

Gilneas

"We shall prevail!"

Official name of the political entity: Kingdom of Gilneas



Banner of Gilneas

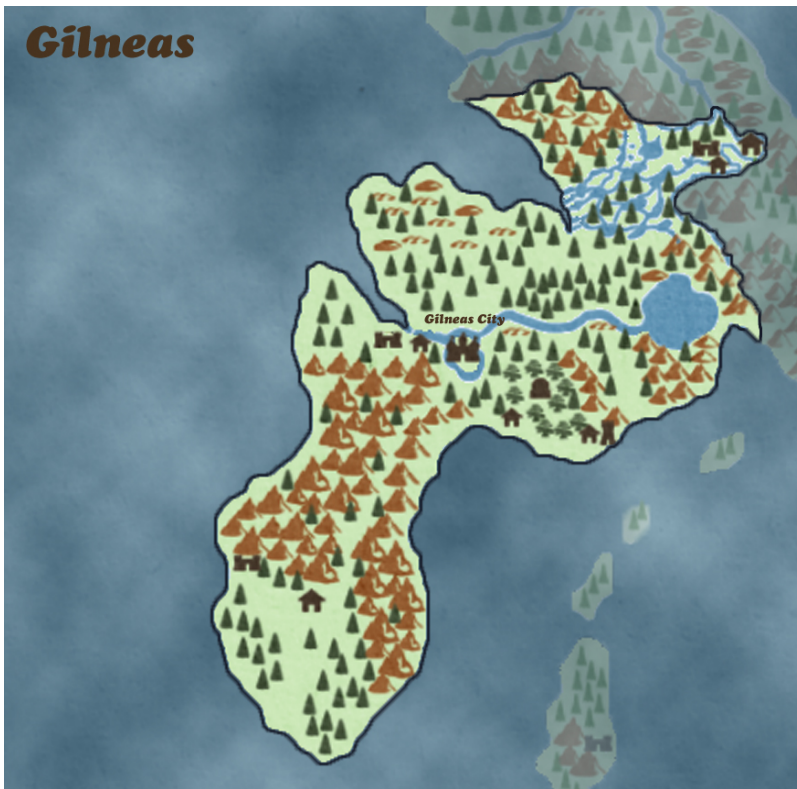
Unofficial names: Gilneas, Crown of Gilneas, Greymane domain, Grey Kingdom.

Area: 305 000 km².

Estimated population: Around 4 732 000 souls at the beginning of the First War.

National colours: Black, dark blue, gray.

Ruling house: House of Greymane



Gilneas before the First War

1 . Introduction

An ancient kingdom in southwestern Lordaeron, Gilneas stands a wonder amongst the human nations. Industrialized during the rule of late King Archibald III., who exploited vast resources brought from Northrend and favorable features of his domain, the kingdom turned a major political power within the whole region.

2. History

A dawn of civilization

There is a rather large scarcity of written sources pertaining the lands of Gilneas in the age before the mighty Arathi kings, hence our knowledge is dubious at best. At the time, this rather strange shaped peninsula was a part of the vast expanse of the Amani Empire. Its masters, the grey mossed Darmani, ruled uncontested amongst its grey, rocky peaks and dark, blackened forests, guarding the southern borders of this mighty, barbarian empire. In time, this would change, however. Slowly, yet steadily, the very first

humans arrived to these rainy lands, leaving their northern homes of amongst the plains of Tirisfal, quickly coming at odds with the local trolls. The Darmani would not see them an equal opponent however, and these humans had been quickly enslaved, only a few small clans keeping their freedom by settling amongst the areas later known as Headlands, open, rocky highlands where they could negate all the advantages the grey trolls had.

The following centuries had seen a little change. Bar occasional human uprisings and problems with the clans of Headlands, a mere nuisance in truth, nothing could even scratch the troll dominion over Gilneas. Still, a change would be at hand, in due time.

The Burning Ember

As the humans of Gilneas had scrambled to their lives under the heel of the Darmani and Amani, a powerful menace arose to the troll empire arose in the east. Led by their chieftain, the mighty warrior Thoradin, the Arathi Tribe slowly united all of the humanity under one banner, ensuing a rallying call to all those tribes and clans under the rule of trolls to stand alongside their brethren. And heed, they did. Arathor soon established itself a regional power, and even a great number of the humans of Gilneas flocked to its banner, especially those of Headlands. And as the Great Troll War reached its impetus, their chance to free the rest of their kin and make themselves masters of their homeland had finally come.

