

# High Medieval



ADVENTURE THROUGH HISTORY



# SIGH MEDIEVAL

*ADVENTURE THROUGH HISTORY...*

**MORRIGAN PRESS INC.**

*AGNEW*

*ANDREWS*

*DEMBSKI-BOWDEN*



# hIGH MEDIEVAL

## FANTASY ROLE PLAYING GAME

Dedication  
To my wonderful children: Hannah and Mhàiri

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAP - HIGH MEDIEVAL EUROPE	4
PREFACE	5
INTRODUCTION	10
THE WORLD OF HIGH MEDIEVAL	32
CHARACTER CREATION	70
CALLINGS	79
SKILLS	99
TALENTS	110
COMBAT	133
MAGIC IN HIGH MEDIEVAL	147
THE CHURCH - RELIGION IN HIGH MEDIEVAL	183
EQUIPMENT	201
GAMEMASTER'S SECTION	212
A HIGH MEDIEVAL BESTIARY	224
INDEX & LEGAL	251



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# HIGH MEDIEVAL EUROPE



PREFACE

# A THROW OF THE RUNES

## OSWAZ: THE WARRIOR

Lord Marcus De Honare had fallen a long way.



Three months ago he was in the court of his father, a respected knight of Normandy. He'd spent most of his time lazily attending weapons practice, arguing with his father about the pointlessness of King Louis' Crusade, and seducing a large number of the serving girls employed at the castle.

Now, as he stood breathless and bone-weary in the icy, driving rain, he reflected that perhaps getting three young peasant women pregnant might not have been such a great idea. Marcus blinked gritty rain from his sore eyes, and cursed his father again for imposing this exile upon him.

A moment later, sword gripped in fingers long-numbered by the cold, he blocked another wild slash by the creature that was intent on taking his life. As the young noble's blade-heavy cavalry sword smashed aside the monster's own weapon, high quality steel met cheap iron with a ringing clash.

The creature grunted and glared with its piggy red eyes.

The greasy smell of its yellow-green skin would've been foul at the best of times, but in the rain it smelled like it had died weeks ago and forgotten to stop moving. Marcus thought it was an Hobgoblin, though it could have been any of the Unholy races and the erstwhile Prince wouldn't have known for sure. Teeth gritted against the driving rain and the irritating hisses of whirling blades, Marcus regretted never paying attention to his history and geography tutors.

Of course, as he ducked a wild slash that came within inches of ending his life, he realized now probably wasn't the best of times to be worrying about that.

"I don't suppose," he began to yell, shouting over the roar of the storm and the cries of the creature, "that we could parley and reconsider this?"

The goblin raised its jagged and scratched blade, answering the human with another vicious swing of the weapon. Marcus threw himself backwards, hitting the ground awkwardly and rolling to his feet a moment later. He swore as his now-sprained ankle began to pulse in rhythmic pain.

"I'll take that as a 'no' then, shall I?"

## VERTHRO: SECRETS

Matthias backhanded the acolyte. He was a frail man of advancing years, but the blow took the younger man by surprise and the acolyte let out a yell of shock as he stepped out of his master's reach. Matthias sneered as his assistant sniffed a trickle of blood back into his nose.

"You are pathetic. I have wasted six years initiating you into the Mysteries. You are very lucky that I don't use you for the ritual." The elderly man licked his dry lips. "Now be gone from my sight before I reconsider the sacrifice. Stay out of my path until the appointed time of the summoning."

The acolyte knew better than to cradle his stinging, bleeding nose as he bowed and walked away. Signs of weakness were not tolerated before the High Priest. When the lackey had left the underground chamber, Matthias stroked his unshaven chin and regarded the complicated chalk symbols that decorated the stone floor. At regular positions, slender white candles stood ready to be lit in the hour before midnight.

"Asmodeus..." the heretic whispered to himself with a smile, "...arise and do my bidding."

The old man made his way to the flat stone table in the center of the largest chalk-line pentagram. Careful not to disturb the symbols on the floor, Matthias touched the

blood-stained surface of the table with aching, arthritic fingers. The red stains were accusing him, for they were evidence of the times this mightiest of rituals had failed before. But tonight would be different. Tonight he had gathered all he needed to ensure success.

The blood of a child born in sin had taken no time at all, of course. That ranked among the least of the components required. Even the finger bone of a saint had not taken very long to acquire, once the proper palms had been crossed with silver. Matthias drew a shuddering breath, trembling with both age and excitement. He knew that he was not long for this world, and his advancing years would soon put him under the earth in the cemetery of this very church. This would certainly be his last chance to summon and bind the great demon.

Ritual phrases echoed in his mind. They were the words he must speak at the apex of the moon's path tonight. Irritatingly, he found himself also remembering the screams that had disrupted the last attempt at the summoning, over fifteen years ago. But Matthias knew tonight was going to be different. He looked over at the unholy symbols that covered the floor and felt another smile crossing his wrinkled face.

Yes indeed, tonight's work was going to be most rewarding.

## RENANZ: PASSION

Symeon was many things. Foremost among these were his skills as a sculptor, though he also took pride in his achievements in the fields of diplomacy, swordsmanship, horse riding and, of course, the bedchamber. A particularly athletic encounter with the Countess of Wessex was in his thoughts this morning, though he tried to bury the memory when Bishop Edward arrived. Rumor had it that the man could read minds. Symeon didn't believe it for a moment, but he lived by a simple code: never trust a priest.

Having been commissioned for a great deal of work

by churchmen in the past – and receiving very little in the way of financial recompense – it was a code that struck the artist as a very sensible indeed. He offered a dazzling and utterly false smile to the bishop, who returned it with little more than a perfunctory nod. Clearly Symeon wasn't dealing with one of God's happier servants today.

"This isn't what I imagined." The bishop said at length. Symeon blinked twice, unsure he'd heard the man correctly. The sculpture in question had taken four months of stressful and difficult work, and was already being (rightly) acclaimed as a masterpiece in the abbeys of the south of England.

"I'm sorry. I don't think I heard you, sir." Symeon was nothing but smiles.

The bishop tutted in response. "I am not 'sir', young man. I am 'your grace'. And as I was saying, this piece is not what I had hoped it would be."

"I, uh, fail to see what your problem with the work might be." Symeon gritted his teeth and added "Your grace," just before the bishop regarded him sharply.

The priest folded his arms and frowned as he stared up at the statue. It depicted the figure of Christ, arms out to entreat all of His followers to come forward and receive his blessing. The detail of the piece was astoundingly realistic, for Symeon was truly a master of his craft. Eventually the awkward silence stretched too far, and the sculptor cleared his throat. "Your grace? If you might at least tell me what problem you have with the piece?"

"Here." The bishop tapped the base of the statue and wrinkled his nose. "I do not believe this is appropriate."

Symeon smothered an angry frown behind his hand.

The bishop had pointed to the most intricate part of the piece – the base – where the artist has labored for many days to faithfully recreate images of all the races in the world that accepted the word of God. Humans, obviously, but also the "little folk": the Hansa, Varangar and Cenedl.

"I see, Your grace. Am I to understand that I shall not be paid for this?"

"You see the facts clearly, I'm afraid." The bishop sighed somewhat melodramatically. "Of course, you should have been well aware that even though the Church accepts these...people...not all houses of God welcome them without question. I suggest you research the place where your art will be situated in the future. It might save you a great deal of time and effort."

As the bishop left, Symeon briefly considered catching up to him and ramming his rapier into the pompous holy man's back. Instead, he turned back to his statue and smiled ruefully.

"Never trust a priest, eh?"

## SAGALAZ: DESTRUCTION

Skall ran like a man possessed.

**H**is boots pounded into the icy ground and threw back chunks of frozen mud as he sprinted through the forest. His heart was in his throat as he weaved between the trees, and though he dearly wished to keep a weapon in his hands, he had long cast aside his heavy scythe for fear it would weigh him down and slow his steps. Skall was running for not only his own life, but for the lives of every man, woman and child in his village.

Could he hear yells behind him? Were they battle cries, or was it his fevered imagination teasing him with his greatest fears? He didn't dare risk a glance over his shoulder. Every single running stride was bittersweet. While his swift feet carried him ever closer to his people, he felt a prickling between his shoulder blades where he expected an arrow to fall any moment.


Finally, Skall burst from the forest. The timber walls of his small village rose in the distance. With his throat afire and lungs burning from the strain, he redoubled his effort. Now his boots pounded into tilled soil as he ran across empty farmland. Sentries saw him approach from the wall, and he waved frantically at them. They couldn't hear his breathless cries until he was through the main gate and into the settlement.

"Thiazi!" he cried through a raw throat. "The Thiazi are coming!"

There was silence for perhaps the span of a single heartbeat, immediately broken by a hundred yells and cries as men cursed and women called their children close. Every man able to wield sword, spear or scythe reached for the closest weapon and made their way to the village wall.

Skall was still out of breath when he returned to the wall with a pitchfork in his shaking hands. Long minutes





passed as the three dozen men stared at the line of trees in silence. One man, a large fellow that served the village as a huntsman, hawked and spat a glob of phlegm on the ground.

“A pox on the damn Thiazi.” He snarled. “I’ll bet my soul it’s a food raid. Harsh winter will’ve drained their supplies and they think they can come and have ours. Let’s show them that they’re wrong, eh, lads?” There were scattered murmurs of agreement. Skall blinked tearing eyes and shuffled from foot to foot, hoping he wouldn’t shame himself by pissing in his trousers.

An ululating cry came from the forest. It was like a hundred voices imitating the whine of a cat, and it rang strange in the ears of the humans of the village. Before any man could think of flight, the Thiazi emerged from the trees at a full sprint. There

were perhaps seventy of them, each carrying flint, bronze or iron axes and swords. At their feet ran a dozen wolves, howling with the Thiazi battle cries. The marauders were tall and slender with wiry musculature. Each had long, ragged hair that had pieces of bone tied in the hanging locks. Through slanted eyes they regarded the village and with pointed ears they heard the cries of the women and children behind the wooden walls.

“Thrice-damned elves,” the huntsman cursed again. He alone showed no fear.

“There’s...so many of them,” Skall felt himself saying.

“There’ll be a lot less in a few minutes, son.” The huntsman raised his bow and let fly the first arrow.



## WELCOME TO HIGH MEDIEVAL

I offer auspicious greetings, reader. My name is Sethari of the Seelie.

If your eyes are gracing these words with intent to learn more, then I bid you welcome to our land. I will serve as your guide through your first steps into this chaotic and dangerous realm. If you are lucky – and pay attention – you will live a long life in the grace of whatever beings you call gods. If you are unlucky (or if you pay too much attention to Franklin’s scholarly grumblings) then may your gods have mercy on your soul.

As I have already mentioned, my name is Sethari. I am, to human eyes and minds, one of the Elvenkind. To use the parlance of my people, I am a blood-noble of the Seelie. I also hold other titles, but to include them in this limiting human writing would take reams of parchment. Suffice to say I am one of the lords of the Elvenkind. I make it a point of interest to delve into the lore of the world outside the borders of the Seelie.

In that respect, I take great pleasure in “acquiring” copies of scholarly works and assessing them for both fact and fiction. Sadly, in this age, intelligence can be so very sorely lacking. And even when it is not, it is no guarantee of honesty.

My keenest delight is in critiquing the works of one Franklin D’Argent. He is a productive little gnome that dwells in the Kingdom of France, and faithfully writes up an endless array of treatises, essays and observations of the human-dominated lands of the world. He is hopelessly biased and under horrendous delusions as to the breadth of his own knowledge, but his works (for the most part) are generally accurate and eminently readable. His travels and his writing have brought much of the strange world outside into my mind. And yet, this does not stop me correcting him mercilessly when he falls into grave error – or worse – terrible hypocrisy. You’ll see for yourself all too soon, my friend, I assure you.

## SPIRIT OF THE SETTING

You have many questions, yes? Questions regarding this land which is so familiar upon first glance, and so very different with each step you take. Very well. It falls to me to answer them as best I may.

This world is both vast in scope and complexity. Countless ancient empires have fallen into rubble and ruin over the millennia, and yet there are traces of them that yet remain to this day. Some of the current settlements of the world are actually built upon the bones of fallen cities. Though the people of these lost kingdoms walk only in literature, legend or as wraiths returned to haunt the living, astute scholars and intrepid explorers alike pry into the secrets and magic of lost ages.

This is a world of colossal and staggeringly decadent empires. It is a world of eternal war; from time out of mind, the people of this globe have battled each other over their differences. Holy wars storm across the East in the name of distant gods and for precious territory. In Europe, individual conflicts break out between any number of noblemen who stand at the head of armies, and war is done for the honour of holding a throne or destroying the heart of heresy before it can spread.

In the vast span of years that men and beasts have walked this world, a thousand wars have raged. I do not exaggerate. I do not need to exaggerate. The truth is so much more damning than any lie I could ever conjure.

This is also a world saturated in magic. The cries of the faithful reach the ears of their distant Lord, and he rewards them with blessed power. Those few who are able to harness the power of the soil and the seasons grow ever rarer, but they still walk the world and cling tight to their ancient secrets. And of course, there are those that glory in the use of dark, sickening power – for this is also a world where superstitions are very real fears, and cursed magicians can indeed call demons from the lower Hells.

Holy relics wait to be found; to be treasured and used to fight evil or sold to the highest bidder – depending on the soul who discovers them. And what of the icons and artefacts of past civilisations and inhuman races? They too lie hidden in the wild lands beyond the cities. Of course, one would be remiss to forget that there are

secrets of a darker nature that hide from human sight. Secrets that no historian or storyteller knows. Secrets of things best left buried, that should never see the light of the surface.

Peasants bar their doors at night against the howling of wolves and...other things...in the darkness. Sailors on the high seas cross cutlass blades with the massive axes of the demonic Tauran minotaurs. Knights take to the field with blessed blades and reap a bloody slaughter in the name of the God they serve. Sometimes the blood on their holy swords is human. Sometimes it is the foul juice that serves orcs and their kind as lifeblood, while in another land it might be the black ichor that runs through a demon's veins.

Every legend of magical beasts in the wilderness, every story of murder and ghostly vengeance, every myth of shadow-dwelling monsters...

...they are all real here.

This is a world where myths and legends walk. It is a realm where one man, or one woman, or one child, can change the course of entire nations. It has happened many times throughout history, and will happen many more as the future unfolds. It is happening right now, and it falls to you to decide if you wish to be blown around by the winds of change...or fight them in the hope you will one day carve your own legend.

Ah, but of course, this is all flowery prose. I have little doubt in my mind that any fool entertaining thoughts of running into the wide world with the intentions of righting every wrong will be drowning in self-righteous pity before many years pass. Well, assuming they survive long enough, that is.

Without further ado, I leave you to peruse the scholarly gnome's latest endeavour. It is my fondest wish that you find it useful, and that should you ever meet the elder Mr. D'Argent upon the long road ahead, you will spare him the cost of a meal and glass of chilled wine...and inform him that I still look with revulsion and embarrassment upon our travels together.

Auspicious farewells until next our paths cross,

*ceimicín deil mhic ceibhne*  
Sethari of the Seelie

CHAPTER ONE

The  
RULES

This chapter contains the complete rule system for the *High Medieval* fantasy role playing game. These rules use the core mechanics of the *Omni Roleplaying Game System*<sup>™</sup> designed by Moriggan Press Inc.<sup>™</sup> In addition, the *Omni System* has been slightly modified to better suit the need of the *High Medieval* game. This chapter includes:

**Introduction:** overview of the basics of role playing. If you're an experienced role player you can skip this part and begin with Materials.

**The *Omni Table*:** an explanation of the single rule that's used for all actions in the game.

**Character Creation:** Guidelines for designing characters used in the game.

**Attributes, Skills, Combat, and Magic:** General rules and examples for each. Skills, Combat and Magic each receive a more thorough treatment in their own chapters, as well.



INTRODUCTION

*High Medieval* is a role playing game (or RPG for short) designed for two or more players. One person must play the part of the Gamemaster (called the GM), while the others take on the role of Player Characters (called PCs).

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Role playing games are like simulations of your favorite television series or book. The Gamemaster helps establish the setting and the basic premise of each adventure, while the Players take on the roles of the series' main characters. Together, the participants will create an ongoing series of adventures called a campaign. A *High Medieval* campaign is open-ended, and can last as long as the Gamemaster and Players like. The only object of the game is to have fun.

THE ROLE OF THE  
GAMEMASTER

The Gamemaster plays a vital part in the *High Medieval* game, serving as a combination narrator, moderator, and role-player. As narrator, the GM must set the stage for each adventure the Players

will undertake, helping to describe what the PCs see, hear, and sense about their surroundings. As moderator, the GM is required to judge the results of all actions undertaken by the PCs and to remain fair and objective at all times. As role-player, the GM must play the parts of all non-player characters (NPCs) and creatures that the PCs meet during the course of their game careers.

GMs have to know the rules of the game, as well as the *High Medieval* setting, notably Europe, the Near East and North Africa circa 1250CE. They have to be creative, and they should always remember that the PCs are the focal point of the campaign. If the players are enjoying the game, the GM is doing a good job.

### THE ROLE OF THE PLAYER

The main role of each player is to choose and create a Player-Character that will serve as his or her game persona. Because every PC must interact with the *High Medieval* setting, you should be familiar with your character's culture, homeland, and profession. Develop a personality for your PC: is he brave or cowardly, selfish or altruistic? What are his likes and dislikes? What is he afraid of, and what does he believe in? Does your PC have a goal in life? The more you know about your PC, the more interesting he or she will be to you and to the other players in the game.

Players should learn the basic rules of the game, particularly those that pertain directly to their character's Skills and Equipment. The guidelines in the Character Creation section will tell you everything you need to know about making a good PC.

### MATERIALS

To play the *High Medieval* RPG you'll need at least one twenty-sided die (called a d20). These can be found at any hobby or game store. Pencil and paper usually come in handy, too. Everything else you'll need to play has been provided in this book.

### GETTING READY TO PLAY

Like most RPGs, *High Medieval* is not a "pick-up and play" type of game. To get the most out of your *High Medieval* campaign, the Gamemaster and players should spend some time looking through *Chapter 2 - The World*, which describes the continent of Europe as well as the near east and its diverse inhabitants. *Chapter 9 - Gamemasters Only* contains advice on planning a *High Medieval* campaign that will be best suited to your group. The GM should read this section and discuss it with the players before beginning play.



ROLL	RESULT
0 or less	Mishap
1-5	Failure
6-10	Partial Success
11-19	Full Success
20 or more	Critical Success

### THE OMNI TABLE

All actions in the *High Medieval* game are resolved by a single, simple procedure:

1. Compare the character's Skill or Attribute Rating with the Degree of Difficulty (the relative ease or difficulty of the action).
2. Take the difference (a positive number, a negative number, or zero) and add it to a d20 roll.
3. Consult the *Omni Table* for the result.

That's all you really need to know. All the rules in this book are just variations of the previous

procedure. Players contribute by describing the Intent of their character's actions to the GM. Then it's the GM's job to interpret the outcome of the *Omni Table* and how it affects the particular scene the player characters are involved in.

*For your convenience, the Omni Table is printed on the character sheet provided in the back of this book.*

## OMNI TABLE KEY

- ✿ Mishap: not only does the attempted action fail, but it fails miserably and may have additional negative consequences (accidental damage to the character attempting the action, opposite of the intended effect, etc.). It's the GM's job to determine the actual results of any Mishap, based on the circumstances surrounding the attempted action.
- ✿ Failure: the action fails to achieve the intended result.
- ✿ Partial Success: the action is only moderately successful, achieving part but not all of the intended effect (such as half-damage from an attack or partial effect from a spell, for example).
- ✿ Full Success: the action achieves the intended result.
- ✿ Critical Success: the action is even more successful than intended, achieving the player's stated intent and also yielding additional benefits of some sort (attack causes a Critical Wound that disables the opponent, increased effect from a spell, etc.). It's the GM's job to determine the actual results and extent of any Critical Success, based on prevailing circumstances.

## OMNI TABLE MODIFIERS

*Omni Table* die rolls may be subject to bonuses or penalties for any of the following modifiers:

- ✿ Attributes
- ✿ Skill ratings
- ✿ Intent
- ✿ Degree of Difficulty
- ✿ Opposing Attributes or Skills
- ✿ Multiple actions
- ✿ Non-proficiency penalty

## ATTRIBUTES

Attributes represent natural abilities, such as strength, intelligence, and dexterity. Each has a numerical value, referred to as its Attribute Rating. In the *High Medieval* game, the Attribute Rating for a human of "average" ability is "0"; an attribute rating of +1 or greater is above average, while a rating of -1 or lower is below average.

Attributes can be used as modifiers to specific Skills by adding the Attribute's numerical value to the level of the Skill (the total is referred to as the Skill Rating; q.v.). Attributes can also be used to determine the result of actions for which there is no specific Skill; for example, lifting a heavy object (a function of the Strength Attribute) or trying to locate a lost item (a function of the Perception attribute).

Whenever an Attribute is used by itself for an *Omni Table* die roll, it is always doubled. Note that this applies to negative-rated Attributes as well. Zero-rated Attributes remain the same.

## SKILL RATINGS

Skills are abilities acquired through training and practice, such as combat and magic. There are two terms used to describe Skills: Level and Rating. Skill Level indicates the character's degree of training, with "0" representing a basic level of proficiency. Skill Levels can be improved with

training and experience (see Improving Skills, in this section).

Skill Rating is the combination of a character's training (Level) and natural ability (a related Attribute). Each Skill has an Attribute that acts as its modifier; for example, the modifier for the Skill, "Sleight of Hand", is Dexterity. To determine the your overall Skill Rating, add the level of the Skill plus its Attribute modifier. Whenever a Skill is used for an *Omni Table* die roll, always use its Skill Rating.



## INTENT

Intent is a player's description of what his or her Character hopes to accomplish by a particular action. This helps the Gamemaster determine the chance of success for the attempted action, as well as its actual outcome. For example, the Intent of an attack might be to injure, disarm, trip, or any of a dozen other stratagems. If the player informs the Gamemaster beforehand of the character's intentions, the GM will be better prepared to interpret the *Omni Table* die result. Intent is also important in helping the GM establish an action's Degree of Difficulty.

## DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Degree of Difficulty (DoD) is a modifier determined by the Gamemaster. It is based on the GM's appraisal of how hard or easy it would be for an individual with an Attribute or Skill Rating of "0" to attempt a given action. The Degree of Difficulty modifier typically ranges between +10 and -10, with easy actions being given a bonus (+1, +2, etc.) on the *Omni Table* die roll, and difficult actions being given a penalty (-1, -2, etc.). The character's Intent and any extraordinary circumstances surrounding the proposed action are also factors in determining Degree of Difficulty.

## DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY GUIDE

Difficulty	Modifier
No chance of failure	No need to roll
Any fool could do it	+10
Very Easy	+7
Easy	+5
Simple	+3
Routine	+0
Tricky	-3
Difficult	-5
Very Difficult	-7
Extreme	-10
Beyond extreme	-15 or worse

## OPPOSED ACTIONS

Whenever a character attempts an action that is directly opposed by another individual or creature, the opponent's ability rating is used as the Degree of Difficulty. In such cases, the Degree of Difficulty will either be the opponent's Skill Rating or an Attribute Rating, whichever is most appropriate.

*Roland the thief wants to use his Stealth Skill to sneak past a watchman. Because this is an Opposed Action, the Degree of Difficulty is the watchman's ability to detect the thief. The watchman has a Perception of +3. Since the guard is using an Attribute instead of a Skill, he doubles the modifier (+6). Roland's's Stealth Skill rating is +9. Roland's player rolls a d20 and adds +3. (the difference between Stealth 9 and the guard's +6) to the roll. If the watchman had a Perception of +5, Roland's player would roll a d20 with a -1 modifier to the roll, instead.*

## MULTIPLE ACTIONS (OPTIONAL)

As a basic rule, each character is allowed to take one action per round. Optionally, this rule can be modified to allow characters to take Multiple Actions in a single round. For each action already performed during the round, characters suffer a cumulative -5 *Omni Table* penalty. Extra actions can be performed during a character's turn, or later in the round as responses to the actions of other characters. The GM decides what constitutes an "action" and what doesn't. Simple things like quickly looking around a room or dropping an item probably aren't actions that would add to the multiple action penalty. More complex procedures like drawing a weapon or dismounting from an equus probably would count as extra actions. In some cases, the GM may ask the player to make a Skill or attribute roll to determine the success of ordinary tasks performed as part of a multiple action sequence (a DEX roll to quickly throw off a bulky cloak and still make an attack, for example).

*Mathilda the serving wench wants to throw her empty mug at a rude male across the table, then stand up and punch him in the face. First, Mathilda's player makes an attack roll to hit with the mug. This is a normal attack roll since it is Mathilda's first action during the round. Next Mathilda's player rolls to see if she punches the male. This attack roll suffers a -5 penalty (in addition to any other modifiers) since Mathilda has already acted once during this round. If Mathilda wanted to then take a third action, her player would roll for this with a penalty of -10.*

Note that a result of Mishap on any Multiple Action die roll prevents any additional action from being taken in that round. For example, if Mathilda's first die roll results in a Mishap, she does not get to attempt the second action.

## OTHER MODIFIERS

Combat, Magic, and some of the more complicated Skills have additional rules and modifiers that the Gamemaster and players should know about. For more information see the corresponding chapters in this book.

## NOTE TO PLAYERS AND GAMEMASTERS

The heart and soul of the *Omni System* is the interaction between the Players and the Gamemaster. It is the GM's job to help simulate in the game those things which make real life so unpredictable: a stroke of good fortune, a freak accident, the strange occurrences that defy all odds or lay waste to the most carefully laid plans.

Players can help the Gamemaster by offering specific information on their character's Intent before rolling on the *Omni Table*. It is also important for players to allow their GM to embellish *Omni Table* results without interfering in the course of the game. Gamemasters will earn the trust of their players by being fair and objective, and by maintaining a degree of moderation in their renderings. Imaginative and inventive narration is fine, even encouraged, as long as it's not overdone.

## TIME IN THE GAME

In the *Omni System*, time is measured in discrete units, called rounds. A round is roughly six seconds long, enough time for a character to trade blows with an opponent, cast a spell, or do anything else that can be accomplished in six seconds or less.

Except in combat and similarly critical situations, it is usually not necessary for the Gamemaster to keep such strict track of time. For example, a day's ride can be covered by the GM in a single sentence, if nothing special is planned for that day. The Gamemaster should feel free to take a

flexible approach about time in the game and use detailed round-by-round descriptions of the action only as needed. Similarly, the *Omni Table* can be used to cover a few seconds of action, or an entire day of warfare.

## ATTRIBUTES

In the *Omni System*, there are seven main attributes that are determined randomly at the time of character creation. These are:

- ✱ **Intelligence**
- ✱ **Perception**
- ✱ **Will**
- ✱ **Charisma**
- ✱ **Strength**
- ✱ **Dexterity**
- ✱ **Constitution**

These Attributes are determined randomly and may be further modified by a character's social class and culture. To determine your base ratings in the randomly generated attributes, roll one d20 for each attribute and compare the results to the following table:

Finally, players may raise any negative value by subtracting an equal amount from any one positive value. For example, a player who rolled a 4, thereby getting a -3 attribute may increase this attribute by decreasing another where he may have rolled a 17 giving him a +3. The player may elect to reduce the +3 to +1 and raise the -3 to -1, he may lower the +3 to +2 and increase the -3 to -2 or he may simply make both attributes +0, effectively cancelling each other. Attributes may only ever be moved towards the average in this way. A positive Attribute may not be raised and a negative Attribute may not be lowered. It is also perfectly acceptable to lower several positive Attributes in order to raise a single very low one.

ROLL (1d20)	ATTRIBUTE SCORE
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20	+5

### INTELLIGENCE (INT)

This is a measure of the individual's intellect and powers of reason. Intelligence is the deciding factor whenever an individual attempts to deduce the basic meaning of obscure or unfamiliar maps, dialects, or writings, appraise the relative value of goods, solve puzzles and mysteries, and so forth.

### PERCEPTION (PER)

This is a measure of the individual's sensory awareness, taking into account the abilities of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, plus such intangibles as instinct, intuition, and psychic talents. Perception is the deciding factor whenever an individual attempts to detect unseen presences or ambushes, detect illusions, locate lost or hidden articles, notice important details or changes in surroundings, or utilize any sensory ability.

### WILL (WIL)

This is a measure of the individual's willpower, determination, faith and wisdom. Will Rating determines how well a character is able to resist temptation, bribery, seduction, torture, coercion, interrogation, or spells of Influence.

### CHARISMA (CHA)

This is a measure of the individual's powers of persuasiveness, including such intangibles as



leadership and the ability to command the respect of others. Charisma Rating affects a character's ability to lead or persuade other individuals, make a favorable impression, negotiate, bargain, or haggle.

## STRENGTH (STR)

This is a measure of an individual's physical power. Strength Rating determines how much weight a character can carry or lift, how much damage a character does with a hand-held weapon, and so forth. It is also the deciding factor in attempts to bend or break objects, force open or hold shut a door, and restrain other characters or creatures.

## DEXTERITY (DEX)

This is a measure of the individual's agility, coordination and maneuverability. Dexterity Rating is an important factor in most physical Skills and determines how well a character can perform acts of manual dexterity, dodge or evade an attack, keep his or her balance, or catch a thrown object.

## CONSTITUTION (CON)

This is a measure of the individual's endurance, stamina, and durability. Constitution Rating determines how well a character can resist the effects of disease, wounds, poisons, toxins, exposure, hunger, and thirst.

## OTHER ATTRIBUTES

Additionally, there are 6 other Attributes that players must track. These 6, unlike the others above, are not determined by a random die roll. Each of these 6 attributes begin with a base of +0 and are further modified by selection of social class, culture and certain Talents. The final attributes are:

- ✿ **Speed Rating**
- ✿ **Combat Rating**

- ✿ **Magic Rating**
- ✿ **Nobility Rating**
- ✿ **Piety Rating**
- ✿ **Renown Rating**

## SPEED (SPD)

This is a measure of how swiftly an individual is capable of moving, either on land, in the water, through the air, or by other means. Speed Rating determines Initiative in combat, as well as attempts to pursue others or escape pursuit.

## COMBAT RATING (CR)

This is a measure of a character's natural ability in combat situations. It reflects a combination of physical and mental attributes, cultural and social factors, biological traits, and personal inclination. Combat Rating serves as the modifier for most combat-related Skills. Combat Rating affects a character's ability to attack as well as defend.

## MAGIC RATING (MR)

This is a measure of a character's natural affinity for Magic. Like Combat Rating, it reflects a combination of natural, cultural, and personal factors. Magic Rating serves as the modifier for using magical Orders and Modes. Characters with low or negative magic ratings have trouble determining when magic is used on or near them and may have a subconscious distrust of magicians in general.

## NOBILITY (NBL)

This is an abstract representation of the character's social standing. It is a measure of his adherence to the norms of his society and culture. In most of High Medieval Europe, this means the level to which the character lives up to the ideal of chivalry. A nobility rating of -5 indicates an utter pariah while a +5 would be a well-respected and chivalrous Knight or King. A character's

nobility rating will affect his reaction rolls in certain situations; penalties for those well above or below his rating and bonuses for reaction rolls with individuals of a similar nobility. Players should note, some advanced character classes have nobility rating prerequisites.

## PIETY (PTY)

This attribute is a measure of a character's faith in their religion, usually Christianity, although it could just as easily pertain to Islam, Judaism or even a Pagan faith. A character's piety rating will affect his reaction rolls when dealing with the Church. Piety also has an effect on some types of magics. (see *Chapter 6 - Magic*). Players should note: some advanced character classes have piety rating prerequisites.

