

Cities of Aridus, A Brief History

Anthatal: The Lost City

Spreading out to form an encircling crescent from the base of the mountain is an ancient forest, its trees tall and strong. The proud city sits nestled between the arms of a great mountain, sheltered from the storms that lash at the lands by the great forest and the snow peaked mountain. Alabaster spires lift a hundred spans into the air, tattered pennants still fluttering in the wind. Walls made of polished granite stand twenty spans tall and ten spans thick, great iron-bound oak gates stand skewed and ajar, leaves piled up in corners and swirling around and into the massive courtyard.

The great wall encloses a large city, large enough to house several hundred thousand elves. The streets and majestic avenues, once bustling with activity and the laughter of elf children, now moan in ethereal sorrow and grief as the wind blows down the vacant alleys. Parks stand empty, the trees overgrown and haunted by their memories of children climbing amidst their branches.

Anthatal, the still proud ancestral home of the elves is lost to them. In their primal and collective memory, the elves of Aridus know they have a true home and long to return. They constantly explore the unknown regions, searching for their lost homeland.

Valoryth: Elvenholm

Elven City. This is a temporary city, more of an over populated outpost that the elves have used since Anthatal vanished. The city is stone and wood, the stone worked into the streets and foundations and first level of the buildings with the wood for the upper levels. The wood appears ancient, the oils and finishes protecting the wood from the most brutal of weather making the wood look almost alive.

A grove of trees, grown side by side, work as a palisades for the city. Openings can barely be seen from the ground, but offer archers a wide field of fire from the walkway while remaining nearly invisible.

Inside the town there are only a couple inns, most elves having their own homes or living in the barracks, and several taverns.

Aloof and secretive they tend to stay away from the other races. The occasional human or half-elf may work with them as rangers and scouts at the fringes of the forests. They don't hate humans as much as it is bred into them that the humans cannot be trusted beyond a certain level. The elves have written and oral records of the humans' previous destructive wars and have tried to stay out of the affairs of the other races.

The current king, Caladen Elessedil, is beginning to believe otherwise, that the elves need to teach the other races about their history so they do not repeat it. Some of the ancient elves are resistant to this idea, while the younger generations, lead by E'lean and E'loric Elessedil, embrace the idea and have begun to actually teach humans and half-elves the ways of the elven ranger-scouts.

If you play an elf, you would more than likely have been born in Valoryth. There are schools and guilds for just about every class though most tend toward ranger/scout, warrior classes or spell casters. Regardless of which school/profession is chosen, training will be long and intense. The elves are the elite warriors and mages in Aridus. Predominant faiths are Tanethier and Alariel.

Notable Persons:

- **King Caladen Elessedil** - King of the Elven People and protector of the Forests of Aridus. Knight of Tanethier.
- **Queen Shara'fein Elessedil** - Queen of the Elven People and Priestess and Knight Protector of Alariel.
- **Captain Kael'est Tel'Mithrim** - Captain of the House guard responsible for watching and protecting the royal family.
- **Captain E'loric Elessedil** - Eldest son of Caladen and Shara'fein, commander of Valoryth's rangers and scouts.
- **1st Lieutenant E'lean Elessedil** - 2nd son of Caladen and Shara'fein serving by choice under his brother's command and

lead scout.

- **General Elyssia Ellandiel** - General of Valoryth's military and councillor to the King and Queen.
- **Councillor Al'kieston Val'istar** - Arch-mage of Valoryth and headmaster of Valoryth's school of magic.
- **Minister Valinor Val'estiar** - Bard and royal historian.

Inns and Shops:

- The Harlequin and Cup (Tavern)
- The King's Pub (Tavern)
- The Flying Wizard (Mage Shop)
- The Emerald Blade (Weapons Shop)
- The Lazy Sage (Inn)
- The Azure Shield (Armor Shop)
- The Wet Trickster (Tavern / Rogue shop?)
- Temples to both Tanethier and Alariel.

Kharbhuraz: Dwarf Home

An underground city of splendor and wonder. Population is all dwarven. The other races are rarely allowed to visit the ancestral city of the Dwarves. All trade and interaction is done through the dwarven trading posts above ground.

