

THE MACCABEAN CALENDAR

The Maccabean, or Korachani, Calendar is the calendar used across the Korachani empire as well as some other now-independent nations which were once dependents of the empire.

It was devised by the Scholar Maccabeus of Nekoda in what is now 6 RM (the Reign of Malichar) and first employed in Cykranalen 16th, replacing the old lunar calendar that had been previously used by the disparate Korachani tribes. Many regions, especially the far south of the Korachani Peninsula, which would later go on to become Hoamm, were most resistant to this change, finally adopting it by around 42 RM.

It is a solar calendar of 12 months, of 30 days each. The year itself is 366 days long, with 6 days that fall outside of the months that are celebrated as days of reverence and festivals. Originally the calendar was further divided into four months (winter, spring, summer, and autumn), though changes over the millennia has left the climate more extreme, with only two clearly distinct seasons – summer and winter.

Between each of the original seasons are two day-long equinoctial festivals, and two solstice festivals of 2 days. The Cut Year observed every 7 years, removes a day from the winter solstice festival, turning it into a single day of mourning of the dead, specifically the mortal death of the Archpotentate Malichar.

Maccabean years are identified by consecutive year numbers, with the full date represented by the day of the month, or the festival day in the case of one of the solstice or equinoctial festivals, followed by the month, and year, in the Reign of Malichar: for instance, 5th Rachalen, 4007 RM, or the Autumn Equinoctial festival, 4007 RM.

MONTHS

The imperial year is 366 days long, or 365 days on a Cut Year, and is divided into 12 months, each of 30 days. There are festival days four times a year, coinciding with equinoxes and solstices, with the equinoctial festivals lasting 1 day each, and the solstice festivals 2 days each. The Cut Year observed every 7 years, removes a day from the winter solstice festival.

The first day of the year is the considered to be the start of the winter Solstice festival.

The months and intermediate feasts are:

Winter Solstice festival lasting 2 days (1 day on Cut Year)
Malichalen (named after the Archpotentate Malichar)
Algolen (named after the planet Algol)
Cykranalen (named after the planet Cykranosh)
Spring Equinox festival lasting 1 day
Livialen (named after the planet Liviad)
Rachalen (named after the Undying Machine, Rachanael)
Murdad (possibly named after a pre-imperial deity)
Summer Solstice festival lasting 2 days
Korahalen (named after Korachan)
Ashtalen (named after the dawn star Ashterath)
Nihavalen (named after the planet Nihav)
Autumn Equinox festival lasting 1 day
Satavalen (named after the ancient astronomer Satavi)
Haelen (named after the planet Hael)
Akoralen (named after Korachan)

WEEKS AND DAYS

Each 30-day month is split into five weeks, each of 6 days, which are Aional, Daional, Idaional, Kaional, Ikaional, and Kuaional. Aional is considered a day of rest, with most establishments closed to business, though the growing economical needs of the empire, as well as the massed industrialisation of its manufactories see most industries work six-day weeks, particularly in harbours and ports, where trade never stops.

The original incarnation of the Maccabean calendar had 7-day weeks, with the seventh day of each week being Ikuational. The week days carried over through the months in a 90-day cycle, which was interrupted by the equinoctial and solstice festivals, continuing as though the festival days did not exist, leading to complex record-keeping. In 995 RM a reform to the calendar system led to the removal of the seventh day of week, which streamlined the calendar, making the first day of each month Aional.

FEASTS AND HOLY DAYS

There are four major festivals in the Maccabean Calendar, all of which are festivals of religious observance relevant to the Church of the Undying Machine and the Cult of Malichar. These holy days coincide with the equinoctial and solstice festivals, which themselves correspond to old pagan festivals from the years preceding the formation of the Korachani empire and the eventual creation of its calendar by the scholar Maccabeus.

Despite having their roots in such ancient pagan festivals, there are few today with the time or inclination to remember or care for such things, though the roots are known through the writings of the scholar Maccabeus who devised the calendar with an eye towards appeasing those who were not yet convinced by the radical overhaul their lives by the Archpotentate Malichar.