## RENOWN (REN)

Renown measures how well-known a character is among the general population of a neighborhood, town, county, nation or even continent wide. Renown of +1 might indicate the character is locally famous. Likewise a -1 indicates local infamy. A +3 renown might indicate the character's fame has spread to neighboring nations and cities while a +5 renown means his exploits are being told throughout the known world. Keep in mind, renown is not always an honest assessment of a character's Skills or exploits. As word travels of his accomplishments, some bending of the truth takes place as rumor builds upon rumor. However, unless someone attempts to spread deliberately misleading lies, a character's Renown is largely based on his actual actions. Like Nobility and Piety, Renown will influence a character's Reaction Rolls in many circumstances.

## ATTRIBUTE BENCHMARKS

Most normal humans have attributes in the -5 to +5 range, with zero being the "average." Attributes greater than +5 are considered "superhuman" and attributes below -5 indicate a serious disability of some kind. There will also be instances where a

particular Attribute is not applicable or is missing altogether. An example might be a tree's SPD or a non-corporeal spirit's STR.

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR ATTRIBUTE ROLLS

Any time a character uses an Attribute to determine the result of an attempted action, use the following procedure:

1. Player states Intent (which Attribute is to be used, and what is the character trying to accomplish?);
2. Double the Attribute's numeric Rating;
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the Degree of Difficulty or opposing factors);
4. Player rolls to attempt the action;
5. GM judges result.

## ATTRIBUTE ROLLS

### 1. Stating Intent

Before rolling on the *Omni Table* to use an Attribute, the player needs to state his character's intent. Tell the Gamemaster which Attribute you're using, and what it is you're trying to accomplish.

### 2. Doubling the Attribute's Rating

Whenever an Attribute is being used as the primary modifier for an action it is always doubled first. This rule applies to plus-rated (positive) and minus-rated (negative) Attributes. Zero-rated Attributes remain the same (two times zero = 0).

*Hakeem the Moor needs to make a Strength roll to attempt to lift a massive boulder. Hakeem doubles his STR attribute of +5 for a total of +10 to his roll.*

### 3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates which Attribute is being used and describes the character's intent, the Gamemaster must determine if any bonus or

penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls on the *Omni Table*.

First, take the character's doubled Attribute Rating and apply it as a modifier — positive, negative, or zero. Then, you'll need to determine the Degree of Difficulty. If the character's action is being opposed by another individual or creature, decide which of the opponent's abilities will be used as the Degree of Difficulty. If it is a Skill, the opponent's Skill Rating is used for this purpose. If it is an Attribute, the opponent's Attribute Rating is doubled and used as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the action is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his stated intent.

*When Hakeem tries to lift the boulder, his player rolls his doubled Strength rating (+10) versus the Degree of Difficulty for the weight of the stone. The GM decides that the stone is extremely difficult for a normal (0 STR) man to lift, so he sets the difficulty at -10. Of course, since Hakeem is a giant of a man and possessed of strength above most other men, he suffers no penalty to his *Omni Table* roll but neither does he gain any bonuses. (+10 STR -10 Degree of Difficulty = 0)*

Other factors that may apply include the character's physical condition (wounded, tired, etc.), the footing (slick, unstable, etc.), and so on. Comparing applicable bonuses and penalties, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's *Omni Table* roll.

#### 4. Making the Attribute Roll

To determine whether the Attribute is used successfully or not, the player rolls a d20 on the *Omni Table*, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

#### 5. Judging the Result

With all *Omni Table* rolls, it is the GM's job to interpret the results, taking into account the

modified die roll total and the player's stated intent, and any other relevant factors. Review the information on *Omni Table* results later in this chapter for examples.

## ATTRIBUTES AS MODIFIERS

Attribute Ratings are used as modifiers for applicable Skills, increasing or decreasing the affected Skill accordingly. The total of Skill level and its Attribute modifier is referred to as the Skill Rating.

*Mathilda has a level of +3 in the Skill, Acrobatics, and a DEX of +2 (DEX is the modifier for this Skill). Mathilda's Skill Rating in Acrobatics is therefore +5.*

## ABILITIES RELATED TO ATTRIBUTES

### REACTION ROLLS

The first impression that a character makes on any new acquaintance is determined by making a Reaction roll on the *Omni Table*. Normally a Reaction roll is based on the sum of a character's CHA and REN. Failure indicates an unfavorable or even hostile reaction; Success indicates acceptance (or at least ambivalence), while Critical Success will always yield the most favorable response possible under the prevailing circumstances. At the Gamemaster's discretion, Reaction rolls can be employed for encounters of almost any sort. In some situations, Skills such as Etiquette or Diplomacy can be used in lieu of Reaction rolls, depending on the nature of the individuals being encountered, their native culture, and other factors.

## MOVEMENT

Individuals and creatures can move up to 30 feet in one round's time, plus or minus 10 feet per +1/-1 Speed Rating. This rate of movement assumes an even surface, a straight course of travel, and limited encumbrance. When using a character's

or creature's Speed Rating to determine distance traveled, remember that one mile per hour is equivalent to about nine feet per round. Normal walking speed for most humanoid creatures can be considered to be about 20 feet per round. It is only rarely necessary to keep track of movement on a foot-by-foot basis, however. See the "Movement" section of the *Chapter 5 - Combat* for more details.

## ENCUMBRANCE

The maximum amount of weight that a human with average ("0" Rating) Strength can carry is their own body weight, plus twenty-five pounds per each additional +1 Strength Rating or minus ten pounds per -1 Strength Rating. Negative encumbrance is not possible. A creature whose weight limit is negative can lift and carry less than one pound. At maximum encumbrance, individuals suffer a penalty of -5 on all *Omni Table* die rolls related to movement of any sort (including all combat and spellcasting that requires gestures).

## COMBAT DAMAGE

Damage totals for physical attacks employing natural or other weaponry are modified by adding the attacker's Strength Rating to the weapon's Damage Rating (DR). Damage totals for device-propelled missile weapons such as arrows are not modified by the user's Strength, although hand-thrown weapons such as javelins are. For more information on Damage Ratings see *Chapter 5 - Combat*.

## CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

1. Develop a character concept. This should be done in cooperation with the Gamemaster;
2. Roll attribute scores;
3. Choose a social class for your

character;

4. Assign and adjust attribute scores;
5. Choose a cultural template and adjust attributes as needed;
6. Select Skills and record them, including benefits from social class, culture and attribute scores;
7. Select you character's starting talent;
8. Round out your character with demographic information and a background story. (see Creative Characters below)

## SOCIAL CLASS & CALLINGS

Each character in *High Medieval* begins as a member of one of five social classes. This social class will determine the character's general outlook on life as well as more game specific things such as starting wealth, attribute adjustments, etc. As character's undertake quests, adventure and otherwise explore the world of *High Medieval*, they will gain valuable experience and thereby gain levels.

To gain a level, a character must have accumulated 25 experience points (XP). At each multiple of 25 XP earned, the character will gain a new level: 25 XP= 2nd level, 50 XP = 3rd level, 125 XP =6th level. A level is essentially a rough estimation of the overall power and effectiveness of a given character, both player characters and non-player characters.

Upon attaining a new level, a player may elect to take a level in his current social class, or he may elect to take a level in a Calling. Callings are explained more fully in *Chapter 3 - Class & Callings*. Basically, a Calling is akin to an occupation or profession. Sample Callings include: Priest, Knight, Man at Arms, Scholar, Mage,

Monk, Alchemist, Merchant, Bandit, Archer, etc. While a character's Social Class grants them certain general Skills and talents, a Calling will focus a character more fully in one area.

Players should review *Chapter 3 - Class and Callings* thoroughly before deciding the type of character they wish to play.

## EXPERIENCE POINTS

In role playing games such as High Medieval, characters earn Experience Points (XP) for their accomplishments. These points can be used to increase the level of a character whereby they increase in Skill levels and gain new abilities and talents. Experience points are awarded by the Gamemaster, as follows:

- ✱ 1-20 XP per adventure or gaming session, based on the difficulty of the adventure and the style of campaign being used by your group, as explained in *Chapter 9 - Gamemasters Only*.
- ✱ Bonus of 1-10 XP for good role playing, based on the persona that the player has created for his or her character. The GM may elect to increase or reduce this figure based on the style of the group's campaign.
- ✱ 1 XP per each game week that a character devotes to training. (no adventuring possible in that time period).

## LIFE AND DEATH IN THE GAME

### HIT POINTS (HP)

This is a measure of how much injury a character can sustain before dying. The average number of hit points that an individual possesses is determined by social class. This total is modified, one time only for beginning characters, by adding or subtracting a number of points equal to the

individual's Constitution Rating. Thereafter, Hit Points increase slowly with character level. Hit Points are not used as an Attribute Modifier or to make *Omni Table* rolls.

### HEALING

The average individual or creature heals at the rate of 5 Hit Points per day, adjusted by their CON Rating (the minimum rate of healing is one point per day). This assumes reasonably good conditions and treatment as well as no strenuous activity. Note that specific injuries may take longer to heal than the time to regain lost hit points. Broken bones may take weeks to fully knit. This is left to the GM's discretion.

### DEATH & DYING

Individuals or creatures reduced to zero or less Hit Points are rendered unconscious and on the verge of death. Should this happen the Gamemaster should immediately roll on the *Omni Table*, using the victims Constitution Rating and current Hit Points as modifiers. The total will yield one of the following results:

- ✱ **Mishap:** barring a miracle of some sort, the victim's career has come to an untimely end. If the victim was a PC, the player can create a new character.
- ✱ **Failure:** things are looking grim. The victim is fading fast and will need to make another CON roll every minute at a cumulative penalty of -1 per roll. A result of failure or worse on any of these subsequent CON rolls results in death. A result of partial success or better, and the victim gets to live for another minute. At best, the victim will suffer a permanent injury of some kind (as per a result of Partial Success - see below).
- ✱ **Partial Success:** the victim will recover, but will suffer some sort of

permanent injury. Possibilities include disfiguring scars, a 1-point reduction of one of the victim's Attributes, amnesia, or some other disability appropriate to the circumstances surrounding the victim's "near-death experience" This disability should not be so severe that the character becomes unplayable (GM's ruling).

- ✱ **Full or Critical Success:** the victim will recover completely, with or without medical attention, and suffer no permanent damage.

These rules should be reserved only for PCs or important NPCs. Any other individual reduced to 0 HP or less can simply be considered dead at once.



## CREATIVE CHARACTERS

Many players new to the High Medieval game may feel constrained by the rich cultural details the game presents, and can find it difficult to portray their character as anything but a stereotypical member of its culture. However, the cultural details presented in the game are merely representative of the broad traits ascribed to those cultures, and just as people in the modern world rarely fit a stereotype exactly, the same is true of Medieval Europeans.

Even in cases where a character is fairly typical, many aspects of personality, not to mention background and appearance, are not mentioned in the cultural guides, such as sense of humor, personal quirks and preferences, and so on. These present any player with a wide number of ways in which to personalize the archetype they choose, without contradicting the broad cultural description if they don't wish to.

Three factors contribute to the overall quality and depth of any given character: Background, Personality, and Appearance. When creating a character it is not necessary to write chapter upon chapter, painstakingly detailing the character's life, outlook, and appearance, however, by simply considering the questions put forward in this document, and writing a handful of short answers, a character can be given a life and personality beyond that of a simple archetype. Each of the three sections will present twenty appropriate questions, not all of which need be answered, and not all of which will necessarily be applicable. If possible, the player and GM should work together to create the character, ensuring it is playable and not overly disruptive to the game they wish to play.

## BACKGROUND

Arguably the most important aspect of character creation, a character's background provides a sense of personal history and it is often the character's upbringing and experiences in life that most

define their personality and outlook. Remember: significant events, personages, and the like, need not necessarily be notable for good reasons; bad events can be just as memorable.

## FAMILY

- ✿ What were the character's parent(s) or guardian like?
- ✿ Does the character have any siblings?
- ✿ Does the character have a family of their own, or did they?
- ✿ Do they ever intend to settle down if they don't?
- ✿ What about other relatives; were any memorable for any reasons?
- ✿ What is the current status of any of the character's relatives, i.e. alive, dead, missing, estranged, ill, enslaved, imprisoned, or divorced?
- ✿ Were there any skeletons in the family closet?

## HOME

- ✿ Where was the character raised?
- ✿ What was the family's status in terms of wealth, social, and local standing?
- ✿ Did the family move at all?
- ✿ Does the character have a home of their own?

## CHILDHOOD/ADOLESCENCE

- ✿ What was the character like as a child/adolescent?
- ✿ Were any childhood/adolescent friends or enemies particularly memorable?
- ✿ Were any childhood/adolescence events particularly memorable?
- ✿ Did the character learn any Skills as a child/adolescent?

## PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

- ✿ Why did the character enter the profession they did?
- ✿ How did the character receive their

training?

- ✿ Did they find any of it particularly difficult or easy?
- ✿ Has the character done anything particularly notable since completing their training?
- ✿ What contacts, friends, enemies or mentors did the character make while training, or pursuing their career?

## PERSONALITY

The character's personality defines how they are role-played, and should be detailed bearing in mind the character's background, as described above. Consider how the character's upbringing, family, past experiences, etc. affected their worldview, morality, and so on, and if they turned out the way they did because of, or in spite of, their background. Consider how they fit their cultural stereotype, and how they differ from it.

## ATTITUDES

- ✿ What does the character like/love?
- ✿ What does the character dislike/hate?
- ✿ What is the character's attitude to sex?
- ✿ What is the character's attitude to religion?
- ✿ What is the character's attitude to magic?
- ✿ What is the character's attitude to illegal activities?
- ✿ What is the character's attitude to conflict, physical or otherwise?
- ✿ Does the character have any misconceptions/ bigoted outlooks?

## CONCEPTIONS

- ✿ How does the character see himself?
- ✿ How do other people see the character?
- ✿ If the character could be summed up in one word, what would that word be?
- ✿ What would the character change about themselves, if they could?

## DIRECTIVES

- ✿ What is the character's greatest fear/worst nightmare?
- ✿ What is the character's greatest hope/dream/aspiration?
- ✿ What motivates the character?
- ✿ Is there anything the character will not do?

## MISCELLANEOUS

- ✿ What is the character's sense of humor like?
- ✿ Does the character have any hobbies/pastimes?
- ✿ How does the character relax?
- ✿ Does the character have any mental or behavioral quirks, flaws, or aberrations?



## APPEARANCE

The character's appearance is usually the first thing anyone notices about them, and can say a lot about their personality, profession, and background. Detailing what the character looks like gives the player a good mental image of the character, vital in imagining scenes in the game. The character's appearance also helps other players visualize the character, and enables GMs to determine how NPCs might react to the character. However, the character's appearance need not necessarily reflect all of their qualities, although it will always reflect some; not every warrior looks grim and determined, and not every magician looks thin and bookish, for example. Also bear in mind the exotic and unusual possibilities that alchemical and magical enhancements can present when detailing a character's appearance; such enhancements can be eccentric to say the least.

## PHYSICALITY

- ✿ How tall is the character?
- ✿ What kind of build and proportions does the character have, and are they muscular, toned, scrawny, or overweight?
- ✿ How much does the character weigh?
- ✿ What kind of style, color, and texture is the character's head/facial/body hair, if indeed they have hair?
- ✿ What shape and color(s) are the character's eyes?
- ✿ What color is the character's skin?
- ✿ Does the character have any distinguishing marks such as birthmarks, scars, disfigurements, tattoos, or brands?
- ✿ What does the character's expression usually convey, i.e. disdain, friendliness, surliness, calm?
- ✿ What does the character's voice sound like?
- ✿ Does the character have any favorite sayings or catch phrases?
- ✿ How does the character move, walk, and carry themselves?
- ✿ What would the character like to change



about their appearance?

- ✿ If the character's appearance could be summed up in one word, what would that word be?
- ✿ How would others generally describe the character's appearance?

## APPAREL

- ✿ How does the character dress when relaxing?
- ✿ How does the character dress when they wish to make an impression?
- ✿ How does the character dress when traveling?
- ✿ How does the character dress when working?

## BELONGINGS

- ✿ What item(s) is the character rarely without?
- ✿ Does the character have any particularly cherished possession(s), such as an heirloom, memento, gift, or childhood possession?

## SKILLS

There are many different types of Skills available to characters. These range from combat and spellcasting Skills to practical Skills like Ride and Swim to courtly Skills like Diplomacy, Etiquette and Heraldry. Specific Skills are covered in detail in *Chapter 4 - Skills & Talents*.

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR SKILL ROLLS

Anytime a character uses a Skill to determine the result of an attempted action, use the following procedure:

1. Player states Intent (which Skill is to be used, and what is the character trying to accomplish?);

2. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's Skill Rating and the Degree of Difficulty or opposing factors);
3. Player rolls to attempt the action;
4. GM judges result.

## SKILL ROLLS

### 1. Stating Intent

Before rolling on the *Omni Table* to use a Skill, the player needs to state his character's intent. Tell the Gamemaster which Skill you're using, and what it



is you're trying to accomplish. Don't forget: Skill Rating (Skill level + Attribute modifier) is always used for any type of Skill roll.

#### 2. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates which Skill is being used and describes the character's intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls on the *Omni Table*.

Apply the character's Skill Rating as the modifier for the attempted action. Then determine the Degree of Difficulty. If the character's action is being opposed by another individual or creature, decide which of the opponent's abilities will be used as the Degree of Difficulty. If it is a Skill, the opponent's Skill Rating is used for this purpose. If it is an Attribute, the opponent's Attribute Rating is doubled and used as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the action is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if a character is trying to pick a lock, the complexity and condition of the lock determines the Degree of Difficulty.

Comparing Skill Rating and Degree of Difficulty, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's *Omni Table* Skill roll.

#### 4. The Skill Check

To determine whether the Skill is used successfully or not the player rolls a d20 on the *Omni Table*, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

#### 5. Judging the Result

The GM interprets the result, taking into account the modified die roll total, the player's stated intent, and any other relevant factors.

## USING SKILLS THAT YOUR CHARACTER DOESN'T HAVE

When a character attempts to use a Skill that he or

she does not know, there are two different ways the GM can handle the situation.

1. Let the character use a similar, related Skill in place of the required Skill. The GM will assess an additional Degree of Difficulty penalty based on how related she thinks the two Skills are. This is called the Substitution Penalty.

*Giani the Tuscan Thief has been cornered by two ruffians who think he stole their purses. The Tuscan has no weapon but has picked up a stout stick from the ground and wants to defend himself with it. Giani does not have the Blunt Weapons Skill, but he does have Short Blades at +5. The GM decides that this is close enough and lets Giani's player use the Short Blades Skill with only a -2 penalty.*

2. Let the character attempt the action as if they had the Skill at level zero. The GM may assess additional penalties if she feels that the Skill requires a great deal of training or experience to even attempt.

*Robert of Lyon wants to sneak aboard a Genoan ship while it is docked in Marseille. Robert does not have the Stealth Skill. The GM lets Robert's player roll on the *Omni Table* as if Robert had a Stealth Skill of zero. Robert's player rolls with a +2 modifier (Stealth 0 + Dexterity rating of +2 = +2). Note that Robert's player does not double his Dexterity rating since this is strictly a Skill roll, not an attribute roll. The GM rules that since sneaking around is a simple task only a -3 substitution penalty is necessary.*

*Later on, Robert encounters a locked chest that he wants to open. Robert does not have the Pick Lock Skill but he wants to try to pick it anyway. Once again, the GM lets Robert's player roll on the *Omni Table* as if he had a Pick Lock Skill of zero. However, the GM rules that lockpicking is a very precise and*

*sophisticated Skill that requires training (not just nimble fingers) so Robert takes an additional penalty of -10.*

Note that some Skills like Magic, Alchemy, and Special Abilities cannot be attempted at all unless the character possess them.

## IMPROVING SKILLS

As players earn Experience Points (XP) for adventures, they gain levels and therefore improve their character's Skills. Players should consult the relevant Social Class or Calling for information of the number of Skill points they receive at each level.

*The German alchemist, Heinrich Mueller, has the Skill, Arcane Lore, at a Level of +5. Upon gaining a new level as an Alchemist he receives 4 Skill points to spend as he chooses. Heinrich's player decides to place 1 additional Skill point into his Arcane Lore Skill giving him a new total of +6.*

Skills can only be improved one Level at a time. Though PCs can improve more than one Skill at a time, the same Skill can only be improved once per week of game time.

## PREFERRED SKILLS

Each Social Class and Calling has a list of Preferred Skills. This list represents the Skills that members of that Social Class or Calling use regularly and have access to qualified teachers for learning. All Preferred Skills cost one Skill point for each rank acquired. Characters may still learn and acquire Skills that are not on their preferred Skill list but these Skills will require 2 Skill points to gain one rank rather than the 1 for 1 of the preferred Skills.

Players should consult their character's Social Class or Calling description for information on their Preferred Skills.

## SKILL RATINGS FOR CREATURES

The creatures included in the Traveler's Guide section of this game use a simplified system for determining the extent of their abilities. In place of the assortment of Skills that PCs and NPCs possess, creatures are rated according to their overall Ability Level, which is used as an *Omni Table* modifier for almost every situation. Additionally, Constitution Ratings have already been added to Hit Point totals, and Strength Ratings have been factored into Damage Ratings. Creatures do not have Combat Ratings or Magic Ratings, since all fighting or spellcasting abilities are based on Ability Level.

## COMBAT

Like all actions in the *High Medieval* game, Combat results are determined by rolling a d20 on the *Omni Table*. However, the level of detail required to simulate Combat in the game is significantly greater for Combat than for Skills or Attributes.

As with all Skills, Combat Skills also have an Attribute Modifier, which is called Combat Rating (CR for short). The term, Combat Skill Rating, always refers to the combination of a Combat Skill's level plus the character's CR modifier.

## COMBAT ROUNDS AND TURNS

During combat, time is measured in rounds. A round is roughly six seconds long: enough time for combatants to draw weapons and exchange attacks, move up to the maximum allowable distance based on their Speed Rating, or cast a spell. During a combat round, each character is given a chance to take action.

A single character's action within a round is called a turn, as in "it's Gor's turn to attack." Once all characters involved in the combat have taken their turn, the round is over.

## DAMAGE RATING & PROTECTION RATING

In the *High Medieval* game, it is not necessary to make a separate die roll to determine how much damage an attack does. Instead, weapons and other forms of attack do a set amount of damage based on their Damage Rating (DR for short), and the *Omni Table* die roll.

Protection Rating (PR) describes the protective value of armor. In the *High Medieval* game, armor is rated according to the number of Hit Points it absorbs per attack.

For more information on Damage Rating, Protection Rating, weapons, and armor, see *Chapter 5 - Combat*.

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR COMBAT

Anytime a character engages in Combat, use the following procedure:

1. Combatants roll for Initiative (each makes an Attribute roll using Speed Rating; the opponent with the highest roll goes first);
2. Player states Intent (what kind of tactic is the character attempting, and what is the specific intent?);
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's and opponents Combat Skill Ratings, and other factors);
4. Player rolls to attempt the action;
5. GM judges result.

## COMBAT ROLLS

### 1. Rolling for Initiative

At the beginning of any Combat situation, each combatant makes an Attribute roll using their

respective Speed Ratings. This is called rolling for Initiative. The character with the highest Initiative total is allowed to act first, and may choose a Tactic based on the slower opponent's Intent (see #2). The combatant with the next highest total goes next, and so on until all the combatants have taken their turns.

If you prefer a high degree of detail in your game, combatants can roll for Initiative each round. If you prefer a simpler approach, have the combatants roll for Initiative only for the first round of Combat, to establish who goes first, second, and so on. Then have all opponents proceed in turn for the remainder of the fight.

### 2. Stating Intent

Before rolling for Combat the character must state his character's Intent. This is done by choosing a weapon or Combat Skill, and a Combat Tactic. There are four categories of Combat Tactics in the *Omni System*: **Attack**, **Defend**, **Move**, and **Stunt**. Each has a number of variations, as described in *Chapter 5 - Combat*. For example, a character's Intent might be to throw a spear, parry with a shield, retreat, or try to trip or distract an oppoent.

The winner of the Initiative roll can choose to declare Intent first or wait until other combatants have done so, in order to anticipate their opponents' moves and act accordingly. Either way, the individual who has the Initiative rolls first.

### 3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates the weapon and tactic being used and describes the character's Intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied before the player rolls on the *Omni Table*.

Apply a bonus based on the Combat Skill Rating chosen by the character. To save time during the game it's a good idea to have players figure their characters' modified Combat Skill Ratings in advance and record these numbers on their Character Sheet.

Apply a modifier based on the Degree of Difficulty. If the Combat tactic is being opposed by another individual or creature, the Degree of Difficulty is always based on the defender's abilities. Decide which ability is most appropriate, based on the following considerations:

- ✿ If the defender is using a weapon, use the defender's Skill Rating in that weapon as the Degree of Difficulty.
- ✿ If the defender is unarmed, use the defender's Brawling or Martial Arts Skill Rating. If the defender has no such talent, use his or her basic Combat Rating Attribute as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the attack is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if Dayn The Forgotten is trying to hit an unwary opponent with an arrow, the Degree of Difficulty would be based on such factors as the targets' range and degree of cover, not the opponent's combat abilities.

Compare applicable bonuses and penalties, and use the total as the modifier that will be applied to the player's *Omni Table* Combat roll.

#### 4. The Combat Action Roll

To determine whether the Combat action is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the *Omni Table*, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

#### 5. Judging the Results

After the player rolls, the GM will interpret the *Omni Table* result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding the action, and other factors. Combat actions intended to cause damage will produce one of the following results:

- ✿ **Mishap:** the attack fails due to a mishap of some sort; the attacker stumbles and falls, hits himself, hits an unintended target, breaks the weapon being used, etc. (GM's ruling).
- ✿ **Failure:** the attack misses the intended target.
- ✿ **Partial Success:** the attacker scores a glancing blow that only does half the attack form's total Damage Rating (rounded-up to the nearest whole number).
- ✿ **Full Success:** the attack does its full Damage Rating.
- ✿ **Critical Success:** the attack does full Damage Rating and achieves the attacker's stated Intent. If the Intent was to injure or kill, the victim suffers a Critical Wound, and must make a roll using his Constitution Rating to determine how badly he is hurt. Subtract the Damage Rating of the attack from this CON roll. Partial Success means the victim suffers a penalty of -5 on all further actions until healed of the Critical Wound. Failure or Mishap means the victim is incapacitated until healed. See *Chapter 5 - Combat* for more information of Critical Wounds.



## MAGIC

In *High Medieval* Europe, there are many different types of Magic being practiced, each with its own traditions, theories, and techniques. And these are only the faded descendants of the great arcane disciplines of old, evidence of which can still be found among the many ancient ruins scattered across the continent.

The Church of Rome has established many laws regulating the use of Magic. Its acceptance by society at large waxes and wanes. Once thought to be purely the work of the Devil, magic has slowly, but surely, found its way into medieval culture.

There are 3 main types of Magic: Divine, Natural and Demonic. Each of these 3 types of magic is fully described in *Chapter 6 - Magic* later in the book.

### ORDERS

An Order is a school of Magic, like Witchcraft or Alchemy — think of it as a character's field of magical expertise. There are five core Orders practiced by European and Muslim magicians of the 13th century, described in detail in *Chapter 6 - Magic*. Though each interprets magic in a different way, a set of common, underlying principles governs its effects. Note that Orders are not Skills, and are not used for *Omni Table* die rolls.

Players should concentrate on learning all about the Magical Order (or Orders) their characters have studied. This information describes how magic works for members of that Order, and how such spell casters view the practice of Magic.

### MODES

A Mode is a general type of spell-effect, such as Illusion, Conjunction, etc. There are twelve different Modes that together describe all the powers and abilities of *High Medieval* spellcasters, described in detail in the *Chapter 6 - Magic*. Players should be familiar with the Modes that

their characters know, as this tells them the kind of spells they can cast. GMs should know about how Modes work as well. Modes can be aquired like any other Skill.

### SPELLCASTING

In the *High Medieval* game a spell can either be cast from memory or from a written work such as a scroll or book. The following sections explain how these two methods work in the game.

### OVERVIEW: CASTING SPELLS FROM MEMORY

The following is an overview of the procedure for casting spells from memory. Each of the steps is explained in detail below.

1. Player states Intent (what is the spell's Mode & intended effect?);
2. Player chooses Spell Level (how powerful will the spell be?);
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's Mode rating, spell level, and other factors);
4. Player rolls to cast spell;
5. GM judges result.

### CASTING SPELLS FROM MEMORY

#### 1. Stating Intent

Decide what kind of spell you want to cast, based on the Modes your character knows; if your character doesn't know the Mode, you can't cast a spell of that type. Keep in mind your character's magical Order, how its members cast their spells, and whether or not they use material components or rituals of any sort.

Once you've done this you can describe the type of spell the character is casting and its intended effect. Is the spell attacking something nearby? Is the spellcaster cooking up a diabolical curse? Is

she waving her arms and chanting? Is she drawing arcane runes in the dirt? The important thing is to state your Intent clearly, so the GM and other players can picture your action in the scene.

## 2. Choosing Spell Level

Each time a spell is cast from memory, the player must decide how much energy his character will invest in it. In game terms, the quantity of energy behind a spell is known as its Spell Level. Spellcasters can usually cast a spell at any level desired. However, the higher the Spell Level, the more difficult the spell is to cast, and the greater the chance of a magical Mishap.

## 3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the spellcaster's player has described the spell and the desired effect, the GM must determine if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls to cast the spell.

Use the character's modified Skill Rating in the chosen Mode as the primary modifier. Then apply a penalty of -1 per level of the spell that is to be cast as the Degree of Difficulty. Compare the two figures to get the modifier that will be applied to the player's *Omni Table* roll.

*Morag the Witch has a Skill rating of +7 in the Move mode and wants to cast "Touch of the Wind" (a Move mode spell) at Level 6. Her final Omni Table modifier is +1 (7-6=1).*

## 4. The Casting Roll

To determine whether the spell is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the *Omni Table*, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

## 5. Judging the Result

After the player rolls, the GM interprets the *Omni Table* result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding of the action, and other factors, as follows:

- ✱ **Mishap:** the spell fails, resulting in potentially disastrous consequences (see Magical Mishaps, in this section).
- ✱ **Failure:** the spell fails.
- ✱ **Partial Success:** the spell has half the intended effect, range, duration, or potency (GM's ruling based on the type of spell cast).
- ✱ **Success:** the spell works as intended.
- ✱ **Critical Success:** the spell is cast as efficiently and effortlessly as possible. This spell does not contribute to the caster's Spell Penalty for the day (see The Spell Penalty on the following page).

## CASTING SPELLS FROM WRITTEN WORKS

Spellcasters can also cast spells by reading them directly from magic scrolls or spellbooks. There are benefits and drawbacks to this method. When casting a spell from a written work, the caster receives a bonus of +5 to her casting roll. However, this type of spell casting requires a minimum of 1 minute (10 rounds) per Spell Level to cast.

Scrolls are lightweight and easily carried, and can be reused any number of times. However, a scroll can only contain a single spell. Spellbooks can contain hundreds of spells, but are usually cumbersome and ill-suited for travel. Most magicians are careful to guard their books from those who might want to steal their secrets.

## MAGICAL MISHAPS

There are few things a magician dreads more than a Magical Mishap. Here is a list of possible Magical Mishaps:

- ✱ No noticeable effect (50% chance of side-effect occurring later).

- ✱ spell rebounds upon caster.
- ✱ Spell strikes unintended target (random direction).
- ✱ Reverse spell effect (rebounds upon caster).
- ✱ Reverse spell effect (random direction).
- ✱ Static spell effect; area charged with magical energies (5-foot radius around the caster).
- ✱ Wandering spell effect, 5-foot radius charged with magical energies, moves at random.
- ✱ Phase-shift: caster teleported to random location.
- ✱ Black hole effect: caster and any individuals within 20 feet are drawn into another dimension.
- ✱ Temporal rift: caster falls backwards (or forwards) in time.
- ✱ Random spell effect (Gamemaster's choice).