Notable Persons:

- King
- Stone Master
- Forge Master

Lockland: Human Kingdom

A large city built up around an ancient stone fortress next to a fast flowing and deep river. Home to the King and his Legion. The stone work obviously beyond human abilities, was a gift from the dwarves during the days of the second race wars. Surrounding the main fortress is a smooth, stone wall standing sixty feet tall and forty feet wide. Crenelations and archer's turrets run along the walls every fifty yards. The walls themselves offer archer's slits staggered across the facing. Flags and pennants bearing the King's black wolf's head on a field of white, top the pinnacled turret tops and the peaks of the Keep's towers.

Circling out from the Keep's walls is the inner city, the main road spiraling out with ramps connecting the lower levels. A second wall separated the Inner City from the Outer City, the outer wall stands forty feet tall and is twenty-five feet thick. The outer city is made up mostly of commoners, shops, warehouses, and the docks.

The outer city is encircled by the Lower wall, standing twenty feet high and ten feet thick with a moat and drawbridge giving access from the land side of the city. A wide, fortified bridge crosses the river.

City Watch patrols the Outer City with several small garrisons spread through out the city.

The Army, mainly the Royal Guard, patrols the upper half of Inner City closer to the Keep while the City Watch patrols the lower half of the Inner City

Population is mostly human with a scattering of dwarves, Halflings, and gnomes.

Notable Persons:

- **King**
- **Prince**
- **Master of Arms**

Inns and Shops

- Herbalist/Healer Shops, Inner and Outer City
- *The Minstrel and Chalice* (Tavern Inner City)
- The Comfortable Dragon (Inn, Inner City)
- *The Scoundrel and Mug* (Tavern Outer City, Black Market/Rogue Shop?)
- The Flying Wolf (Inn, Outer City)
- The Sage's Cellar (Magic Shop, Lower Inner City)
- The Silver Axe (Weapon/Armor Shop, Inner City)
- *The Jester's Pub* (Tavern, Outer City Docks)
- Blade and Maiden (Weapon/Armor shop, Outer City)

Other Places of Note:

- City Watch Garrisons (Outer City)
- Army Garrisons (Inner and Outer City)
- Temples to:
 - Gorum
 - Shelyn
 - ValistaraThe
 - Calistria

Below are the surrounding towns and hamlets associated with major human populations:

Wyeford

The second largest human settlement, claiming blood relation to the current king. The town is large with a mixed stone and lumber wall encircling the main keep with the city encircled by simple chevaux de frise, backed by an eight foot wooden wall, allowing archers to fire upon any enemies.

- Populated by majority of humans, though there are a few halflings and half-elves wandering about.
- Wyeford is a small city surrounding the main keep.

People of Interest:

Lord Wyeford: Micha Wyeford is the lord of this province and distant relation to the King. A solid man with intelligent eyes that carry the wisdom of age and experience. He appears to be in his mid to late fifties.

Joffery of Wyeford: the popinjay son of Lord Wyeford, and something of a disgrace to the family.

Points of Interest:

The Bouncing Blade: tavern and inn, catering to mostly soldiers

The Blossoming Goose: Inn catering to the "higher" class visitors and inhabitants of Wyford.

Gild-works: appears to be a weapon and armor merchant. everything in view seems to be ornamental and somewhat garish.

Wyeford Smyth: weapons and armor merchant. Items in view appear well-made and durable. If picked up the weapons have superb balance and weight. The armor is all custom crafted for the individual. Armor takes 3-4 weeks to be made.

Cresfalls

A medium farming community, more prosperous than the others due to the wine grapes and it's wine export from the several wineries.

One of the few towns that is even fortified with more than stake barriers.

- The town is populated by mostly humans with a scattering of halflings.
- There are 8 main buildings and a couple storage shacks
 - Blacksmith: (See NPC's L8 Expert)
 - Tavern: (Barkeep; PG 304 GM Guide)
 - A small, well kept Shrine (deity unknown) (Priest, Acolyte: GM Guide PG. 305-306)
 - General Store (Shopkeep; PG. 285 GM Guide)
 - Weapons/Armor Shop with smith.
 - Inn with stables.
 - Guard garrison (with cells)

- Town Hall
- Small, orderly homes and farms dot the lands surrounding the town, and larger grape, apple, and pear orchards further to the south.
- A fifteen foot tall palisades surrounds the town, archers patrolling the top.
- In the middle of the buildings is an open market including:
 - Produce stands
 - Wine vendors
 - Butchers with venison, chickens, pork
 - Clothing vendors
 - Charms and jewelry
- Several pairs of city watch patrol the town

Cheypool

A small outpost town with several farms surrounding it. The last bit of “civilization” before entering the northern mountains and forests.

