

Gardiren is the principal settlement of Nephshire on the northern frontier of Kaldor. It lies on the eastern bank of the fast-moving River Shem, twenty leagues north of Tashal. Vast forests claimed by the Taelda barbarians extend north and east to the Sorkin Mountains. These rich forests and centuries of trade with Azadmere have been sources of great wealth for Clan Curo, a wealthy and ancient clan led by the proud Earls of Neph.

Caer Gardiren's excellent river port and its control of Medrik Bridge, the only crossing of the Shem north of Heru, ensure control of northern traffic using Noron's Way. Gardiren is also the western terminus of the Silver Way, the rugged trail leading to the mysterious and fabulously wealthy Kingdom of Azadmere.

## HISTORY

Gardiren and surrounding Nephshire are steeped in blood, silver, and gold. The castle was once the royal seat of Serelind, and Clan Curo fought alongside Calsten and Medrik during the Migration Wars and the founding of Kaldor. Clan Curo had already loyally served the royal Clan Tane at Gardiren for over five years when Calsten made Hemid Curo the constable of the keep in 160.

Gardiren originated at least four thousand years ago as a Khuzan kyg called *Irkhar*. Jarin began to settle around the kyg c.1200BT, welcomed by the Khuzdul miners and traders since the humans performed labors for which the dwarves had little liking. The two cultures maintained a prosperous peace for five centuries until the Atani Wars.

## The Atani Wars

As elsewhere on Hårn, the Atani Wars marked a great change in the history of the Shem Valley. The Lythian invaders were easily kept at bay until the dwarves retreated to the nearby Sorkin Mountains after the Battle of Sorrows in 683BT. A few human clans led by Clan Kophar went with the

**Location:** Northern Kaldor, K-4

**Government:** Earl of Neph

**Liege:** King of Kaldor

**Population:** 640

## TAXES

**Property:** 6% per year (residential)  
5% per year (business)

**Hawking:** 10% goods value

**Bonding:** 1% per month

**Wharfage:** 1d per foot, per day

## CREDITS

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## 1 CAER GARDIREN

The traditional holding of the Earls of Neph. The castle stands atop an ancient Khuzan kyg. The keep has five stories and the castle wall is 25 feet high. The current structure was built as a keep named Sere Tower in 130, then upgraded to a castle by Medrik in 170. Most of the original structure is obscured by centuries of additions and renovations.

[a] **Granaries.**

[b] **Weaponcrafter:** Saery of Debar.

[c] **Ostler:** a walled common holds the caer's stables, maintained by Pallin of Arbat.

## 2 MEDRIK BRIDGE

The first bridge was built in 278 by Medrik II. The current stone and wood bridge, completed in 606, is the fourth bridge on the site. The river is 8-10 feet deep and 400 feet wide here. Vertical clearance is 8 feet unless the Shem is flooding.

[a] **River Gate:** open only during daylight, tolls are collected by two guards from the castle garrison. Tolls are 1f per person or animal, 2f per cart, and 3f per wagon. Strangers are often charged more and harassed if they resist. The guards pocket the difference so this is a popular duty among the men.

