



The Country of Arduin

Introduction

Welcome to the Kingdom of Arduin. Past this point lie the pages of information detailing the inner workings of the kingdom's government, the wild ranges of its topography, and intriguing nexus gates that make it literally the crossroads of the multiverse. Joining this mélange of diversity is the mixes of Arduin's people, their quirks and oddities, as well as the deep richness of its culture. Read on and enjoy.

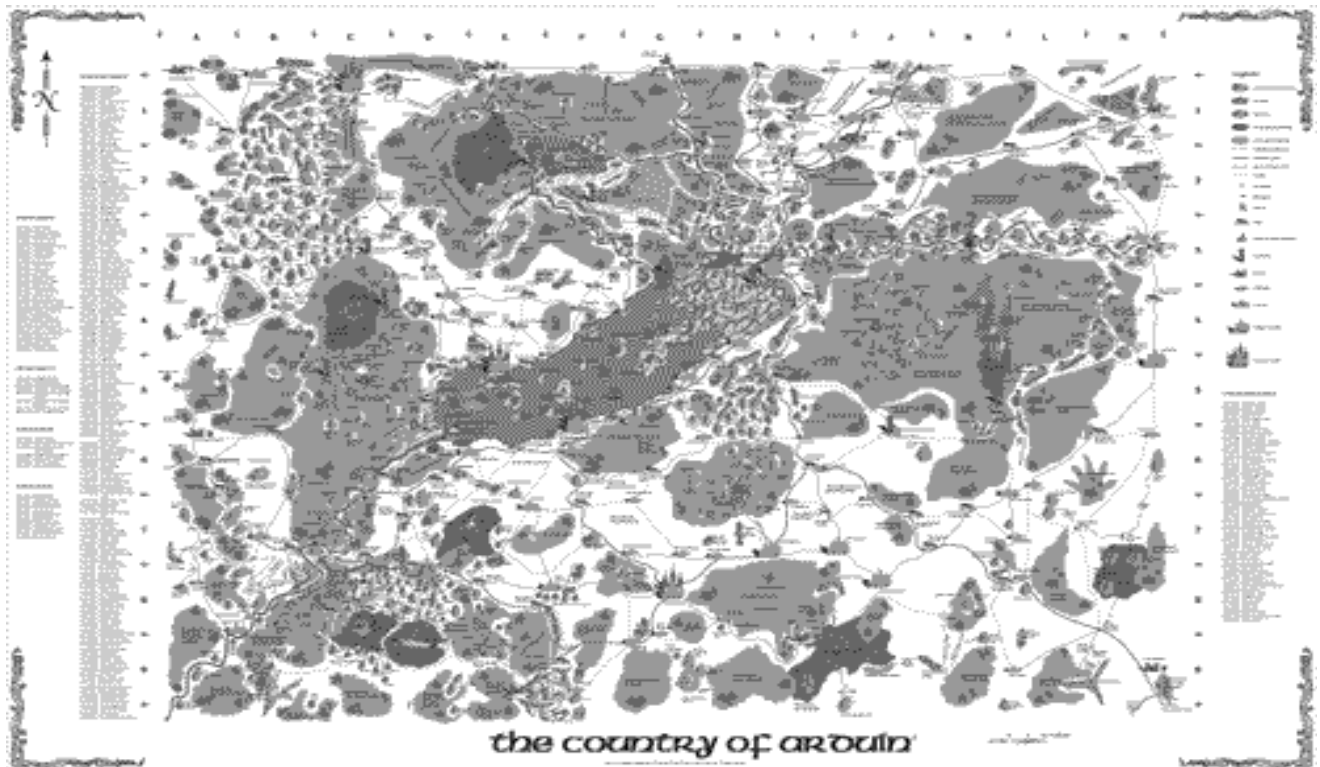
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Arduin is a nation on the southern portion of the third continent of Khaas called Khaora (see the world map for more details). Arduin is the legendary land of the nexus, its mythic and renowned gates, and the famous accords of peace that ended the Wars of When. Arduin is also a wild and diverse place, and the joys and perils of high civilization and learning stand almost next to the deepest wilds and dangers in existent. The

Arduin nexus keeps the nation in constant flux, and change and tolerance are the keys to Arduin's survival and continued prosperity.

Maps and Arduin

While a full map of Arduin is provided as a guide to this fabulous country, Emperors Choice Games and Miniatures has a previously published, two-foot by three-foot color map that is highly suggested as a guide to the Kingdom of Arduin. The map is at a much lower scale than the overhead maps provided herein, and as such has more minute detail than possible in this volume. Many of the forests, mountains, lakes, plains, and other terrain features are mentioned that are only noted on this map. Its use in assisting the potential adventurer and game master alike cannot truly be overstated. Even so, without the aid of this fine map, intrepid explorers will find the overheads provided ample for their needs.





History of Arduin

The history of Arduin is a rich and detailed one. In truth, it parallels the history of the world. Arduin is and always has been a nexus. Such power inherent in this very fact has drawn others to the land in every era of Khaas' past. Yet, for all of this, perhaps the most definable time in Arduin's deepest past is the Great Rebellion against the Kthoi Overlords.

