

The Kubora are divided into twenty-six tribes who at various times are allied to or fighting one another, their non-Kuboran neighbours and anyone else who happens along.

The tribes and their approximate numbers are as follows:

<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Population(1)</b>	<b>Warriors(2)</b>
Aranaki	800	250
Asawne	350	105
Belmeddi	1200	400
Chetuli	600	200
Delerni	400	120
Denal	256	80
Garao	400	125
Iorzu	1500	500
Kobeaon	1300	400
Korvai	900	300
Mahnlin	306	100
Minrai	400	125
Neji	450	150
Nolgind	250	80
Obodu	1800	600
Oncade	380	130
Piri	400	100
Rathiri	500	150
Sangic	700	220
Samasdin	800	250
Suyari	400	125
Tiraen	350	100
Uld	280	80
Utcin	250	80
Vikoeri	500	150
Zurnir	700	225
<i>Total Pop.</i>	<i>16,172</i>	<i>5,145</i>

1. Approximate numbers only.

2. Includes unblooded warriors and maiden warriors.

## KUBORAN ARMS AND ARMOR

Most Kuboran are light to medium infantry. They are typically armed with a dagger, an axe, several spears or javelins and a round shield made of wood, reinforced with iron decorations. Some warriors own swords. Shortbows are mostly used for hunting, but will be used in warfare if necessary.

Kuboran smiths do not forge the best iron and consequently their weapons are at best only of average quality. Imports of weapons made in southern workshops make up a large part of the trade carried out by Rethemi and Thardic mercantylers who trade in the Peran. Kuborans do not usually wear armour other than furs and animal hide tunics. Some have leather or

studded leather armour obtained from traders. Few, if any, wear helmets. Those that do either traded for them or took them in battle. Heavy armour does not suit the Kuboran style of warfare. In open battle they use rudimentary formations such as shield walls, but prefer headlong rushes at the enemy. They are expert guerrilla fighters and masters of the ambush.

All males aged from sixteen years are considered warriors, although they are not considered men until they have passed their manhood ceremonies. These normally take place somewhere between the young man's sixteenth and eighteenth birthdays. Being considered a man means that he can marry, sit on the tribal council and inherit property. Most, but not all, manhood ceremonies take place at the annual Tribal Moot at Kustan.

## TRIBAL SUMMARIES

### Aranaki

The Aranaki total 824 tribesmen. They can field some 250 warriors. The tribe is divided into eight clans, all under the leadership of Mordrin Grey Eye. The most famous Aranaki ancestor is Nebran, under whose leadership, the Kubora united to destroy the Corani Empire fort at Kustan. His name is revered and the Aranaki have the right to travel to Kustan unmolested at any time. The Aranaki have little contact with non-Kuborans, except for the clans who live along the coast who trade with Orbaalese merchants from time to time.

### Asawne

The Asawne are one of the smaller tribes. Their range lies between the Dernia River and the Scarlet Ribbon. The tribe numbers some 250 members split between four clans. They can field 105 warriors. The Asawne are on friendly terms with all their Kuboran neighbours. The Asawne are always at war with the Agrikans at Bedenes. Many young men of the tribe are serving as mercenaries with the Earl of Tormau.

### Belmeddi

The Belmeddi are one of the largest tribes, with over 1200 members. The tribe has nine clans and can field 400 warriors. The Belmeddi have little contact with outsiders. The warchief of the Belmeddi, Meleka the Fey, has given his support to Ryler the Southron of the Iorzu Kubora in his attempt to unify the tribes for a war against the south. This puts the Belmeddi squarely against the Obodu.

## Chetuli

The Chetuli Kubora numbers some 600 people. The tribe is divided into eight clans. The eastern border of their range is the Chetul River from which they take their name. Their closest allies are the Mahnlin and the Sangic. In recent times the Chetuli have come into conflict with an Urdu tribe across the Chetul. This conflict is degenerating into a vicious war that could embroil more tribes on both sides of the border. The Chetuli warchief, Bregan, is seeking help from his Mahnlin and Sangic allies for a raid against the Urdu to seek vengeance for the death of a hunting party last year.