There was one particular clan enslaved by the Darmani at the time. It is not known where exactly does their name come from, as the Gilneans would have us believe it was adopted after the rocky peaks they lived in during those days, a rugged range resembling a grey mane from afar, and served almost an offense to the Darmani trolls, while the grey trolls themselves would whisper of a clan named to express its eternal servitude to their kind. Its origin notwithstanding, this name would haunt them for all eternity and they would look upon the name with nothing less than utter contempt. And from this clan, a man would rise, to fight beneath the banner of King Thoradin, to free his kin, to give his people freedom and home. A name that would be forever known to the annals of history as Aderic. Lord General Aderic Greymane.

Fleeing the enslavement in Gilneas, this young and cunning man soon joined the armies of King Thoradin, quickly rising through their ranks. As years passed by, Arathor joined the high elven kingdom in their struggle against the Amani, giving Aderic a chance to show his worth in combat against the forest fiends. And his worth, he indeed had shown. By the time the Amani had their might broken at the base of the Alterac Mountains, he had attained the rank of General, forming an experienced force of his own kindred under his wing. A force he would, by the order of his liege, lead to win his homeland, now laying wide and open.

The power of the forest trolls had been broken in Alterac. The surviving Amani forces soon fled to the north, leaving the western and southern tribes to themselves. Yet, the Darmani would not give on their ancestral territories so easily. As Aderic and his forces strode into Gilneas, joining with the remaining free humans in Headlands, the greys formed a fierce opposition, going to great lengths to ensure the general's failure. But despite their best efforts, Aderic pressed on. Soon enough, all their human slaves rose into open rebellion and the trolls found themselves vastly outnumbered, leaving them no choice but to retreat deep into the woods of eastern Gilneas. A stalemate ensued, as Aderic's forces could never hope to defeat the trolls in such terrain, yet nothing could stop the general, wholly determined to cleanse the peninsula of all the troll presence once and for all. And so, he and his officers crafted a bold, yet terrible and costly scheme. Let the forests of Gilneas burn, and the trolls with them.

To achieve such a goal, Aderic had to ensure the trolls would be concentrated in a single location, otherwise he could miss his only chance at complete and absolute victory. His forces had pressed the trolls hard, slowly driving them towards the northeastern forests, where he sprung his trap. A small number of wizards King Thoradin had given him as his entourage set the forests ablaze, using vast deposits of coal to ensure a true firestorm, and in due time, nothing but a vast field of burning embers remained. Some trolls had tried to break through, but they were either cut down or captured. Those who had survived were not fortunate, however, as Aderic had them all impaled on stakes, decorating the borders of Gilneas with their mutilated bodies. The Darmani tribe had been broken forever, and no sane troll would ever dare to set his foot in Gilneas again.

Imperial province and the autonomous state of Gilneas

The Great Troll Wars left the grey lands in the hands of humanity. For his accomplishments, General Aderic had received the title of Lord from King Thoradin and was appointed the very first steward of the new imperial province. For the remainder of his days, he sought to bring order to his beloved homeland, a fruitful effort in the end. So respected and loved he was by his kin, they branded him the father of the land upon his very death, surrounding the place of his final rest by a vast monument dedicated to his memory.

The following two centuries had been kind to Gilneas. A number of stewards held the office rather successfully, and the land prospered. Most of these stewards hailed from the line of Aderic, something that would eventually become a norm, as the line was held in the highest of respect by the people of these lands. Over time, prosperity would make for a change, as it always does. Inspired by the numerous new cities in the central imperial provinces, the Greymanes pursued the royalty to sanctify the creation of the very first city within the boundaries of their domain. In time, they would agree, and a city would be born. Its people would call it Gilneas, a name that would eventually refer to the whole peninsula, until then only known as the land of the sickle.

The changes would not stop with that moment, however. The people of Gilneas, ever distinct and distant from their kin the east and north, pressed onto their attempts to achieve a larger degree of autonomy. At first, the kings of Arathor had resisted this movement, trying to keep their empire under strong, centralized rule, but as the magocratic city of Dalaran achieved achieved the rights to become an autonomous city state, nothing could stop the Gilneans. Fifty years after the formation of Gilneas City, Lord Steward Tobias Greymane was granted the title of Sovereign Lord Viceroy, cementing his place as the ruler¹ of the newly established city state of Gilneas.

