

ENCYCLOPEDIA Haldonia



A Fantasy Role Playing Campaign Setting

KEITH DONE

ENCYCLOPEDIA



A FANTASY ROLE PLAYING CAMPAIGN SETTING



by
KEITH DONE

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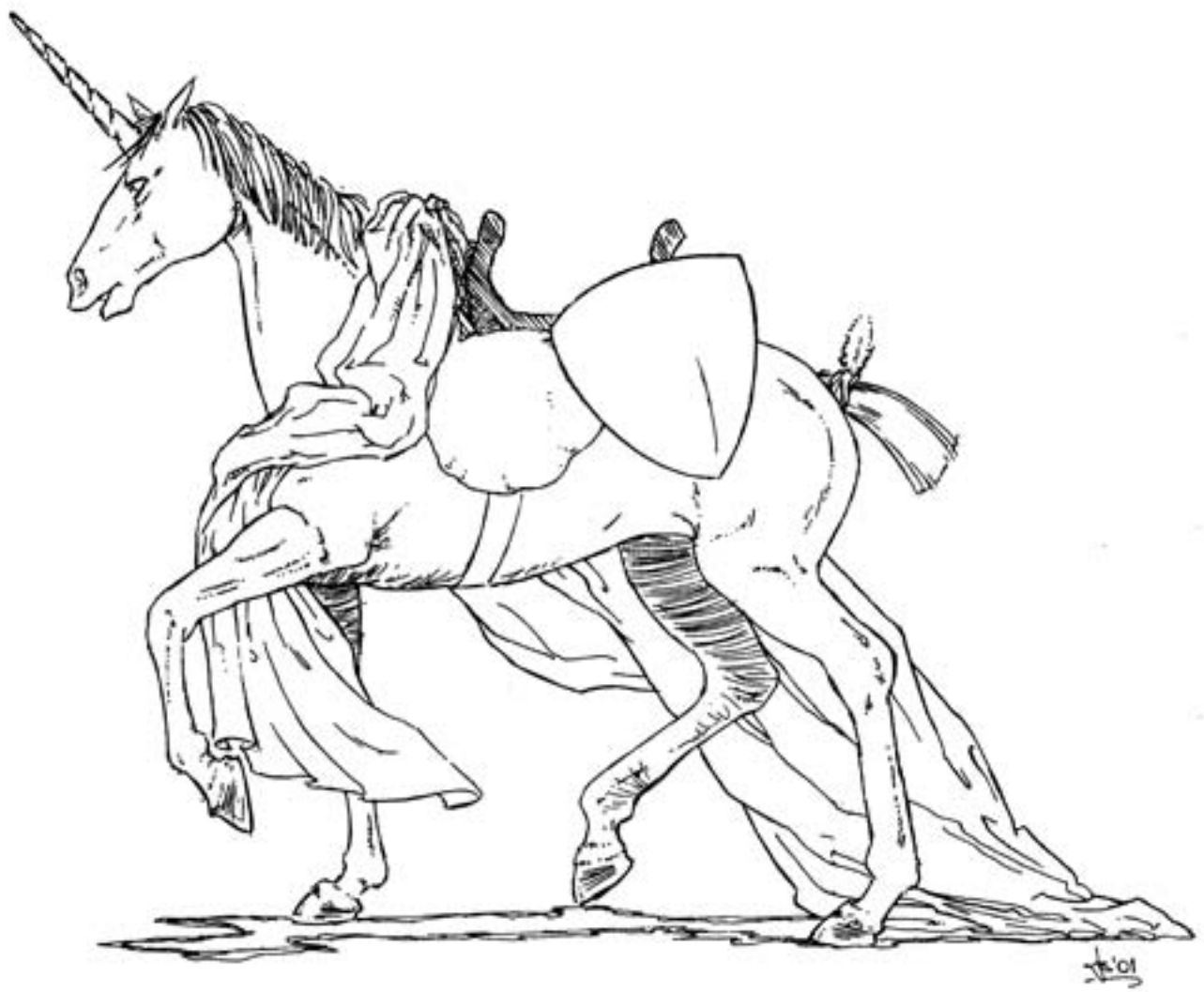
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Dedicated to Kaleece and Alex – the next generation





