

in wedges. They achieved ~~a combination of mobile fire power with~~ mobile shock power. On foot they fought using the shield-wall technique; in this, each man is so positioned as to present the enemy with an impenetrable wall of alternate shields and spears. Only bad luck, treachery, or incompetence, and in the case of Middle-earth wizardry, can break a shield wall.

The Long Winter 2758-9 may well have drastically altered the face of Rohan. The depopulation of the plain, and loss of livestock in 2758, followed by the flooding of much of Calenardhon in the spring of 2759 must have left the plains permanently depopulated at the expense of the mountain valleys; the political power of the lowlands - as demonstrated by Freca in 2754 - would have been destroyed, and possibly the Marches may have been reduced to three by amalgamating those of the now empty plains with the more populous mountains.



The Rohirrim maintained themselves in Calenardhon for 500 years without losing their cultural or genetic identity for a number of reasons. Firstly because of their relative isolation - begun by the unnavigability of the rivers and completed by the disuse of the Minas Tirith-Fornost road - and secondly it was in Gondor's interest to maintain the situation. Rohan was an exploited and underdeveloped country - the price she paid for living within Gondor's boundaries - and the high-men of Gondor were also loathe to risk the diluting of their Elven-blood by intermarriage with ordinary men. By the reign of Thengel (2953-80) however, there were signs of an increasing Westernisation starting at Edoras.

The outlook for the Fourth Age is initially bright under the new dynasty, but deep seated divisions in Rohan, which began to emerge in the council in 2754, but were retarded by the disaster of 2758-9 could re-emerge soon, as the incipient cultural conflict heralded by Thengel's reign shows.

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S is for His Stronghold down in Mordor,  
 A is for the Armies at His call,  
 U is for the Uruks in His forces,  
 R is for the Ring that rules them all;  
 O is for His Forge in Orodruin,  
 N is for the Nazgûl at His beck;

Put them all together, they spell S-A-U-R-O-N  
 And you're lucky if He doesn't wring your neck!