

THE LANGUAGES OF HERENOR

Development of the Major Languages of Herenor

In the following tables, the groups of words are centred around their primary sources in Hâhan, or the Ancient Speech, traditionally the language of the Hâhnorens' divinities and demi-gods, in part reconstructed by later scholars. The system of alternate vowels and consonants was soon reduced to more economical forms in Old Hâhnoren, which was the spoken form of the language of the Hâhan until the Fourth Age; it was during this period that an increasing number of early written records and early literature indicate the gradual emergence of Classical Hâhnoren, the first truly literary language since the period of Wendem domination.

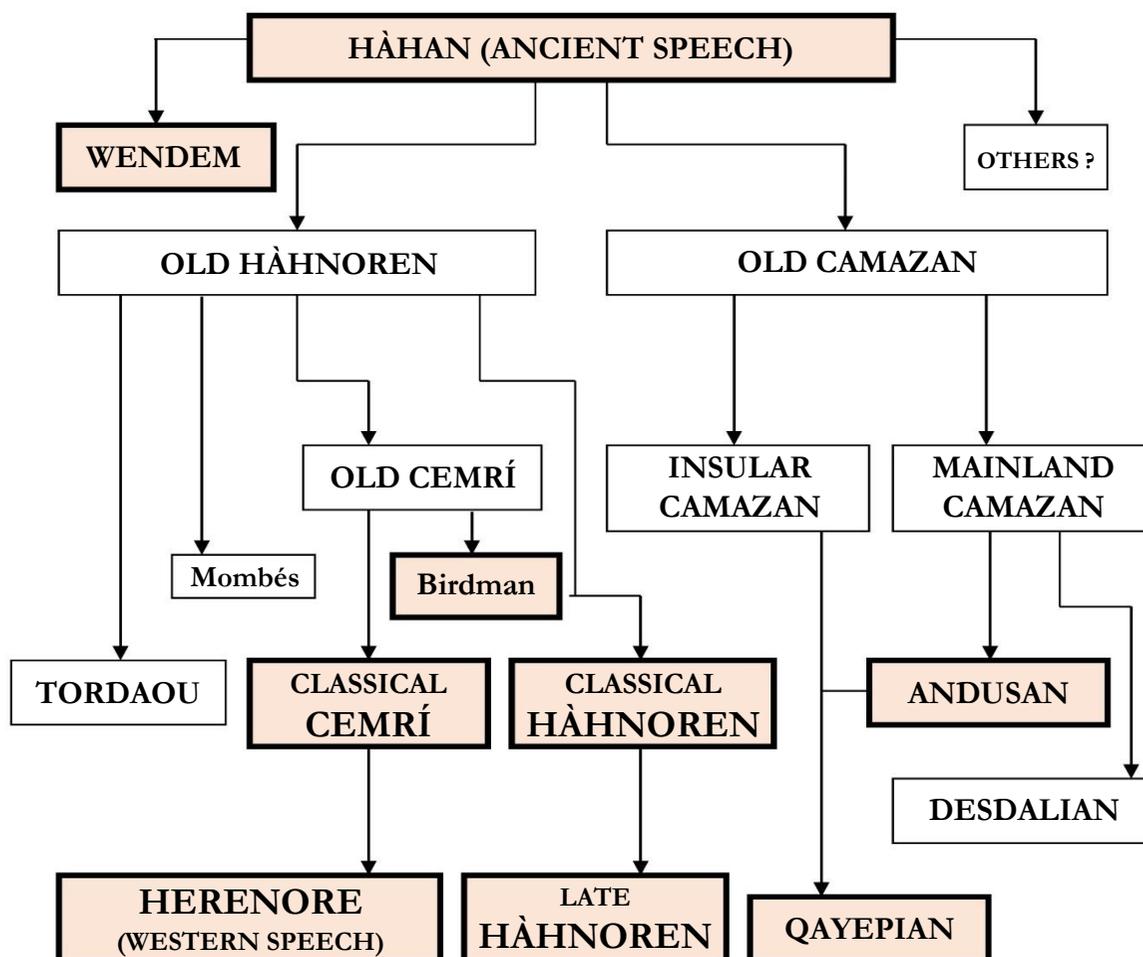
The spread of Hâhnoren over the whole of Hâhnor in the Fourth and Fifth Ages, and the later development of imperial expansion saw a growing interaction between Hâhnoren and the closely related Cemrí language. This culminated during the period of a single Empire, at the end of the Fifth Age and beginning of the Sixth, at which time there was a great deal of lexical borrowing on the part of the Cemrí in particular; indeed, at the dawn of the Sixth Age, the refined Classical Cemrí was widely in use as a written medium across the plain of Silémore.

However, as the imperial structures began to crumble, and as the fiercely independent government in Ercin looked increasingly towards expansion westwards into the heartlands of Herenor, so among its various subjects a new *lingua franca* developed, Herenore, based closely on Classical Cemrí. Throughout the Sixth Age, these two imperial languages, Hâhnoren and Herenore, come to dominate the cultural and political life of the continent: the former remained the language of the imperial Hâhnoren state in the South, and the medium of administration for its far-flung colonies, not only around the fringes of Herenor, but as far away as Melxar, the Americas and North Africa; whilst Herenore was the everyday language throughout Silémore and across the wide plains into the valley of the River Gennuille in the west.

As the peoples in the West and North West began to emerge as challengers to the ancient supremacy of the Hâhnoren legacy, so we witness too the growing importance of the Camazan family of languages, still distantly related to Hâhan. Ancient records and legends written even before the Great Flooding at the end of the Fifth Age show that a distinct and complex literary language was in use across these wild regions, and this is generally termed Old Camazan; later, in the Sixth Age, Desdalian and Andusan developed into two major languages belonging to the so-called Mainland Camazan group, whilst Qayepian became the most dominant of the Insular Camazan languages, on the large island of Qayepon. Indeed, by the Great War, Qayepian had virtually taken on the rôle of the new *lingua franca* in a world where the Qayepian Empire now stretched across wide swathes of the Atlantic region.

The Family of Hahan Languages

The Ancient Speech, correctly termed Hahan, is the basis for the branch of languages including Old Hahnoren, Classical Hahnoren, Cemrí, Tordaou, and ultimately Herenore, the common tongue for international dealings from the mid Sixth Age. It is also the root of the Camazan family of languages in north-western Herenor.



- Major languages with literary and commercial status on the continent are in highlighted boxes.