The Kthoi

Like many things in Khaas, Arduin's defining history begins with the Kthoi. In the nexus of what would later become Arduin, they had built great structures and here too came the war that would see their fall and destruction. In the aftermath of that cataclysmic war, the Runeweavers attempted to lock away the nexus region. This lack of foresight is one of the downfalls to their rule, directly leading to the later war that followed. The Titans, long old allies of the Kthoi, used this act, one among many reasons given in the Meeting of the Vast Night, as part of their cold logic to unleash another great war on the world. As the logic of their argument played out, it's ending was inevitable: to shatter the power of the Runeweavers and claim it as their own. Never truly accepting the fall of the Kthoi and their replacement, the Titans spoke before the manifold stars and the blazing rune structures holding the powerful of the world in the Vast Night, swearing this time was theirs to rule.

This terrible war rocked the world, changing its destiny to path none could have foreseen. While the Titans had failed to grip the world in their fists, they had yet succeeded at the same time, as it is previously recorded in the world's history. No rehash of that time is necessary here. Arduin's part was small but growing in importance. The nexus grew even more active after this recent world-rocking war, and with it an even greater influx of strange beings and powers. In this flood of beings, there arrived the presence of the creatures many would later call the Time Lords.

Arduin and the Time Lords

Where these strange beings were birthed

or crept out of time to come to the Arduin nexus is unknown. They were quiet at first; Khaas was seeing a true explosion of races and many were powerful in their own right. The sinking of the second continent had broken the grip of the Runeweavers and the dominance of the Titans across the breadth of Khaas. Into this vacuum came a full spectrum of races and cultures, each claiming its own place in the world. The Time Lords used this for their benefit and gathered power into what was Arduin and beyond its nexus, preparing for the time when they would take the world for their own. Their ambitions were betrayed by their vices and they were forced into war early—igniting the world once again in blood, fire and death. Their reign, while brief in the scope of the world's history was a brutal one, which saw the bright and shining glory of many races extinguished forever. Here the peoples of the world fought in a great 'War of Life' against the destructive ambition of the Time Lords. The end of which saw the extinction of the Runeweavers as a world power and the trapping of the Time Lords in one of the most famous prisons of legend, the Caverns of the Ancients.

The Birth of the Land

Into the quiet of the slumbering land left rent and broken in the aftermath of the previous great war came the Elves. Not for the first time had they walked the forests between the mountains. While the growing power of the world coalesced on the fifth continent under the Mages of the Circle, the Elves made the land their own. They accepted the changes inherent with the nexus. Its fickle and frequently frightening nature appealed to their fey hearts. While the plots and wars of the Mages of the Free Circle of Light sometimes touched upon Arduin's fey lands, for the most part they stayed aloof from the world. When the Interstellar Wars broke out they faced its horror and lived; though not untouched by the contagions released in that conflict.

Dark Years and The One

In the long interregnum that came after, the Elves of Arduin closed their borders, at least for a time. The survivors of the holocaust unleashed on the fifth continent came to the wild



but relatively untouched continent of Khaora in waves. Arduin wanted no part of these and strove mightily to weave its borders into an impenetrable barrier against their ingress. While civilization around them struggled up out of the long night once more, and nations rose and fell, Arduin stayed isolated and alone. Its borders repulsed all invaders or explorers, at least until the brooding pestilence spewed from the hellish depths of the One reached out to touch them. Seeking the power of the nexus, as all others before it, Caliban reached forth a palsied hand to wither the flower of Elven glory, wreaking havoc on the lands of Arduin and the fruit of Elven power.

Broken, but not cowed, the Elves of Arduin warred and waited, seeking the time to cast off the yoke of hell. When the kingdom of Khaer-Mideon Elves rose into full power, they rejoiced at their coming. Caliban, the One, could not abide their glory and turned its will upon them. In time, the war between the two would



shatter both, alter the orbit of the world, and extinguish life on a scale untouched since the Great Rebellion was waged against the Kthoi. Thus, soon peace, or such peace as the rancorous races of Khaas could ever attain, would fall again across the world.

The Quiet Years

In time, while these events slowly faded from the view of Almanity and were forgotten, nations and lands rose and fell and new wars, while terrible, did not reach the world spanning extent of their predecessors. In the fertile ashes of past empires and lands grew new kingdoms, burgeoning and lustily making their individual marks on the passage of history. Arduin was not untouched by these times and while closed and isolationist felt the mark of more than one belligerent kingdom or empire during this 10,000-year epoch. They had kept the secrets of their land hidden well and few knew the Elven land was a nexus. Equally secret from most was the keys to the secrets of magik and technology. While here and there gems would sparkle and glimmer, for the masses of Khaas, its existence was the lore of the misty past. The Elves knew the greed and avarice of men well, and held such knowledge close. The findings of the College of Sages in Falohyr changed everything. The spreading word of their results brewed cupidity on a scale unprecedented and ushered in the next chapter of Arduin's history, the infamous Elf-Human Wars.

Elf-Human Wars

Truly the forerunner of the bloody Wars of When to come, the history of Arduin would not be complete without speaking of this 100-year span. As spoken by the famous chronicler in previous works, here is the Elf-Human Wars.

It began dim thousands of years in the dark and bloody past; the one true and rightful ruler of Arduin, King Tarafass Dawnstar of the Royal House of the Rising Sun, closed the borders of his kingdom and forbade non-Elves entry into his wondrous land. King Tarafass Dawnstar knew the findings of the College of Sages in Falohyr, and what such tidings portended for his