

In Battle and at War

The Riders attack in small groups, showering a static target with arrows or using Pentan Shot tactics against mobile foes. The Pentan Shot is their famed skill of riding up to an enemy, then retreating, while peppering their pursuing foe with arrows. Repeated use of the tactic wears down opponents, and in their frustration they may break ranks to charge the elusive riders. Only then do the heavy cavalry charge. Although equipped well for shock, their light mounts and weapons make the Char-Un heavies less adept at melee than the heavy cavalry of the west or even Dara Happa. They can give a good showing, though, and never attack unless the foe has been severely weakened already.

The standard manoeuvre body on the battlefield is the clan and above that, the tribe. The tribal grouping corresponds most closely with the regiment of agrarian cultures. The Char-Un fight as an army in much the same fashion as any nomad horde, using a series of feints, flank manoeuvres and attritional attacks. They seek not to break the enemy in direct combat so much as to tire, frustrate and disrupt them until an opportunity arises to break their line with a sudden strike. Once the enemy are routed, then the reserves are released for a general pursuit in which a whole army can be destroyed piecemeal.

The Char-Un typically deploy in a double line, occasionally in three lines if they have sufficient forces. The

I once met an unusually well-informed military scholar, Bendrek Twice-Frozen by name, in return for a pot of auntie's medicinal rub (he seemed most troubled by a chill), he outlined the typical composition of a nomad horde of 10,000 warriors. What I found surprising and alarming was his insistence on calling the Char-Un 'Pentans,' even though he noted that thanks to the Empire they had rather more heavy cavalry than 'the others.' When I sought to correct him, he peered over the strange Kralori lenses he wore clamped to his nose and smiled faintly. 'We'll see' was his only response.

5000 Riders (horse archers, no armour, short spear)

1000 Warriors (horse archers, bow, lasso, no or minimal armour, sword or axe)

2000 Warriors (medium cavalry, bow, lance, light armour, sword)

2000 Warriors (heavy cavalry, lance and shield or two handed lance and no shield, sword and heavy armour, typically laminate)

— *Promantis*

Pan of the horde takes the centre rear with the heaviest lancers at his command, including his bodyguard. Riders form the flanks with warriors at the centre of each line, covered by a screen of riders. Flanking detached columns are very popular in large hordes and are timed to arrive on the battlefield at critical moments.

