

HALLS OF THE ELVEN-KING™

#8204



FORTRASSES of Middle-earth™

Home of Legolas
and Thranduil

Playable with



Rolemaster™

FORTRESSES of Middle-earth™

HALLS OF THE ELVEN-KING™

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The palatial Halls of the Elven-king (Q. "Mardo Edhetaro") cut deep into a hill located in northeastern Mirkwood. Facing southward, the main doors into this wondrous delving look out onto a stone bridge that spans the cool, swiftly-flowing Forest River (S. "Taurduin"). This strategic crossing joins the great Woodland Realm ruled by King Thranduil to the north with the oppressive depths of the haunted woods to the south.

Besides guarding the bridge, the fortified subterranean palace serves as both the capital of the Wood-elves (S. "Tawarwaith") and as the gateway into northern Mirkwood. Here, only ten miles from the point where the Forest River surges out of the woodland and into the Long Marshes of Wilderland, the Elven-king greets the rare travellers who journey westward up the Taurduin valley. Few sojourn beyond the Halls, though, for Woodland Realm remains an enchanted land shrouded in mystery and threatened by the dark forces spawned by the Lord of the Rings.

1.1 THE FORTRESSES SERIES

The *Fortresses of Middle-earth* series is intended to provide Gamemasters (GMs) with extremely detailed overviews of individual towers, castles, citadels, and other fortifications of particular note. Each module in the line documents the history, design, layout, and garrison associated with the given site. A list of suggested adventure themes follows the text.

Before reading the material on this fortress, take a look at the two-page view located at the center of the booklet. It gives you a clear picture of what the text is all about. Then turn to Section 1.2.

Like the rest of the Middle-earth Series, this module contains game terminology and references based on ICE's *Middle-earth Role Playing (MERP)* and *Rolemaster (RM)* fantasy role playing (FRP) systems. If you need to adapt the material to another FRP game, read Section 1.3.

1.2 TERMINOLOGY

Because of space considerations, we cannot reasonably discuss all the peculiar terms found in this module. We can, however, provide a sampling of the most commonly used terminology.

Bailey — an enclosed courtyard.

Barbican — an outwork containing a castle gateway.

Bartizan — a small tower suspended from a wall or tower to provide flanking fire.

Battlement — the protected defensive position located atop a wall or tower.

Crenelation — a notched battlement (parapet) resembling "spaced teeth" with alternating openings (embrasures called crenels) and sections providing cover (merlons).

Curtain — a straight section of defensive wall.

Dike — an artificial embankment such as a man-made earthen wall; also an excavation.

Drawbridge — a bridge that can be raised and lowered.

Embrasure — a specially designed opening from which a defender fires missiles, such as a crenel or a space hollowed in a thick wall which provides access to a loop.

Hourd — an often temporary, overhanging timber galley projecting from the top of a wall.

Keep — also called a Donjon, it is the independent, self-defensible, inner stronghold of a castle or manor.

Loop — a narrow opening in a wall for the discharge of missiles.

Machicolation — a projecting gallery at the top of a wall or tower with slots (murder holes) in the floor from which missiles can be dropped or fired down against an enemy.

Moat — a defensive ditch.

Motte — a large defensive mound.

Parapet — a bank of earth or a wall over which a defender may fire.

Portcullis — a vertical, sliding grill with spiked tips that serves as a barrier gate.

Splay — a sloping base of a wall or tower, which frustrates ramming by deflecting strikes upwards.

Talus — a sloping wall, thicker (splayed) at its base.

Turret — a bartizan.

1.3 ADAPTING THIS MODULE

This module is adaptable to most major FRP games. Statistics are expressed on a closed or open-ended scale, using a 1-100 base and percentile dice (D100). No other dice are required.

1.31 HITS AND BONUSES

When converting percentile values to a 1-20 system, a simple rule is: for every +5 on a D100 scale you get a +1 on a one-twenty (D20) or three to eighteen (D18) scale.

The concussion hit numbers listed in this module only represent general pain and system shock. They cover bruises and small cuts rather than wounds. Critical strike attacks and damage are used to describe serious blows and wounds (respectively). Should you use a FRP system that employs no critical strike results (e.g., TSR Inc.'s *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*® game), simply double the number of hits the PCs take or halve the hit values found in this module.

1.32 CONVERSION CHART

If you play an FRP game other than *MERP* or *Rolemaster* and you do not use a percentile system, use the following chart to convert 1-100 numbers to figures suited to your game.

1-100 Stat.	Bonus on D100	Bonus on D20	3-18 Stat.	2-12 Stat.
102+	+35	+7	20+	17+
101	+30	+6	19	15-16
100	+25	+5	18	13-14
98-99	+20	+4	17	12
95-97	+15	+3	16	—
90-94	+10	+2	15	11
85-89	+5	+1	14	10
75-84	+5	+1	13	9
60-74	0	0	12	8
40-59	0	0	10-11	7
25-39	0	0	9	6
15-24	-5	-1	8	5
10-14	-5	-1	7	4
5-9	-10	-2	6	3
3-4	-15	-3	5	—
2	-20	-4	4	2
1	-25	-4	4	2



2.0 BACKGROUND

"Inside the passages were lit with red torch-light, and the elf-guards sang as they marched along the twisting, crossing, and echoing paths. These were not like those of the goblin-cities: they were smaller, less deep underground, and filled with cleaner air. In a great hall with pillars hewn out of living stone sat the Elvenking on a chair of carven wood."

— *Hob.*, p. 168.

THE ELVEN-KING'S REALM

King Oropher, the father of Thranduil, founded the Woodland Realm during the late Second Age. Before his death during the first assault against the Gates of Mordor at the end of Age, he established a Kingdom rooted in a union of Silvan Elves (Avari) and a small group of more powerful and prominent Sinda exiles who originally hailed from Lórien. These Forest-folk dominated virtually all of the beautiful wooded wilderness called Greenwood the Great.

Unfortunately, the Shadow fell over the forest beginning around T.A. 1050 and during the ensuing centuries the area became known as Mirkwood. The Wood-elves retreated northward, tightening their defense against the insidious onslaught of Orcs, Spiders, Wolves, and the other foul denizens unleashed by the evil Necromancer (Sauron). Although they lived in scattered flets (arboreal

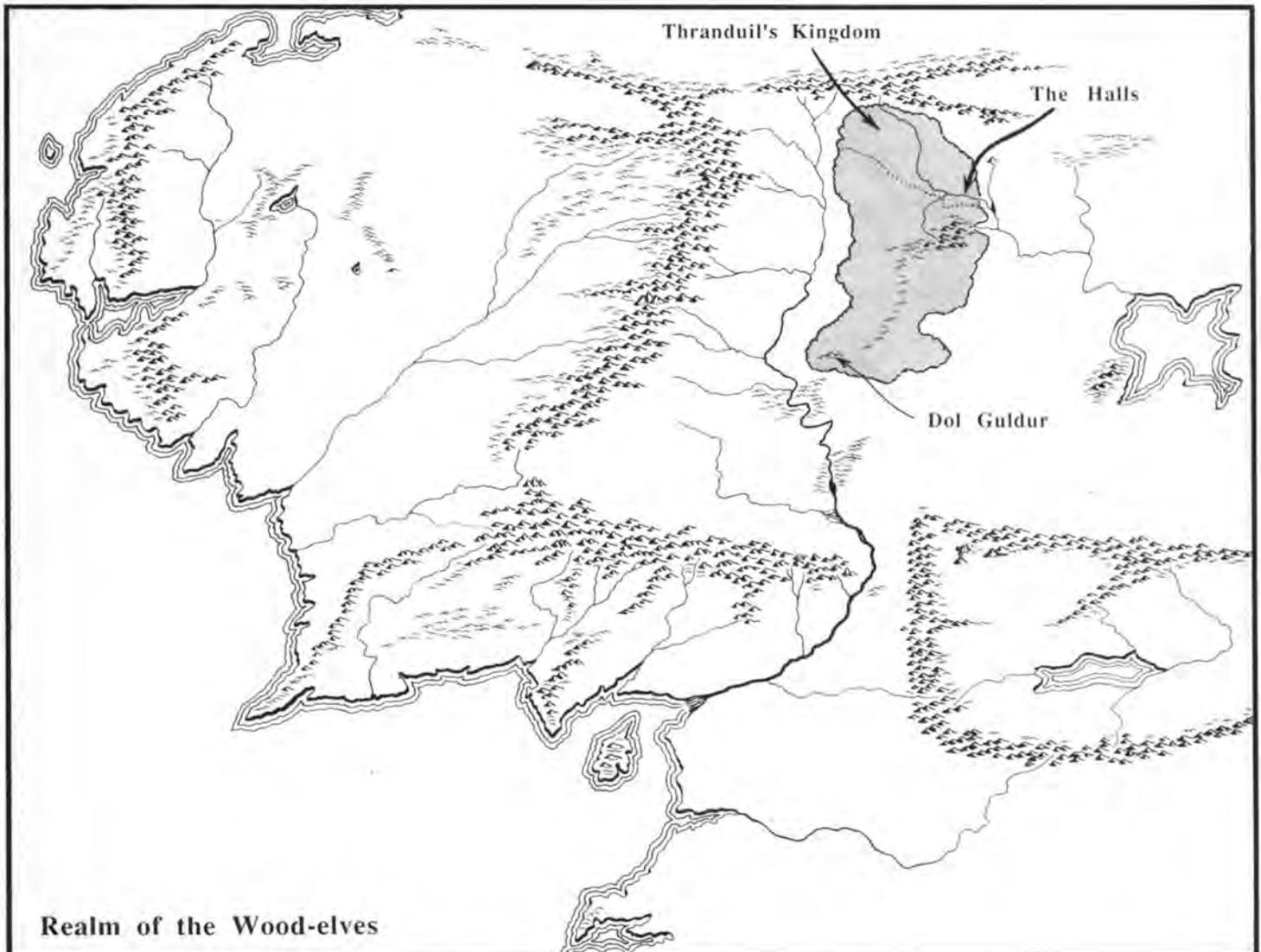
homes) and erected a chain of stout Tree-forts, the Forest-folk rallied around the palace built by King Thranduil in the hills above the Forest River.

THE HALLS OF THE ELVEN-KING

This palace has numerous Elven names — Mardo Thranduilo and Caras-e-Dawarwaith among others — but it is best known as Aradhrynd, the "Halls of the Elven-king." It serves many functions, for it is not only a home to the King of Woodland Realm but it is also a capital, a town, and a fortified refuge. Thranduil resides and works here, as do many of his vassals. The Halls are also a commercial and military center, a place where merchants gather to conduct business with the Men and Dwarves of Rhovanion and where the Elven armies muster for their campaigns against the minions of Mordor. It was here that the Ring-bearing Hobbit Bilbo Baggins encountered Thranduil's winestores, and here the Elf-host assembled before marching to the Battle of Five Armies.

Now we turn back to the Elder Days, where the tale begins that provides insight into the nature and origin of these magnificent chambers.

NOTE: *The material in this work is a compilation of both historical commentary and Elven narrative. In addition, we combined original Silvan art with more recent renderings.*



2.1 THE GREAT MARCH OF THE ELVES

Starry night covered the world in its youth, before the sculpting of the Moon and the Sun. Deep in the seas of history, the origins of Thranduil's realm lay like a pearl. Ten thousand years before he became king of the the Forest-folk, a great many Elves followed the call of Oromë and left the land of their awakening to dwell in Valinor. The Great March of the Elves continued for a thousand years in the First Age. The three Great Kindreds of Elves — the Vanyar, the Noldor and the Teleri — comprised the migrating host of the Eldar. The Marchers formed a living chain thousands of leagues in length, over hitherto unseen lands blessed with forests, rushing rivers and precipitous mountain ranges. The rugged beauty of the world in its starry youth enchanted the Teleri, led by the brothers Elwë and Olwë. They often lingered along the way, cherishing a vista. Occasionally, some of the Kindred broke off from the Great March to dwell in a starlit vale they came to love.

The March passed through a vast green wood and came to the Great-river, the Anduin, running along the towering range of the Misty Mountains. There the House of Olwë (of the Great Kindred of the Teleri) divided. Most followed Olwë and went on, crossing the river and the mountains. But several thousand wished to go no further west, instead choosing to follow the river south. Thus, they formed a new House with Lenwë as their leader and lord.



2.2 THE NANDOR

Lenwë's Elves, the Nandor, settled throughout the Vales of the Anduin south of Iauriach, the old river ford. For more than a thousand years, they remained content, living in harmony with the flora and fauna nearby.

The Kindred of the Teleri were especially gifted in song. The beauty and power of their singing recalled the Music of Ilúvatar and the Valar. The magic of Elven voices stirred the spirits of all living things, from trees and flowers to birds and beasts. Some beings gained the power of speech and song, skills which otherwise would have slumbered on. The descendants of these beings were thought to be kings and lords of their kind and were hailed as magical creatures by the folk of later ages.

Over the years, the Nandor developed their own ways and customs. Their lore was rooted in the earth and its waters, which they cherished most of all. The Nandor knew more about tending and nourishing growing things than has any race since. They explored the land around them, following streams and rivers to their source. While the Kindred was sundered several times by these wanderings, most Nandor remained in the woods around the wide lake called the Palaiion into which the torrents of Anduin ran before crashing down the Falls of Rauros.

Eventually, the period of serenity was interrupted. Morgoth's dark and evil creatures gathered at Angband. Scattered bands of Elves led by Denethor fled Eriador, crossing into Beleriand, where they sought the protection of its lord, Thingol, King of the Sindar. (Thus, the Nandor who remained behind largely escaped the cataclysm that shook Beleriand during the Goblin-wars. So too, they escaped the bloody War of Palisor, which raged after the awakening of Men, the second children of Ilúvatar.) As the First Age drew to a close, the land around the Nandor was vast and mostly free of other folk, but for the Dwarves of Moria and migrating clans of Men.

By the end of the First Age, the Nandor flourished. The Kindred had divided, some Nandor living southwest of the lake and others southeast. The growth of these divergent kindred was fueled by the arrival of Elven exiles from sunken Beleriand to the west. Many new arrivals were high Sindarin lords from Thingol's hidden realm of Doriath ("The Land of the Fences").

The first to cross the Blue Mountains were Celeborn and Galadriel, mightiest of the elves who left Beleriand just before the Fall. They were followed by Amdír and his House, who settled amongst the Silvan Elves southwest of Lake Palaiion in the land called Lorinand. Amdír was followed in turn by Oropher, who would be King of the Silvan Elves and Thranduil's father. The sorrow of his flight is told in some detail in this passage from this historical poem of Tawarwaith called "Kings of the Greenwood."

*From treachery, from flaming ruin
In Beleriand they fled,
Stopping not to weep nor mourn,
Nor count the Elven dead.
A living chain of Firstborn,
The Grey-kindred were led
Over vast Mountains of Blue.
Eriador's breadth they tread.
The Sinda prince, Lord Oropher,
Marched ever at their head.
Round Misty peaks, under silver moon,
To the Anduin they fled.
Of Kin sundered long ago,
They weaved a tale of woe,
Of darkened Doriath's doom
By Seven Sons brought low.*

2.3 OROPHER

To understand the nature and character of the Silvan Elves of Greenwood, we must recall the experiences of Oropher during the First Age. His decisions at that critical period affected his actions and judgments as King of Greenwood the Great during the Second Age.

To Oropher, the catastrophe in Beleriand was directly attributable to the Noldorin notion that Middle-earth was a land to be shaped and forged to their liking. He viewed the High-elves of the West as misusing their deeplore to scar and distort the world's natural beauty by building great cities and vast stone fortresses. Oropher judged their achievements disharmonious with the great music he heard in the unmolested earth. In pursuit of their goals, the Noldor also betrayed and attacked Oropher's kin. These misbehaviors confirmed his resolve to oppose and reject the Noldor and all their works.

The kinslaying at Aqualondë and the Sack of Menegroth ("The Thousand Caves") were unpardonable offenses. Oropher upheld and extended Thingol's ban, proscribing Noldorian values. Gil-galad's later claim to high kingship over all Elves added further insult; Oropher viewed Thingol as rightful lord and king and expected the leadership of the Elves to be passed on to one of Thingol's kin. Steadfastly refusing to acknowledge the Noldor's superiority, Oropher held higher his own claim and became king of the Forest-folk of Greenwood. His peaceful realm grew and prospered, keeping to the old ways. The adoption of Silvan names by Oropher and his Sindar more than symbolized the merging of folk; it was a statement of opposition to the Noldor and those like them.

The attitude of Oropher to the Dwarves of Moria was also rooted in his experiences in Doriath in the First Age. He realized that Durin's folk were of different Kin than the Naugrim of Nogrod who had slain Thingol and wrecked Menegroth, so at first he held them blameless. However, when Moria's Dwarves welcomed Naugrim refugees from Belegost and Nogrod, Oropher began to mistrust them. In addition, the growth of this greatest mansion of the Dwarves in Moria and its close association with the Noldor in Ereinion brought with it a dramatic increase in the traffic of people and goods passing through Greenwood. More trees were cut down to provide fuel, and the Dwarves broadened the Old Forest Road and built a bridge over the Anduin. These encroachments disturbed and disappointed Oropher. When he perceived the signs of an evil will to the south, he abandoned Amon Lanc, the "Naked Hill" in the south of Greenwood the Great, and in a series of surprising moves, established his realm north of the Naugrim in the pine-wooded valleys of the Dark Mountains.

By avoiding open conflict with The Lord of the Rings during the War of the Elves and Sauron (S.A. 1693-1701), Oropher husbanded his strength, echoing the policies Thingol employed during the First Age. When the War of the Last Alliance began in S.A. 3430, he acted wisely, perceiving that Thingol's policy of isolation, however understandable, had been a major factor in the collapse of Elven culture. Displaying great humility, Oropher set aside past differences and joined his forces with those of Gil-galad and Elendil the

Tall, High King of Amor and Gondor. However, the unity of the alliance was shaky at best.

Oropher refused to place himself or his forces under the command of Gil-galad. Several factors influenced his decision, not the least of which was the perceived arrogance of the Noldor in assuming leadership of the Elves. (Many would argue that Gil-galad's experience in fighting Sauron reasonably mandated his command.) Further, Oropher's contribution in terms of numbers was one-quarter of the host, over 40,000 warriors. While Oropher's Silvan Elves were superb warriors in the forest, their woodland weapons and lack of armor put them at a disadvantage on the open field or in the laying of siege. From Oropher's point of view, his Elves had already provided crucial aid to the cause by holding the bridge across the Anduin, thus allowing the Host of the Alliance to outflank Sauron. Greenwood also provided a safe eastern base and source of supply for the Alliance.

Little credit is given Oropher in the songs and tales recounting those days. The prevalent attitude of the late Second Age emphasized the glory and contributions of the Noldor and Númenóreans while ignoring the bravery of Sindar and Silvan fighters. The slights felt by the Silvan Elves had tragic consequences; in order to prove themselves bold warriors, they led rash assaults and suffered frightful casualties. Both Amdír of Lorinand and Oropher were slain beside more 25,000 of their warriors during the Battle of Dagorlad and the Siege of Mordor.



2.4 THRANDUIL AND THE THIRD AGE

Following the death of Oropher, his son Thranduil became king of the Forest-folk. Early in the Third Age, Thranduil attempted to rebuild the Forest Realm in the south, reaching toward Amon Lanc. But his folk were diminished in number and spread thinly throughout Greenwood. When Thranduil perceived that the shadow of Sauron still cast its pall across the land, he gathered his folk and withdrew northward. By this time, other free peoples had settled around the forest. While they were not the enemy, their treatment of the land conflicted with those of Greenwood's Elves, the Tawarwaith. The conflict is typified by the behavior of Northmen who settled east of Greenwood, on the plains of Rhovanion. They raised great horse herds on the plains but wintered in settlements at the edge of the forest, using its wood for building and fuel. As their numbers increased, so did their depredation of the woodlands. Men were responsible for the East Bight clearing, which could only be looked upon with horror by the Silvan folk, whose love of the forest precluded any such devastation. War between the Northmen and migrating Easterling Wainriders made the situation worse, with fire and sword and fleeing refugees disrupting further the serenity of the eastern edge of Greenwood.



2.5 THE RISE AND FALL OF DOL GULDUR

A more deliberate evil was established first in the south of the woods and later, to the north. By T.A. 1050, the tower of Dol Guldur stood upon Amon Lanc, and Sauron's evil creatures crept northwards through the woods. Having never fully recovered from their losses in the Second Age, Thranduil's folk drew upon Thingol's example to respond to the encroachment; Thranduil built a palace and stronghold in imitation of Thingol's Menegroth. In the northern corner of the gloomy forest, now becoming known as Mirkwood, Thranduil was forced to take a stand — or Silvan folk might have been forced to abandon their way of life altogether.

