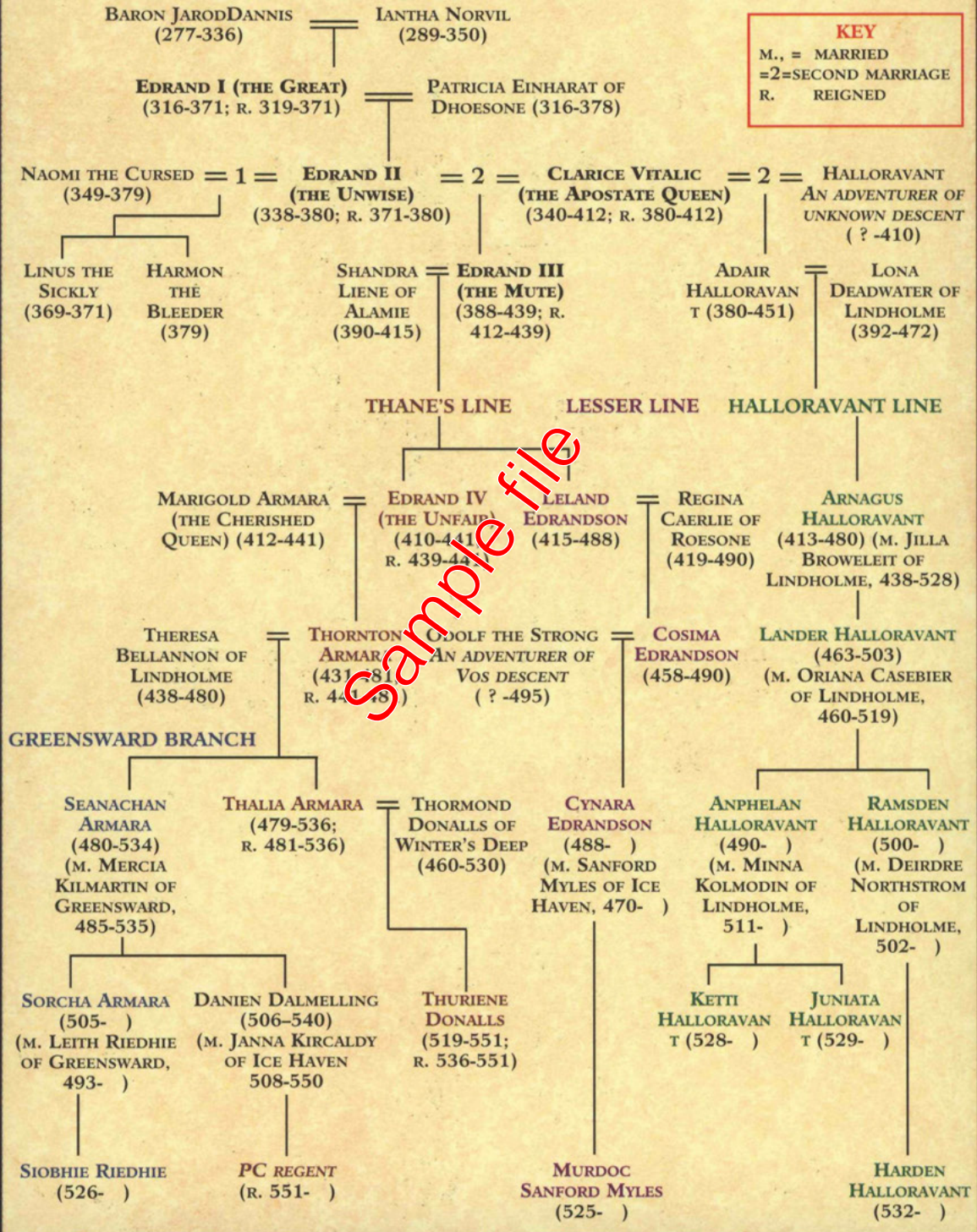


Descent of the Thanes of Talinie

Regents are shown in boldface. Dates are in Michaeline Reckoning.





talinie

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UNITED KINGDOM

As you assume the regency of Talinie, many challenges await. The realm faces conflicts with its neighbors, religious troubles, vanishing forests, and goblin raids. Court intrigue strains every alliance and undermines each royal edict. As ruler, you command the resources needed to solve Talinie's problems, but you must act quickly, decisively, and carefully. One wrong decision worsens the crisis, and two wrong moves mean certain disaster.

