the old ones lie neglected and crumbling as beasts prowl their walls; bandits are rife, and predatory

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tax collectors often arrive with armed soldiers to take even more than the bandits would. It is an area that cries for heroes, and finds none to answer the call.

Canyon River

This river is a rapid flow of dangerous, rocky waters leading through dangerous, forested places to a dangerous road and the Dungeon of Graves itself, the fabled Rappan Athuk, a supremely dangerous place.

Carterscroft

Population 17,721

Capital of Eastreach Province, a seething hive of corrupt officialdom. Located where the three main high-roads to the south and west converge, Carterscroft is also the southern end of the Tantivy Road, which links the east and west portions of the province. The Tantivy Road runs northeast from Carterscroft, crosses the Amrin at Drownboat Crossing, and eventually reaches the northern coast near Eastwych. The city is thus the center of all land-based trade in the entire province.

Coast Road, The

The Coast Road is seldom used, and is infested with bandits and monstrous unpleasanties. It is known as a route to the dungeons of Rappan Athuk.

Drownboat Crossing

Population 4,287

A town that has been ferrying peasants from eastern to western Eastreach and back, for as long as anyone can remember. Anyone crossing Eastreach Province by land will most likely make the crossing of the Great Amrin at this town.

Eastwych

(EAST-wich)

Population 26,204

Eastwych is the naval headquarters of the Kingdom of Foere. The size of the city is largely due to the presence of the massive fleet and its supporting forces. Eastwych's attention is focused much more upon the Kingdom of Oceanus than on the coasts of the Sinnar Ocean.

Estuary Road

The southern border of Eastreach Province, patrolled by Bard's Gate cavalry stationed in the city of Eastgate.

Forest of Hope

A dark forest with an utterly inappropriate name.

Glimmrill Run

(GLIM-rill)

This is the border of the Unclaimed Lands, and is essentially a frontier river. Pirates are to be found in great numbers on the waters and along the banks of the Glimmrill Run.

Great Amrin River (and tributary, Stoneheart River)

The river of rivers, celebrated in song and beloved by merchants. It is broad and in some places has treacherous currents, but it is the main avenue of trade between Bard's Gate and its colony port of Eastgate. Those traveling to Bard's Gate, especially those who become seasick or dislike long roads, can make the journey almost all the way to their destination by booking passage on an upriver-bound keelboat from Eastgate. There are very few landings along the river before reaching the Great Bridge, so Eastgate is definitely the best place to embark on the journey. Piracy has been on the increase, but the practice is discouraged by well-armed

river patrols and even privateers funded by Bard's Gate and Eastgate. Privateering is a worthy profession, and supports the common good.

Lowwater Road

Tedious, dangerous, uncomfortably wet, and leads to even worse places. Travel here is inexplicable.

Mausoleum

One rumored entrance to Rappan Athuk (RAP-an AH-thuk, or ruh-PAN ah-THOOK), adventurers have died here in droves, leaving their magical weapons and other useful items free for the taking.

Old Pirate Fortress

An old pirate fortress that changes hands often, and seldom for the better.

Ruined Fort

A ruined fort on the Coast Road, a good place to start a freehold for adventurers who are either foolhardy or very powerful.

Stormshield

An unoccupied manor with legal entailments.

The Tantivy Road

(TAN-tiv-ee)

Nice, bucolic scenery. Nothing but peasants, porridge, and "tax collectors" for 450 miles... also, manticores.

Wain Road

(North-South run)

A road that is no longer entirely safe, unless one travels with a Bard's Gate caravan. Barons are not permitted to set up their own "tax collection" sites on the high road, but the practice is not unknown.

Wild Edge River

Just don't go here.

Zelkor's Ferry

(ZELL-cores)

Population 20 or so.

A small ferry across the Canyon River, with a landing for riverboats, this little settlement is a common base camp for those foolish enough to explore the Mouth of Doom entrance to Rappan Athuk.

Exeter Province

(ECKS-eh-ter)

Overview

Exeter is a loyal province of the Kingdom of Foere, ruled by a Lord-Governor appointed by the Overking. It is cut off from the rest of the Kingdoms, and for the last ten years has been governed on the principle of defending the borders at all costs, without preemptive attacks against raiders, and without regard for the decline of law and order in the interior of the province. The population of the rural areas is under constant threat from roaming brigands and monsters of all kinds.



Capital: Albor Broce (14,830)

Notable Settlements: Cairn Condor (729), Jambles (2,721)

Ruler: Lord-Governor Benevic of Lortsbar

Government: feudalism (vassal of Foere)

THE LOST LANDS: BORDERLAND PROVINCES

Resources: foodstuffs, livestock, grain, trade hub, gems, tobacco

Exeter Province once extended all the way down to the Helwall, built 83 years before the Imperial Record began to chart the years, and in its early role as a military frontier, played a major role in battling the Hel-dring raiders at the dawn of the Hyperborean Empire. Ten years ago, Exeter Province was spared from the violence of the Wilderlands Clan War of 3506 that was fought almost exclusively in Keston Province and the Wilderland Hills of southern Suilley. Over the course of history, vast numbers of incursions into the regions between the March of Mountains and the Forlorn Mountains have pillaged their way through Exeter Province, skirting around castles and forts but ravaging the countryside unopposed by the province's much-weaker armies. Exeter Province has long held the uneasy position of serving as one of civilization's buffer zones.

As a result of this dismal and violent history, the province is not heavily settled.

Trade and Commerce

Exeter conducts and regulates overland trade with Hawkmoon to the east, which generates most of its revenue, and to some extent also trades with the Helcynngae Peninsula to the south (though this goes through Cerediun Province first, taking the most lucrative cut of tolls and taxes).

Wilderness and Adventure

The wilderness is creeping in like nightfall. Troops no longer make regular patrols, and rural garrisons have been bled of their soldiers to man the forts and castles along the edge of the Wilderland Hills to the north. The population of Exeter Province has never been large, and settlements tend to be isolated, unguarded, and ripe for the plucking.

