

LOCATION:	Mineous Hundred, Daenshire, Kingdom of Kanday
STATUS:	Legal Settlement within a Royal Forest
GOVERNMENT:	Warden of Mineous/ Hadros of Gurian
POPULATION:	29 (6 households)
CULTIVATED LAND:	155 acres

History

Gurian is located on an outcrop, that elevates some 15 feet above the surrounding area. The southern side of the hill, which is encompassed by a small stream, forms a steep cliff. Commanding the nearby area and being easily defendable, the location is an ideal settling area.

Despite the lack of any direct signs of past inhabitation, the place has clearly been used since ancient times. This is proved by the remains of earthworks along on the eastern flank of the hill, and by a set of tumuli located nearby.

The current settlement originates from a simple trapper's hut built by a man called Guran around 540 TR. He found the place deserted and overgrown with thorns and light wood, and without any signs of former housings. He started to clear the surface of the outcrop, and built a simple log cabins. After this, he started to crop vegetables and some cereals in plots assarted up- and downstream Gurian Stream. Guran started a family and adopting the clan name of "Gurian". Since then, clan Gurian extended and farmed the arable land generation by generation.

When the area was declared a Royal Forest in 598 TR by the royal decree know as the "*Ibonost Bull*", all residents and their descendents were allowed "*to stay, as long as their doings don't interfer with Gozydan or Royal interests*". The family also acquired the right to hunt within the forest for an annual fee of 2 shillings.

Over the time, relatives by marriage moved to the hill an erected additional buildings, extending it into a small hamlet. Although Gurian is quite far from the regular Gozyda ranges, the clan protected the accessible sides of the settlement with a simple palisade.

Credits

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References

Please visit the websites at
www.lythia.com
www.kelestia.com
www.columbia-games.com



Current Situation

Within the past two generations, the inhabitants of Gurian took to robbery in order to supplement their income from farming, hunting and foraging. They started by occasional raids on travelers on the Mineous Trail (known as “King’s Way” nowadays) in the Kandian Teba hundred and within the Thardic Eidel Province.

This changed in 718, when the Gurian clanhead Hadros made an arrangement with Paol of Uladar, guildmaster of the Ibonost Lia-Kavair and son-in-law of Keliel of Gurian. Paol had obtained the king’s permission to inspect all cargoes travelling the King’s Way, as a kind of tax inspector. Paol passes information on low risk/ high revenue travellers on the King’s Way and impending patrols of the Ibonost forces to the bandits. Goods taken from travelers are fenced by Paol’s brother in Eidru. When the king is in Ibonost, some bandits move to Ibonost to find suitable victims amongst the king’s petitioners. Between the raids, the inhabitants make their livings by farming their land, hunting, and foraging nuts and berries in the forest.

The proximity to the Kandian-Thardic border gives a relative high security to the robbers, who just have to cross the borderline to get out of range of possible prosecutors.

For further information on Paol of Uladar, see “**BANDITS OF DYRISA ROAD**” in Jonathan Nicholas’ article on **IBONOST**, 2003.

Local Map Key

1 **BRIGAND/ TRAPPER/ FARMER**
‘Captain’ Hadros of Gurian (42) is the leader of Clan Gurian and its brigand troop. He is a sturdy, dark haired and de-

cidated man, a natural leader. Hadros is an excellent woodsman, knowing his ways through the forest, and being a good archer with the shortbow. In fights, he prefers to use a spear and a handaxe to a sword, saying, that swords would only attract problems when you don’t need them.

Though Hadro’s wife Melise of Uladar (43) almost never leaves Gurian, she is well respected by all men and women within the settlement. She coordinates most ‘civil’ affairs within the settlement, as ploughing the fields, collecting medicinal herbs and mushrooms, etc. This is essential to hold up the masquerade of a usual forest settlement. She does not shun standing up against anyone, not even her husband or Jarol. Since Jarol brought Selireth to Gurian, Melise has tried to make the girl’s involuntary stay as pleasant as possible.

Nordis (19), Melise’s oldest son, is an athletic and handsome young man, and helps with trapping, farming and robbing. He has two sisters. Penlise (17), a calm girl, helps her mother with housekeeping. She likes Selitreth and became her best ‘friend’ at Gurian. She is also a skilled tanner and furrier. The youngest girl, Chaleryn (15), causes trouble to her mother. Chaleryn wants to become a famous brigand like her father and her uncles, and has tried to follow the raiding party several times.

The family farms 12 acres of land and owns a “Hunter Badge” allowing the bearer to hunt whatever he likes within the bounds of Mineous (see “*MINEOUS FOREST*”). They also keep chicken and goose on their large croft.