The newly received powers and privileges allowed Lord Tobias to bring in sweeping changes to Gilneas, and the land soon bloomed. The fading clan system gave its way to the rise of new noble families, whom the Greymanes would built their power

¹ Despite the custom to keep it within the single line, the title of Sovereign Lord Viceroy was not hereditary by the law. The kings of Arathor had right to appoint any man they wished to see rule in their name.

around, their ancestral territories turned hereditary fiefs. Countless settlers arrived from the eastern and northern lands, bringing in new blood, beliefs and customs. The large mineral deposits of the Ember Hills brought life to many mining communities. And finally, the countless fishing settlements turned robust, bustling harbors, the city of Gilneas the greatest of them, using the woods of Gilneas to build remarkable fleets. Soon enough, the sailors of Gilneas began to explore numerous southern islands, often founding new colonies, including one that would bear the name of Kul Tiras.

The century of strife

The folk of Gilneas has always been rather distinctive from the rest of humanity. While the worship of the Light spread amongst the human domain, they clung to their old way, cultivating its praxis and forming much of their culture around its tenets. Even though the Light eventually did gain a hold in the land through a new wave of Arathi settlers, it would never achieve such prevalence as in the other human kingdoms, and the old ways would not only preserve, but evolve. As the worship of the Light slowly penetrated the Gilnean society, its keepers realized the potential danger and sought to institutionalize their teachings. Thus, a new order was born, an order dedicated to preserving, cultivating and expanding the knowledge of the old ways. The Order of the Harvest.

The order brought in a spark of new life. Its members, ever widening their insight and proficiency, eventually reached the levels where they could be considered druids, although their mastery of druidism would be always rather crude. In time, they even established a friendly relation with the elven Order of the Runestone, allowing them to further polish their techniques. And as the order thrived, so did the old ways flourish. Yet, in the end, these developments would ultimately bring Gilneas at odds with the royal court of Strom.

The rise of the Gilnean power. The evolution of its culture. The ever continuous distinction from other of their kin. And finally, the inherent cry for freedom. All these realities would slowly drive the people of Gilneas, as well as the ambitious Greymanes who represented their longings, to press for even larger degree of freedom. For a time, the

kings of Arathor would hardly try to stop them. However, their patience would not be endless, and with the Gilneans growing ever more bold, they soon changed their policy. At first, they simply tried to curdle the privileges and rights, slowly limiting the powers of the Imperial Viceroy as well. These feeble attempts would cause more harm than use however, and a fierce opposition formed. Still, the matter was kept rather civil, without any sign of true hostilities in sight. Until the rule of the so-called Crusading Kings.

The first of these kings, known to us as no other than Faldir the Third, made his intention to deal with disobedient Gilneas once and for all known upon the day of his very coronation. A devout and zealous man he was, he believed the practice of the old ways to be the inherent problem of the Gilnean insubordination and went to great lengths to root it out. But Gilneans were stubborn, proud and defiant people. In the end, they rose into open rebellion, and for a long century, Gilneas would be coated in blood.

The wars between the crown and Gilneas proved a costly endeavor, leaving either of the participants battered and exhausted. The Greymanes, ambitious and enthusiastic to defend their freedom, gathered their bannermen and warriors to ride towards the north, where they hoped to stay the Arathi. In the marshes east of Amberwood, they made their stand, prepared to meet the zealous imperial armies blade to blade. And they would not wait for long. Accompanied by a massive host gathered from all the corners of his empire, King Faldir soon made his presence known. Riding at the front of his vanguard, a terrible force comprised of the greatest of Lordaeron's crusading knights, he gave Lord Vincent Greymane his last chance to make amends and bend the knee. Yet Greymane. A stubborn man he was, Greymane would never bend his knee.