At present, the Lord-Governor keeps his troops carefully deployed in camps and small forts to watch for further incursions from the north in case of a repeat of the Wilderlands Clan War, with most of the soldiery concentrated along the northern border or walled up in Albor Broce. Ten years of this defensive strategy have caused burgeoning problems with beasts and monsters in the rural countryside, and unchecked banditry is on the rise.

Albor Broce

(AL-bor BRO-chee)

Population 14,830

The highly — and perhaps excessively — defended capital of Exeter Province. This city is the headquarters of the secret police and of the Lord-Governor. Albor Broce is located at a major crossroad where two high roads converge, and benefits greatly from trade along these thoroughfares.

Cairn Condor

(cairn KON-dor)

Cairn Condor is the main border-stronghold of Exeter Province's eastern marches, a citadel built on the crest of a tall foothill at the base of the Forlorn Mountains. The fortress is manned by troops from the Lord-Governor's army, and is the base for all patrols along Exeter's 250-mile mountain frontier. The fortress hires mountain adventurers from time to time for missions in the mountains, since the soldiery of the province are barred from such risky expeditions.

Cut Horn Gap, Duchy of Duquesne

The Cut Horn Gap is not properly considered a part of Exeter Province, for it comprises the small Duchy of Duquesne, currently under the rule of Duchess Shalindra. The origin of this duchy is unknown, and its political allegiances are unclear.

Hawkmoon Road

A relatively safe road between Albor Broce and the realms beyond the Cut Horn Gap.

Provincial Military Road

Once a safe road, but no longer adequately patrolled.

Jambles

(JAM-bulls)

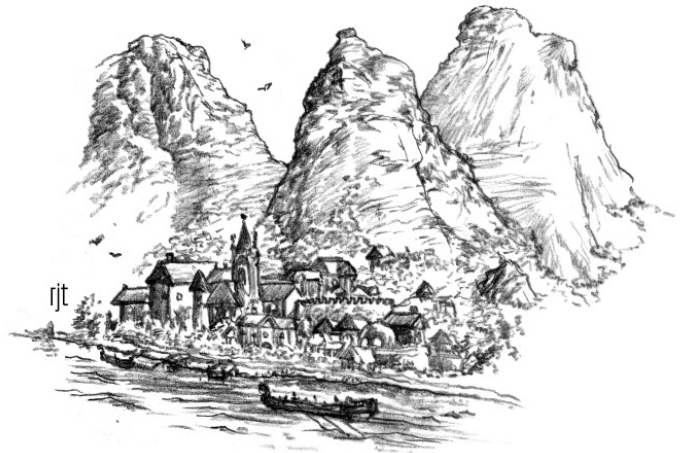
Population 2,721

A large, walled town on the Provincial Military Road west of Albor Broche.

Trader's Way

(Exeter Province)

The seemingly endless Trader's Way continues southward through Exeter Province, a well-guarded stretch. Beyond the borders of the province, the Trader's Way passes through many depopulated and dangerous regions of wilderness and barren lands.



Gaelon River Valley

(GAYE-lun, or GUY-lun)

Overview

The Gaelon River Valley is a large area including the river's tributaries as well as the valley of the main river. It is a free land unclaimed by foreigners, with no central government. Many of the river valleys are inhabited, but the area also contains a considerable quantity of completely untamed wilderness. The great trading city of Endhome sits at the river mouth where it empties into the Sinnar Ocean.

Capital: none (though Endhome exercises the greatest influence)

Notable Settlements: Deadfellows (1,240), Endhome (35,000), Gaelon River Bridge (3,251), Mirquinoc (7,647)

Ruler: local village leaders and extended families (the Endhome Senate holds great sway when it wishes to)

Government: varies

Resources: trade hub, fishing, foodstuffs, grain, pottery, timber, sugar, furs, dyes, gems, gold

The River Basin

The geographical region defined by the watershed of the Gaelon River does not have precise political or cultural borders. The Gaelon originates in the Cretian Peaks where a vast waterfall of accumulated runoff roars down from the mountain heights. The river cuts almost due east to empty into the sea at Endhome. The river basin is enormous: The northern edge begins its shallow downward slope no more than 50 miles south of the Estuary Road and only 20 miles south of the Trader's Way, and the river basin extends as far south and east as the King's Road. The edges of a river basin are not a natural boundary for the movement of armies or merchants,

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so adjoining lords and nations often claim or abandon, conquer, convert and fight over the lands at the periphery of the Gaelon River Valley. The farther one gets from the main river, the more lawless and dangerous the terrain becomes until reaching one of the patrolled roads that mark the approximate boundaries of the valley.

The Valley of the Gaelon is mostly made up of rolling, grassy hills, with the tributaries running through wide valleys between these higher altitudes. Some of these valleys are entirely forested over, and many of the hills are limestone formations dotted with caves.

History and People

As noted earlier, the Gaelon Valley's lack of natural borders means that it has occasionally been a highway for armies on the move, or the site of other people's battles. The outer reaches of the valley are in constant political flux, moving from the control of one outside power to another. The main river area has been remarkably free of intruders and invaders, partly because the independent nature of the valleyfolk in the hinterlands makes it difficult for an invading army to reach the main river without suffering accidents, sabotage, and small ambushes along the way.

Trade and Commerce

A considerable amount of river traffic goes up and down the Gaelon River, as produce and farm goods are sailed or rowed downriver to the markets of Endhome. Occasional rafts of furs come down from trappers and hunters at the very highest source of the river in the Cretian Mountains themselves, but for the most part, the river valley's main trade goods are agricultural: hides to make vellum and leather, wool and textiles, cattle, beer, wheat, vegetables, and wine from the few highlands that support vineyards.

Loyalties and Diplomacy

The lands close to the banks of the main river consider themselves allies of the city of Endhome, which is a close trading partner and maintains a few armed keelboats to keep river piracy to a minimum. Beyond the close affiliation with the "Trade Capital of the Continent," the people of the Gaelon Valley consider themselves free folk, beholden to none.

Government

Officers of Endhome administer the small city at the Gaelon River Bridge and the even smaller camp town that perpetually exists at the King's River Bridge. Other than these exceptions, the communities of the river valley are not part of a structured feudal system. Most of the small towns are independent, and several manor houses in the countryside are the independent fiefs of knights. Government tends to be associations of village elders, local knights, town counselors, and freehold lords.