## Delerni

The Delerni are a border tribe of 400 people in seven clans. They can put 120 warriors into the field. The Kingdom of Rethem claims most of their range as part of Hohnamshire. This has meant ongoing tension and open hostility between border manors and Delerni clans. The Agrikans at Menekai have been particularly brutal towards the Delerni. The warchief of the Delerni, Krega, is a strong supporter of Ryler of the Iorzu, as he sees the destruction of the Agrikan fighting orders in Rethem as the only way of ensuring the long term survival of his tribe.

## Denal

The Denal are one of the smallest tribes, but one of the most fiercely independent. They number only 256 in three clans, and can field about 80 warriors. Most of their range is composed of the Denia Marshes. Denal villages are located deep within the marshes and they are hostile to anyone entering their domains. The Denal are noted among the Kubora for their relentless ferocity and stories of Denal heroes are sung about campfires all over Peran.

## Garao

The Garao are a small clan of 400 members divided into nine clans. They muster 125 warriors. The Scarlet Ribbon passes through the western end of their range. They are allies of the Uld and have a long-standing rivalry with the Oncade. The current warchief is Boudach. He spent ten years as a mercenary in the kingdoms to the south before returning home. He is one of the most respected Kuboran warriors alive today. He supports Ryler and sees the "weak" southern states as ripe for the plucking.

## Iorzu

The powerful Iorzu tribe has over 1500 members, split into fourteen clans. They can field a large muster of 500 warriors. Their current warchief is Ryler the Southron, so named because of his time spent as a gladiator in the Pamesani arenas of Rethem and Tharda. He is attempting to unite the tribes under his rule to invade and conquer western Harn in emulation of the feats of Arlun of the Obodu last century. His bitter rival is Arbrega Coldhand of the equally powerful Obodu Kubora.

## Kobeaon

One of the largest tribes, the Kobeaon have 1300 members in fifteen clans. They can muster 400 warriors. The Kobeaon range is well watered and blessed with abundant game. The Kobeaon are one of the more peaceful of the tribes, with no enemies of note. Kobeaon women are renowned for their beauty.

## Korvai

The Korvai are another large clan with 900 members in ten clans. They can field an impressive 300 warriors. The Korvai have a lot of contact with Orbaalese traders passing through the Kadag Straits. They trade furs, wild animals and other items for metals and trade goods. The *hanuhn* of the Korvai is Donal Oakheart. He is an amazing one hundred and three years old and is the oldest Kuboran in Peran. It is said that as an unblooded warrior he marched with Arlun during the conquest of Rethem. He is revered by all the tribes for his longevity and memory.

## Mahnlin

The Mahnlin are the easternmost of the Kuboran tribes. They number 300 in five clans and can muster 100 warriors. Their range is within the Rethemi shire of Parachshire, and the Agrikan knights at Menekai claim most of it. The terrain is rough and the Mahnlin pride themselves on their ability to survive in the harsh mountain conditions. They also skirmish with the Gargun of the Rayesha Mountains, particularly the gargu-kyani of Yzug. They trade ore and other mountain products with their neighbours.

## Minrai

The Minrai inhabit the extreme tip of the Peran Peninsula and the Minrath Islands. They number 400, split amongst eight clans. They can muster 125 warriors. The Minrai are fair sailors and have many small vessels. They are protective

of their islands and in 719 destroyed a small Ivinian settlement on one of the islands. At this time they are engaged in a worsening conflict with the neighbouring Vikoeri Kubora.

## Neji

The Neji are a small tribe of 450 members in six clans. They muster 150 warriors. The Neji are noted for their particular variation on the art of Arus. They use a blue dye that produces a particularly hideous effect. They are considered ugly by Kuboran standards of beauty. Not withstanding their appearance, the Neji are renowned warriors.

## Nolgind

The Nolgind are the most far-flung of the Kuboran tribes. They live entirely on the many islands that make up the Afarezirs. They number 250 split into fifteen small clans. They can muster only 80 warriors. Like the Minrai, they are good sailors and protect their island domains fiercely. Two years ago an Orbaleese settlement on Movel Island was wiped out. The Nolgind have little contact with other tribes outside of the annual Moot.