The traditions and glory of Doriath were handed down through songs and tales of Oropher and the Sindar who followed him. Thranduil made good use of this history, building a fair, if lesser, reconstruction of the Thousand Caves and Land of the Fence. The similarities between the two realms are striking. Both housed great halls built under large hills on the banks of a river. Both halls had limited access over the river by a single stone bridge. The borders east and west of the realms were protected by rivers, at least to some extent. And both realms were situated in a deep forest.

Thranduil lacked many of the advantages enjoyed by Thingol, not the least of which were the magical mists of Melian that made a maze of Doriath's borders. However, Thranduil and his folk were wise in the ways of the woods and the use of trees. Centuries of tree cultivation enabled them to create a maze of pathways that misled and confused all but the wiliest of intruders. The Silvan's vast forest lore gave them myriad eyes and ears that forewarned of approaching strangers, both friend and foe. Elf-friends found the way through the woods marked by runes carved in the bark of trees or noted subtle signs on certain stones.

Beyond the borders of Thranduil's realm there was only Eglaband, the Elf-path, which crossed Mirkwood east to west and passed through the South-march. There were no other sure and safe paths north of Eryn-ny-Fuin, the "Mountains under Night," and even a Forest-elf must rely upon memory of ways now dim and tangled by growth. In dire need, perhaps, a great and ancient tree could be roused from his deep and troubled slumber for aid and direction.

In building his stronghold, which served as palace and armory, Thranduil had to do without the aid of the Dwarves. His delving of the hill was therefore less extensive, clever and beautiful than that at Menegroth. Like most of the Firstborn, Thranduil's Elves possessed a keen sense of beauty and patience and made their home a fair place over many years, though it was but a pale twin of the splendors of Menegroth.

The absence of Dwarven assistance affected Thranduil in another way. He could never find and process the metal needed to provide armor and weaponry for his army. As Lord of all Beleriand, Thingol oversaw vast resources and possessed great knowledge; he offered both in exchange for the service of Dwarven stonewrights and metalsmiths. What little metal Thranduil obtained was used to make arrowheads, spear points, axe heads and knives; he had little to spare for helmets, great swords, shields or coats of mail.

Allowing for these differences, Thranduil followed the example of Thingol as best he could, organizing his realm and army along Sindarin lines. Most Forest-elves lived near the King's-hall. They made their homes in the branches of beech trees or in huts on the ground. However, Silvan Elves cut little live wood, except when in dire need. Their needs for beams, boards and firewood were filled by gleaning the tree fall of storms and artful pruning. Their huts were not the log houses of men, save in the bare lands of the Raft-elves. With endless years at their disposal and a patience unknown to men, they grew homes of living trees. Planting a sapling which grew up over the years to become beams, pillar and wall, they wove and plaited the branches to fashion upper floors and roofs over a central clearing. To those other than the Forest-folk, these homes looked like a thick stand of trees. Elves who desired solitude made homes high up in the branches of a single tree and were less noticeable to travelers on the ground than was a bird's nest.

As the shadows of Mirkwood grew during the Third Age, Thranduil followed the examples set by Thingol and Finrod in constructing the awesome underground fortress of Nargothrond, fortifying the marches of his realm. These fortifications were similar to the homes of the Elves, but were made of mighty oak. A ring of oak-forts and look-out posts guarded the borders and mazes of Elf-paths throughout the forest realm. Every beast in the woods acted as a sentry, warning of strangers long before they presented a danger.

Central to the system of defense and the realm as a whole was the Halls of the Elven-king. Thranduil's Hall was the capital of the realm, a palace, a town, and a citadel of final defense. The location of the hall reflected an understanding and a knowledge of Menegroth and Nargothrond. Fronted by a river that obstructed a direct approach, the palace stood securely behind a mighty front gate with access limited to a single stone bridge. Any enemy who crossed the bridge and breached the gate must then find its way through another maze of corridors and passageways to gain entry into the feasting halls, living quarters and storerooms set deeper into the hill.

While no rival in size for the Thousand Caves or the Halls of the Narog, Greenwood's Halls could hold several thousand Elves for a long time. Thranduil conceived it from the beginning as a fortress, thus avoiding some of the shortcomings of Menegroth and Nargothrond in this regard. An underground spring provided an adequate water supply. Finally, an escape route existed, and should all defense fail, the Silvan Elves could flee.

Thus Thranduil stood prepared for the dark days of the War of the Ring. He had removed to the northeast of the forest in T.A. 1050 and by 1100, had completed the delving of his stronghold and the fortifying of his borders. For the next two millennia, the dark evil from Dol Guldur encroached upon him; Orc raids, colonies of Great Spiders, other fell creatures and servants of Sauron challenged the Forest-elves. Brief respites came when Sauron was temporarily driven out of Dol Guldur in 2063 and again in 2941.

From T.A. 2951 on, raids on Thranduil's realm intensified. In T.A. 3018, the first formal assault on Thranduil was repulsed. Soon thereafter, on the Dawnless Day in T.A. 3019, a great army of Orcs and Wolves stormed Hardhrim, the South-march, with torch and scimitar. Thranduil's preparation served him well; his citadel was never tested, for the enemy was repelled along the southern border. Fire and war harmed the forest, as the Elves fought a running battle with their fleeing foes. All organized resistance by the forces of Sauron was formally ended on April 6, 3019, when Thranduil and Celeborn met in the midst of the forest. Thereafter, Thranduil extended the borders of his realm to encompass all the woods north of Emyrn Muil, the Dark Mountains. Once again, the forest had found beauty and peace.



2.6 LEGOLAS, GOLLUM AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Following the Battle of Five Armies in T.A. 2941, a brief and uneasy peace reigned in Mirkwood. Thranduil's son, the Elven-prince Legolas, stood with his father when in T.A. 3018, Aragorn II, a man liked by the Elves, brought to Mirkwood a strange prisoner: Gollum, the cursed Stoor. A tragic figure who accidentally discovered the Great Ring and soon fell under its sway, Gollum was at that time searching for "the Precious" at the behest of Sauron. Thranduil readily agreed to house and watch Gollum, but the sneaky fellow escaped that same year, and Legolas was sent to inform Elrond and the Council. Soon thereafter, Legolas joined the Fellowship of the Ring. Their victory over Sauron and Gollum's death were linked, lending the fallen and misshapen Hobbit an odd dignity.

In Legolas (S. "Green-leaf"), we find much to admire. A lover of trees, the Sindarin Elf-prince formed an extraordinary friendship with Gimli, a Dwarf. After the sundering of the Fellowship, Legolas traveled with Aragorn to find Merry and Pippin. He fought ably in both the Battle of the Hornburg and as one of the Grey Company, in March of T.A. 3019, at the Battle of Pelennor Fields, the greatest of all Middle-earth conflicts. In Gondor, he first saw the sea, a stirring sight for an Elf born and raised in gloomy Mirkwood's trees and caverns. The "sea longing" was then awakened in him. Early in the Fourth Age, following the death of Elessar and the beautification of ravaged Ithilien, Legolas sailed over the sea, taking along a most unlikely companion, Gimli the Dwarf.

3.0 THRANDUIL'S ARMY

Prior to the arrival of Oropher and the Sindar, the Tawarwaith had no formal military force. Their weaponry consisted of the bows, knives and javelins they used to hunt, and their armor was limited to soft leather garments.

After becoming their Lord and King, Oropher formed and trained the Silvan Elves into an army that followed the Sindar model conceived by Thingol. The Sindar model was more sophisticated and efficient than that of any other Elven armies, including those of the Noldor. Its superior structure largely compensated for the obvious advantages enjoyed by the Noldor, who owned extensive armor and rode horses. This structure was achieved by breaking the boundaries of the social structure of the clan, or House, which depended on kinship by blood or marriage. The basic military structure was called a Gwador, or "Brotherhood of Sworn Companions," as opposed to the Gwanur, or "Kindred."

Both Gwanur and Gwador were made up of warriors bearing the same classes of weapons. A Gwanur was limited to a maximum of 2500 warriors, while a Gwador had no upper limit. Serving in a Gwanur was a matter of Kinship; joining a Gwador was a matter of choice.

3.1 THE FOUR GWADOR

In Thranduil's army, there were four different Gwador. Each Gwador consisted of numerous companies, or Gweith. A Gweith, or single company, in the Pengwador, could range in size from 12 warriors to as many as a thousand. The other Brotherhoods tended to larger formations which could be broken down into smaller companies, if the need arose.

THE PENGWADOR

First was the Pengwador, or "Brotherhood of the Bow." The largest of the brotherhoods, it contained one-third or more of the entire army's warriors. Foremost, the bow was the Telerin weapon of choice from the earliest days in Cuiviénen. The bow was the weapon best-suited for silent ambush in the forest and also served as the best hunting weapon. Finally, the Pengwador was charged with the immediate defense of the entire border, or Hebrim, of the realm.

The Pengwador played the most active and continuous role in Thranduil's army. Archers of this Gwador were charged with the defense of the Marches of the realm. The Marches were split into Nivrim, or West March; Radrim, the East March; Fordhrim, the North March; and Hardhrim, the South March. Considering the perimeter of Thranduil's realm, the Border Watch, or Gwarrim, were stretched quite thin. Usually, no more than a Gweith of ten or twelve Elves stood watch per mile, with an occasional Tree-fort placed forward for support and refuge.

THE PELEGWADOR

Second was the Pelegwador, or "Brotherhood of the Axe," the weapon of choice of the Sindar of Beleriand. The next largest Brotherhood until the War of the Last Alliance, the Pelegwador suffered horrifying losses in the Dagorlad and storming of the Morannon.

THE EGWADOR

Third was the Egwador, or "Brotherhood of the Spear." The main strike force of the army in the field, the Egwador formed a formidable phalanx. The shock of this Brotherhood's charge could shatter an enemy's line. The Egwador composed the core strength of Thranduil's host at the Battle of Five Armies and Dagor Dagorath.

THE MAGWADOR

Last was the Magwador, or "Brotherhood of the Sword." While nearly every Elf carried a knife or sword, Thranduil's folk equipped only a few warriors with great battle swords. Further, obtaining a vast number of battle swords in trade with Men or Dwarves proved to be too costly.

3.2 THE STRENGTH OF THE ARMY

At its peak, during the War of the Last Alliance, the Army of the Tawarwaith numbered nearly 30,000. More than 10,000 warriors served the Pengwador; 7,000 fought in both the Pelegwador and Egwador; and almost 6,000 filled the ranks of the Magwador. Losses in the War were catastrophic. The Pelegwador perished to the last Elf, fighting valiantly alongside Oropher. The army suffered 20,000 deaths, and virtually all survivors were wounded. Thranduil was now King, but the Tawarwaith would never recover their former strength.

Thus, Thranduil wisely consolidated his grip on the realm while slowly rebuilding his army over the long years of the first millennia of the Third Age. Once his citadel was completed around T.A. 1050, Thranduil took a stand against the evil spreading north.

3.3 OTHER BROTHERHOODS

The other Brotherhoods disbanded in times of peace, placing their homes round about Thranduil's Hall, which served as the armory and storehouse. In time of war, a call was sent out for a Hud, or "muster." The Gwedeir would rally in the King's Hall, receive their war gear, and fall into appropriate formations. That the Tawarwaith

could perform with great efficiency can be seen in Thranduil's reaction to the news of the death of Smaug the Dragon in T. A. 2941, when he was able to assemble and march on Lake Town and the Lonely Mountain with several thousand Egwador and Pengwador in only five days.

3.4 FORMATIONS

Thranduil's army was trained for two field formations: formal battle in the open field and large scale fighting in the dense forest of Mirkwood. The open field formation centered around a phalanx of Egwador, with Pelegwador and Magwador supporting the flanks while archers covered the entire front. The Wood-elves' lack of metal armor predicated a strategy of a short, heavy bowfire followed by the rush of the rest of the force; thus, exposure to enemy archers was reduced to a minimum.

The difference in tactics between the Silvan army and the forces of Gil-galad and Elendil, who could exhaust enemy archery behind shieldwall and armor, cost Thranduil's folk dearly in the Battle of the Last Alliance. Provoked by heavy casualties from enemy archery, the Silvan Elves made a rash assault against the enemy's front and were repulsed with telling losses. In the forest, the army deployed the Magwador and Pelegwador in companies to support the front line of archers, while the Egwador was held in reserve to exploit a hole in the enemy line, or to fill a gap in the Elven line. As the vanguard, Silvan forces rendered great service to the Host of the Last Alliance and also spearheaded the advance on Mordor east of Anduin.



3.5 DRESS, WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

DRESS

Warriors of the Tawarwaith dressed in everyday woodland garb. Their costumes varied in detail from Elf to Elf and should not be considered a uniform except in the broadest sense. Predominant colors were natural shades of green and brown, highlighted by trim and piping in the brighter colors found in the birds and blossoms or seasonal color changes of the forest.

Hoods and cloaks were made of a finely woven cloth and designed so that they could be reversed. One side was predominantly green, the other brown. Cloaks could be turned inside-out through a seam vent, exposing a white lining useful during the winter snows.

A sleeveless, leather tunic was the customary body armor, along with knee-length leather trousers. The tunic and trousers covered cloth shirts and hose. Soft suede or leather shoes covered Silvan feet.

EQUIPMENT

The Elves were efficient forest foragers and hunters and could travel great distances eating and resting very little. They rarely used packs except when outside their forest for an extended period of time. Thranduil's Elves survived on lembas, or "way-bread," carried in a small wallet on a leather waist belt. They also took along water, wine or a berry brandy in a flask.

WEAPONS

The Egwador and Magwador usually bore wood, leather or wicker shields into battle. Shield decoration tended to floral or leaf themes. Silvan spears were eight to ten feet long, the blade attached to the shaft in a socket. Swords were normally double-edged and one-handed, tapered to a point and used in a stab-and-slash manner. Rarely seen amongst Thranduil's warriors were larger two-handed swords, heirlooms borne by the descendants of the Sindar who fled Beleriand with Oropher in the First Age. Such rare swords were of great lineage and worth, with potent properties, including near-sentience.

Axes were single-bladed, long-shafted weapons wielded with two hands. Most of Oropher's fellow exiles were drawn from the Pelegwador of Thingol's army, and many Silvan axes were also of long lineage and power, although a great number were lost in the storming of the Morannon. The bows of the Pengwador were short and light; Oropher brought along few of the great bows of Doriath. East-march Elves were, in origin, the Green-elves of Ossiriand and used a lighter bow similar to their Silvan kin.

Every Elf carried a knife in addition to his other gear. Elven knives had short, broad leaf-shaped or triangular blades, or they had long, thin straight blades without guards.

THE USE OF ANIMALS

Unlike the Elves west of the Misty Mountains, Thranduil's Folk made very little use of the horse. Thranduil maintained a small herd of forest ponies for hunts and never developed a mounted force for warfare or even for use as messengers. It was more efficient, in the forest, to use birds and other creatures, or to employ signal arrows with varied whistles and colors. Some Elves wore helmets; a few of the ancient, tall helms of Doriath were preserved and worn. More common were leather helms with an iron headband and four iron ribs welded to a peak.

Thranduil's army was superbly designed to defend his forest realm and served bravely outside the woods, when properly employed. More than once, Sauron was forced to divert as much as half his strength against the Elves of the Forest when those forces might have proved decisive elsewhere.

4.0 THE KING'S HALLS

4.1 THE TALE

Following the death of Smaug the Dragon in T. A. 2941, Esgaroth and Dale were rebuilt, and the Kingdom under the Mountain was restored. Thranduil generously aided the Men and Dwarves in their endeavors, and as a result, commerce grew between Thranduil's realm and the new kingdoms. Men needed wood for new homes and food for many new arrivals until the fields around the Lonely Mountain could again be tilled, sown, and reaped.

In those days, Thranduil sometimes opened the doors of the Woodland Realm to Men, for Bard the Bowman had fought beside the Elven-king and was held in high esteem. Meanwhile, Men worked to service the furnaces and foundries of Dain's Dwarves. Goods and gold sailed the Taurhir and Celduin Rivers, crossing Long Lake in all directions. The land was once again fair and free. Merchants haggled and grew fat, and everyone prospered. It was then that Bancadan, a merchant of Dale, visited the Hall of the Elven-king, leaving behind this tale, which is still told.

NOTE: *The following account is taken directly from Bancadan's journal discovered shortly after his death.*

BANCADAN'S TALE

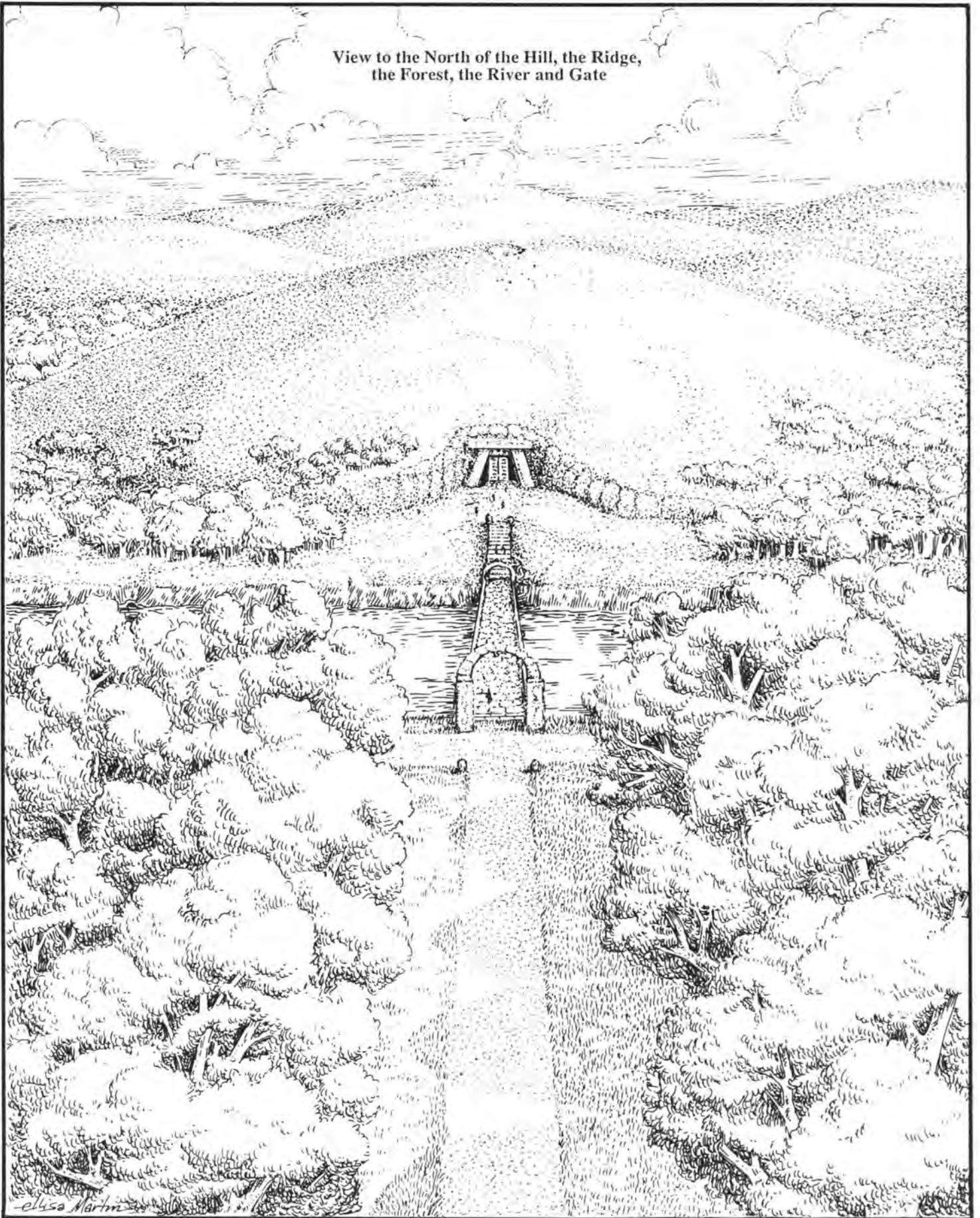
"I set out from Dale during the fourth Autumn after the Death of Smaug. Charged by King Bard, I carried tokens of his great friendship and gratitude to Thranduil, the Elven-king. To him, I would present these gifts and regards, as well as many goods and treasures to exchange, for our city was rebuilding itself and in great need of timber, foodstuffs, medicine, clothes, and pottery.