Wilderness and Adventure

The Gaelon River Valley is rife with possibilities for adventure, from the relatively mundane guarding of caravans to the far more exotic exploration of ancient ruins in the forested and forgotten valleys of the smaller tributary rivers where clans of wood elves still live. Traveling up the Gaelon to the Cretian Mountains brings a group of adventurers into strange surroundings, for the Cretian Peaks are as ill-starred and dangerous here as they are on the other faces of the great mountain range. Trappers, gold panners, and outlaws inhabit the heights near the source of the river, keeping largely to themselves and harboring secrets.

Deadfellows

Population 1,240

The town of Deadfellows is located at the highest navigable point on the Gaelon River, a rough frontier settlement.

Duskmoon Hills

The Duskmoon Hills are a large range of tall, jagged hills to the north of Endhome, the last stretch of the Trader's Way. Endhome patrols the

Trader's Way through the hills, but the city has no particular interest in wasting time, gold, and people to tame these wild lands.

Endhome

Population 35,000

Trading capital of the continent, a major city. Endhome controls the heartland of the Gaelon River valley, but otherwise avoids political entanglements beyond the environs of the city. It exerts far less control over its trading regions than Bard's Gate, but its commerce is nevertheless on a larger scale than its more influential rival.

Gaelon River Bridge

Population 3,251

A large, busy town where the Trader's Way crosses the Gaelon River. It is essentially ruled by the City of Endhome.

King's Road

(Grollek's Grove to Endhome)

The King's Road from Grollek's Grove to Endhome is the eastern edge of the Borderland Provinces — to the east lie the Sundered Kingdoms.

Mirquinoc

(MER-quin-ock)

Population 7,647

A fey-infested free city on the north side of the King's Road; an odd and interesting place.

Trader's Way

(Gaelon River Valley, between Estuary Road Crossing and Grollek's Grove)

The old stone high-road passes through pleasant lands here, with a few scattered inns, towns, and villages bridging multiple small rivers along the way. This is the most pleasant leg of the long trading road, although it is certainly not free of all risks.

Keston Province

(KEST-un, occasionally GAST-un)

Overview

Keston Province is no longer a province of the Kingdoms of Foere, having declared fealty to the Crown of Suilley. It has always been sparsely populated, and is still reeling from the devastation of the Wilderlands Clan War. The province is well-governed, but even before the war only the areas around the main roads were particularly safe or civilized, and at this point the province's interior is no more than a sparsely settled wilderness.

Capital: Kingston (15,612)

Notable Settlements: Aljun (4,237), Caer Saliond (325), Notquite Inn (22)

Ruler: His Excellency the Lord-Governor of the Suilley Dominion of Keston Province, Baron Miltrin Cormien

Government: feudalism (vassal of Suilley)

Resources: wool, livestock (sheep), flax, foodstuffs (apples), grain, linen, quarry stone, coal, lead



History and People

Keston is very lightly populated, with most of its folk living in the towns and villages along the length of the South Road and the Gap Road. Few settlements remain along the Trader's Way, after the ravages of the Wilderlands Clan War of 3506. There has never been more than a scattering of hamlets and freeholds in the Province's interior or along the edge of the mountain ranges.

Trade and Commerce

The city of Kingston is well placed for trade, being at the crossroad of the Gap Road leading into the Kingdoms of Foere, the South Road which runs from Toullen to the Duchy of the Rampart, and controlling the Provincial Military Road leading to the Domain of Hawkmoon through Exeter Province. None of these routes is very heavily traveled, but together they make enough revenue to maintain the province well. If the province manages to rebuild the ravaged rural communities lost to the depredations of the Wilderland Clans, it will become a strong nation over time. At present, however, the province is still struggling with the loss of farmland, villages, and rural population from the war.

Loyalties and Diplomacy

Keston was once a province of Foere, but in 3336 I.R., along with the County of Toullen, Keston Province rescinded its feudal obligations to the Court of Courghais and offered fealty to the Crown of Suilley.

The King of Suilley appoints a Lord-Governor for the province, but the feudal ranks below the Lord-Governor are hereditary. These nobles offer their fealty to the King of Suilley, but report to the Lord-Governor as the King's representative. Hence, travelers in the province find the usual mix of barons and knights, all with greater or lesser landholdings.

Keston's current ruler is the retired general Baron Miltrin Cormien, who was elevated to the position of Lord-Governor by the young King of Suilley, Ulrich IX. Cormien is a disciplined administrator, staunchly loyal to the Crown of Suilley, related by blood to all four of the Dukes of Keston, and a figure of legend among the common folk after his defeat of the Wilderland Clans.

Wilderness and Adventure

Other than along the roads, there is very little in Keston Province that is *not* wilderness. In the eastern part of the province, many secrets lie buried in the charred remains of forgotten villages. Wolves — and far worse things than wolves — howl unchallenged beneath the night skies of empty, rural Keston. Farms lie fallow, and forests claw their way back into the long-forgotten grounds of their ancestral growth. A few hardy settlements remain in these newly crafted wilds, and some new villages are springing up almost like colonies in a foreign land. Many of these new hamlets disappear in time, but some persevere and prosper.

Aljun

(AL-jun)

Population 4,237

A large, walled town in the middle of Keston's deadly eastern wilderness region. It is the main center for the Province's attempts to re-settle the area after the devastation of the Wilderlands Clan War.

Caer Saliond

(KAYR SAL-ee-ond)

Caer Saliond is a military fortress under the Lord-Governor's administration, bearing the primary responsibility for preventing incursions of raiders out of the Meridian Mountains.

Creeping Mire, The

A vast swamp, replete with swamp-denzens...and it is said to be growing.

Gap Road

Bucolic and scenic, a road with pleasant inns and minimal casualties to be expected along the way.

Kingston

Population 15,612

Capital city of Keston, a high-walled city with a strangely lopsided appearance, for its foundations shifted slightly during the Fiend Rains.