## Obodu

The Obodu are the largest of the Kuboran tribes. They number 1800 split into ten clans. They can field 600 warriors. The warchief of the Obodu is Arbrega Coldhand, a fierce rival of Ryler the Southron. He disputes the divine guidance claimed by Ryler and seeks leadership of the Kuboran nation himself. The Obodu inhabit the rugged Obodu Hills and brook no incursions from other tribes. The rivalry between Arbrega and Ryler threatens to involve both their tribes and their allies.

## Oncade

The Oncade number 380 persons in four clans. They can field 130 warriors. They are enemies of the Garao and the Mahnlin. Fergus No Nose (so named because he lost his nose to an Agrikan sword at the massacre of the Agrikan knights at Kustan in 718) is the current warchief.

## Piri

The Piri live along the northern bank of the Perath River. They are a small tribe of 400 divided into six clans. They field 100 warriors. The Piri are famous for their ancestor Dergan Strongarm, who carried Kemlar's Stone an amazing forty paces at the tribal moot held in 625. This feat has not been bettered in nearly a hundred years.

## Rathiri

The Rathiri number 500 and field 150 warriors. They are divided into five clans. The Rathiri are the guardians of Kustan and as such are regarded well by all Kubora. They host the annual tribal moot and are charged with keeping safe the holy places of the Kubora.

## Sangic

Eight clans make up the Sangic population of 700. They field 220 warriors. The Sangic, like the Mahnlin and other tribes on the borders of Rethem, live in lands claimed by Rethemi lords. They suffer periodic raids by Agrikan knights and have to deal with constant pressure on their borders. They favour war with Rethem to deal with them once and for all.

## Samasdin

The Samasdin are a remote tribe who number 800 persons. They can muster 250 warriors. The Samasdin skirmish constantly with the Cronal Urdu on the other side of the Chetul and there is no love lost between these people. Interestingly, Nefran Island at the mouth of the Chetul is used as a burial site by both tribes and is considered neutral ground.

## Suyari

The Suyari have 400 members in six clans, and can field 120 warriors. They are in constant conflict with Rethemi patrols in Hohnamshire. They are closely allied with the Delerni and Utcin. They have a truce with the Earl of Tormau and do not attack his forces.

## Tiraen

The Tiraen have 350 members divided into seven clans. They field 100 warriors. Their range includes most of the Tirsa Islands in the Gulf of Pendor. They are good sailors and are primarily fishermen but also practice piracy. They have allied themselves with a band of Orbaalese pirates and allowed them to set up a secret base on the largest island.

## Uld

The Uld are a small tribe of 280 people divided into three clans. They field 80 warriors. The Uld range is pressed between the Perath River and the expansionist Agrikan knights of Bedenes. The Uld are under constant attack and face the very real possibility of extermination. Jerg, warchief of the Uld, is lobbying his fellow chiefs to aid him in an attack on Bedenes to try and neutralise the threat his tribe faces.

## Utcin

The Utcin are another small tribe, numbering a mere 250 people in three clans. They can field 80 warriors. Their clan range has shrunk considerably over the past twenty years as a result of the expansion of Rethemi farmlands in Hohnamshire. The Utcin range includes a large area of marshland that they use to good effect. All their villages are located deep within the marsh, relatively safe from surprise attack.

## Vikoeri

The Vikoeri give their name to Cape Vikod, the western most part of the Harnic mainland. They number some 500 people, divided into seven clans. They can field 150 warriors. They are in a worsening dispute over hunting lands with the neighbouring Minrai. Ten Vikoeri hunters were ambushed and killed by a Minrai war party in 719 and they are planning a revenge attack.

## Zurnir

The Zurnir are a medium sized tribe of 700, split into ten clans. The Zurnir can muster 220 warriors. They have little contact with non-Kuborans other than at the tribal moot when they trade with the foreigners who have made the journey to Kustan. The Zurnir champion Ligan Harefoot has won the annual running race at the moot four years in a row.

## THE ANNUAL MOOT

Every year, beginning on the Yaeleh (Full Moon) of Larane, the tribes gather for the annual moot at Kustan. The moot lasts several weeks and involves meetings, councils, trading, sporting events and provides a venue for individuals, clans and tribes to make or break alliances and to settle old scores, arrange marriages, indulge in drunken revelry and to gamble.