You may not even last long enough to make a second mistake. You have reason to believe that someone assassinated your predecessor after just one.

what you need to play

This domain sourcebook is an accessory for the BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign setting. You or your Dungeon Master need the BIRTHRIGHT boxed set to play, as well as the AD&D® *Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*.

how to use this sourcebook

This book details the people, provinces, customs, and landmarks of Talinie. Herein, you will find all the information you need to play the regent of Talinie. Players of nonregent characters who live in Talinie can also use this sourcebook to flesh out their homeland.

If you choose rulership, you may play Thane Thuriene Donalls (the regent listed in *Ruins of Empire*) or a character who inherits the domain upon the thane's death. Alter any details in this sourcebook that you dislike or that don't apply to your character's reign.

Once you've read this book, pass it along to your Dungeon Master. Explain what you want to keep or change about the kingdom, and point out the adventure ideas you wish to pursue. Remember, if there's something here that won't fit the campaign, your DM is free to reject it.

Talinie is meant for the regent who wants a challenge. Your character faces trouble the instant he takes the throne. Act with care. Successful rule of Talinie calls for a delicate balance of authority, diplomacy, and guile. Good fortune be upon you, O Regent!

A Supplication to the Most Holy and Honorable Noble Thane of Our Beloved Land of Talinie, Protector of the Realm, Defender of the Faith, Champion of the Oppressed, Advocate for the Righteous, Scourge of the Heathen, and Chosen Emissary of Haelyn the Celestial Warrior:

Your Highness! Upon your glorious accession to the Oak Seat, a thousand congratulations from your loyal adherent, Harrin, Fifth Viscount Stalban of the estate of Grimsay, Greensward. A thousand condolences on the sudden and tragic death of your honored predecessor, Thane Thuriene Donalls. We all join you

in wishing her a lengthy interval in

Haelyn's Twelve Lands of Rapture. I fervently hope that you will not condemn this letter's

arrival so soon after your coronation. Of course writing the first letter to a new monarch should be the privilege of the High Priest, the revered Hierarch Torias Griene. However, he appears delayed in returning from his sudden visit to the lowland temples. No doubt he has paused to mourn the riding accident that killed the thane, whom he served fervently day and night these 15 years.

I cannot hope to match the High Priest's vigor of service, but my love of this realm, my lifelong home, compels me to try. During the past decade some loyal followers among the nobility have observed the High Priest's admirable reluctance to bother Thane Donalls with trivia. Certainly if I had taken Hierarch Griene's place beside the thane on those moonlit walks in the Rose Palace gardens, I too would have felt reluctant to broach distracting matters of state. Yet some believe that the thane might have wished to learn of certain issues. To that end I

describe my view of the problems this realm faces, the dangers that beset any solutions, and the resources you command to face these dangers.

political issues

The view I now describe met with unfavorable response from your predecessor, but I stand firm in believing its truth: In the past 15 years, Talinie has been invaded twice—invisibly.

For generations, Talinie enjoyed easy peace with the neighboring kingdom of Boeruine. During your predecessor's reign, Aeric Boeruine's ambitions, and strength, grew without limit. We all remember the stormy day three years ago when the archduke, clad in full

plate, led his hordes to the Talinien border and said to the panicked guards, "I suggest an alliance against the threat of invasion." Of course the thane could do naught but accept this "suggestion," for fear of seeing the threat of invasion instantly become fact.

The late thane undoubtedly has earned millennia in the Sweet-Scented Lands for her deft handling of our unwanted treaty with Boeruine. For the rest of her reign, she skillfully deflected the archduke's demands for troops and support. (The good Hierarch Griene approved of the thane's policy, for he believes Aeric Boeruine lacks faith in our Northern Imperial Temple of Haelyn.) Still, with each day the archduke grew more insistent that Talinie send troops and aid to support his quest for the Iron Throne. Now you, Your Highness, must cope with a powerful ally—if that is the word—who will greet your ascension with instant impatience.

Despite the thane's shrewd diplomacy, she could not refuse the incursion of thousands of refugees from Boeruine—gentry and scholars whom the archduke made unwelcome. These folk found safe harbor in the lowlands region, but their foreign customs have produced friction between them and native Talinien residents.

