

Hârn Introduction 2

Welcome to Hârn, probably the most detailed Fantasy world ever produced for gaming. It was developed in N. Robin Crossby and has been published by Columbia Games Inc. since 1983. Currently, over 2 million words have been printed officially and hundreds of pages of unofficial material have been developed by fans. This brief introduction is for those who have not previously played on Hârn, and has been adapted specifically for the Melderyn Campaign. What follows is information on the world, its politics and the people who inhabit what is affectionately known as the *Misty Isle*.

THE WORLD

Hârn is a rugged, forested island off the northwest coast of the continent of Lythia, on a planet called Kethira. The local waters around the Hârnic Isles are notoriously rough and difficult to navigate, especially for those unfamiliar with them. It is a place regarded dismissively by most Lythians, for tales of wild men, dwarves, elves and fearsome beasts have been carried to the continent and have served to discourage all but the most adventurous, or perhaps foolhardy, travelers. At the heart of the big island is the freshwater lake Benath, and several large rivers drain the interior, the two largest being the Thard in the west and the Kald in the east. Much of Hârn is mountainous, particularly in the Lake Benath and northeastern regions. As of 730 T.R., there are five civilized human kingdoms on Hârn plus numerous barbarian tribes. Rumors speak of kingdoms of dwarves (Khuzdul) and of elves (Sindarin) but few believe these, and think them tales of fantasy to scare little children back to their beds. Most humans on Hârn are of a racial stock called Jarin. The Vikings of Orbaal who hale from

Ivinia to the northeast are an exception, as are some tribal groups on the island.

CULTURE

“Arren of Melderyn grasped the romantic memory of the Corani Empire, and gathered it unto himself...”

Feudal Hârn, p. 47

The kingdoms of Hârn are feudal states, although one, Orbaal, is a land of Vikings, and ties of tribute replace those of homage. (The level of technology and organization of the rest is analogous to Medieval England on Earth during the reign of Richard II, 1377-1399.) Nobles are granted land by the crown in exchange for military service and the protection of the common folk who work their lord's lands a set number of days a week. The aristocracy is divided into earls, barons, and enfeoffed knights (those holding at least one manor). Dukes are found only in Melderyn and Tharda, all related by blood to the monarch. In addition to the landed nobles, feudal kingdoms are divided into administrative counties known as 'shires' under a sheriff appointed by the crown. A large and powerful merchant class controls most of the goods and services found in the cities and towns of Hârn. These merchants are part of a loose guild association known as the Mangai. This group grants and administers the franchises for most guilded occupations on the island. Those who join guilds follow the typical progression from apprentice to journeyman to master, although many never reach master's rank. Another group that is often maligned and feared but little understood is the mystical Shek-Pvar, sorcerers who are rather secretive and often seem uncaring to others. One kingdom, Melderyn, is

sometimes called the Wizard's Isle on account of the widespread belief that it is ruled by wizards. Indeed, it is reported that many of the inhabitants of Melderyn are not even truly human, possessing an innate capability to cast spells and other arcane abilities. The study of magic tends to be divided into two groups – those who are born with the innate abilities and the Shek-Pvar who are not but devote their lives to understanding the Pvaric mysteries. The two types of practitioner rarely overlap.

EVERYDAY LIFE

“We see in the surviving records of western Hârn a deep desire in the common folk to live in peace, long unrequited in the vicissitudes of constant war and political turmoil. Governmental stability was a thing unknown, with few states outlasting their founders for more than a generation or two. The immense productive energy of the region remained dormant, awaiting a period of tranquility from which to burst forth.”

Feudal Hârn, p. 63

For most people on Hârn, life is based on manorial agriculture, and the annual cycle of the seasons. The vast majority of people are born, live out their lives, and die on the same manor, and in most cases the same as that of their parents and grandparents. It is not uncommon for generations to occupy the same cottage, and till the same fields. City life revolves around three broad categories of activity: government, commerce, and religion. The common folk would dearly like to be left to themselves, most not caring at all who calls himself a king, or priest, or lord. However, war is a constant fixture, whether petty squabbles between manorial lords, or great

kingdoms contesting over issues very far removed from the concerns of their subjects. Viking raids from Orbaal and from Ivinia are not unheard of, and the forests teem with brigands, hostile tribesmen, and worse.