## COUNTERSPELLS

Any spell or magical effect can be dispelled by casting a counterspell of the same Mode. If the counterspell is of a different Order than the original spell, the spellcaster takes an additional -5 penalty to his casting roll. Counterspells have the same range and duration as regular spells of the same Mode.

First, the spellcaster must successfully cast the counterspell (follow the normal spellcasting procedure). Then compare the level of the counterspell to the level of the spell to be countered. Use the level of the counterspell as a positive modifier and the level of the spell or magic to be countered as the Degree of Difficulty then roll on the *Omni Table*. Full or Critical Success means the spell has been countered, and its effects

negated. Partial Success means the spell's level and its effects have been reduced by half (round up). Failure means the counterspell has no effect, while a Mishap may actually strengthen or extend the duration of the target spell (GM's ruling).

*Cailean casts a Level 9 spell that creates a Wall of Winds between him and his rival, Morag the Witch. However, Morag is proficient in this Mode (Defend), and is of the same Order as Cailean. She successfully casts a counterspell at Level 8, hoping that this will be sufficient to dispel her opponent's magic. After her spellcasting roll, Morag's player rolls again at a penalty of -1 (her level 8 counterspell minus Cailean's level 9 spell = -1). She rolls a 17, for a result of Full Success. Cailean's barrier sputters and dissolves before his eyes.*

## THE SPELL PENALTY

Casting spells from memory is mentally exhausting. Each time a spell is cast, the magician incurs a cumulative penalty of -1 on further spell casting die rolls for that day, with one exception: spells that result in a Critical Success do not contribute to this penalty. A minimum of seven hours of rest is required to recover normal spellcasting abilities. "Rest" includes sleep, meditation, or any other form of relaxation.

*Johann the Wizard wants to cast "Solomon's Bolt of Destruction." He has already cast three spells in the last few hours, so Johann suffers a minus 3 Spell Penalty (in addition to any other Omni Table modifiers). After the spell is cast, Johann's player notes on his character sheet that Johann's new Spell Penalty is -4. The next time he casts a spell, he will take an additional -4 penalty to his casting roll.*

## ENCHANTMENT

Rules for Enchanting Items can be found at the end of the *Chapter 6 - Magic*, following the lists of Modes and Orders.



CHAPTER TWO

The  
WORLD

CONCERNING THE PEOPLES  
& PLACES OF OUR WORLD  
*An essay by Franklin D'Argent, Hansa Scholar*

**HUMANS**

It has been said by many that Man is the true inheritor of God's Kingdom. They are the race that rules the world in all ways. Men and women work the land in every nation, comprising the majority of our world's population. They are slaves and serfs, beggars and bandits. They are also countesses and kings, knights and noblewomen.

Many humans harbor hatred or mistrust for the "lesser" races of near-men and monsters. Such beings are often viewed as ungodly or unholy, perhaps even spawned by Satan's desire, and are treated accordingly. In some nations, this attitude is more pronounced than in others, just as such a demeanor often depends on a person's education, religious beliefs or social rank. In all things, humans are a race most affected by the events around them. Just as the highest king or queen deals in war and the intricacies of the courts, so does the lowest peasant listen for news of a coming

battle or seek signs to indicate the quality of a harvest. Humans are unique among the races, for they are not shut away from the world – they are the world. Kingdoms rise and Empires fall by the actions of all men and women.

*Do I detect a fawning note in your writing, little gnome? Are you envious of the role that the humans play in their foolish idea of a "God's Plan"? Or are you merely showing the proper obedience that all good lackeys display?*

Human adults range between 5 feet and around 6 feet in height. Those who live without the need for toil or effort are often prone to corpulence and fatness, while a peasant who works hard and a lord that practices with the blade are able to keep themselves reasonably healthy for their whole lives, short of suffering injury or illness.

An average human lifespan lasts between 35 and 50 years, though extreme longevity – surely a gift from the Lord Himself – is not unheard of. Such people might live into their 70th year. Humans are considered adults in their early teenage years, when

they are expected to work alongside their parents or find employment in a trade.

Humans are a diverse lot. Some are capable of achieving anything they put their mind to; great leaders emerge, such as military icons like Richard the Lionhearted, or religious leaders like Pope Innocent IV. Other humans are examples of ill-breeding and oppressive social systems that allow none to rise and excel beyond his low birth. After all, most of the world's brigands and bandits are humans – a strong counterpoint to the race's many highborn rulers.

In this era, the Year of Our Lord twelve hundred and fifty, humanity is emerging from what some scholars are already naming "the Dark Ages". The fall of Imperial Rome is centuries past, and the church of the Christian God now holds direct sway over much of Europe. In the East, Islam holds sacred the name of Allah, believed by some to be the same Lord as our own, though worshipped through heathen rites and rituals. In the Far East, the impetus of Genghis Khan's barbarian horde is dying out, and they are slowly losing their grip on the lands they once conquered so swiftly.

The nations of men and women still battle each other just as often as they stand united. No learned man can argue that it is a dangerous and chaotic time that we approach. In these uncertain decades, the pathways of the future will be made by humans, just as they have carved the ways of the past.

## HANSA

My own people are the Hansa, sometimes referred to by the derogatory term "gnomes", in reference to our height and stature. Of all the near-human races, my kind associate with the men and women of the world most openly and most often. We are still few in number across the lands of Europe, perhaps meeting a total population figure of around 20,000 in all.

We, too, are a Christian people. While we follow the faith and our own settlements usually have a small chapel or church, it is the rare human settlement that welcomes us to worship alongside them.

*You even call yourselves "near-humans". If ever there were a race that deserved its place under humanity's heel, it is most assuredly the spineless Hansa.*

We originated in France (the County of Flanders to be precise) in much the same way any nation of people grows and spreads as they make contact with the peoples of other countries. Now, midway through the 13th Century, one can find our settlements (and the small Hansa buildings in many large cities) along the trade routes that are the lifeblood of European commerce. If we are known for anything, it is our love of trade and the exchange of coin and goods. In truth, the monopolies that our business guilds hold sometimes attract persecution and criminal activity, but the humans recognize that we provide useful and fair trade nevertheless.

We are a folk that love to gather together in guilds, be they in the pursuit of trade, craft, or artistic creation. Our largest guild is called the Hanseatic League, and it is this organization of traders and merchants that supplies much of the amber, grain, timber, honey, salt and especially herring to the cities of Northern Europe and the Baltic. It is based in the German city of Luebeck, where a small district is set aside for the Hanseatic League's storerooms, warehouses and lumber yards, near the docks. The key to Hansa trading is simple: take the important cargoes, the simple things, and build and build over time. Don't risk all on a single venture, but rather gather your resources by providing great quantities of the basic supplies people need. Many Hansa merchants are wealthy because they spend decades supplying grain and lumber, not because they took a chance on silk or gold from the East.

The second of our loves is sailing. Though all of the near-humans pale as sailors when compared to the dreaded Tauran of the Mediterranean, the Hansa take pride in their innovative ship designs. Flat-bellied Baltic trading cogs are heavy vessels, but a good crew and fair winds can make these rugged ships make their way across the seas of Europe with many times the cargo that a Norse-built ship might hold.

Above all, we are a peaceful people. Individual Hansa rarely answer the call to Crusade, and only the most pious or devout among us would dare to take up blade and shield in the name of the Lord. However, it is not entirely unknown for one of our kind to go about such behavior – even if they are rarely seen again.



The average Hansa is between 3 feet and 4 ½ feet in height. Our eyes are slightly slanted, and are described variously as “narrowed”, “suspicious”, “cunning” and so forth, depending on which human you ask. Neatly trimmed beards are the fashion among the mercantile-inclined, though our sailors and farmers can appear as rough as any human peasant. Our diet is limited, in that we do not eat red meat. For some reason of nature, it sits sour in our bellies and causes the flux, much in the same way humans suffer if they eat too much richly-cooked food. Typical Hansa families dine on salt-fish and poultry most evenings, and remain hale and hearty well into their 50’s on such a diet. The Hansa are considered adults in their late teens, and in their dotage by the start of their 60’s. Long-lived among our kind have counted a full 90 years behind them before they passed on.

*Curious race are the gnomes. They cower before violence and confrontation, yet they dwell in the underbelly of the human port cities – some of the most dangerous settlements in the “civilized” lands of men. Is this beaverly or merely greed for coin, little scholar?*

While we do not hold much influence over the affairs of the world, we do relish our deeds in the making of financial empires. Many are the human lords that come knocking at the doors of the League when he needs to borrow money for his invasions.

## LVENKIND

Relatively populous, yet utterly separate from humanity, the Elvenkind follow no laws but their own. They ignore national borders and lawful ownership of territory, instead claiming their own kingdoms and nations within human lands. If the Elvenkind made issue of this fact with the local lords, then war might well be declared, but the truth of the matter is that these beings are rarely

encountered by anyone not of their own people. An elven settlement might be in a forest only a few hours walk from a city, but few residents there will ever see the mysterious elves. It is said that they have their own arcane abilities to protect their homes from discovery. If this is so, it is a very different magic than the God-given powers possessed by the church.

The elves are separated into two nations, both ignoring the other just as they disregard every other race. The Seelie, that claim Ireland as their homeland, dwell in forest settlements and usually remain hidden from the sight of human eyes. Occasionally wandering Seelie do venture out into the rest of the world, but they are frequently petty and vain creatures, interested only in their own pleasures, and highlighting the faults in those they meet.

What rumors do exist tell of a race gifted with near-immortality and magic powerful enough to see into the future. It is for these abilities and more that the Elvenkind are most often loathed and feared by humanity and those who dwell amongst them. The Seelie hide in their forests like jealous cultists, unwilling to come forth and prove to all that their powers are not granted by the Devil. Indeed, had the Elvenkind been less reclusive, it is likely that these eerie beings would have suffered under the blade and burning brands of many suspicious folk.

Elves that turn their back on their own kind are known as Unseelie. These elves are even rarer than their kin, and dwell apart from other elves in secluded, natural areas. Many of the legends in the British Isles that tell of cursed sites or haunted ruins are often thought to be the domains of the Unseelie. Whether they are practitioners of Satanic rituals, or guilty of some other sin is unknown to any but the elves.

Little is known about the Unseelie, save that they are rumored to be malicious, spiteful and have

no qualms against killing any who enter their domains. This, oddly enough, makes them little different from the Seelie – at least to an outsider’s viewpoint. The few that have come into the world at large have proven to be treacherous at best, and murderous at worst. They appear to forsake the application of woad body paint and spiral tattoos that otherwise indicate a Seelie elf’s rank and station in his society.

*I see. You neglect to mention our bonds with the natural world and the resulting enhancement of our magical arts. You also fail to point out that our distance from the humans has resulted in less conflict between the two races than can be said for any of the other peoples in this world. Perhaps you are not as educated as you believe, scholar.*

Lastly, there are the Elvenkind that make their home in Scandinavia. These are the Thiazzi, and the legends of the Northmen speak of a race of beings descended from the blood of giants and the old gods themselves. While the people of Scandinavia are almost entirely Christianized, local lore still attributes these elves to sinister origins in prehistory.

They are nomadic, living in tent-villages and moving as they see fit, following some cycle of migration of which only they are aware. Each of the Thiazzi is a ruthless killer and hunter, and the most skilled rises above the others as a tribal leader called a Garm. Curiously, seemingly tied to the pre-Christian Norse mythology, the Thiazzi

*You assume incorrectly. They are a breed apart from us. We are the gold to their coal, and the light to their shadow. They are the pathetic, deluded remains of the ancient Elnenkind that dabbled in sorcery darker than they could control. How they live on is a mystery to us all.*



elves offer great worship to wolves, seeing them as spiritual protectors and brothers. Indeed, there are even legends that speak of werewolves and shape-changers in the north of the world, and whether these are misinterpreted Pagan myths or have some basis in truth, it is a superstition many in the region hold fast.

*These barbarians are too few and too isolated to warrant notice. There can be no magic left in their thinned blood by now. Berserkers and shapeshifters? I sincerely doubt it.*

## VARANGAR

The doughty, mountain-dwelling Varangar are the source of many fireside tales and myths in Scandinavia, though like the Hansa, they too have ranged from their homelands to settle elsewhere in small colonies.

Disrespectfully called “dwarves” by some folk, the Varangar are hardy folk, tough as stone and twice as stubborn. Living in the harsh and rocky climes

of the North, the Varangar most often reside under the earth in elaborate systems of caves and mines. Above these under-towns, there are settlements on the surface where the herders and farmers sow crops and raise livestock. Truly, a Varangar township is a strange place to visit, and a curiosity no scholar can afford to miss.

*Black caves underground and timber cottages on the surface. No-one but a gnome or a dwarf could love the braying of pit ponies under the earth and the relentless sound of hammers at the forge at all hours during the day.*

The craftsmen of the Varangar give the race its reputation, for their weapons and tools are constructed with unrivalled skill and care. The blades they forge are worthy to be the weapons of human kings, and the implements they create would serve a farming family for generations without wear.

Beside their love of the forge fire and the craftsman’s art, the Varangar are also consummate miners. Men joke that it is due to their short stature, though in truth the few I have spoken with speak of “understanding” the rock of the earth itself, and seeing clearly the shape and direction a mine must take as they heave the first pickaxe into the ground. Some of the surface-dwelling Varangar turn their skills towards lumber harvest, and port cities in Northern Europe see a great deal of timber from these master merchants. Indeed, there are many Hansa in the League that seek trading alliances with Varangar partners.

Though the Varangar still make use of the more common (but less efficient) Norse-style ships that have seen use for many decades, they are also keen and relentless explorers. One sailor, deep in his cups (sadly, another great love of these hard-working folk) assured me that he had visited a land across the great ocean. While I confess that

I did not believe him, if anyone could sail across the endless Western waters with a grim smile and a rowdy crew, it is probably the Varangar.

*Yes, and if any being could waste its entire life digging in the earth, it is also a Varangar.*

On a note of interest, though these folk associate with humanity far more than most near-humans, they are still an insular people. The one exception to this general rule was a small mercenary army known as the Varangian Guard, which formed in 988AD. I am unaware as to the exact details regarding the Varangar's reasoning, but they sent thousands of their warriors from Northern European colonies to serve the emperors of Byzantium. These "Axe-wielding Guard" served the empire in its long decline, and were disbanded only 45 years ago. Most curiously about the entire arrangement was that humans fought alongside the Varangar in this regiment, and were also considered "Varangian".

In religious terms, the Varangar are grouped by the Church alongside the Hansa and the Cenedl. They too have accepted Christianity, the Church sees us all as the descendants of a lost tribe of Israel. For the Varangar, it is enough that they accept the Lord. Few trouble themselves about their origins outside Northern Europe.

The average Varangar is between 3 ½ feet and 4 ½ feet in height. Unlike the Hansa, the Varangar are often physically powerful and broad of shoulder, even in youth. Varangar of both sexes have been known to physically carve Norse-like runes into their flesh, after great battles or significant life events. Males often grow long beards, though the exact styling is left down to clan allegiance or personal taste. Females remain beardless until dotage, where they sometimes display tufts of hair on their cheeks. A Varangar is considered an adult at 30, and at the edge of old age at 130.



## CENEDL

The other “little folk” of the world are the Cenedl [Ken-ed-el]. They took the name in the spirit of community (it is the Irish word for “kindred”) and these near-humans originate and dwell mostly in the British Isles. To men, they are often referred to as “Halflings”, though this seems to cause the Cenedl no obvious offense and they are sometimes known to use it among themselves.

The Cenedl are insular and distant from the doings of men’s empires. Though they are not purposefully hidden as the Elvenkind, the Cenedl still remain under the notice of most humans. Their small village settlements in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England are notable for their peaceful atmosphere and sense of kinship and community.

The Cenedl have a love of harvesting the treasure of the earth, and are consummate farmers. It is not unusual for a Halfling orchard to produce fruit of wonderful quality, and many of these rural folk sit on quite the hidden horse of wealth from such trade. The Cenedl are also renowned for producing some of the finest wines in the world, exported to mainland Europe at no small cost by human merchants and a few members of the Hanseatic League. Many a French vintner has imported the labor of Cenedl winemasters.

A typical Cenedl settlement is little more than a collection of thatched cottages situated around a lake or river, and surrounded by many miles of arable farmland, orchards and the occasional vineyard. Most also feature a small chapel or church, for the Halflings have taken to Christianity just as the peoples of the British Isles have, though they follow the Celtic cross rather than the Roman sect of the religion.

*Another race of little creatures that bows before the human God. How very touching.*



The Cenedl are a peaceable folk, and few heed the call to Crusade or answer a lord’s cry for war. However, most settlements that fall within human borders do not withhold tribute or tax when the time for payment comes. Indeed, it is said by some that the bounty provided to human lords by their thriving farmlands excuses the Cenedl from participating in local militia or calls to battle.

Cenedl adults are usually between 3 and 4 feet in height. With the exception of their stature, they are physically similar to humans. While many of the Cenedl sport traditional woad face-paint, it is usually applied in artful patterns to serve as decoration, rather than the original Celtic custom of using it as war paint. Most Halflings dress to suit their daily labors, and few show evidence of wealth, for it is considered vulgar to show off in such a manner. Even the wealthiest Cenedl often

wears little more jewelry than a necklace or a wedding ring.

The Cenedl are considered adults in their early teens, and age much as humans do. Indeed, beyond the obvious contrast in build and size, there is very little difference between the two races.

## The Unholy

While the “little folk” are largely accepted by the people of the world and (some might say more importantly) by the church, the creatures that are known as the Unholy are not tolerated. Even the Elvenkind, with their dedication to arcane and ungodly arts, do not labor under the level of malice and disgust that the Unholy must suffer. The goblin races are among these accursed folk, as are the much mightier ogres. Perhaps the most individually powerful creatures among the Unholy are the northern giants known as trolls. Many Scandinavian legends paint these creatures as the very bane of the old gods. I have only seen one of these monsters, and I can all too easily believe the legends after that single encounter. Only a demon would wear a necklace of human and bear skulls.

*Taxation. The surrender of personal property because another says you must do so. Any race that bends to such demands deserves its place as the amusing pets of the humans.*

The Unholy have little in the way of society. They are too diverse and scattered to ever form into a decent-sized settlement, let alone a civilization. As an example of recent years, while the hordes of the Mongol Khan absorbed many of the small, nomadic hobgoblin tribes that roamed the Eastern Steppes, the creatures are too few in number to forge their own nation. It is much the same with the other Unholy races. While they might find acceptance (or at the very least, bare tolerance) in some of the cities of the East, Europe has little of Islam’s generous policy on the matter. All



throughout the Western lands, these creatures are hunted without mercy and killed with impunity. Surely the monstrous creations of Satan deserve no less, and indeed, it is no sin to spill the blood of the Unholy. In fact, the church decries any who allow the abominations to live.

Cast out by the enlightened peoples of the world, the Unholy make their lives as outlaws, mercenaries, and often as indentured servants and slaves. It is beyond the ken of this scholar to catalogue the individual races’ lifespan and appearance. Indeed, the shorter any such lifespan can be made at the swing of a knight’s sword, the better.

*The “Unholy” is a curious name. The Fallen were born long before mankind’s myths of the Lord and Saviour. In fact, the Seelie have hated them from time immemorial.*



## TSAURAN

Of all the beings in this world, my kind reserves their truest fear for the Tauran. Beast-men in body and deed, these towering bull-headed folk have a well-earned reputation as rapacious pirates and merciless raiders.

Originating from the isle of Crete, the Tauran spread out from the calm waters of the Aegean Sea, roaring into the Mediterranean like a foul wind. Called “minotaurs” by minstrels and saga-poets, these mighty fiends group together in ravening pirate



crews and storm the decks of merchant vessels in the hunt for plunder. The lucky merchant crews are killed defending their cargo and their ships. The unlucky crews survive to be fed to the sharks that inevitably trail Tauran vessels. These sharks follow for the food that the minotaurs so frequently provide when they take a ship.

*I do not doubt that the Tauran are vicious killers, gnome, but your personal bias is slipping into your writing. How quickly you fall to dark prose when the subject is those who attack your fellow merchants.*

They are another race that calls no land home. Driven to the seas by humans, these raiders still manage to find many Mediterranean ports to offload their stolen cargo. Those that remain on land find a great deal less persecution in the lands of the East and North Africa.

Naval battles between these beastmen and mercenaries hired to keep the seas clear (in addition to national navies) are common, but the Tauran are rarely defeated. Word from the Holy Roman Empire has it that the Pope is close to calling a crusade against these pirates; such is the danger they pose to the trade routes and supply lines into Venice and the surrounding port cities.

## LIFE IN OUR TIME

The world turns as it has for thousands of years, and the lives of the simple folk remain unchanged from time out of mind. In any society there must be a caste of people that toil in the trades and work the earth. In this age, the life of the peasantry is not a savage or unfair one, though it is certainly demanding. Slavery is mostly abolished (but

for some lingering cases, usually involving the Unholy) and though a serf must work the land in the name of his liege, the taxes for doing so can be high, but are rarely extortionate.

Most peasant homes in villages have a vegetable patch beside the property, in addition to the dozen or more acres of the liege lord's land that the family must tend and work. The working family spends 3 days of the week working the land to pay taxes to the local lord, and a further 3 days working in order to provide for themselves. In addition to this basic land lease tax, the lord receives a small sum of good or services if a serf wishes to marry, or to use new fertile ground as additional farmland.

Serfs (usually younger sons and daughters in large families) who do not inherit land to work often seek employment with the local lord. From such stock is drawn the liege lord's horse-master, stablemen, men-at-arms, butchers, bakers, scullery servants, livestock slaughterers and cooks. Those of exceptional manners might also become grooms, tailors, maids and valets to the lord and his family, and those of wit and intelligence are apt to become estate clerks, messenger runners or even heralds.

Possibly the highest positions within a noble house for a peasant to rise are the seneschal and the sergeant. The seneschal is the estate manager, overseeing the mundane day-to-day business of running the manor or castle, directing the servants and attending to the family finances, making sure all is well in the coffers. The sergeant is a unique military role; essentially a ranked man-at-arms who rides at the nobleman's side as a consultant and lieutenant. He has the authority to issue orders to the militia and men-at-arms, though obviously not to any knights accompanying the nobleman. Both of these roles are becoming increasingly vital to the nobility, and it is a foolish lord who mistreats his closest, most useful servants.

An intriguing and relatively recent social exception is that of the freeman. With the development of the concept of manumission (a payment to a liege lord

in exchange for freedom), there is a new kind of serf that rents the land from a lord, but is exempt from many of the taxes and tithes that frequently drain the resources of the peasantry. These freemen are present in increasing numbers, though they differ little from serfs in the changes their presence makes upon the land.

*Freedom is sweet to the soul. 'Tis a Kanso to miss the point entirely.*

It is not all tax and strife for the common man. Famine is much less of a danger in the lands of Europe compared to previous centuries, and indeed, a peasant family has a very healthy diet – even compared to the nobility. A poor family works physically hard every day (except Sundays, the saint's days and holy days appointed by the church) and eats a daily diet consisting of healthy home-cooked bread, various fruits and vegetables. The nobility regard such as "peasant's food" and many incorrectly believe that it causes illness of the stomach and bowel.

The lord owns the land around his estate, and the serfs must pay small fees of coin or goods in order to avail themselves of the services available. This includes the local vineyard and wine press, fishing streams, woods and forests (used for hunting deer and rabbit) and the local mill (for making bread and grinding grain). None of the charges levied against these services are designed to be devastating, for no lord wants a hostile and unhealthy workforce. Such has proved in the past to be ripe for rebellion, and serfs are not slaves – they are people, not property. Treating them unjustly is a sin most grave.

*A sin to treat workers and tenants badly? I do not doubt it. That is not to say that it never happens, of course.*



## TOWN LIFE

While much of the European landscape is divided across many isolated and separate villages, towns are beginning to flourish across the known world. As with a village, the centerpiece of a town is the church, though it is increasingly common to see an example of skeletal gothic architecture and stained-glass windows rather than the blocky, rigid structures that grace the middle of villages. Indeed, Gothic majesty looks set to be the standard from now on, and this scholar wonders how well these elegantly constructed buildings will stand the test of time after the passing of a millennium or more.

The township is a hive of life. Livestock roam the streets on market days, while pigs are free to wander as they will. Ironically, the proliferation of pigs means that cobblestone town streets are cleaner than their village counterparts, for the humble pig dines on the refuse and waste from chamber pots that are slopped out into the roads.

Replacing the chalk blocks, timber frames and the dried mud and straw walls of village homes, town houses are more often constructed with rough stone foundations, wooden walls and timbered ceilings. Roofs are still thatched, but laid out with increased density and skill. Windows (most often papered although some have glass panes) are set into the walls in pairs and the exterior of these homes is frequently washed with ochre paint as additional protection against the elements. Village houses usually require rebuilding once a generation. Town houses are meant to last, offering a tangible inheritance for a family's heirs.

Perhaps the primary function of a town is that of a marketplace. Traders, artisans and guildsmen mingle with the local farmers and villagers in such an atmosphere, and the barter of goods and services can run all day and into the young hours of the evening. This makes towns (and by extension, the rare and larger European cities) the ideal places for guilds of skilled traders and craftspeople to congregate and offer their services.

## GUILDS

Education is the privilege of the noble-blooded and those sworn into the church's service. While many a priest offers lessons in reading and writing to the peasantry, few men and women have the time to dedicate to such an essentially useless pursuit. After all, there is little advantage in such knowledge, especially if one is already a master of his trade and earns a good living as a crafts-master. Not all wisdom comes from literature, and a skilled tradesman or artisan may have intelligence and wits far beyond what the highborn would consider in a "lowly peasant." In short, trade knowledge is more useful to most of the people in society than scientific or historical lore.

These practical skills are gained by either experience in the person's home village, or by enrollment with a guild. If a serf or servant can raise the admission fee (usually as a result of some years' hard work in the fields at least) then it is possible to enroll a member of the family into a guild. This honor is usually reserved for sons, for the head of a family that has guild membership and trade skills is often a great provider when he grows into his inheritance and starts his own family.

Training traditionally starts at around the age of 7, and it is common for the apprenticeship to last another 7 years, during which time the master assumes complete responsibility over the apprentice. Apprentices live in their master's homes, often sleeping in a comfortable corner of the workshop at night, and they have their food, clothes and beginning tools paid for by their instructors. Accordingly, the bonds between master and apprentice become very strong; be they forged in love and respect, or hatred and bitterness at any mistreatment. Many masters have more than one apprentice, especially if they themselves are well-known for their skills, and the rivalry between the children can become heated. If any problems occur that hinder the apprentice's skills (or the boy is simply too lazy or clumsy to ever make a good tradesman), the boy will be returned to his

family. Such a returning is the height of disgrace, as would be expected.

*This sounds very much like a form of adoption. Is it done in the hope the boy will return to his family one day, full of gratitude and pouches full of coin?*

After 7 years (or perhaps more in demanding trade areas such as those apprenticed to copyists or doctors), the apprentice is considered a journeyman. Journeymen are proven tradesmen, skilled in their work and reliable in the eyes of the guild. It can be a prosperous position for many young men, for with the founding of new towns all over Europe and the constant expansion of current settlements, trained workers are much in demand across the continent. In addition to the offers of work, the journeyman also gains the opportunity to work with others in his guild, and train further alongside masters of the craft. This can only help when he too seeks to become a master, recognized by the guild and paid a premium for his efforts.

The path from journeyman to guild master is one that frequently lasts several years, and there really is no average duration with which to compare. A journeyman seeking to rise that final step in his trade will first need the money to set up his own shop, and that in itself can take many years of hard labor. He must also produce a masterpiece, known by the French word; chef-d'oeuvre. This varies from guild to guild, with the aim being to either create a work of great beauty, utility or quality, whether it is from base materials or by repairing a damaged item. And of course, a journeyman must have the sworn recommendation of an established master, and must swear an oath to the guild himself.

Upon this achievement, the new master gains the right to imprint all his works with his own unique mark; representing his mastery of the guild's trade. He may now seek apprentices of his own (should

he so desire) to do the minor work of the trade, and will receive excellent rates of pay that will raise him far above the average townsman.

The list of guilds a town or city might house within its merchant's quarter can be extensive. Literally any physical labor, artistic creation, skilled trade or learned career will likely have a guild somewhere. This ranges from doctors, sculptors and blacksmiths to more mundane employment such as maidservants, candle-makers, and porters. In this era of growth, there are truly few limits to what a person can find training to undertake, and the pool of skilled laborers is much larger and of a much higher quality as a result.

## THE MEDICINAL ARTS

Death during and after childbirth is high, and there are infections of the flesh and blood that no man of learning is able to cure. These ailments are the work of the Devil, and there are plainly times that mortals are unable to counter the influence of Hell. Scholarly doctors are bound to save both the body and soul of their patients. If a way exists to preserve life and heal the damage to the body, it shall be done. If a cure or remedy does not exist, then it is a doctor's duty to assist with the patient's death in the most godly and humane way possible in order to send their soul to Heaven.

The idea of the Four Humors is a popular one in modern medicine, taken as it is from the pre-Christian Greeks and translated by Islamic scholars, before reaching the scholars of Europe once more. This theory relies on the balancing of four fluids within the body, blood (from the heart), phlegm (from the brain), yellow bile (from the gall bladder), and black bile (from the liver). When the balance of these fluids becomes unstable, an abundance or shortage of any fluid makes a person ill.

Treatments for different ailments most often revolve around the administration of herbs and tinctures, though while many such medicines have

scientifically proven effects, there are equally as many that remain in use only because they are folk remedies that tradition endorses. Leeches are often used to bleed patients, and surgery, while never without its risks, is an efficient method of removing damaged flesh, and the survival rate increases dramatically with both the correct tools, and anesthetic and painkilling medicines. Amputation is a sadly common treatment after injuries or battlefield wounds turn sour and blacken.

Some herbs and mixtures are useful for curing toothache, head pains, stomach irritation and the flux. Some can be mixed into syrups for helping fight hacking coughs or damage to the throat. Others make excellent painkillers or anesthetics, such as opium and hemlock, if used in the correct quantities. As is to be expected, the administration and use of these medicines is the trade of a skilled herbalist or doctor, and there is understandably a great deal of coin to be made in the curing of injury and ailments.