"The trip down the River Running to the Long Lake was swift and pleasant. My stay at Enesgaroth, New Lake-town, was brief but profitable; an exchange with Heleder, a fisherman, provided large lake trout for our journey up-river to the Elven-kingdom. I was most intrigued when he showed me a curious black stone, perfectly round, which he had found in the belly of a sturgeon. The "Dragon's Eye," he called it. I decided immediately to make it my personal gift to Thranduil. I purchased the stone for ten gold coins and placed it in a gleaming silver casket engraved with Dragons chasing terror-stricken men 'round a mountain. (The casket had been forged by one of King Dain's finest smiths.)

"Soon, we set off on the Taurduin River, first poling our way through the Aelinann Marshes. Autumn had come to the forest; it seemed a great, quiet fire of gold and red stretching as far as one could see north and south. Above the forest, vast flocks of birds made the journey south for the coming winter. Soon we entered the dark forest and arrived at our first campsite in Thranduil's realm, the village of Celebannon. Here my crew of Dale-men and Lake-towners stopped before returning home. A new Elven crew then commanded the barge and boat. A delight it was to observe them, these tall, lean and graceful beings singing merry songs (which rang like a chorus of bells as they poked about) and peeking into Tawgir's bags of wool, shorn of sheep newly-come to Dale, and sifting through the corn bins of laugalas.



View to the North of the Hill, the Ridge,
the Forest, the River and Gate



"Again, we pushed off, traveling up-river under the trees of the looming forest. At nightfall, we stopped on the south bank. After mooring the boats, the crew and I went ashore to spend the night. Here I saw and entered, for the first time, an Elf-dwelling. Nenledil, captain of the Raft-elves and our pilot, took us to what was called a "Dymath," a tower of living Oak trees. Years before, young saplings were planted in a large round clearing; over the years, the trees were tended and pruned carefully. Eventually, substantial branches jut from the trunks; limbs grow into the circle and are woven under, over and across one another to form a "talan," or floor, about ten feet above the ground. As the trees grow, inner branches are pruned until the trunks are tall enough to add another level. Thus, the tree forts grow every year. At ground level, the trunks grow closer together; the space between them is a tangle of roots, dead branches and boles.



"As I discovered, it is quite difficult to pass inside, except by a single cleared space between two trees on the north side. The entire stand of trees is surrounded by a thick hedge bristling with sharp thorns. Only a warrior in chain mail or an Orc could push through that barrier. Most remarkably, when we paused in our walk from the boats, I had asked Nenledil how far we had to travel to find this place. The Elf smiled and pointed to the trees in front of us. I could not discern the Dymath from the other trees around us, though I stood but ten paces away. Nenledil told me that such towers were scattered around Thranduil's border as strong points and refuges against the enemy to the south. This particular tree-fort had been grown to serve as a resting place for those travelling up-river and to guard a nearby ford that could be crossed when the river was low and sluggish.

"We spent that night on the first level above the ground and partook of a simple but satisfying meal. The night was quite cool, and to warm me, the Elves made a small, smokeless fire on a large, flat stone. Gear and packs were hung on stumpy branches that formed the pillars of the wall; piles of leaves made a soft bed. Thus I passed a restful night, my dreams filled with magical tales told to me, it seemed, by whispering trees and murmuring streams.

"In the morning, as we prepared to leave, an Elf in the crown of the Dymath came down to us bearing a remarkable visitor who wished to meet a Man from Dale. The Elf held out his hand; in it stood a tiny bird. The bird's puffed chest and proud stance would have made him an eagle, were he not as tall as my thumb. On one leg was a gold band set with a jewel of amber. He cocked his head, looked directly at me and warbled a loud trilling song that went on for some time. He then paused a moment before resuming, singing louder than before, causing much merriment and laughter among the Elves. I turned to Nenledil who, seeing my confusion, put on a serious air, bowed to the bird, and whistled a tune that sounded as if the tiny thing had sung it himself. When he had finished, the

Elf turned to me, begged my pardon and introduced me to Bel-bilinc, Lord of the Sparrows. The cause of their laughter was Bel-bilinc, who after introducing himself to me and getting no reply, thought perhaps that Men could not hear well and so repeated his names and titles, a very long list, in what he considered a bellow. Surprised as I was to find a speaking sparrow-lord, I bowed deeply and offered my services. Nenledil informed me that Bel-bilinc would fly ahead of us to tell Thranduil of our coming. The Elf suggested that I offer some tufts of sheep's wool as a gift for the sparrow's nest. I did so, and he was off in a flutter, carrying a ball of wool as big as he. Soon we too were off. Near the end of the day, we at last approached the fabled Halls of the Elven-king. My heart raced; my pulse ran unbridled, like a runaway horse.

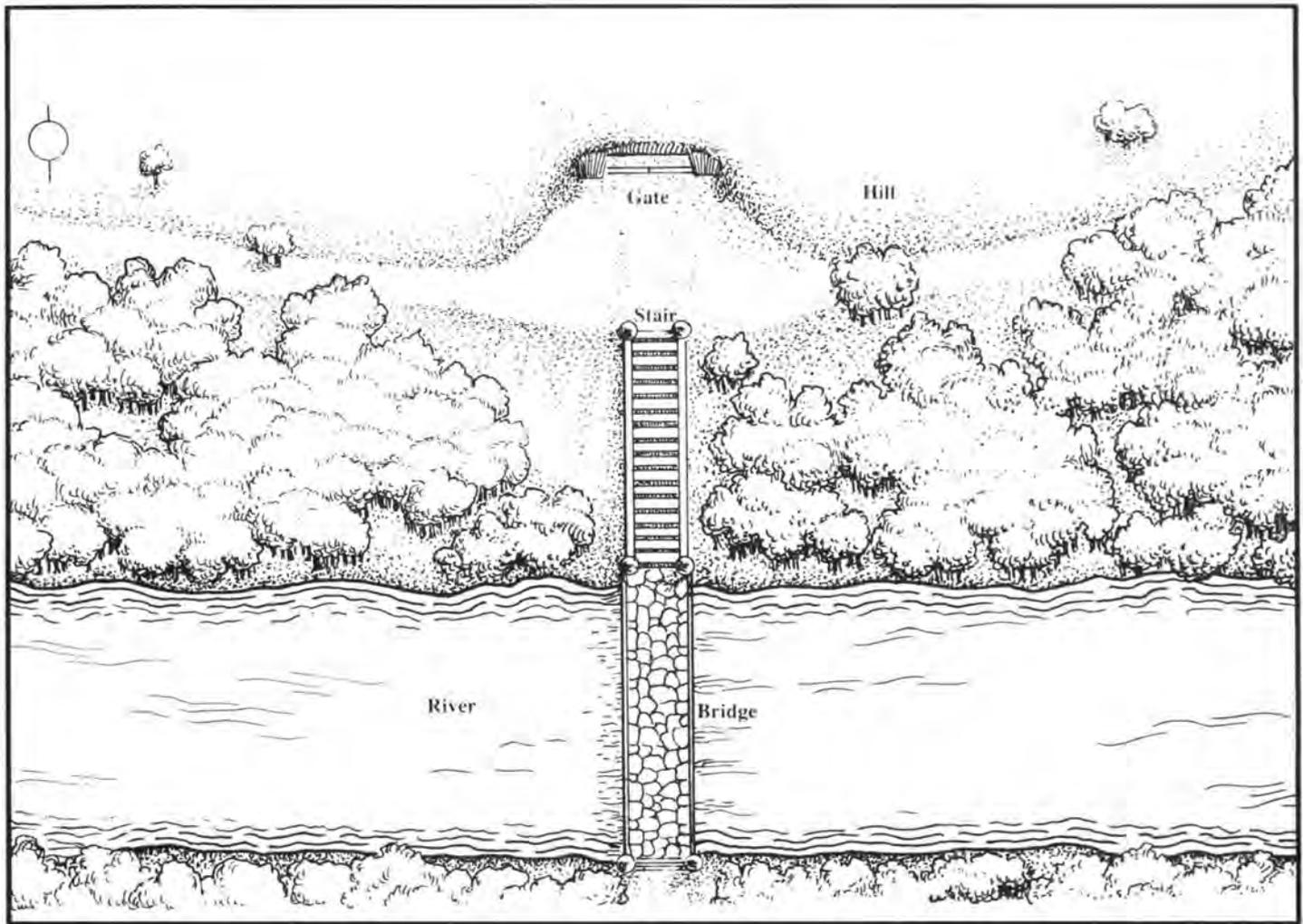
"We were met someways down river by several small Elven-boats with prows carved in the likeness of various water birds. I clambered into one of these and continued up the Forest River, while Nenledil took my boat and barge of goods up a side stream. Shortly, a series of great hills rose up on the North bank and I could see a long bridge, set on many stone pillars, reaching across the river. We put ashore at its north end under the trees and bushes, then climbed the bank to the stairs that led to Thranduil's open doors, set into the hill, where many Elves waited in welcome.

A great feast was held in honor of my coming, for I was the first Man of Dale to come as guest of the King and to dwell there in a season. I cannot tell of all the wondrous songs and tales I heard, the dancers with leaves and flowers in their gleaming hair, nor of all the foods I ate that first night, but mountains of ripe berries disappeared, and rivulets of red wine flowed into our goblets. It seemed an enchanted whirl that went on and on. Each event was more magical than the one before, the music unimagined by men. I dreamed it all maybe, for I cannot remember its end or my going to sleep, but only awakening late the next morning.

"In the afternoon following my arrival, I presented to King Thranduil the gifts and tokens of King Bard, King Dain, and the folk of Esgaroth. Lord Thranduil was wearing a crown of autumn leaves and bore a staff of carved oak. Bright lamps hung suspended from the walls and natural stone pillars. The King was most curious about what I called 'my own special gift.' As the imperious monarch took the stone from its box, he marvelled at its heat in his hand. This quality I had not noticed, having handled it only long enough to place it in the box before packing it away. I recounted to Lord Thranduil how it had come to me. Having heard of his love of gold and silver and jewels, I thought he might be pleased by such a remarkably perfect ball of jet. He thanked me graciously, rolling the stone in his long-fingers and noting that it seemed of great worth.

"'We shall return the hospitality,' said the Wood-elf King, his voice as musical as a lute. 'Its value shall be matched before you leave,' Thranduil promised. The haughtiness and suspicion evident in the woodland ruler's face disappeared.

"I was then formally presented to his queen and Legolas, Thranduil's son and heir. The Queen's beauty dazzled me; her hair cascaded about her like a river of silver in torrent. The lady's welcome carried like chimes or silver bells stirred by the wind. She stood as tall as Thranduil, who was taller than all others present. For Lady Arhendhiril was Sindarin, kin to the House of Thingol through the family of Elmo, his brother in Beleriand. The purity of the Sindarin strain in the Queen was reflected in her silver hair. Though abashed in her presence, I was engaged to speak of my journey as her maids scurried to prepare my lodgings.



"Thereafter, I met privately with Lord Thranduil and his counselors to discuss the business of my journey: the goods which I had brought to barter, and those Elven goods desired to take back, or rather, have sent back to Esgaroth. The bargaining was most generous and fair to both sides and by far a more pleasant trading session than any I had before experienced with Men or Dwarves. Then, my royal audience at an end, I was given charge of Galion, the King's butler, who would tend to all wishes during my stay.

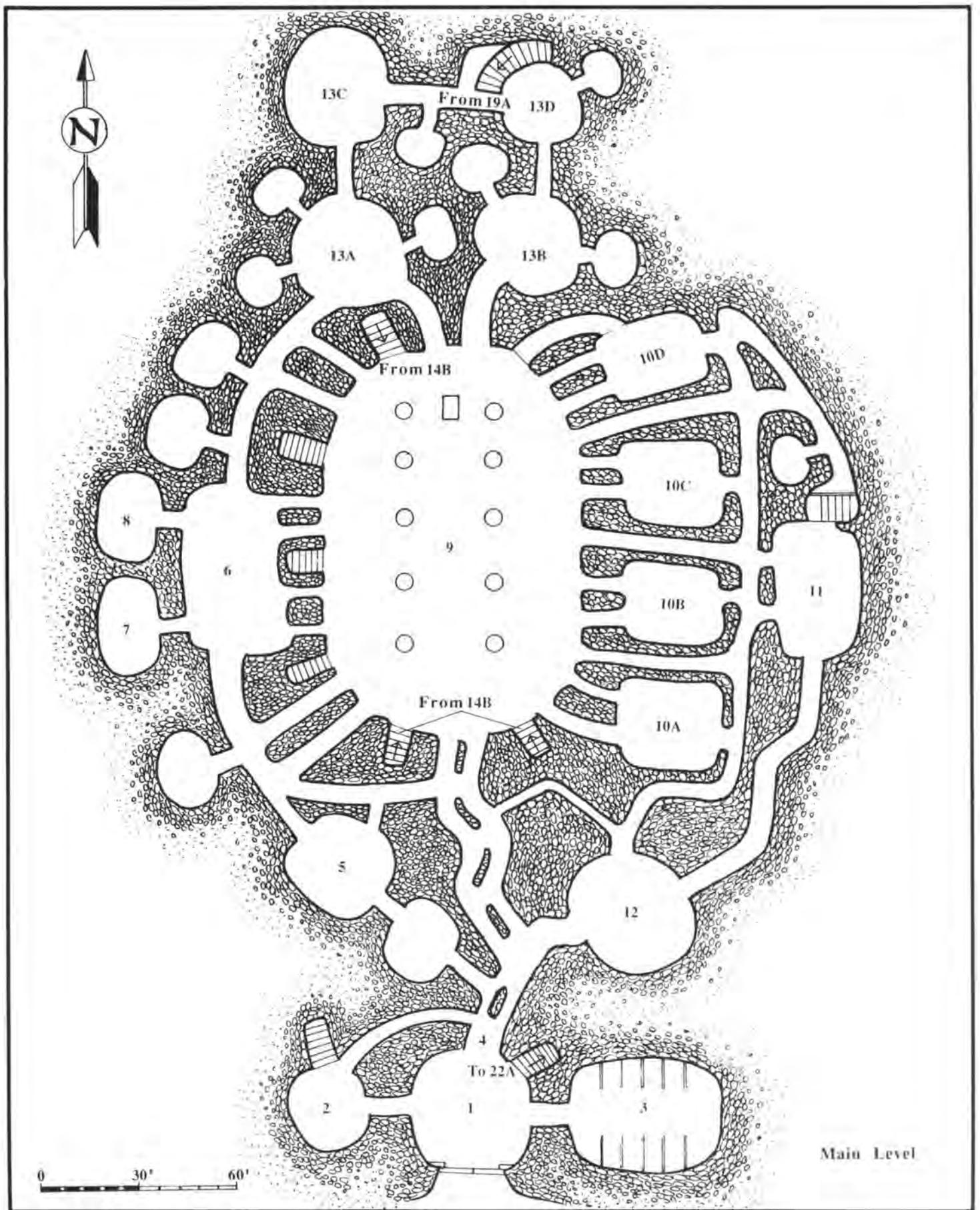
"For an Elf, Galion proved to be a fine and merry fellow; we became great friends. He graciously showed me many of the wonders and workings of Aradhrynd, the King's Halls, a strange and marvelous place unlike any other I have seen."



4.2 THE LAYOUT

"The whole of Aradhrynd began as a warren of natural caves hidden deep in the hill beside the Forest River, as Men call it. According to Galion, who was there, the caves were much enhanced by the delvings of Thranduil's folk. They dug and cut for fifty years, shaping the bone and sinew of the hill into a fair design of four levels. I was soon to discover the magic of their handiwork. Altering the natural cave formations as little as possible, Thranduil's Elves make use of sloping floors; stalagmites and tapering limestone pillars enliven the subtly-lighted halls and rooms. Decorative carvings and wall hangings act as room dividers and add color to the caverns. Often, the tunnels one walks wind, spiral and turn back on themselves. Like the floors, corridors slope and bend; footing is uncertain and for the unwary, dangerous.

"Across along stone bridge spanning the Forest River, one climbs steep stairs and crosses a grassy court before reaching the stone doors which protect the entry into Thranduil's Halls. The gates (called Ondenynn) are fifteen feet high and thirty feet wide and open by sliding on cunningly-designed tracks built into the floor and ceiling. The doors open at a word from my guide; he intimates that the King alone may open the gates if he so wills. One foot thick and wrought with many Elven enchantments, the gates provide a formidable defense.



Main Level



MAIN LEVEL

1. "The Gate Hall is a domed cave some thirty feet in diameter. It is generally bare and serves as the threshold for four passageways into the hill. As my guide revealed, the gates themselves are two great slabs of cut-and-dressed stone, which open by magic. This I believe, for their size and weight is so great that a gang of fifty stout Men would not be enough to push them open! Yet the Great Gates spring open and close on command, heeding the command hidden in a secret Silvan song, of which there are many.

2. "Facing into the hill, the passageway on the left leads to the Gwarroth, or 'Guardroom,' a small cave perhaps five paces across. Weapons hang upon the wall; two guards sit on stools about a table. 'The guards are ever-wary,' says Galion, 'of anything that might disturb the peace of Thranduil's hidden realm. A pair of guards stands four-hour shifts at all times.

3. "The right hand passage leads to a small stable. The Rochroth, or stable, is somewhat larger than the Gate Hall and has stalls to accommodate as many as ten of the King's ponies, including their feed and equipment. Most of the time, the horses stay outside, near the hill, and come in at a call or whistle.

4. "Of the two archways in the north wall, one leads to a wide staircase winding down to the level of halls below. When I asked Galion by what name it was called, he replied that it depended upon the direction one chose on the stair. Those at the top, heading down, call it the Dadbendrath; however, those at the foot, heading up, call it the Ambendrath. Apparently those passing the sweeping staircase and going neither up nor down call it Pendrath.

"The other archway opens onto the main passage, a double corridor which winds its way to the Great Hall and is crossed at many points by corridors leading to other halls and pathways.

5. "West of the main passage stands the Dururoth, or 'log-room,' a rough cave filled with all manner of wood, including kindling chips, cutcord and rough logs. This wood will fuel the fires and ovens of the Great Kitchen, also located on the Main Level.

6. "Through the Dururoth and down a curving passage, one enters the Great Kitchen, or Basgorond, a large chamber with several ovens, a fire pit and in the far corner, a well fed by a cold clear spring which flows inside the hill. Long stone counters serve the tables upon which the cooks work. Galion says that the kitchen is at most times idle, for its main purpose is to provide for the army in times of war. ('These Elves simply don't eat,' I could not help thinking.) The walls are lined with shelves and cabinets holding pots and crockery, pans and utensils of all sizes.

7/8. "Two doorways on the west wall open into a good-sized pantry containing various condiments and a smokehouse for venison and and other meats, fish and fowl. (No more tender and succulent meat will be found anywhere else in Middle-earth!)

9. "Four doors built into the East Wall accommodate the great bustle to and from the Great Hall when this kitchen is in use. Entering Belrond, the Great Hall, I was struck first by its vastness. A vaulted ceiling is upheld by ten mighty stone pillars, each carved like a beech tree with a canopy of branches and leaves covering the roof. Entering Thranduil's Hall gives one the feeling of standing in a quiet clearing of the ancient forest a moment before time began or life awakened.

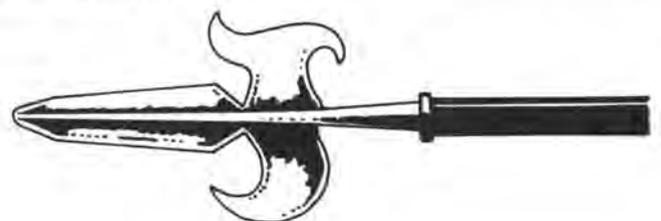
Here too stands King Thranduil's throne room, the chamber in which he holds court and stages large celebrations, and when times demand it, where he gathers his warriors to prepare for war. Numerous doors and archways lead to passages and staircases taking one to all parts of the palace. Thranduil's Throne Room is subtly lighted by torch and lamp. Standing at the north end between rows of trees is Thranduil's magnificent throne of oak, the entire piece carved with a woodland theme. The floor is etched with entwined representations of plants and flowers native to Greenwood. Hanging on the walls are bright tapestries of birds and beasts frozen in flight and halted leap. A wonder to see, and yet not as high or as wide as the hall of King Dain under the Lonely Mountain. But Galion retorts: 'Dwarves nibble at stone to make room for their beards to grow!'

