

## Elen Daelarion

Aeifa (elven) Kingdom, ruled by Queen Miriel II, and her High Council of the 10 heads of the main Aeifa communities throughout the Queendom. She succeeded her grandmother, Miriel I, 247 years ago, and is a wise, cautious and peace-loving monarch – especially important when faced with the growing aggressive power of her northern neighbour, the Magamul Empire of bloodthirsty Minotaurs. It is for this reason she maintains a standing military force of Aeifan infantry, archers and mages, mainly at her northern borders. The country's navy, though effective against the non-seafaring Minotaurs, is nevertheless, fairly small by Artemisian standards. Border Towers are situated along the borders, with small garrisons, mainly to keep unwanted monsters, lycanthropes and Grim (orcs) away.

There are cordial relations with her two western neighbours, the Davarin Holds, with whom they do much trade, and through whom most trade with the western and southern realms passes.

There are three main settlements, the Capital of Ananrion (pop 23,000) and two smaller towns, Nimlenrion (pop 5,200) and Forenanwe (pop 4,800). Most other settlements are small (pop 150-500) with most Aeifa spending much of their time in the woods or hills, in small family groups. In addition, there are multiple self-sufficient inns along the roads, providing welcome sustenance and shelter to the trading caravans from the west, and also some sacred sites of worship – abbeys, monasteries and ritual stone and wooden circles. The main religion is a worship of the Great Mother, and Nature gods.

## Zil Brokungol

Davarin (dwarven) Kingdom, ruled by the autocratic, ancient, highly conservative and unsmiling Davarin King Thirven III, the Smiling (aged 182). It is an underground complex of mines, smithies, living quarters and palaces, with an above ground citadel and customs house collecting tolls from all travellers (one third of which is refunded to Elen Daelarion courtesy of a hard won trade agreement signed over 150 years ago, when the King had just ascended the throne. His father and ruling grandfather were killed in a three-way war between vicious Grim and opportunistic Aeifa (elves). The treaty was signed just after Thirven was crowned, and he still broods about it. The Kingdom has a very strategic site, placed at the very crossroads of the main arterial road between east and west.

## Ak Gatholbund

To the north of the great road west, is the underground Clanholds of Ak Gatholbund. Unlike Zil Brokungol, it is ruled by a Council of the heads of the seven clans that live there, with a Head-dwarf elected from their number. Generally, the Clanholds are progressive (for dwarves), and very artistic. Their citadel lies beside the deep waters of the Zilmere – with one arm stretching E-W (Zilwarmere) and the other N-S (Zildalmere). They are good traders, and very honourable; they loathe the Grim (orcs) and their fellow-travellers, and will attempt to kill them on site, even those from civilized areas.

## Other Sites of note

## The Mouth of Roriol

This is one of the great Wonders of the natural world. Beside a deep azure blue lake, stand 2 enormous trees, flanking the entrance to a huge cavern, said to be a long forgotten dwarven realm. From it issues a series of step waterfalls, from a river that flows underground. The whole site is surrounded by mountains, towered over the huge peak of Mt Nargaban in the west, from which flows the source of the lake.

## Karagrim Vale

A large hilly region, of a great wild natural beauty, surrounded by mountains, and inhabited by a smattering of elves and hardy humans. In the SE corner is a massive stone circle, at which the gods are honoured each Summer Solstice, and many from other, even distant regions, make their way to this religious festival, which is accompanied by fairs, music, plays and sporting competitions.

## The Paragaino River

One of the main waterways of Artemisia, it passes through the huge Legephele Forests. Along the way, are various hostel houses (usually self-sufficient Inns) and a narrow track between the Paragaino and Lothformar rivers, bordered by ancient stone obelisks erected by the first Aeifa (elves) to arrive on Artemisia – or so it is said. In the Autumn Equinox, when the forest is red-gold, the whole court traverses this path and give solemn thanks at another stone circle there.

## The Jadzik Pass

This very windy and hilly region is the main route between east and west Artemisia. A winding road leads up to the Citadels of Zil Brokungol, and then down to Elen Daelarion. Veering off the path often results in losing one's bearings, and falling prey to the natural geographic and animal hazards of the region. Few people live here, apart from one fortified Inn to give succour to all travellers.

## The Cairn Hills

These pleasant meadowed downs are dotted with the cairn and other stone memorials of past inhabitants – human, Davarin and Aeifa, usually of high birth. A stone circle here is used for solemn ceremonies every Winter Solstice, and whenever an important personage dies.

## The East Coast

The coast near the capital is dominated by the huge monolith of black rock arising alone from the sea – the *Mordeth Pyramid*, home to countless birdlife, as well as some giant avians – be they eagles, or even rocs. The sea is always rough around its base, and several shipwrecks have occurred here.

Further south lie the three treeless and windswept *Innaisfer Isles*, whose people farm sheep of the highest quality wool, in small fields fenced by drystone walls, the wool of which is made into the famous Innaisfer sweaters and tweed coats, each with a specific pattern from each spinner. The isle to the east of these, the *Werelion Isle* was home to a roving pack of lycanthrope giant cats, now extinct, and home to a hardy fishing folk who export much slated and preserved fish to the mainland.

Finally, there is the placid coastal lagoon of *Nimlenrion Water*, near the eponymous town. Bird and animal life is prolific, and the whole area is regarded as a nature reserve, and a favourite place for young Aeifa couples to holiday – even the Queen's offspring

come here, adding to its popularity as a holiday destination.