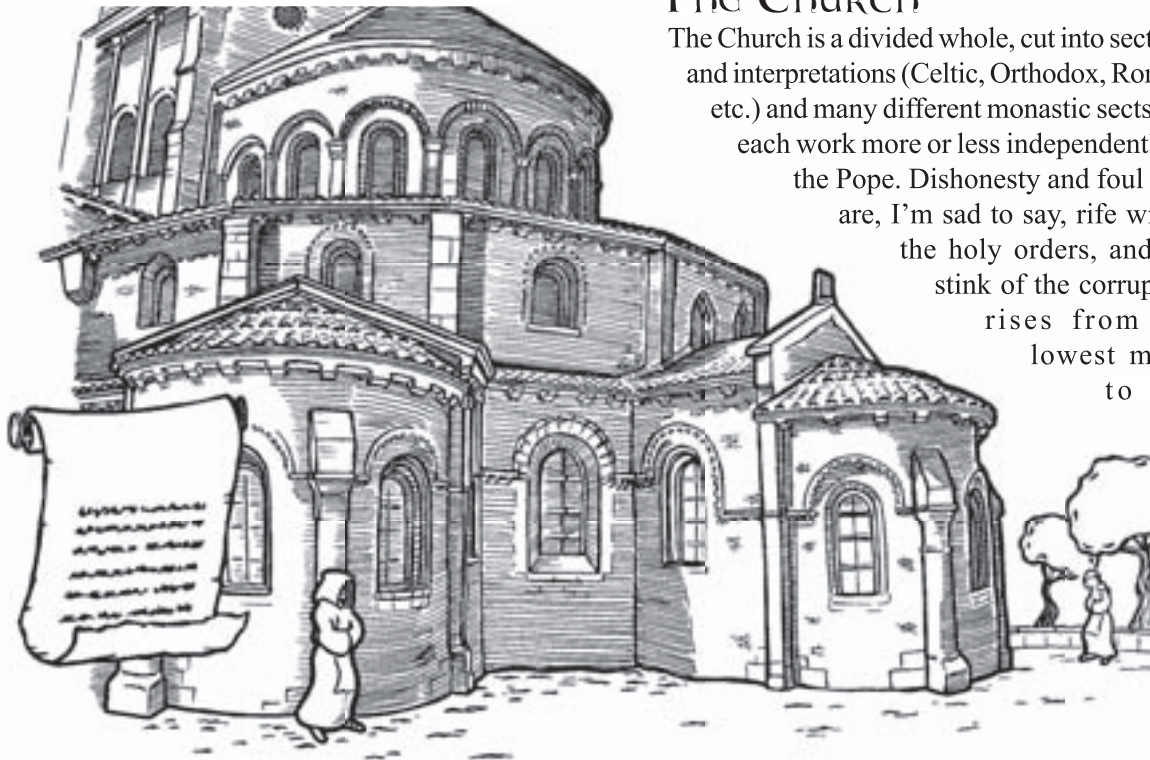
A last note on medicine must be given to the

*Back to money so soon, little Hansa? I doubt most of the peasantry could afford much in the way of monetary repayment.*

mention of plague. Greece suffered its share of these in the time before Christ, as disease rushed through the cities of old and killed thousands in its wake. Europe has seen many smaller cases of plague since, and a city afflicted in this manner is sealed from within and without, cutting off all trade and travel. Starvation is not uncommon in a plague-locked city, and martial law is the nobility's recourse to preventing food riots if the disease does not abate before the supplies are depleted. Often, teams of people will move from street to street dragging "dead carts", carrying bells and calling for families to "bring out your dead". Plague victims are usually buried in mass graves outside the city, blessed by a priest, and covered in lime to help dissolve the remains.

## THE CHURCH

The Church is a divided whole, cut into sections and interpretations (Celtic, Orthodox, Roman, etc.) and many different monastic sects that each work more or less independently of the Pope. Dishonesty and foul play are, I'm sad to say, rife within the holy orders, and the stink of the corruption rises from the lowest monk to the



Pope himself. It seems easier to divide the church into those holy men and women that dedicate themselves to the faith to better the world, and those that dedicate themselves to faith in order to attain property, riches, and live a life of decadence.

The current head of the church is Pope Innocent IV, and like his predecessors Innocent III, Honorius III and Gregory IX, the Pope has views that break with the longstanding tradition of a separation between church and state. The dominion of the papacy is key in his mind, and he truly believes that his position allows him to dictate the movements of national kings and emperors. The most recent of epic papal interferences has been the deposition of Emperor Frederick II of the Holy Roman Empire. Though the Pope spent half a decade away from Rome, the deposed Emperor's recent death has allowed Innocent to return to the capital in glory. He is currently "advising" the German princes upon whom they should elect as the next leader of the empire.

## CHURCH STATIONS

Below the Pope is a council of cardinals responsible for his election. It is from their august ranks that a new Pope is chosen upon the death of the previous holder of office. Below these men are the Bishops and Archbishops, most as wealthy and with as much land granted to them as lords and nobles. Indeed, most of these figures are drawn directly from noble families, and sit on various regional and national councils. Bishops travel the world, consecrating (and re-consecrating) churches, altars and other holy ground, in addition to inspecting the churches and abbeys under their jurisdiction. Each is seen as a "manager" of sorts, overseeing the activity and progress of the dozens of churches within their given region.

Below the bishops, offices in the church break down into landed positions in a single monastery, church or abbey. The head of an abbey is referred to as the Abbot, and is often a power player in local government and politics, as well as being the

head of the monks and priests within his halls. He directly controls much of the land granted to the church and frequently has the largest stake in the church's investments in local trade and business. In smaller churches, or larger buildings where an Abbot is often called away for distant duties, the head of the house is the Prior. Often more of a seneschal than a standard priest, the Prior runs the management and upkeep of the church and assists the Abbot in any necessary capacity.

The majority of the holy men in Europe are simply monks; simple priests, no more and no less. Individual churches have varying offices and duties for the monks to perform, such as teaching the peasantry how to read, tending the sick, or offering hospitality to travelers, but the unifying theme of all monks is their dedication to a hard life away from worldly pleasures in order to seek the grace of God. Self-beatings (known as flagellation), fasting, hours of repentance and prayer – these methods and more purge the monk's flesh of evils and help him resist earthly temptations. This lifestyle holds equally true for women in the church, and nuns especially are regarded as close to God through their piousness and austere way of life.

It should be noted that many noble families send their younger sons and daughters to swear service to the holy orders, and accordingly there are many monks and nuns who secretly (or openly) harbor a great deal of interest in political machinations and worldly occurrences. It could be said that this is one of the avenues by which corruption has crept into the holy orders, but in truth, the main problem is that of the power that the Fourth Deadly Sin holds in the hearts of mortal men. Avaritia, also known as avarice.

*Greed. The driving force behind all human thought. This comes as no surprise to the Seelie, I assure you.*

## CORRUPTION

Many individual parishes and abbeys also fall into corruption and dishonesty in the current age. The church gains land as gifts from many nobles seeking to have their souls saved, and even the peasantry are offered the liberty to avoid pilgrimage and tithes if they instead simply send the money they would have deposited after a lengthy journey. There have been instances of monks and priests running brothels, stealing land from the peasantry in order to found new churches without permission, and the lives of many monks within the halls of their monasteries is far from the frugal life of fasting and repentance laid out by Benedict's Rule.

The holy and pious Roman nobleman, Benedict, laid out a set of laws that would allow monks to live spiritually-fulfilled lives and renounce the world's pleasures. Of these, diet was famously strictly regulated. Monks were allowed to partake of little more than they required for subsistence. Instead, many of the abbeys of Europe overflow with several huge courses at each meal, consisting of rich and expensive wares far above the means of the common man. But this is only the first of many sins committed behind holy walls.

Monks were ordained by Benedict's Rule to work their own land, raise their own crops and livestock, and perform all the menial duties that a pious and unworldly man should do in his honest work. Monks should clean the monastery, till the fields, empty their own chamber pots, and so on and so forth. In reality, what has happened is a church-sanctioned form of near-slavery, where a new caste of "monk" was created – lay brothers – purely for the purpose of performing all the menial physical labor that the choir monks deemed beneath them.

Certainly, in many churches these lay brothers are literate, monastic in ideal and intent, and assist the true monks with their religious services. However, in just as many (most notably the Cistercian sect), they represent a class of unlearned laborers and

servants, often drawn from the men and women that were displaced and lost land when the church was constructed in the area.

Many churches also own property in the surrounding lands, purchased or granted by any means imaginable. Some is literally stolen from the peasantry and claimed by the church, but much of this stems from the belief of knightly nobles that in slaughtering their foes, their souls can only be saved if they pay the men of the church to pray on their behalves. It is a popular theory, and one that makes many abbeys and churches exceedingly wealthy. In essence, it would seem that the road to Hell really is paved with good intentions.

*You are beginning to sound like a heretic, little scholar.  
You do not wish to call the newly-formed Inquisition upon your head, do you?*

## RELICS

All churches compete for pilgrims, each seeking more travelers and thereby receiving more donations. Most of the larger abbeys and cathedrals can do this by displaying the relics of a saint or Jesus Himself, from when the Savior walked the earth. Beside the financial gains, many worshippers report deep feelings of spiritual fulfillment upon seeing or touching certain relics, and there are most assuredly cases of divine health blessing the witnesses afterwards. Diseases cured, injuries healed, or uncommon streaks of good fortune often follow a visit to a powerful and holy relic.

In most cases, a relic is allegedly one of the personal possessions of a long-dead saint, and perhaps even a fragment or shard of his skeleton. Finger bones, ribs and skulls are by far the most common relics of saintly remains, though complete skeletons have been retrieved in some instances.

There are murmurings that some relics are patently false (such as some of the clay that God used to fashion Adam), while others are of dubious origins

but still believed (such as a fragment of the table used for the Last Supper). Both are housed in the cathedral at Canterbury, one of England's holiest sites. Most blessed and beloved are saintly relics, and the alleged fragments of the True Cross, upon which the Lord was crucified. Many noblemen and monks quest for relics across the world. Some merely seek to display their favor in the eyes of God, while others hunt for these treasures out of deep piety, as well as to bring another link to the Divine to the people of the world.

*Is it even worth me commenting on just how foolish some people are to believe all this?*

## MAGIC

Of the blessings of divinity and the blasphemy of sorcery, a few words must be said. Much ink has been used on the subject, and perhaps more blood has been spilled over the topic of magic and religion than any other. It is true that the two concepts are twined together, for they are bound in the existence of each other. Without magic, there would be no religion, and without faith, magic would not exist.

Divine magic is the domain of the Church. It is the very lifeblood of the holy orders, allowing the men and women of God to channel the smallest shards of His incredible power. It is the truest of magics in the world, given to the faithful by a caring deity, and used in the name of the greater good. With divine rituals and spells, a priest might exorcise a demon from the world, banishing it back into Hell. He might use his holy power to repel the intrusion of dark supernatural influences nearby, literally forcing evil beings or the walking dead to flee his presence. It can also be used to bless weapons, wreathing them in a holy aura that is poison against sinners, demons or the Unholy.

Beyond this, divine magic also has the power to heal the sick, the injured and the dying of their ills.

Indeed, many priests wander the world seeking to assist the downtrodden and the needy – though many offer their holy blessings in return for a price or service. This is not frowned upon by the Church, for even those touched by the Lord must pay for food and shelter.

*The power, it could be argued, comes from within he who uses the magic, not from some distant deity. One wonders how long it will be before this concept flowers in the minds of men.*

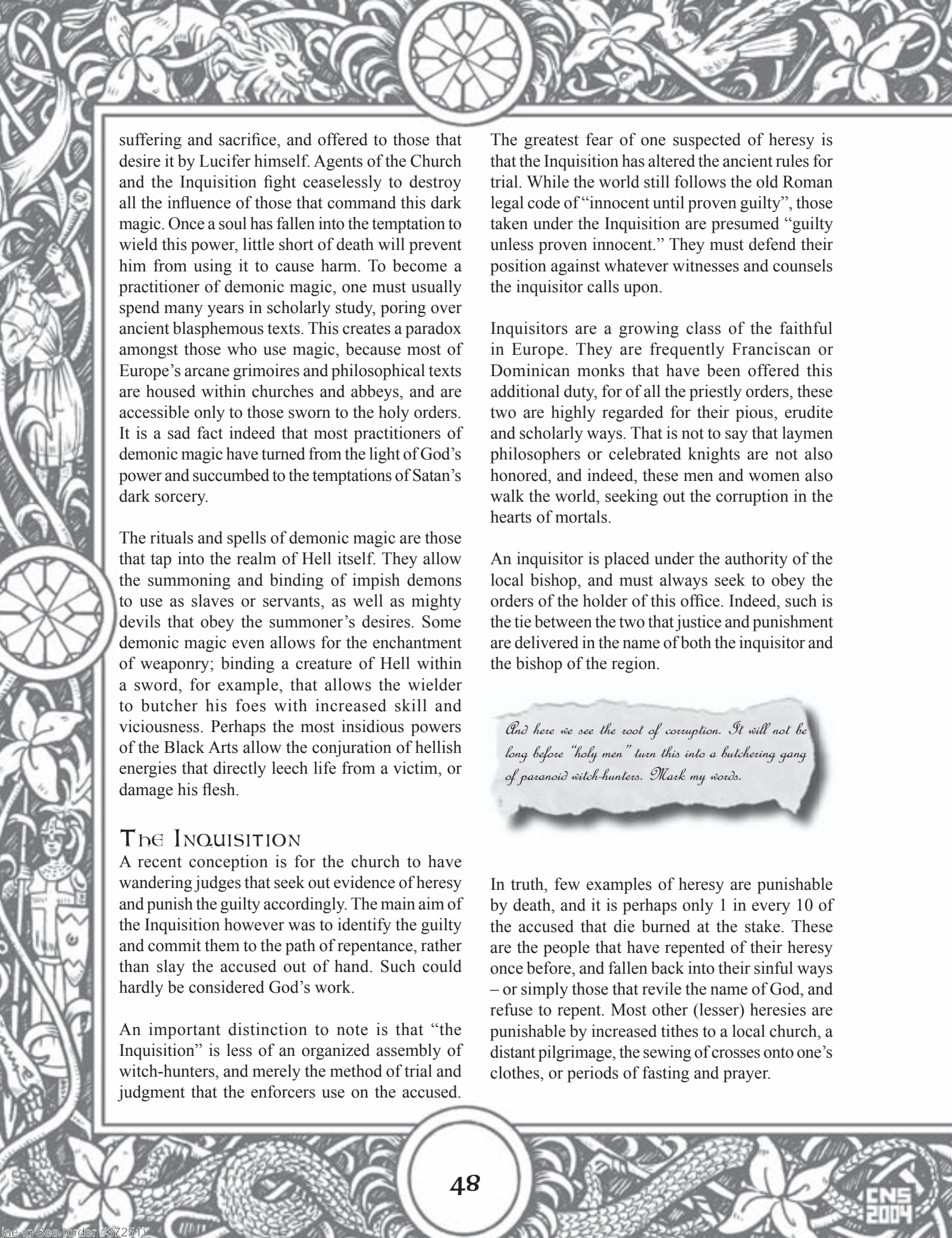
Natural magic is channeled from the power within the earth itself. Though the world is God's creation, there have been hedge magicians, witches and wisewomen from the pre-Christian era that have shown talent for magic without faith in the Lord. Their power springs from knowledge and understanding of the earth's natural cycle, and the ability to harness the energies of creation. Many practitioners of natural magic are godless heathens or pagans, and though the Church as a whole tolerates the use of these spells, the spell-casters themselves can attract the ire of the Inquisition if they are not careful.

Natural magic, in tune with the earth, is used for cures and remedies, as well as for wards against evil and personal protection against dark influences. Common natural magic rituals involve many herbal or material ingredients, and are directed toward helping a strong harvest, good luck in finding a wife or husband, or even fertility in marriage. More volatile and powerful rituals might produce rapid plant growth, or the manipulation of the weather over a given region.

*Pathetic. It is so much more than this...*

Demonic magic is the malicious power that bleeds up from the underworld through the skin of the earth. It is the magic of Hell, powered by





suffering and sacrifice, and offered to those that desire it by Lucifer himself. Agents of the Church and the Inquisition fight ceaselessly to destroy all the influence of those that command this dark magic. Once a soul has fallen into the temptation to wield this power, little short of death will prevent him from using it to cause harm. To become a practitioner of demonic magic, one must usually spend many years in scholarly study, poring over ancient blasphemous texts. This creates a paradox amongst those who use magic, because most of Europe's arcane grimoires and philosophical texts are housed within churches and abbeys, and are accessible only to those sworn to the holy orders. It is a sad fact indeed that most practitioners of demonic magic have turned from the light of God's power and succumbed to the temptations of Satan's dark sorcery.

The rituals and spells of demonic magic are those that tap into the realm of Hell itself. They allow the summoning and binding of impish demons to use as slaves or servants, as well as mighty devils that obey the summoner's desires. Some demonic magic even allows for the enchantment of weaponry; binding a creature of Hell within a sword, for example, that allows the wielder to butcher his foes with increased skill and viciousness. Perhaps the most insidious powers of the Black Arts allow the conjuration of hellish energies that directly leech life from a victim, or damage his flesh.

## THE INQUISITION

A recent conception is for the church to have wandering judges that seek out evidence of heresy and punish the guilty accordingly. The main aim of the Inquisition however was to identify the guilty and commit them to the path of repentance, rather than slay the accused out of hand. Such could hardly be considered God's work.

An important distinction to note is that "the Inquisition" is less of an organized assembly of witch-hunters, and merely the method of trial and judgment that the enforcers use on the accused.

The greatest fear of one suspected of heresy is that the Inquisition has altered the ancient rules for trial. While the world still follows the old Roman legal code of "innocent until proven guilty", those taken under the Inquisition are presumed "guilty unless proven innocent." They must defend their position against whatever witnesses and counsels the inquisitor calls upon.

Inquisitors are a growing class of the faithful in Europe. They are frequently Franciscan or Dominican monks that have been offered this additional duty, for of all the priestly orders, these two are highly regarded for their pious, erudite and scholarly ways. That is not to say that laymen philosophers or celebrated knights are not also honored, and indeed, these men and women also walk the world, seeking out the corruption in the hearts of mortals.

An inquisitor is placed under the authority of the local bishop, and must always seek to obey the orders of the holder of this office. Indeed, such is the tie between the two that justice and punishment are delivered in the name of both the inquisitor and the bishop of the region.

*And here we see the root of corruption. It will not be long before "holy men" turn this into a butchering gang of paranoid witch-hunters. Mark my words.*

In truth, few examples of heresy are punishable by death, and it is perhaps only 1 in every 10 of the accused that die burned at the stake. These are the people that have repented of their heresy once before, and fallen back into their sinful ways – or simply those that revile the name of God, and refuse to repent. Most other (lesser) heresies are punishable by increased tithes to a local church, a distant pilgrimage, the sewing of crosses onto one's clothes, or periods of fasting and prayer.

## THE NOBILITY

In this era of cross and crusade, the station of nobility is a gift from God. Kings rule with divine right, appointed and ascended to the throne with the blessing of the Lord – and often the Pope. This is a gift that comes with great privileges, but is not without its burdensome duties.

Holding and maintaining a throne is often a game of balancing many factors. The local peasantry must be appeased and not abused. Other lords in the region must be soundly defeated if they threaten with invasion, or never antagonized at all if they offer peace. Marriages must be arranged and the lord's own sons and daughters will be pressed into wedlock to assure alliances of land and military might. All the while, a lord will be aware of the dangers of assassination or death in war. He must be aware of who profits from his death, and who stands to gain most by his removal. In some nations and areas, the lord must also obey the wishes of the bishop or abbot of the region, adding another level of responsibility and difficulty to his position.

A noblewoman takes all of the responsibilities of her house and family if her husband is slain or away at war. On her shoulders fall all of the duties of directing the seneschal and overseeing the estate finances, and most of the ladies in Europe have some education and preparation to do so should the circumstances ever require. Indeed, the only aspects of noble life that women rarely participate in are the “manly”, physical pastimes of boar-hunting and warfare. Few highborn households are ruled by men that allow their wives no say. It is said that behind every man there is a great woman, but in this enlightened age, the two often rule side by side. Wisdom is a virtue best shared.

## NOBLESSE OBLIGE

A liege lord, be they a King of a nation or a provincial baron commanding a few leagues of countryside, has a responsibility to the serfs and servants that work his land. This involves, at its most basic level, a level of physical protection

against harm. It is the lord's duty to use the taxes he levies to raise a fighting force (usually peasant militia, but occasionally landless or otherwise allied knights) to repel the incursions of bandits, animal predators such as bears, lions and wolves – and in many regions, the foul presence of the Unholy races. A lazy or careless lord will leave his workers and tenants vulnerable, and that will make the peasantry ripe pickings indeed for the rapacious goblins, ogres and other monstrosities that plunder the countryside.

### DUKE/DUCHESS

Herzog/Herzogin (Germany)  
Duc/Duchesses (France)  
Duca/Duchessa (Italy)  
Duque/Duquesa (Spain)

### MARQUESS/MARCHIONESS

Pfalzgraf/Pfalzgräfin (Germany)  
Marquis/Marquise (France)  
Marchese/Marchesa (Italy)  
Marqués/Marquesa (Spain)

### EARL/COUNTESS

Graf/Gräfin (Germany)  
Comte/Comtesse (France)  
Conte/Contessa (Italy)  
Conde/Condesa (Spain)

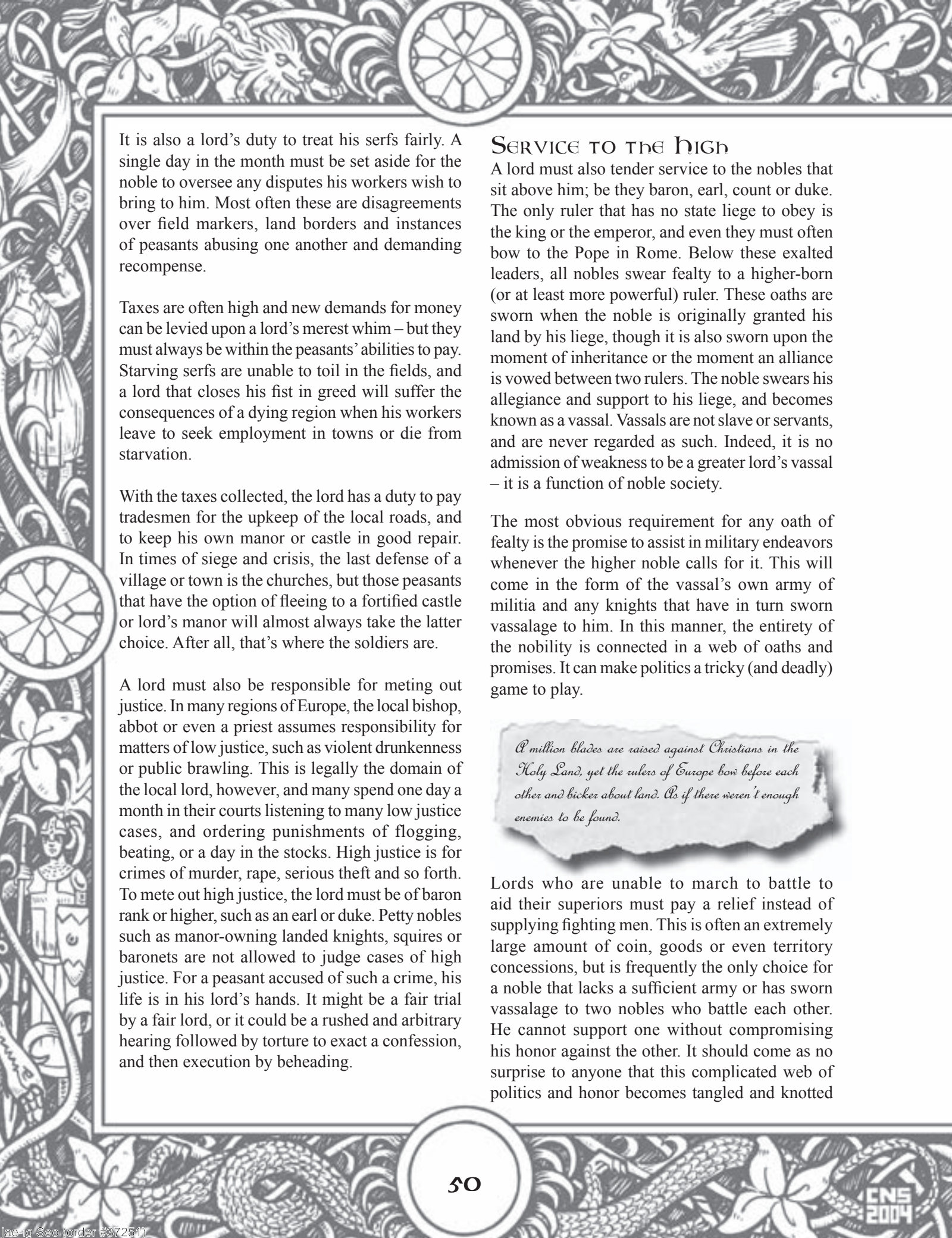
### VISCOUNT/VISCOUNTESS

Vicomte/Vicomtesse (France)  
Visconte/Viscontessa (Italy)  
Visconde/Vixcondesa (Spain)

### BARON/BARONESS

Baron/Baronin (Germany)  
Baron/Baronne (France)  
Baron/Baronessa (Italy)  
Barón/Baronesa (Spain)

\* - This list is only partial and not meant to be representative of all regions or all stations.



It is also a lord's duty to treat his serfs fairly. A single day in the month must be set aside for the noble to oversee any disputes his workers wish to bring to him. Most often these are disagreements over field markers, land borders and instances of peasants abusing one another and demanding recompense.

Taxes are often high and new demands for money can be levied upon a lord's merest whim – but they must always be within the peasants' abilities to pay. Starving serfs are unable to toil in the fields, and a lord that closes his fist in greed will suffer the consequences of a dying region when his workers leave to seek employment in towns or die from starvation.

With the taxes collected, the lord has a duty to pay tradesmen for the upkeep of the local roads, and to keep his own manor or castle in good repair. In times of siege and crisis, the last defense of a village or town is the churches, but those peasants that have the option of fleeing to a fortified castle or lord's manor will almost always take the latter choice. After all, that's where the soldiers are.

A lord must also be responsible for meting out justice. In many regions of Europe, the local bishop, abbot or even a priest assumes responsibility for matters of low justice, such as violent drunkenness or public brawling. This is legally the domain of the local lord, however, and many spend one day a month in their courts listening to many low justice cases, and ordering punishments of flogging, beating, or a day in the stocks. High justice is for crimes of murder, rape, serious theft and so forth. To mete out high justice, the lord must be of baron rank or higher, such as an earl or duke. Petty nobles such as manor-owning landed knights, squires or baronets are not allowed to judge cases of high justice. For a peasant accused of such a crime, his life is in his lord's hands. It might be a fair trial by a fair lord, or it could be a rushed and arbitrary hearing followed by torture to exact a confession, and then execution by beheading.

## SERVICE TO THE HIGH

A lord must also tender service to the nobles that sit above him; be they baron, earl, count or duke. The only ruler that has no state liege to obey is the king or the emperor, and even they must often bow to the Pope in Rome. Below these exalted leaders, all nobles swear fealty to a higher-born (or at least more powerful) ruler. These oaths are sworn when the noble is originally granted his land by his liege, though it is also sworn upon the moment of inheritance or the moment an alliance is vowed between two rulers. The noble swears his allegiance and support to his liege, and becomes known as a vassal. Vassals are not slave or servants, and are never regarded as such. Indeed, it is no admission of weakness to be a greater lord's vassal – it is a function of noble society.

The most obvious requirement for any oath of fealty is the promise to assist in military endeavors whenever the higher noble calls for it. This will come in the form of the vassal's own army of militia and any knights that have in turn sworn vassalage to him. In this manner, the entirety of the nobility is connected in a web of oaths and promises. It can make politics a tricky (and deadly) game to play.

*A million blades are raised against Christians in the Holy Land, yet the rulers of Europe bow before each other and bicker about land. As if there weren't enough enemies to be found.*

Lords who are unable to march to battle to aid their superiors must pay a relief instead of supplying fighting men. This is often an extremely large amount of coin, goods or even territory concessions, but is frequently the only choice for a noble that lacks a sufficient army or has sworn vassalage to two nobles who battle each other. He cannot support one without compromising his honor against the other. It should come as no surprise to anyone that this complicated web of politics and honor becomes tangled and knotted

with great frequency.

## SPORT & AMUSEMENT

The life of the nobility is not spent entirely in toil. The majority of their time is spent engaging in the pursuits available only to the born wealthy and the idle rich. Chess and backgammon are popular courtly games and rivalries between renowned players take place across the lands of Europe, with nobles traveling many leagues in order to compete with each other. Chess is not called the “game of kings” without reason.

An exceptionally popular noble pursuit is hunting. Great hunts involving a lord and several of his vassal knights can sweep across a region, as the hunting party pursues graceful quarry such as deer and stag, or hunt rarer and more dangerous prey such as boar or even lion. Most hunts are conducted for amusement and the chance to earn respect in front of a noble’s peers by being the one to bring down the prey. Often, in the case of deer and boar, the night sees a great feast take place in the main hall of the manor. If the hunters seek signs of lions or other dangerous predators, it is often because the beast has been sighted by the local serfs and the lord takes to the hunt in order to protect his workers.

Some nobles maintain a high reputation for horse-breeding, and a stable of the highest quality steeds is seen as an excellent sign of a cultured ruler. Nobles take great pride in their horses, and it is the desire of any knight to own the finest animal he can. After all, it is not merely a beast that carries him into battle and enhances his image; warhorses are trained to kill with their flashing hooves and protect their master if he is unhorsed. A noble well-known for the quality of his horses usually most likely has a well-trained staff of stable men and experts on hand to consult, and may frequently lease out his stallions to other nobles so they may increase the quality of their own herds. Such a service comes at extortionate cost, naturally.

Many lords and ladies also pursue the sport of

falconry. This is a unique and expensive sport, and one that is beloved of most of Western Europe’s nobility. The falconer himself is a well-trained servant, and is often accorded a large amount of respect from the other household servants purely because of his position in the lord’s service and his expertise in handling the hunting hawks. It is not a position that falls on the totally uneducated or the careless, and a highly skilled falconer (such as one who finds many new additions to the lord’s collection and breeds the birds successfully) might well be treated as well as the seneschal or the sergeant in a noble’s service.

And, of course, there are the lordly pursuits of training for war. Swordplay, archery, tactical lessons and history: these are all (in varying degrees) part of a noble’s pastimes, for they are the beginning steps in the quest for knighthood.

## CHIVALRY & KNIGHTHOOD

I am a great admirer of the noble concept of chivalry, though I recognize it is a path walked by killers as well as saints. It is also one of the most often misunderstood aspects of the age. In concluding my treatise on the noble-blooded of our world, I finish on the concept of the chivalric ideal and the class of knighthood.

Perhaps the highest ideal a man can aspire to in this age is the position and rank of knighthood. It is the social caste that allows for absolute privilege, and though the efforts involved are not the dawn to dusk toil of a farmer in the field, it is a rank that comes with a large degree of responsibility. The origin of the word comes from the dominance of cavalry forces on the continent: chevalier, meaning ‘horse-warrior’. Curiously, the naming also dates back to 1085, when landowners were sometimes referred to by the Latin *per loricam* – ‘wearers of chain mail’.

The bards and minstrels that perform in the courts of the highborn would have all believe that the chivalric ideal is the pinnacle of romantic imagery, as well as a sign of manly prowess and proof of

noble birth. In truth, chivalry means very different ideals to those that seek to follow its path, or bend it to their advantage.

## THE CLASH OF IDEALS

To the knights themselves, strong of arm and with the blood of kings and counts in their veins, knighthood is not usually an expression of their faith. Certainly, there are many pious knights, but the path of chivalry most often involves a life of battle, tournaments, codes of honor – and gaining a great deal of fame and wealth. Most knights are already wealthy by birth, but a noble's lifestyle is not a cheap one, and the tourneys to claim fame and coin are a wonderful source of income.

In truth, for many that are knighted, the ideal of chivalry embodies little more than a life of demanded respect and the joys of honorable battle. Far from the church's "reality" of bold Christian warriors doing battle in the name of the Savior, what we have in truth is a cult of violence. Chivalry allows young men to cloak themselves in the trappings of religious piety, while spending their time training to fight, gaining honor in the eyes of their fellow highborn, and acquiring wealth.

These men, who often so basely ignore the religious aspects of their exalted position, are still not low knaves or murderers. While many a knight and his entourage of squires and servants regard killing prowess as the mark of a man (and indeed, most knightly songs are entirely about the subject) the knight is still defined by his obedience to the law and the wishes of his own liege lord, be it the king or merely a more powerful knight.

*And yet the dirt-grubbing farmers of human lands look up to their knightly landlords and work day in, day out for the "honor" of living on the nobleman's land. A curious system.*

Richard the Lionhearted, once King of England and passed on into God's grace many years hence, was admired most of all by his fellow knights for his famous sword blows that would "chop a man's skull down to his teeth". But he was also a great and fair king, beloved by the people of the land. Such would not be the case if he was simply a murderer.

