

HÂRNIC TOURNAMENTS

The tournament is a martial sport that demonstrates a knight's strength and skill in battle. In its present form, it comprises the Melee, in which groups of mounted knights engage in battle on a field, and the Joust, which is a contest between two mounted knights, armed with lance and shield.

Tournaments have been held for as long as feudalism has existed. Originally, they were simply mock battles between two groups of knights during peacetime. Such battles involved weapons of war and lacked any specific rules of conduct; hence, they were often difficult to distinguish from a real melee.

With the growing influence of Laranianism and popularity of the concept of chivalry, tournaments became more refined. Rules were introduced and enforced by Marshals and Judges, and blunted lances and swords replaced weapons of war. Tournaments began to focus more on pageantry and individual skill and the Joust developed to overtake the Melee in popularity.

Tournaments are commonplace in all feudal kingdoms. On Hârn, they are especially popular in the kingdoms of Kaldor, Kanday, Melderyn and Chybisa, where the church of Larani is dominant among the nobility. However, they are also held in some form in any nation with a mounted warrior elite.



TOURNEY FEES

Earl: 40s (480d, or £2)
Baron: 20s (240d, or £1)
Landed knight: 10s (120d)
Landless knight: 5s (60d)
Foreign knight: double charge
Knight of the Lady of Paladins or
the Checkered Shield: no charge
Knight of the Royal Guard: 2s (24d)

Tourney Fees

Tournaments are expensive to organize and run. Most hosts charge contestants a participation fee to subsidize costs and discourage triflers. Fees increase with a participant's rank.

Occasionally, a magnanimous King will host a large tournament without entry fees, to celebrate an important event like a royal marriage or jubilee. Contestants can attend such events by invitation only.

CREDITS

WRITER

Bill Gant

ARTIST

Richard Lushek

CONTRIBUTOR

Patrick Nilsson

EDITORS

Tom Dalglish

Grant Dalglish

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TOURNAMENT HOSTS

Tournaments can be hosted by any King, great noble or religious fighting order. Hosting tournaments is an expensive exercise as catering, prizes, entertainment and so on must be organized – the high costs usually prohibit all but royalty from hosting large tournaments.

The actual organization of the tournament is not managed by the host but by his steward, who is referred to as Master of the Tournament. This official is responsible for ensuring that all preparations are made and that the guests are suitably accommodated, fed and entertained.

KNIGHTS OF THE TOURNAMENT

At nearly all tournaments, only knights can participate in the Joust and Melee. Roughly one quarter of Hârníc feudal knights hold land in exchange for military service. The rest are knights-bachelor, who hold no land and serve as retainers of lords, members of fighting orders, or with royal guard units.

Many landed knights cannot find the time to attend tournaments. Knights-bachelor often outnumber landed knights by at least 6:1. A typical tournament is attended by 30 to 50 knights, most of whom are local.

The largest tournament in Hârn is the Royal Chelebin Tournament of Chivalry, held every midsummer at Olokand in Kaldor. This grand event draws as many as four hundred contestants, and about five thousand spectators.

Barred From the Tournament

Tournaments are generally open to all knights, regardless of nationality. However, there are often specific exceptions, and unwelcome knights may be attacked and arrested. In Larani-dominated kingdoms such as Kanday or Kaldor, the following exceptions are rigorously enforced:

- Knights who have failed to meet their feudal obligations or otherwise shown disloyalty to their liege.
- Worshipers of Agrik, Morgath, or Naveh, or harborers of such worshipers.
- Violators and excommunicants of the Church of Peoni or Larani.
- Knights who have been defeated in a duel of honor.
- Oath breakers, liars, and bearers of false arms.
- Robber knights and other outlaws.
- Cowards.
- Profiteers.
- Men who have dishonored ladies.

TYPES OF KNIGHTS

The typical knight is male and openly bears his own coat of arms. However, there are three other types of knights that deserve mention: black knights; champion knights; and female knights.

Black Knights

Occasionally, a knight will attend a tournament incognito, wearing a helm that hides his face, bearing no coat of arms and carrying a blank shield. For the purpose of charging an entry fee, he would be classed as a landless foreign knight.

The mystery participant is usually referred to as a 'black knight', although he is not obliged to wear that color. Ironically, some black knights are garbed in white! The presence of a black knight is often a source of intrigue for the other knights and spectators, who can only speculate as to his true identity and measure on the field. Perhaps the black knight is a prince from another kingdom in disguise, or maybe he is a dangerous outlaw. The fighting ability of the black knight is unknown, thus he tends to attract many challenges, particularly from the younger knights.

It is expected that if a black knight is defeated in combat, his identity will be revealed. Once this happens, he must bear his heraldry for the remainder of the tournament. Alternatively, if the defeated knight refuses to reveal his identity, he will be required to leave the tourney immediately.

Champion Knights

Many important knights are unable or unwilling to participate in tournaments. They seek representation to bring honor to their name and also to fulfill their obligation to support their lords.

For example, Baron Dwyn Elorieth of Nubeth keep in Kaldor is too old and frail to participate in tournaments, but always has someone represent him, for personal honor and to show support for his lord, Earl Sedris Meleken of Qualdris castle. Similarly, the young Earl Meleken may not be able to attend tournaments if he is away questing, so he may wish to send a proxy to represent him and fulfill his duties.

The proxies are referred to as 'champion knights' – they participate in tournaments by carrying the banner of their lord and fighting under his name. Any entry fee is the same as if the lord himself were participating. Traditionally, champion knights are the eldest sons of the lords, but often they are tough warriors with a reputation for tournament prowess, recruited from among the lord's vassal knights.

Champion knights are effectively noble retainers of their lord for the duration of the tournament. Hence, they must charge their shields with their patron's arms in the center over their own. They must also bear their lord's emblem on their surcoats. The lord covers all costs associated with attending the tournament, and he is also entitled to any prizes won by the champion knight.

A champion knight is bound by duty to behave in a manner befitting a knight of his lord's station. Any misdeeds committed by a champion knight reflect poorly on his patron, who may be forced to pay restitution. Hence, a lord must choose wisely when selecting a knight to represent him.