Although called the Misty Isle due to the fog common in coastal areas, Hârn enjoys a relatively mild climate. Winters tend to be rainy rather than snowy except in high elevations, and the summers are often cool, if a bit muggy. This means harvests are typically average, and bountiful crops are as rare as famines. Most areas of Hârn produce enough grain for local needs, but Kaldor in the east is noted for its surpluses. There and in Kanday in southern Tharda, wool is produced in great abundance, with large surpluses exported to the Lythian continent.

The typical unit of currency throughout Hârn is the silver penny (denarius or d for short and said as penny or plural as pence), worth roughly the value of a laborer's daily toil. Except for a single minting of a larger coin in Tharda in 726 called a groat (worth 12d) in celebration of the accession of King Arren II, no human kingdom mints any other type of coin. The Khuzdul of Azadmere mint both a silver penny and a gold crown. The Khuzan Gold Crown, worth 320d, is a fairly rare item, and most people will never see one. Kaldor, Melderyn, and Tharda each mint their own pennies, and most are accepted in other kingdoms, although they are sometimes discounted. Older coinage from Rethem, the old Thardic Republic, and Kanday is still in circulation, but tends to get melted down and recast when it comes into the possession of Royal authorities. The coins of Rethem were severely debased, and tend to be discounted as much as 50%. Other denominations are multiples

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of silver pennies:

4 farthings = 1 penny (1d)
12 pennies = 1 shilling (12d)
20 shillings = 1 pound (240d or £1)

Mercantylers often issue notes for specific amounts to avoid the need to transport specie. These notes are usually only negotiable with other mercantylers and can be heavily discounted. However, anyone willing to take the paper can accept it, although will likely negotiate its value.

MAGIC

“Today one takes for granted the use of magic – especially Pvaric – taught as it is to elementary school children, but in those days, it was a truly arcane subject. The Shek-Pvar operated under a little known and widely misunderstood code, restricting their activities amongst the common folk, even as the Deryni, never as numerous as suspected, parlayed their innate power into influence which reverberates even now ...”

Feudal Hârn, p. 174

The use and existence of magic in Hârn is considerably lower than in most popular games. Flashy, wide area affecting spells exist but are not common. For the most part wizards on Hârn are feared, mistrusted, and misunderstood. Shek-Pvar mages are not only confined by the restraints of society but also by the limitations placed upon them by other practitioners of their art, with all ascribing to a set of laws governing their conduct. For not only are they expected to restrain themselves in the use of their art before the ‘Kvikir’ as they call non-wizards, but are forbidden to use those arts for personal advancement in society. It is

indeed a gray area, as the very use of the arts can constitute a breach of the rule. The mage’s life is one dominated by the circumspect pursuit of knowledge, both mundane and arcane, not of power. Those who violate this law are usually cast out, declared renegade by their fellows, and often hunted as outlaws depending on the nature of their offense. The Shek-Pvar are elemental magicians, divided into six convocations of Fyvrian (earth), Lyahvi (light), Jmorvi (metal), Odivshe (water), Peleahn (fire), and Savorya (spirit). Some few who have managed to combine these disparate elements are known as *Gray Mages*. A different group of wizards with innate magical ability are known as Melderyni after their concentration in that kingdom. (They are sometimes called Deryni to distinguish them from those living in the kingdom without such abilities. Usage is fluid and often confusing, much like the people themselves.) Their use of magic is based on long, static tradition, and although their power is great, often exceeding the most accomplished of the Shek-Pvar, their traditions bind them. They rarely develop new spells, although research sometimes rediscovers lost arts. Unlike the Shek-Pvar, they do not gather in chantries of arcane lore, as for them training tends to come from family members or recognized masters. A small subset are reputed to be able to use healing arts. As their magic comes from within themselves, they often combine with their fellow practitioners to increase their individual powers. Though exceedingly few in number, they loom large over the affairs of men. Two of the Hârn kingdoms – Melderyn and Tharda – are ruled by such sorcerers. (The Deryni are the literary creation of the author Katherine Kurtz. The Melderyn Campaign uses the ideas and many of the customs and powers of the Deryni as detailed in her novels, however, it does

not use characters or places. Ms. Kurtz reserves the copyright to the Deryni and the derivations thereof.)