As far as anyone can tell, the walls are still strong and stable, but entering the city with its crooked houses and uneven streets gives some travelers a distinct sense of vertigo. It contains, among other interesting locales, the Citadel of the Red Inquisitors.

Morninghaven Sanatorium

An isolated prison for the criminally insane, in the middle of an enormous, deadly swamp.

Notquite Inn, The

A fortified inn located in a triangular gap between the borders of neighboring realms. This is not a bad spot for those being persecuted — unjustly, no doubt — by sheriffs or other officious representatives of the law.

Swamp Road

The Swamp Road is desolate and obviously poorly maintained, especially during the spring rainy season when provincial repair crews are unwilling to brave the dangers of the Creeping Mire.

The March of Mountains

Overview

The March of Mountains is the name of a vast chain of mountain ranges, all part of the same geological formation as the Stonehearts. These ranges include the Kal'Iugus Mountains, the Meridian Range, the Ramparts, and the Cretian Mountains, in addition to the Mons Terminus range (although the Mons Terminus are generally considered to be the southern spur of the Stonehearts). The March of Mountains marked the eastern edge of the ancient Hyperborean Empire's heartland, and more recently has marked the eastern boundary of the true Kingdoms of Foere, as opposed to their subject provinces.

Cretian Mountains

(CREE-shin)

The Cretians are the northernmost range of the March of Mountains, and is also the largest. Many dark rumors and superstitious stories surround the Cretians, from tales of ghosts, to invisible giants that fly on the wind, to the legends of Lost Boy Mountain on its northern end. The Cretians completely encircle the heavily wooded Yolbiac Vale, an isolated and inbred country with strange attitudes and motivations.

The heights of the Cretians are virtually unknown to geographers, scholars, and cartographers, with the exception of the outermost few miles around the periphery of the vast mountain range. Few venture into the interior, and fewer return. Those few hardy souls that have returned from deeper expeditions report that the mountains contain a number of small vales inhabited by folk even stranger than the eccentric citizenry of the Yolbiac Vale. Demon worship, cannibalism, and oddly tangled family trees are mentioned in most such accounts of the mountain folk. What is also spoken of is the number of ancient sites to be found in the deep Cretians, evidence that at one time there was a fairly large population dwelling in the mist-shrouded peaks. What drove these people into decay and decadence is not known.

Kal'Iugus Mountains

(KAL-eye-YOU-gus)

The Kal'Iugus Mountains are the second largest of the ranges of the March of Mountains after the Cretians. The meaning of the odd name Kal'Iugus is lost to history, but it is thought to predate the arrival of the Hyperboreans.

The Kal'Iugus is home to several clans of mountain dwarves, hostile to lowlanders and possibly allied with the northern giants of the range. Other dwarves tend not to speak of them.

Meridian Range

The Meridians rise between Keston Province and the County of Vourdon. It is not a high range compared to the other ranges of the March, other than the great mountain known as Primus, grim and sharp-peaked, which towers over the lesser mountains below it.

Mons Terminus

The Mons Terminus mountain range is the southernmost point of the Stoneheart Mountains beyond the Stoneheart Valley. The old imperial capital of Curgantium was built at the very southern tip of the Mons Terminus range (just off the map) to symbolize the city's position as the core of the empire.

Rampart Mountains

These mountains have always served as a bulwark, defending the eastern flank of the Foerdewaith and the Hyperborean empires from the wilder lands of the Borderland Provinces.

South Road

The South Road runs north and south along the eastern rim of the March of Mountains.

Merchants generally prefer taking the South Road rather than Trader's Way for moving their cargoes north or south through the Borderland Provinces, for the Trader's Way passes through many areas of empty wilderness, and the South Road is at least lightly settled along its whole length.

Duchy of the Rampart

Overview

The Duchy of the Rampart is a palatine dukedom; the title is hereditary and the Duke reports to the Overking at the same level as one of the other rulers within the Kingdoms of Foere. It is a stable and well-guarded realm, with a strong sense of chivalry and feudal obligations. However, a certain decay is setting in, and strange things lurk in the shadows. The creeping advance of dark and dangerous matters is subtle and isolated here, but very much present. The people of the duchy know in the backs of their minds that the Rampart is declining, but they do not understand why, or how to counter the process.



Capital: Troye (44,600)

Notable Settlements: Metzel (2,876), Reliquary of Jamboor (2,274), Ristalt (6,781)

Ruler: His Most Noble Lordship, the Palatine Duke Claud VII, Battle-Duke of Foere and Sword of the Foerdewaith

Government: feudalism (palatine duchy of Foere)

Resources: coal, iron, gems, wool, quarry stone, cloth, timber, ironwork, gems

Borders and Lands

On the eastern side of the March of Mountains, the borders of the Duchy of the Rampart extend roughly 200–250 miles from Troye to the south, southeast, and west. To the west, the border extends roughly 600 miles to the west, including all of the lands between the Cretian Mountains and the Rampart Mountains.

The Duchy was once much larger than it is now, reaching eastward as far east as the Gundlock Hills, and south nearly reaching the Lorremach Highhills (though this latter was a mix of Suilleyn and Rampartine nobles and villages that had no real delineation until the secession of the Suilleyn king). Most of these lands were lost to the Kingdom of Suilleyn during the Suilleyn rebellion from the Kingdoms of Foere, and there is no credible expectation that they will ever be retaken.

History and People

The people of the Rampart are solidly and traditionally Foerdewaith, very loyal to the Overking in Courghais. Chivalry is still a strongly held value among the knightly class, although there are certainly many knights whose claim to chivalry is dubious at best, and scurrilous at worst. The Duchy has stood for centuries as the eastern defense of the Foerdewaith homelands, and is fiercely loyal to the Overking and the heartlands to the west.

An ancient order of knights is based in the Rampart: the Order of the Swan, whose device is a white swan on a black background, framed by a circle of plumes. Knights of the Swan are generally knights-errant rather than in service to a feudal lord. The Duchy is also the site of a major religious center, the Great Reliquary of Jamboor, located to the south of Troye in the foothills of the Rampart Mountains.

Trade and Commerce

The capital city of Troye benefits from an excellent strategic location for trade, although the city itself is not particularly mercantile. In general, the folk of the Rampart are not traders or merchants, but the Duchy makes efforts to foster trade and travel within its borders.