Female Knights

Most contestants in tournaments are male, although a few female knights have been known to attend. The majority of male knights are uncomfortable with the presence of female warriors at Laranian tournaments, an ironic double standard. Although most knights worship Larani, a great female warrior, they also believe that fighting is exclusively men's business and women should stay off the battlefield.

The challenges of female knights are often politely ignored. Even if a contest is accepted, the tendency to "go easy" on the women pleases no one. For this reason, many female knights attend tournaments in disguise as Black Knights, revealing their true identity only after a contest has been settled. Some champion black knights have turned out to be female.



Retinues

There is an unspoken expectation in noble society that the size of a knight's retinue is proportionate to his rank. It would be recalcitrant of an earl to attend with only a handful of companions, just as much as it would be presumptuous of a simple knight-bachelor to arrive with a large entourage. The generally accepted retinue size is given below:

Landless knight: 1-2

Landed knight: 2-12

Baron: 12-24

Earl: 25-50

An earl's full retinue typically comprises the following:

Squires

Valets and pages

Men-at-arms

Family members

Friends and companions

Heralds and scribes

Priests of Larani

Weaponcrafters, Ostlers, etc.

Physicians and Apothecaries

Entertainers and fools

Servants, cooks, laborers, and maids

Some lords bring hardened criminals in chains or caged wagons for public punishment or execution, earning them prestige among their peers.

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STEEDS

Each knight usually arrives at the tournament on a courser (a knight's preferred riding horse, typically ridden for hunting) or possibly a simple rouncy. He is accompanied by a squire mounted on a rouncy or perhaps a humble cob. The riderless warhorse (generally a charger, or a destrier if the knight is very rich) is led by the squire or a groom – it normally carries the knight's heavy armour and armaments when traveling. There would also be a few pack-horses such as sumpters carrying the party's belongings.

If a lady travels with the knight, she would ride a gentle riding horse such as a palfrey, or in a horse-drawn wagon accompanied by handmaidens and servants if the knight is particularly wealthy.

Therefore, each participating knight might bring 4 to 8 horses with him – feeding and stabling hundreds of horses obviously becomes a logistical challenge.

Feeding the animals is an enormous task, one that keeps squires, servants and ostlers very busy during the tournament. Tons of grain and a much greater amount of fodder are required just for the beasts every day. The granaries of the local castle and nearby manors are stocked with surplus quantities of grain to support this demand – teamsters are kept busy throughout the tournament transporting the grain to ostlers for distribution to squires and grooms. While the spirited warhorses are fed hay and grain in the local Ostler's Common, all other horses must graze on the grass and stacks of hay or straw piled by ostlers' apprentices in an open field – usually the same field as the one that hosts the Melee.

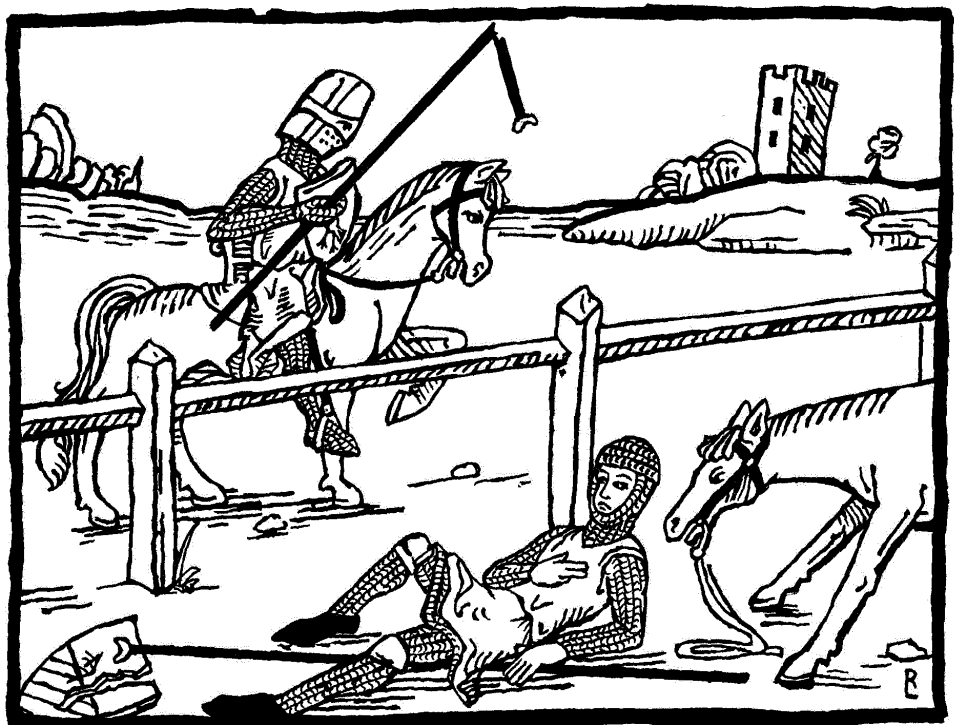
Needless to say, the horses and other beasts leave a considerable amount of manure on the fields. The dung at the stables and near the knights' tents is collected daily by peasants called 'gong farmers', who also clear the makeshift cesspits at the fringes of the Commons. The smelly manure, rich in nutrients essential for agriculture, is carted away for later use in plowing.

TOURNAMENT VENUE

Accommodating so many visiting knights and their retinues in existing structures is usually beyond the capacity of any tournament venue. Only the most important and wealthiest knights would be invited to stay at the local castle.

After paying their fees and but before formally greeting the host of the tournament, the bulk of the nobility pitch colorful pavilion tents flying their gonfanons (flags) in the designated campgrounds in one of the Commons. A single knight may have several tents – the largest is for the knight and his family, and the rest for the squires, retainers and servants. The knight's shield is hung from the entrance of the main tent. An open area – usually roped off – adjacent to the cluster of tents is used to keep horses and (if applicable) carts and wagons.