2 **BRIGAND/ HERDER**
Caldith of Uladar (41) and his wife Sammeth of Gurian (31) have 5 children - three girls: Maris (11), Ilka (5), Panyeth

(4); and two boys: Daffyd (7), and Karel (2).

Caldith began his career as a cutpurse in Kuseme and Coranan. Later, he became a bully for the Lia-Kavair. Being caught after accidentally having killed a 'client', he was sentenced to death, but managed to escape. He fled into Kandian territory, and being outlawed he was forced to become a highwayman. He met Sammeth at Ibonost, when she tried to pickpocket him. He became fond of the young woman, wed her and followed her to Gurian. In summer, the couple usually returns to Ibonost to attend the monthly market, where Sammeth trains the older kids in petty theft and pickpocketing. Caldith acts as a messenger between Paol and the brigands. He also joins the hamlet's men on the major raids. The family owns 20 goats, 30 sheep, 4 cows and a bull, requiring 30 acres of pasture along Gurian Stream. They also grow some vegetables within their croft (½ acre). While the family stays in Ibonost, the Dolaidin family (see 3) cares for the animals.

3 **BRIGAND/ HUNTER/ FARMER**
 Diron of Dolaidin (49) is married to Iselith of Gurian (46), Captain Hadros' older sister. Diron is a half-gozydan and a skilled tracker and hunter, usually supplying the community with fresh game in winter. He and his sons Revard (22) and Diehfam (19) join the brigands attack group only on the larger raids. Most of the time, the men, Iselith and her daughters Salira (23), Tamael (15), and Mirelael (12) till the fields or care for Caldith's herds (see 2). The family owns two Hunter's Badges (allowing their bearers to hunt within Mineous Forest; see **MINEOUS FOREST**) and works on 8 acres of land.

4 **BRIGAND/ FARMER.**
 Jarol of Gurian is Captain Hadros'

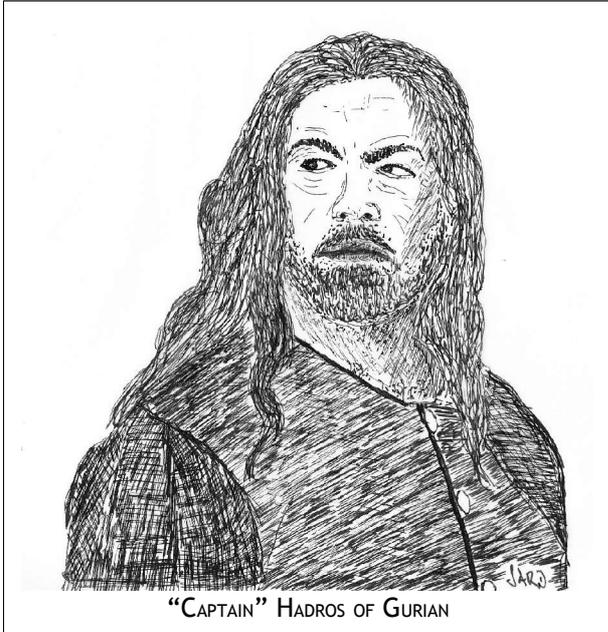
younger cousin. He is an extraordinary brutal man of 38. His unmindful behaviour tends to endanger the brigand's operations and Hadros is always careful to keep Jarol's impulses under control.

Three years ago, Jarol brought Selireth, a young peasant girl, to Gurian. After having robbed and murdered most of her family after a chance encounter during a hunt, he tied and blindfolded the pretty girl of then 15 years and carried her home. He told her, that she would be his wife and would stay with him or die. Knowing no help, she stayed and gave birth to two boys, Shurin (2) and Ulfid (½) in the meantime. Selireth still thinks about fleeing to escape her daily torture, but knows that her new family, Clan Gurian, would hunt her down or even kill her to prevent her witness their crimes to anyone.

Jarol often neglects his 10 acres of land.

5 **FARMER**
 Keliel of Gurian is the uncle of Captain Hadros and Jarol's father. His gozydan wife died several years ago. Being 58, Keliel retired from his live as a brigand four years ago, when he received an impairing wound during an pursuit by the king's men. His impairment doesn't allow for fast movements and so he now concentrates on farming the land to supply the group with fresh vegetable from his croft and fruit grown in an orchard located within the palisade. Additionally, he farms 9 acres of land.

Keliel is not proud on the brutish manners of his son Jarol, but keeps on excusing his deeds with "the gozydan blood running through his veins". He is concerned about his "daughter in law" Selireth, knowing her fate if she would finally try to run away. He tries to comfort her with small presents, like carved brooches and self-made talismans, and to



"CAPTAIN" HADROS OF GURIAN

calm down Jarol before seeing his wife when he returns home. Also, he pretends to have a "normal family live", often visiting his grandsons.