Government

The Duchy is not a wild patchwork of feudal divisions like the provinces to its east. It is segmented into a regular system of equally sized counties. The counts appoint sheriffs and other officials, and usually have at least four castled baronies in their lands, along with several knightly manors.

Wilderness and Adventure

The Duchy of the Rampart is well-settled, although pockets of wilderness are everywhere in between settlements. The southern verge of the Cretians is a wild and rugged place, much more sparsely inhabited, and correspondingly more dangerous for those who venture close to these strange peaks. Along the verges of the Rampart Mountains there are also fewer settlements, but this is an area where mining towns and settlements of hill dwarves can be found in the rugged foothills, and patrols are at least occasionally undertaken by actual troops, rather than a lone knight or a few volunteer yeomen with billhooks and crossbows.

However, a certain sense of ennui, decadence, and decay has been slowly creeping into the Duchy of the Rampart for many years. The tenets of chivalry are on the wane, roadside inns seem just a bit less well kept, and the pleasures of some of the nobility are a bit more jaded than in centuries past. Banquets sport increasingly elaborate dishes, carried to the table by poorly fed domestic servants. Heresy in the rise, and small and secret covens of demon-worshippers have been uncovered in the rural countryside, their cults festering beneath the mask of a cheerful peasantry. The occasional savage murder goes unsolved, leaving people to look over their shoulders when walking alone. The touch of evil and decay is subtle, but its gentle pressure can be felt.

Metzel

(METS-el)

Population 2,876

A mining and iron-smelting town at the base of the mountain pass into the Yolbiac Vale. Unless one is interested in the mining industry, the primary importance of the town is as a jumping-off point for travelers foolish enough to continue northward into the heights of the Cretians.

King's Road

(From Foere in the west, through Troye, to Grollek's Grove)

An ancient stone road marking the northern border of Suilleyn, claimed as free passage by the Duchy of the Rampart.

Rampart Road

A fairly safe high road through civilized regions, raised on a causeway that rises anywhere from three to twenty feet in height, depending on the surrounding terrain. A few inns and forts are to be found along the way on the rampart itself, and farms and villages can be seen from the road.

Reliquary of Jamboor

A major religious center of Jamboor, the Hyperborean God of Magic, Knowledge, and Death. The Great Reliquary is located in the foothills of the Rampart Mountains, close by the South Road. Those with gold in their pockets and questions in their minds might benefit greatly from the oracles and far-flung spy network centered here.

Ristalt

(riss-TAULT)

Population 6,781

A trading city in the western part of the Duchy, with a large dwarven population. Mining and timber settlements from the western foothills of the Rampart Mountains bring their trade-goods and their strange tales to Ristalt's merchants and taverns, respectively.

Troye

(TROY)

Population 44,600

Troye is the capital city of the Duchy of the Rampart, founded in the Hyperborean era. The city is a major destination city for caravans, whose merchants sell their cargos here to buy goods from faraway places for the return journey. Merchants planning on making the whole trek from the Kingdom of Foere into the provinces and back (most likely to Manas, but sometimes to Endhome) stop here to enjoy one last taste of city comforts before heading off into the wild.

Kingdom of Suilley

(SOO-lee)

Overview

Some three hundred years ago, the Kingdom of Suilley declared itself an independent kingdom and seceded from the Kingdoms of Foere. Since this time, other large regions of the Borderland Provinces have declared themselves vassals of the Suilleyn king, which has increased the kingdom's power by an order of magnitude but strained its resources to the utmost. It would be possible for Suilley to collapse under this pressure, in which case vast areas of the Borderland Provinces could be thrown into chaos.



Capital: Manas (28,420)

Notable Settlements: Aen Vani (3,281), Alembretia (13,240), Cluin (3,213), Pfefferain (4,712), Stronghold Hjerrin (3,672)

Ruler: His Most Regal Majesty King Ulrich IX of Suilley, Sovereign of Keston and Toullen, Protector-Regent of the Lorremach.

Government: monarchy

Resources: foodstuffs, livestock (horses), trade hub, grain, flax, spirits (ale), glass, manufactured goods, quarry stone, banking, copper, opium, gems

Borders and Lands

The northern border of Suilley is the King's Road until it comes within 150 miles of the city of Troye; these 150 miles are within the Duchy of the Rampart. The western border with the County of Vourdon is roughly 100 miles east of Olaric, and although parts of it are disputed, it is considered to run due north and south along this line. The southern border is a line that runs northwest from the very southernmost extent of the Lorremach Highhills, with the Flatlander Road approximately 50 miles inside the border, then turning southwest 200 miles south of Manas to join a triple border-point with Keston and Vourdon 150 or so miles south of the city of Olaric.

Trade and Commerce

Although Suilley endures a season of rain and mud each year, farms are productive and pillaging is infrequent, especially in the regions near the high roads (with the exception of the Trader's Way). The uninhabited parts of the country's rural interior, and some wild regions such as the Lorremach Highhills, cannot be described as safe, but are not unduly dangerous for those who travel in large, well-armed groups.

Government

Suilley is a monarchy ruled by a hereditary king or queen, deriving descent from Ghienvais I, the first king to bear the crown in rebellion against Foere. The realm has eight ducal houses, which makes the king relatively strong compared with many of his peer monarchs, since it is rare for the dukes to agree long enough with each other to unite against the king in any way.

Changing Times

The largest problem facing Suilley at this time is actually the result of its own past successes in war and diplomacy. It has inherited the realms of Keston and Toullen, with all their problems, which means the King of Suilley now possesses, largely by default, a wide-ranging and disorganized feudal empire. The resources simply do not exist to protect, subdue, rebuild, and organize all the things in Suilley's far-flung domains that need to be protected, subdued, rebuilt, and organized. Suilley is a growing empire that could falter and fail simply from a run of bad luck, or any significant catastrophe.