Talinie has also seen a second, different invasion: The mining and timber interests in the Northern Marches have taken over the realm's two guilds. Our guildmasters—unctuous confidence men—are puppets of two ruthless foreign guildmasters, Banner Andien of Dhoesone and Storm Holtson of Stjordvik. These thieves have gained only minor success in their home realms, so they encroach on Talinie's land to

exploit it for

missive from a courtier

whatever they can plunder.

I fear the guildmasters must have

shown a face of false devotion to the High Priest Torias Griene and led him astray, for he encouraged the previous thane to indulge these men without limit. The good hierarch, himself (I am sure) of spotless character, practices benevolence toward all his flock, and people of low character have no doubt taken advantage of him.

I believe a possible third invasion threatens our beloved realm: a series of disastrous coastal raids. The northern jarldoms of Rjurik grow restless, their eyes turning toward the Anuirean domains that lie just across the Tael Firth. Many suspect that Rjuven druids preach of war against Talinie to protect its forests, a point that leads me to my next unpopular sentiment.

economic issues

The people of Talinie honor the preceding thane for the prosperity she brought to our fair land. All are living better than they were before she took up the torch of leadership.

That said, I urge you to note how the countryside has become less fair during her reign. We in the upland provinces lament the gaping quarry pits, the bleak eroded hillsides, the devastation that the guilds have wrought. Your subjects have benefitted from the plunder of the land, but what will our children inherit? The land is still healthy, for the moment, but if left unchecked these destructive practices will ruin the realm.

I must also mention the new incursions of brigands and raiders from Thurazor and the lawless goblin gorges of the Five Peaks. Our scarred, barren land gives no protection from these savages. We implore you to help.

religious issues

As Thane of Talinie, you see not only to the secular needs of your people, but also to their spiritual needs. The unification of church and state, under which the thane also leads our Northern Imperial Temple of Haelyn, makes the government an example of the balance all of us should strive to achieve in our own lives.

Your predecessor showed great commitment to the temple's ideals; her lieutenant and hierarch, the high priest, has spread its stern teachings with admirable zeal. In these times of change, though, may we not consider showing generosity of spirit toward those of different creeds? Orthodoxy has closely knit our society, yet surely

believers secure in their own faith can tolerate the varying beliefs of others, without resorting to violence or oppression. Temple hierarchs have enacted restrictions on nonbelievers that, some say, deserve reassessment. I would gladly speak to you in private of these sensitive matters.

resources

Left unchecked, any one of these problems could destroy the realm, but I think none of them insuperable. Talinie, for all the threats against her, still boasts substantial resources. Your predecessor cleared the forest with zeal but did not squander the income produced thereby, and so the state treasury remains adequate. Talinie's true wizard, Torele Anvivas, presents a magical force to be reckoned with. Though he calls nobody friend, I do not doubt his loyalty to the realm.

Your greatest resource in all crises remains unchanged: the people of Talinie. Torn as they are between uplands and lowlands, among temples and guilds, all still pledge loyalty to the Oak Seat you now occupy. Though the immigrant newcomers in the lowlands seem giddy and extravagant, they bring new ways and new ideas, cosmopolitan views, and intriguing new skills. The uplanders, born to this land for thirty generations, remain unlettered, provincial, and more than a little suspicious, but also hard-working, honest, provident, and sensible. They are the foundation rock upon which you can strengthen our beloved realm.

In this eventful time after your glorious coronation, you will receive many visitors. Certainly the high priest, upon his return, will counsel you as he counseled the late regent; you may trust his words as much as he trusts yours. No doubt I can add little to his wise advice, but if you feel that a new and candid perspective on matters of state may prove useful, please know that I am always at your service.

I remain Your Majesty's loyal and devoted servant,
Harrin Stalban

early history

The first residents of this land were, of course, elves. But the primordial elven culture called the Trautha ("stone builders") remains mysterious. Not even the Tuarhivel elves know much about these earlier elves. The Trautha fashioned swords of bronze and pots of clay, but they wielded powerful magic. Their stone circles, spaced arrow-straight on ley lines across the realm, remain Talinie's strongest sources of magical power—two thousand years after the Trautha were exterminated by the Andu, precursors of the Anuirean Empire. Even the reasons for this bloody war remain unclear. The Andu did not exterminate native peoples elsewhere, but the Trautha (whom the Andu called "mud folk") seem to have aroused their particular hatred. No one knows why.

After the cataclysm at Mount Deismaar, the land became part of the Anuirean Empire. Emperor Gladian Roele (who began his 10-year reign 83 years after Deismaar) christened the domain "Talinie" after his favorite concubine. The current capital, Nowelton, is built on the ruins of the principal Anuirean fortress, which was called "New Town." The Empire built six other outposts in the region; these became Talinie's provincial capitals.