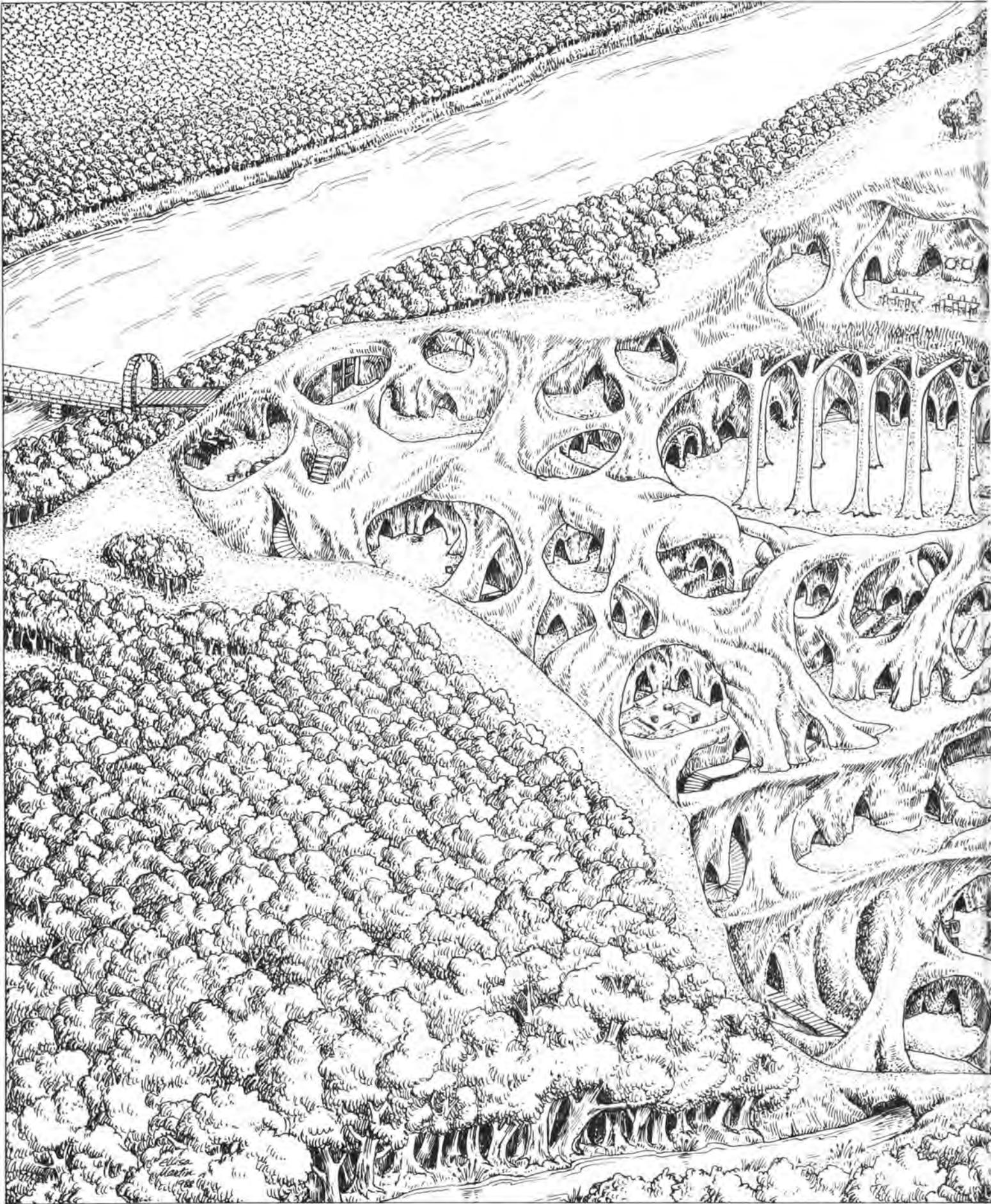
10A-D. "Along the east wall of Belrond, four sets of double doorways lead to the King's Armories. Each Gwador has a large armory of its own to hold their shields, helmets, axes, swords, spears, and arrows. While most of the weapons of the Tawarwaith are stored here, Galion tells of older magical weapons, relics of Beleriand, kept in the King's Treasury. (I must admit that a flash of greed overtook me, and I longed to see and hold the magic weapons, but such an opportunity would be very unlikely.) Inside the armories and upon their walls hangs the gear of war, which is also stacked in rows and laid on tables where Elves fletch arrows and sharpen blades.

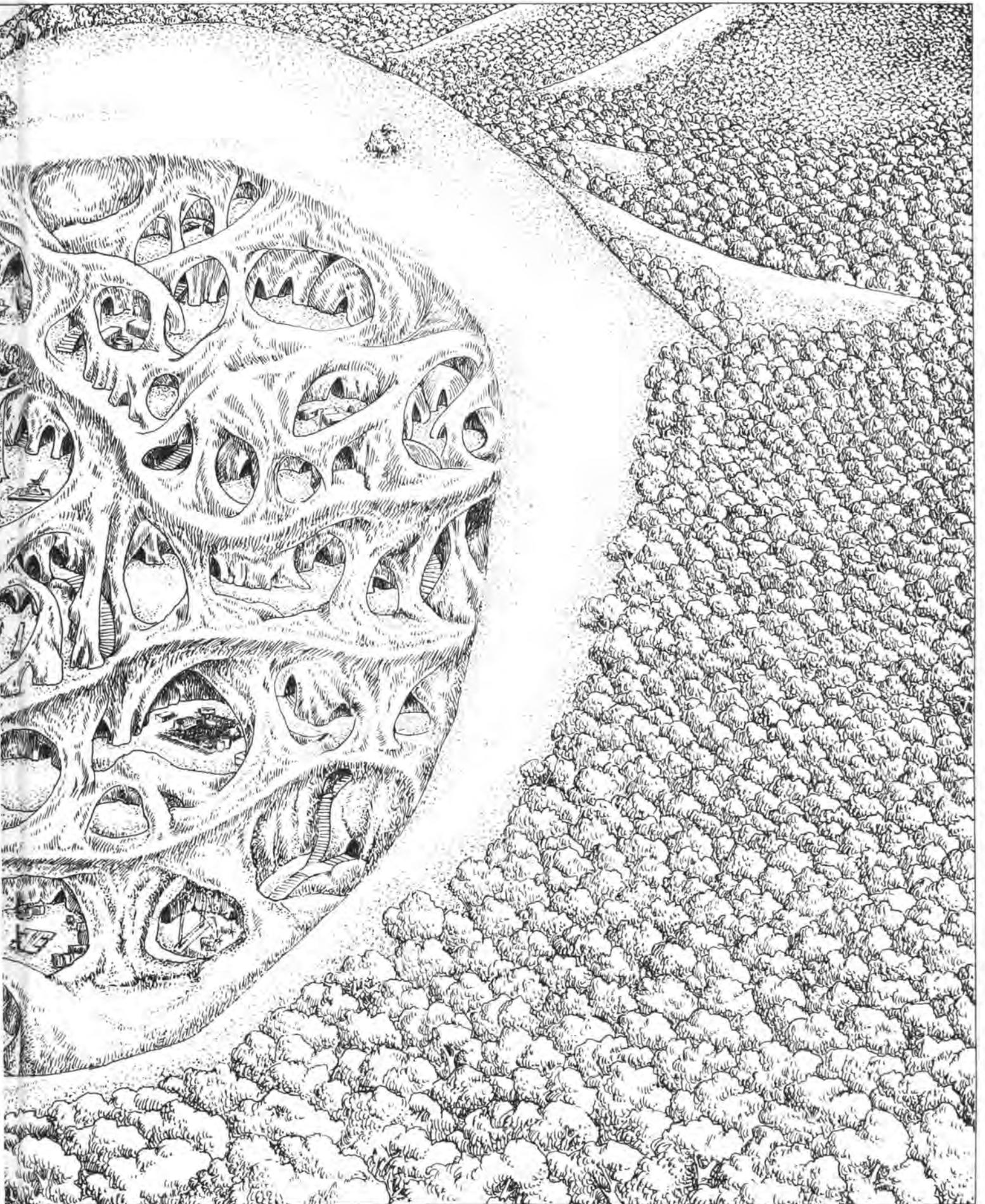
11. "Behind the armories is the Dambarond, or 'foundry.' Metalwork is done here, although Thranduil's smiths are few, and their metals rare. (Fortunately for me, for I have brought to trade two barrels of iron arrowheads, scores of Dwarven knives and ironingots from King Dain.) A small blast furnace operates with great efficiency, and many benches and stone anvils (as well as buckets and tools) add to the clutter. All around, one sees pliers, hammers, augers and spikes.

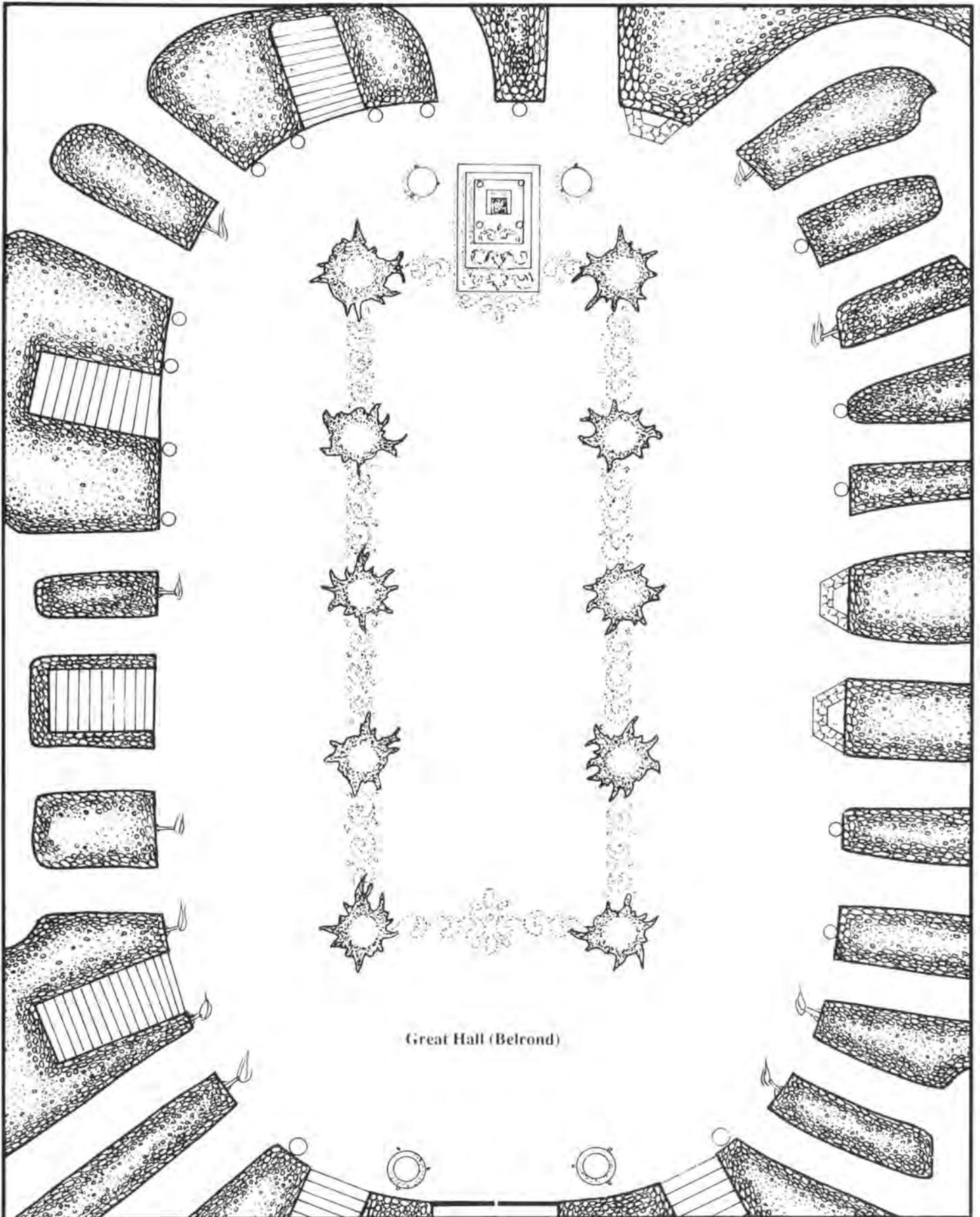
12. "A door in the south wall leads through a long passage to another log room holding fuel for the foundry.

13A-D. "Elsewhere about the main level are scattered various common rooms, dormitories and barracks for use in time of need. Innumerable closets and cells lie tucked away in unseen nooks, no doubt storing housekeeping sundries. Galion despairs (even with his prodigious Elven memory) of recalling what might be kept behind the many doors we passed in our stroll. Like other Avar, he intones "May the King forget' almost as a pass-phrase as we moved about the citadel.

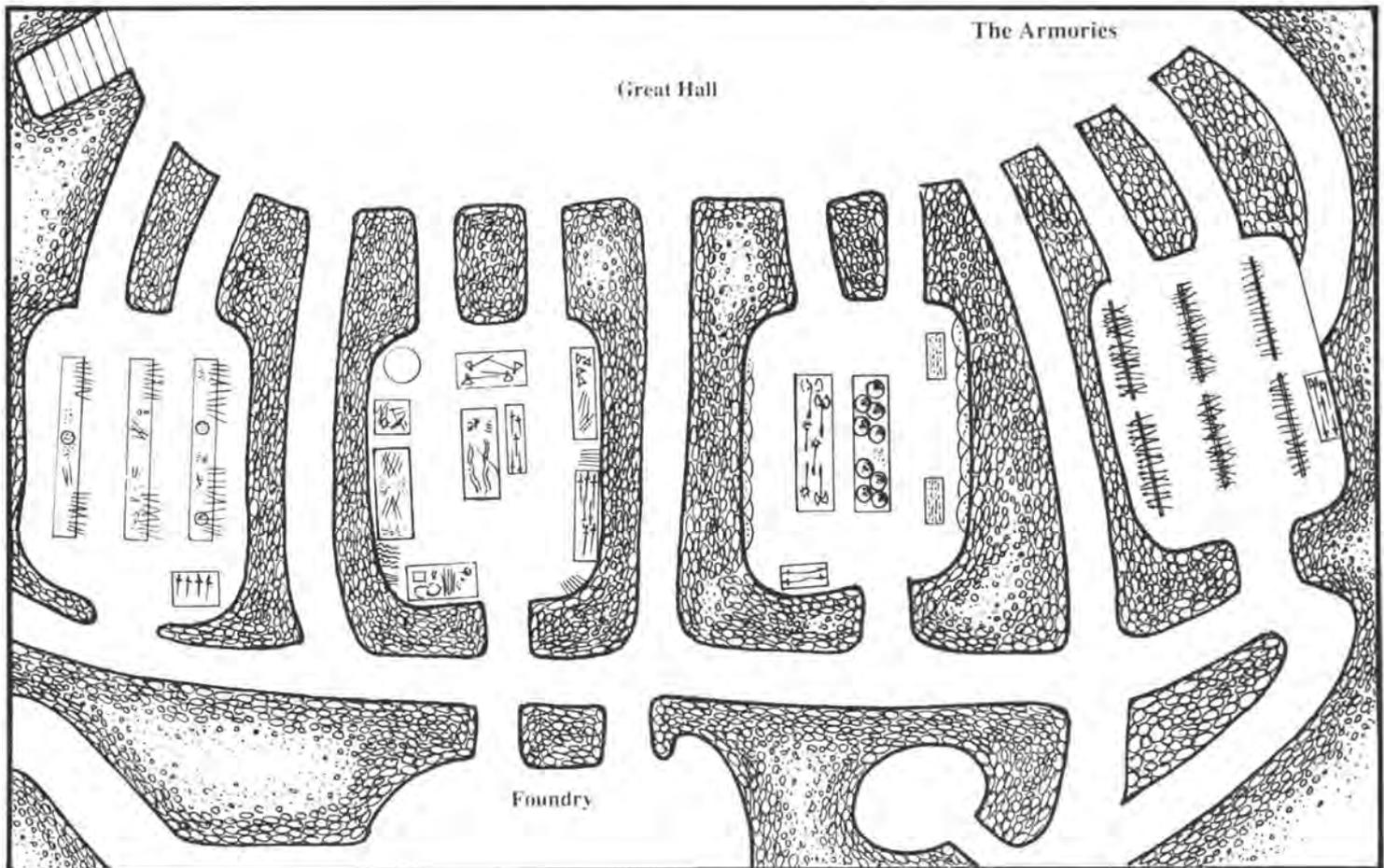
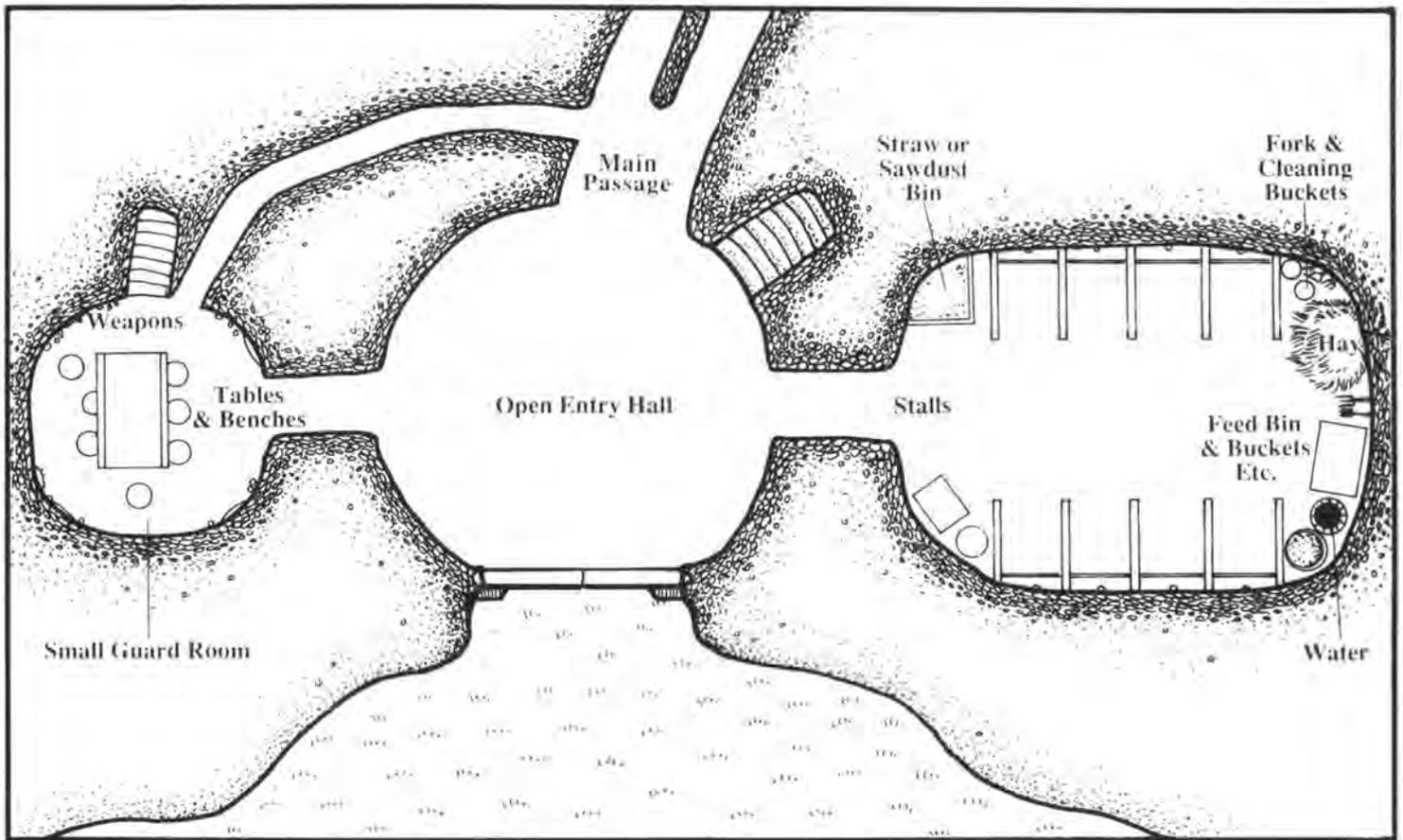








Great Hall (Belrond)



UPPER LEVEL

14A-B. "Up a staircase (14A) in the north wall to the upper level is the Merethrond (14B), the main Feast-hall (where the King's court and permanent residents dine and dwell). Oval in shape, it is 70 feet long and 60 feet wide. Appointed with oak tables, chairs and stools, it is the most-used of all the large halls. The walls of the Merethrond are decorated with trophies and shields celebrating the history of Thranduil's realm. Here bards sing of legends and tell tales of bygone days around a mighty fire in a large central pit. Galion whispers that a keen ear pressed to the stone wall will hear the echoes of famed singers of old.