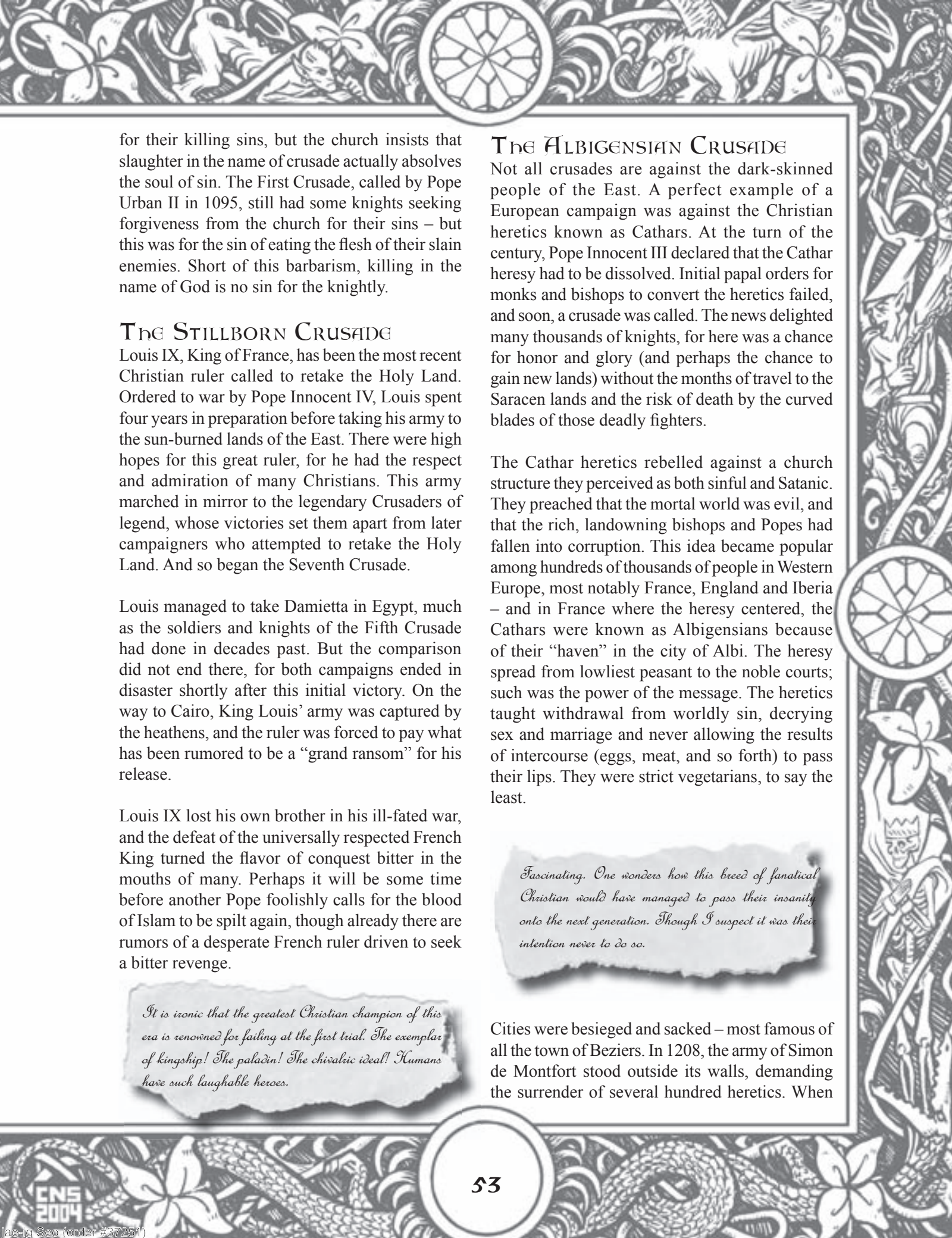
For the men of the church, chivalry is a tool of control that has all the chances of turning against its wielders. It is a sin to take another man's life, but most of the rulers of Europe are bound to a knightly code of chivalry that glorifies in the killing of one's enemies. Indeed, such is the measure of their prowess and honor. This has created a dangerous and unstable clash of ideals between the laws of the land, and the laws of the Lord.

The answer to this problem came in the form of church-sanctified violence. To remain in touch with the leaders of the world (and to remain leaders themselves) the men of God devised a way for the knights to remain Christian even through their sins of war, and have attempted to inspire the concept of chivalry into an expression of faithful duty. There is one word that chills the blood of any who hear it in this chaotic era. It stands for pious honor, sacred duty, and the glory of God in war. It is a concept developed solely for the Christian faith to maintain its hold on the ruling class and allows the wholesale slaughter of the church's many enemies.

That word is crusade.

It is a holy war, in fact, many holy wars, directed at the church's various rivals such as ungodly heretics and the heathens of the Islamic East. With this simple idea – that killing in the name of God is both glorious and noble – the church has managed to satisfy the hungers of the knightly rulers of Europe, and at the same time annihilate those who would stand against the spread of faith in the cross.

Certainly, some knights must perform penance (minor flagellation, fasting or intense prayer)



for their killing sins, but the church insists that slaughter in the name of crusade actually absolves the soul of sin. The First Crusade, called by Pope Urban II in 1095, still had some knights seeking forgiveness from the church for their sins – but this was for the sin of eating the flesh of their slain enemies. Short of this barbarism, killing in the name of God is no sin for the knightly.

### THE STILLBORN CRUSADE

Louis IX, King of France, has been the most recent Christian ruler called to retake the Holy Land. Ordered to war by Pope Innocent IV, Louis spent four years in preparation before taking his army to the sun-burned lands of the East. There were high hopes for this great ruler, for he had the respect and admiration of many Christians. This army marched in mirror to the legendary Crusaders of legend, whose victories set them apart from later campaigners who attempted to retake the Holy Land. And so began the Seventh Crusade.

Louis managed to take Damietta in Egypt, much as the soldiers and knights of the Fifth Crusade had done in decades past. But the comparison did not end there, for both campaigns ended in disaster shortly after this initial victory. On the way to Cairo, King Louis' army was captured by the heathens, and the ruler was forced to pay what has been rumored to be a “grand ransom” for his release.

Louis IX lost his own brother in his ill-fated war, and the defeat of the universally respected French King turned the flavor of conquest bitter in the mouths of many. Perhaps it will be some time before another Pope foolishly calls for the blood of Islam to be spilt again, though already there are rumors of a desperate French ruler driven to seek a bitter revenge.

*It is ironic that the greatest Christian champion of this era is renowned for failing at the first trial. The exemplar of kingship! The paladin! The chivalric ideal! Humans have such laughable heroes.*

### THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE

Not all crusades are against the dark-skinned people of the East. A perfect example of a European campaign was against the Christian heretics known as Cathars. At the turn of the century, Pope Innocent III declared that the Cathar heresy had to be dissolved. Initial papal orders for monks and bishops to convert the heretics failed, and soon, a crusade was called. The news delighted many thousands of knights, for here was a chance for honor and glory (and perhaps the chance to gain new lands) without the months of travel to the Saracen lands and the risk of death by the curved blades of those deadly fighters.

The Cathar heretics rebelled against a church structure they perceived as both sinful and Satanic. They preached that the mortal world was evil, and that the rich, landowning bishops and Popes had fallen into corruption. This idea became popular among hundreds of thousands of people in Western Europe, most notably France, England and Iberia – and in France where the heresy centered, the Cathars were known as Albigensians because of their “haven” in the city of Albi. The heresy spread from lowliest peasant to the noble courts; such was the power of the message. The heretics taught withdrawal from worldly sin, decrying sex and marriage and never allowing the results of intercourse (eggs, meat, and so forth) to pass their lips. They were strict vegetarians, to say the least.

*Fascinating. One wonders how this breed of fanatical Christian would have managed to pass their insanity onto the next generation. Though I suspect it was their intention never to do so.*

Cities were besieged and sacked – most famous of all the town of Beziers. In 1208, the army of Simon de Montfort stood outside its walls, demanding the surrender of several hundred heretics. When

the city leaders refused, the army attacked and slaughtered over 18,000 people. The churchmen with the army offered counsel on the battle, and are recorded as saying “Kill them all, for God knows His own.” Innocents were butchered along with the heretics within the city walls, justified by the church’s assurance that God will judge the innocent souls fairly and allow them into Heaven.

*That is putrid and cancerous. This is the behavior of goblins and their ilk, not so-called “reasoning” men.*

## BEING KNIGHTED

I have known two knights well enough to converse, and they tell differing tales of their ritual into knighthood. The first, Sir Mark of Glastonbury, told me of a ceremony before a wise bishop in the halls of a cathedral. Before the rite itself, he bathed alone in a bath of rose water, and spent the night in unspeaking vigil before the altar and the image of the crucified Christ. The ritual itself was a solemn occasion, performed by the bishop, and the knight received the collee – the light touch of a sword on the shoulder, naming him as a knight.

Lord Simon de Toulouse had a different experience, and one that (despite the wishes of the church) is much more common among the noble families of Europe. He was “dubbed” by his lord after exceptional service in training, squire duties, and battle. After kneeling and swearing an oath of fealty before his liege lord, he was given a firm tap on the side of the neck with his lord’s bared sword blade. This dubbing is known as the Unanswered Blow, and represents the last blow a lord is allowed to strike without the knight legally returning the treatment. More importantly, it is a sign from the lord that although he could have beheaded the prone applicant, he instead deemed him worthy of knighthood. As can be seen, there was little of religion in this matter, and this appears to be the custom throughout the continent. Such

a ceremony does not necessarily mean the newly-knighted warrior does not see himself as a soldier of Christ, but it remains a ritual based more on lords creating followers than the church accepting holy soldiers.

## OF KNIGHTLY THINGS

A landed knight spends his days overseeing the running of his estate (or more likely, hiring someone to do the job for him so he can leave and seek sport at the tournaments). An errant “wandering” knight with no land certainly spends most of his time traveling from tourney to tourney, seeking to compete in contests of the lance and trials of the sword. The rewards for success in these competitions are great, in both fame and wealth. Typically, the victorious knight claims also ownership of the fallen warrior’s horse, and is free to ransom it back to the defeated knight or keep it as he wishes.

When called to battle (or even crusade) the errant knight answers the call to gather with a small retinue of servants and squires. The landowning knight might assemble men-at-arms from among the peasantry of his region into a rough regiment, though there are those knights that pay their liege lord in hard currency for the right to stay away from battle. Most knights outside of the Templar order possess some small estate, and usually follow the call to battle with a small group of personal servants and attendants.

A knight’s weaponry consists of the sword, shield and mace, and his armor is layers of cloth padding, under a full-body coat of small chain links (which I’m reliably told is hellish to wear in a day-long march and worse in battle). The helmet is a full-face affair, with narrow eye slits offering excellent protection. Naturally, it makes sense for these valiant and vicious men to use the best quality protection available. The richest (and undoubtedly luckiest) nobles may even be able to petition the Varangar for “dwarven-made” armor. These men must be able to offer a kingly sum indeed.

*Only cowards coat themselves in layers of iron when they go to battle and call themselves heroes. They are doubly foolish, for a skilled bowman can kill an armored knight in a heartbeat.*

On both the field of battle and the chivalrous tournaments, a knight's heraldry is the most essential part of his appearance. Though little official ruling exists on the creation of family emblems and the colors a knight might display (many family members do indeed alter the symbols and colors each generation) the practice of displaying heraldry is a serious one. In the tournaments, it presents each competitor as his own unique warrior, pleasing the crowds as noblemen, easily recognized by their colors, fight for honor and glory.

At war, displays of family crests and color easily allow fellow fighters to identify those who share their side and those who oppose them. No knight can flee the engagement without bringing shame upon his family, for his colors are there for all to see. Lastly, there is the logical reason of ransom. A knight with elaborate heraldry and obvious colors is declaring two things by entering a battle: that he does not fear drawing the enemy's attention, and that he is wealthy far beyond the reach of the common man. That last means, that should he be captured alive, he can be ransomed for a noble's riches.

## KNIGHTLY ORDERS

There are many orders available for a prospective squire or established knight to join. Each is an organization of surprising complexity, ranging from landowning nobles that may give up part or all of their land to the order, to the landless errant knights that wander Europe and the Holy Land seeking to do good in the order's name, and in most cases, the monks and brothers who remain at the order's founding place and work to control

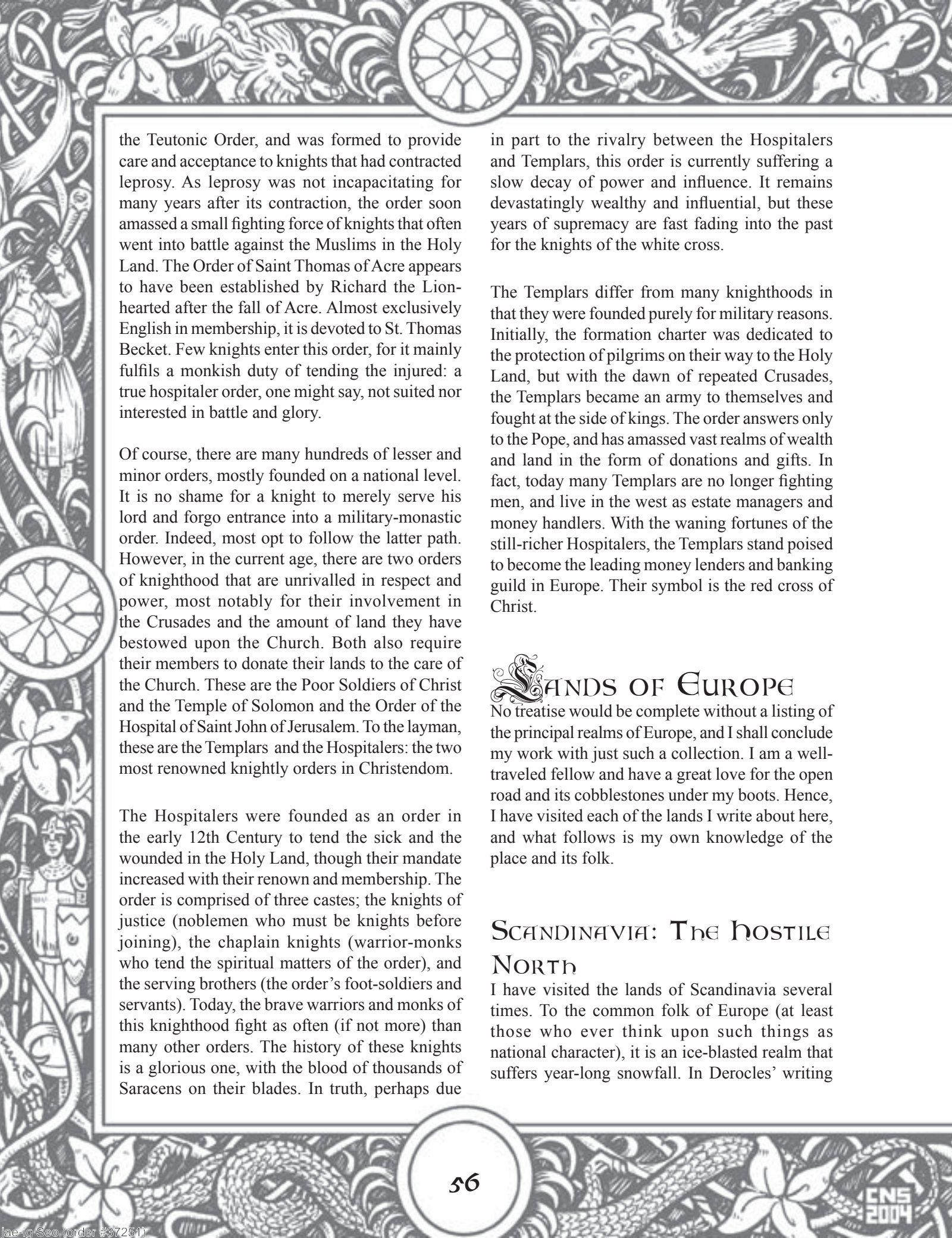
the knighthood's financial fortune.

The Order of the Glorious Saint Mary and the Order of the Hatchet remain the two largest knighthoods available exclusively to women. The first of these is a recent contrivance from the Italian city-states, seeking to grant female knights the same religious exemptions that male crusaders enjoy. It has not received papal sanction or approval yet, though there has been little hostility raised against its members. The Order of the Hatchet has a somewhat more violent formation. It was founded at the close of the 12th Century in honor of the women of the village of Tortosa in Iberia, who rallied the town against Moorish siege, using the axes they gathered from their homes. It is thought that the Dames of the Hatchet no longer exist, for no record I have seen shows of any new members admitted after the initial knights some 60 years ago. However, that is not to say there are none, and it would be a novelty (but certainly not a farce) if a woman of the order turned up in European courts today.

The Teutonic Knights of Saint Mary's Hospital in Jerusalem is an order that remains a rare gem for any scholar to describe. Founded in the final years of the 10th century, after the siege of Acre, it was born in the name of giving shelter and hospital needs to injured German crusaders. It is an ambitious order to say the least, which ties in nicely with its links to the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire. From the very first years of its founding, the Teutonic Order has cut further east into Hungary, the Slavic lands and the Holy land itself, carving out new territory that is now governed by the Order. Though the current Pope, Innocent IV, has decreed that all the Order's possessions are property of the papacy, the knights of the Teutonic Order, distracted and driven to conquest, do not appear to be listening. The symbol of the Order is a stylized flared-tipped cross in black, with a central shield motif sporting the two-headed Imperial eagle of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Order of Saint Lazarus was founded alongside





the Teutonic Order, and was formed to provide care and acceptance to knights that had contracted leprosy. As leprosy was not incapacitating for many years after its contraction, the order soon amassed a small fighting force of knights that often went into battle against the Muslims in the Holy Land. The Order of Saint Thomas of Acre appears to have been established by Richard the Lion-hearted after the fall of Acre. Almost exclusively English in membership, it is devoted to St. Thomas Becket. Few knights enter this order, for it mainly fulfils a monkish duty of tending the injured: a true hospitaler order, one might say, not suited nor interested in battle and glory.

Of course, there are many hundreds of lesser and minor orders, mostly founded on a national level. It is no shame for a knight to merely serve his lord and forgo entrance into a military-monastic order. Indeed, most opt to follow the latter path. However, in the current age, there are two orders of knighthood that are unrivalled in respect and power, most notably for their involvement in the Crusades and the amount of land they have bestowed upon the Church. Both also require their members to donate their lands to the care of the Church. These are the Poor Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon and the Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem. To the layman, these are the Templars and the Hospitalers: the two most renowned knightly orders in Christendom.

The Hospitalers were founded as an order in the early 12th Century to tend the sick and the wounded in the Holy Land, though their mandate increased with their renown and membership. The order is comprised of three castes; the knights of justice (noblemen who must be knights before joining), the chaplain knights (warrior-monks who tend the spiritual matters of the order), and the serving brothers (the order's foot-soldiers and servants). Today, the brave warriors and monks of this knighthood fight as often (if not more) than many other orders. The history of these knights is a glorious one, with the blood of thousands of Saracens on their blades. In truth, perhaps due

in part to the rivalry between the Hospitalers and Templars, this order is currently suffering a slow decay of power and influence. It remains devastatingly wealthy and influential, but these years of supremacy are fast fading into the past for the knights of the white cross.

The Templars differ from many knighthoods in that they were founded purely for military reasons. Initially, the formation charter was dedicated to the protection of pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land, but with the dawn of repeated Crusades, the Templars became an army to themselves and fought at the side of kings. The order answers only to the Pope, and has amassed vast realms of wealth and land in the form of donations and gifts. In fact, today many Templars are no longer fighting men, and live in the west as estate managers and money handlers. With the waning fortunes of the still-richer Hospitalers, the Templars stand poised to become the leading money lenders and banking guild in Europe. Their symbol is the red cross of Christ.

## LANDS OF EUROPE

No treatise would be complete without a listing of the principal realms of Europe, and I shall conclude my work with just such a collection. I am a well-traveled fellow and have a great love for the open road and its cobblestones under my boots. Hence, I have visited each of the lands I write about here, and what follows is my own knowledge of the place and its folk.

### SCANDINAVIA: THE HOSTILE NORTH

I have visited the lands of Scandinavia several times. To the common folk of Europe (at least those who ever think upon such things as national character), it is an ice-blasted realm that suffers year-long snowfall. In Derocles' writing

“Regarding the North of the World”, he describes the place in no uncertain terms: “It is home to barbarians and the descendants of barbarians, and a region where inhuman creatures dwell, kept at bay by the axes of the vicious natives.”

He is correct, but only reveals the smallest part of the whole picture in his selective honesty.

The name Scandinavia refers to the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Each of these kingdoms share an origin and a people.

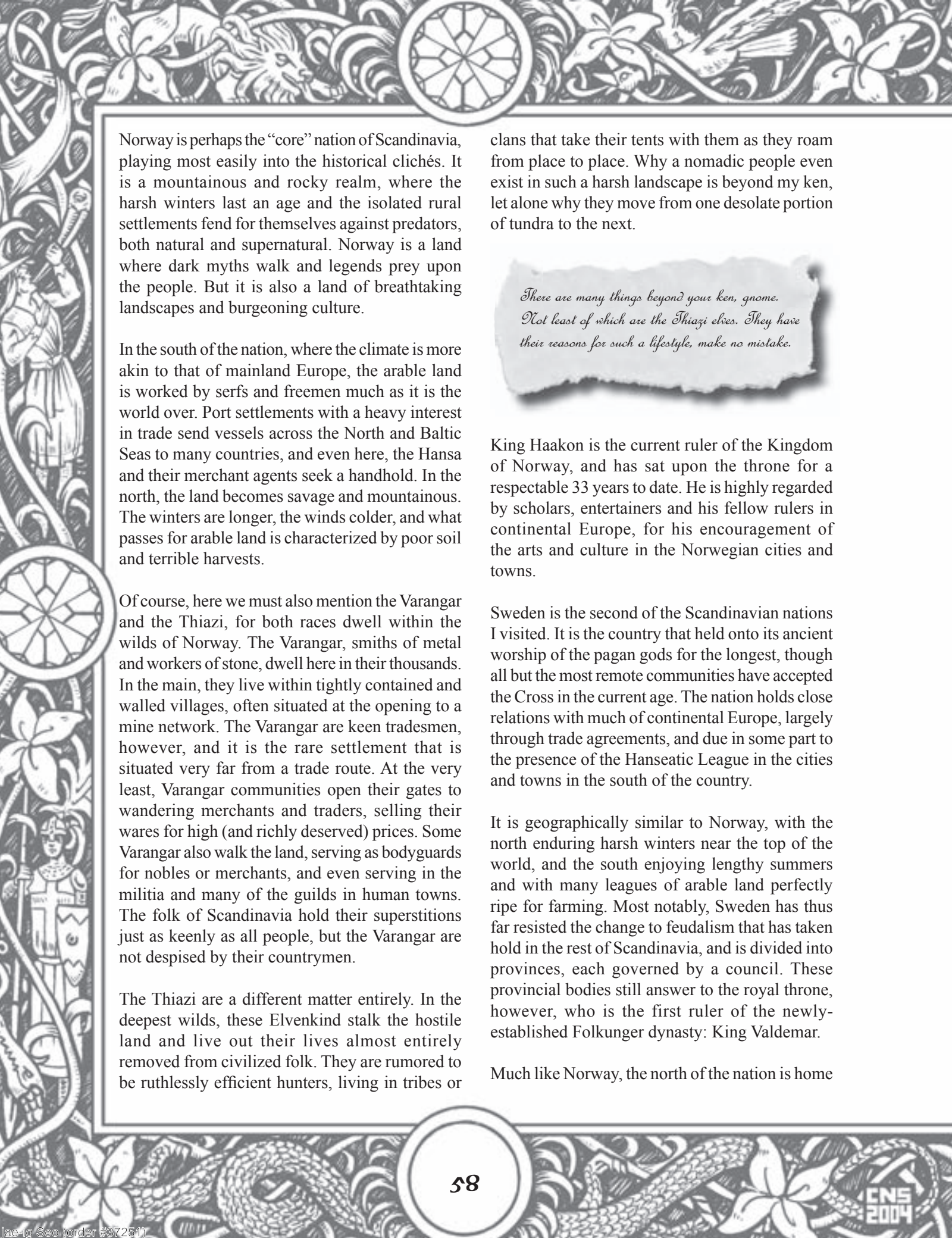
In history, the Scandinavian people are known by all as the mighty and ferocious Vikings that raided Europe for so many decades. These vicious raiders, followers of old pagan gods, beached their longboats on coastal settlements and stormed into the midst of the natives, slaying those who stood in their way. They captured and raped the women, slaughtered the men who stood against them, and filled their holds with the treasures and goods of the settlements that fell to their fury.

Much more influential – and often less demonized by lay folks – were the Scandinavian colonists that spread across Europe and settled wherever they wished. These were the



*This entire realm stretches like a blade above the main body of Europe. One has to wonder if the “God” that shaped the world has a sense of irony.*

Normans, and many of those living in the Western lands and the British Isles share direct blood-ties as the descendents of these settlers.



Norway is perhaps the “core” nation of Scandinavia, playing most easily into the historical clichés. It is a mountainous and rocky realm, where the harsh winters last an age and the isolated rural settlements fend for themselves against predators, both natural and supernatural. Norway is a land where dark myths walk and legends prey upon the people. But it is also a land of breathtaking landscapes and burgeoning culture.

In the south of the nation, where the climate is more akin to that of mainland Europe, the arable land is worked by serfs and freemen much as it is the world over. Port settlements with a heavy interest in trade send vessels across the North and Baltic Seas to many countries, and even here, the Hansa and their merchant agents seek a handhold. In the north, the land becomes savage and mountainous. The winters are longer, the winds colder, and what passes for arable land is characterized by poor soil and terrible harvests.

Of course, here we must also mention the Varangar and the Thiazi, for both races dwell within the wilds of Norway. The Varangar, smiths of metal and workers of stone, dwell here in their thousands. In the main, they live within tightly contained and walled villages, often situated at the opening to a mine network. The Varangar are keen tradesmen, however, and it is the rare settlement that is situated very far from a trade route. At the very least, Varangar communities open their gates to wandering merchants and traders, selling their wares for high (and richly deserved) prices. Some Varangar also walk the land, serving as bodyguards for nobles or merchants, and even serving in the militia and many of the guilds in human towns. The folk of Scandinavia hold their superstitions just as keenly as all people, but the Varangar are not despised by their countrymen.

The Thiazi are a different matter entirely. In the deepest wilds, these Elvenkind stalk the hostile land and live out their lives almost entirely removed from civilized folk. They are rumored to be ruthlessly efficient hunters, living in tribes or

clans that take their tents with them as they roam from place to place. Why a nomadic people even exist in such a harsh landscape is beyond my ken, let alone why they move from one desolate portion of tundra to the next.


*There are many things beyond your ken, gnome.  
Not least of which are the Thiazi elves. They have  
their reasons for such a lifestyle, make no mistake.*

King Haakon is the current ruler of the Kingdom of Norway, and has sat upon the throne for a respectable 33 years to date. He is highly regarded by scholars, entertainers and his fellow rulers in continental Europe, for his encouragement of the arts and culture in the Norwegian cities and towns.

Sweden is the second of the Scandinavian nations I visited. It is the country that held onto its ancient worship of the pagan gods for the longest, though all but the most remote communities have accepted the Cross in the current age. The nation holds close relations with much of continental Europe, largely through trade agreements, and due in some part to the presence of the Hanseatic League in the cities and towns in the south of the country.

It is geographically similar to Norway, with the north enduring harsh winters near the top of the world, and the south enjoying lengthy summers and with many leagues of arable land perfectly ripe for farming. Most notably, Sweden has thus far resisted the change to feudalism that has taken hold in the rest of Scandinavia, and is divided into provinces, each governed by a council. These provincial bodies still answer to the royal throne, however, who is the first ruler of the newly-established Folkunger dynasty: King Valdemar.

Much like Norway, the north of the nation is home



to the nomadic tribes of Thiazi, while Varangar settlements dot the landscape at infrequent intervals along trade routes. The presence of these near-humans is tolerated much the same as it is throughout Norway, and in some isolated regions, the Varangar are treated with respect and are considered equals.

Denmark, attached to the northernmost point of the Holy Roman Empire, is the smallest of the Scandinavian lands, with the exception of the oft-overlooked Iceland, which is annexed by the Kingdom of Norway. Here, the farmland is fertile and the soil is rich. The towns thrive and grow (especially with the strong presence of the Hanseatic League and its merchant agents), and trade is the lifeblood of the realm. While the people of Denmark endure heavy burdens of military taxation under the current ruler, those with mercantile interests use Denmark as a funnel from the seas to bring trade down into the Holy Roman Empire.

It goes almost without saying that the Hansa have relatively sizeable populations in many of Denmark's largest towns. Situated as they are on major trading routes, and in such close proximity to the cities of the Holy Roman Empire and the other Hanseatic cities of Northern Europe, it is an ideal place for my kin to dwell and prosper.

*Yes, you Hansa, among all of the "near-humans" truly have spread like a plague of rats.*

The current ruler of Denmark, King Abel, ascended to the throne when he deposed and killed his brother Erik earlier this annum in the Year of Our Lord 1250. Time will tell if his rule will be a long one, but I suspect this violent king will meet his end in battle before he reaches old age. His love of hunting and violent sport is well-known.

## THE BRITISH ISLES

The blood of the British people is the blood of Europe's past and present. These lands have suffered invasion countless times, and the population is a mix of overlapping invaders that settled and mixed with the established natives. The Celts, the Saxons, the Romans, the Norse and the Normans – the people of the British Isles claim descent from each and all of these peoples.

In truth, the lands are not smoothly united, and each invasion sent the original Celtic inhabitants further west into harsh countryside, while the Saxons and the Normans settled in the most fertile lands. All of the British Isles accepted the Cross relatively quickly along with mainland Western Europe, though the variations of church rituals performed in the Celtic-dominated areas of Ireland would have a foreign cast to the eyes of a Roman Catholic priest. Also worthy of mention is the fact that the British Isles are excellent sites for mining.

England has provided Europe with more than its fair share of famous kings, most notably the semi-mythic Arthur, whose exploits form some of the base of the romantic ideals of chivalry, and the renowned paladin of God, Richard the Lionhearted. King Richard ruled some five decades ago, but his legacy lives on in the thousands of crusaders and knights that seek to attain similar glory and carve their names into history with the edge of their blades.

The nation boasts the most arable land in the Isles, and is unsurprisingly dense with tilled farmland. Cooling weather changes over the last couple of centuries mean that England's once thriving wine industry is struggling with ruin, and the vineyards are fewer and fewer as time goes by. However, it is not uncommon for town folk and even rural peasants to purchase incredibly cheap imported French wine.