In theory the moot is neutral ground, but given the fierce nature of the Kubora it is often the scene of lethal interactions between individuals and tribes.

Since the Arlun's conquest of Rethem, the Kuboran nation has become more tolerant towards foreigners entering their lands (as long as they are there to trade). Many Rethemi and Thardic mercantylers make the dangerous journey to Kustan to peddle their wares and to trade for the exotic animals, furs and other produce of the Peran. Common trade items include cloth, metalware and weapons.

The Kubora love sports and many are played at the Moot. Team events such as rope pulling, gargun head ball and relay races are popular, with prizes and honour going to the winning tribe. Individual events such as lifting weights, wrestling, running and martial competitions are also held.

The prestige events are the stone carry and the martial events. The stone carry involves carrying Kemlar's Stone (a boulder that Kemlar was said to have stood on to address the tribes) as far as possible. Dergan Strongarm of the Piri set the record of 40 paces in 625, a record that has stood for nearly a century.

The martial events include spear throwing (a test of distance and accuracy), wrestling (anything goes), and swordsmanship (you can use any hand weapon). The current Spear Champion is Angwaine Spearslayer of the Mahnlin. Haral Swiftaxe of the Denal is the Sword Champion and Kilgar the Meek of the Rathiri is the Wrestling Champion for the third year running.

During the moot the population of Kustan increases from some two hundred and fifty to over six thousand, making it, for a short time, one of the most densely populated places on Harn.

## LANGUAGE

The Kuboran tribes speak a dialect of Old-Jarinese that is almost identical to that spoken by the Urdu and the Equani. This tongue can be understood, with some degree of concentration, by speakers of Modern Jarin such as is spoken in Orbaal, Azadmere and Erael. To the ears of a speaker of Modern Jarin the language of the Kuborans seems quaint and old-fashioned (-15% ML).

Within the Kuboran nation there is some linguistic diversity and regional dialects exist. The most distinct dialect is that of the isolated Nolgind Kubora that is considered archaic even by Kuboran standards. The tribes whose ranges border Rethem have also added many Harnic words to their vocabularies. It is not uncommon among the Kubora to find people who speak Harnic, normally at least enough to conduct trade.

## SEAFARING

Several of the tribes are accomplished seamen and live on the scattered island chains surrounding the Peran Peninsula. The Nolgind,

Tiraen and Minrai all build small, single masted sailing vessels of up to 30' in length. These are used for fishing and travel between the islands of their respective ranges. The Tiraen are practised pirates and often attack merchant vessels travelling through the Tirsia Islands. Most of the tribes whose ranges include coastline build small boats for coastal fishing.

Coastal tribes will often barter food and water for trade goods from foreign vessels making the long journey around northwestern Harn. Like all tribes, the Minrai and the Nolcind are fanatically protective of their tribal lands and islands and have not allowed any permanent settlements to be established. However, the Tiraen have recently allowed a band of Orbaalese pirates to establish a base on one of their smaller islands, sharing the spoils of captured vessels.

## ART AND CRAFTS

The Kuboran people are accomplished carvers of wood, bone and stone. Their metalcraft technology is somewhat primitive and decorative items such as jewellery and fine metalwork is characteristically blocky and chunky. The women of the Kubora are renowned for their ability in weaving intricate patterns on panels that are used as decorative and religious icons in tribal huts.

In the past century there has been a flourishing of Kuboran art. This is mainly due to the change from a nomadic life to that of living in semi-permanent settlements.

Typically artwork reflects aspects of Kuboran life and culture. Representations of animals, ancestors, family lineage and religious figures are the most common subjects in Kuboran art.

## ARUS

Nothing distinguishes a Kuboran so much as the intricate facial scarring and branding that they submit themselves to known as *Arus*. Arus is important to Kuborans because it is a record of who they are and what they have done. A person's tribe, lineage and deeds can all be read in the patterns of scars and brands. The Kuborans have a concept of prestige, respect and dignity, called *anam*. This is one of the reasons why Arlun's half-Rethemi son, Obras, was rejected as leader of the Kubora. He had no arus, and was not considered a man, therefore had no *anam*.