15A-B. "The Feast-hall is served by the upper kitchen and pantries located just north of the Feast-hall.

16. "Just south of the Feast-hall stand the Upper Barracks, where the Arathirweth, or King's Guard, are stationed. This guard is the only permanent, standing garrison and rarely exceeds one hundred warriors.

17A-S. "East and West of the Feast-hall are the numerous apartments of Thranduil's courtiers, their families, and their servants. Here visiting Lords and Ladies stay when visiting King Thranduil in his palace. Each apartment has several chambers (or alcoves) and closets surrounding a common room. All are furnished with resting pallets, beds, stools or tables and chairs intricately carved of wood. The more richly-appointed chambers have tapestries or wall reliefs depicting great Silvan folktales and old legends. In one such chamber, Galion set me and made me quite at home.

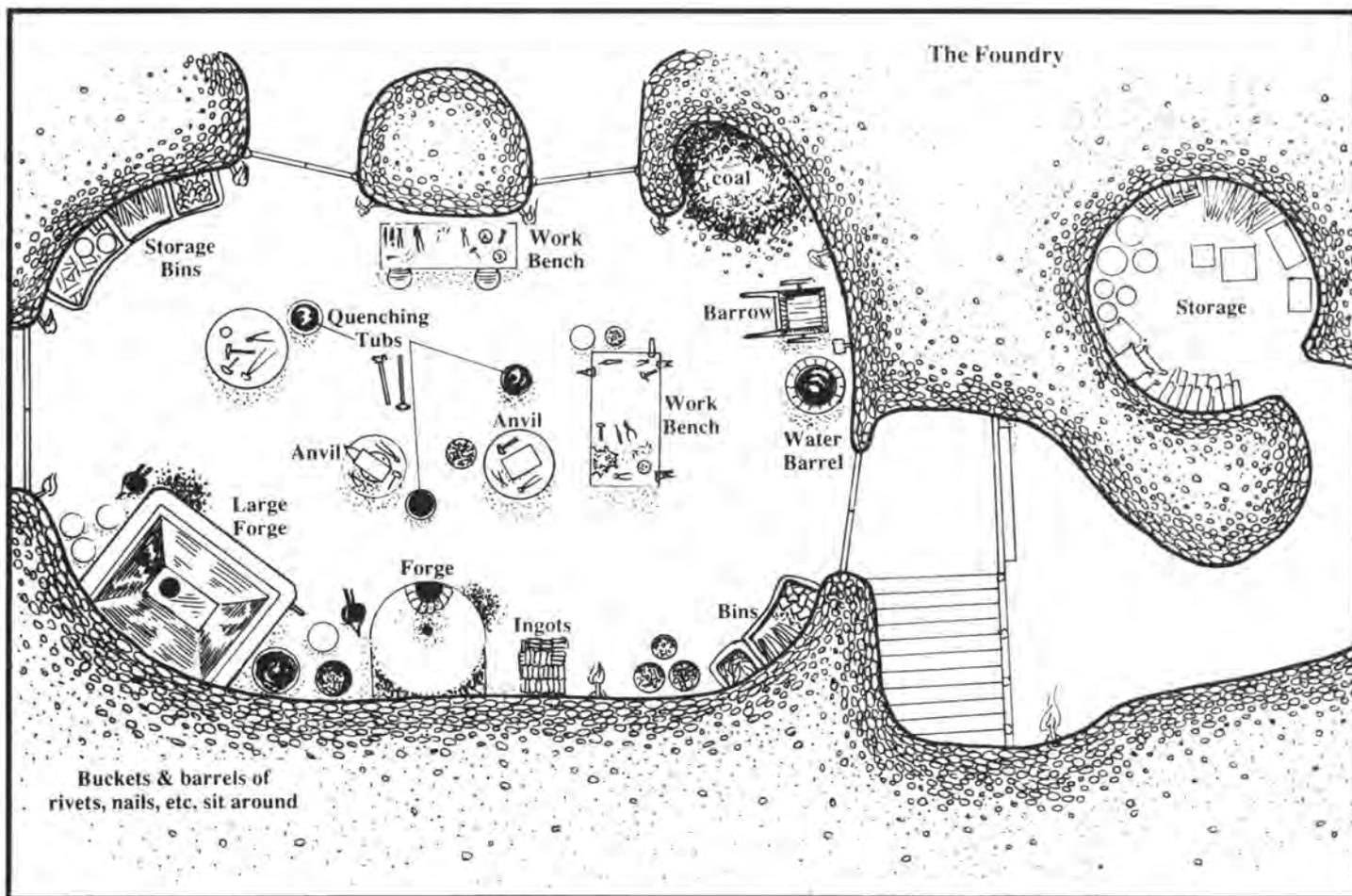
18. "These stairs lead to another lower level where the Treasury and other halls and cells lie.

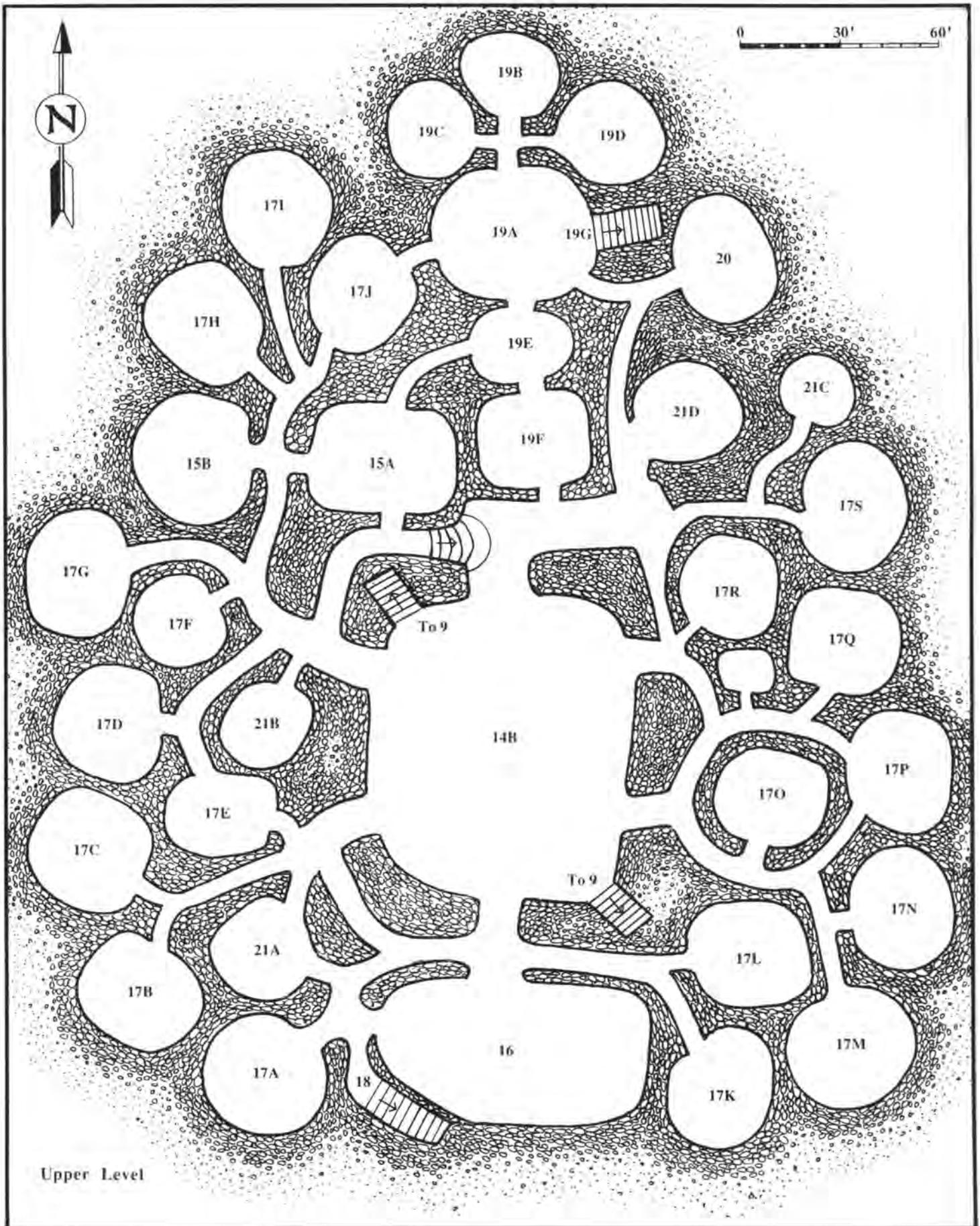
19A-G. "North of the upper Feast-hall spread the King's Chambers, those of the Queen, his son, his personal attendants and his bodyguard. The King's private chambers are the most luxurious of the entire palace, with tapestries, sculpture and rich Silvan heirlooms of his House displayed on stands and on the walls. Thick, heavy carpets displaying woodland motifs cover the floors. The rooms are illuminated by Elven lamps, most rare in this part of the world. A hidden, private stairway (19G) leads from the King's bedchamber to his treasure rooms and storerooms on the lower levels.

20. "Just east of the King's chambers is the Library, or Parmaroth, a small room containing many rare scrolls and books. Some books recall songs of great magic dating back to the First Age. Others are richly decorated in gold and jewels and recount brave Elven deeds of ancient days.

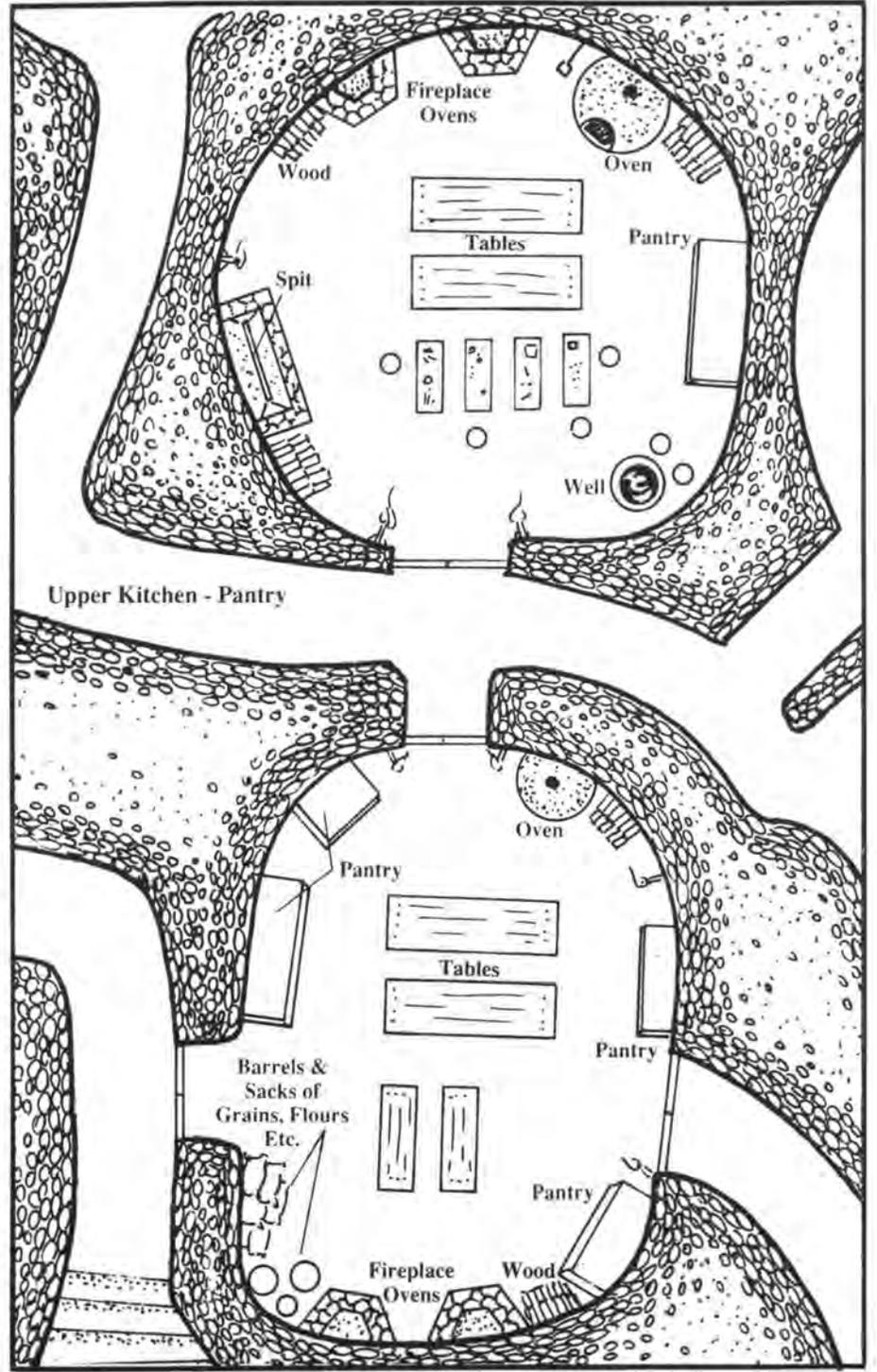
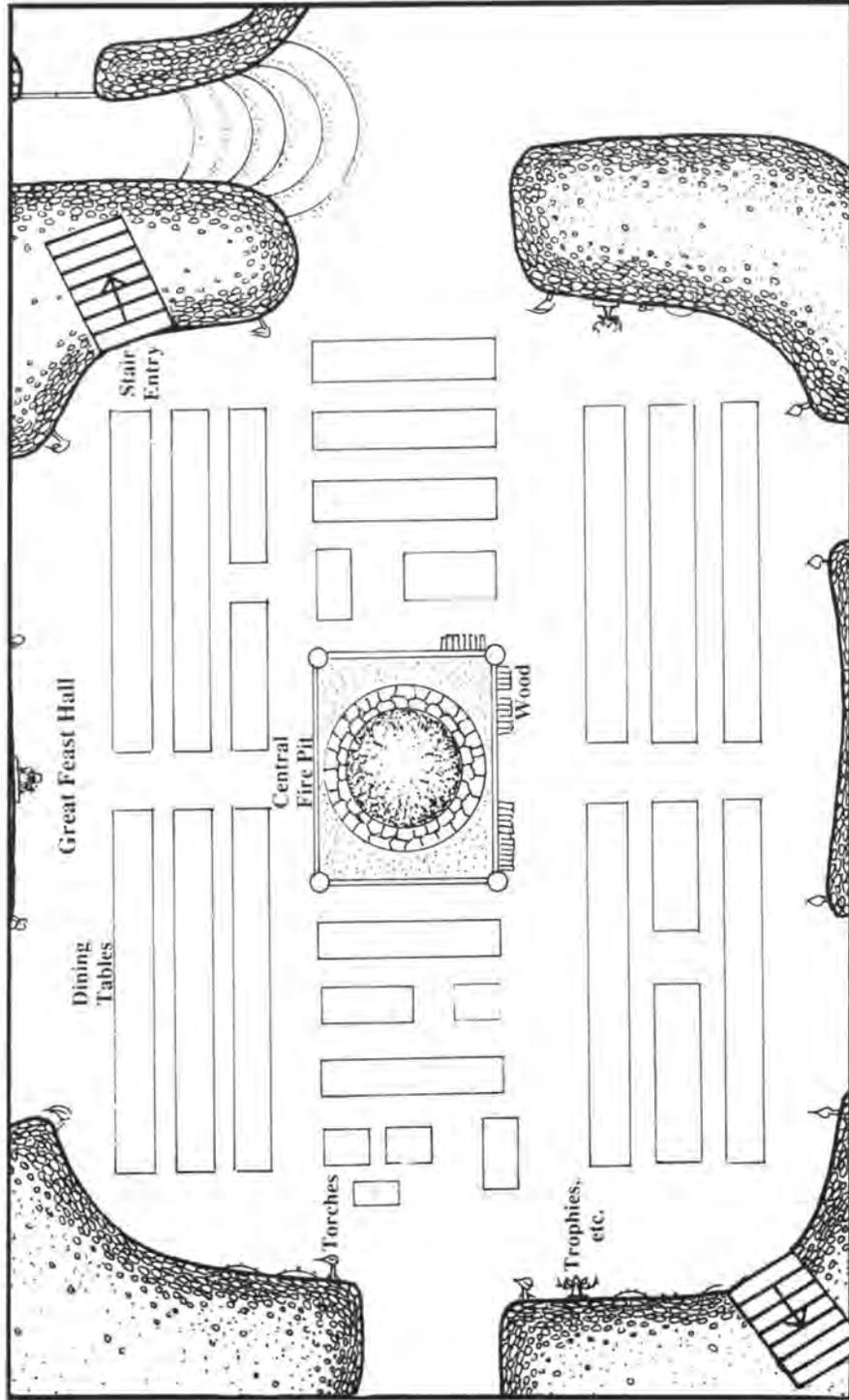
21A-D. "These storage closets contain extra torches, lamps, furniture, bedding and general houseware goods.

