The Lady's Grammar

By Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship

The Emela titles of the churches of Larani and Peoni and their fighting orders, read by one who does not speak the tongue

> "I have heard Emela sung over my head since I was seven years old, in the temple school at Tashal, and I have never understood a line of it. What follows is not a grammar. It is what a patient man can learn from the titles alone, set side by side, and checked against the memory of an old knight who has worn them all his life."
>
> — Vaidenon of Hustan, Warden of the Inkhorn Fellowship, Tashal, Morgat 720 TR

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Emela is the tongue of the altar. The churches of Larani and Peoni both keep their scriptures in it, written in Khruni, and both teach it to every acolyte who comes to them; it is a daughter of Old Jarinese, as *Tongues of Kèthîra* tells. Outside the temples hardly anyone speaks it. What the rest of us hear of it are titles: the Matakea who says the Soratir in the village, the Melana who rides by on the Salt Route, the Reslava at the gate with her bowl.

I do not speak Emela. I have asked priests of both houses to teach me, and been told, kindly, that the tongue is for prayer and not for study, which I take to mean that a Warden of the Fellowship is not a likely acolyte. So this is a reading from the outside. I have gathered every title the churches and their orders set down with its meaning, laid them side by side, and looked for the pieces that come back. Where a piece means the same thing in three titles I trust it. Where it turns up once, I say so.

I have also had the help of a man who lived inside these words. Gerla Largen is a venilana, a retired knight of the Order of the Checkered Shield, and steward of its chapterhouse at Xerle, near Dyrisa in Kanday. He is fifty-nine, a veteran of Ezar's War, and the keeper of more war stories than any man I have written to. He says his prayers by heart and, by his own account, knows "the grammar not at all". He answered my letters at length and with a soldier's impatience. Where I quote him, his are the words of the orders as their men use them, not as the priests would have them.

Credits

Writer: Vaidenon of Hustan

Set down by Lesli of Bifel and his homunculus, Claudin

With the help of Gerla Largen, venilana of the Checkered Shield at Xerle, by letter (Inkhorn); see Sources and Additions.

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How Sure I Am

Certain: the church sets the meaning down beside the word.

Near certain: the piece appears in three titles or more and means the same in each.

Confident: two clear witnesses agree.

A fair guess: one witness, or witnesses that only half agree.

A guess: a reading that pleases me and that nothing I know contradicts.

I cannot say: the word will not come apart.

The titles and their meanings are the churches' own, as Columbia Games' books record them. Every reading of a piece, and every degree of confidence, is mine and the Fellowship's. *(Inkhorn)*

Two Estates: -lana and -ken

I begin with the fighting orders, because their titles are the most numerous and the plainest. The Lady of Paladins sets down its ranks from the Chabla at the top

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to the Ainken at the bottom, and the Checkered Shield of Kanday adds a few of its own. Lay them out in two columns, the knights on one side and the soldiers on the other, and the tongue all but explains itself.

Rank	Knight (gentle)	Soldier (common)
grandmaster	Chabla	—
senior commander	Senior Reblena	—
commander	Reblena	—
deputy commander; sergeant	Turlana	Turken
senior knight; corporal	Remlana	Remken
knight; soldier	Melana	Meken
squire	Atalana	Ataken
recruit	—	Ainken
sent out alone	Erana	Erken
retired	Venilana	Veniken
lay brother	Rilana	—
honored patron	Sulana	—
the commanders' council	Soylana Assembly	—

Erana, the wandering knight, is the Checkered Shield's word. The Fellowship gives it to the Lady of Paladins and every Laranian fighting order as well. *(Inkhorn)*

The ends of the words tell a man's birth, and the fronts tell his work. **-lana** marks the sworn member of gentle birth, the knight-kind; **-ken** the sworn man of common birth, the soldier-kind. I am near certain of both. The clearest witness is the squire: a noble squire is an Atalana and a common one an Ataken, and nothing else in the two words differs. The retired are the same, Venilana and Veniken, and so are the plain ranks, Melana and Meken.