Aen Vani

(een VAH-nee)

Population 3,281

Deep in the Wilderland Hills, the Vanigothic town of Aen Vani falls into the territory of Suilley only upon maps drawn in the civilized realms. In reality, the Vanigoths have their own king and do not acknowledge any other rulership. Aen Vani is the seat of the Vanigoth King, currently a seasoned warrior by the title of Saldevic II, and one of the few surviving leaders of the Wilderlands Clan War.

Alembretia

(ah-lem-BREE-shah)

Population 13,240

Known for manufacturing exquisite glassware, Alembretia is a large city on the Flatlander Road some 10 miles from the base of the Lorremach Highhills, and perhaps 50 miles from the crossroad where the Flatlander Road meets the Trader's Way in the highlands.

Broch Tarna

(BROCK TARN-ah)

An ancient fortress in the Wilderland Hills, reputedly cursed.

Caer Silecia

(KAYR sil-AY-see-uh)

Population 621

The ancestral castle of the King of Suilley, northeast of Manas by way of the South County Road.

Cluin

(CLOO-in)

Population 3,213

A popular pilgrimage destination on the South County Road, with a past miracle and a hint of religious radicalism.

Flatlander Road

The main southern road from the city of Manas to the Trader's Way. The further one travels from Manas, the less safe the road becomes. This

is also the main artery for the opium trade from the Lorremach Highhills to the markets in Manas.

Lorremach Highhills

(LORE-eh-mock)

A dangerous region indeed. Also, the main source of poppies for Suilley's increasing opium trade.

Manas

(mah-NASS)

Population 28,420

Manas is the capital city of Suilley, housing the court of King Ulrich at Palaz Terondel within the city walls, along with various other institutions of the country's government. The city prospers from trade and from the stability of the surrounding region, being at the very heart of the King's authority and power. However, there is a violent undercurrent in the city, which has a very tough thieves guild and an ongoing battle between opium gangs trying to control the trade. During the Mud Season, the city stinks to high heaven, and many of the nobles depart for their country estates before mud makes the rural roads difficult to travel.

Pfefferain

(FEF-er-ain)

Population 4,712

"Crown of the Lorremach," this town is the production center for much of Suilley's opium trade.

Remballo

(rem-BAH-low)

Population 6,722

A small trading city dominated by the banking house of Borgandy.

South County Road

A stone-paved high road, well-traveled, peaceful, and pleasantly bucolic. The western part of the road, between Olaric and Manas, is perhaps a bit safer than the eastern run from Manas to the King's Road, which passes through several bands of wilderness.

Stronghold Hjerrin

(JAYR-in)

Population 3,672

An ancient fortress held by the Kingdom of Suilley. The stronghold is definitely something to see before one dies, for it spans the entire road with a vast "tunnel" beneath the fortress proper. Aficionados of siege warfare and castle architecture will not want to miss this sight, although trying to get there can admittedly be fatal.

Tower of Corredrix

(CORE-eh-drix)

The possibly-abandoned tower of a wizard, with a long history of past tenants.

Wennesalar (Ruins)

(win-ES-a-lar)

A destroyed village deep in the Lorremach.

Wilderland Hills

Wild and desolate: these hills are the realm of monsters and barbarian Vanigoths. They were the source of a vast incursion against Keston Province roughly ten years ago, an event called the Wilderland Clan War.

County of Toullen

(TOO-len, antique: too-lain)

Overview

Toullen is a feudal vassal of Suilley, essentially a palatine realm ruled by the Count, who has pledged his personal fealty to the Suilleyn king. It is a very rural country, still recovering from long-term damage caused by the Fiend Rains. The main attraction of Toullen for most people of the Borderland Provinces is the Tournament of Lilies and the highly competitive jousting competitions of the county. Most of the county's revenue comes from logging and mining operations on the western slopes of the Kal'Iugus Mountains.



Capital: Tertry (13,593)

Notable Settlements: Tuller (8,840), Durbenford (7,073)

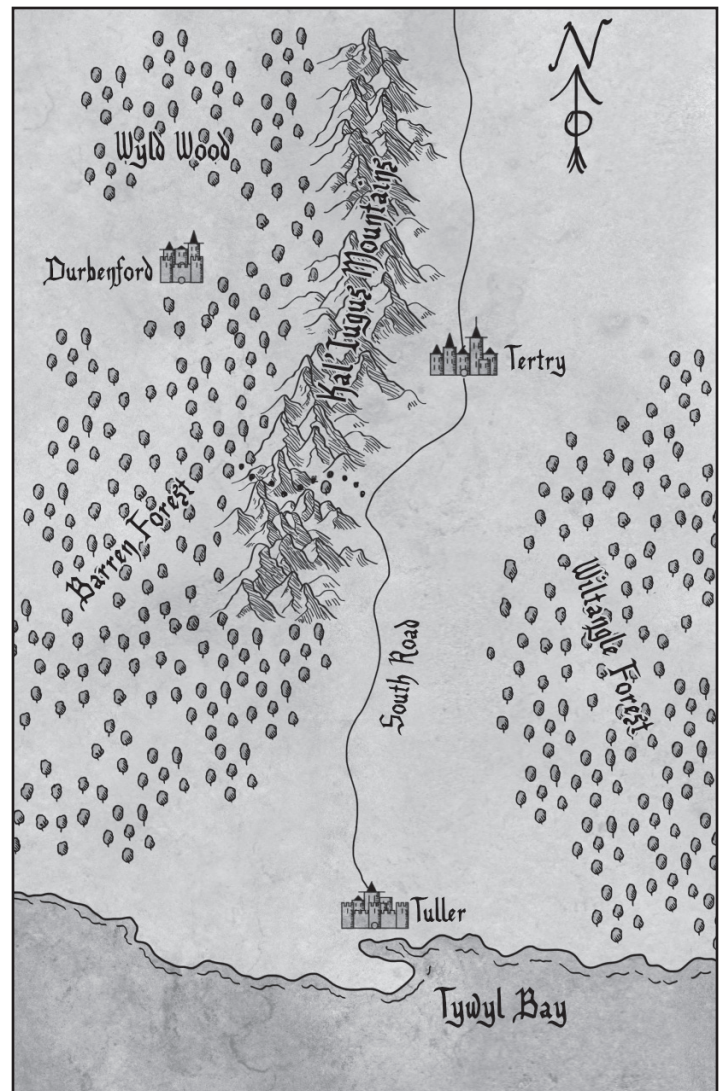
Ruler: The Honorable Luthien I, Count-Palatine of Toullen, Protector of the Southern Marches