RELIGION

“Religious conflict played an enormous role in the politics of the day. It is true that some kingdoms experimented with religious tolerance and even freedom, but always for them ancient taboos remained in force. It was whispered that Arren of Melderyn was an adherent of Naveh, a legend generally considered spurious by most historians...”

Feudal Hârn, p. 22

Hârn is a pantheistic society, and the Hârnic Isles have adherents of all ten major Lythian deities. The concept of good and evil is much more relative in Hârn than in most other games. However the following guidelines should suffice as a simple introduction:

“Good” gods/goddesses include:
Larani, Peoni, Save K’nor, and Siem

“Evil” gods include:
Agrik, Morgath, and Naveh

“Neutral” gods/goddesses include:
Ilvir, Sarajin and Halea

Ilvir and Siem are almost exclusively worshipped on Hârn.

The Jarin people to the north have an affinity with Ilvir – the only god reputed to actually live on Kethira, and indeed on Hârn – while the Faerie folk (Sindarin and Khuzdul) reportedly worship Siem. The other eight were imported when the great

Lythian migrations occurred. There are three kingdoms in which Larani is the chief goddess: Kaldor, Melderyn, and Chybisa. The nobles of these kingdoms are almost exclusively Laranian. Where the church of Larani is powerful the worship of Agrik, Morgath and Naveh tends to proscribed and punishable by death. The Kingdom of Tharda tolerates the worship of all the gods, but the king and most of the nobles follow Larani. The Churches of Morgath and Agrik, while tolerated, are not especially powerful, having suffered in the wars of the previous decade. The common folk of the kingdoms tend to worship the gentle goddess Peoni. The Ivinian overlords of Orbaal are almost exclusively worshippers of Sarajin, however, Agrikan influence has grown in the past few years and the Agrikan female fighting order The Crimson Dancer holds Quimen Keep from the King of Orbaal. The majority of Jarin in the area worship Ilvir, although somewhat secretly for fear of reprisals from their Orbaalese overlords.

It is believed that at the beginning of time the gods fought each other unceasingly, only making peace to avoid the destruction of all. The agreement is known as the ‘Concordat of the Illimitable Tome,’ and is not something that most Hârnians spend a lot of time thinking about. Many of the churches of the various deities sponsor orders, including Larani, Agrik, and Save-K’nor. In the case of the Larani and Agrik, these churches also sponsor fighting orders, and some of the best-trained warriors on Hârn can be found amongst them. In the case of Larani and Peoni, and some believe, Naveh, monasteries are also maintained.

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Symbols of the Gods of Hârn

Agrik



"Master of the V'hir, Immortal Warlord of Balgashang, Breeder of Plague, Squalor and Decay, Reasonless Reaper, Tyrant of the Foul Chamber, Knower of the Ten Thousand Ways"

Naveh



"Lord of the Pitch Shadows, Master of Deceit and Evil Dreams, Lord of the Last Illusion, Merchant of Death, Unseen Lifter of Lives, Trancer the Cat, Wealth's Worry."

Halea



"The Empress of Opulence, Queen of Pleasures and Self-Fulfillment, Maker of Bargains, Guardian of the Treasure Hoards of Heaven, Enslaver of Hearts and Loins, Mistress of the Stolen Moment Forever Lost, Unchaste Lady of the Ten Forgotten Acts, Golden Temptress of the Crimson Chamber."