> *"A boy comes to us an atalana or an ataken, and the whole chapterhouse knows which before he has unpacked his box. The front of the word is the same because the work is the same: horses, harness, his knight's mail at first light. The back of the word is his father."*
>
> — Gerla Largen, venilana, in a letter to the Warden

The gaps say as much as the pairs. There is no Ainlana, because a noble does not enter as a recruit: most come in as Atalana. There is no Rebken either, no common commander, because a commoner rarely rises past sergeant. A tongue does not keep words for things that do not happen. I confess I should like to hear a knight call a jumped-up sergeant a Rebken; it would be a fine insult, and the grammar would bear it. *(Inkhorn)*

The Fronts of the Words

me-: the sworn man

Melana and Meken are the ordinary knight and the ordinary soldier, and I am confident that me- marks the full, sworn member under arms. The temple's Menoran, the Master of the Fighting Order, suggests it means *fighting*. But the Peonian primate is a Mepeleh, and Peoni's is a church sworn to mercy. My two witnesses quarrel here, and I side with the larger: *sworn* is nearer the mark than *fighting*.

rem-: the file leader

A Remken leads a file of five soldiers, and a Remlana is a senior knight. I am confident the piece means the head of a small band of the plain men. That it is re-, *over*, joined to me- is a fair guess: *over the sworn*.

tur-: the man who makes it happen

The Turken leads a decad. The Turlana commands the chapter while the Reblena is away at court, which is often. Both carry out orders they did not give, and I am confident that is what tur- means: the second, the executor. The grandmaster of a clerical order is a Turintesa, and the books say his office is to interpret the will of the central church rather than to make it. That he is the same kind of man, higher up, is a fair guess.

> *"The Reblena says the bridge by noon. The Turlana says which bridge, which noon, and which of you. The Turken says it again, louder."*
>
> — Gerla Largen

ata-: the attendant

The squire, near certain. A common squire is a soldier trained to ride and keep horses, and is sent out as courier and scout; I suspect the horse is somewhere in the word, though that is only a fair guess.

veni-: at rest

The retired knight and the retired soldier, near certain. In the Checkered Shield a venilana who stays with the

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order keeps a manor or a chapterhouse as its bailiff or chamberlain, which is exactly what Gerla does at Xerle.

> *"Venilana means the Lady's man at rest. I am at rest. I keep the keys, the accounts, the wine and my opinions, and my Reblena, who is thirty and moderate and right more often than I tell him, has use for three of the four."*
> — Gerla Largen

er-: the road

The Erken, the chosen men, go out alone or in pairs; they read and write, draw maps, and often pass for foresters or hunters. The Erana rides out on quest or pilgrimage with his Reblena's leave. I am confident er- means *sent forth*. Notice that er- with -lana gives not Erlana but Erana: I take it the l falls away after r, though one word is all my evidence, a fair guess. The acolyte's Three Vows, the Hesa-Eran, may hold the same root, the vows that set a soul on its road, or eran may simply be *three*. I cannot choose between them.

> *"Er- is the road. An erken goes out with a map and comes back with a better one. An erana goes out with his Reblena's leave and comes back, if he comes back, with a story he will tell for thirty years. I was erana two summers before the war. Ask me about the second."*
> — Gerla Largen

ain-: the new man

The recruit. A fair guess on a single witness.

The odd ones

Reblena breaks the pattern. By the rule above a commander of knights ought to be a Relana, re- over the -lana. Instead the word carries a -b- and ends in -lena, not -lana. I suspect an older or grander form of the word, a lord rather than a man; that is a guess. **Rilana**, the lay brother who serves at need, may be ri-, *free*, *at his own charge*; **Sulana**, the honored patron, su-, *bounty* or *treasure*, as in the Suloran who keeps a temple's archives. Both are guesses. The **Soylana** Assembly I leave for the church words below.

Chabla

I cannot say. It will not come apart, it ends in nothing I recognise, and it ranks its holder with a baron.

> *"Nobody knows what Chabla means, and the Chabla least of all. It was old when the order was young. We do not take it apart. You do not take apart a thing you have sworn to obey."*
> — Gerla Largen

The Temple of Larani

The church's own offices are fewer and older, and the soldiers' tidy grammar holds less well among them. Priests, Gerla reminded me, "have been mending this tongue for a thousand years, and soldiers have been breaking it for nine hundred." Here are the offices, from the highest down.