Tournaments attract great numbers of spectators, and with them come those seeking to feed, amuse, or exploit the crowd. Merchants set up their stalls wherever they can, hawking a bewildering assortment of wares, ranging from the mundane to the exotic. Costumed acrobats, jesters, jugglers, and thespians entertain the crowds. The clergy walk among the people, chanting their plainsongs and preaching to potential converts. Innkeepers conduct a roaring trade selling cheap ale and wine to the masses – drunkenness is common.



Pageantry

The tournament venue takes on an increasingly vibrant and regal atmosphere as the participants arrive. There is fine food and entertainment in abundance. Shields, tents and flags are erected to announce the presence of the participants. Nobles in rich clothes congregate in the open and dance gracefully to the music of minstrels. Knights resplendent in their polished armour take part in grand processions and receive blessings en masse from priests. Many would argue that it is this pageantry, more than the events themselves, that defines the essence of a tournament.

MARSHALS AND JUDGES

Marshals at the tournament comprise heralds who arrange and meticulously record the events at all tournaments. At royal tournaments, the Chief Herald from the local College of Heralds is also present, to make important proclamations, and to officiate in the selection of the Judges. The tasks of the Marshals include:

- Ensuring that all events take place in due order.
- Confirming a contestant's right to bear heraldic arms (if necessary).
- Registering each contestant.
- Recording all tournament activity, even minute details such as how and where a knight strikes an opponent.
- Acting as proxies for knights when issuing and accepting challenges.
- Announcing the arrival of their masters.

The Chief Marshal of the Lists (also known simply as the Chief Marshal) is the most senior Marshal at the tournament. This official's tasks are to ensure that the other Marshals act in accordance with their directives, and also to determine which team each participant is to join for the Melee.

At Laranian tournaments, Marshals wear pure white tabards to signify their positions. The tabard of the Chief Marshal is emblazoned with a gryphon sergeant gules. Marshals at Agrikan tournaments wear orange, and the Chief Marshal wears orange and black.

Judges are worthy knights and squires who have the power to arbitrate at a tournament. There are always 5 Judges appointed at Laranian tournaments – other tournaments can have as few as three Judges or as many as eight. Judges may not compete in the tournament.

At royal tournaments, the Chief Herald offers a roll to the King, upon which are emblazoned the shields of hopeful knights and squires. The King must select one knight and one squire to act as Judges. The selection is supposed to be based solely on their unbiased honesty, although political considerations often take precedence.

The other Judges are then selected at random from a group of potential knights and squires. At least three Judges must attend any given contest, at least two of whom must be knights.

The Judges' decisions are final and cannot be disputed, although it is possible for an unsatisfied host to dissolve the group and call for a new group of Judges to be selected.

At Laranian tournaments, Judges traditionally wear bright red capes to differentiate them from the participants, and carry long white batons which are used to proclaim judgments. The color scheme is different at Agrikan tournaments, with the capes being golden and the batons orange.

The crown protects all Marshals and Judges at any official tournament. It is a grave offense to assault or even disobey a Marshal or Judge during the events – the penalty can be as harsh as being labeled a coward and banned for life, having to pay a severe fine (£20) and/or being imprisoned for one year.

LADIES AT THE TOURNAMENT

Tournaments are popular venues for unmarried daughters of nobles to seek future husbands and to exchange gossip. The heady dreams of true love and courtship and the fire of romance encourage damsels to dress more extravagantly, preen themselves more carefully, and flirt more coquettishly than usual, often to the disapproval of their mothers. From the knights' viewpoint, the presence of so many lovely and available maidens graces the tournament and spurs them to try harder than usual to seek their attention and admiration.

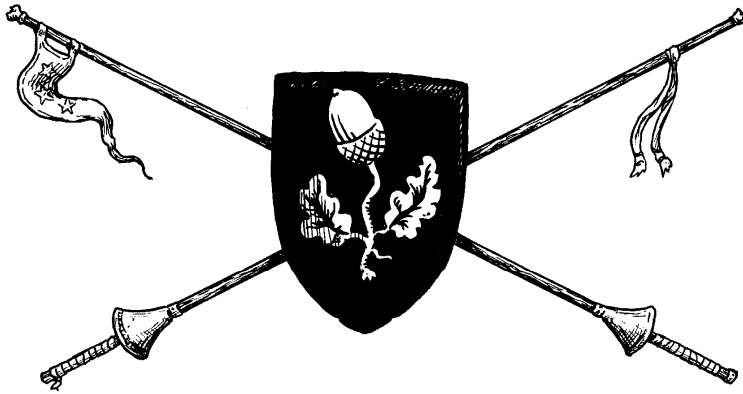
During events, ladies either sit in the galleries or on wooden benches that have been carried out to the field outside the perimeter of the Lists. Helpful heralds stand nearby, describing the actions of the events and offering the names and deeds of the contestants.

Favors

One of the most important challenges for an unmarried male knight at a Laranian tournament is to obtain a favor from a lady to whom he is attracted. The value of such a token is entirely sentimental, although it can inspire some knights to fight more confidently, or give rise to furious jealousy in others who had been vying for the attention of the same lady.

Favors typically range from an impersonal Peonian-style scarf to a more personal token such as a glove, detachable sleeve, veil, lock of hair or even a garter. A knight can tie the favor to the end of his lance, helmet or arm, or place it under the tunic and close to his heart.

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WEAPONS OF THE TOURNAMENT

Early tournaments used normal weapons of war in all contests – the obvious consequence was a high casualty and fatality rate. This is still true at most tournaments in Rethem. However, since the purpose of most Hârníc tournaments is to display martial skill rather than to injure people, special rebated (blunted) weapons are used in the Joust and Melee.

Special jousting poles are used in the traditional Joust – each participating knight is expected to bring at least three to the tournament, although most bring many more than this. Jousting poles are fragile lances – they are made from soft wood and designed to break easily. They are blunted, padded or fitted with a coronel, an iron crown-like head to spread the force of impact over a wider area.