Peoni



"The Restorer and Bringer of Life Renewed, Maker of Balms, Lady of Truth, Ever-living Daughter of White Virtue, Guardian of the Meek, Lady of Industrious Labors and Ripe Harvest, Confidant of Lovers, Chaste Lady of Honest Love."

Ilvir



"Master of Araka-Kalai, Brooder in the Blasted Plains, Serpent that Dwells Below, Accursed Lord of the Barren Cycle, Prince of the Fatherless Multitude, Craven Lord of the Sterile Lands."

Sarajin



"King of the Icy Wind, Lord of the Perilous Quest, Wielder of the Blooded Axe, Master of the Frosty Climes, The Gray Slayer."

Larani



"Shieldmaiden of the Worthy Cause, Guardian of Dolithor, Protector of the Brave, Lady of Paladins, the Unwilling Warrior, Lady in Flowing Red."

Save-K'nor



"Lord of Puzzles, Conundrums and Mazes, Sage of the Gods, Lord of Jesters, Mixer of Potions, Knower of Many Things, Keeper of Var-Hyvrak, The Lost Guide."

Morgath



"Tormentor of the Unlamented Dead, Master of the Principle of Evil, Lord of the Gulmovrin of the Black Pit, Wielder of the Shadow of Bukrai, Wrecker of Chaos."

Siem



"Master of the Lords of Dreams, Bringer of Meritorious Dreams and Blessed Forgetfulness, Lord of the Starlit and Thrice Blessed Realm, King of the Uttermost West, Master of the Sundered Ones in Exile, Spirit of the Mist, Never Changing Lord of the Azure Bowl."

“The foundations of Modern Hârn were laid in the actions of the Parkhurst Dynasty throughout the eighth century. Arren of Melderyn, that Colossus who bestrode the Misty Isle, forged one kingdom from three, and in so doing, left his successor a nation equal in power to all the others combined, if they had been able to do so. It would have taken a far less ambitious king than Arren the Great to fail to unsheathe that mighty sword, and far more dynamic kings in Melderyn to compel him to lay it aside ...”

Feudal Hârn, p. 52

There are five human kingdoms on Hârn: Chybisa, Kaldor, Melderyn, Orbaal, and Tharda. Of these Tharda is the largest, comprising nearly 300,000 people and most of western Hârn and ruled by a cadet branch of the Kingdom of Melderyn, which is the second largest, with some 160,000 inhabitants in southeastern Hârn. Kaldor, in the east, has just over 100,000, Orbaal, isolated in the north, a population of 8,000 Ivinians ruling over 65,000 conquered Jarin. Tiny Chybisa, to the south of Kaldor, has about 8,000 people.

CHYBISA

Ruled by King Verlid VII from his castle capitol Burzyn, this small kingdom sits astride the Genin trail between Kaldor and Melderyn's mainland shires. Much trade flows along the trail, and Chybisa benefits greatly from this, and is thus wealthier than it ought to be for its size. However, both larger neighbors have a claim, and the crown sits uneasily on Verlid's head. Burzyn is one of the strongest castles on the island.



KALDOR

A large, feudal kingdom comprising much of eastern Hârn, Kaldor is ruled by King Haldan III from the city of Tashal.



Haldan came to the throne in 722 after the death of his cousin Miginath. There had been concerns that Miginath's illegitimate son Maldan Harabor would attempt to claim the throne himself, but Haldan had the support of the powerful Troda Dariune, Earl of Balim. Kaldor briefly fought with the nascent kingdom of Tharda, sending several hundred knights and men-at-arms to fight after Haldan became king, but quarreling with Kaldor's more traditional enemy the Thardic Republic, he withdrew them and left the Republic to its fate. Relations today between Kaldor and Tharda are peaceful, if not cordial. The merchant class of the kingdom relies heavily on trade with Tharda, and would not welcome renewed conflict.