Title	Office
Sebrath	the pontiff, the Abbot of Tengela
Tirnatha	the Body of the Unwilling: the pontiff's twenty counsellors
Ethelanca	the Holy Office
Lirrath	primate
Serekela	archbishop
Rekela	bishop
Turintesa	grandmaster of a clerical order
Serolan	high priest, or abbot
Valaran	Master of Acolytes
Suloran	Master of Archives
Obasaran	Master of Secular Affairs
Menoran	Master of the Fighting Order
Matakea	temple priest
Ashesa	acolyte

ser-. Rekela is a bishop and Serekela an archbishop, and the only difference between the words is ser-. I am confident it means *high*, *arch-*. It fronts the high priest, the Serolan, as well, and I think the pontiff's Sebrath wears the same piece cut short; a fair guess.

-rath. The primate and the pontiff, Lirrath and Sebrath, share an ending I read as the *seat* or *see*, the chair of rule. A fair guess. Kerthede Talvail, who leads the Order of the Spear of Shattered Sorrow and is primate of Hârn, is both a Turintesa and a Lirrath: an executor of the church's will in one office and the holder of its chair in the other.

-kela, -kea. The bishop, the archbishop and the temple priest, Rekela, Serekela and Matakea, may share a word for the goddess's servant. A guess.

-ran. Four temple masters end alike: Valaran, Suloran, Obasaran and Menoran. I am near certain that -ran is the master. What each is master of is in the front of the word, and I can read only two of the four: men-, the sworn fighting order, and su-, the archive and its treasure. Vala- and obasa- I cannot read.

hesa, vakum. The acolyte is an Ashesa, and an acolyte's first act is to take the Hesa-Eran, the Three Vows. I read *hesa* as *vow*, and the Ashesa as *the vowed*: a fair guess, and one that pleases me more than most. At the end of his training the acolyte performs the Telur-Vakum, a ritual labor that may be anything from illuminating a manuscript to a dangerous quest. *Vakum* the Order of Hyvrik sets down alone with that meaning, so of that I am certain; *telur*, the proving, is a guess.

The two masses. The lay mass is the Soratir. The high rituals, closed to all but priests, are the Alamirata. Alamire was the fortress Saint Ambrathas took and made a temple and chapterhouse, and the Lady of Paladins at Cundras keeps the Light of Alamire, a small lantern said to have lit the saint's pen as he wrote the holy texts. I suspect Alamirata is ata-, *attendance*, on the *alamir*, the holy thing or place: the service of the holy. A guess, and I mark it so.

tir- and -annon. Larani dwells in Tirithor, which the church calls the Land of the Mighty. Her emissaries are the Knights of Tirith. The knight's vigil, the last step to knighthood, is the Tirannon, and the pontiff's council is the Tirnatha. I am confident tir- is *might*. The -thor of Tirithor comes back in Dolithor, where the Laranian dead fight the good fight, and I take it for *land*: a fair guess. The -annon of Tirannon I borrow from the Peonians, whose Reslavannon is the Portal of Mendicants. If annon is a gate, the Tirannon is the *threshold of might*, the door a squire passes through to stand up a knight. That is a fair guess, and the one I am proudest of. The Lady of Paladins holds its Tirannon for its squires at Whyce on the feast of Saint Ambrathas, the 17th of Larane.

Tirnatha. The Body of the Unwilling is so called because a priest summoned to it must refuse three times before he takes his seat. Tir-, might, I keep; *natha*, refusal, I would only guess.

The Temple of Peoni

Peoni's church prays in the same tongue and names itself quite differently, which is the best evidence I have that Emela is a living church language and not a soldiers' code. Its offices, from the highest down:

Title	Office
Hapalan	the pontiff (plural Hapalani)
Pelclunia	the sixteen cardinals who advise the Hapalan
Mepeleh	primate
Sulaplyn	bishop
Pelnala	high priest or priestess
Solana	Master of Acolytes
Avasana	Master of Archives and Treasures
Lerovana	Master of Healing
Ebasethe	temple priest or priestess
Reslava	mendicant priest, licensed to travel
Esolani	acolytes

pel-. It runs all through the house: Pelnala, Pelclunia, Mepeleh, the Sapeleh that is the church's worship, and the Peledaur that a would-be mendicant passes. I am confident it is the goddess's own mark. What it means beyond that, *mercy* perhaps, is a guess.