As time passed and major events, such as the mortal death and later rebirth of Malichar as an otherworlder, took place, they were introduced to the pre-existing festivals, becoming holy days of the Church of the Undying Machine and the cult of Malichar. And so were the origins of the Maccabean festivals forgotten to all but those with access to ancient writings that have since been condemned by the church.

In most cases the days of the festivals do not precisely match the days and events that they are commemorating due to the constraints imposed by the calendars' structure. For instance, the date of the Archpatrician Malichar's mortal death is commonly thought to be the 22nd of Malichalen, though his mortal death is commemorated during the Feast of the Mortal Death of St. Malichar.

The holy days of the Maccabean Calendar are as follows:

THE MORTAL DEATH OF ST. MALICHAR

More commonly known as the Feast of Passed Souls, the Holy Day of the Mortal Death of St. Malichar is regarded as the commemoration of those who died during the previous calendar year, and takes place during the two days of the winter solstice.

This is a solemn observation, marked by the peal of church bells on midnight on the first and second day of the holy day, between which families and individuals visit the massive funerary towers located within imperial necropolises to pay their respects to the dead. In Korachan, the bodies of the dead are recycled and used in the production of dross within the empire, but skulls are preserved and cleaned for display within the funerary towers, with details and epithets scribed upon the skulls, which are placed in family crypts.

Those with the fortune to have died in the days preceding this feast are given elaborate funeral processions. The skull of each deceased is given its own litter, borne by a church fanatic, and taken to the family crypt in the funerary towers after which mass is held in their name.

Those, like work-slaves and helots, who are unable to afford a family crypt, attend communal masses to commemorate their dead.

The feast is a corruption of the ancient proto-Korachani midwinter festival that celebrated the cyclical nature of life and death.

THE MORTAL BIRTH OF ST. MALICHAR

Taking place around the spring equinox, this festival originated in pre-imperial celebrations that honoured the passing of winter and the rebirth of life. Its original meaning has been almost completely lost, replaced by the festival of

the Rebirth of St. Malichar, which has taken over the aspect of rebirth.

Today, the spring equinox is celebrated as the commemoration of the first birth day of the Archpotentate Malichar, which was actually thought to be in mid-Rachalen.

It is seen as a time of birth and indoctrination of newborn babes into the Church of the Undying Machine, with children born in the past calendar year baptised.

THE FESTIVAL OF AFFIRMATION

Taking place close to the summer solstice, the Festival of Affirmation is a time for celebrating life and the good-fortunes of the empire, and for giving thanks to the wealth and health of the celebrants, be what they may.

Marriages often take place around the closest full Blood Moon to the Festival of Affirmation and may, particularly in smaller communities, be conducted as a massed ceremony with multiple weddings taking place at the same time.

Regardless of a couples wedding date, the wedding anniversary is typically celebrated during he Festival of Affirmation and communities come together in street parties to celebrate

THE REBIRTH OF ST. MALICHAR

Observed around the autumn equinox, the festival of the Rebirth of St. Malichar originated as a traditional festival celebrated around harvest-time. However, as seasons became less distinct and traditional agricultural practices gave way to modern dross manufacture, the original meaning of the festival was lost.

This, coupled with the rebirth of the Archpotentate Malichar as an otherworlder in Satavalen of 331 RM led to a marked change in the way this feast was observed.

Traditional celebrations involved baking loaves of bread from freshly milled flour, which would be blessed by parish priests before being divided amongst the populace. This celebration now takes on the form of blessed biscuits, with rivalries between competing bakeries often reaching high levels of fanaticism.

The night skies of this feast are lit up by great bonfires around which couples who were wed in the previous calendar year are blessed, with their foreheads marked by the charred remnants of the bonfire in symbol of the blessing of St. Malichar.

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FEASTS OF PATRON SAINTS

Outside of the four holy days that form official part of the Maccabean Calendar, there are also various other festivals that are observed in cities across Korachan and the empire itself.

These feasts typically honour the patron saint of the settlement or region, with a mass observed in their honour. Often their remains or an idol are removed from storage and blessed with holy water before being carried throughout the main thoroughfares of the settlement, its presence considered a blessing to the residents.

In more fanatical regions fanatics and flagellants may follow in the wake of the procession.

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