It seems Anuire never found this outlying territory worth much trouble. The Imperial City settled Talinie with exiled minor nobles and other troublemakers, nonconformists who developed a free-thinking culture that to this day produces independent and hard-headed people. After the Empire's collapse, this independent and contrary nature led to three centuries of petty internal succession wars.

wasted centuries

Talinie fell into disunity for many generations. Small, contentious factions of priests and nobles warred with one another, using the commoners as their pawns. Priests advanced their various

beliefs; nobles allied with whatever faith looked most likely to improve their incomes.

The settlers' Anuirean background made Haelyn their god of choice, but they disagreed violently over the proper way to honor the warrior god. Competing splinters of the Temple of Haelyn proposed varying degrees of pomp, different temple hierarchies, and contradictory scriptures. History records a bloody battle between two temples, resulting in mutual destruction, over the number of candles to be lit on Haelyn's altar.

After too many generations, the Northern Imperial Temple finally gathered enough support from

history of talinie

Sample file

the nobility to become the established religion of the domain. The Northern Temple's plain, strenuous, serious faith attracted the nobles because it did not confuse them with pomp or foggy ritual. What is more, the Northern Temple preached a message of work—unending work in Haelyn's name without expectation of reward. This severe message pleased lieges who felt their vassals could show more industry and less inclination to grouch.

Although mired in internal dissension, Talinie's squabbling factions always managed to present a united front to would-be invaders. Since the fall of the Empire, Talinie has remained free of outside control—a point of pride among all Taliniens.

return to order

Over two centuries ago, the baron Jarod Dannis emerged from the chaos and seized power. A brilliant warrior and talented statesman, the baron founded modern Talinie and the current line of regents, though he himself never held the throne. To mollify his allies (who feared his ambition), Dannis refused the crown and instead put his three-year-old son, Edrand, on the throne.

Dannis made the proclamation of regency immediately after his stunning victory in the Battle of Ice Haven, 319 years after the death of Michael Roele (or 319 Michaeline Reckoning). Because the only stick of furniture left intact in the enemy castle happened to be a wooden chair, Dannis used it as a temporary throne. To this day the wooden throne of Talinie is

called the Oak Seat.

Dannis ruled in all but name for many years. After his father's death at an advanced age, Edrand the Great (and, obviously, the patient) ruled well for decades.

Edrand married Taricia Einharat, a scion who shared the bloodline of Anduiras. Their son, Edrand II, married Naomi the Cursed, an unblooded noblewoman, and had two sickly children. Naomi died in her second childbirth, and Edrand married the far more vigorous adventurer Clarice Vitalic (Brenna line), a swordswoman from Alamie. Clarice gave birth to Edrand III. Edrand II died soon after, and Clarice reigned as thane until her son grew old enough to assume regency. To take the Oak Seat, Clarice had to convert from her birth-faith (Western Imperial Temple of Haelyn) to the state religion; thus her historical name, "The Apostate Queen."

Clarice, wise as a ruler but impulsive in matters of the heart, remarried to a blooded companion from her adventuring days, the dashing rogue Halloravant (Anduiras line). The collateral line they began holds a secure but troublesome place in Talinie's history. The

Halloravant lineage includes many nobles who are duplicitous, given to stealth and conspiracy. These politically minded scions technically have no claim to the Oak Seat, yet some contest the issue. Over the generations, some have quietly held that the Halloravants have right of succession if Edrand's lineage should fail, though the Halloravants have made no open claim. Shielded from disrepute by their great influence and familial status, some Halloravants have allied with foreigners who mean no good for Talinie.

The realm's two leading guildmasters, Anphelan Halloravant and his cousin Murdoc Sanford Myles, are puppets of the thieving Banner Andien of Dhoesone and Storm Holtson of Stjordvik. The fact is widely recognized but not spoken, for the thane can do nothing overt to prevent this foreign alliance. The Halloravants occupy too lofty a social position to permit royal censure. So the foreign guilds lay waste to the realm, and divert the profits to Dhoesone and Stjordvik.

thiene donalls

Upon reaching his majority, Edrand III took the throne peacefully, and his line continued unbroken over the next two centuries to the present. The last regent but one, Thalia Armara, took official control of the Northern Imperial