Eldoria





ENCYCLOPEDIA ELDORIA

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INTRODUCTION

The contents of this book are the culmination of twenty years of writing as a referee of role-playing games, principally for the fantasy-based genre, although I have had brief forays into horror and science-fiction. The "Encyclopedia Eldoria" is a stand-alone work intended to provide a referee with enough background material to begin running a fantasy role-playing campaign set in Eldoria. There will be other sourcebooks, providing greater detail on such areas as religion and major cities, but all you really need to kick off a campaign is the book you are holding.

The majority of the work concerning Eldoria is original and comes from my own RPG campaigns and from competitive tournaments I have written for Australian games conventions. However, I owe a debt of gratitude to my many friends and colleagues who have enjoyed playing in Eldoria over the past two decades and have encouraged, and continue to encourage me, to design material for my setting.

In many ways, the busy city streets and lonely country lanes of Eldoria have become as familiar to them as their own backyards. Quite a few people have received my blessings to create their own campaigns and tournaments set in Eldoria and, during the process, their numerous ideas and suggestions have crept back into the fabric of Eldoria over the years, becoming an inseparable part of its overall weave.

They have inspired me to build on many of their concepts and therefore this is their book as well as mine. I am truly appreciative of the laughter, tears and the high adventures that we have all shared in Eldoria and in the real world.

In no specific order of I would like to acknowledge the contributions derived from the following people:

Angela Caffrey, Terry Krause, Rob McCord, Malcolm Owen, Nigel Bell, Andrew White, Ken Spinaze, Adrian Mackay, Darren Catton, Mark Garnet, Joe Saina, Geoff Still, Sean Serin, Graham Stocks, Joanne Trim, Russell Proctor and Stephen Done.

Special thanks to:

Kain Whitehouse for his involvement on the Potions and Poisons section.

William Anderson of Comstar for his faith in bringing Eldoria to you, the reader.

Greg Lane, who planted the seed that became Eldoria, all those years ago.

ABOUT THIS PRODUCT

"Encyclopedia Eldoria" contains all the core source material that you need to start a role-playing campaign based in the fantasy realm of Eldoria. It has been written to be easily used in conjunction with most role playing resources and material currently available; the contents of "Encyclopedia Eldoria" being largely descriptive in nature, rather than rules heavy.

You will be able to purchase pre-made adventures and additional resource modules specifically written for Eldoria and you will also be able to integrate non-Eldorian products into the campaign setting, with little difficulty.

Besides this book, you will need the following items to

facilitate play:

RPG Rulebooks

Writing material.

Dice.

Players (of course)!

The rest of this introductory section provides a quick reference to Eldoria, its realms and nuances. It's kind of like a quick snap-shot of the overall campaign world. The remainder of the book is divided into the sections that gradually build a foundation for the Referee (and players) on the modern Eldorian setting.

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The sections are:

Religion

An overview of the Eldorian Pantheon, the religious beliefs of the people, priesthoods and the creation mythos.

History

The historical records of the Darktime and the Redemption up until the year 2150R*.

Geography

An introduction to the realms of the modern world.

Miscellany

Cultural details, racial traits and peculiarities unique to Eldoria.

*I have selected the year 2150R as a starting year for modern Eldorian campaigns as it is a time of political intrigue. Diplomatic ties between the realms of Sard and Elkia are at an all time low and war seems inevitable. The Churches of the Unholy Trinity have been proscribed in most places and have been driven underground, resorting to the establishment of secret temples in remote places; stealing sacrificial victims away in the dead of night. It is a time of uncertainty when villains are trying to seize power and heroes are needed to challenge them.

Now your players can take on the roles of those heroes, enter the world of Eldoria and have endless adventures. There are plenty of hooks to get them started – just turn to the History Section and read through some of the events and political situations occurring across Eldoria's many realms in 2150R.