The battle of the Marshwoods turned glorious, yet utterly terrible. As Lordaeronian knights, supported by Alteraci and Stromic heavy infantry, clashed with Gilnean light infantry, men of the Harvest and Greymane man hunters, the marshes came to be soaked with blood. At first, it seemed the overconfident imperial forces would smash the Gilnean resistance, but as the muddy terrain deprived them of their momentum, the situation turned. Ultimately, it would seem Lord Greymane would end the war in one, single stroke. His men descended upon the heavy armored royalists like vultures, slowly turning the battle into a slaughter, just as the lord himself pressed against King Faldir and his personal

guard. But too true to its nature, treachery would intervene. A number of Gilnean light-worshipping houses, mostly of the Arathi origin, betrayed their lord for their king and turned the course of the battle. Lord Vincent himself fell with a dagger in his back, just as he tried to break through with the remainder of his men. His victory assured, King Faldir led his armies south, leaving only a small contingent to take care of the dead. The number of the bodies as vast as it was, they had to burn them all without delay. Thus, a new name would arise for the area, a name derived from the massive pyres they would construct to serve the purpose. Pyrewood.

The betrayal in the north left Gilneas vulnerable and open. King Faldir took the land, stripped all the nobles loyal to the Greymanes of their holdings and appointed a new Lord Viceroy, one of his own house. For some decades, the situation remained relatively calm, as Lord Gregor Arathi ruled with the iron fist. Persecution, torture, beheadings, burnings at the stake, all aimed towards one, single goal. Breaking the spirit of Gilneas and eliminating the old ways completely. But despite all his fervor, he could not hunt down all the surviving Greymanes and men of the Harvest. They endured, hidden in the unfavourable expanse of the Dusky Peaks², ready to retake their homeland the moment an opportunity would present itself. And as the increasingly harsh rule of Lord Gregor forced the land itself from its slumber, it has.

A myriad of little streams turned a mighty river, that is what the Second Greymane Rebellion would become. As we know, all of the land slowly turned against the Arathi establishment, and Lord Gregor ultimately lost his patience. He lashed out, burning villages, even towns, and holding massive public executions, yet to no avail. In the end, even he disappeared in the dark woods of Blackwald, captured by a resistance strike force. We do not know for certain what became of him, but it has always been traded amongst the folk of Gilneas that Marcus "the Vicious" Greymane, leader of the resistance, had him burned at the stake, just as Lord Gregor had thousands of his kin. His son led the charge thereafter, but in due time, the Gilnean tide has swept him away as well.

With the fall of the Arathi establishment, the intensity of the conflict slowly deteriorated. The successors of King Faldir tried to invade and pacify the land for many

² It is said the famous Greymane Manor is built upon an ancient cave complex the Greymane family used as their major hideout during the rebellion.

times, but each time successfully, and each time with smaller fervor. The wars brought the different branches of the Gilnean folk ever closer, the followers of the old ways forming a strong bond with those light-worshippers who stayed loyal to the Greymanes, and without the support of the local houses, the Arathi could not hope to bring Gilneas back into the fold. Ultimately, the line of the Crusading Kings had fallen, and the new king bore no interest to continue their costly wars. Gilneas turned independent in all but name, its only obligation towards the crown lying with the common defense of the realm.

The freedom beckons

The centuries following the Greymane rebellions³ saw Gilneas grow and prosper once again. The tenacity of its people a great asset, it soon recovered and began to build its power anew. As the rising maritime nation of Kul Tiras eclipsed even the power of its mighty navies, the kingdom refocused on its land-based armies and mercantile capabilities. Its military, ever bold and strong, turned one of the mightiest in all of Arathor, rivaled only by the mountainous nation of Alterac. Together, these two nations would often lead imposing expeditions to secure the borders of the realm. Eventually, they would even explore the dwarven lands of Khaz Modan, making for the very first contact between their respective races. A strong bond would develop, and some dwarves would even come to settle in Gilneas itself.

As we know, this peaceful era would come to an end, eventually. As King Wodanin III made his intention to reform the realm clear, Alterac, Gilneas and Kul Tiras joined to oppose him, and a terrible war to overthrow the Arathi dynasty began. Even though it was Alterac who would bear the weight of the war the most, Gilneas lost countless of its sons and daughters as well. An entire cadet branch of the Greymane family was extinguished when a contingent of Arathi pyromancers summoned a mighty firestorm to turn the tide of the battle of Southpoint Pass, while many of the eastern Gilnean settlements were burned and pillaged by the Stromic expeditionary forces that had traversed to Gilneas through the Alterac Mountains. But despite all their effort, the Arathi could not win. After

³ The Greymane rebellions are actually known under different names to us. In Gilneas itself, they are known as the Freedom Wars, whereas in Lordaeron, one can find them under the name of Gilnean Crusades.

long decades of war, even the most loyal to their dynasty longed for peace, and in the end, their line was overthrown. As the last of the Arathi left for the lush south, the northern kingdoms mutually acknowledged their sovereignty and independence. Gilneas finally came to be free.