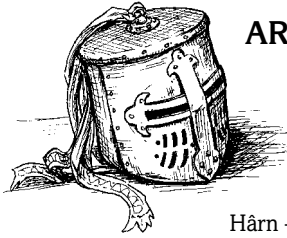
Jousting poles at most tournaments are 10-12 feet in length, longer than lances of war, which measure 8-10 feet. However, at the Royal Chelebin Tournament of Chivalry and at any tournament hosted by a Laranian fighting order, all jousting poles must be exactly 15 feet long. It is traditional at Laranian tournaments for jousting poles to be painted red and white.

For the Melee, the contestants fight with headless lances and rebated swords. The lances are considerably shorter and more resilient than jousting poles. Marshals inspect all weapons prior to the event to ensure that they are indeed blunt. Such weapons are cheaper than their equivalent weapons of war – about one third of the normal price. Although the lances and swords are rebated, being hit by them can still break bones and may even kill by direct blow, or as a result of someone being awkwardly unhorsed. Bloodless melees are rare.

Most participants at tournaments use knights' shields during a Melee, but prefer the longer kite shields for the Joust. Other types of shields (such as round shields) are generally not permitted, or at best frowned upon.

Unless they are black knights, all participants have their heraldic devices emblazoned on their shields. Most knights have their heraldry showing on their surcoats as well. However, members of religious fighting orders would wear the coat of arms of their order instead, and similarly, knights of the Royal Guard would wear their King's arms on their surcoats. Ostentatious knights also have caparisons on their steeds that display their devices. In addition, there is a growing tendency by great nobles to feature a crest or mantle on the great helm at the Jousts.

A fine saddled, fully-trained warhorse can cost over £10. Other equipment costs include: three or four dozen jousting poles; a few rebated broadswords and lances; a bastard sword, mace and dagger; four or five knight's shields; spare clothing for social activities; a riding horse with appropriate gear and at least one pack horse; possibly a spare warhorse; a pavilion tent and miscellaneous equipment. A wealthy knight could be facing basic costs of as much as £30 (7200d), and this is before considering the costs for his entourage and general maintenance! It is therefore not difficult to see how an Earl could spend in excess of £100 (24000d) to attend a tournament.



ARMOUR OF THE TOURNAMENT

The armour worn by contestants is the same as that worn into battle, except many knights wear a great helm and kurbul breastplate and ailettes for additional protection.

It should be noted that great helms are rare on Hårn – they are almost exclusively worn by wealthy knights at the Joust, and seldom in battle. The narrow eye slits of great helms severely limit peripheral vision, which is essential for survival in actual combat.

The following tables show the typical armour worn at a summer tournament by knights of varying degrees of affluence. The cost assumes armour of average quality. Wealthy knights often wear more expensive, superior armour that weighs less and offers better protection. Extremely rich knights have been known to spend as much as £60 on armour.

Poor Knight

Leather hood, providing minimal protection to the skull and neck.
 Plate halfhelm with nasal, secured over the hood with leather laces tied under the chin.
 Linen long-sleeved undershirt, pulled on over the head.
 Scale byrnie, extending to the upper arms and tops of the thighs.
 Linen surcoat worn over the byrnie, displaying the knight's coat of arms. It is slit to the crotch to facilitate riding.
 Leather sword belt for the scabbard.
 Linen braies (breeches) extending from the waist to just below the knees, tied under the undershirt with a drawstring.
 Woolen hose, extending from thighs to feet and fastened at the front with ties to the drawstring of the braies.
 Leather shoes or ankle boots tied with thongs, worn over the hose.
 Iron prick spurs.

BASIC COST: £3 (720d)

Average Knight

Quilt arming cap, worn under the mail cowl to prevent chafing of the scalp and ears.
 Mail cowl, fastened at the jaw with a ventail.
 Plate halfhelm with nasal, secured over the mail cowl with leather laces tied under the chin. For the Joust, the helmet has a steel facemask.
 Linen long-sleeved undershirt, pulled on over the head.
 Quilt gambeson, extending to the wrists and thighs. It has a high collar to help protect the neck. It is slit up to the crotch front and rear to allow the armour to hang naturally over the thigh when mounted.
 Mail hauberk, extending to the upper arms and thighs. It is pulled on over the head. Also slit to the crotch to facilitate riding.
 Linen surcoat worn over the hauberk, displaying the knight's heraldry. Also slit to the crotch to facilitate riding.
 Leather sword belt for the scabbard.
 Linen breeches covering the waist to just below the knees, tied under the undershirt with a drawstring.
 Woolen hose, covering thighs to feet and fastened at the front with ties.
 Kurbul kneecops.
 Leather shoes or ankle boots tied with thongs, worn over the hose.
 Iron prick spurs.

BASIC COST: £7 (1,680d)

Wealthy Knight

Quilt arming cap, worn under the mail cowl to prevent chafing.
 Mail cowl, fastened at the jaw with a ventail.
 Plate halfhelm with nasal, secured over the mail cowl with leather laces tied under the chin. For the Joust, the helmet is replaced by a plate great helm.
 Linen long-sleeved undershirt, pulled on over the head.
 Quilt gambeson, extending to the wrists and thighs. It has a high collar to help protect the neck. It is slit up to the crotch front and rear to allow the armour to hang naturally over the thigh when mounted.
 Mail hauberk, extending to the upper arms and thighs. It is pulled on over the head. Also slit to the crotch to facilitate riding.
 Linen surcoat worn over the hauberk, displaying the knight's heraldry. Also slit to the crotch to facilitate riding.
 Kurbul ailettes laced at the shoulders, displaying the knight's arms.
 Leather sword belt for the scabbard.
 Mail leather-lined mittens, tied at the wrists. The mittens have slits in the palms to allow the hands to be freed as necessary.
 Linen braies (breeches) extending from the waist to just below the knees, tied under the undershirt with a drawstring.
 Woolen hose, extending from thighs to feet and fastened at the front with ties to the drawstring of the braies.
 Leather shoes or ankle boots tied with thongs, worn over the hose but under the mail chausses.
 Mail chausses extending from thighs to feet and fastened with ties to a girdle. They are also tied with laces below the knees to further support them.
 Quilt cuisses, worn over the thighs and knees over the mail chausses and tied to the girdle.
 Plate kneecops worn over the cuisses.
 Iron prick spurs.