The people of England are notoriously superstitious, and look upon the presence of near-humans with guarded distrust, even the few settlements of

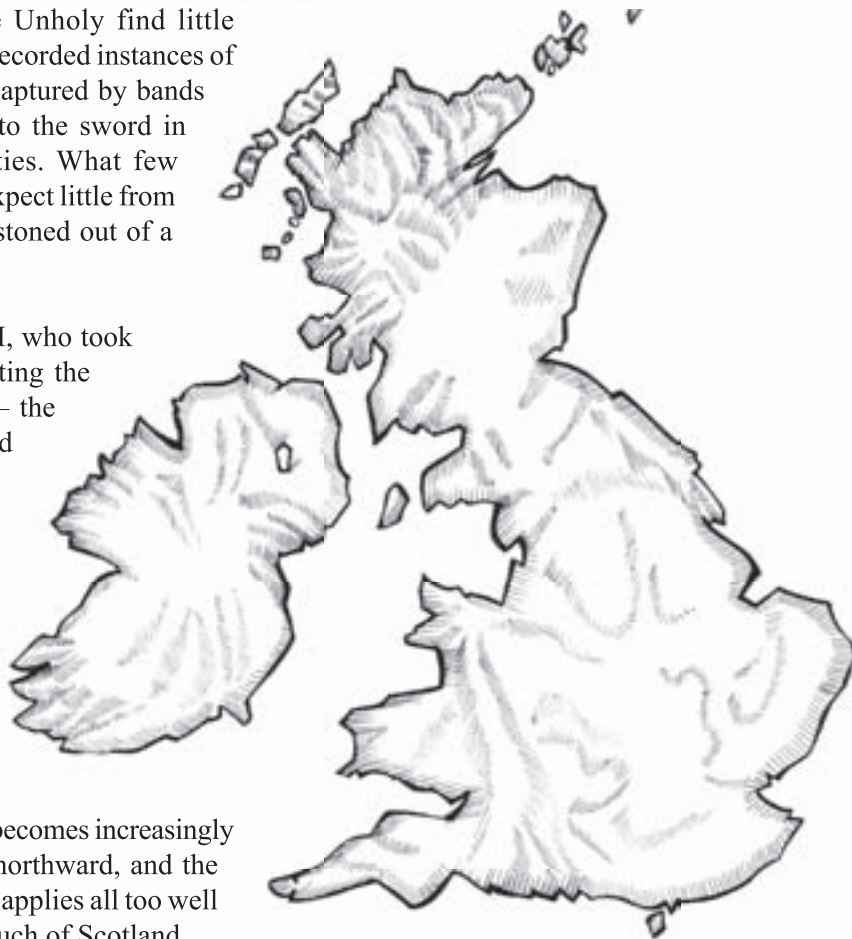
Cenedl that exist here. The Unholy find little tolerance here, and there are recorded instances of goblin bandit groups being captured by bands of English knights and put to the sword in lieu of regular hunting parties. What few Unholy live in England can expect little from the peasantry besides being stoned out of a settlement.

The current ruler is Henry III, who took power as a boy when inheriting the crown from John Lackland – the king who famously signed the Magna Carta, limiting his royal excesses and treacheries.

Scotland is England's neighbor to the north. It is populated by a mixture of descendants of various invasions and the original barbaric tribesmen that were native to the region. The land becomes increasingly mountainous as one travels northward, and the name "Highlands" is one that applies all too well to the craggy landscape of much of Scotland. The nation shares an uneasy relationship with England to the south. The King of Scotland, Alexander II, is technically a vassal ally to Henry III, but the relationship is frequently bitter between the two. Alexander also turns his attentions to some of the eastern regions of Scotland, where the Norwegians still occasionally attempt to solidify their presence by claiming territory.

Varangar outposts are rare but not unheard of in this kingdom, and the Cenedl have several small communities in the lowlands close to the English border.

*You fail to mention the other creatures of "myth" that roam the mountains, such as the Nuckelavee, or Kelpy. They are rare indeed, but these creatures do exist in the far wilderness.*



Wales is to the west of England, and it is here that many of the original inhabitants of the Isles made their home after successive invasions. The people here are proud of their Celtic ties, and are frequently hostile to the English. This is not without support, either, for the previous ruler Llewelyn the Great, had papal support in rising up and retaking small parcels of land back from the English lords. This ruler, wed to the bastard daughter of King John Lackland and beloved by the Welsh people as a true Prince of Wales, died only a decade ago. And yet change is fast in coming.

Currently, the arable farmland is already being eyed by the English and Norman lords that push into Wales once again. Castles are being constructed by these rich nobles, and the Welsh stand leaderless against this incursion. There is talk

that Henry III will cede the crown lands of Wales to his own son, naming an English lord as the new Prince of Wales. Such would leave a sour taste in the mouths of many Welsh folk, but there is little the disorganized and vastly outnumbered people of the realm can do about it in the immediate future. It will surely not be long before another rebel leader arises and takes the title back from the English, however.

The Cenedl have several sizeable settlements in the land of Wales, and though they keep to themselves and generally stay clear of politics, it is not unknown for a few political idealists to join forces with the rebel armies. Mostly, these communities trade with humans when they wish, and maintain an unassuming distance the rest of the time.

Lastly, Ireland stands separate from the main Isles; a bastion of independence and self-sufficiency. Here, the Celtic Church is in favor, and the native people still thrive in their kin-based family units, clans and provinces. There are many minor “kingdoms” across Ireland, each overseen by a council of elected men and women known as a “tuath”. These councils elect a “king”, known as a Ri, and in turn, several Ri will offer support to an Ard-Ri: the “high king”. This system is arcane and quaint in practice, and it suffers under the yoke of English and Norman invaders.

Ireland is a bountiful and verdant country, though the excellent farmland thins and lessens as one travels further west. It should come as no surprise to any reader that the English and French nobles that settle in Ireland have done so almost exclusively along the eastern coast, and the communities there are thriving and prosperous. To the west, where the Celtic people dwell in their smaller villages, the land is somewhat less plentiful.

It is here that the Elvenkind dwell in their thousands. It goes without saying that these beings stay far above the affairs and wars of men, and pay no attention to the demarcations and jurisdictions of human borders. The Seelie nation is based in Ireland in its entirety, and an elf settlement only a

few hours walk from a human city will see little to no contact between the two communities. It is also here that the Cenedl dwell in the main, though these folk are more approachable to the British and aren't regarded as aloof, vain and ungodly creatures such as the reclusive elves.

*How we are regarded is of no concern to us, little Kansa. If any race should fear the humans standing outside their homes with pitchforks and blades it is your ilk and their much-envied fortunes.*

## THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Far from the eagle-bearing imperators and senates of Ancient Rome, the Holy Roman Empire is a feudal state, led by European nobles that meet to elect an Emperor to serve as temporal overlord. The appointment of the Emperor must also be ratified by the Pope, and in some cases, the Pope has seen fit to depose an emperor that displeased him – such as in the current turmoil over the death of Frederick II. It covers a sizeable portion of Europe, principally comprised of the kingdoms of Germany and Sicily. While it is a grand nation, and boasts colossal cities overflowing with trade opportunities, cathedrals and universities, the Holy Roman Empire has always lacked the solid unity of France, its direct neighbor to the west.

The Emperor sits in a position that has pretensions of glory far higher than reality allows. Just as the Pope is the Vicar of Christ and the voice of God in spiritual matters, so the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire is conceived as God's “temporal” voice. This is a wonderful delusion, for although his authority is deemed to stretch over the Christian world, in reality an Emperor holds little sway over any of the other lands of Europe, and certainly none at all in a unified monarchy such as France, that has the strength and vision of a beloved king like Louis IX.

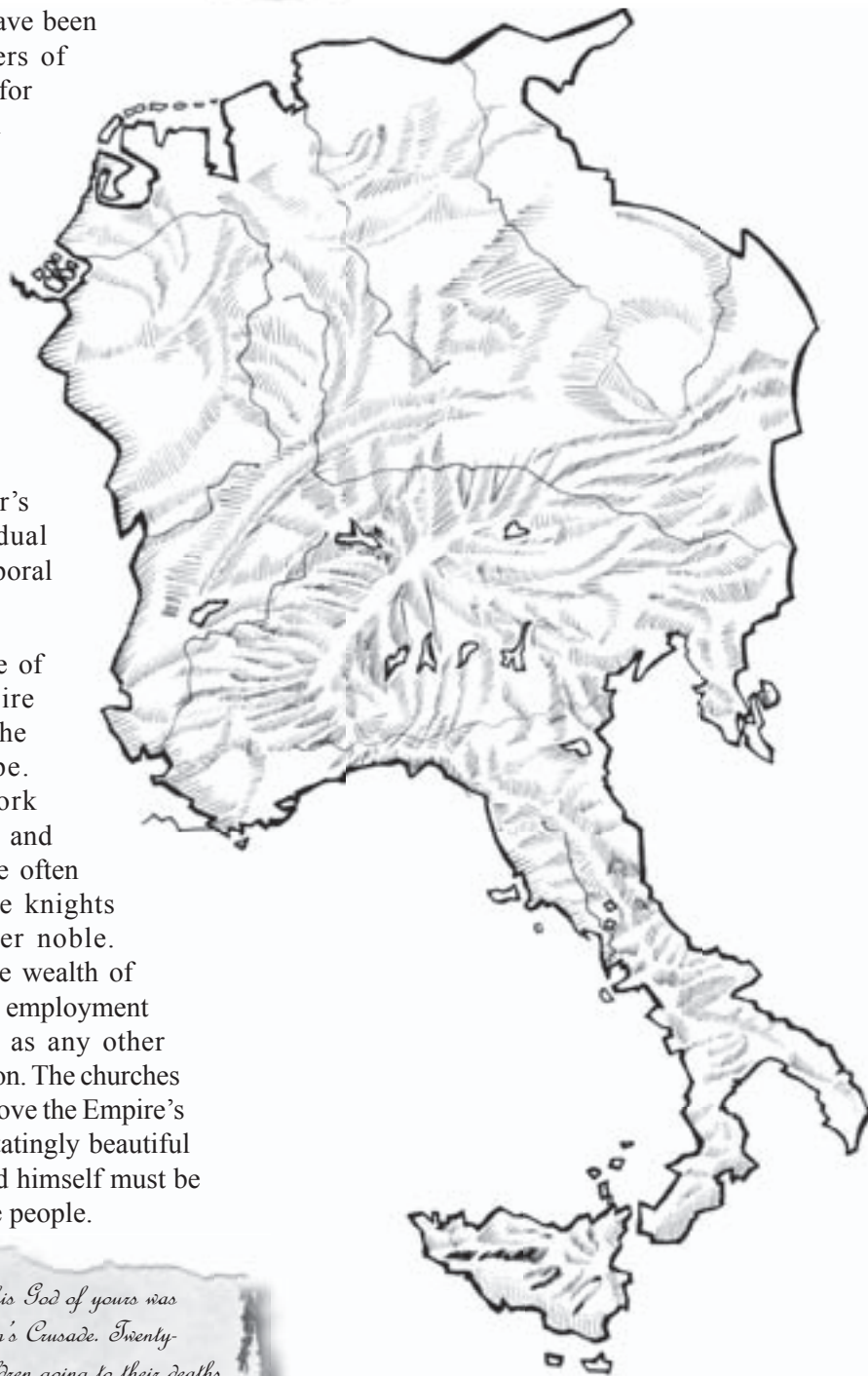
Much of the tensions between the offices of the

Pope and the Emperor have been between different holders of the positions jockeying for strength and domination of both papacy in the city-states of Italy and overall leadership of Christian Europe. It has fallen into the Pope's favor most recently, and though the Italian city-states are technically part of the empire, the distance between the main bulk of the Emperor's lands and these individual cities make such a temporal union difficult at best.


The day-to-day existence of the people of the Empire is little different from the rest of those in Europe. Rural communities work the land for themselves and their landlords, and more often than not those lords are knights in vassalage to a higher noble. Townsfolk have the same wealth of opportunity in regards to employment and standards of living as any other prosperous European nation. The churches and cathedrals that rise above the Empire's horizons are often devastatingly beautiful to behold, and surely God himself must be moved by the piety of the people.

*Oh yes, surely. I imagine this God of yours was greatly moved by the Children's Crusade. Twenty-thousand of this nation's children going to their deaths and slavery in the Holy Land! Such folly is almost*

Germany's landscape is broken into regions ruled by the elector princes, who govern themselves



whether an Emperor sits upon the throne or not. In truth, though the title comes with lands of its own, the Emperor's crown does not come with absolute dominance over the German subjects, for the princes are too powerful in their own right.



This tenuously-bound society is another reason the Empire lacks the union and power of France, and it is largely due to the previous Emperor's generosity in granting rights of authority to his nobles. Some of the larger towns have actually gained a degree of independence from the nobility and clergy, with settlement leaders amassing enough wealth and power to stand separate from standard methods of government.

The Holy Roman Empire prospers despite the chaotic lives and intrigues of its noble classes. The population is booming and towns are both expanding and being founded at an incredible rate. Many of the most urbanized areas are located in the south and west, though the north has its fair share of trading ports. In fact, the Hanseatic League was founded on the northern coast of Germany, and has many of its members' headquarters and bases are found in the city of Hamburg. The Empire does a great deal of its trade with factors in the Baltic Sea, and much of the money that enters comes through the hands of the Hansa first.

It will come as no surprise to any reader that the Hansa gather in the port cities and along trading routes in great numbers – though with a population as small as ours, any such figure must be taken with a grain of salt.

## ITALIAN CITY STATES

Caught in the storm between the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, the cities of the Italian peninsula are a law unto themselves. These settlements (Florence, Sienna, Pisa, and so on) are dynamically constructed small city-states of around 30,000 people, each serving as an autonomous body with its own political interests and financial strengths. There is little unity or cohesion between any of them – indeed, there are frequently battles and talk of assassination attempts – and thus any effort to form a stable nation are somewhat far-fetched. What has occurred, through the burgeoning political warfare and mercantile interests of so many different institutions, is a

situation like no other in Europe. Any realm can claim a number of battles, heresies and a dozen claims that make it a hotbed of conflict and scholarly interest, but the Italian city-states are most assuredly unique.

Each city is governed by innumerable factions, alliances, institutions and groups, with varying degrees of military, monetary and religious interests. Much of these groups' efforts are spent counteracting the fortunes of their rival groups in other cities, which sends the entire region ever closer to some kind of minor, skirmish-driven civil war. It is a confusing system.

At the most basic level, some of the conflict can be defined between the two groups known as Guelphs and Ghibellines. Of course, the infighting even within these groups is savage and often underhand, but an essential breakdown of the two would define them as the former: those who are usually in support of the Empire's rule, and the latter: those who support the primacy of the papacy. Nobles, churchmen and hundreds of invested merchants use this ideological divide to wage a shadow war against their enemies, though the conflicts frequently take to the battlefield as well.

The tension is further escalated by a degree of class warfare. The magnati (noble caste) are often embroiled in civil disputes over the rights and privileges they enjoy over the emerging popolo caste (artisans and craftsmen). The latter group has designs on entirely removing the nobility from political and institutional power, thereby establishing a system of government removed from the clutches of the landowning aristocracy.

It is the conclusion of this scholar that the city-states are a fascinating place to chronicle, but a ghastly place to call one's home.

*Most human settlements are like hives, with each insect working mindlessly to support the ruler. It seems that someone has kicked this hive around somewhat, and there are many insects with pretensions of lordship.*



## FRANCE

Once the bulk of the Western Roman Empire hundreds of years ago, France is at the apex of its power in the current age. Truly it seems as though the kingdom can achieve no further victories and amass no greater a reputation for chivalrous lords, pious royalty and faithful peasantry.

Or perhaps the truth is somewhat darker. This is a nation divided by conflicting interests and yet united by faith and royal supremacy.

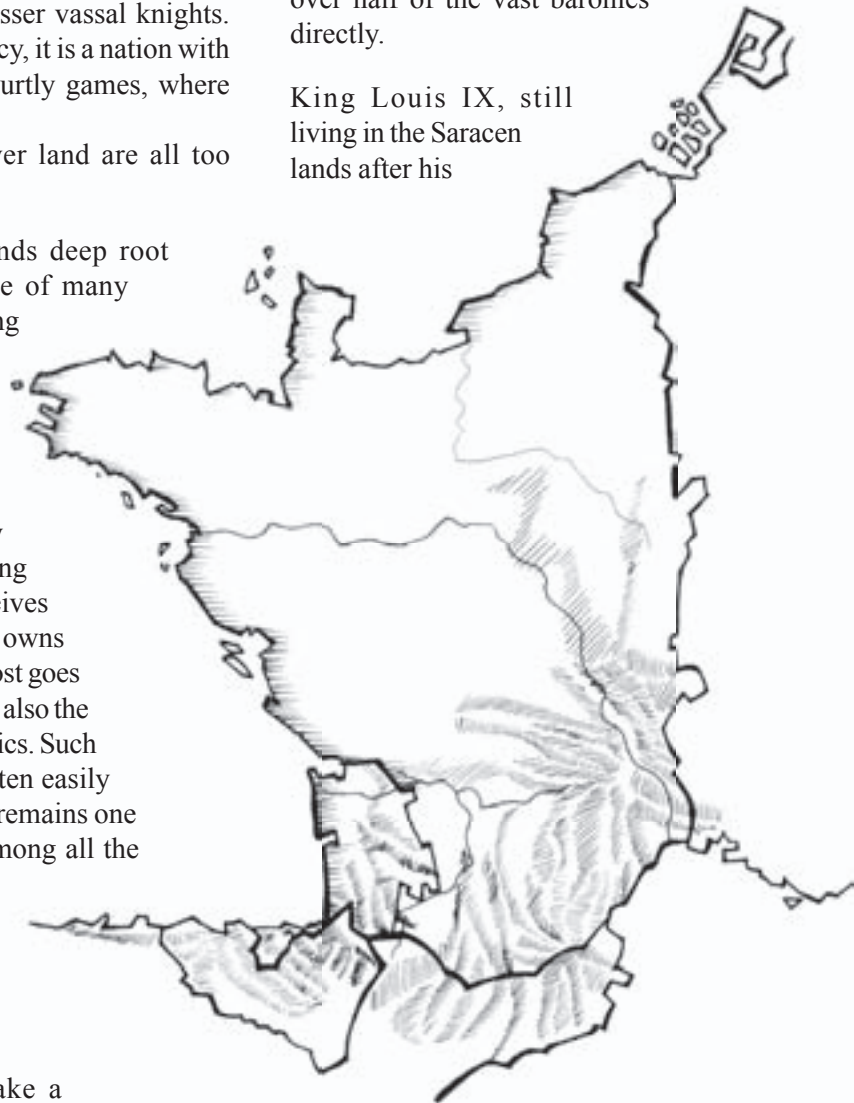
France is a vast country, consisting of several huge counties and duchies of land, each with a noble ruler and a horde of lesser vassal knights. From the view of the aristocracy, it is a nation with horrendously complicated courtly games, where assassinations, poisonings and disputes over land are all too common.

The Church's corruption finds deep root here, for France is the home of many grand cathedrals and towering abbeys. Bishops and abbots are powerful landowners with a great deal of wealth and interest invested in local politics. Clashes between the church and the nobility are extremely common, ranging from disputes over who receives the peasantry's taxes to who owns which stretches of land. It almost goes without saying that France was also the source of the Albigensian heretics. Such ungodly activity is not forgotten easily or quickly, and yet the nation remains one of the most devout overall among all the European countries. Indeed, the King is a deeply religious soul, who is rumored to perform penance and prayer far beyond his needs.

Feuding nobles usually make a realm unstable, but in the case of

France, the threat that should be magnified by current furor is actually relatively serene for such a vast nation. The expulsion of the English monarchy has left many English lords in France forced to swear vassalage to Norman barons and overlords, centralized in the duchies of Normandy and Poitou. This sits ill in the bellies of many such lords, who wish to see Henry III reclaim the lands England once held on French soil. Currently the only land claimed in France by the English crown is the tiny duchy of Aquitaine. And yet, despite this instability, the King (who is not even present in the nation) holds dominion over half of the vast baronies directly.

King Louis IX, still living in the Saracen lands after his



recent ransom and freedom from the heathens, enjoys a near saintly popularity among the people of France (and indeed, much of Europe). All of this, despite his utterly crushing defeat in a crusade, his being largely responsible for the continued growth of the Inquisition in France, and his avowed dislike of the Jewish faith.

*I was given to understand that the Jewish faith was universally frowned upon by all outside it. This king probably earns great respect for his public condemnation of these folk.*

Truly, this is a land of confusing conflicts.

Each of the baronies is self-governing and even those directly ruled by the king are overseen by loyal vassals. Before and during his continued absence, King Louis appointed many reliable and trustworthy holy men to investigate the nobles, bailiffs and governors of France and determine which were truly loyal. Those that were deemed untrustworthy or potentially treacherous were summarily removed from power and replaced by proven allies. And there is no shortage of such honest and loyal nobles, let alone landless knights that seek to attain such a position. What the world is seeing in Louis IX is a living legend that will surely be immortalized in history.

Each of the duchies is geographically distinct, for France is a large enough land that Flanders (bordering the Holy Roman Empire on the north-east) bears little resemblance to Toulouse (in the south-west, bordering Iberia). As a general rule, the northern duchies boast excellent farmland, huge cities, and increasing in number as one moves further north, excellent vineyards, such as those of Burgundy and Flanders. Trade is lucrative here, and the large cities cater for any need or desire – at least, in regards to the mercantile art. My people originated from this region, and there are many outposts of the Hanseatic League here. Most cities can boast at least one warehouse or dockside office.

The center of France is mountainous and almost entirely rural, as are some areas of the eastern borders where the colossal Alp mountain range marks the divide between the kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire. Here, settlements become smaller and the monasteries much less grand.

The south of the nation appears much like the north, though on a slightly smaller scale. Here, the towns are not quite so prosperous and trade-filled. There are also reminders of the Cathar heresy if one knows where to look, in the form of houses and buildings that were never rebuilt, or in the gleaming face of newly-restored cathedrals that suffered attack in the battles of the crusade.

## IBERIA

Like much of Europe, Iberia is a land divided. With this region ranging south from France and almost reaching the tip of Africa, it is no surprise that the greatest divide Iberia faces is one of warring religions, and not merely territory.

*Killing in the name of religion seems to be the rallying cry of this age. This "Iberia" may be a nexus for such violence, but it is merely one of many.*

It is a realm that has suffered invasion many times, though it traces its roots back to the age of the world where men first came to understand the use and construction of bronze tools. In this respect the history of Iberia and its people is much like the British Isles: an ancient land, populated by tribal folk who repeatedly endure invasion. With Iberia, the invaders were no Norse Vikings or Norman knights. Instead, the natives originally encountered the Phoenicians, who arrived in large sailing vessels and established trading colonies along the coasts. In the passing of time, Iberia was controlled by Carthage, and then fell under the supremacy of Rome after the Punic Wars. Rome's rule lasted for 6 centuries without interruption, until that empire also dissolved and grew weak, just as Carthage and the Phoenicians had before.

A Germanic tribe known as the Visigoths then came and settled in the land, migrating from central Europe. It was not for another 200 years (in the early 700's) that the Muslims also came to dwell there. From North Africa they came, and dominated the southern peninsula, spreading the faith of Islam and reaching north to take more and more of the Christian territory. With the Cross in the north and the Crescent in the south, it is because of this unsteady balance that Iberia constantly stands on the edge of civil war.

The age of Moorish domination is long over, and the Christian kingdoms rise in financial power and military might. Aragon, Castile, Leon, Navarre and Portugal are all under the influence of the Cross and Christian nobility. There are many hundreds of knights that reside in Iberia, and is a prime location for many a knight errant to seek out his fame and fortune in battle against the Muslims. In fact, Iberia is one of the strongholds of both the Templar and the Hospitaller knightly orders. These voluntarily landless knights, having sworn their property to the church, seek out heathens to battle and Christians to protect. Iberia becomes an excellent source of dedicated work for the orders between crusades.


The civil war that always threatens to erupt is known as the Reconquista. It is so named because of the Christian desire to completely liberate the peninsula of Islamic invaders and beat the heathens back to North Africa. In the south of Iberia,

in mirror to the Christian kingdoms, several sultanates and minor fiefdoms make up the Muslim-dominated region called al-Andalus.

The cities of Iberia are a visual wonder, born from the conflicting architecture of Roman and African invaders. There are huge markets that do significant trade; merchants from across the continent and the Mediterranean Sea venture to Iberia to unload and sell cargo. Art is a lucrative export that finds a home in many manors and castles across Europe.

Muslim Iberia is a renowned haven of science and philosophical learning. There are texts and scrolls that originate from Islamic scholars of al-Andalus that describe surgical operations performed with knowledge and skill far beyond the doctors of the Christian lands. Stargazing





astronomers, poets, botanists, geographers and cartographers – all are found in Muslim Iberia in scores. It is a cultured land to say the least. But it has its darker side...

In the Muslim ports, Tauran vessels frequently dock and exchange their cargoes for coin or other wares. Indeed, to say that al-Andalus is a great haven for Tauran pirates would be something of an understatement, and the southern cities provide excellent places to distribute stolen wares to the black market. It is also a place of relative solace for the Unholy races, who are treated with less derision in lands where the Crescent of Islam holds sway.

## BYZANTIUM

The crucial differences between the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire are both issues of territory and religion. While the former nation is a loosely-held alliance of principalities under the dominion of the Roman Catholic Church, the latter is simply a collection of unbound, unrelated states that follow the Orthodox Church. Geographically unsound, the states that make up the Empire have almost no economic contact, and there can never be a solid foundation of trade upon which the Empire could grow. Worse, a succession of foolish rulers, border wars with a variety of enemies (most notably the Seljuk Turks) and various nations separating from the Empire are beginning to signal the end of the realm.

In short, the Byzantine Empire, situated in the lands on the cusp between Europe and Asia, is slowly falling into ruin. It will not be many more years before this last light of the ancient Roman Empire is extinguished for all time.

The capital of the Empire is Constantinople, once called Byzantium. It was renamed for Emperor Constantine I, who was responsible for the conversion of the old Roman Empire to Christianity. It is because of this heritage that so many scholars regard the dwindling Byzantine Empire as the final glimmers of Ancient Rome.

Maps tell of a harshly divided land. In the west, the lands of Greece are broken into separate Christian despotates and duchies, and the east sees Islamic sultanates and satrapies. In the center, focused around the city of Byzantium itself is the Latin Empire of Jerusalem. This last is little more than a crusader's dream on maintaining real territory in the Byzantine Empire. It is regarded with distaste by the people of the land, and I doubt it will last for long.

I have never visited the lands of the Empire firsthand, though several of my colleagues have done so on numerous occasions. It is a nation that presents a fantastic opportunity for trade and profit – serving as a natural bridge between Europe and Asia that could easily import and export luxuries, arts, crafts and exotic wares from one continent to the other. Indeed, that is exactly what my colleagues in the Hanseatic League wished to investigate. They reported that a nation of seafarers had turned back to the land, and were growing increasingly territorial and withdrawn.

The mind of a merchant boggles at this, and the mind of a scholar does much the same.

Another failing point of the Empire could be considered its faith. Orthodox Christianity is not spreading (and has never spread to date) with the rapid encompassing promise of the Roman Catholic faith.

While Catholicism preaches a unity of men that recognizes no national divide, Orthodox Christianity is still often tied exclusively to ideals of Empire and nationality. When missionaries turn this to their advantage and include the nationalism of those they convert, the results can be spectacular – the Slavic peoples and many of the Russian principalities have been converted to the orthodox faith.

Tellingly, the Empire is flushed with people of all nations and races. Even Orientals come to dwell here from the Far East, and some of the cities even



have distinct “quarters” or neighborhoods for people of different ethnicity. Constantinople, the capital of the empire and one of the most beautiful cities in the world, is currently a hollow shell of its former glory, having been sacked and conquered by pillaging, out of control crusaders in the Fourth Crusade, in the Year of Our Lord 1204. The Empire had called the crusaders to the region in the hope they might slow the advance of the conquering Muslims. Such hopes soon turned to dust when the knights and their armies stormed Constantinople instead, perhaps out of greed or envy for its wondrous riches. The capital city is not even truly under the control of the Byzantine Empire, though the next decade may see attempts to take it back.

*A Christian city, assaulted and stormed by God's own holy army. How delightfully quaint.*


Bordering the divide between Europe and Asia, it is not surprising that the Byzantine Empire is one of the gathering points for many inhuman races. The Tauran raid the ships that ply the waters of the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea, and the Unholy

eke out their lives in the cities as slaves, servants, thieves, mercenaries and hired killers.

## THE FRONTIERS

To conclude this treatise, a word must be said on the “minor” lands of Eastern Europe and Asia. The Slavic lands, the Khantate of the Golden Horde that thundered through Asia and Eastern Europe, and the Islamic realms of the Holy Land and beyond: these are realms that do not necessarily feature as significant factors in the day-to-day lives of the people of the majority of Europe. They are regarded as the “barbaric eastern lands”; nations of Godless heathens, hidden enclaves of pagans clinging to the old ways, and ravening hordes.

*It has long been the purview of men to demonize what they do not understand. I expect cursory examination into these lands would reveal they are no more or less barbarous than anywhere else under the dominion of humans.*



It is not my position to say whether this is true or not, for I am a European scholar, and my interest lies primarily in the Christian lands of the west and center. I can however comment that these views of the East are “exaggerated” to say the least.

Hungary and the surrounding Slavic lands are divided into self-governing baronies much like the rest of Europe, and overseen by lines of kings deemed hospitable and wise by the crusader lords that passed through the realm on route to the Holy Land. While it seems likely there are pagan settlements surviving in the current age, still worshipping old, near-forgotten gods, it is also a land in the grip of the Orthodox Church of Byzantium, with great adherence to the faith. Churches and cathedrals rise here with no less frequency than many European lands. There are vast tracts of pastured and fertile land, just as there are mountain ranges that would make the Scandinavian crags of the Varangar look insignificant.

And yet, much of this region is under the spears and axes of the Mongol Horde, its cities having been razed, sacked and plundered in recent years.

The Khanate of the Golden Horde is more a threat to the Islamic empires and sultanates of the East than the Crusades could ever be, yet the Mongols seldom feature in the texts of European scholars. Hungary, Russia, the Slavic lands...all have fallen before the might of the Mongols. Perhaps these skilled fighters might feature more if it was common knowledge that the Mongols currently claim 3 times as much land as even Alexander the Great ever conquered.

Regarded almost universally as illiterate, savage barbarians, the finer aspects of Mongol conquest are often ignored. As Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan was a leader who absorbed much of his foes’ culture into his own, and allowed those he conquered the freedom of their religious beliefs and society. And yet, those who opposed the coming of his hordes died in their thousands, and tales of the mutilated bodies of European and Asian soldiers

are legendary. There are also rumors of churches and cathedrals in the Russian principalities and Slavic lands being ransacked and put to the torch. Truly, the rule of the Great Khans is a confusing one to the unfamiliar eyes of those in the West.

The Mongols have their heroes just as we do. While Genghis Khan is the obvious counterpart to King Louis IX, Subedei the Warrior matches the deeds of Richard the Lion-hearted with equal ferocity and glory. What other soldier, barbarian or not, can claim the utter destruction of an army of 80,000 with a quarter of the amount of men at his side? This incredible fighter and general died only 4 years ago, at the astonishing age of 70. After the recent death of Guyuk Khan, the grandson of Genghis, the empire is currently ruled by his widow, Oghulgamish.

When a new Khan is elected, one can’t help but wonder where these ambitious conquerors will turn next. There is talk of the ancient city of Baghdad falling within the next decade, and such a move will most assuredly wipe out the last traces of the "Abbasid Caliphate".

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL CLASS

CLASS & CULTURE

Social Class represents the lineage a character holds, not just from his mother and father, but a heritage handed down from ages past. In *High Medieval*, social status is not just an accident of birth, but a combination of destiny, opportunity, and determination. Characters can rise from the son of a lowly blacksmith or dishwasher to become a Knight Hospitaller, and mighty kings can be led into desolation and servitude.


Each of the following Social Classes give a player a set of rough guidelines from which to build their character. Players should record all relevant information like their starting wealth; attribute adjustments, etc on their characters sheets. Each social class also lists a number of possible occupations available to that class. This should be used in developing a believable background for each character.

There are 5 basic social classes in High Medieval:

- ✱ Outcast
- ✱ Commoner
- ✱ Freeman
- ✱ Lesser Nobility
- ✱ Greater Nobility

While it may seem tempting for most players to immediately select Greater Nobility, players should note that with great power often comes great responsibility. While we all have romantic notions in our heads about being great Kings, Queens or Dukes, these types of player characters will often have much less flexibility to them than characters from other social classes. Great nobles spend most of their time administering their lands, navigating the dangerous waters of courtly intrigue and avoiding the assassin's blade or toxin. This is not intended to discourage players from playing Greater Noble characters but rather to make sure they understand the type of player they are selecting.