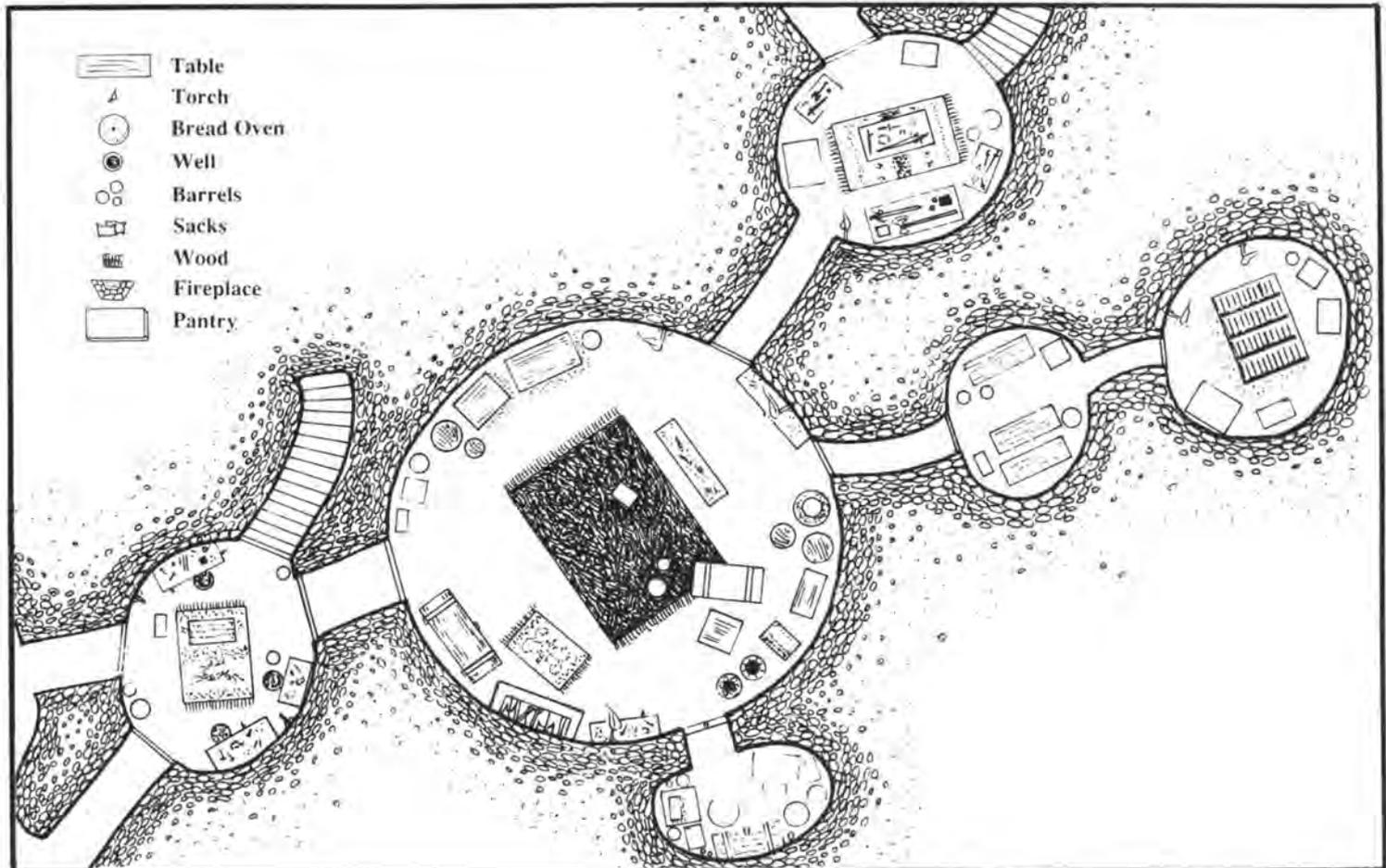
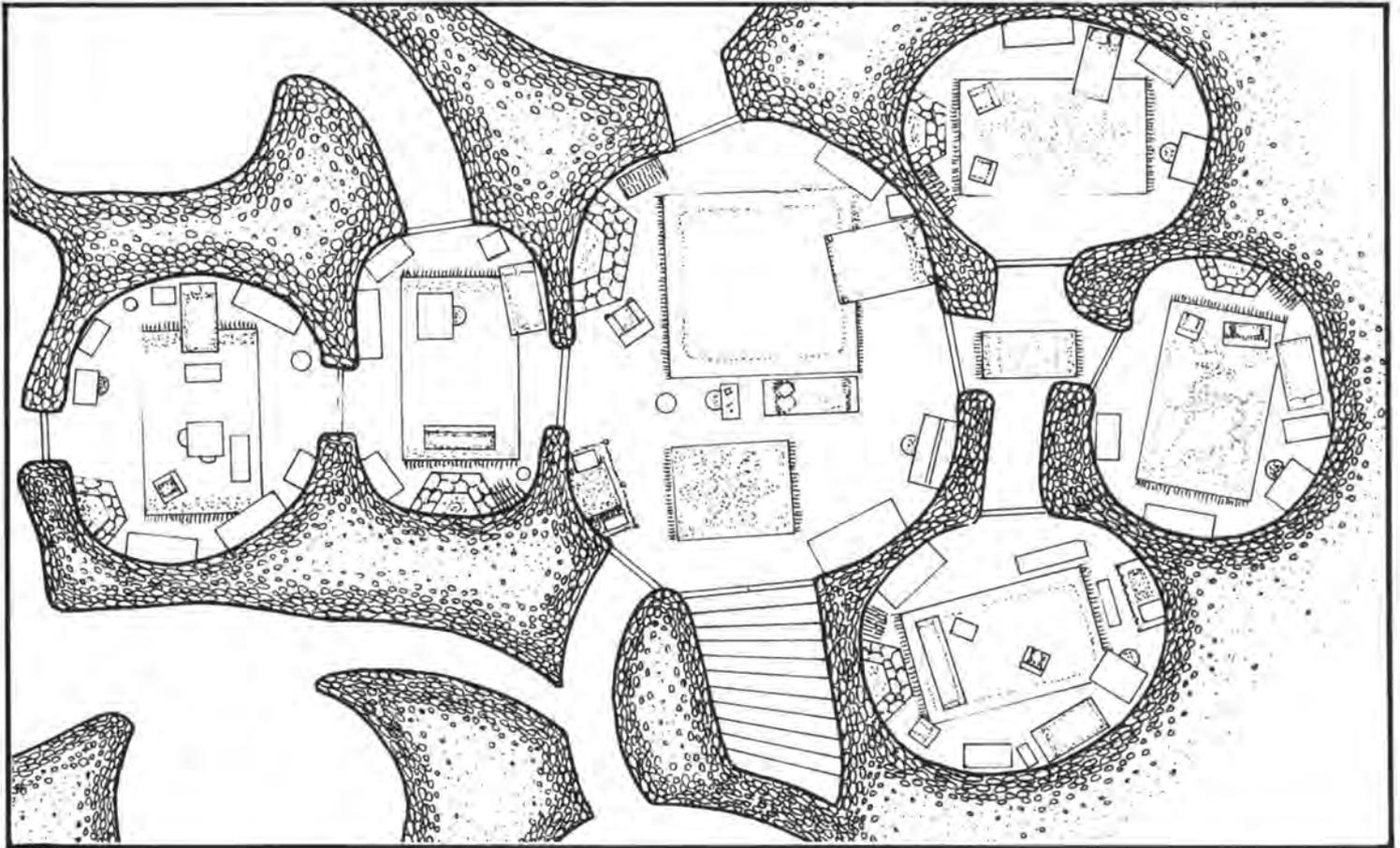
"Here we concluded my viewing of the Upper Level of Thranduil's Halls. It was with great interest that I went with Galion to the first of the lower levels. Here I would see such industry as the Tawarwaith carried on, and I might gain some idea of which goods of mine would be of greatest use to them. I hoped as well to see goods and artifacts that would serve my needs and those whom I represented.





Upper Level





LOWER LEVEL

22A. "The Tanning-hall and the smaller caves opening into it are the sites of leather goods' production. Suede and leather jerkins, soft Elven shoes, belts, wallets, furs and other items are made from the hides and pelts gathered by Thranduil's hunters. Treated and tanned, dyed and sewn, these hides become garments and accessories; the nimble hands of Elven-maids turn the crude skins into finely-crafted tunics and trousers in a matter of days. Their extraordinary handiwork, extreme durability and weight make them highly-valued garments, especially to woodland travellers. The bark of oak trees is used for tanning; Silvan Elves produce their highly-prized green dye from oak bark. Additionally, an extremely soft white Oak-leather (far surpassing the softness of leather made by Men) is made from a growth on the oak. This Oak-leather brings a dear price outside Greenwood. The secrets of the manufacture of these items are known only to the Forest-folk.

22B-D. "Storage closets for tools, dyes and other items fill this small area.

23 A-C. "The Apothecary Hall (23A) holds cordials, medicines, salves made from the trees, shrubs, herbs and vines of the forest. Such potions have potent properties far surpassing the salves of Men or Dwarves, for Silvan herbal lore and songs of healing hark back to Ages lost in the mists of time. Wounds of battle or the effects of a poison can be combatted by the medicines made here. Cordials are available to fight the effects of the elements and weariness. Thranduil's High-herbalist is a potent healer. Two nearby doors open to closets (23B and 23C) containing the rarest and most valuable herb-medicines and potions made in Thranduil's realm.

24A-C. "Deeply prized by Forest-folk and outsider alike are the products of the Weaving-hall, or Ladhron (24A), home to all manner of cloth made from insect silks, plant fibers and animal hair. Such natural matter is weaved into extremely fine fabrics of delicate design. Elves insist upon lightweight, durable, clothing which is warm in winter and cool in summer. Garments made by the clever, slender hands of Elven-maids are unsurpassed in design and function. While most utilitarian clothes like cloaks, hoods, trousers, and skirts favor woodland colorings and floral trim and highlights, ornamental gowns and tunics (created for celebrations and feasts) and all manner of wonderfully carved items are here shaped by patient hands into objects of great beauty and worth. Animals and birds are the dominant theme, cleverly cut and elegantly entwined by horn and hoof, feather and wing, thereafter to function as table and stool, or post and rack. Here, rare objects of horn and bone are made into fine combs and bracelets for the maids of the court of the King (as well as others!). Two small chambers (24B and 24C) open from the Hall and serve as storage rooms. Fortunate indeed is the rare Bacher, or tradesman, who can induce one of Thranduil's folk to part with a wall hanging or a carpet at any price! Dare I hope to be so blessed?

25. "In the Cennadhron, or Pottery-hall, skilled Elves produce all kinds of pots and crockery upon tall wheels. Cunning and many-hued glazes finish the ware for the King's table. The Cennain are given to light and even humorous themes, for the life of a pot is short, even in Elven hands.

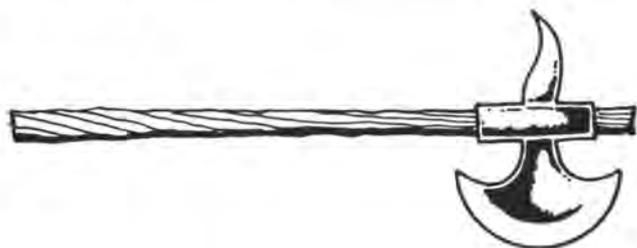
"The cup that carries the wine is destined to break," says Galion, quoting a Silvan saying.

"Clay is brought from the Forest River, shaped, and fired in great brick furnaces and ovens; the heat is fired by logs from the log-room. Potter's wheels turn and whirl, and several work benches bear tools and glazes. The product, whether a pot or a fine vase, is lighter than a Dwarf-made piece and yet stronger. Such is the magic of the Woodland-elves!

26. "This large Entry Hall bears breathtaking tapestries on the walls; Elven hunters stalk a Dragon in one mural. Another depicts Thranduil's carving delving the very Halls in which we now tread.

27/35. "Through special agreement and after much cajoling, Galion has obtained the King's permission to show me the Royal Treasury, or Harmaroth. On this same lower level of work-halls is the Mirroth, or Jewel-hall (#35), a work place where the mirdain of Thranduil create and craft jewelry for the King and his People. We soon approach a great door made of stout oak bound by iron and secured by an elaborate silver lock of Galion's own design. (He speaks of the lock with great pride, saying it would 'baffle any burglar, be he a Wizard or a Hobbit!' Why he would make a particular effort to keep out Hobbits is quite beyond me.)

"So we enter the Caves of Jewels (#33 and #34). Herein lies a dazzling torrent of jewels and precious stones, gold and silver in coin and bar, and valuable ornaments of all kinds. Galion spills a barrel full of gems out of a coffer and a jar and onto a vast plush carpet of black felt; it seems that ten thousand glittering stars leap into being in a night sky beneath my feet!

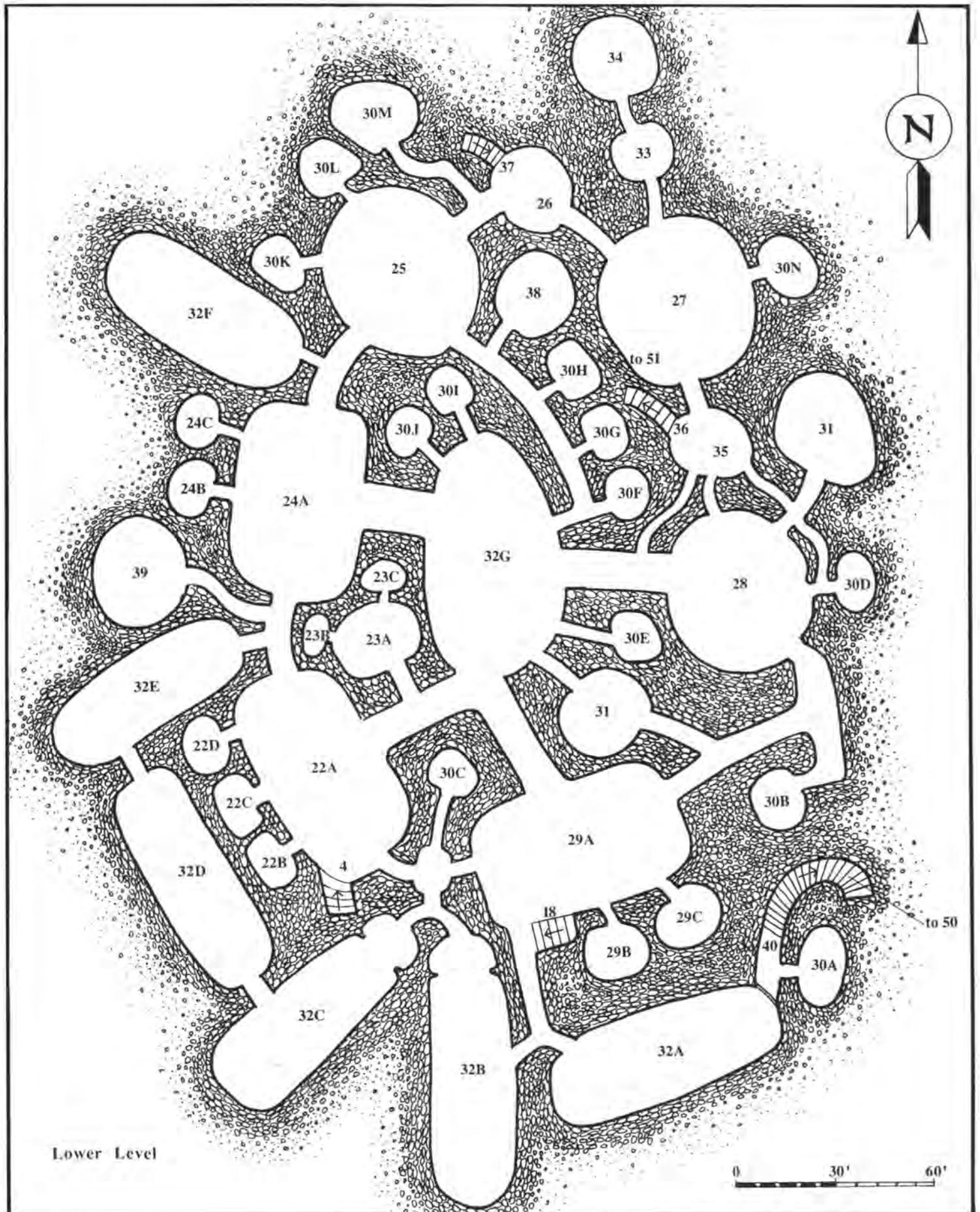


"As Eglavirdan, the King's jewel smith, shows me many things, (each more precious than previous), I am amazed by the profusion of beautiful things. Here too lie the great heirlooms of Thranduil's House, including Oropher's great axe, Culubeleg Toroghast Trollbane, which he received as a gift in Beleriand. Its great single-bladed head chased with patterns and runes of power in a glowing red gold is said to have been brought from the furthest west by Finrod. The axe's shaft is the stone-hard shinbone of a Troll, drilled and fluted so that it sang out when swung, calling doom upon its foes.

"Eglavirdan seems most anxious to learn how I have obtained the black stone sphere I gave to the King. He has been charged with polishing the stone to bring out its full luster and wishes me to see the results, as they are 'most curious.' He puts the dark sphere in my hand, and as he extinguishes all the lamps and lights of the Treasury but one, the jewels all about us twinkle brightly now. Most puzzled am I. As it becomes dark, to my surprise, the stone becomes warmer, almost hot. Soon the stone itself throws off what seems a smouldering light, deep red like a dying fire. The stone weighs heavier in my hand. The light grows and flickers until I can almost believe that the stone is the Dragon's Eye, as the fisherman said. Can it be the very Eye of Smaug, balefully burning with Udunur, Hell's fire? The light cast by all the other jewels nearby dims, and the deep shadows all about grow darker and looming. Then Galion and Eglavirdan relight the lamps. The gloom flees, and the jewel again appears to be nothing but a sullen stone, with veins of fading red.

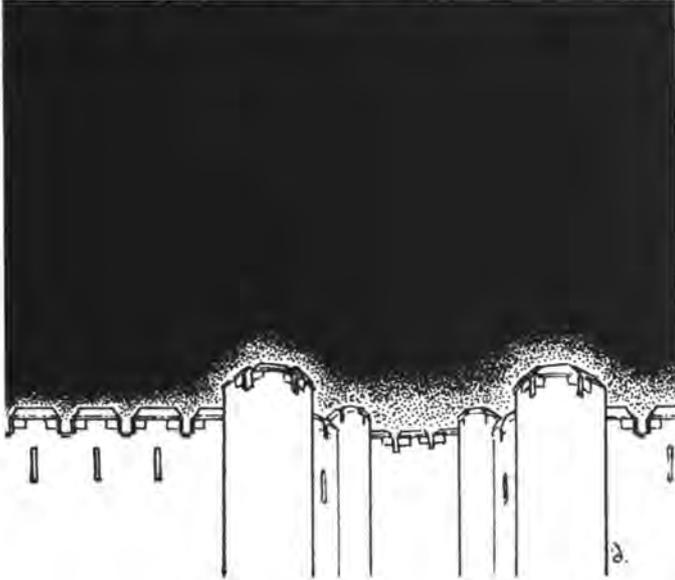
"Cautiously, Eglavirdan takes it from me and places it into the silver casket, remarking, 'Quite strange! I will endeavor to uncover any further properties of the stone, for it seems a thing of hidden power.'

"Distracted by the demonstration, I can hardly recall any of the other treasures shown me. I cannot recall their histories, fabulous though they are. After a time, Galion and I continue our tour of the palace.



"As we proceed to a stairway (#36) down to the cellars, we pass doors which Galion calls Gadroth, or cells to hold prisoners, rarely in use these days. Other passages and tall archways lead into large halls used as dormitories (#32), housing many of the Forest-folk when the need arises.

28. "The Wood Shop houses the tools and tables used by the King's finest craftsmen. Lovers of wood, Thranduil's Folk carve elaborate staffs, chairs and utensils in this well-lighted room.



29A-C. "The Ondadthroth, or 'Hall of the Masons,' is the cave where the stone carvers and masons of the King keep their tools, for their work is in a sense, the whole of the palace and fortress, its chambers, halls and passageways. Many years were spent in delving and shaping the marrow of the hill into the wonder it is today. Their work is mostly done, though they spend some time enhancing it. Many Silvan stonecarvers have gone on to other works. A few now work on rare stone and crystal occasionally unearthed. Although this jewel and bead work cannot compare with that of the Noldor, it is quite keen and artful. The King's collection of such 'trinkets' has grown over an age, so that his court is aglow, during feast and celebration, with gleaming and glittering jewels. Of course, the finished jewelry is stored in the Treasury.

30 A-N. "Many cells lie empty here. They appear to be small and dark, not at all comfortable. I decline my guide's offer to inspect a cell more closely.

31. "The Elven Woodworkers store supplies and raw, unworked pieces here; extra tables and tools are also stored here.

32 A-G. "These dormitories are simple, clean and bright chambers with fresh water, cisterns, and pallets. There is little evidence of anyone living here now.

33. "The first Jewel Hall is small but overwhelming in content; I describe it in some detail above (see #27)."

34. "The second Jewel Hall contains the rarer gems, jewels and magic items treasured by the Wood-elves.

35. "The small Entry Hall is quite impressive. A soft, warm glow bathes the area near the stairs.

36. "This twisting stone stairway leads down to the cellars.

37. "These twisting stairs lead back to the Upper Level.

38. "Near the hall leading to the Pottery Hall, this chamber holds extra wheels, tools and other items sometimes needed by the King's potters.

39. "Lying halfway between the Tanning Hall and Weaving Hall, this storage area serves both. Surplus tools and workbenches are stored here and remain remarkably free of dust.

40. "These broad, winding lamp-lit stairs lead to the Cellars below.

CELLAR

41 A-D. "Here lies the Solchroth, or Root-cellar, where various edible tubers and roots collected in the forest are stored in great piles, bins and barrels. Three smaller caves (41B-D) store the roots at cool temperatures.

42. "Passing a dark Gadroth, we enter the Widthroth, or wine cellar, filled with barrels of wines, berry-brandies and cordials. Galion greets them all as old friends, explaining to me the meaning of the carvings on their lids, which denote their place of origin. Judging it appropriate to toast some of those of great and noble lineage, we thoroughly examine the King's stock, which is exceptional! We leave singing the praises of the wines, arm in arm and most merry, if somewhat befuddled.

43. "Next we come to the Great Storeroom, or Anvachroth. I notice trapdoors by which my goods (and others!) were brought up from Nen Amon, the hill stream which runs through the underground Elven kingdom. I caution Galion about storing such goods on so steep a slope. The merry Elf has little fear they might slide down and out the trapdoors. Politely, he thanks me for pointing out the danger, for it seem to us that the entire hill was aslant and about to slip into the river, of a sudden. My host promises to inform the King directly. We wander about a bit through the stacks of crates and barrels, including those I had brought up-river, until we are assured that they are indeed secure, at least for the moment. Then we pass on through the other cellars.

44. "Finally, we arrive to a cave just above the gurgling hill stream. Inside is a device which raises the lowered portcullis that blocks entry into the hill at this point.

"It also serves as an escapeway should we be in danger of falling to the enemy during a siege," Galion boldly points out. Here Galion and I, most weary from our excursion and quite drowsy from our drinking, sit to rest a while. Galion sings a drinking song about a Dwarf in a dungeon who escapes through a door he opened in a dream — quite silly, I think, as I doze off.