BASIC COST: £12 (2,880d)

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RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES

The churches of Larani and Peoni have been heavily involved in the development of tournaments in the majority of Hârníc kingdoms, influencing their form with religious ideals.

CHURCH OF LARANI

Laranianism is the official religion of the royal households in Melderyn, Kaldor, Kanday and Chybisa - this ensures that there is always a prominent Laranian theme incorporated into tournaments held in those kingdoms.

The Order of Hyvrik in western Hârn and the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow in the east have considerable influence among the nobility; a manifestation of this influence is the emphasis on Laranian ideals in the tournaments. Chivalric behavior and honorable combat are extolled as pious virtues. Loyalty to one's lord and fulfilling feudal obligations are also considered highly important.

One tenth of the earnings from most Hârníc tournaments are donated to the church of Larani. In return for this tithe, blessings are bestowed by priests and military support is offered by the Laranian fighting orders to assist in maintaining security at the tournaments.

The tournament is an occasion for knightly adherents of Larani to champion a lady or cause and bring honor by competing. It is believed that the best method of achieving this is through single combat against an opponent - hence, the Joust is considered the most important event in any kingdom where Larani is openly worshipped. In non-Laranian kingdoms such as Rethem, the Melee, not the Joust, is seen as the cornerstone of any tournament.

The Feast of Saint Ambrathas

The most important celebration of the Laranian year is the Feast of Saint Ambrathas, which takes place in mid-Larane. Tournaments are held at the chapter houses of Laranian fighting orders and also in Olokand, in the kingdom of Kaldor, which is the venue for the Royal Chelebin Tournament of Chivalry.

The Feast of Saint Ambrathas celebrates the legendary deeds of Ambrathas of Alamire, a warrior-priest credited with being Larani's greatest mortal champion. This celebration

is characterized by tournaments between "knights of good heart", special lay masses and night long meditation and prayer by Laranian priests.

Laranian Icons

Laranian overtones pervade the atmosphere of most Hârníc tournaments, with the notable exception of those held in Rethem.

Particularly at tournaments held over the Feast of Saint Ambrathas, red-and-white-checked banners and decorations, re-enactments or pantomimes of Saint Ambrathas of Alamire's legendary battles, tapestries and other depictions of the Knights of Tirith, representations of Larani's shield Hyvrik and statues of Mendiz the great crimson Winged Lion are all ubiquitous. Enterprising merchants attempt to sell religious trinkets, among them the alleged splinters from Protector, the Spear of Shattered Sorrow that was once wielded by the missionary Fardir of Tenil. One can hardly go anywhere during the tournament without seeing some object of religious significance.

Recruitment

Tournaments attract a large number of young, impressionable nobles. Persuasive members of the clergy often attend to seek out recruits for a sponsored fighting order. Recruitment is primarily aimed at younger sons who are unlikely to inherit land.



Tirannon

An important lay ritual among noble adherents of Larani is the Tirannon, the “Gate of the Mighty”. It is the final step in becoming a knight. The ritual is performed by a squire who is to be knighted, and consists of the squire placing armour and weapons on an altar in a Laranian temple or chapel, keeping a 24-hour vigil over them, praying for Larani to bless him and his war gear, and meditating on the holy virtues of a “perfect knight”. During this time the squire must not eat or drink and he should not be interrupted.

It is considered auspicious for squires to undergo the Tirannon just before and during a tournament. Therefore, if possible, pious lords often wait until this time to knight their squires.

Penance

Tournaments are not designed to be fatal, but accidents do happen – this is not a dishonorable way for a knight to die. The knight who kills accidentally is expected to do penance and assume some responsibility for the widow and her children.

Laranian Justice

Tournaments present excellent opportunities for the Laranian church to publicly display judgement and punishment for temple crimes. This serves as a reminder to the populace that they must not only be mindful of secular laws, but religious ones as well.

Trials by Ordeal are common – the accused is dropped into consecrated water for the religious court to determine guilt. If the accused sinks, he is deemed innocent and rescued; if he floats, he is guilty and must undergo whatever punishment is appropriate for the crime committed (a blasphemer might have his tongue cut out, for example).

A person accused of a serious temple crime, such as heresy or witchcraft, may be put to death as long as the church obtains secular consent. Public executions (usually burning to death) for temple crimes are rare, which is why they tend to be reserved for important secular tournaments for maximum exposure.

CHURCH OF PEONI

Peonianism has a surprising influence over most Hârnic tournaments. The church praises true love and thus encourages courtship between knights and ladies. This brings the spectacle of romance and courtly love to the violent world of warriors, giving knights more reason than prizes to behave honorably, fight valiantly, and lose with dignity. Stalks of freshly-cut wheat are often tied to helmets or lances as a symbol of Peoni's blessing.

The local Peonian temple at a tournament venue usually houses an infirmary which is always put to good use during the events. Although the chance of injury at tournaments is far less than in a real battle, bones can still be broken from falls or unlucky strikes, and open wounds can be suffered from duels and foot combat. Treating heavily armoured knights suffering from heat exhaustion is common.

Ladies often give plain kerchiefs of the same color as the robes of the Peonian clergy (such as green in spring and beige in summer), or scarves decorated with images of flowers or fruit (in groups of four) as favors.

Peonian Icons

The most popular Peonian icon at Kaldoric tournaments is Yselde the Trothmaker, a semi-divine servant of Peoni and the mistress of honorable love. There is usually a representation of Yselde – portrayed as a heavysset, good-humored woman of middle years, carrying a basket or sometimes a suckling child – present at the galleries. Other servants of Peoni, such as Belsirasin the Weeper and Tirrala the Handmaiden of Renewal, are also prominently featured.