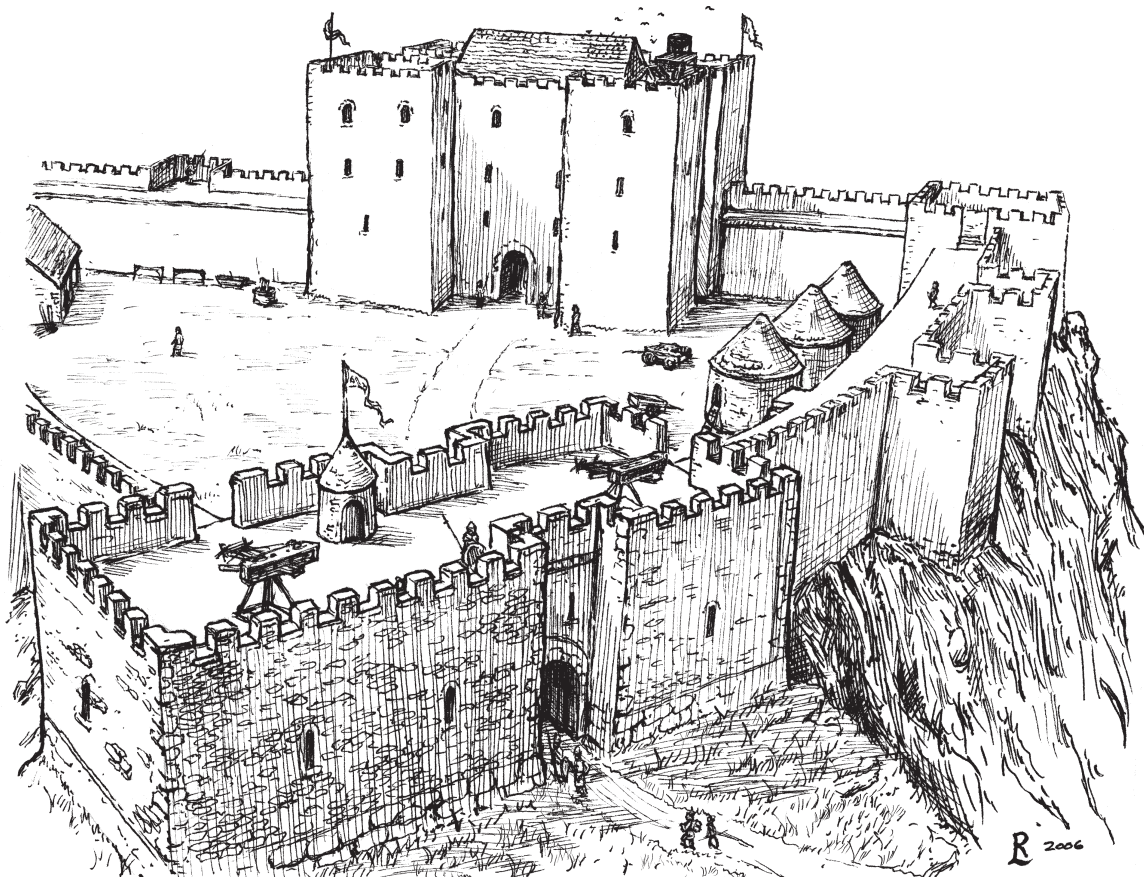
## 3 BIDOW BRIDGE

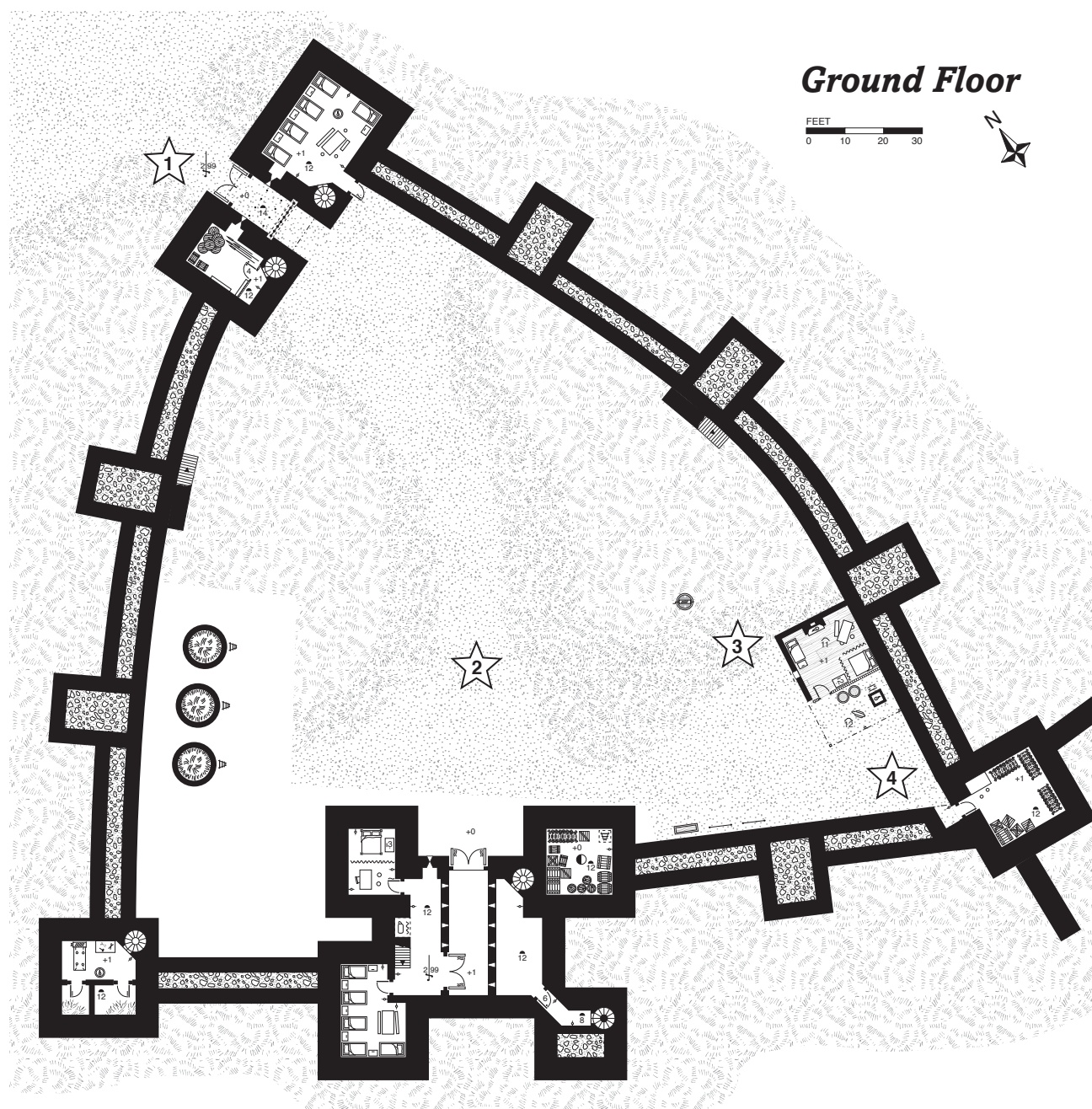
Constructed in 702 to replace an earlier bridge, maintenance of this wooden bridge is a duty of the Bailiff of Teverl. The Aril is 5 feet deep and 30 feet wide at the bridge. Vertical clearance is 5 feet unless the river is flooding.

[a] **Tollhouse:** Ebran of Morad collects a farthing (1f) toll from each person or animal crossing the bridge. River traffic is exempt. Ebran must pass on all coin to the Bailiff of Teverl, but is allowed to live in the tollhouse.

## 4 TEVERL MANOR

Teverl acts as the demesne to the castletown and is run by a bailiff. The manor is blessed with a scenic setting and beautiful views of the Aril and distant mountains. When the weather is fair, the earl hosts fabulous revels outdoors, centered on a large pavilion tent that is raised along the river bank to the southeast. The current bailiff is Sir Rabal Towson, age 65, a crippled great uncle of the Lord of Wybend. Sir Rabal is a competent bailiff who avoids intrigues. The manorhouse is constantly being improved with furnishings and plantings that befit its role as the earl's showplace. Teverl village lies three hundred yards off-map to the south.