Keliel's daughter Halryd (24) is married to Paol of Uladar, guildmaster of the Ibonost Lia-Kavair. His oldest son Korald (41) is a farmer at Colhin Manor near Ibonost, his younger son Isthén (32) works as a carter, hauling goods along the King's way. Both act as scouts and messengers between the brigands and Paol.

6 HORSEBREEDER/ FARMER/ BRIGAND (OFF MAP)

Filiel of Gurian is a calm woman of 46 years and a cousin of Hadros of Gurian. Her husband Melioth of Taztan, an ostler from Kuseme, was killed during one of the brigand's operations 7 years ago. Since then, she took over the responsibility for her husband's business, who was an only moderately successful breeder of cold blooded horses, especially small, sturdy animals he sold to miners. However, the winnings and the bounty were high enough to apprentice the oldest son Jerkil (25) at an ostler in Coranan. He now works as a journeyman for an ostler mainly serving the miners at Darentel's

Finding and Iben's Lode Mine. His younger brother Uthret (22), an excellent horseman, supports his mother and crews up with the Gurian raid parties as does his youngest brother Lagrik (20). Their sisters Sanedroel (19) and Sanoua (12) help with the family's almost 20 horses.

The family's hut, stable and pasture (30 acres) is located 500 yards along the way upstream Gurian Stream. The family also works on 5 acres on the hamlet's fields.

6 STABLE (OFF MAP)

The deal with Paol of Uladar provides high wins and has allowed the robbers to obtain horses. The rides allow the brigands to set up the locations of their ambushes relatively free. On the other hand, the presence of the steeds might rise the foresters' suspect. Therefore, the stable for the mounts has been moved to the woods, to a location that will unlikely be spot by chance, and out of earshot from the settlement and the stream. The stable is a robust timber building surrounded by a large pasture. The brigands always use different ways to and fro the stable from the hamlet. Lagrik of Taztan or another member of the Taztan family usually stays at the secret stable to care for the steeds.

7 "THE ANCIENT GRAVES"

A group of five tumuli is located west of the hamlet. Their ridges are enclosed by massive stone plates reaching deep into the ground. The flanks are overgrown by grass and scrubby bushes. There is no obvious entrance, but a slight depression in the side of the largest tumulus gives evidence of a long-forgotten attempt to excavate suspected treasures. The residents of Gurian are all but superstitious, but nonetheless avoid the tumuli's proximity as far as possible. They refer to the tumuli as "the ancient graves". However, the true origin and

purpose of the mounds is unknown.

8 FIELDS (MOSTLY OFFMAP)

The hamlet has three fields. The rather small “*OLD FIELD*” is shown on the map, “*NEW FIELD*”, with most of the arable land lies downstream Gurian Stream, “*UPPER FIELD*” is located upstream, past the pastures.

Brigands' Assault Tactics

The brigands usually strike on the King's Way between Mina River and Sweetwater River. They establish a base camp somewhere south of the trail and have two scouts watching the trail to both directions.

When spotting viable victims, the watchmen signal their comrades who establish an ambush at one of a couple of suitable locations, usually afoot, leaving the mounts at the base camp. They quietly wait for their victims, then show themselves wearing masks, and blocking the victims' way and retreat, and demanding to surrender certain amounts of silver, valuables or wares. Threatened by armed men with bows, spears and swords - and usually outnumbered - most travellers will eventually agree, preferring to leave parts of their property than their lives.

Then the brigands will retreat southwards into the forest, leaving one of the

scouts to further watch their victims' further steps until they are confident of their victims abandon the area. If the victims try to trace the bandits, the brigands will either take their steeds, outrun the pursuers towards the Blackwoods, and then cover their trace turning back northwards, or try to discourage their pursuers by eliminating them one by one or even ambush again and eradicate them, if necessary. Sometimes, they also take hostages (especially women, children, or priests) to ensure they are not followed. After a few hours, these hostages are usually released somewhere near Mineous Trail. However, hostages kept by Jarol of Gurian may have to face a more cruel fate.

However, after two or three days, the brigands will always relocate their encampment or retreat to Gurian.

The brigands have agreed on distinct signs with Paol of Uladar, like camping at certain sites, or wearing special clothing. Travellers showing these signs will not be harassed by the brigands (but possibly others).

The Gurian brigands defend their area. If they encounter other groups of brigands, they will try to move them off or even kill them. This is an attempt to avoid the attraction of inquisitions by the foresters, the sheriff, or of the Laranian knights of Venric.