CONCERNING THE WORLD

"Indeed it would seem that we dwell in a land blessed by the Gods, for only in Eldoria do we see the remaining signs of their divinity, in the power of the Tas which allows us to shape the world according to their great plan".

Abbot Uhsurn Canthrell, of the Church of Ormocea, in his opening address to the Congress of Odressi in 2100R

Somewhere in the Void there exists the star that is called Pharys, so named by scholars who dwell upon the second world

that circles it. That world is called Enshar; one of six bodies that make their paths about the life-giving sun and the only one that harbors life. It is a green, bountiful place dominated by vast oceans, having only two major land masses, one located in the northern hemisphere and one in the southern hemisphere. The southern continent is called Altarren and the northern landmass (which this book deals with in detail) is called Eldoria.

Enshar teems with animal and plant life which is, on the whole, very similar to our own. But in ages past, there were more fantastic creatures that walked the plains, delved in the oceans and crossed the skies of the planet. Most of these were destroyed in the great cataclysm that heralded in an age of chaos known as the Darktime, but some survived, as did the intelligent humanoid races (collectively called the Saahn).

In the countries that make up the continent of modern Eldoria, Humans have come to dominate most regions, particularly the coastlines and rivers that empty into the Greater and Lesser Inner Seas. Other intelligent humanoid races certainly exist, however their numbers are nowhere near that of the populations of the Humans.

The Human cultures are rich and varied, from the hardy Norse-like barbarians of Char-Endl to the exotic desert-dwellers of Y'sira. But while their ways can be very different from one another, they all tend to share a common tongue, set of laws and currency, due to the legacy of the Sardellan Empire. This great Empire colonized or conquered most of the Eldorian continent 700 years ago and, although it began its long decline and eventual disintegration many centuries past, its influences are still strong and seen throughout the Human world today.

The major realms and centers of power that influence Eldoria are detailed as follows:

ELKIA

A cultured and civilized land ruled over by the Lord Protector and the theocracy of the Holy Trinity, the churches that represent the three supreme deities of law and order in the world. Elkia was once a major part of the Homelands belonging to the Sardellan Empire and its people are constantly on guard against the threat of war from their neighbors in Sard.

SARD

Along with Elkia, Sard was once part of the Sardellan Imperial Homelands and is a mountainous land, rich in mineral wealth. It retains a strict feudal-like system of government, with lands divided between powerful lords, most of whom give patronage to the Church of Trezkillian (God of War).

LLAN

A heavily forested land, with large tracts of unexplored territory to the north and west. Llan has been devastated by past civil wars and was occupied by the Sardellan Empire. The country has recently prospered under the control of the mercantile guilds who have largely usurped political control from the old noble houses.

CHAR-ENDL

A frigid tundra with rugged coastlines defined by deep fjords. The Char-Endlese are a semi-nomadic culture with an entrenched clan system. In order to have any status in Char-Endl you must belong to, or marry into, one of the Ten Clans.

The people are followers of the God Hirath, whose icon is the Dragon. Draconic mythology and symbolism play a large part in the culture of the Char-Endlese.

Y'SIRA

Y'sira is a land of great deserts, located in the far south, beyond the Sea of Souls. The Y'siran capitol, Byalliz, is called the City of Thieves and is also the center of power for the Church of Daugron, Goddess of Fire. Y'siran traders travel the seas, selling their exotic produce throughout the ports of the northern realms.

LEEZERIA

The sacred country of the Leezari Elves, who guard its borders from intrusion by all other races. It is a largely unspoiled land of tranquil forest glades and beautiful mountains, with few permanent dwellings, save for its capitol, Tarimthol-Irl and the great learning center of Pharidor's Watch.

The Elves have remained isolated from the rest of Eldoria since the Darktime but have recently begun to have more contact with the world after an alliance was forged with the Human realms to provide aid to the Leezari in their eternal struggle with the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz.