Peonian Tournaments

In 716, the Earl of Balim in Kaldor inaugurated the Tournament of Love, a three-day tournament attended by 30 to 50 local knights and held at the West Common of Kiban in the month of Nulus. It is the only Hârnic tournament with a strong Peonian theme, if only the aspect of honorable love. The Angyla Festival, an important Peonian celebration, is held at the same time, although most of the activities are of little interest to the Larani-worshipping nobility. However, one Angyla event that is gaining popularity with participating knights is a variation of “Burning the Flag”. This variation entails two teams of mounted knights armed with rebated broadswords attempting to capture the opposing team's flag and throw it on a bonfire for burning.

OTHER CHURCHES

The religions of Halea, Ilvir, Sarajin, Save-K'nor, and Siem are tolerated in most tournaments but not encouraged. They have no official representation in the events or formalities, but their influence can be found in other, less formal aspects of the social activities.

Tournaments held in Rethem have a strong Agrikan theme; the use of fire features prominently. In the Thardic Republic, tournaments have been largely replaced by Pamasani Arena games which are largely operated by the Agrikan church. These games often include honorable jousts as well as dishonorable and brutal slaughters.

TOURNEY 10

TOURNAMENT EVENTS

The dominant events at most Hârníc tournaments are the *Joust* and the *Melee*. All participants are expected to participate in both events.

THE JOUST

The Joust, also known as the Tilt, is a contest between two mounted knights who charge and attempt to strike and unhorse each other with their jousting poles. It is the perfect opportunity to display individual prowess against an opponent in a controlled and public venue. The Joust is the key event at all Laranian tournaments, eclipsing all others.

There are many different rules for winning the Joust, but the most common set is called the Laranian Joust. This contest is won by the first knight to accumulate 3 points. *Breaking* a jousting pole against an opponent counts as 1 point and unhorsing an opponent counts as 3 points. Striking any part of the saddle scores no points and striking a steed leads to disqualification.

The jousters are permitted to make no more than three passes in a bout. If, after three tilts, the score remains tied, or if both knights are simultaneously unhorsed, the combatants must fight on foot using (real) swords, axes, or maces. The first knight to strike his opponent three times is the winner, except strikes to the shield do not count.

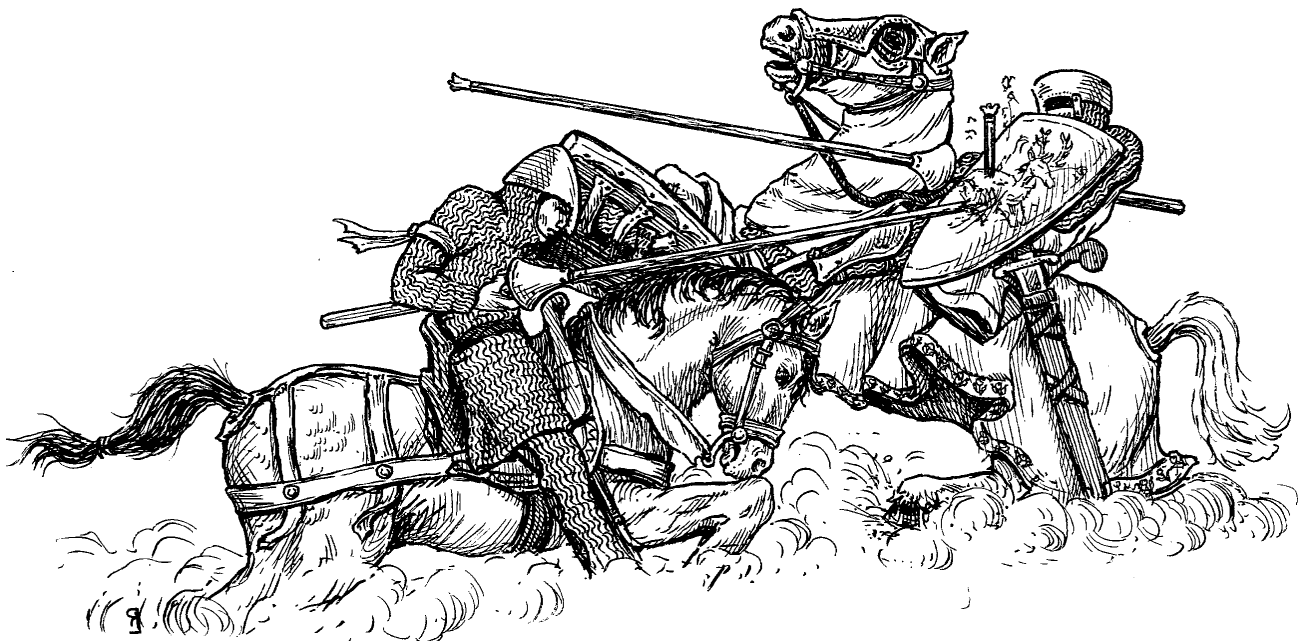
There are many variants of the Laranian Joust. For example, instead of a contest being limited to three tilts with the lance, there could be up to five or seven tilts, or even any number of tilts until one knight yields. If a knight is unhorsed, the contest might continue with both knights dismounted, although this is more common in duels. An unhorsed knight never has to fight a mounted knight under Laranian rules, but this is often seen under Agrikan Rules, especially in Pamesani arenas.

Each tournament also has its own rules regarding the jousting poles. Aside from length requirements, some tournaments attempt to promote fairness by collecting all participants' jousting poles and redistributing them randomly after the Judges have inspected them. Furthermore, many Jousts award the contest winner all of the loser's jousting poles – an important benefit considering the fragility of these weapons.

The winner of the Joust at any tournament is awarded the title of Champion of the Joust. The winner is usually the last knight remaining, or chosen by Judges from among a group of undefeated knights.

The Lists

Jousting occurs in an enclosure called the Lists. Within the Lists is a straight, level Jousting Run that is usually covered with thickly strewn sand, or well mulched with refuse from a tannery to soften an unhorsed knight's fall.



The Jousting Run is divided for much of its length by a Tilt Barrier to prevent the steeds from colliding with each other. At most Hârníc tournaments the barrier comprises a length of rope tied to a row of wooden posts and hung with cloth. The Royal Chelebin Tournament of Chivalry features a solid Tilt Barrier, a wooden fence four feet high.