In selecting a Social Class, players should be looking for a few different things. Each Social Class has adjustments to attributes that must be



taken into account. If you have in mind a stealthy thief type of character, you'd do well to select a Social Class that gives a bonus to Dexterity, or, at the very least, does not have a penalty associated with Dexterity.

Secondly, each social class has a list of Preferred Skills. The skills on this list will cost the player 1 skill point per +1 increase in skill rating. Any skill not on this list that the player may want for his character will cost him 2 skill points per +1 increase in skill rank. These skills should be ticked off on the character sheet denoting their status as Preferred Skills.

Immediately following the skills list, you will find the number of skill points the character starts the game with, and the number received at each increase in level. The player will use these skill points to purchase ranks in any skill they want their character to possess.

Within each Social Class description, players will also find all relevant information on how to determine their starting Piety, Nobility, Renown, Starting Wealth and Hit Points. These figures should all be recorded on the players character record sheet.

Finally, the player should select one Talent from the starting Talents available to his Social Class. Players may select any Talent from any Talent Tree in their Social Class for which they meet all prerequisites.

## GAINING LEVELS

As characters adventure they will gain experience (xp) and therefore rise in level. At each level, a character gains the number of skill points listed on his chosen Social Class along with one additional Talent. Players are free to spend these skills points as they wish; 1 skill point for one rank in a preferred skill or 2 skills points for one rank for any skill not listed on the Preferred list for their Social Class.

Likewise, any Talent in the character's Social Class (or Calling) may be selected providing the character has all relevant prerequisites for the Talent.

Levels are an abstract representation of a character's overall strength and effectiveness. As such, with each level gained, the character receives a slight boost to his Hit Points, allowing him to withstand slightly more punishment as he gains levels. With each level gained, each character adds their CON rating to their hit point total. In the case of characters with +0 or negative CON ratings, a minimum of one hit point is gained with each level.

Finally, with each 3 levels gained, a player may add +1 to any one Attribute rating. This reflects the characters training and experience gained through adventuring. So at 4th level the character gains their first +1 bonus, another +1 at 7th, the third +1 at 10th level and so on.

## MULTICLASSING

Players should note that they are not restricted to their starting Social Class for the entire life of their character.

While it is not normally possible to multiclass amongst the various Social Classes, players do have other options. When rising in level, players may opt to take a level in their Social Class as described above or, they may take a level in a Calling. Callings are detailed fully in Chapter 8 but for now suffice to say that a Calling is similar to a profession or occupation. Each calling has prerequisites to entering it so players should become familiar with the requirements of any Calling into which they envision their character progressing.



# OUTCAST



+0 STR	+0 DEX	+0 PER	-2 CHA
+1 CON	+0 SPD	+0 WIL	+0 INT
+1 CR	23 HP	+0 MR	
-3 NBL	+0 PTY	-1 REN	

**TALENT TREES**  
 Brawler  
 Dirty Fighting

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
 Balance, Brawling, Climb, Deception, Disable Mechanism, Disguise, intimidate, Knowledge (local, region), Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Survival (choose one), Swim, Weapon (small blades, hafted)

**STARTING PACKAGES**  
 Worn and ragged clothing  
 Dagger or Club  
 Wool Blanket  
 6d in coins

**Bonus Languages:** None  
**Starting Skill Points:** 28 + INT  
**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + INT

There will always be those who slip through society's cracks. Perhaps they violated the laws of the land and fled from the punishment they deserved, and now live a life on the run from justice. Perhaps misfortune denied them a chance to succeed in trade or craft, and their only chance is a life on the choked streets of the cities. Sinister as it may be, there are those that are career criminals and choose the life of a bandit or beggar, in order to further their selfish and malicious ends.

There are advantages to this life, make no mistake. It is an age of booming population and expansive growth in every land – and opportunities to scam coins from the hands of the foolish exist in every street, in every alley, in every corner of every city. The lack of reliable communication between regions means that identifying a criminal or outlaw on sight is next to impossible unless the tracker knows exactly who he's hunting and has seen his face. For those that slip through the world's cracks, *High Medieval* Europe presents many excellent hiding places.

The drawbacks to living an outcast's life are definitely significant. As nebulous as the threat of capture might seem, when justice does finally catch up to these characters, it is often swift and without mercy. A constant source of income is very difficult to come by, and the outcast's skills and lifestyle rarely lend themselves well to the character remaining in one place for too long. Even "harmless" outcasts, such as beggars, are firmly banished to the lowest social strata – usually for the duration of their entire lives.

Outcasts often adventure to right wrongs...or to create them. A beggar or landless farmer might take to the road in order to earn money or acceptance by his good deeds, or seek out lost relics in the hope of building a fortune. A criminal might adventure to shake the local lord's justice off his trail, or to seek fresh pickings elsewhere. It is common for any outcast to walk the world in the hope of leaving an old life behind, or to put his skills into use in new ways.

# COMMONER



+1 STR	+0 DEX	+0 PER	+0 CHA
+1 CON	+0 SPD	+0 WIL	-1 INT
+0 CR	18 HP	+0 MR	
-1 NBL	+0 PTY	+0 REN	

**TALENT TREES**  
Militia Training

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Animal Handling, Brawling, Climb, Cook, Handicraft, Knowledge (agriculture, local), Operate Conveyance, Swim, Weapon (hafted, thrown)

**STARTING PACKAGES**  
Worn but sturdy clothing  
Dagger, Handaxe, or Spear  
Wool Blanket  
Backpack  
Rope, hemp (50 ft.)  
Donkey  
1d20+6 d in coin

**Bonus Languages:** None  
**Starting Skill Points:** 28 + INT  
**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5+ INT

In every society, there must be a caste of folk that bear the brunt of the labor. In the Middle Ages, this falls upon the peasantry of the time; commoners and freemen. Commoner characters usually come from a rural background and were born into the life of a serf, where they worked on the lands of their local liege lord. It is not an enviable position, but it does come with valuable rights that put any serf far above the station of a slave. Serfs are a nobleman's tenants and workers. They are not his property.

A commoner works hard in his labors; from dawn to dusk, six days of the week, excepting Sundays and religious holidays. This work consists of sowing and harvesting in the fields rented from the local lord, or service in the landowner's manor house / castle as a servant. No matter where he works, a commoner is protected by the law. He is a tax-paying member of society and entitled to a fair trial if accused of a crime, as well as the protection of both his lord and the local church.

Of course, rights or not, it is rarely an easy life for a commoner. Few own property themselves, instead living (and working on) land rented from the local lord, or in some cases, the church. When assistance from the liege isn't forthcoming, it falls to the commoner himself to defend his family and belongings. A single harsh season could wipe out his earnings and ruin his family. A corrupt lord might impose heavy taxes and break previous agreements, thereby destroying a commoner's livelihood and banishing him from his own home. There are few certainties in a commoner's life, and most of those revolve around a hard day's work.

Commoners adventure for any number of reasons. Pilgrimage is probably the most likely and such a journey can last for many years, if the character decides to visit more than one site across Europe. Such an adventurer might become a travel-hardened explorer and mercenary. A land that has fallen on misfortune might leave its peasantry disaffected or abandoned and any number might take to the road in order to earn their coin. There are also those that seek out penitence for their sins. These commoners in search of redemption might seek out evils to destroy as best they can, or might become relic hunters, finding lost holy items and returning them to agents of the Church.

# FREEMAN



*	*	+0	*
STR	DEX	PER	CHA
+1	+0	*	*
CON	SPD	WIL	INT
+0	18	+0	
CR	HP	MR	
+0	+0	+0	
NBL	PTY	REN	

**TALENT TREES**  
 Coin of the Realm  
 Militia Training  
 Wanderer

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
 Administration, Animal Handling, Appraise, Brawling, Cook, Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Handicraft (any), Knowledge (local, region), Operate Conveyance, Sleight of Hand, Swim, Weapon (large blades, hafted)

**STARTING PACKAGES**  
 Short Sword or Dagger  
 Wool Blanket  
 Backpack  
 Quilted Armor  
 Waterskin  
 Iron Pot  
 Tent  
 3d20+6 d in coin

**Bonus Languages:** Latin +1  
**Starting Skill Points:** 23 + INT  
**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5+ INT

In *High Medieval*, the freeman class applies to those peasants that live in towns or rural settings and don't offer fealty to a local lord. Rural freemen still lease their farmland from the local noble, but they do not suffer the burdens of heavy taxation that serfs must bear, nor do they need to dedicate half of their week to working on the lord's behalf. More commonly, this class defines characters that live in the ever-expanding towns and cities of the age, and owes no oath of service to a noble.

Unskilled or unspecialized freemen are typically farmers themselves, and often make enough money to live in a townhouse, within the protection of the city walls. Other freemen work in the trades and the crafts, perhaps initially as an amateur or an apprentice, perhaps one day reaching the position of journeyman or master in the guilds. In *High Medieval* Europe, there are hundreds of guilds, for almost every craft or trade imaginable, and each seeks to increase its pool of reliable and skilled freemen through apprenticeship and recruitment.

Freemen most often make up the skilled craftsmen of the time. These are the laborers that band together to build towns, construct wondrous works of art, or simply endeavor to provide the local community with whatever services or skills they can offer. It is a rewarding (though demanding) lifestyle and a skilled freeman, free from the heavy taxes many villagers must endure, can amass a great deal of personal wealth over the course of his life.

A freeman might take up adventuring for all the reasons a commoner would, and more. Perhaps the local church makes a claim for his land, and reduces him to the station of serf against his will. Such a character may take to the road out of spite or refusal to pay taxes to the local priests. War, plague or famine might drive a freeman from his town, as would lucrative job offers elsewhere in the nation. A freeman might also adventure seeking to increase the fortunes and good reputation of his guild, perhaps for noble reasons, or perhaps to make up for errors or crimes in his past that have displeased the guild leaders.

# LESSER NOBLE



+0	*	+0	+0
STR	DEX	PER	CHA

+1	+0	+0	+0
CON	SPD	WIL	INT

+2	20	+0
CR	HP	MR

+2	+0	+1
NBL	PTY	REN

**TALENT TREES**  
 Coin of the Realm  
 Combat Training  
 Rank & Privilege

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**

Administration, Animal Handling, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Heradry, Intimidate, Knowledge (geography, history, law, local, region, tactics), Ride, Swim, Theology (any one), Weapon (large blades, hafted)

**STARTING PACKAGES**

Dagger  
 Longsword or Mace  
 Mail Shirt & Round Shield  
 Riding Horse + tack  
 4d20+10 £ in coin

**Bonus Languages:** Latin +2, Choice +1

**Starting Skill Points:** 20 + INT

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT

The majority of the noble classes and the aristocracy are comprised of lesser nobles that owe fealty to the great rulers of the realms. These vassal rulers are the landowning allies of the monarchs of Europe, or the landless members of noble families. These are the thanes, counts, barons, lords and esquires of the world – aristocrats of noble blood, but not true royalty or the highest rank of nobility.

There are undeniable advantages to belonging to a landowning, wealthy family – not the least of which might include education in history and the arts, and the right to learn the skills of war that many nobles prize above all else. Financial security is a given, as long as the character maintains his holdings or keeps in the good graces of the relative with all the money. Social status is also a right of this class, for wherever he goes, he can identify himself as the scion of an aristocratic bloodline. This also means such a character must ever be aware that he represents the honor and reputation of his family. Evil, ignoble or criminal actions will damage that reputation, and there might be a price to pay somewhere down the line for besmirching the family name. Lesser noble characters might also be bound to an oath to defend the local peasantry from harm, and grave threats must be met with force of arms.

Some of these characters, the younger sons of other nobles (both lesser and greater), may find themselves forced into a position or rank they have no desire to fulfill. Many sons and daughters are dispatched to monasteries and nunneries once the family has enough heirs to ensure lineage, and a lesser noble might show equally less aptitude and eagerness for the ranks of knighthood or an arranged marriage.

Lesser nobles have many reasons to take to the road and seek adventure. In fact, disinherited or landless nobles have little other choice. Such a life might consist of endless tournaments and galas at the estates of other nobles, or they may take the form of acting as an ambassador or diplomat for another ruler. Other nobles might adventure infrequently, seeking out additional fortunes or attempting to hinder the efforts of a rival house and bloodline. And of course, there will always be those reckless souls who seek glory and fame because they are simply bored of an indulgent life at the castle.

# GREATER NOBLE



+0	+0	+0	+0
STR	DEX	PER	CHA
-2	+0	+0	+1
CON	SPD	WIL	INT
+1	18	+0	
CR	HP	MR	
+3	+1	+3	
NBI	PTY	REN	

**TALENT TREES**  
 Combat Training  
 Rank & Privilege  
 Statecraft

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
 Administration, Appraise, Deception, Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Heradlry, intimidate, Knowledge (engineering, geography, history, law, local, region, tactics), Literacy, Ride, Swim, Theology (any one), Weapon (large blades, hafted)

**STARTING PACKAGES**  
 Dagger, Lance, Longsword & Mace  
 Reinforced Mail Armor  
 Round Shield  
 Helm  
 War Horse + tack  
 10d20+10 £ in coin

**Bonus Languages:** Latin +4, Choice +3

**Starting Skill Points:** 20 + INT  
**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT

Exalted above the insignificant lives of the world's workers and laborers, the greater nobility are the characters whose decisions affect the course of the Europe's future. They are the dukes, duchesses, princes, kings, queens and emperors of the many nations, and it is by their will that empires and kingdoms rise to glory and fall into dust. Born into a life of complete privilege and often taught by generals, knights and scholars, these nobles frequently have a very real understanding of the great game of politics, and an equal mastery in the art of war.

Rare is the man or woman that can ever rise to this position, for it is almost always a right of birth. Depending on whom one believes, the world's rulers are chosen by God himself, and keep their positions by divine right.

By fate of birth and the character's pure blood, it is likely a greater noble will have access to almost any education or training he desires – as long as he is not forced into the Church or into the knighthood against his will. More than any other people in the current age, the lives of the greater nobility are often valued in what they can bring through political alliances, marriages, or by their actions on the field of war.

A greater noble character will only leave his life of privilege and plenty for a solid reason, or if he is presented with no other choice. Like lesser nobility, penitence and the hunt for holy relics in the name of the Church is a popular path for pious nobles to take. Others quest to seek glory and fame, perhaps in order to strengthen their kingdom or attain the popularity and wealth required to stage an overthrow of the current monarchy.

Greater nobles that hide their bloodline and walk the world are not unheard of, for it is every man's wish to be free and the demands of the highest courts can be a burden that one might choose never to shoulder again. More philosophically-minded nobles might venture across the land in order to gain a better understanding of the world and the people that populate it, and would return to their courts greatly enriched by the experience – if they survived the dangers they faced. Reckless and brash characters might even flee from an arranged marriage that they want no part of. Such a life outside the castle walls would be plagued by bounty hunters and trackers hired by the family, seeking the wayward character's return.

# CULTURAL TEMPLATES

## HIGH MEDIEVAL CULTURES

On top of Social Class, the final piece of information needed to create a character is their ethnicity or race. Where a person is born and raised will govern certain things in the game like languages, other attribute modifiers.

Players may elect to have their character's be Normans from Norfolk, Italians from Florence, Occitans from Toulouse or even a Cenedl from Wales or Varangar from Sweden.

Once the player has selected his cultural template, the bonuses, penalties, preferred skills and other traits should be recorded on his character sheet.

## BRITISH

**Preferred Skills:** Handicraft (cloth making), Herb Lore, Knowledge (agriculture, forestry)  
**Attribute Modifier:** PER +1, WIL -1  
**Special:** Must be Lesser Noble or lower class.  
**Languages:** English +10  
**Region:** England

## FRENCH

**Preferred Skills:** Administration, Diplomacy, Etiquette  
**Attribute Modifier:** CHA +1, CON -1  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** French +10, Latin +3  
**Region:** France

## GERMAN

**Preferred Skills:** Brawling, Diplomacy, Handicraft (any one), Operate Conveyance (any one)  
**Attribute Modifier:** STR +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** High German +10, Low German +3  
**Region:** Holy Roman Empire

## IRISH

**Preferred Skills:** Herb Lore, Knowledge (folklore, forestry), Perform (instrument or singing),  
**Attribute Modifier:** None  
**Special:** Must be Lesser Noble or lower class.  
**Languages:** Gaelic +10  
**Region:** Ireland

## ITALIAN

**Preferred Skills:** Administration, Appraise, Deception, Etiquette  
**Attribute Modifier:** CHA +1, STR -1  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** Italian +10, Spanish, French, Latin or Greek +3  
**Region:** Italy, Sardinia, Sicily

## JEWISH

**Preferred Skills:** Appraise, Knowledge (any one), Literacy, Theology (jewish)  
**Attribute Modifier:** +1 WIL, -1 STR  
**Special:** Must be of Freeman or Outcast  
**Languages:** Hebrew +10, Choice +6, Aramaic +1  
**Region:** Any

## MOOR

**Preferred Skills:** Appraise, Handicraft (any one), knowledge (any one), Intimidate  
**Attribute Modifier:** +1 WIL, -1 STR  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** Arabic +10, Spanish +2  
**Region:** Iberian peninsula, North Africa

## NORMAN

**Preferred Skills:** Administration, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Heraldry  
**Attribute Modifier:** WIL +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** Must be Freeman or higher class.  
**Languages:** French +10, Latin +3  
**Region:** England, Normandy, Sicily, Naples

## OCCITAN

**Preferred Skills:** Handicraft (artificer, artisan, brewer/vintner), Perform (any), Theology (cathar)

**Attribute Modifier:** WIL +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** Occitan +10, French +5  
**Region:** Southern France, Provence

## SARACEN

**Preferred Skills:** Administration, Knowledge (any), Ride, Theology (Shiite or Sunni)  
**Attribute Modifier:** DEX +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** Arabic +10  
**Region:** Holy Lands, Anatolia, North Africa

## SCANDINAVIAN

**Preferred Skills:** Brawling, Operate Conveyance (any one), Survival (arctic, mountains)  
**Attribute Modifier:** STR +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** Must be Lesser Noble  
**Languages:** Norse +10  
**Region:** Scandinavia, Iceland, Denmark

## SCOTTISH, GAELIC

**Preferred Skills:** Climb, Intimidate, Knowledge (folklore), Survival (mountains)  
**Attribute Modifier:** CON +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** Must be Freeman or lower class.  
**Languages:** Gaelic +10  
**Region:** Scottish Highlands & Isles

## SLAVIC

**Preferred Skills:** Stealth, Herb Lore, Perform  
**Attribute Modifier:** +1 PER, -1 WIL  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** Slavic +10, Greek +2  
**Region:** Eastern Europe, Balkans, Russia

## SPANISH

**Preferred Skills:** Handicraft (any two), Investigate, Knowledge (architecture)  
**Attribute Modifier:** WIL +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** None  
**Languages:** Spanish +10, Arabic +2  
**Region:** Iberian peninsula

## WELSH

**Preferred Skills:** Herb Lore, Knowledge (folklore), Survival (mountains), Tracking.

**Attribute Modifier:** PER +1, CHA -1  
**Special:** Must be Lesser Noble or lower class.  
**Languages:** Welsh +10, English +3  
**Region:** Wales

## CENEDL

**Preferred Skills:** Animal Handling, Cook, Handicraft (artisan)  
**Attribute Modifier:** STR -2, PER +1, CON +1  
**Special:** Must be of Commoner or Freeman As per local population 10+  
**Region:** Wales, Southwest England, Bretony, Isle of Man

## HANSA

**Preferred Skills:** Administration, Appraise, Etiquette  
**Attribute Modifier:** WIL +1, CHA +1, STR -2  
**Special:** Must be of Freeman  
**Languages:** Hansa +10, French or German +5  
**Region:** Flanders, France, Holy Roman Empire, Denmark, Scandinavia

## ELVEN, SIDHE

**Preferred Skills:** Deduce Motive, Herb Lore, Survival (forest)  
**Attribute Modifier:** INT +2, PER +1, STR -1, CHA -2  
**Special:** Must be of Freeman or higher class.  
**Languages:** Sidhe +10, One other +4  
**Region:** Ireland

## ELVEN, THIAZZI

**Preferred Skills:** Climb, Stealth, Survival (alpine, arctic)  
**Attribute Modifier:** CON +1, PER +1, CHA -3  
**Special:** Must be of Outcast social class  
**Languages:** Thiazzi +10, Norse +2  
**Region:** Scandinavia

## TAURAN

**Preferred Skills:** Brawling, Intimidate, Seamanship (galley)  
**Attribute Modifier:** STR +3, CON +1, INT

-1, CHA -3

**Special:** Must be Outcast.

**Languages:** Tauran +10, Arabic or Greek +4

**Region:** Crete, Eastern Mediterranean

## VARANGAR

**Preferred Skills:** Seamanship (longship), Survival (alpine)

**Attribute Modifier:** STR +2, CON +1, INT -1, CHA -2,

**Special:** Must be of Freeman or Outcast

**Languages:** Norse +10

**Region:** Scandinavia, Orkney, Shetland & Hebrides Islands, Iceland

## CALLINGS

Characters in the *High Medieval* game start off simply as members of one of the social classes of the middle ages. Their actual occupations and livelihoods are up to the player and GM to decide and really have little bearing on the game itself but are used more for creative backgrounds and color.

These social classes offer plenty of opportunities for characters to learn new Skills and Talents but to truly advance as an adventurer, most players will want their characters to focus and concentrate on one particular area of development. This is where Callings come into play. A Calling is like an advanced class that characters may enter as they gain experience. Callings focus a character's development to one particular area. For example, the Alchemist Calling will open up various avenues of progression for a character, among them spellcasting, item creation and scholarly knowledge. The Man at Arms calling will provide more combat specific Skills and Talents.

Most players will find it beneficial to have their characters receive a good grounding of a few levels in their social class as all Callings have prerequisites for entry. These could be simply minimum Attribute or Skill ratings, required social class levels or even levels in another Calling.

Assuming the character in question has all the prerequisites, a Calling may be taken at any time a character advances a level. The process is the same as advancing a level in one's social class. When enough experience has been accumulated, the player simply informs the GM that he elects to take a new level in a Calling instead of his social class. The character then receives all benefits (and suffers all penalties) associated with the new Calling. This includes a new list of preferred skills. Any skill ranks and talents previously received from social class (or another Calling) are retained but the preferred skill list and talent trees of the old social class are no longer available.

Upon accumulating enough experience points to advance another level, the player may elect to take another level in the Calling, take another level in their old social class or take a new level in another new Calling.

Several Callings are provided for your enjoyment in this tome. Future *High Medieval* sourcebooks will increase this number with more Callings including regional and cultural specific Callings.

The various Callings available include:

Alchemist	Archer
Astrologer	Bandit
Burglar	Corsair
Courtier	Demonologist
Forester	Friar
Jester	Knight
Mage	Man at Arms
Merchant	Minstrel
Monk	Priest
Scholar	Witch



## ALCHEMIST



**TALENT TREES**  
Combat Training  
Academia  
Alchemical Sciences  
Magical Orders  
(Alchemy)  
Path of the Healer

**PREREQUISITES:**  
WIL +1, INT +2, MR +1  
Concentration +4  
Literacy +5  
Must spend 6 weeks finding a master.

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Alchemy, Appraise, Astrology, Concentration, Cook, Heal, Herb Lore, Knowledge (any), Literacy, Mode (any), Research, Speak Language (greek, latin or arabic).

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 MR at levels 1, 3, 6, 10 & 16.

The study of alchemy is not the mere transmutation of base metal to gold, but the philosophical search for perfection. Through the changing of base, corruptible material to a state of perfection, divinity is found. In the era of Eden, this perfection was found in all things. Now, born with sins upon the soul, mankind must strive to attain perfection as best he may. Gold is the only material that cannot be reduced in quality, cannot be tarnished, and no matter how it is used, will always remain perfect; hence its attraction to the philosophers of the current age.

This is not a path based on achieving wealth and riches, but a long, scholarly life of literature and experimentation. At least, so the true-hearted philosophers would have one believe. Obviously, there are charlatans aplenty ready to trick coin from the unwitting and the foolish.

Alchemists use a system of magic that is an amalgam of Egyptian, Ancient Greek, Roman and Islamic lore, which is grouped into the magical science called the Hermetic art. Over the course of many centuries, the study of alchemy has resulted in the development of many complicated chemicals and acids. These in turn have bolstered the understanding of science and the elements. In the Year of Our Lord 1250, though some religious leaders are insisting the practice of alchemy be forever ceased, there are many men and women (bound to the clergy or mere scholars) that practice this science in secret and exchange their knowledge. To outward appearances, a simple tutor or scribe can seem harmless. In truth, he might be one of the most valuable scientific minds of the age.

*Alchemists gain a number of bonus spells equal to their INT + MR scores at first level.*

# ARCHER



**TALENT TREES**  
Defensive Fighting  
Militia Training  
Way of the Arrow

**PREREQUISITES:**  
STR +1, DEX +2, CR +1  
Weapon (bow) +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Balance, Concentration, Handicraft  
(bowyer/fletcher), Swim, Weapon  
(bow, crossbow, small blades)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 DEX at level 1, +1 CR at  
levels 3, 7 & 9.

Keen eyes and steady hands are the mark of a good Archer. Whether characters come to the talent by natural aptitude, practice or military training, archery is a skill that is always in demand. On the battlefield, an Archer can kill his opponent before swords are even drawn, turning the tide of the conflict with the flight of an arrow. In village life, an Archer is a respected defender of the settlement. In the regions where lawlessness is the reigning order of the day, the Archer is an assassin or highwayman to be feared.

Archery is a fine science, made up of many subtle nuances that go unseen to the untrained eye. Even intuitive archers understand the complexities of angles, wind factors and basic biology of infections caused by their missiles. Experienced bowmen come to understand different woods and their uses, then becoming skilled at creating excellent weapons for their own use (and occasionally to sell). These experts are in great demand as craftsmen and well-paid mercenaries.

Even armored knights and shield-bearing men-at-arms fear the fall of arrows on the battlefield. Whether it is an arrow storm that darkens the sky or a single Bowman releasing a volley, a skilled Archer can puncture critical areas in any opponent's defenses.

## BANDIT



**TALENT TREES**  
Brawler  
Dirty Fighting  
Fools & Their Money  
Skirmisher  
Wilderness Lore

**PREREQUISITES:**  
CON +1, CR +2, REN -2  
Stealth +3  
Survival (any) +4  
Weapon (any) +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Brawling, Climb, Disguise, Gambling, Handicraft (any), Intimidate, Knowledge (local, region, tactics), Search, Stealth, Survival (any), Swim, Weapon (any 3)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CR at levels 1, 3, 5 & 9.

In the current era, money flows ever upward. It flows up out of the hands of those who do all the work, and into the coffers and palaces of those who lord themselves over the common folk. Who can blame a man for taking to illegal practices just to earn a little of that coin back for himself? Bandits, brigands, highwayman...call them by any name, they are a breed of criminal that plagues the overland trade routes of Europe. Hunted by the soldiers of nobles and hounded by local sheriffs' men, Bandits still manage to turn a brisk trade in accosting travelers and relieving rich folk of the burdens of a heavy purse.

It goes almost without saying that the majority of Bandits come from peasant stock and moved into the brigand's game in order to make some money for themselves beyond what they could have earned working the land or in a town trade. However, some nobles have been known to turn rogue, seeking a life of danger and excitement. The reality is often closer to a life on the run from the hangman's noose, and seeking to rob another wealthy traveler before starvation sets in. Not all Bandits are as prosperous as the bards' tales say, especially in regions where the law is strictly enforced by large numbers of soldiers, militia or sheriffs.

A life on the run from the law has its share of dangers and difficulties, but hard times falling on good people can be enough to turn most anyone toward such actions. Nations and regions hit by heavy taxes or natural disasters see a massive upturn in banditry, as the laypeople try to salvage what coin they can to stay alive. Most bandits, despite at least some skill with weapons, are not overtly violent or cruel men. Of course there will always be those who turn to the criminal life and care little for the lives of others in doing so. "Your money or your life" is no idle threat on the trade routes of Europe.

## BURGLAR



**TALENT TREES**  
Defensive Fighting  
Fools & their Money  
Quick & Agile

**PREREQUISITES:**  
DEX +2, PER +1  
Stealth +5  
Sleight of hand +4

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Acrobatics, Appraise, Balance, Climb, Concentration, Deception, Disable Mechanism, Disguise, Forgery, Gambling, Knowledge (local, region), Search, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Weapon (small blades)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 DEX at levels 1, 6 & 10 ,  
+1 PER at levels 2, 5 & 12.

If the Bandit is the scourge of the countryside, the Burglar is his urban counterpart. Lawlessness strikes at the hearts of hard-living town-dwellers just as easily as it does in the deprived folks of rural regions. And there are just as many who turn to the trade out of malice, spite or a lack of desire to earn a fair living. The only difference between brigands in the two settings is that while Bandits must make do with robbing what a traveler has on his person, a Burglar has the pick of a person's belongings once he has gained entrance to the victim's dwelling. Better than this, he has the chance to steal from townsfolk, who are wealthier on the whole than rural farmers.

A Burglar can also be an accomplished cutpurse and mugger, though he commonly turns his skills towards the richest picking possible: breaking into peoples' homes by stealth or force, and looting whatever valuables he can use or sell on. Europe's larger cities can offer incredible target sites ranging from abbeys and cathedrals, through the gamut of banks and guild houses right through to noble estates and even nearby fortresses.

The opportunities become thinner and scarcer with the smaller settlements, but a good Burglar will usually have a new target lined up elsewhere and will never fear heading off to fresh pastures. In fact, remaining in one place for too long is a sure way for a Burglar to risk catching the attention of the militia, sheriff or the city watch.

## CORSAIR



### TALENT TREES

Brawler  
Dirty Fighting  
Wild Fighter

### PREREQUISITES:

STR +1, DEX +1, CON +1, CR +1  
Balance +4  
Seamanship (any) +4

### PREFERRED SKILLS:

Balance, Brawling, Climb, Gambling,  
Handicraft (any), Seamanship (any),  
Siegecraft (ballista, catapult), Speak  
Language (any), Swim, Weapon  
(any 3)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT

**Bonus:** +1 CR at levels 1, 4, 7, 11  
& 15

The pirates of Europe's seas enjoy a life of easy pickings in this time of trade expansion and burgeoning industry. A skilled crew of corsairs can take a fat-bellied merchant cog and relieve the vessel of all its cargo within an hour, loading up the pirates' own cargo holds with the plunder and taking them to another port city to sell either as the vessel's legal trade or straight to the black market. It is a time when the life of a corsair can be richly rewarding – provided one does not get caught and strung up. Every man and woman in this trade faces a death by hanging if captured by the authorities. Even those that avoid the law are at risk of drowning, treachery from crewmates, infection from wounds or simply getting spitted by a sword if the attacked merchant vessel had the foresight to hire mercenary guards.

Corsairs plague the waterways of Europe, especially the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas. They are the bandits of the oceans, preying upon the poorly defended cargo ships that cling to the coasts. Those crews that are unable to outrun the corsair vessels tend to meet death or rape under the pirates' mercies and the ships are captured and sold on, ransomed back to the owners, or simply scuttled and left as wreckage.

Port cities offer haven to corsairs, who hide in the densely-populated teeming hives of the docks and escape the notice of the law. The few pirates that do call a city home are probably talking about one of the Mediterranean ports along the coast of Iberia, Africa or Italy. Most of these lawless sailors simply live a life aboard the vessel they work, going ashore for barter and entertainment.

## COURTIER



**TALENT TREES**  
Coin of the Realm  
Mime & Music  
Rank & Privilege  
Statecraft  
Wanderer

**PREREQUISITES:**  
CHA +2, INT +1  
Seduction +6 or Diplomacy +6

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Administration, Cook, Deception, Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Heraldry, Intimidate, Investigate, Knowledge (any), Literacy, Perform (any), Seduction, Speak Language (any), Weapon (small blades)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CHA at levels 1, 5, 8 & 13,  
+1 REN at levels 1 & 9

Politics is often called “the Great Game”, and experienced courtiers are definitely its greatest players. The level of vassalage, sworn service, alliance, allegiance and ties of marriage between the tens of thousands of noble families across Europe is utterly staggering. There are sides that must be appeased, factions that need to be controlled, other elements to be placated and wooed.