RHENFARA

Separated from Y'sira by the impenetrable jungles of Po-Ka, in the west, Rhenfara is a land where martial skills are revered almost as an art. The people live in close harmony with the land and are guided by a Druidical order of Ulliah, originally a northern cult that gained a significant following in Rhenfara after they sought sanctuary in the south, following their expulsion from Llan, many centuries ago.

AHR-GANIZ

Ahr-Ganiz is the mountainous, cave-riddled home of the Goblinskynd, who retreated here after their ousting from eastern Leezeria during the Darktime. They are a diverse species, dedicated to retaking Leezeria and exploiting its natural wealth. They have been waging a genocidal war against the Elves for centuries. Most Human and Elven adventurers would only ever enter the dangerous territories of Ahr-Ganiz as an act of desperation.

NORTHLAND

A rustic, underdeveloped country that is noted for its rich agricultural produce. Northland's peaceful inhabitants are protected from Ahr-Ganiz by a unique treaty with the Hlissicaari, a fierce reptilian race that dwells in the volcanic regions that range across its southern borders.

A monarch and parliamentary council govern the country and a small portion of the population is made up of Halflings.

MARITAAN

This is an arid land, with a geography containing many unusual rock formations, deep canyons and features etched out of the landscape by wind and water, over the ages. The population is a blend of the indigenous Y'naari-Su (a race steeped in ancient traditions and forgotten sciences) and the remnants of the Sardellan colonists who overran the country seven hundred years ago.

A mixing of the two cultures has resulted in the evolution



Eastport, the capitol of Northland, is basically no more than an overgrown village. The royal palace, the Castle of the Rising Sun, appears on a hill in the background

of a very conservative, yet advanced people, with a greater understanding of engineering and chemical sciences; skills that the rest of Eldoria lag behind in due to the reliance on magic to overcome technological problems.

TEMPEST

A city-state located at the heart of the Greater Inner Sea, built on three, small neighboring islands and on a vast network of platforms that have grown up over the sea separating them.

CONCERNING SOCIETY

Religion is perhaps the most influential force across Eldoria, both spiritually and politically. There are twenty-seven recognized deities, not including subservient angels, demons and other such creatures that are said to directly serve the ends of the Gods.

In several countries there is no separation between church and state, governmental control is directly in the hands of ruling clerical orders. Other countries are ruled by secular institutions but still are heavily influenced by the dominant religions in their region. The very fabric of Eldorian society is closely interwoven with the extensive Pantheon of Gods and this will become more evident as you read the historical and political sections contained in this book.

All recorded Human history revolves around a period known as the Darktime. Although scholars cannot be sure, it is thought that this period lasted at least 3000 years. It was an age of barbarism, when society fell apart and reverted to the rule of the strongest. It is remembered dimly as a time of unceasing conflict, worldwide famine and plague, a period when sorcery went unchecked and brought terror and destruction down upon the population.

Very few records were made during the Darktime and it seems that many of the writings that existed in the more enlightened ages prior to then, were deliberately sought out and destroyed as a result of a backlash against magic and those who practiced arcane arts. The common man came to revile knowledge of the ancient cultures and the Sorcerers of the world were eventually cast down.

The Darktime is defined as beginning with the Last Battle, a

monumental conflict between the Gods, resulting in their withdrawal from the mortal world. Prior to the Last Battle, the Saahn were drawn into a Divine civil war and suffered greatly as a consequence.

The Darktime ended with the discovery of the Three Books of Law by the Prophet Samroth. This event was called the Redemption and is said to have heralded in a new age of civilization, perceived as a second chance for the Saahn; the common belief being, that if the mortal races show sufficient faith, the Gods will return to the world again.

Accordingly, chronological dates of the Human calendar are denoted by 'R' or 'D'. The date 2113R means 2113 years after the Redemption. The date 2113D means 2113 years prior to the Darktime. Some of the non-Human races, noticeably the Elves, measure time with their own calendar systems.