Males wear *arus* that covers much of their face. Traditionally, female *arus* is generally

confined to the lips and chin, although in some tribes full facial *arus* on females is not uncommon. The southern tribes (Delerni, Asawne, Denel and Utcin) allow full facial *arus* on women.

## KUBORAN TRIBAL LIFE

The Kubora have a reputation in the civilised states as being mindless barbarians, hell-bent on causing as much mayhem and destruction as possible. The reality is that most Kuboran warriors, whilst exalting in battle and enjoying combat for it's own sake, spend most of their time hunting and providing for their families.

The clan is the most important social division within Kuboran society. Clans are generally comprised of related individuals. A number of clans make up a tribe. Many clans were once independent tribes who were amalgamated into larger tribal groupings during the period of consolidation when Arlun united the Kubora for his invasion of Rethem. Each clan has it's own *Druhn* and *Hanuhn*. From these men the tribal council elects the tribal *Druhn* and *Hanuhn*. However, clans are fundamentally independent units and it is not unknown for individual clans to feud amongst themselves even within a tribe.

Family life is very important to the Kubora and family responsibilities are taken very seriously. Adultery is considered a heinous crime, as is abuse of children and women. However, these prohibitions generally do not apply to "*strangers*" and those not "*of the People*".

The Hanuhn and the tribal council interpret tribal law. Transgression of tribal law generally results in some form of punishment. Banishment is a usual punishment and for particularly serious crimes, death is a common. Often this is accompanied by the council removing the accused person's status as "a man of the people".

While women are considered inferior, some females opt to live as warriors. They claim a special status known as *Aengtha*. A female claiming the right of *Aengtha* is afforded all the rights and responsibilities of a man, excepting that they are unable to become a *Druhn* or *Hanuhn*, and they are unable to marry. Some tribes do not afford the right of *Aengtha* to women, notably the Kobeon and the Iorzu. However, maiden warriors are generally considered stark fighters because they must remain unbeaten to keep their maiden-warrior

status. A warrior who bests a maiden-warrior in combat can, if he is unmarried, take the woman to wife. All Kuboran women have some skill with the bow and knife and will fight as fanatically as the men when their homes and families are threatened.

## KUBORAN MANHOOD CEREMONIES

The high point in the life of a young Kuboran warrior is the moment when he is asked to step forwards and partake in the sacred ceremonies that will forever make him a man amongst the people. This normally occurs somewhere between the young warrior's sixteenth and eighteenth birthdays. Most young warriors hope that their ceremony will be performed at Kustan, where the spirit of Kemlar will guide them through the expected ordeal that the ceremony will entail. The actual manhood ceremony is a religious and spiritual rite that is shrouded in mystery. A man may not tell a claimant for manhood about the ceremony. It is a test that he must face with his wits and strength.

Manhood bestows upon the Kuboran warrior certain rights and privileges. Foremost among these is the right to sit and be heard in council and to hold the position of *Druhn* or *Hanuhn*. Also, he gets the right to take a wife and to start a family of his own. Only those who have been through the test of manhood are considered fit to breed.

The ceremony itself is a two-part process that is administered by the tribal and clan shamans. The first part is a practical test of hunting and tracking skills, whereby the claimants must navigate a course set by men of the tribe and find a specific item or treasure. The course includes traps and puzzles and is a test of initiative, co-operation and stamina.

In the second part of the ceremony, claimants to manhood are prepared by ritual bathing and prayer to Kemlar. They are then given a cocktail of drugs. The shamans use their ritual invocations to call forth the spirit of Kemlar to guide the claimant through a series of tests. The exact nature of the test varies with each individual and group. The majority of claimants experience a shared hallucination - this is controlled by the shaman using telepathy and verbal suggestion on young men who are susceptible because of their drug induced state. To the claimants, the test is real. They must perform some feat or defeat a foe of the people.

The success or otherwise of this feat determines whether the shamans pronounce the claimant a man. Death, even if it is just in the mind, is not necessarily failure. If the claimant acts stupidly and does not learn important lessons from the test, he will be rejected as a man. The fate of those "not-men" that fail the test varies. A few commit suicide, others try to perform some incredible feat of bravery to be granted a second chance, while others simply live their lives as part of the clan, but without the rights of a man. Few Kuborans fail.