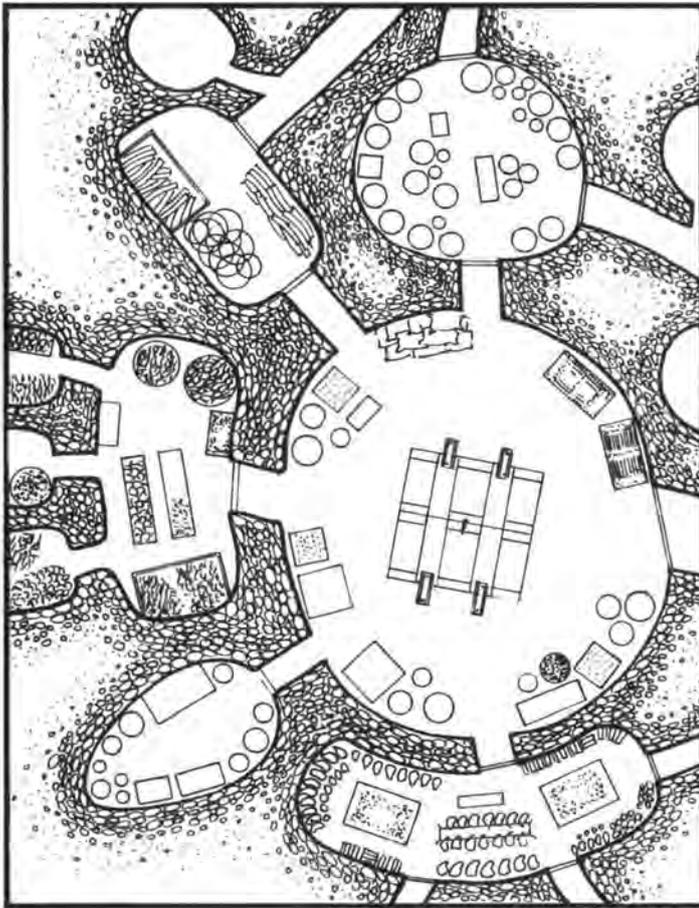
45 A-G. "On the lowest level, a number of small cells and closets stand vacant, used for some purpose unknown to me. Galion says nothing, and I allow his silence to rule.

46 A-C. "Here stand three smoke rooms where meat and fish are dried, smoked and stored for the King's tables. The smells are delicious, but my belly is too full of wine to eat now.

47. "This room is filled with wood staves and metal bands for barrel repair. Living by the River, the Wood-elves depend upon it for commerce.

"Many a barrel has floated up and down stream more than once and must be repaired," my guide proudly notes. Two Elven craftsmen batter a barrel into shape as we watch. Their skill with hammers is admirable to one born all-thumbs, like myself.

48. "This storage room contains cast-offs and odds and ends from the barrel repair cells and other chambers on this lowest level of the domain.



49. "The Entrance Chamber near the stairs is spacious and glows with a soft, golden light. The sharp odor of fermenting wines is in the air and awakens a desire in me to sample more of the Elven grape.

50. "These twisting stairs lead up to the Lower Level of the stronghold. The steps are uneven and smooth, making quite a task of simply walking up or down them at a good pace. Galion almost floats down the steps, I note.

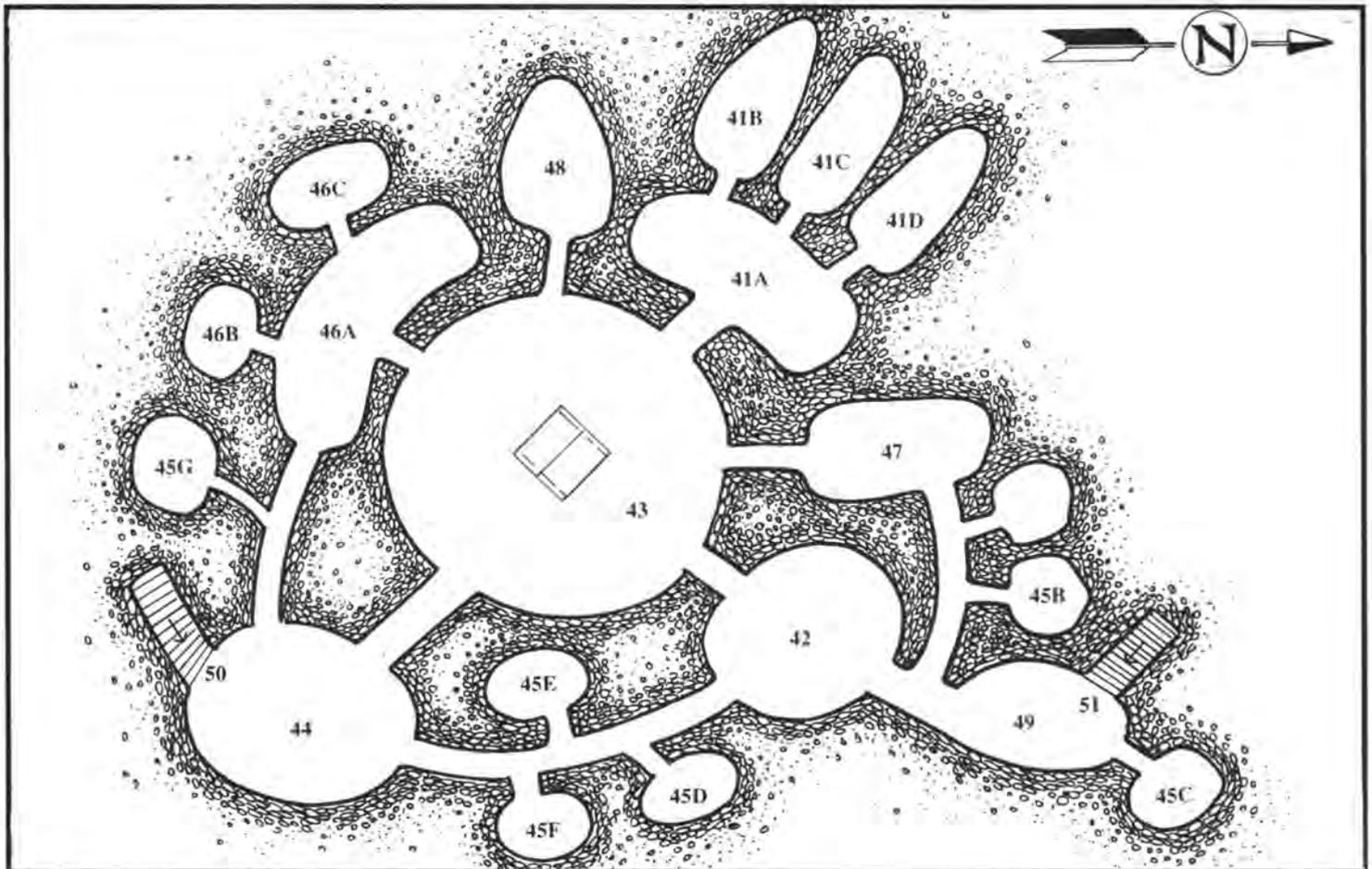
51. "The steps leading up to the Lower Level twist and wind like a river cast in stone. Were the light not so clear and bright, would fear falling, for the steps themselves are worn smooth and not at all level."

THE END OF THE TALE

"When I awoke the next morning, I found myself upon my bed in the apartment on the upper level that had been given me the night I arrived. Over the winter weeks and months I spent there, until spring came and I departed, I heard many tales and songs and stories of the history of Thranduil and the Tawarwaith. I learned much of the past, hearing stirring songs I had never heard before. My trade was conducted, and my return was to bring me great profit and wealth.

"In return for my gift of the black stone, King Thranduil presented to me a wardrobe of Elven-clothes: a suit for each season, most finely made, that I wore on many travels afterwards. His Queen gave me a ring with an amber jewel, inside which was caught a honey bee; I would forever after be a friend of the Forest-folk and to any kin of theirs or other Forest-elf I met."

So ends Bancadan's Tale, and so we leave Thranduil's Caverns, knowing more but not everything about the Wood-elves' underground kingdom.



5.0 ADVENTURES

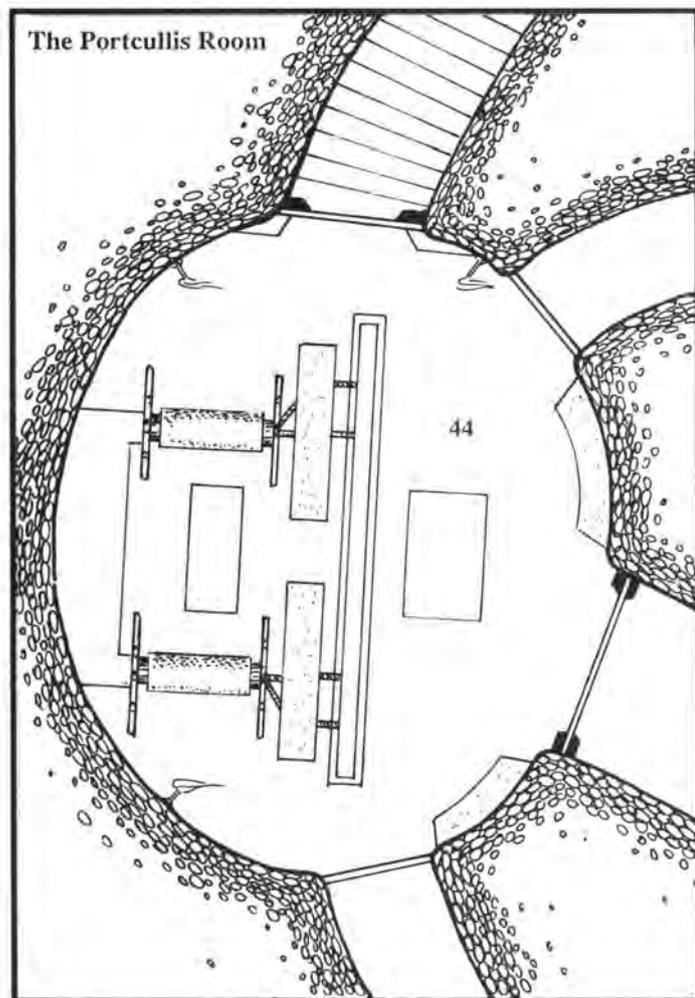
A NOTE OF WARNING

The Halls of the Elven-king are difficult to find and nearly impossible to penetrate without the cooperation of the Forest-elves. Those adventurers who manage to enter Thranduil's realm will step into a world like that of the Elder Days, a domain long since disappeared from most of Middle-earth.

5.1 A SORCERER IN THRANDUIL'S HALLS (T.A. 1450)

The delving of Aradhrynd took place between T.A. 1000 and T.A. 1050. While the main danger to Thranduil came from Dol Guldur, his realm was also threatened by the Witch-king (from the north west) and by Dragons and other fell beasts from the Grey Mountains to the North. In the east, the Desolation of Smaug defined the border of the realm.

In T.A. 1450, Angmar sends a party to spy upon the defenses of Thranduil's realm. Led by Nathir, a powerful sorcerer who can command and direct Great Spiders, a small party of Orc-warriors and trackers has reached the Elven Halls. The sorcerer has somehow gained entry into Thranduil's citadel and discovered much about it. The PCs must discover clues of Nathir's presence and prevent him from escaping the Halls to rejoin the Orcs awaiting him. Failing that, the PCs must prevent the sorcerer's escape from the forest and his return to Angband with the information.



5.2 THE DRAGON'S EYE (T.A. 2951)

In T.A. 2951, the Shadow returns to Dol Guldur, and many of Thranduil's folk stand guard at the borders. To equip the mustering of Wood-elves, a trading expedition of Men from New Lake-town is allowed to come to the Halls. Amongst them are several men who have fallen under sway of the the Shadow. Two high-level thieves and a disguised Easterling mage have heard talk of the Udunur, the "Dragon's Eye," and will attempt to steal it and escape. (The Easterling has some notion of its power and how to use it.) The loss of the stone could be a considerable blow to the free peoples in the war to come.

NOTE: *This adventure could also be set in the early Fourth Age, when the security surrounding Thranduil's realm is greatly relaxed.*



5.3 THE ELVES' PRISONER (T.A. 3018)

The War of the Ring is about to begin in earnest, and the Dark Lord wishes to release an important prisoner held by the Elves. In late June of T.A. 3018, a raid is made on Thranduil's southern border; several small parties of Orcs attempt to penetrate the border and release the escaped prisoner, who is awaiting them at an appointed spot in the forest. The PCs can be a small group of warrior and tracker Orcs who must find the spot, overcome the Elven guards, and escape with the prisoner. Alternately, the PCs can be a group of Elves in hot pursuit of the Orc party which has freed the prisoner; they must try to overtake the Orcs and return with the prisoner to Thranduil. In either case, the PCs should encounter flora and fauna of the forest to both help and hinder them.

NOTE: *A few Giant Spiders remain hidden in their sticky, steely webs deep in the heart of the forest. Bears prowl freely, and wolf packs, while rare, are seen. Bats by the thousands continue to live in the region's many natural caves. A handful of poisons can be found, from a stone lichen paste that dehydrates the victim to the golden fruit of the Yavin Girith, which causes a deep and sometimes fatal sleep. Helpful herbs and antidotes include the stimulant, Elben's Basket, a root, and the very valuable and rare Ul-Naza, whose leaf will neutralize any poison if taken in time.*

5.4 THE DORWINION AGENT (EARLY FOURTH AGE)

— Before Legolas led the Wood-elves out of the forest and into Ithilien, in Gondor, Thranduil's folk enjoyed a respite from the battles and threats that plagued them throughout the Third Age. Peace has returned to the embattled Elven under-Kingdom in the heart of Mirkwood Forest. But trouble never rests too long in this part of Middle-earth. Disguised as a grain merchant, an evil Dorwinion wine-seller named Dolwin has bribed a Silvan Elf to look the other way as he, Dolwin, taints the wine stored in barrels, deep in Thranduil's Halls (See #42, section 4.2). The Dorwinion agent then plans to offer his wine to Legolas at a premium price. The PCs, who are Wood-elves themselves, must catch Dolwin in the act or otherwise prove that he has tainted or plans to contaminate the wine stored at the Woodland Realm.

5.5 OTHER ADVENTURES

Few strongholds served the Free Peoples as well as the Halls of the Elven-king. Built soon after Sauron's reappearance at the beginning of the second millennium of the Third Age, the Halls served as the center of the Elven defense in Mirkwood and enabled the Forest-folk to prevent the Dark Lord's conquest of Rhovanion. Despite the constant machinations of the Evil One and a deadly and ruinous assault on the Woodland Realm at the climax of the War of the Ring, Thranduil's prized palace never fell.

Although the Halls remained forever secure, they remain an intriguing setting for adventures, and so too do the woods that surround the magnificent underground bastion. A few additional ideas for adventuring in the Wood-elves' kingdom follow.

MID-THIRD AGE ADVENTURES

Sauron had just reappeared in Endor when the construction of the Halls took place. Disguised as the Necromancer, he occupied Amon Lanc (S. "Naked Hill") in southern Mirkwood and there he constructed the fortress of Dol Guldur (S. "Hill of Sorcery"). This uncertain time, soon after Thranduil completed his stronghold, is an ideal period for adventuring.

— The Halls are occupied and nearly complete when the PCs are invited to visit the palace. While staying in the guest halls on the upper level (17A etc), one of the PCs gazes through an unfinished conduit in his bedchamber and sees Lord Taurion, one of Thranduil's vassals and councilors, hand one of the masons a necklace and scroll. Taurion whispers: "The tunnel must be finished before anyone uses the chamber." Taurion and the mason, who is named Ondringor, appear to be speaking about a secret passage that starts on the northern side of the hill. Unbeknownst to the rest of the Wood-elves, the two seem to have constructed the tunnel in order to provide an unsecured way into the Halls. The PCs are faced with the dilemma of discovering the nature of Taurion's plot.

Taurion is actually bitter because Thranduil favors Argaldor, and not Taurion's son Tauressar, for the position of High-captain of the Guard. This only the most recent of many rebuffs, for Thranduil is convinced that Taurion's cowardice led to the loss of Orpohor's body during the fighting outside the Gates of Mordor. The King and his vassal have long been at odds.

Taurion resolved to betray his King by providing Thranduil's enemies with a means to covertly enter the palace. He has paid Ondringor to carve a tunnel which enters the citadel from inside one of the two storage closets (23C) adjoining the Apothecary Hall (23A)

— Camaron the Ward-captain has spotted torchlights moving through the woods just north of the point where the Men-i-Naugrim (S. "Way of Dwarves") enters the foothills of the Mountains of Mirkwood (S. "Eryn-nu-Fuin"). Accompanied by two of his Warders, he heads northward toward Thranduil's tree-forts. He encounters the PCs along the way and immediately suspects that they might be in league with the Necromancer. Hoping to capture at least one of the company and take him to the Elf-king, Camaron prepares to attack. One of his companions startles some bats, however, betraying the Elves' presence.

— Two traitorous Warriors from the elite Magwador plan to assassinate Thranduil and his Lords by poisoning the royal winestores (42). They have enlisted an Elf-maiden, Úniel, to distract the guards long enough to enable the fiendish Elves to enter the storeroom and pour a vial of liquid Acaana into the hearty wine from Dorwinion.

LATE THIRD AGE ADVENTURES

Adventures during the late Third Age take place when King Thranduil is no longer directly threatened by the Necromancer (Sauron). Instead, the Dark Lord has returned to Mordor and his Úlair servant, Khamûl the Easterling, is the Lord at Dol Guldur. Mirkwood is a dangerous land, and the Forest-folks' formidable enemies are poised to strike the final and mortal blow against the capital of the Woodland Realm.

— A beautiful Sinda Elf-maiden named Nandeli is found lying face down beneath the surface of the Nen Amon (S. Hill Stream"), impaled by the portcullis (see 44). She has a thin knife wound just below her left ear that corresponds to the dagger carried by Arcamir, the Gondorian emissary. Thranduil orders Arcamir detained. One of the PCs believes that he/she overheard a soldier speaking with Nandeli on the lowers stairs (40) just before her death. (Thancalion, the junior of the three Captains of the Halls' Garrison, slew Nandeli when she stated that she wanted to wed Arcamir rather than him.)

— The PCs come across some voices in the forest. Coming closer to the sounds, they realize that a group of Elves are conversing about some impending attack. Further examination reveals that a unit of three bowmen assigned to a local tree-fort plan to let some of the "Necromancer's trackers" through the Silvan defense perimeter. Like the bowmen, the trackers are Elves, but they appear to taller and better armed, and they are equipped with composite bows and black steel swords. Their green tunics are trimmed in black and their hoods have cowls that cover the upper portion of their faces.

— Khamûl's Orcs recently ambushed a party of Woodmen carrying a prized bow northward toward the Halls of the Elven-king. Only two Woodmen escaped, but they succeeded in fleeing with the bow. Now, the Black Troll Ulflog and his band of six Olog-hai are attempting to recover the treasure. They have pursued the Woodmen as far as Amon Tamró (Q. "Woodpecker Hill"). As the Woodmen reach the base of the hill, they rush past the PCs.

FOURTH AGE ADVENTURES

After the fall of Dol Guldur at the end of the Third Age, Mirkwood is cleansed and renamed it Eryn Lasgalen (S. "Greenleaf Woods" or "Greenwood the Great"). Although a time of hope, many Elves began departing for the Undying Lands during the ensuing years. In addition, scattered groups of the Evil One's minions clinged to their secluded hiding places and stirred trouble for many years during the Fourth Age.

— Avaralas, the chief apprentice to Eglavirdan the Jewelsmith, covets Thranduil's treasure. The larcenous Sinda Elf plans to strip wealth from the Caves of Jewels (33 & 34) after slaying his master. Then he hopes to flee the Halls with Eglavirdan's greedy wife (Varmaldi) by way of the Hill Stream (44). One of the PCs observes Avaralas embracing Varmaldi, but he/she is not sure whether the apprentice jeweler realized that there was a witness to the tender moment. (The murderous Varmaldi is not above slaying a second victim.)

— A group of Orcs overrun a remote Tree-fort, slaying the occupants. The Elven defenders slay all but six of the attackers. Strangely, no alarm is sounded. Staying near a neighboring Tree-fort, the PCs realize that all of the holds in the area have been abandoned, save the captured site.