CONCERNING NONHUMANS

Besides Humans, who control most of Eldoria, there are three other major races of humanoids in the world. Collectively, all these races are known as the Saahn:

ELVES

Known as the Leezari in their language, the Elves (as a nation) occupy Leezeria and have dwelled apart from other realms in Eldoria, dissuading Humans from intruding into their domain. Only in the last 200 years have they begun to have more contact with the 'outside' world, making alliances with the nations of the Greater Inner Sea and inviting Humans to settle their eastern frontiers.

Elves are essentially immortal, but few remain active beyond the age of 500 Human years. Between the ages of 350 and 500, most Elves succumb to a condition known as Priatharia, whereby they enter a permanent trance-like state, their body remaining perfectly preserved.

DWARVES

Also known as the Stonekin, the Dwarves have largely come to dwell amongst the cities of the Humans, typically working as smiths or masons. They are a people in transit, conscious of losing touch with their old ways.

Tales tell that, before the Darktime, the Dwarves once dwelled in the west, in grand underground halls, mining the depths of the world. Then some unknown rift between their clans drove many of the Stonekin eastward, to the lands of Men, where they tried to re-establish their ancient homes.

But the mines delved in the mountains throughout eastern Eldoria were a pale imitation of their cities of old and, over the centuries; successive generations have abandoned their traditions, deserting the mines to take up residence amongst the Humans.

Still, the grandeur of their lost heritage calls them and the Dwarves are a sad folk, lamenting over songs and stories of a forgotten age. Some heed the call and undertake the long pilgrimage to the west, to search for signs of Zarkanda-Zahl, the First Kingdom of the Dwarven Lords.

GOBLINKYND

This is a term for all intelligent, humanoid creatures (Goblins, Orcs, Ogres, Lizardmen etc.) normally considered belligerent to Humans. One of the few records that survived the Darktime tells of a climatic battle in which the strength of the Goblinkynd was broken and they were driven into the mountains for ever after.

They exist in small numbers throughout most of the modern world, hiding in secret labyrinths or caverns on the fringes of Human civilization. As a more formidable threat, they have evolved into a disunited nation in the mountainous lands of Ahr-Ganiz on the borders of the Elven lands, where they are numbered in the millions.

OTHER RACES

Other intelligent races (such as Gnomes and Halflings) exist in Eldoria but not in significant numbers that would constitute a nation. The realms of the Humans have eclipsed many of

these lesser people, who now dwell in secret or in more isolated regions.

More details of all races can be found in the section, "Miscellany".

CONCERNING MAGIC

Eldoria is often referred to as the Arcane Realm, a place where hidden super-physical powers exist that common-folk refer to as 'magic.' This unseen energy source is known as the Tas by more learned people. It permeates all living and non-living material and there are those skilled individuals who have discovered ways of drawing upon the Tas; allowing them to use its forces to create desired effects.

All sages agree that every practitioner of magic draws upon the Tas, regardless of the way that they tap its source. Although its energy permeates the very air that the Saahn breathe, it is strongest in the inner regions of Eldoria. The further away you progress from Eldoria's heartlands, the weaker the Tas becomes, until it is virtually non-existent in the Outlands of the Eldorian continent. Nobody knows exactly why this is so and it continues to remain a mystery, baffling the highest masters of the College of Arcane Science.

Despite the tyrannical reign of feuding Sorcerers that occurred in the Darktime, it was magic that ultimately enabled the devastated races of the Saahn to survive that terrible period. Naturally, civilization re-emerged in the more central parts of the continent, where magic gave Clerics and Wizards the upper hand in overcoming the difficulties that the new kingdoms faced. Even today, the population of Eldoria is still clustered around the middle of continent, about its Inner Seas, and only small, less advanced communities dwell in the areas bordering the vast open oceans beyond.



Both Clerics and Wizards create spell-forms by connecting the latent energy field of their personal aura with the Tas; an immense reserve of background energy that permeates all things.

The common person is well aware of magic existing alongside the rest of the natural forces of the world, although they have little idea how the Tas works (just like most people do not understand the physics involved in a nuclear explosion but know of its effects). The ability to tap the powers of the Tas remains limited to a very small part of the population, making magic an uncommon event but not something that the 'mundane' folk are totally unfamiliar with. Most people in the cities and surrounding regions have witnessed acts of magic once or twice in their lives.