-ana. Where Larani's masters end in -ran, Peoni's end in -ana: Solana, Avasana, Lerovana, and the Pelnala above them. That it is the same office spoken in the other house's manner, as two abbeys of one order sing the same psalm to different tunes, is a fair guess.

reslava, -kai. The mendicant is a Reslava. The test of one is the Reslava-kai Peledaur, the Passage of Humble Souls. The new mendicant receives the Reslava'Anama, an amulet of silver, and leaves the temple by the Reslavannon, the Portal of Mendicants. Reslava, *the humble one*, I hold with confidence, and annon, *gate*, likewise. Kai, joining two words as our *of* does, is a fair guess. If Peledaur is the passage, then Reslava-kai Peledaur runs backwards to our ear, *the humble ones' passage*, which is how I would expect a church tongue to put it.

-lan, -lani. Here the two houses touch. The Peonian pontiff is the Hapalan, and the church writes the plural Hapalani; so the Peonian acolytes, the Esolani, are

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likely a company of Esolan. The Laranian high priest is a Serolan. I read -lan as *a holy person*, with -lani its plural: a fair guess. It is tempting to hear Larani's own name in it, and to hear in -lana *one of the Lady's*. But the Peonian pontiff bears -lan too, and I will not hang one lady's name on the other's pontiff. A guess, then, and a pretty one.

so-. Four words gather round it: the Soratir, the lay mass where the people gather; the Soylana Assembly, where the commanders gather; the Peonian Solana, master of the acolytes; and the Esolani, the acolytes themselves. I read it as *the gathering, the congregation*: a fair guess.

Peoni dwells in the meadows of Valon, where it is forever spring. I can read nothing in the word, and I like it no less for that.

A Glossary of the Pieces

Here, gathered in one place, is every piece I have read, with the titles that bear witness to it and how sure I am.

Piece	My reading	Witnesses	How sure
-lana	a sworn member of gentle birth: knight-kind	Melana, Remlana, Turlana, Atalana, Venilana, Rilana, Sulana, Soylana, Erana	near certain
-ken	a sworn member of common birth: soldier-kind	Meken, Remken, Turken, Ataken, Erken, Ainken, Veniken	near certain
ata-	attendant, squire; the one who serves a knight and his horses	Atalana, Ataken	near certain
veni-	at rest, retired with honor	Venilana, Veniken	near certain
me-	plain, full, sworn: the ordinary member under arms	Melana, Meken, Menoran	confident
rem-	head of the plain men: a file leader	Remlana, Remken	confident
tur-	the one who carries the order out: second, executor	Turlana, Turken, Turintesa	confident
er-	sent forth, abroad on the road	Erken, Erana	confident
ain-	new, untried	Ainken	fair guess
reb-, -lena	commander; perhaps an older or higher form of -lana	Reblena	guess
ri-	free, at his own charge	Rilana	guess
su-	keeping, treasure, bounty	Sulana, Suloran, Sulaplyn	guess
so-, soy-	gathering, congregation, the many	Soylana, Soratir, Solana, Esolani	fair guess
re-	over, head of	Rekela, Remken, Remlana, Reblena	fair guess
ser-, se-	high, arch-	Serekela, Serolan, Sebrath	confident
-kela, -kea	servant of the goddess, priest	Rekela, Serekela, Matakea	guess
-rath	seat, see, the chair of rule	Lirrath, Sebrath	fair guess
-ran, -oran	master of a temple office (Laranian)	Valaran, Suloran, Obasaran, Menoran	near certain
-ana, -ala	master of a temple office (Peonian)	Solana, Avasana, Lerovana, Pelnala	fair guess
-lan, -lani	a holy person; -lani the plural	Serolan, Hapalan, Hapalani, Esolani	fair guess
pel-, -peleh	of Peoni: her mercy, her worship	Pelnala, Pelclunia, Peledaur, Mepeleh, Sapeleh	confident
hesa	vow	Hesa-Eran, Ashesa	fair guess
vakum	ritual labor	Vakum, Telur-Vakum	certain
telur	proving, the last test	Telur-Vakum	guess
tir-	might, the strength of the mighty	Tirithor, Tirith, Tirannon, Tirnatha	confident
-thor, -or	land, realm	Tirithor, Dolithor	fair guess