MELDERYN

For centuries the most enigmatic realm on Hârn, Melderyn is nicknamed "The Wizard's Isle." The capitol Cherafir, and some of its larger settlements are prosperous, peaceful, and comfortable. Melderyn has not known conflict in many years, although the city of Thay was sacked by Vikings in 703. Another raid in 707 was dashed to bits by a freak storm off Cape Renda, and some say by arcane means. Melderyn is ruled by King Darebor II, a serene monarch of nearly fifty. He is



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rumored to be troubled at the activities of his late brother, and wonders at the wisdom of so powerful a state as Tharda. It is also rumored that that is all he will do.

ORBAAL

Once a land of semi-independent states, this icy, mountainous kingdom in northern Hârn was conquered by free-booting Viking warlords over the last century who oppress and exploit the Jarin who are no longer master's of their own house. Rebellion has been brewing for many years, and is likely to break out sooner rather than later. King Alegar II in Geldeheim is owed tribute by most of the Ivinian clans, but his actual control is mostly in name.



THARDA

The newest state on Hârn, the Kingdom of Tharda was proclaimed in 725. In 720, Arren of Melderyn, younger brother of King Darebor II, seized the Kingdom of Rethem in a coup d'etat. Personally slaying the former king, Chafin III, and proclaiming himself King of Rethem, Arren waged war over the next five years against the Kingdom of Kanday to the south and the Thardic Republic to the east. He perfected a military organization with roots in the Azeryan Empire, with which he combined with the shock value of feudal heavy cavalry. His armies proved an unstoppable mailed fist. Although he conquered all he surveyed, Arren of Melderyn was himself slain in



personal combat against the last King of Kanday, Andasin IV, who was also slain at that time. After a brief power struggle, Arren I's son emerged as Arren II, King of Tharda, and he rules yet. The kingdom enjoys a degree of religious freedom unknown in any other Hârnic nation. Through a judicious combination of favors to those powerful figures from the prior regimes, a strong standing army, impartial justice, and a light royal hand, Arren II has achieved strong personal loyalty from most important factions in the kingdom. Enough that some of his great nobles are urging him to once again employ the enormous military machine he inherited from his father.

TRIBAL NATIONS

"In those days Hârn still boasted a flourishing tribal culture with over a dozen different nations, a way of life now all but erased..."

Feudal Hârn, p. 23

Much of the human population of Hârn lives outside of the civilized kingdoms and occupy the vast stretches of land in the rugged hills and hinterlands of the island. While mostly of a mixed Jarin and Pharic racial stock, the eighteen tribal nations of Hârn maintain their own ways and cultures. Some are nearly civilized like the Bujoc, and some, like the Pagaelin, are warlike and savage. Some have been known trade and even possess a primitive agriculture. The Chelni are famed for their equine prowess and their steeds. The beauty of the women of the Kath is legendary. Those who venture into the lands of any tribal nation must be fleet of foot, quick of mind, or uncommonly skilled with a blade.

Tribal Groups

Adaenum
Anoa
Bujoc
Chelni
Chymak
Equani
Gozyda
Hodiri
Kabloqui
Kamaki
Kath
Kubora
Pagaelin
Solori
Taelda
Tulwyn
Urdu
Ymodi

There are also several species of orcs that live on Hârn. Collectively known as Gargun, these fearsome beasts are found throughout Hârn but are most often encountered in the mountains and other locations far from settlements. However, Gargun swarms have devastated several unlucky communities, and survivors are usually few. Other creatures also make Hârn their home. The god Ilvir is known to be the creator of the creatures known as Ivashu, which take many forms and are simply seen as monsters to most folk.

Time and Date

The calendar used throughout Hârn was developed by a Melderyni Astrologer named Tuzyn 730 years ago. The year is expressed as Tuzyn Reckoning (T.R.), and begins on the first day of Nuzyael. A full moon typically occurs on the 15th of each month. The months are as follows:

Spring

Nuzyael
Peonu
Kelen

Summer

Nolus
Larane
Agrazhar

Autumn

Azura
Halane
Savor

Winter

Ilvin
Navek
Morgat

Each month has 30 days.

Each month has three ten-days (Hârníc weeks).