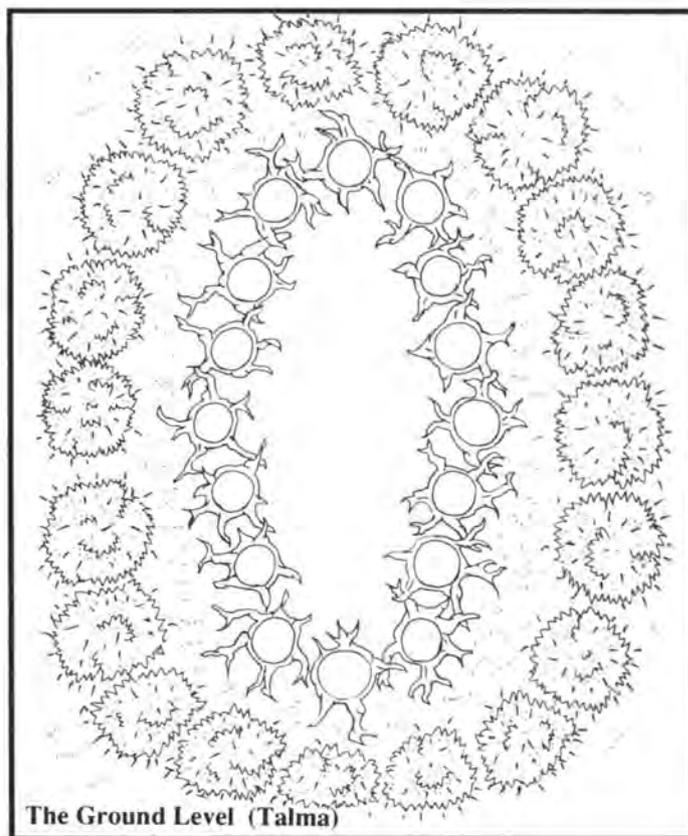
6.0 A TYPICAL TREE-FORT

A long chain of tree-forts surrounds the Woodland Realm, enabling the Wood-elves to observe movements along their borders and communicate with startling efficiency. The densest concentration of these modest arboreal strongholds appears along the southern boundary of Thranduil's Kingdom, within a day's march of the Valley of the Forest River (S. "Nan Taurduin"). There, as many as three lines of tree-forts provide defense in depth against the great threat from the South. Other tree-forts guard the Realm's less vulnerable borders on the eastern, western, and northern edges of Northern Mirkwood.

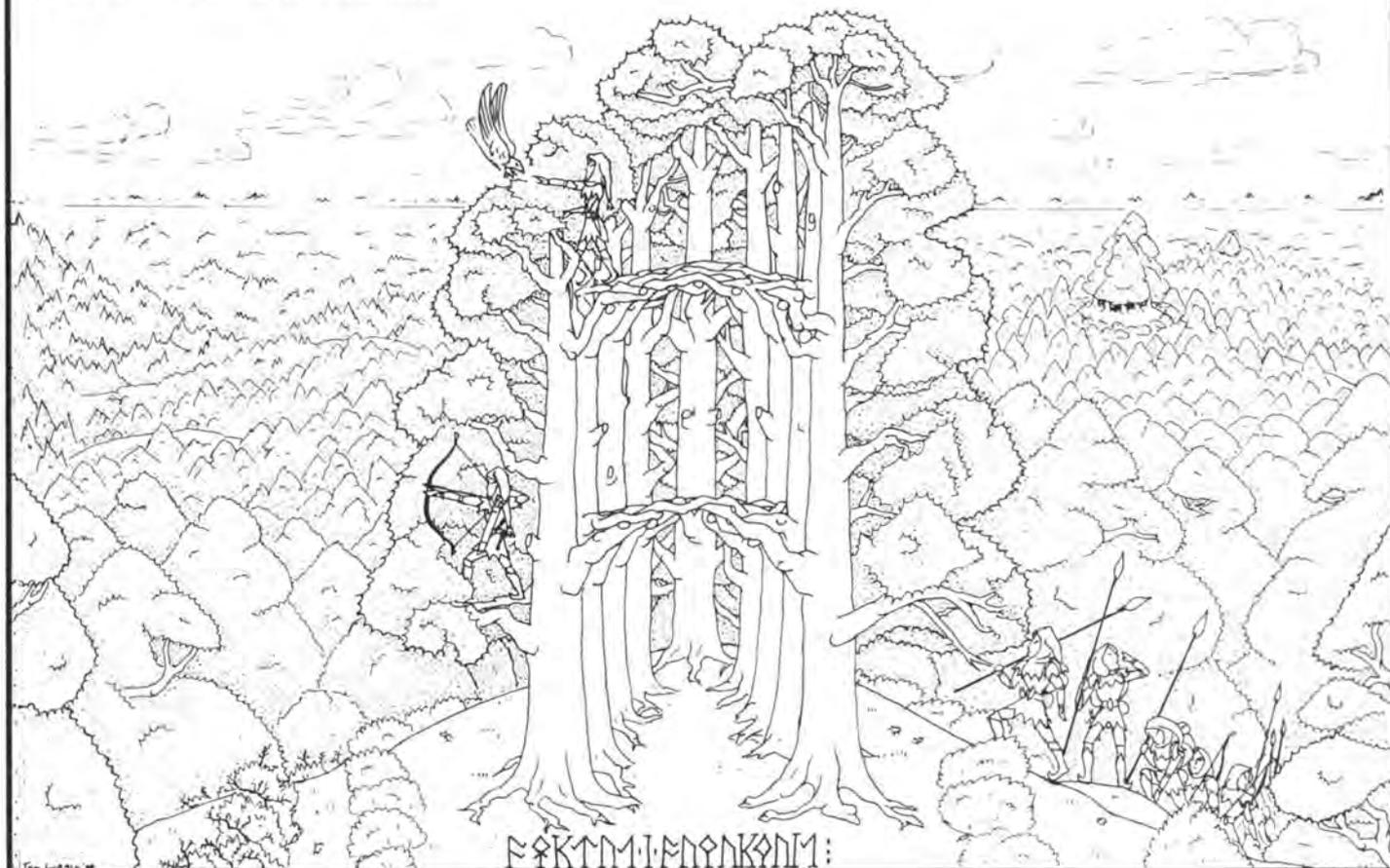
LAYOUT OF A TYPICAL TREE-FORT

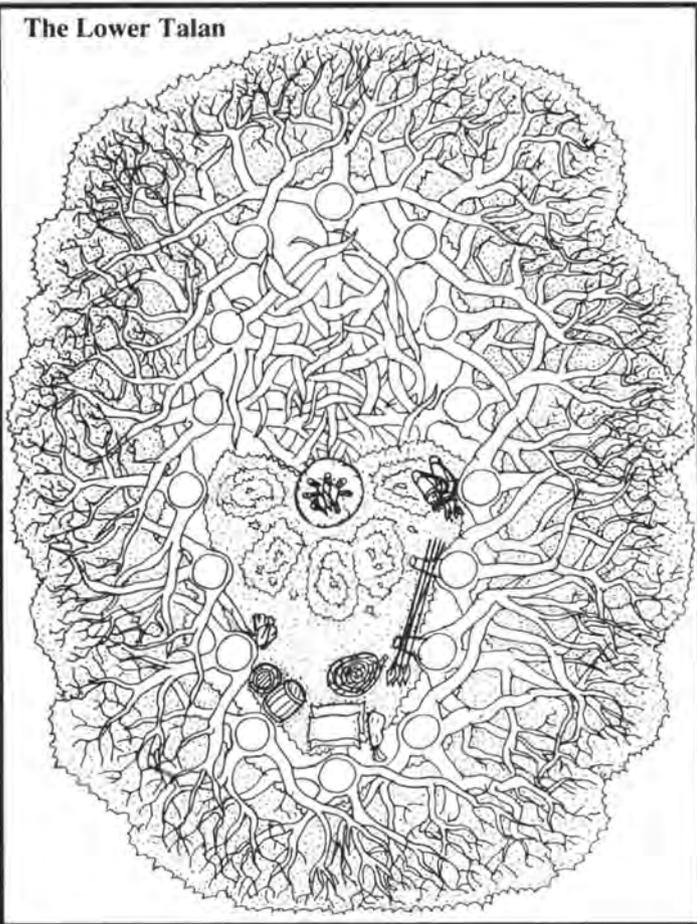
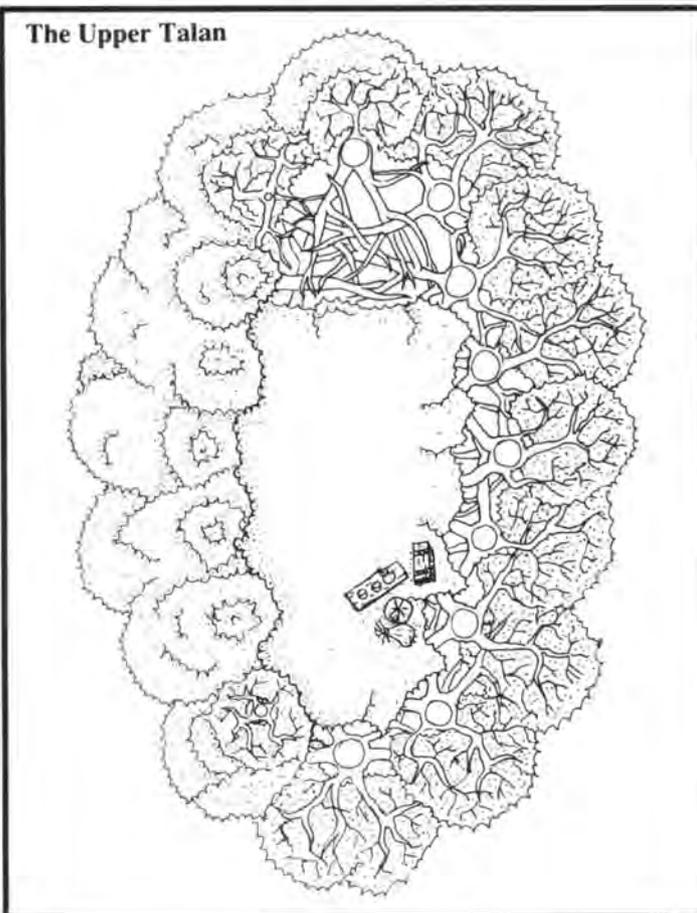
The stylized view penned by an Elven artist depicts a section of the line of tree-forts located near the Halls of the Elven-king. Each fort is situated in the trees crowning a hill and is within sight of no less than four other positions in the chain. This positioning enables the Elves to keep watch on every part of the surrounding forest. Using sounds, flags, or flickering lamp-lights or enchanted fires, their sentries constantly relay signals to one another, permitting them to sound an alarm whenever trouble brews or to simply deliver time-sensitive messages.

There are four distinct levels in an average Silvan tree-fort. First, there is the ground around the base of the tree, which is called the "Talma." Then there are two floors, or "Telain" (sing. "Talan"), that serve as both the quarters and work area for the fort's three residents. The roof closes above the Upper Talan and provides an ideal spot for a lookout.



A View of a Typical Silvan Tree-fort



The Lower Talan**The Upper Talan****THE FLOOR (TALMA)**

Sixteen beautiful oak trees crown the summit of this hill, which is known as Amon Tamró (Q. "Woodpecker Hill"). Kept free from underbrush and ringed with two shrub-walls, the ground around the base of the tree-fort acts as pair of natural "baileys." They encircle the trees, which together are analogous to the walls of a towering "keep." The prickly hedge-ring that comprises the outer shrub-wall wards off animals and makes it virtually impossible for intruders to crawl up to the base of the trees without betraying their presence and/or impaling themselves on the sharp thorns. In contrast, the inner row of bushes offers berries to the defenders and acts as a deterrent against enemy missiles.

THE LOWER TALAN

The lower floor arches about ten to twelve feet above the base of the trees. Retractable rope ladders enable the Elves to get in and out of fort with relative ease. Some of the Forest-folk, however, prefer to climb up into the Lower Talan by way of the outer branches.

Thoroughly intertwined, the branches of the fourteen evergreen trees that support the fort have been carefully harnessed to provide a relatively flat surface upon which the leaf-covered floor is constructed. This sturdy yet comfortable surface is divided into two areas: the inner chamber, which serves as a sort of parlor and common room; and the balcony that extends outside of the circle of tree trunks, which is utilized as a defensive hound or rampart.

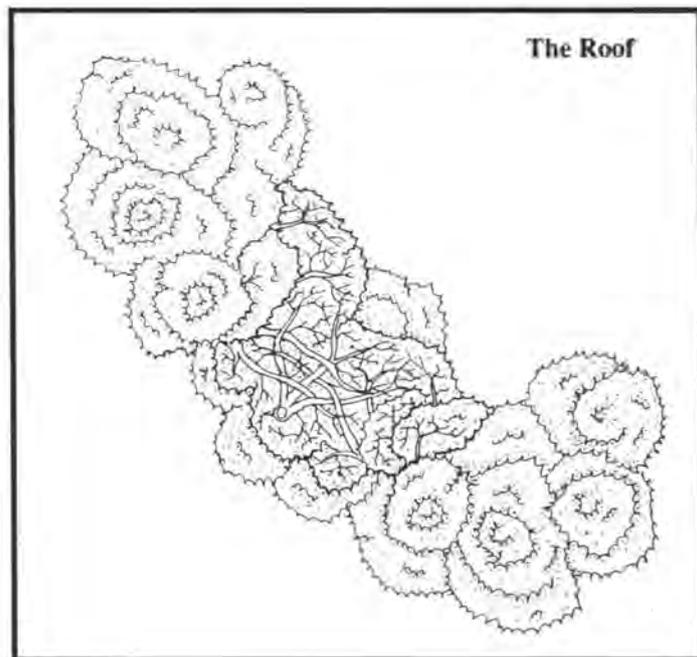
THE UPPER TALAN

The Upper Talan is constructed just like the Lower Talan. Here the trees' branches have been trimmed and manipulated in order to provide a level, uninterrupted living space. Ladders join the inner chamber with the Lower Talan, which is ten to twelve below.

A storeroom, treasury, and armory, the Upper Talan is a much more private refuge than the Lower Talan. It is the last and best bastion in the tree-fort.

THE ROOF

The tree-fort's thick roof is composed of a web of natural vaults. Thick foliage covers the arching boughs, keeping the rain out and affording the residents shade. In addition, the roof is strong enough to support a half-dozen defenders, although the area is rarely occupied by more than one or two watchmen.

The Roof

7.0 MASTER GARRISON TABLE

The following abbreviations are used below: Lvl=Level; Hits=Concussion Hits; AT=Armor Type; DB=Defensive Bonus; Sh=Shield; Gr=Greaves; OB=Offensive Bonus; MovM=Movement and Maneuver Bonus.

AT — Two letter codes give the character/creature's **MERP** armor type: No=No Armor; SL=Soft Leather; RL=Rigid Leather; Ch=Chain; Pl=Plate. The number is the equivalent **Rolemaster** armor type: 1=No Armor; 2=Robes; 3=Soft Hide (as skin); 4=Heavy Hide (as skin); 5=Leather Jerkin; 6=Leather Jerkin and Greaves; 7=Leather Coat; 8=Reinforced Leather Coat; 9=Leather Breastplate; 10=Leather Breastplate and Greaves; 11=Half-hide Plate (as skin); 12=Full-hide Plate (as skin); 13=Chain Shirt; 14=Chain Shirt and Greaves; 15=Chain Mail Suit; 16=Chain Hauberk; 17=Metal Breastplate; 18=Meat Breastplate and Greaves; 19=Half-plate; 20=Full Plate.

Weapons — Weapon abbreviations follow the OBs: ba=battle axe; bo=bola; bs=broadsword; cl=club; cp=composite bow; da=dagger; fa=falchion; ha=hand axe; hb=halbard; hcb=heavy crossbow; ja=javelin; lb=longbow; lcb=light crossbow; ma=mace; ml=mounted lance; pa=pole arm; qs=quarterstaff; ro=rock (Rock=Fall/Crush attack); sb=short (or horse) bow; sc=scimitar; sl=sling; sp=spear; ss=short sword; th=two-hand sword; ts=throwing star; wh=whip; wh=war hammer; wm=war mattock.

DB, Sh, Gr — Defensive bonuses include stats and shield. Shield references include quality bonus (e.g., "Y10" means "yes, a +10 shield."). "A" and "L" indicate arm and leg greaves respectively. Parenthetical references indicate some equivalent covering.

Notes — Spell lists are denoted by three numbers (e.g., 1/2/3). The first number refers to lists known to 5th lvl, the second to lists known to 10th lvl, and the third to lists known to 20th lvl. Parenthetical notes indicate equivalent or approximate profession.

Name	Race	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	Mov M	Notes
KING AND HIS RETAINERS											
Thranduil	Sinda	33	175	Pl/18	95	Y20	(A/L)	242bs	247lb	45	Warrior.—/9/—. 66PP.
Young Legolas	Sinda	8	94	Ch/13	50	Y10	N	90bs	120bs	35	Warrior.
Older Legolas	Sinda	28	148	Ch/13	70	Y10	N	205bs	240lb	45	Warrior.
Lords	Sinda	20	133	Pl/18	60	Y15	A/L	155bs	180lb	25	Warriors.2/—/—. 20PP.
Lords	Sinda	20	66	Ch/13	50	Y10	N	85bs	65lb	20	Bards. 1/2/5, 40PP.
Lesser Retainers	Sinda	12	115	Ch/13	50	Y15	N	135bs	115lb	15	Warriors.
KING'S GUARD											
High-captain	Silvan	12	121	Ch/15	55	Y10	(A/L)	140bs	125sp	20	Warriors.
Guard-captains	Silvan	10	111	Ch/15	45	Y5	(A/L)	130bs	115sp	15	Warriors.
Guard Horsemen	Silvan	6	72	Ch/14	45	Y10	L	105ml/sp	85sp	15	Warriors.
Guardsmen	Silvan	6	74	Ch/15	45	Y10	(A/L)	110bs	90sp	10	Warriors.
Apprentice Guard	Silvan	4	55	Ch/13	40	Y5	N	90bs	80sp	10	Warriors.
HALLS' GARRISON											
Captains	Silvan	10	117	Ch/15	45	Y5	(A/L)	135bs	125lb	15	Warriors.
Watchmen	Silvan	5	74	Ch/13	40	Y5	N	100bs	90sp	10	Warriors.
Warriors	Silvan	4	58	Ch/13	40	Y5	N	90bs	80sp	10	Warriors.
WOODLAND WARDERS											
Ward-captains	Silvan	9	89	SL/3	55	Y10	N	80sp	65lb	25	Rangers.—/4/—. 18PP.
Warders	Silvan	4	47	RL/9	45	Y5	N	55sp	45lb	20	Rangers.—/2/—. 8PP.
THE PENGWADOR (Brotherhood of the Bow)											
Captains	Silvan	7	100	Ch/13	25	N	N	90bs	125lb	15	Warriors.
Bowmen	Silvan	5	80	Ch/13	20	N	N	75bs	95lb	10	Warriors.
Warriors	Silvan	3	65	Ch/13	20	N	N	45bs	85lb	10	Warriors.
THE PELEGWADOR (Brotherhood of the Axe)											
Captains	Silvan	7	104	Ch/15	40	Y5	(A/L)	115ha	95cp	15	Warriors.
Axemen	Silvan	5	75	Ch/13	30	Y	N	95ha	80cp	10	Warriors.
Warriors	Silvan	3	63	Ch/13	25	Y	N	75ha	55cp	5	Warriors.
THE EGWADOR (Brotherhood of the Spear)											
Captains	Silvan	8	113	Ch/15	25	N	(A/L)	125sp	110sp	15	Warriors.
Spearmen	Silvan	5	78	Ch/13	15	N	N	100sp	85sp	10	Warriors.
Warriors	Silvan	3	65	Ch/13	10	N	N	80sp	50sp	10	Warriors.
THE MAGWADOR (Brotherhood of the Sword)											
Captains	Silvan	9	121	Ch/15	45	Y5	(A/L)	130bs	120cp	15	Warriors.
Swordsmen	Silvan	6	99	Ch/14	45	Y5	L	110bs	80cp	10	Warriors.
Warriors	Silvan	3	61	Ch/13	35	Y	N	80bs	50cp	10	Warriors.
MISCELLANEOUS FOLK											
Seers/Astrologs.	Silvan	11	37	No/1	20	N	N	45ss	20da	10	Bard/Seers/Astr.2/13—.
Alchemists	Silvan	9	33	No/1	20	N	N	35ss	25da	15	Mage/Alchs.—/16/—.
Apprentices	Silvan	4	22	No/1	15	N	N	25da	-25	15	Bard/Seers.—/6/—.
Cooks	Silvan	3	43	No/1	15	N	N	60ha	35da	15	(Warriors).
Smiths	Silvan	4	47	SL/6	15	N	A	75wh	65sp	20	(Warriors).
Artisans	Silvan	3	38	SL/5	15	N	N	55ss	30da	20	(Warriors).
Servants	Silvan	2	17	No/1	10	N	N	35ss	10da	10	(Warriors).

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