The kingdom of Gilneas

Unlike to Lordaeron, or even Azeroth, independence did not bring in sweeping changes to Gilneas, it only allowed it to further continue in its already laid out path. The first free kings focused on the regions south of the Duckrocky Peaks, where they had numerous new towns formed by the royal decree, slowly turning the area their own royal domain. In the north, they redistributed the administrative power amongst the most loyal and powerful noble houses, effectively establishing the Grand Council of Gilneas. In time, Greymanes also converted to the worship of the Holy Light, although they would always protect the old ways and maintain religious freedom within their realm. King Ivar II even had a magnificent cathedral built in the centre of Gilneas City, one that would forever bear name of Light's Dawn Cathedral. The old ways slowly fell back under the weight of these developments, although they would always keep a significant presence, particularly in the heavily forested areas of the Blackwald and Northgate Woods.

As their power consolidated and grew, the folk of Gilneas grew ever more ambitious, filled with an urge to expand their realm and holdings. At first, this led to a new wave of colonization, concentrated around the frontier provinces of the realm. To the north, they founded the municipalities of Pyrewood and Ambermill, while in the east, they dug deep into the rugged massifs of the Ember Hills and Alterac Mountains. But the land to colonize had not been endless, and the kings of Gilneas ultimately realized they would have to expand their borders. A perfect opportunity eventually appeared in the forested north, where the vast expanse of Silverpine Forest still lay mostly uncivilized, its inhabitants either the Shadowglen forest trolls or pioneers. Soon enough, Gilnean colonists began to swarm the peripheries of this enormous woodland, constructing numerous outposts and pushing the border of their kingdom further north. As we know, the Shadowglen did not take this affront lightly and made war upon the humans, eager to

defend their ancestral territories. To face the threat, King Tobias I joined the forces with the king of Lordaeron, and although it would take many long years, they would prevail in the end. With the Shadowglen scattered, the kings divided the forest by the river of Arevass, and for the next centuries, the hunger for new territories would be sated.

The Violet War

Gilneas and Alterac have always been rather close. Both kingdoms boasted mighty armies, Alterac arguably the strongest one in all of the Seven Kingdoms, both stood united in their past efforts to explore the lands beyond the borders of Arathor, both had grandeur ambitions and dreams of future. But as the years following the Gilnean expansion into Silverpine passed by, they grew ever closer, their royal families often joined by marriage, their bonds strengthened by various treaties. With nowhere to expand but the lands owned by the neighbouring human nations, this union proved an invaluable asset. Believing together, they were without a peer, it served to embolden the kingdoms, to give them means to turn their ambitions true. And such as it was, they soon turned towards the most sensible victim. Dalaran and its southern domains.

So much could be said about the Violet War, especially of the involvement Gilneas had. While Alterac and Stromgarde waged their mountainous war, Gilneas had to contend with Dalaran and its mighty mages. Bitter memories of the war against the Arathi and their pyromantic magicians still lived on, despite long centuries that had passed, filling the folk of Gilneas with clear disdain, almost hatred, towards any mages but their own. Their witch hunters, a force with a tradition as old as the War for Independence, relentlessly hunted any Dalarani mages, gradually depriving the magocratic nation of their primary advantage. Yet, as the victory ultimately approached, an unexpected actor entered the war, an actor who would change everything. The crusading kingdom of Lordaeron.

Lordaeron's entry to the war on the side of Dalaran was indeed a surprise to all of the actors. Not only was the kingdom weakened from the war against the Nerubian worshipping Northrenders, but its crown prince was also betrothed to the youngest daughter of King Darius I. The Greymanes considered this an affront, even betrayal, and turned to fight Lordaeron with unprecedented rage. The following campaign stretched

over all of western Lordaeron, a bloody matter that cost both nations the very best they could offer. As we know, it culminated with the battle of Fenris Isle, where Lordaeron managed to sink all of the Gilnean navy and wholly decimate its armies. However, it paid a terrible price in doing so, as both King Barthilas and Crown Prince Cedras perished, sacrificing their very lives to achieve the ultimate victory. With most of its armies gone, Gilneas had to sue for peace. Unlike Alterac, which had been left in shambles by the war, it paid a rather moderate price, losing most of its lands north of Pyrewood.