Pairing Process

The process of pairing knights together for jousting differs from one tournament to another. Many tournaments rely on a completely random draw, but this method is often disliked by knights of high station, who object to being matched up against 'lesser' knights or their own vassals.

Other tournaments prefer to allow each knight to nominate an opponent, or to lay an open challenge for any knight to accept. The rules for pairing at a particular Joust are communicated by the Marshals at the beginning of the tournament.

Wagers & Trophies

It is customary, but not required, for combatants to wager their armour (or the equivalent in silver - who needs a second set of armour, which probably doesn't fit anyway?), and sometimes their shield, favorite weapon and/or warhorse as well. The winner of the contest then takes the items as trophies. The value of the trophies wagered between the jousters must be approximately the same. Poor knights risk losing everything they own through wagers.

Normally, the recipient of a challenge (rather than the challenger) suggests a wager, which can be accepted or declined by the other party.

Romantic knights offer jewelry (such as gold rings or bracelets) as trophies but do not request any items in return; should they lose the combat, the request is that the jewelry be given to a lady, but should they win, they can (for example) demand that the loser bow deferentially to all the ladies watching the contest.

Attendants

A jousting knight is allowed up to three liveried squires to assist him in the Lists. Normally, an attendant stands at each end of the Jousting Run, ready to hand a fresh jousting pole to his master, or to make a hasty adjustment to a strap as needed.

Attendants are not permitted to assist in actual fighting during the Joust or any ensuing foot combat. They may not be armed or armoured within the Lists. An energetic attendant may, however, sprint after their charging knight to help him stand should he be unhorsed.

Commencement & Closure

Trumpeters in the galleries announce the approach of the two contestants, who enter the Lists through gates from opposite ends. Each mounted knight is accompanied by his herald, who carries his banner and loudly proclaims his master's name and title, and by his squire and any other attendants permitted to enter the Lists.

The Judges and Marshals officiating in the contest are stationed near the middle of the Jousting Run. One of the Judges stands prominently with his baton raised high in the air.

When the knights are ready to joust, they must tilt up their jousting poles. The bout then begins by the Judge swinging his baton down, which may be triggered by a great lady allowing her kerchief fall to the ground.

On the Judge's signal, the jousters charge at each other, couching their jousting poles under their right arms and keeping their opponent on their left. Thus begins the Joust.

The Joust can be stopped at any time by a Judge casting his baton to the ground. Men-at-arms armed with staves stand within the Lists to help carry out the Judge's command if necessary.

Once a bout has ended, several servants rush to the Jousting Run. They quickly clean up any debris (such as broken jousting poles) in preparation for the next pair of jousters.



TOURNEY 12

THE MELEE

The Melee, also known as the Tourney, is essentially mock warfare between two teams of mounted knights wielding blunted broadswords and lances.

The Melee takes place on an open field, usually the largest Common, which is referred to as the Tourney Lists. At most tournaments, it is impractical to fence or rope off the entire perimeter of the Tourney Lists. Consequently, the action sometimes spills out beyond the boundary, and on rare occasions even into the local settlement, causing havoc.

At the end of the day, one team is declared the winner by the Judges, and the best fighter (from either team) is chosen as the Champion of the Melee and awarded a prize.

Team Selection

Each team in the Melee comprises several smaller units, grouped by banners led by an Earl, Baron or Manorknight. Vassal knights must always rally to the banner of their lord, but knights-bachelor, foreign knights and knights of the Laranian fighting orders can join either team.

Upon arrival at the tournament site each knight presents himself to the Chief Marshal. The knight declares which team he wishes to join. The Chief Marshal must ensure that the teams are evenly matched – he has the authority to direct knights to join a different team to balance the numbers.

Each team officially has a team leader, who is the highest-ranking knight. The team leader declares the team's tactics and strategy after conferring with the other important nobles on his team.

Every team member has a colored kerchief tied to his right upper arm (most often white or red in Laranian Tournaments), to denote for which team he is fighting.

Combat

At the beginning of the Melee, the two teams assemble on opposite sides of the battlefield, which is known as the Tourney Lists. The teams are subdivided into cavalry centads comprising a number of squadrons, grouped by the banners of their leaders.

When the horns are first blown, the two teams mobilize to outflank each other and make the opening charge with blunted lances. This commences the Melee.

The charge consists of mostly trotting into position, with perhaps 100 to 200 feet of cantering at the end. Given the uneven terrain of the Tourney Lists, no knight would risk their extremely expensive warhorses by galloping them across it.

The initial clash usually causes the most injuries, as knights are concussed or unhorsed from hard lance thrusts. Lances are broken or jarred free from hands by the force of impact, and rebated broadswords are drawn. The battle quickly degenerates into a swirling mass of single squadrons or even individuals riding about and pounding at each other. At times, the action is frantic and exciting as squadrons rally together and charge at a cluster of opponents, but on occasion, the fighting lulls to a stop altogether as teams fall back to regroup.

The Melee is a dangerous event, even with blunted lances and swords. There is only a small number of Judges and Marshals to police the large melee battlefield. Accidents do happen, and dishonorable actions are performed when the officials are not watching.

It is generally considered dishonorable for multiple knights to gang up on an opponent, especially one who is no longer mounted. It is also improper to kick or lay hands on a knight or horse (including the reins). Furthermore, it is deemed cowardly to strike a horse. However, such actions are often made in the chaos of battle, much of it unnoticed by the Judges and Marshals.

To assist the Judges over the large Tourney Lists, Marshals are given temporary power to make judgments and dismiss participants during the Melee, although a Judge can override their decisions.

Should a knight be unhorsed, the other members of his team would (depending on their loyalty) rally around and defend the knight while he remounts – a knight on foot is in danger of being trampled to death in the confusion of the Melee, hence the urgent need to remount as quickly as possible. In addition, if the knight remains unhorsed by the time a Judge or Marshal arrives, he will be sent off the field.