- The town is populated by all humans
- There are only 4 main buildings and a couple storage shacks
 - Blacksmith: (See NPC's L8 Expert)
 - Tavern/Inn: (Barkeep; PG 304 GM Guide)
 - A ragged Shrine (deity unknown) (Priest, Acolyte: GM Guide PG. 305-306)
 - General Store (Shopkeep; PG. 285 GM Guide)
- Shanty style homes speckle the outskirts of the town along with farms with fields near harvest.
- There is no militia or town guards
- In the middle of the buildings is a crude fountain and what appears to be a trader's market.
- Market includes the following shops:
 - Farming tools
 - Horse tack
 - Mediocre weapons and armor
 - Food stuffs. (i.e. salted hams, vegetables, beans etc.)
 - Adventure gear: Backpacks, bedrolls, boots and clothing
 - Bowyer/Fletcher
- The bows, weapons, and armor all seem to be of a slightly inferior quality. The leather not quite cured well enough on the armor, the weapons have a poor balance to those experienced with such things. The arrows are notched and slightly curved.
- The farming tack looks better made than the armor and the farming tools are better balanced than the weapons. These people obviously aren't versed in the militant arts.
- The foodstuffs are the best items in the market. The hams appear perfectly cured, the venison jerked and dried but not overly salted. The vegetables are fresh and of a decent size.
- There is a shaman looking woman selling good-luck charms, fertility potions, and health trinkets, her eyes mismatched in color and wearing deer-skin jerkin and leggings. (Shaman, PG 308 GMG)
- There is a shanty style tannery outside of town, the smell drifting on the wind.

There are many other hamlets that have no name other than a descriptor based on what the townsfolk call it they are all basically the same outline:

- Tavern/Inn
- Blacksmith
- 5-6 outlying farms, mostly self-sufficient

Beymoor:

The halfling home town where all of Aridus' halflings were born, or so they claim. It's a small village nestled between the arms of two hills and protected by surrounding forests. The halflings are, for the most part, passive and welcoming to all visitors provided they keep the peace. Unwelcome visitors tend to find things becoming uncomfortable quickly and are run out of town. They have a shrine to Shelyn and Amsiel.

People of Note:

High Reeve: Master Simonsen - More or less the governor of Halfling country.

Shire Reeve: Master Thressal - There Sheriff, responsible for keeping the peace and dealing with “undesirables.”

Grain Reeve: Master Wheatfoot - Head farmer, in charge of the country's agriculture/

Coin Reeve: Master Pipper - money banks; in charge of the economy and currency.

Priestess of Shelyn

Priestess of Amsiel

Places of Note:

Office of the Reeves: Central governmental building housing the offices of the Reeves, the local jail house, and local police garrison.

Tea Time Tavern and Lodge: (pronounced Tia Timmey) the tavern caters to Halflings and large-folk alike. They even have rooms for the large-folk.

The Downs: Hills outside of Beymoor, rumored to be ancient burial grounds and haunted by long dead and most certainly evil creatures. Young Halflings on occasion dare one another to spend a night in the Downs, none in living memory has been able to do so.

Radbolg:

Orc Settlement. This is the only known orc settlement and is avoided by all the races, with the exception of the occasional elf raid.

Gorga:

Treydacht Council grounds. This is the only place known to the other races where the Treydacht will meet and not kill one another on site. Is it avoided by all the other races, to step on the sacred grounds is death for any race other than a Treydacht .

Agar:

Keep of the Magi. Currently home to the gnomes, though there are rumored to be a handful of Magi around Aridus. The keep houses the secrets of the Magi as well as the collective knowledge from the old world, though it is very likely sealed away and hidden and protected by spells and traps... or worse...

Ranger Camps:

Eshill - Made up of mostly human and half-elf rangers/scouts. Training ground for the human King's scouts and rangers.

Shymoor - Elven encampment, hidden and unable to be seen from the ground.

Galorith - Elven camp abandoned an eon ago after a terrible slaughter, none know where it truly lies, if it still stands at all.