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Piece	My reading	Witnesses	How sure
-annon	gate, portal, threshold	Reslavannon, Tirannon	confident
-kai	of (joining two words)	Reslava-kai Peledaur	fair guess
reslava	humble one, mendicant	Reslava, Reslavannon, Reslava'Anama	confident
alamir-	the holy, the high (as Alamire, the holy fortress of Saint Ambrathas)	Alamirata	guess
Chabla	unknown: an old word, older than the orders	Chabla	unknown

For the Game Master

Using the Pieces at the Table

A new rank in a Laranian fighting order takes -lana if a knight holds it and -ken if a commoner does. The front of the word is its work: tur- for an officer who carries out orders, rem- for the leader of a few, er- for one sent away, veni- for one retired.

The Fellowship uses Erana for a knight of any Laranian order sent abroad on quest, pilgrimage or the order's business. *(Inkhorn)*

Rebken is an insult, not a rank: a knight's word for a sergeant who gives himself airs. *(Inkhorn)*

A knight of an order is called Sir, whether he was born noble or raised by the order: Sir Perel Yeno, Reblena of Cundras, born noble; Sir Lakuen Dehurkyl, Venilana and steward of the same caer, born common and raised for his service (see *Raised by the Lady*). *(Inkhorn)*

Laranian priests: Ashesa, Matakea, Serolan, then Rekela, Serekela, Lirrath and Sebrath. Peonian priests: Esolani, Ebasethe or Reslava, Pelnala, then Sulaplyn, Mepeleh and Hapalan.

A Character Who Asks

A character who knows Emela can read what the Warden only guesses at. A successful Language (Emela) roll tells the player whether a reading here is right; the game master decides, and need not agree with Vaidenon. A character without the tongue who asks a priest gets the answer Vaidenon got. *(Inkhorn)*

Sources and Additions

This section is set down plainly. It lists what in this account comes from Columbia Games' published works and what the Inkhorn Fellowship adds; the Fellowship's additions are marked *(Inkhorn)* in the text.

Published sources

- Columbia Games, *HârnMaster Religion* (#4401): the Larani and Peoni chapters, with their offices, rites, heavens and the scripture tongue and script of each church.
- Columbia Games, *Lady of Paladins* (#4444): the order's ranks and insignia, the venilana and veniken, the Soylana Assembly.
- Columbia Games, *Checkered Shield* (#4442): the erana, the rilana, the venilana and veniken, and the order's ranks.
- Columbia Games, *Order of Hyvrik* (#4441): the Turintesa, and the Vakum, ritual labor.
- Columbia Games, *Spear of Shattered Sorrow* (#4443): Kerthede Talvail, Turintesa of the order and Lirrath of Hârn.
- Hârn Writers' Guild and Columbia Games, *Laranian Saints*: the Knights of Tirith, Alamire and its Light at Cundras, and the Lady of Paladins' Tirannon at Whyce.
- Columbia Games, *Dyrisa Castle*: Gerla Largen, retired melana and steward of the Checkered Shield's Xerle chapterhouse, and Reblena Daruth Salden.
- Columbia Games, *Lythia*: Emela among the daughters of Old Jarinese.

The Fellowship's additions

- Every reading of a piece of a word, and every degree of confidence given.
- Gerla Largen's letters: their words are the Fellowship's, written in his voice from what *Dyrisa Castle* tells of him.
- The sound rule by which er- and -lana give Erana.
- Erana for the Lady of Paladins and every Laranian fighting order; Rebken as an insult; Sir for knights of the orders born noble.
- The Language (Emela) roll for a character who asks.

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