Government: feudalism (palatine county of Suilley)

Resources: timber, flax, linen, foodstuffs, livestock (swine), copper, furs, gems, fishing, shipbuilding supplies, shipbuilding

Borders and Lands

Much of the County of Toullen extends to the south of the Sinar Coast Region Map, for the vassal state of Suilley reaches all the way to the



THE LOST LANDS: BORDERLAND PROVINCES

seaport of Tullen, the only port within Suilley's domains. The County is a narrow realm bordered to the west by the Kal'Iugus Mountains, although a small annex exists beyond the mountains in a forested area dominated by the city of Durbenford that is reached by means of a mountain pass. The County's eastern border is the Wiltangle Forest, and its southern border is Tywyl Bay. Its northern border with Keston Province is the crossroad of the Provincial Military Road and the South Road, 200 miles by road from the capital city of Tertry.

Trade and Commerce

Virtually all of Toullen's wealth comes from two sources: merchants on the South Road, and the extensive mining and logging efforts in the Kal'Iugus Mountains. Caravans on the South Road are fairly common as they make short legs of the route between the port at Tuller through Toullen and then beyond to Keston, Vourdon, the Duchy of the Rampart, and Manas.

Government

A hereditary Count, currently Luthien, first of his name to rule, governs Toullen. Below the level of Count, Toullen has a stratum of nobility called High Barons to whom ordinary barons pledge fealty, most knights in turn pledging fealty to one of the ordinary barons. Count Luthien is a strong and popular ruler, and the County is benefitting greatly from his reign.

Wilderness and Adventure

In general, Toullen appears to be quite well settled, with villages and hamlets throughout the County's narrow band of territory. Yet these settlements all have much-smaller populations than one would expect, for the Fiend Rains turned a great deal of the County's tillable land to marsh and fen, something from which Toullen's former vast fields of grain have never recovered. Depopulated as it is, the countryside has few broad expanses of primeval wilderness, which makes for fewer threats to civilization. On the other hand, the Kal'Iugus Mountains to the west, and the Wiltangle Forest to the east, are quite wild and dangerous, indeed. Adventurers seeking their fortunes in Toullen will most likely be seeking out treasure and fame in one of these two places and should be prepared for unpleasant surprises in the wilderness of Toullen's marches.

Barren Forest

The southern and western border of Toullen, south of the Sinnar Coast Region Map.

The Barren Forest is little explored and even less settled, though some logging towns do exist.

Durbenford

(DERB-in-furd)

Population 7,073

A rural city off the Sinnar Coast Region map to the west of the Kal'Iugus Mountains.

Durbenford is the most remote possession of the Kingdom of Suilley, which the folk of Durbenford refer to simply as "The Northern Kingdom."

Tertry

(TER-tree)

Population 13,593

The backwater capital of the County of Toullen, host to the most prestigious tournament in the Borderlands, the Tournament of Lilies, held on the great lists and fields beyond the city walls.

Toullen Pass

A heavily patrolled mountain pass connecting east and west Toullen.

The Toullen Pass lies 100 miles southwest of Tertry, and provides a fairly level, low-altitude crossing of the Kal'Iugus Mountains to reach the mines and quarries of its western flanks, and the timbering industry around Durbenford.

Tuller

(TULL-er)

The only seaport in Suilley's feudal empire, Tuller is barely under anyone's authority.

Wiltangle Forest

(WILL-tangle)

A primordial forest of legend, deadly and vast.

Wyld Wood

(WILD WOOD)

The tail-end of Toullen, infested with fey creatures and pernicious druidism.

The Unclaimed Lands

Overview

The Unclaimed Lands are the uncontrolled feudal lands north of the Great Amrin River and west of the Glimmriil Run until it reaches the Forest Kingdoms to the north. A few self-styled counts and barons rule in castles over a scattering of manor houses and small villages, and small groups of nomads wander here and there, but the region is mostly given over to wild forests, unexplored hills, and uncultivated meadowland. Several small tributaries flow from the Unclaimed Lands to the Great Amrin and the Glimmriil, some of which are deep enough to allow trade by raft or even keelboat.

Capital: none

Notable Settlements: Turpin (812)

Ruler: none (local freeholders and robber knights)

Government: none

Resources: grain, mercenaries, livestock (sheep), wool, plunder

With a few exceptions, the Unclaimed Lands remains a window upon the dark age following the Fall of the Hyperboreans.

Turpin

(TERP-en)

Population 812

One of the larger centers of river-piracy in the unclaimed lands, a fortified town.

County of Vourdon

(VORE-dun)

Overview

An independent vassal-state of the Foerdewaith overking, caught between the receding empire and the growing power of Suilley. The County of Vourdon is a vassal state of the Overking in Foere, with a great deal of independence from the distant rule of Courghais. It is a peaceful and productive land, enjoying good diplomatic and trade relations with its neighbors on either side of the March of Mountains.

Capital: Olaric (19,297)

Notable Settlements: Shullcross (3,100), Yllec (982)

Ruler: His Excellency Peilorth Rhombard I, Count-Palatine of Vourdon, Earl of the South Rampart Marches

Government: feudalism (palatine county of Foere)

Resources: spirits (wine, brandy), flax, grain, foodstuffs (grapes, apples, pears), linen, livestock (sheep, swine), wool



Borders

The County of Vourdon extends through the gap between the Meridian and Rampart ranges, from the verge of the Shadrack Forest (just west of Shullcross) to approximately 100 miles east of Olaric, 100 miles north of Olaric, and 150 miles south of Olaric.

Trade and Commerce

The County of Vourdon is an exclusively agricultural region, and initiates very little trade beyond its borders other than linen, bad wine, brandy, and small quantities of flax oil. A number of merchant caravans pass through Olaric on the way into and out of Foere along the South County Road, which is a safe and pleasant route. The length of the road from Olaric to Shullcross, while very hilly, is a pleasant journey, lined with fields of flax that turn into a sea of blue during the flowering season. Orchards cover the hillsides, and great terraces carved into the mountains are overburdened with the yellow grapes of Vourdon. Fortified stone chateaux may be seen in the distance, usually on hilltops from which the owner can look over the lands and farms of the fiefdom.