There are two main divergent understandings of how the Tas may be sourced – the ways of the Wizard and the Cleric. Both disciplines use magic but their way of accessing the Tas and harnessing its power have evolved along very different lines. The method used by Wizards evolved in the golden age before the Darktime and it is thought that those who commanded the magic arts back then, wielded power significantly greater than modern Wizards. Certainly, magical constructs and artifacts made prior to the Darktime still function today and such devices are

exceedingly difficult for contemporary artificers to understand, let alone duplicate.

Wizardry involves a pseudo-science that forges a link with the Tas by a series of harmonic and manipulative distortions of the field. These techniques take the form of simple utterances of ritualized vocals and the weaving of set patterns with the hands. These are called Spells or Incantations. They cause the surrounding Tas energy to flow into the caster's aura, a natural field generated by all living creatures that is our connection to the Tas.

The invoker of the Tas triggers the desired outcome with similar vocal utterances used to draw the energy. Sometimes the presence of small amounts of specific organic or inorganic materials is required to assist with the translation of certain Spells. Likewise, the presence of large quantities of certain materials, particularly metals, inhibits contact with the Tas.



ENCYCLOPEDIA ELDORIA

From a speech made by the Prophet Samroth, concerning the discovery of the Books of Law.

“It is written that at the Dawn of Time the Gods dwelled in the world and imparted much of their wisdom to the wise amongst the mortal races. Then the Gods left Enshar to walk amongst the stars and they left the Darvinor, ranked highest amongst the Elven folk, as their custodians. But the Darvinor were hungry for knowledge that was kept from mortal races and they led the children of Enshar away from the enlightenment of the Gods and so brought down the Darktime upon them all.”

For an age of unaccounted years, utter chaos engulfed the world and all that was learned was lost. Then hope was rekindled in the form of the legendary Books of Law, three great tomes that contained the lost beliefs and rituals of the twenty-seven religions that had existed before the Darktime. The scattered tribes of the Humans were united in the northern continent of Eldoria and a new enlightened era began, the Age of the Redemption.

Two thousand years have passed since the discovery of the Books of Law and the nations of Men now dominate Eldoria, from the frigid realm of Char-Endl, to the exotic desert lands of the Theocracy of Y'sira. They have unlocked the secrets of steel and stone but their ascendancy has been very different than our own world. For in Eldoria, Man has also learned the secrets of Magic, resulting in a reliance on arcane power that has retarded the emergence of science. Combined with the suspicion and secrecy that the abundance of religious institutions apply to any new discoveries, Man has remained locked in a quasi-medieval level of technology.

Yet Man is not alone in Eldoria. The Dwarven Stonekin once dwelled in mines beneath the great mountain ranges, but for many centuries they have been abandoning their old ways and coming to live amongst the cities of Men (though their elders still tell tales of ancient glory). And in the east, the Leezari Elves have recently emerged from a self-

imposed isolation from before the Darktime, seeking allies to help them in their eternal war against the Goblinskynd of Ahr-Ganiz.

Civilisations have arisen, empires have come and gone but the temples of the Gods remain constant, involving everyone in their rivalries and machinations. Political intrigue is almost a sport amongst the clergy and a talented individual can keep their purse full by serving the many and varied clandestine causes of the twenty-seven priesthoods.

Yet far from the great cities, there are still places that remain untouched in the modern world, such as the great forests of Llanish Highlands, the impenetrable jungles of Po-Ka or the Outlands, where magic is weak and inconstant. Great fortunes lie in wait for those bold enough to journey there to uncover the relics and treasures of the past.

Eldoria is the new d20 campaign setting from Comstar Publishing; an immersive world of dangerous liaisons, mystery and expeditions down dungeons deep. Adventure awaits.....

Contains:

- A unique mythos
- Fully detailed background history
- Descriptions of realms and cultures
- New items and monsters to include in any campaign