It is said Princess Elenna truly loved her husband-to-be, knowing him well from the time he had spent in the court of her father. The breaking of their betrothal took a heavy toll upon this beautiful and delicate woman, and his ultimate death broke her once strong spirit utterly. Grief-stricken and maddened, the princess took her very life, plunging a dagger deep into her own heart. To serve an eternal memory of hers and testament to the vanities of war, her royal brother adopted red roses, flowers Elenna was deeply fond of, onto his coat of arms. Soon enough, these red roses turned the national flower of Gilneas, serving an embodiment of the new age and warning of the past mistakes.

The colonies beyond the sea and the new era

The defeat of the Violet War deeply affected Gilneas, its people and their national spirit. With their ambitions broken and unable to expand, they turned to themselves, somewhat detaching from the politics of the other nations that called the eastern continents home. Calm befell the nation, and in time, calm turned stagnation. As long decades went by, it would seem nothing would awaken this slumbering bear ever again. Nothing but the reign of young, adventurous King Benjamin II.

For all we know, Benjamin had long dreamed about the past glory of Gilneas. Not about the time preceding the Violet War, but rather the ancient past, when Gilneas possessed mighty navy and explored the lands beyond the frontier. He argued this could awaken and renew the national spirit. Give them something novel to strive for. Secure resources required for further advancement and development. To provide a bright future. And his people listened. They began to build their navies anew, to sail onto open seas once

again. As their southern neighbour, the mighty sea nation of Kul Tiras, had already been exploring and colonizing the islands in the Great Sea for long years, they did not hesitate, joined their efforts with Tirasians and ventured far beyond. At first, these ventures had been rather cautious, restricted only to the waters surrounding the landmass of Lordaeron. But as years passed by, they grew bolder and bolder. Until they reached the southern shores of the icy continent, Northrend.

Despite its rather harsh weather and hostile inhabitants, Northrend proved to be a place rich in resources. We do not know much of the first stages of the Gilnean colonization, as the first pioneers did not keep written records bar the very minimum required, but for all we know, it was a challenging struggle. Both Gilnean and Tirasian explorers and colonists concentrated on the region they would call the Grizzly Hills, contending with the local wildlife, ice trolls and humans. In time, those hailing from Gilneas founded a naval fortress called Grizzle Bay Guard, a fortress that would serve a staging ground for any further colonization. Using Blackriver as their primary means of travel, they slowly penetrated the surrounding forests, often founding settlements along its banks. Settlements such as Amberpine, Aspen Grove or Blackriver Camp.

These oversea colonies brought new life to Gilneas. Not only had the optimistic national outlook returned, the resources harvested in the cold north also brought many mercantile capabilities and new possibilities to the kingdom. Slowly, its economy turned less dependant on its own rural regions, freeing a rather large workforce to move to the urban areas instead. As time passed, these urban areas began to industrialize, a number of new manufactories rising up, further strengthening the economy and its current course. However, the nobles of Gilneas somewhat hindered the process, afraid to loose their dominance within the realm, as did the policies Gilneas held at the time. Well until the rule of the visionary king Archibald I.

During his youth, Archibald traveled the Eastern Kingdoms wide and far. He spent many years in Ironforge, observing their society and techniques, as well as in Stratholme, the industrial capital of Lordaeron. These experiences made him realize how obstructive the current system was, how much it hindered all the potential Gilneas had. It was truly no wonder he began to cast the old system down the very moment of his coronation. Not

only he eased many policies, especially those pertaining to the power the nobles held over the lives of their subjects and the business of any kind, but he also actively supported the industrialization. Amongst many things, he employed a large number of quality dwarven and human engineers, using them to aid any manufacturers in their beginnings. He also founded the very first technical university in the Seven Kingdoms, serving to provide new generations of high learned technicians very much required to keep this new machinery going.

At first, the nobles resisted these changes. They were afraid they would lead to their fall into obscurity, undermining their economical and political power. Yet, as we know thanks to the biography provided by a gilnean historian known as Francius Leeway, Archibald was a hard and determined man, and the nobles knew better than to rise openly against him. Ultimately, as they gradually adapted and their coffers began to fill with gold, even they came to realize his vision was for the best of all Gilneas, even if it would be at the expense of some of their past privileges. With even the nobles in the line, Archibald was able to fully realize his ultimate vision, leading to almost miraculous results. By the time his son Genn ascended to the throne, he was leaving a strong, united and healthy realm behind. A realm ancient, yet with promise and perspective.

