

Background History

The Order of Hyvrik and the Order of the Checkered Shield have a complex evolution. This is due to two factors: first, the Theocracy of Tekhos and, second, the evolution and rise of the Kingdom of Kanday.

Before 565 the majority of Laranian clerics in western Hårn were missionary priests of the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow. During the Theocracy the priests were driven underground. Many went into hiding with the 'rebels and outlaws' (a significant number with clan Kand). Links with eastern Hårn, poor at the best of times, became almost non-existent.

The Theocracy of Tekhos collapsed in 588 when the Theocrat, Horahnam of Tekhos, was assassinated in Coranan. There followed spontaneous revolts throughout the Theocracy. Less than a year later, in Nuzyael 589 Andasin of Kand seized Ibonost Keep. Andasin, who was by then in his thirties, proclaimed the Kingdom of Kanday. This was the Interegnum, a time when many petty states were being formed. Andasin's Kingdom was just one of many.

Laranian missionaries formed the Order of Hyvrik in Aleath as a missionary Order for Western Hårn. The Order was formed as the Theocracy was falling. The Temple in Aleath was built to head a new missionary order for western Hårn. It was created in 593. At the time Aleath was an independent city struggling to regain control of the surrounding area. Once communications were fully re-established with Eastern Hårn the Sebrath and the Turintesa of the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow were faced with an accomplished fact.

At this time the Order of Hyvrik was formed the 'Kingdom of Kanday' still consisted of Ibonost Keep only. Kanday was a petty state a long way from Aleath. There had previously been a temple to Larani in Aleath, which was razed during the Theocracy. The order was created by priests who had remained hidden within the city and the surrounding lands during the Theocracy.

In 598 Andasin I added Edino to his kingdom. It was another 22 years (620) before Dyrisa was captured. By this time Andasin was 62 years old. Tragically, his only surviving son, Kubro, was killed in the battle for Dyrisa.

Looking at the Laranian Bishoprics and the timetable for the building of the major Abbeys building in Western Hårn we see some interesting things.

Korri was built in 608. At the time it was in the Kingdom of Gemela. The Kingdom of Gemela was (and still is) a remote backwater. Until Ezar's War it never attracted much attention from anybody. The Order of Hyvrik was only 15 years old and was concentrating on building a power base in Aleath. Not only did they lack the manpower & political clout required to expand into Gemela, but also they had no real interest in

doing so. They were looking to expand north and east. For this reason Korri Abbey is not an Orderial Abbey.

Welur was built in 612, the year the second Aleath Republic was founded. Its construction represented an attempt by the Order to consolidate power in Aleath. This is another reason why they were uninterested in the Abbey at Korri. In 612 Korri was still unfinished.

Eight years later, in 620 that 'to give thanks to Larani' Andasin I founded Shreve Abbey. It was founded as an independent abbey, not as part of the Order of Hyvrik. Andasin envisioned a new Clerical Order; for his fledgling Kingdom. Additionally he didn't want to be too closely associated with an Order whose Turintesa was based in another country, especially a country claiming to be a republic.

In 622 Andasin I founded the Order of the Checkered Shield. This is a fact. A layman formed a Laranian Fighting Order. This is unique (and these days possibly blasphemous) although he had the full backing of the priests in his retinue (perhaps there was one priest in particular, a Saint of the Checkered Shield).

The exact details are sketchy, but the Order of the Checkered Shield was created by Andasin without there being a sponsoring Clerical Order. Within five years of its creation the Order of the Checkered Shield had increased Kanday to include Quivum, Imiden, Ewen, Zerien & Heroth (Ohetis became part of the kingdom with Dyrisa).

The Checkered Shield built Kanday, they know it, and clan Kand knows it.

In 623 the rebuilding Erone Abbey began after the Checkered Shield began to conquer what is now northern Kanday. The Checkered Shield intended Erone to be the Headquarters of a new sponsoring Order (they knew that the church authorities would not let them remain independent).

The 'Order of the Checkered Shield' formed by Andasin I was little more than mercenary company prepared to give lip service to Larani. They had a number of militant priests within their ranks but had little (or no) official sanction from the church. They were, however, a very effective force. Within five years of their creation they had more than doubled the size of Andasin's Kingdom.

Andasin I was aging fast. He was worried about his place in the afterlife and about the stability of his fledgling kingdom. For this reason he began the re-building of Erone. His intention was to create a new Kandan Clerical Order to oversee the Checkered Shield. The church Hierarchy, however, did not want a proliferation of new Clerical and Fighting Orders. However, the Lirrath recognised a rising star in Kanday, especially when Andasin's grandson Andasin II

began using diplomacy, rather than the sword to consolidate his Kingdom.

The ten years between 627 and 637 were a time of consolidation in both Kanday and the Church of Larani. The church hierarchy insisted that the Checkered Shield must be made responsible to a Clerical Order. The independent Abbeys of Shreve, Erone and Korri had no wish to be amalgamated into the Order of Hyvrik. The Serolan of these abbeys were also Rekela. The Abbot of Shreve was regarded as the principal Laranian Cleric in Kanday. He was the biggest fish in a pond that was getting bigger. If his Temple joined the Order of Hyvrik he would become subservient to the Turintesa of the Order of Hyvrik.