“Many sages, myself included, hold that the miserable quality of the Vourdon grape comes from magical residue. The grape is grown on mountain terraces carved out by earth elementals and other great magic during the floods, and it is possible that the earth contains strange, unnatural minerals as a result. Perhaps the magical residues will fade, and the quality of the grapes improve over time. One can only hope.”

—*Essay Upon Wine*, by Mondrat of High Ribbon, Court Sage of Vourdon in the City of Olaric, submitted to the University of Vermis in 3507.

The King of Suilley constantly attempts to woo the Count of Vourdon into switching allegiance from Foere to Suilley. Thus far, all diplomatic efforts in this regard have failed, albeit very cordially. Vourdon's status as an independent feudal realm under Foere's protection is a comfortable situation for the Counts of Vourdon, and they see no need to go through the turmoil of changing their fealty.

Of late, however, Foere has made some onerous demands upon the County, calling up a number of troops to join the Overking's army, and levying several new taxes. If the trend continues, too many demands from Foere might certainly cause the Count to rethink his current loyalties.

Wilderness and Adventure

Vourdon is safe enough that wandering the villages looking for adventure yields relatively poor results, although there are always small groups of bandits to chase, and the occasional predator from the adjoining mountain ranges. Most adventurers in the country are drawn to the mountain terraces carved by a united effort of wizards from the mountainsides to channel and re-direct the deluges of the Fiend Rains. Some few of these vast excavations revealed ancient catacombs that had been underground until the removal of countless tons of rock. There are not many of these, but a few expeditions into some have discovered that many of the passageways are of worked stone, their origins completely unknown. Moreover, they are home to a number of dangerous predators and contain ancient treasures.

Olaric

(oh-LAR-ic)

Population 19,297

Olaric, also often spelled Olaaric, is the capital of Vourdon and seat of Count Peilorth Rhombard. The city is quite provincial, but pleasant. As a flax-producer, the city also boasts the largest ball of twine in all of Foere, which is likely an accurate claim. It is displayed in the hall of the Ropemakers' Guild, for those who wish to see it; admission is free.

At the moment, there is a moratorium on arresting heretics in Olaric, for complex theological reasons.

Shullcross

(SHULL-cross)

Population 3,100

A medium-sized town at the western border of Vourdon, Shullcross stands where the South County Road turns southward and becomes the Saxon Road to the Duchy of Saxe.

Lawful large town

Yllec

(EE-lek)

Population 982

A small, walled, trading town about 50 miles inside the borders of Vourdon on the South Road, known for an almost evangelical loyalty to the ancient Hyperborean gods.

Yolbiac Vale

(YOLE-bee-ack)

Overview

The Yolbiac Vale is a dark and forested realm, barely populated, ruled by independent barons and a scattering of local nobles claiming higher status than baronial. It is a land of dark alpine forests, independent villages, isolated abbeys, bizarre superstitions, and strange perils. Its people are widely varied in attitudes and customs, for few of them ever leave the environs of their home villages. Such wanderers are highly suspect, and even though they bring back fascinating news and tales of other villages, they might be doppelgangers or shape-changed faeries.

Capital: none (though Coelum is usually considered the First City of the Vale)

Notable Settlements: Coelum (2,848), Roulune (507)

Ruler: none (13 “Ducal” families rule most of the area)

Government: decentralized feudalism

Resources: livestock (swine), timber, foodstuffs (dream-apples), spirits (wine), alchemical reagents

Borders and Lands

The Yolbiac Vale is a deep indentation in the middle of the Cretian Mountains that runs from Coelum to about a hundred miles south of the town of Elet. It has several wide river valleys extending to the west that curl into the deep heart of the mountains. The strange folk of the Yolbiac populate these remote areas. The territory comprises approximately an area of 22,000 square miles. The majority of the region is heavily forested, but not with a single, contiguous growth of trees. Instead, the region has many primordial forests that run five to ten miles across. Ridges of stone, or infertile ground, divide the forests, for this is high and broken terrain.

Trade and Commerce

The Yolbiac region produces many strange commodities such as a variety of dark-purple apples that induce strange dreams and a dark grape, almost black, from which they ferment a potent, bitter wine that stains the lips and teeth of those who indulge frequently. Fey items are often brought down from the Vale, and include twists of hair or painted sticks that have magical powers, or finely chased goblets of hypnotic beauty. Purchasers of such items are cautioned; occasionally, their original owners have imbued them with unanticipated consequences.

The Vale may be reached either through the Coelum Pass in the Duchy of the Rampart, or by the Ghostwind Pass near Elet in Aachen Province. During the summer months, there is a considerable amount of trade with the folk of the Yolbiac Vale, but when the winter snows set in, they are left to themselves. The Ghostwind Pass is completely inaccessible during the depths of winter, and the Coelum Pass is treacherous at best.



Wilderness and Adventure

There is essentially nothing *but* wilderness and adventure in the Yolbiac Vale. Many villages find themselves in times of crisis without the help of anyone, and monster lairs are virtually everywhere in the high crags and deep forests of the region. Off the top of one's head, one can list Ysoolte's Weir, the caves of Quarvel, the lair of Borovendal, the Tor of the Yellow Witch, and many others.

Coelum

(SEE-lum)

Population 2,848 (2,602 humans; 181 hills dwarves; 65 half-elves)

Coelum is not a political capital, but as the main town in the Yolbiac Vale, it is where most of the trade goods go to market, and where the local nobles go for their larger meetings. It is a major religious center for Narrah, goddess of the moon, but other than this it has no significance to the outside world.

Knights of the Swan

The Knights of the Swan have no exact location, for they are an order of itinerant knights who range through the Yolbiac Vale, usually alone or with a couple of armed retainers. Many of the knights are paladins, although the majority are just ordinary fighters dedicated to protecting civilization — such as it is — in the Vale.



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