3. Geography

Climate and ecosystems

A land located in southwestern Lordaeron, most of Gilneas lies on the peninsula of the same name. Washed by the warm Tirisfal Stream, Gilneas features a rather rainy temperate oceanic climate, with seasonal weather and mild winters. Most of its terrain is particularly rugged, some parts covered with woods, either sparse or dense, some with lakes, larger or smaller.

The rugged terrain of Gilneas can be separated amongst several major formations. To the south lies the vast expanse of the Duskrocky Peaks, a grey rocky massif of volcanic

origin. The Headlands, a craggy highland region, can be found along the western shores of central Gilneas, divided in two by Northgate River. The east features two major formations. The famous Ember Hills, called so after the ancient battles against the trolls that took place there, and the southern massif of the Alterac Mountains, forming the whole northeastern border of the realm. Last, there is also the western massif of the Alterac Mountains, intersected by the northwestern border of the grey kingdom.

Next to its mountains, hills and highlands, the woodlands of Gilneas serve a prominent characteristic as well. Running along the banks of Northgate River are the so-called Northgate Woods, a moderately dense woodland chiefly comprised of the famous gilnean grey pine. To the north, one can find the swampy Marshwoods of Pyrewood, bordered by the enchanted forest of Amberwood. Once again, either of these woods is predominantly coniferous, Pyrewood featuring grey pines, Amberwood featuring silver pines. Unlike these northern woodlands, the southern forest of the Blackwald is predominantly broadleaf, a dense forest comprised of ancient oaks, beeches and satinwoods.

Finally, it is important to note the plains of Duskhaven, vast grasslands located in southernmost Gilneas, as well the numerous lakes of Gilneas, Emberstone being the largest of all.

Natural resources

Despite its ancient history, Gilneas has not yet depleted its finite natural resources. The eastern expanses of the Ember Hills and Alterac Mountains still house vast mineral deposits, including much valuable iron and coal. So do the crags of the Northeastern Headlands, as well as several areas north of Pyrewood. The colonies in Northrend also provide a great deal of minerals, although it is not their primary contribution in terms of resources, while the Duskrocky Peaks serve a source of stone. Last, the areas around Amberwood provide notable reserves of amber, arguably the largest after those of Lordaeron.

As we know, Gilneas harvests extraordinary amounts of lumber, largest after

Lordaeron and Azeroth. However, most of this lumber and timber does not originate from the forests within the borders of the kingdom proper, but from its Northrend colonies. The coniferous woodlands of the Grizzly Hills provide Gilneas with lumber of all kind, enough to satisfy its industrial needs and even leave some to export. Still, the northern expanse of Amberwood is used for harvesting as well, providing Gilneas with the quality wood of rare silver pines.

Where the forests of Gilneas are not used for lumber harvesting, they are used for hunting. Deep and ancient, the Blackwald serves a supply of many different types of game, and so do the regions of the Northgate Woods. Bar game, Gilneas make use of many domestic animals. Sheep are found along the slopes of the Duskricky Peaks and Headlands, horses along the plains of Duskhaven. The Duskhaven Plains also hold the largest concentration of arable land within the kingdom, rivaled only by the farmlands far to the north.

4. Economy

A great bulk of the Gilnean economy relies on its industrial capabilities. Their manufactories focus primarily on textiles, metalworking, woodworking and chemistry. Textiles form a great deal of their export, as Gilneas is considered amongst the largest producers of textiles in the Seven Kingdoms. Chemicals also make for a valuable commodity, as do all kinds of firearms.

Where the industry leaves much for export, the agriculture leaves much for import. The population boom in the last decades, coupled with the movement of a large part of the workforce to the urban centers, left the agriculture strained and unable to satisfy the needs of the population. Still, the areas of southern Gilneas do produce a substantial amount of crops, especially wheat and corn, while the coastal regions specialize in fishing.

Even though Gilneas has somewhat industrialized economy, craft and handcraft still survive. Substantial deposits of amber leave a rather large space for many kinds of handcrafted products, ranging from jewelry to expensive perfumes. Last, despite the existence of chemical industry of sorts, alchemy still holds prominence, especially in medicine and healing.