The Sebrath and the Turintesa of the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow sent envoys to Dyrisa where they met with Andasin II and finally brokered a compromise. The Turintesa of the Order of Hyvrik overplayed his hand and alienated the envoys (the Turintesa of the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow did not, in any event want a second clerical order on Harn to rival the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow in power). The upshot was that the Turintesa of the Order of Hyvrik was granted sponsorship over the Order of the Checkered Shield, as he had wanted. He was not, however, given control of the independent abbeys.

The Abbot of Shreve was made Serekela of Western Harn and was given special dispensation to appoint any future Turintesa. In addition, the Order of the Checkered Shield were allowed to elect their own Chabla. King Andasin II would certainly have preferred to retain his right to appoint the Chabla, as his grandfather had done, but he trusted the loyalty of the Knight Commanders of the Order and this alternative was better than allowing the church to make the appointment.

The upshot of the negotiations resulted in the current, extremely complicated command structure of the Order of Hyvrik. The Turintesa in Aleath controls a large number of wealthy abbeys. The church, however, is structured in such a way that the abbeys give a portion of their revenue not directly to the Turintesa but to the Rekela and Serekela. The Turintesa in Aleath must rely on funding for himself and his staff being made available by the Serekela. He can rely on Welur for total support, and also these days on Erone, but not necessarily on the Serekela.

The current mission of the church remains to promote Laranianism through missionary work. Sheriff Rekela Tamys Bakyth believes this equates to crushing Agrikanism by any means possible. Others, notably the Serekela, Styffen Millard, are more cautious. The Serekela will, however, back his Rekela in any dispute with the Checkered Shield.

The Order of the Checkered Shield has done very well from clan Kand, and vice versa. The Order emerged from Ezars'

War even more powerful. They have always elected Chablas who are both loyal to clan Kand and are prepared to stand up to the clergy. They will listen politely to the clergy on matters of faith (almost all Chablas have been pious men). But on military matters they will brook no interference from the priesthood. The holdings of the Order of the Checkered Shield are, in the main, in north western Kanday, remote from the sponsoring Clerical Orders powerbase in Aleath. This is how the Checkered Shield like it.

From its headquarters in Menekod the Checkered Shield control a huge amount of land. The Chabla is more powerful than a Baron and can muster at least as many troops as an Earl.

There are two factions within the Order of the Checkered Shield. The Andasin loyalists and the Anafas loyalists. This is a gross simplification. The vast majority of Anafas loyalists simply regard him as a better man. They don't intend to do anything about it. There is, however, a small minority who contemplate treason in the interests of the kingdom. Sir Symon Tolfane is an Anafas loyalist. Sir Symon tolerates some border skirmishes with the Order of the Copper Hook, but is concerned that things are escalating. He transfers the most militant of the young hotheads well away from sensitive border areas. Several young men have found themselves transferred to one of the Chapter Houses south of Dyrisa.

Many people regard Andasin IV as weak. He is more like Andasin II, the diplomat, rather than Andasin I the warrior. He will look for a negotiated, rather than a military, solution to any problem. Both Andasin & Anafas would love to see a civil war in Rethem. The chance to annex land south of the Thard (especially Hyen) would be taken. Chafins leg-breakers, the Companions of Roving Doom, also have lands on the Kandan border. Teregan controls almost 1/3 of the Roving Doom Lands.

Regardless of which faction they belong to members of the Order of the Checkered Shield have one thing in common, they are all (in their own ways) loyal to clan Kand and to Kanday. The problem with this loyalty of course is that it is well known. The Checkered Shield in Tharda are distrusted for this reason.

The Thardic branch of both Orders claim loyalty to church above all else and tries to remain distant from politics, both Kandan and Thardan (not easy). The Thardan branches of both Orders try to keep contact with Kanday to a minimum. They are, however, a good source of intelligence for Kanday.

Church Organisation

The standard Laranian Temple has the following priests: -

- The Serolan (High Priest)
- The Valaran (Master of Acolytes)
- The Suloran (Master of Archives)
- The Obasaran (Master of Secular Affairs)
- The Menoran (Master of the Fighting Order)
- Several Matakaea (Priests)
- Several Ashesa (Acolytes)

These priests, it appears are common in every Temple. Evidence for the existence of small chapels or churches with only one or two Matakaea and/or Ashesa appear to indicate that these are (almost?) always 'chaplains' attached to a noble house or a manor held by the Fighting Order.

The structure works well, except for one position, the Menoran. The existence of a Menoran on all Temples raises many questions. If the Temple does not belong to a Clerical Order, they have no associated Fighting Order. Why do they need a Menoran? If they are part of a Clerical Order, for what part of the Fighting Order is the Menoran responsible? There are many Menoran, one for each Abbey. If the Church attach 'chaplains' to Fighting Orders (they do - see Menekod) how is the chaplains role different from that of the Menoran. Looking specifically at Kanday my solution is the following:

The Menoran is Master of the Fighting Arts, not Master of the Fighting Order. In non-orderial churches he is responsible for the temple guards and for training the clergy in the arts of warfare and combat. All clerics receive some combat training. This is a weak and lowly post, the least of the senior positions, in non-orderial Temples.

Chaplains are non-orderial priests provided by the Church of Larani to give 'spiritual guidance' to temporal land-owners. They have no formal connection to the Order of Hyvrik and are therefore usually well respected by the Checkered Shield.



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