Knights who have been dismissed from the field of battle must remove their team color and may not re-enter the fray. Some brazen knights, seized by their passion, attempt to sneak back on to the field during the chaos of battle, but they risk being banned from the whole tournament if they are caught.

Standard Bearers

Every lord who has vassal knights will fly his standard, under which a small pennant signifying the team color is flown. This standard serves as an important rallying point for the vassal knights and also to allow spectators to easily locate the lord.

A lord usually chooses one of his most experienced and trusted vassal knights to act as his standard bearer. This is considered a great honor. This knight is duty-bound to carry the flag, which is mounted on a pole, and follow his lord everywhere on the battlefield.

Many knights tend to target opposing standard bearers to force them to drop their standard, as this can cause confusion among the enemy group by dissolving their rallying point. Because a standard bearer must hold his flag aloft, he is unable to fight and is therefore vulnerable. Therefore, he must be guarded by a protective screen of loyal knights whenever possible.

Should a standard bearer fall, another knight in the group is expected to immediately take his place. The lord would be greatly shamed were his flag to remain fallen while his vassals were still on the field.

Retainers

A knight can nominate up to a set number (usually three) of his squires or foot soldiers to receive permission to enter the Tourney Lists. These liveried retainers may only assist the knight whose badge they wear. They may enter the field either mounted on a riding horse or on foot, and can only be armed with either a rebated broadsword or a quarterstaff. They are allowed to wear armour but cannot carry a shield unless it is intended for their lord. The retainers' duty is to ward off attacks against their lord if he has been unhorsed, or to deliver a fresh horse, shield or sword to the lord, or to carry an unconscious master safely off the field. Retainers are otherwise not permitted to remain on the field.

As representatives of their master, retainers must behave in an appropriate manner. Any misbehavior on their part would reflect poorly on their knight, causing shame and dishonor.

Refuges

A typical Melee lasts for 2 to 6 hours – no knight is expected to fight continuously throughout the day. Special refuges reserved for each team are roped off at various points along the perimeter of the Tourney Lists, where the knights can enter to rest and change horses at any time. Fighting is not allowed in the refuges. Knights resting in the refuges can stay as long as they wish, quaffing wine and eating as they observe the battle and discuss team strategies. The refuges also serve as rally points for squadrons of knights held in reserve.

Ransoms

Some Melees, particularly in Rethem, practically revolve around capturing knights for ransom. Although ransoms in the Melee are lighter than in war, they can still bring considerable wealth – the ransom of an important knight could be a fine warhorse and a set of good armour.

Laranian tournaments usually forbid ransoming, to encourage the ideal of fighting for personal glory or for honoring a lady.

End of the Melee

As sunset approaches, the Judges and Marshals blow their horns to signify the end of the Melee. The officials meet with the team leaders of both sides, to determine who is to be declared the Champion of the Melee. The exhausted participants are then permitted to take a short break to look presentable for the evening banquet and dance.

OTHER EVENTS

While the Joust and Melee are staples of any tournament, other events and competitions, ranging from the increasingly popular Archery Contest through to a simple hollering contest, may also take place. Most of the side-events are spontaneous and unplanned, such as wrestling contests and 'foot-the-ball'. These events are open to commoners and so tend to attract them more than the nobility.

Side-events indulged in by knights and squires typically include riding against the quintain and other tilting exercises. Alternatively, a knight may make a challenge to others to engage in foot combat – the rules for winning vary but are rarely intended to be lethal.

More serious side events include duels between nobles and public executions. The former is usually held in private, while executions attract large crowds.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

For a gathering of so many nobles in one place, no tournament can be considered complete without food, entertainment and courtly intrigue.

Feasting is a crucial activity for any tournament – a host who does not feed his guests well will see them departing early (and unhappy). Sumptuous banquets are served almost continuously to the nobility, ensuring that they are never hungry. A dinner banquet would typically comprise pottage (a thick vegetable broth), fresh bread, at least three courses of cooked meats and fish, roasted geese or swans, sauces and a variety of desserts.

(Even the commoners eat well, although not necessarily at the expense of the host, with various cheap cooked meats and salted fish accompanying broth and bread at the inns, and an abundance of aromatic meat and fruit pies, toffee-coated apples, roasted vegetables and other food available for purchase from market stalls.)

It is typical for the nobles' banquets to be held in the great hall of the local castle. During the tournament, the great hall is also the venue for nightly dances, and dramatic performances from the Thespians' guild. Jesters and fools are a source of great hilarity, often at the expense of some of the guests. Bards from the

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prestigious College of Harpers masterfully produce beautiful music with their harps and lutes, or eloquently recite poems and songs of love and tales of gallantry.

Most nobles participate in considerable social activity, ranging from engaging in polite banter and courtship to forging secret alliances with other nobles. What can be gained from political intrigue can far outweigh any prize offered during the events.

The tournament officially ends with the closing ball, where the feasting and reveling continues through the night. Following the cessation of food and entertainment, the noble visitors gradually depart for home, to look forward to the next tournament.

PRIZES

Prizes are awarded for winning the main events of the tournament. The value of the prize is relative to the importance of the event. The most important prize at most tournaments is for Champion of the Joust, which can be a combination of coins, fine cloths, jewelry, sturdy armour and possibly even a fine horse, valued at thousands of pence.

The prize for Champion of the Melee is similar to but generally less valuable than the prize for the Champion of the Joust. Other, lesser prizes are often awarded for various achievements, such as Fastest Horse, Best Squire, Best Lance, and so on.

At most tournaments, each prize is awarded by a lady, ideally by one who had gifted the contestant with a favor. Prize winners also have the honor of the first dance at the evening banquet with the lady who conferred the prize.

In the kingdom of Rethem, however, the awarding of prizes is less gentle. Since the Melee is the supreme event, the ultimate prize is for the Team Triumphant. At large Rethemi tournaments, generous prizes are hidden within a purpose-built wooden 'keep', in which are sometimes chained female slaves. At the end of the Melee, the victorious team assaults the keep to rape and pillage to their satisfaction; to finish off, the knights set fire to the structure, usually with the slaves still chained within, as a sacrifice to Agrik.