5. Politics

Despite the changes in the past decades, Gilneas still remains a feudal monarchy it has always been. The king stands atop of the feudal system, followed by the noble principal houses who serve his direct vassals and major political force within the realm. Nevertheless, the common citizens have enjoyed a wide spread of rights and privileges for a long part of its past history, and they even acquired certain political rights in the past decades.

Political system

King

The king is the ultimate power in the kingdom of Gilneas. Although assisted by the cabinet of his own choosing, he stands atop of the feudal power chain. He forms the foreign policy and acts as the supreme commander of the Gilneas military. Despite his authority, his power is not absolute. He relies on his nobles who rule their own lands in his stead and serve his council.

Principal nobility

Direct vassals of the crown. These nobles rule vast stretches of land, serving the highest level of administration within the realm. They also serve as a council to the king, as well as the ultimate judicial force within their own domains.

Lower nobility

The lower gentry of Gilneas, these noble houses serve a lower level of administration, owing their allegiance to their respective liege lords. As Gilneas does not have any warrior knights such as Lordaeron or Azeroth, most of those who do not rule over any land either hold public offices, serve army officers or make their fortune in business of any kind.

Citizen

Each citizen belongs to a certain municipality. These municipalities elect their own

leaders and councils. All municipalities bar the royal city of Gilneas fall under the rule of certain principal house. Citizens often organize into militia, which serves the secondary defense force within the realm.

Administration

The kingdom of Gilneas is divided into a multitude of large domains, each governed by one principal noble house. However, there are two exceptions to this rule. The royal city of Gilneas, a municipality answering directly to the crown, and the royal demesne. Although the royal demesne belongs directly to the crown, it essentially functions the same way as any other principal domain.

The principal domains are divided between the personal holdings of the liege, lesser nobility domains and larger municipalities. In turn, the lesser nobility domains are either divided between the personal holdings and smaller municipalities. Municipalities elect their own councils, which in turn appoint the mayor. A mayor can be of noble origin, and such mayors are titled Lord Mayors. Meanwhile, all the lesser domains are ruled by a noble house in the same fashion as the principal domains. All the landed nobles are titled as Lords⁴.



⁴ All the landed gentry of Gilneas is given the title of lord, including the king himself. This title is derived from lording over a land. Other titles, such as Barons, are hereditary honorary titles that grant its user certain status and prestige.

6. People and culture

Values

Strong, powerful, proud, determined, stubborn, stern and unforgiving. These would be the qualities most often found when describing the people of Gilneas. The past conflicts also made these brawny humans distrustful of the rest of their kind, resulting in somewhat isolationist psych . Nevertheless, these people are still warm on the inside and greatly value hospitality. An art, poetry and music also holds a special place within their hearts, and one could even theorize their rather distinctive architecture is a product of their artistic nature. On the other hand, the Gilneans are often found to be rather unusually realistic and pragmatic, often far more than their idealistic brethren of Lordaeron and Azeroth.

Faith

There are two important elements to the faith in Gilneas. First, Gilneas is a rather secular nation. Although the Church does hold some presence within the kingdom, it has absolutely no political powers at its disposal. This state has its roots in the ancient wars where the Greymanes fought against the zealous Arathi kings supported by the Church. Although the wounds from these wars had mended a long time past, the crown and its subjects still hold certain distrust towards the institution.

Second, Gilneas is a very tolerant nation. This stems from its dualistic nature. Although the faith in the Holy Light holds prominence, many still cling to the worship of the Old Ways, represented by the Order of the Harvest. Certain remote areas even hold sacred groves, something extremely rare to be found within the realms of Lordaeron. Ancestors are also revered in a manner very distinct from any other human kingdom bar Stromgarde, often being evoked in times of great need.

People

The great majority of the Gilnean population is of human origin. These humans are

of the Gilnean stock to almost no exception. As such, the nation is very homogenous, further aggravating its nationalism. Still, there are two major traces of origin to be found in their national memory. Although every single Gilnean can trace his origin to the ancient human clans of Gilneas in some way, the Arathi blood also runs in their veins, strongly in some than the others. Some families are even of the Arathi in their origin, although the long centuries made them Gilnean in all but this small fact.

Apart from the humans of Gilneas, there is also a noticeable minority of dwarves and gnomes. These can mostly be found around the areas of the Alterac Mountains, although some found their way to the Gilneas City as well, especially during the times of industrialization.



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A gilnean house, an example of its distinctive architecture.