## GROUND FLOOR

[1] **Gatehouse:** Caer Gardiren's gate house is large and imposing. The doors are covered with intricate iron scrollwork depicting the heraldic arms of Clan Curo. Murder holes, arrow slits, and a portcullis guard the entry. The gatehouse has two floors and quarters for two mani of light foot and an armoury. The gatehouse roof is patrolled day and night.

[2] **Courtyard:** This area is typically busy with servants, horses, soldiers, and the smithy. The inner west wall is covered with climbing roses that are carefully pruned. They look magnificent in summer.

[3] **Weaponcrafter:** Bonded master Saery of Debar apprenticed in Habe. He is adequately compensated and is loyal to the Curos.

[4] **Tower Room:** storage for dry foodstuffs.





## EARL HEMISEN CURO

Earl Hemisen Curo, Earl of Neph, age 50, is a corpulent and mercurial libertine. The "Lion of the North" sates his keen appetites by yielding to them. He acts without moral restraint from any religious doctrine, preferring his own counsel to that of long-dead prophets. He has a deep curiosity about human nature but is too unique to be a good judge of people. He relies heavily upon his steward to navigate the shoals of intrigue.

The earl strikes some as fast-acting, even erratic. They are puzzled by the meticulous control he exerts over issues of hospitality and dining. He considers every meal an act of judgment involving the senses and believes this is what elevates humankind above the grazing herds in the fields. A less friendly view he sometimes expresses is that "those incapable of enjoying life are not fit to keep it."

Born to wealth and power, Earl Hemisen nurtured extremes as a youth in Tashal. His political marriage in 687 to the sanctimonious and doctrinaire Lady Meliara Kynn, sister of one of the rising stars of the Laranian church, prompted him to refine his hedonism into a true philosophy.

Though Lady Meliara has dutifully provided eleven healthy children, for thirty-three years the loveless marriage has deteriorated. Conflict now defines them: virtue and vice, spirituality and materialism, austerity and decadence, order and chaos. A civil conversation between them is nigh impossible.

The earl claims descent from the Houses of Tane and Artane. He wishes to re-consecrate the neglected tomb of Calsten at the ruined Zanoth Abbey in Kanir Forest. Earl Hemisen takes pleasure in researching his clan's lineage and the genealogy of the other great clans of Kaldor. In particular, he is interested in those clans that have blood ties to the Tane and Artane monarchs. The earl donates generously to the *Enclave of the Holy Oak* to finance researches on his clan's genealogy.



**Shield:** Gold, a plume bendwise azure, between two roses gules.

**Crest:** A lion-rampant with two heads of the field.

**Motto:** *Virtue in service.*

**Registry:** Holy Oak, 640.

**Holdings:** Gardiren, Pendeth, Esenor, Setrew, Yeged.

## HârnMaster

### SIR HEMISEN CURO

#### Earl of Neph

11 STR	14 EYE	18 INT	13 END
13 STA	15 HRG	14 AUR	06 MOV
09 DEX	15 SML	14 WIL	
06 AGL	07 VOI	09 MOR	

#### APPEARANCE

Age 50, 5'11", heavy frame, unattractive, black hair, hazel eyes, medium complexion.

**Medical:** Gout, Obesity.

#### SKILLS

Initiative 93, Unarmed 60, Dagger 87, Broadsword 77, Kite Shield 75, Lance 72, Riding 64, Dodge 35.  
Intrigue 82, Rhetoric 79, Dancing 65, Lovecraft 60, Heraldry 52, Law 48, Physician 46, Survival 42, Foraging 36, Oratory 26.

**Languages:** *Hârnic* 90, *Jarinese* 55.

**Scripts:** *Lakise* 84, *Runic* 74.

**Ritual:** *Larani* 16, *Piety* 07;  
*Halea* 10, *Piety* 11.

**Sunsign:** *Ahnu*, 19 Nolos, 669.

#### ARMOUR

Plate helm, Mail hauberk & cowl, Quilt gambeson & hood, Cloth tunic & surcoat. All materials superior.