In any court, those who walk the delicate social balance with skill and grace are respected, envied and admired greatly. It is no easy feat – and these are just the legal considerations. When matters of treachery, infidelity, assassination and treason come into play – and they –always do – the lives of the highborn become even more complicated, confusing and outright dangerous. Courtiers know how to move through these chaotic webs of plotting and intrigue. Most importantly, a courtier knows how to get through and bend the situations to his or her own advantage. All it needs is a few whispered words in the right ears, some blackmail evidence to sweeten another deal...and perhaps a drop of poison in a certain goblet of wine.

This is a life that revolves around keeping one’s hands clean – and only getting them dirty when no-one else is looking. As long as anyone within the courts can keep on the good side of the court ruler, he can enjoy a certain amount of leeway and protection. Once a courtier starts to fall from favor (especially if it is due to his own treacherous behavior) then it becomes all the more likely he will become a victim of the incessant infighting that grips the European courts.

## DEMONOLOGIST



**TALENT TREES**  
Arcane Training  
Inventive  
Incantations  
Magical Order  
(demonology)

**PREREQUISITES:**  
WIL +1, INT +2, MR +1  
Literacy +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Astrology, Concentration, Deception, Knowledge (arcane arts, demonology, history), Literacy, Mode (any), Research, Speak Language (arabic, aramaic, greek, hebrew, latin), Theology (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 MR at levels 1, 4, 8, 12 & 18

For some, the price of selling one's soul is no price at all. Divine power stems from belief in the Lord God. Natural magic is drawn from the energy of the world itself. For Demonologists, that just isn't enough. There always has to be more. More magic, more control, more power. These are the spellcasters and occultists that summon demons in order to interrogate, enslave or worship the beasts of the Underworld. A sorcerer that walks this path has forever abandoned any hope of redemption. His soul is no longer his own and an eternity of pain awaits him upon his mortal death. Until that fateful day, he commands the magic of Hell itself.

A demonologist has spent significant time learning about and trying to understand the denizens of the Underworld. For some it is a personal deceit, for no mortal can truly comprehend the creatures we call demons. Others care for nothing but the power they receive and the manner in which they can use it. It should be noted that not all demonologists come to this deal with the Devil because of evil within their souls. Some, though rare enough, turn to demons as a last resort when all else has failed and God doesn't seem to be listening. The demons themselves don't consider the difference between why mortals surrender their own souls. It is enough that they do it willingly, opening themselves to exploitation.

These men and women must conceal their darkness from the agents of the Church, and even from most right-minded people of the world. Association with the evils below the Earth is never regarded in a positive light by any right-thinking commoner, and educated magicians are likewise horrified at the cost of attaining such power.

*Demonologists gain a number of bonus spells equal to their INT + MR scores at first level.*

**Penalty:** -1 CON or CHA at levels 1, 7, 14 and 20

## FORESTER



**TALENT TREES**  
Beast Lore  
Militia Training  
Wilderness Lore

**PREREQUISITES:**  
PER +1, CON +1  
Literacy +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Animal Handling, Climb, Cook, Handicraft (any), Investigate, Knowledge (forestry, law, local, nature, region), Operate Conveyance (any), Search, Stealth, Survival (forest), Swim, Tracking, Weapon (any 2)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 PER at levels 1 & 7, +1 CR at levels 2, 5, 12 & 18

Much of Europe is swathed in dense, dark forest. Rural settlements by their very nature are almost always close to a region's forests and even most towns are situated somewhere near a sizeable wood. Almost any travel in the continent – especially overland trade routes – will have travelers seeing no shortage of woodland.

To the people of the current age, forests are not beautiful glades fit for frequent walks; rather they are places of the unknown and deep darkness, for who knows what beasts or magical creatures might dwell within a vast wood? Such places require people with the courage and skill to navigate through them, and people who have trained to acquire the lore of the forests.

Yeomen, rangers, and Foresters make up the courageous souls who brave the depths of Europe's woodland regions. These are the men and women that have the wit and the will to survive away from civilization. Some even roam the forested lands for so long that they call such places home. Catching game, hunting for sport or employment, guiding travelers through beast-infested parts of the woods – a Forester does all of these things and more. In the wooded wilds, few souls are as worthy and useful as those who know the land's secrets.



## FRIAR



**TALENT TREES**  
Church Doctrine  
Magical Order  
(occultism)  
Path of the Healer  
Path of the  
Missionary  
Path of the Mystic  
Path of  
Righteousness

**PREREQUISITES:**  
WIL +2, INT +1, PTY +3  
Literacy +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Concentration, Deduce Motive,  
Diplomacy, Etiquette, Handicraft  
(brewer/vintner, illuminator), Heal,  
Investigate, Knowledge (any),  
Literacy, Mode (any), Speak Language  
(any), Theology (any 2)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 PTY at level 1, +1 WIL at  
levels 2, 6, 9 & 15

The Church ever has need of those brave and noble souls who would seek to spread the word and faith of the Lord. This responsibility falls to the friars, serving as mendicant priests wandering the land, both preaching the grace of God and doing the lord's work. Landless – most often homeless – such men are frequently bound by vows of poverty and travel far and wide over the course of their lives.

When they arrive in a settlement friars often find a great deal of work as healers and arbiters in local disputes. Sometimes these men are asked to look into recent troubles with the liege lord or approach the local abbey if the holy men nearby are enforcing heavy taxes or stealing land from the peasantry. Famously, wandering friars are asked to root out heresy and seek signs of demonic influence. It can be a demanding life, no matter what a man's personal fortitude might be, and the dangers of the road are not insignificant.

As wanderers, friars are often an active force for the Church, making up a sizeable portion of Christianity's active magic-users. They also come into contact with wild, unrestrained demonic forces more often than town-bound priests, and the temptation to fall into demonic magic is often greatly lessened and made more repulsive to those who witness it frequently. Though each individual has his own aims, desires and agenda to adhere to, it is common for a friar to travel with likeminded men and women, banding together to do good and offer protection to people of Europe. A black-hearted friar, like any selfish or treacherous servant of God, will use his powers and influence at the expense of his flock, caring little for the harm he causes or the stain on his soul.

## JESTER



**TALENT TREES**  
Defensive Fighting  
Mime & Music  
Quick & Agile

**PREREQUISITES:**  
DEX +2, CHA +2  
Perform (any) +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Balance,  
Climb, Deception, Diplomacy,  
Disguise, Etiquette, Perform (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 DEX at level 1, 4, 8, 12 &  
16, +1 CHA at levels 3, 6, 9 & 13

The Fool is a unique position in any court. From the outside, jesters are adept tumblers and performers, combining their skills with any hired minstrels and troubadours to make an evening's entertainment for the gathered nobles. Jesters specifically excel at telling bawdy jokes and teasing those who are present in order to raise the spirits of the highborn folks before and after they dine. But there is much more behind a jester's innocent façade, and many people in the court are all too aware of it.

Here is a position that allows a man to directly speak to and insult anyone, even a king, should he so desire. There will be no retribution for such an act, as it is part of the jester's trade. A Fool can speak his mind to anyone without fear of punishment, and in some courts where the jester is highly valued he has direct access to the ruler's ear. His is the voice that speaks without fear of reprisal and a jester's observations are accordingly respected for it. This makes any jester a consummate spy and snoop in courtly games, and anyone who seeks to thrive in machinations of a political nature could do much worse than have the local jester as an ally and confidant.

Jesters are expected to accompany their lord wherever he goes, including state visits and even times of war. Those that work as wanderers, moving from domain to domain as hired entertainers are granted less immunity than established jesters, but no less respect when it is due.

## KNIGHT



**TALENT TREES**  
Combat Training  
Mounted Combat  
Path of  
Righteousness  
Rank & Privilege

**PREREQUISITES:**  
STR +2, CHA +1, CR +1, NBL +3  
Ride +5  
Weapon (lance) +4  
Weapon (large blades) +4

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Diplomacy, Etiquette, Heraldry,  
Knowledge (history, law, local, region,  
tactics), Literacy, Mounted Combat,  
Ride, Shield, Weapon (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CR at level 1, 4, 7, 10,  
14 & 18

Exalted in legend and renowned for nobility, the Knight is a man of courage and good character. He has trained for years to reach his position, and is as familiar with the sword as a peasant is with his scythe. To some, a Knight is God's soldier, exemplifying all that is noble and chivalrous in the human heart. To others he is a proven warrior that has earned his wealth and the right to fight alongside his fellow nobles. To his enemies, the Knight is a fearsome destroyer, weaving a killing spell from horseback, taking lives below with each spinning flash of the blade.

The responsibility upon the shoulders of most landed Knights is not insignificant. There are duties of estate to attend to, and the call of tournament is always ringing out somewhere in Europe, beckoning the attendance of any Knight that hears. The local populace must be protected against the horrors of the wilderness and the depredations of the Unholy, while the lords that rank above the Knight must be answered when they give the call to war or Crusade. A Knight's life is filled with obedience and responsibility, but the rewards of glory, love and honor can be great indeed.

Knights can be a great force for good in the world if they bend their aims toward that goal. Self-interested and unscrupulous members of the knightly orders can use their training and position to better their own lots even further. The true attitudes of the man behind the visor will often take some time to be revealed to his traveling companions. Although there are indeed Knights that work to further God's name, personal honor and wealth are much more important to many members of this class.

# MAGE



**TALENT TREES**  
Academia  
Arcane Training  
Inventive  
Incantations

**PREREQUISITES:**  
WIL +1, INT +3, MR +1  
Concentration +4  
Literacy +5  
Must spend 6 weeks finding a Master.

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Astrology, Concentration, Herb Lore, Knowledge (any), Literacy, Mode (any), Research, Speak Language (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 MR at level 1, 4, 7, 12 & 17, +1 INT at levels 3 & 10

To some sorcerers, the pursuit and study of magic is a scholarly path, not a spiritual one. These men and women are interested in magic for its own sake, and use the energies they conjure and manipulate to suit their own ends. Some might be pious and some utterly Godless who believe in forging their own destiny. No matter what the religious inclinations of those concerned, each and every mage pursues his art because it holds his interest above almost all else. Magic, for most, is worthy of fear and awe. For mages, it is worthy of respect, dedication – and frequently – obsession.

The path to magical understanding is rarely a quick one, nor is it easy without bargaining one's soul to demonic powers. It requires intense study, the acquisition of tomes and scrolls detailing magical undertakings, and of course, no small amount of practice. Though many mages have personal reasons for taking to a life outside the comfortable walls of a town or city, most have at least some desire to hone their magical art by repeated use.

It will come as no surprise to find that various conflicts can occur between the magicians that come by their powers by scholarship and dedication, and those that channel the power of the Lord or the energy of the Earth. Each faction steadfastly believes in its own rightness and superiority, though mages are often the most open-minded and accepting of other magical styles.

*Mages gain a number of bonus spells equal to their INT + MR scores at first level.*

## MAN AT ARMS



### TALENT TREES

Sell Sword  
Skirmisher

### PREREQUISITES:

STR +1, CON +1, CR +1  
Concentration +4  
Literacy +5  
Must spend 6 weeks finding a Master.

### PREFERRED SKILLS:

Brawling, Climb, Handicraft (any),  
Knowledge (local, region, tactics),  
Operate Conveyance (any), Ride,  
Shield, Siegcraft (any), Swim, Weapon  
(any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CR at level 1, 4, 7, 12 & 17.

In an era of hard work from dawn to dusk, the majority of Europe's people live out their lives in backbreaking drudgery, never leaving the boundaries of their farms or inherited land. Others find skill with a shield and a spear can evolve far beyond boyhood play, and allow them a chance to earn money using the talent for war. These people typically serve local liege lords as militia and hired soldiers, drawn by the lure of a steady wage, dislike of the farmer's life, or a simple desire to live as a fighting man.

It is not an easy life at the beck and call of a lord: living out of the castle barracks, constant training and weapons practice, and the food isn't always that great either. When the army does march to war, it is the men-at-arms that are the first wave of any attack. These are the men that must take the charge of an enemy cavalry against their shields. These are the men that must climb the walls of an enemy lord's castle and face the waiting blades. These are the men in the middle of the battlefield, hewing left and right with cheap swords and ramming their spears home into enemy flesh.

Those that wander the world do so with a wealth of experience at their fingertips. They are more skilled with a weapon than most commoners could ever hope to be, and they have first-hand knowledge of battle and can read the ebb and flow of conflict. The life of a Man-at-Arms is difficult, but it also breeds survivors.

## MERCHANT



**TALENT TREES**  
Coin of the Realm  
Statecraft  
Wanderer

**PREREQUISITES:**  
CHA +1  
Literacy +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Administration, Animal Handling, Appraise, Deception, Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Handicraft (any), Knowledge (any), Literacy, Operate Conveyance (any), Speak Language (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CHA at level 1, 4, 7, 10 & 15, +1 PER at level 3, +1 WIL at level 5.

It is an age of expansion, discovery and burgeoning trade across the world. There is a great deal of money to be made in supplying the people of Europe with goods and wares, and the people who are reaping it in fastest of all are the merchants. Exotic wares and treasures from the East are increasingly sought by collectors in the West, European nations trade whatever marketable commodities they can raise, and even commoners can afford the simplest luxuries imported from other nations; be they inexpensive wines or hand-made rugs. It is a great time to have a hand in the growing world of business enterprise.

Some Merchants deal in reliable, proven trades that are always in demand, such as massive shipments of lumber, cotton, wheat, grain, salt, sugar and so on. If successful, these are the men and women that stand astride vast mercantile empires and likely join (or establish) a merchant's league with their allies and partners. Other Merchants prefer riskier ventures, seeking to provide exotic wares from outside a certain region. If demand suddenly falls, then the trader could well be out of business and in a mountain of debt. If he is successful, then he can look forward to a rapid rise in fortunes. This is a career with a great deal of danger and competition to say the least.

Merchants that prefer a more hands-on approach to business dealings will likely travel the world with their wares and shipments, overseeing the arrangements and negotiations personally. Indeed, most starting Merchants will have little other choice, for they lack the coin necessary to hire factors, accountants and agents to do the work for them. Once the character has risen in both status and fortune, then he can begin to enjoy the political and financial sway open to a true merchant prince...if he ever makes it that far, of course. Success requires no small number of well-made decisions and shrewd investments, and it is far easier to fail than to succeed in the world of trade.

## MINSTREL



**TALENT TREES**  
Mime & Music  
Wanderer

**PREREQUISITES:**  
DEX +1, CHA +1  
Perform (any) +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Deception, Diplomacy, Disguise, Etiquette, Gambling, Knowledge (any), Litracy, Perform (any), Ride, Seduction, Speak Language, Weapon (any 1)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CHA at level 1, 4, 8, 12 & 18.

The old saying applies to many Minstrels: “Jack of all trades, master of none”. A Minstrel is a curious character in the world, never quite fitting into any established niche in society. Those that do not enjoy repeated or permanent patronage by a landed noble are wanderers and roamers, forever heading wherever the road takes them as they seek their next performance. They can proudly show high skills with instruments, poetry and storytelling, and are much in demand to liven up the courts and taverns of the continent with their wit and musical talents.

But there is often more to a Minstrel than a wandering bard. Some serve temporarily as lawyers of a sort, and are relied upon by the peasantry for their memory and knowledge of local history. When legal doubts arise between commoners, a Minstrel can be consulted to see if his breadth of knowledge would be of use. This is an informal position at best, and few Minstrels can adequately fulfill the obligations put upon them. Those that can are rewarded, however. Beyond seeking employment as a musician and performer, Minstrels are also frequently hired by nobles and clergymen as couriers and even spies. What better agent in a rival’s court than an unassuming hireling who wishes nothing more than to perform for the lord’s amusement? And yet, who else has a valid reason to visit a realm for a short time, observe the current atmosphere, then leave without suspicion?

It is not always an easy life, for some regions with skinflint and stingy patrons will ensure dry spells for wandering bards. It is in times like these that they must fall back on secondary skills, or head for more appreciate and generous employers. Minstrels that find work as heralds and even ambassadors for important nobles are rare and always treasured for their talents.

## MONK (NUN)



**TALENT TREES**  
Church Doctrine  
Life at the Abbey  
Magical Order  
(occultism)  
Path of the Healer  
Path of the  
Righteous

**PREREQUISITES:**  
WIL +1, PTY +2  
Speak Language (latin) +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Administration, Animal Handling,  
Astrology, Concentration, Handicraft  
(any), Knowledge (any), Literacy,  
Mode (heal, ward), Operate  
Conveyance (any), Reserach, Speak  
Language (any), Theology (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 5 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 PTY at level 1, 3, 5, 10 &  
17, +1 WIL, INT or MR at levels 4,  
9, & 15

Some holy men are bound by their nature, their promise, or simply their choice to remain within the walls of an abbey or monastery. Some do this to escape the horrors of the world, while others merely to reflect upon the greatness of the divine. Increasingly, noble children and other young men come to life as a monk in order to amass shocking amounts of wealth and property under the name of the Church. These monks are spread across Europe in their thousands, collecting taxes from the peasantry and violating their vows of poverty in order to scrape together as much wealth as they are able.

Some monks are seen to be honest and faithful men. Though it is the duty of the parish priest to serve the local community, a monk's life is not spent entirely sealed within the abbey walls. Many do indeed dedicate vast amounts of time to scholarly study and refinement of magic, but just as many go on lengthy pilgrimages at least once or twice in their lives.

The monk has an advantage over many other holy men, for he has access to the riches of the abbey, both financial and literary. Monks therefore have a host of literature and lore at their disposal, allowing them to blossom in magical study. It should come as little surprise that these men, shut off from the world for lengthy periods of time, are also the ones that fall most easily to sinful influence and the lure of dark magic. After all, who will ever know what goes on in the catacombs beneath a monastery?



## PRIEST



**TALENT TREES**  
Church Doctrine  
Magical Order  
(occultism)  
Path of the  
Missionary  
Path of the  
Righteous

**PREREQUISITES:**  
CHA +1, WIL +1, PTY +2  
Speak Language (latin) +5  
Theology (chosen religion) +6

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Administration, Deduce Motive,  
Diplomacy, Etiquette, Intimidate,  
Knowledge (any), Literacy, Mode  
(defend, heal, ward), Speak Language  
(any), Theology (any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 PTY at level 1, 4, 7, 12  
& 17, +1 WIL or MR at levels 3, 9  
& 14.

For most people of Europe the parish priest is the face of Christianity in their lives. He leads them in prayer on holy days, blesses their efforts, baptizes their children, performs their marriages and heals their wounds. In short, a priest is often the lynchpin of a community, especially in the smaller settlements. He is the man who knows everyone by name and deed, and he is also the first one people run to in times of trouble.

It is an exhausting life. Few parish priests muster the resources of the frequently-decadent and dishonest monks, and instead live in conditions similar to those of his flock. When the town or village is attacked, the priest stands alongside the residents, using his divine powers to heal the injured or bless the defenders. Even in times of peace, the priest often has childbirths to attend, various illnesses to cure or merely educating those who come to him in matters of religion and the world. None of this takes into account his own studies of magic or prayer, which a priest must dedicate much of his free time toward.

Certainly corrupt examples of this class appear – as in any type of character. But they are thankfully rare among parish priests, for there are other, easier paths for sinful and false holy men to follow. When a priest does fall from grace, however, the results are often devastating to the small and tightly-knit community of which he was the heart.

## SCHOLAR



**TALENT TREES**  
Academia  
Magical Order (any)  
Church Doctrine

**PREREQUISITES:**  
INT +2, NBL +1, PTY +1  
Literacy +5  
Speak Language (latin or greek) +5

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Astrology, Concentration, Forgery,  
Heraldry, Herb Lore, Investigate,  
Knowledge (any), Literacy, research,  
Speak Language (any), Theology  
(any)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 INT at levels 1, 3, 7, 11,  
15 & 20.

In the current age, education is a privilege and never a gift. When most avenues of learning are open only to the wealthy noble caste and those men and women within the walls of the church, Scholars represent the one path that commoners can walk in the hope of gaining a deep and formal education. In some realms, they are teachers and instructors at colleges and universities. In other regions that lack even the vestiges of formal education, Scholars are educated men and women hired as personal tutors, usually to instruct highborn children about the intricacies of history, geography and the current political climate.

Knowledge is power. This is a truth that holds dramatic weight when learning and education are so rare in the world. Scholars are obviously able to lend their intelligence and gathered lore to most situations; ranging from the known sightings, weaknesses and origins of a certain inhuman creature, to the political climate between two warring realms and the history of conflict between them.

Scholars take to the road in order to witness firsthand the things they have read about in books, and to learn a great deal more through experience. Those interested in magical items and strange creatures can spend decades on the open road, seeking answers to endless questions and recording all they can for others to one day read. The pursuit of knowledge is a satisfying life for some, though even many Scholars would be happier with a coin or two for their troubles.

## Witch



**TALENT TREES**  
In the Stars  
Magical Order  
(witchcraft)  
Path of the Healer  
Way of the Wise

**PREREQUISITES:**  
CHA +2, WIL +1, PTY +2

**PREFERRED SKILLS:**  
Animal Handling, Astrology, Concentration, Cook, Deduce Motive, Heal, Herb Lore, Knowledge (agriculture, arcane arts, demonology, folklore, local, nature, region), Mode (any 4), Speak Language (any 3), Survival (any 1), Theology (pagan)

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 4 + INT  
**Bonus:** +1 CHA at level 3, 7, 10 & 15, +1 MR at levels 1, 8, 12 & 20.

A Witch is many things to the settlement he or she lives in. Some play the part of defenders: using natural magic to keep the evils of the wild at bay. Others act as doctors: using magic, herbs and other medicines to cure illness and using their experience and expertise to decrease the risks of childbirth. Lastly, they are lore-masters: ancient knowledge and rituals are handed down from the Witches who came before, and this lore is used for the betterment of all who earned the Witch's favor. In many settlements across Europe Witches work as they are needed, or work as they see fit. Some seek to help others, while selfish pagan magic-users seek only to help themselves.

Christianity tells a different tale; one of murderous demon-worshippers and evil sorcery. The people of the era are too aware of history and the world around them (even without formal education) to truly believe such declarations of heresy, and only the most adamant religious fanatics attempt to persecute these masters and mistresses of natural magic. The balance between pagan Witch and Christian priest is an uneasy one, though both reserve their ill-wishes for the real evils of the world, such as demons and those that worship them.

Witches are now relatively rare. Oppression and religious propaganda have sullied the name of all pagans, and almost all of Europe exists under the unification of Christianity. Yet the Witches live on, serving where they may if they are so inclined, and even sometimes allying with forces of the Church to combat demons. Though practitioners of natural magic and divine faith can rarely agree on anything with a religious context, it does not prevent the two groups respecting one another's power.

*Witches gain a number of bonus spells equal to their INT + MR scores at first level.*

## CHAPTER FOUR

# SKILLS & TALENTS

## SKILLS

Like Attributes, Skills are more than a collection of numbers to be manipulated and optimized. Skills are the most fundamental way of describing a character - even more so than Attributes. "Stealth +5" is not just a number to be used with the Omni Table. It's an aspect of the character, and it tells a lot without ever rolling dice or assessing modifiers.

## SKILL BENCHMARKS

The Skill Benchmarks section below is provided to help players and GMs better understand how their character's skill ratings correspond to more familiar levels of ability.

For example, a character with a +10 skill can be expected to know most things a professional in that field would know, to have contacts with other professionals in the field, and to be up-to-date on the latest developments and theories.

## COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

If two or more characters both have ranks in a given skill, they may be able to work cooperatively to achieve a shared goal. More often than not, this will give the character some benefit as long as they

are near the same level of competence (+/- 5) and working towards a common goal, but always keep in mind the old adage: "Too many cooks spoil the stew." When two characters work together using the same skill, allow the player with the higher skill rank to make the Omni Table roll but award a bonus to that roll equal to 1/3 of the relevant skill ranks of the character who is assisting.

In many cases, a character's help won't be beneficial, or only a limited number of characters can help at once. When a cooperative effort may be useful is always at the discretion of the GM.

Skill Rating	Description
0	Novice
3	Apprentice
5	Competent
7	Adept
10	Professional
15	Expert
20	Master
30	Grandmaster
40	Legendary

## Preferred Skills

Skill	Mod	Outcast	Commoner	Freeman	Lesser Noble	Greater Noble
Acrobatics	DEX					
Administration	INT			X	X	X
Alchemy	INT			X	X	
Animal Handling	CHA		X	X	X	
Appraise	INT			X		X
Astrology	INT					
Balance	DEX	X				
Brawling	CR	X	X	X		
Climb	STR	X	X			
Concentration	WIL					
Cook	INT		X	X		
Deception	CHA	X				X
Deduce Motive	PER			X		X
Diplomacy	CHA			X	X	X
Disable Mechanism	DEX	X				
Disguise	CHA	X				
Etiquette	CHA				X	X
Forgery	INT					
Gambling	INT					
Handicraft	*		X	X		
Heal	INT					
Heraldry	INT				X	X
Herb Lore	INT					
Intimidate	CHA	X			X	X
Investigate	CHA					
Knowledge (specific)	INT	X	X	X	X	X
Literacy	INT					X
Mode (specific)	INT					
Mounted Combat	DEX					
Operate Conveyance (specific)	INT		X	X		
Perform (specific)	*					
Research	INT					
Ride	DEX				X	X
Seamanship (specific)	INT					
Search	PER					
Seduction	CHA					
Shield	STR				X	X
Siegecraft	INT					
Sleight of Hand	DEX	X		X		

Speak Language	INT					
Stealth	DEX	X				
Survival (specific)	*	X				
Swim	STR	X	X	X	X	X
Theology (specific)	INT				X	X
Torture	WIL					
Tracking	PER					
Weapon (specific)	*					

\* Attribute modifier varies depending on sub-skill

### Skill Format

Several special terms are used in the following Skill descriptions. These terms are defined below:

#### Skill Name

Skill description is found in this section.

**Training Time:** Before a player may take his first rank in some skills, he must have spent at least this amount of time in training and practice. Subsequent ranks do not require this training. Training time assumes that a character is practicing the skill four or more hours a day with competent instruction. No instructor or exceptional schooling can alter this time.

**Modifier:** The Attribute used to modify your Omni Table roll using this skill.

## SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

### ACROBATICS

The ability to perform most types of acrobatic maneuvers, including tight-rope walking, tumbling, leaping, vaulting, and break-falling (falling up to 20 feet without taking damage). Group actions include pyramids and flinging other acrobats (or non-acrobats) into the air. This skill can also be used when attempting contortionist feats like wriggling free from ropes.

**Training Period:** 50 weeks.

**Modifier:** DEX.

### ADMINISTRATION

The knowledge and ability to maintain and run an orderly organization, such as a small merchant stall, a rural manor, an abbey or the supply train of a vast crusading army.

**Training Period:** 5 weeks.

**Modifier:** INT

### ALCHEMY

Alchemy is the *High Medieval* equivalent of chemistry (although it also refers to a mystical and spiritual path). While alchemical creations often have seemingly magical effects, they are not considered enchanted items. Basic knowledge of alchemical lore and practices includes the ability to read alchemical ciphers, prepare and preserve ingredients, identify mixtures by test, and utilize alchemical apparatus. Alchemists can also concoct, forge, or otherwise create the categories of substances listed here: Alchemical Materials, Elixirs, Poison, Potions, and Powders. Specific substances are described in detail in the Equipment chapter including degree of difficulty, ingredients, creation time, cost of materials, and typical selling price.

To actually create an alchemical substance, characters must possess the relevant talent from the Alchemical Sciences Talent Tree. When creating an alchemical substance, a failure means that the time and ingredients are lost and the Alchemist must start again from scratch; a partial success means that the Alchemist has failed, but can continue to work on the creation without new ingredients; and

a success or critical success means that the process works as planned. An Alchemist can work on more than one project at a time, but if so, she takes a -5 penalty on each roll for each extra project (the standard multiple action penalty).

**Modifier:** INT.

## ANIMAL HANDLING

The ability to capture, tame, train, and/or breed domestic animals or wild beasts. Taming takes one week per every three Ability Levels of the creature to be tamed; training to perform a single task on command, such as carrying a rider, attacking, or guarding, requires an additional four weeks, or longer if the beast is particularly fierce or stubborn in nature. The Intelligence of a beast typically determines the limits of the creature's ability to learn.

**Modifier:** WIL

## APPRAISE

You can appraise common objects with a partial success or greater. Appraising a rare or unfamiliar item requires a full success or higher. If the check is successful, you estimate the value correctly; a failure means you are unable to even venture a guess at the item's value or you err and value the item at 50% to 150% of its actual value.

**Modifier:** INT

## ASTROLOGY

By studying the configurations of the sun, moon, planets and stars, practitioners of astrology can determine if the signs are well-aspected (favorable) or ill-aspected (unfavorable), and may thus be able to divine the outcome of future events. An Astrologer can make one divination per night, modified by the difficulty of the divination attempted. Results will always be vague and open to interpretation. Trained Astrologers (Astrologer Calling) receive certain bonuses when using this skill.

**Training Period:** 10 weeks.

**Modifier:** INT

## BALANCE

You are adept at walking on slippery, uneven or otherwise precarious surfaces. A partial success lets you move at half your SPD along the surface with a check required once per round on any dangerous surface. A failure means you are unable to move for 1 round. A mishap means you slip and fall. The difficulty varies with the type and condition of the surface.

**Modifier:** DEX

## BRAWLING

This involves proficiency in an unsophisticated form of hand-to-hand combat. Brawling is typically used for Close Attacks and Grappling, although characters can also use it to employ make-shift weapons, such as broken bottles or furniture, or to use such "dirty tricks" as eye-gouging and biting. The Damage Rating and Omni Table penalty for such weapons and tactics is usually between -3 and -5. Individuals can also use Brawling to attack with natural weaponry, such as a Tauran's horns (head butt).

**Modifier:** CR

## CLIMB

This skill involves the basic ability to climb rocks, walls, trees, ladders, ropes, etc. The availability of hand-holds, the condition of the surface or object being scaled and similar factors can all contribute to the Degree of Difficulty for this skill (GM's ruling).

**Modifier:** DEX.

## CONCENTRATION

This skill is used whenever a character is performing an action and is disturbed in some way. Whenever a character is attempting an action that requires his full attention and is distracted or otherwise interrupted, a Concentration check is required. This normally involves a skill that requires careful attention, like picking a lock or spellcasting. Examples of situations that require Concentration checks would include being attacked while making

a skill check, attempting to use a skill or to cast a spell in a raging storm and so on.

**Modifier:** WIL

## COOK

This is the ability to prepare food in such a way as to ensure that it will be edible and reasonably tasty. A failure or partial success creates an edible, if unappetizing meal, while a full success creates a meal that is quite palatable. A critical success will be spoken of for weeks as a meal that was fit for a king. A critical failure will be unfit for even a character's dog to eat.

**Modifier:** PER.

## CRYPTOGRAPHY

The ability to decipher cryptograms, codes, and secret or dead languages, and to write in code. Each text that a cryptographer attempts to decipher is given a difficulty rating, usually equal to the encoder's level of cryptography. Decoding a text requires one hour per level of the text's difficulty. The Degree of Difficulty will take into account the language or code and whether it is intricate, exotic, or very old writing.

**Modifier:** INT

## DECEPTION

The ability to deceive other individuals without arousing their suspicion and to win their trust by deceitful means. This includes the use of various scams, rigged games, and the like and also includes the ability to disguise one's background, profession, and so forth. A Deception check is usually opposed by the target's Deduce Motive check.

**Modifier:** CHA

## DEDUCE MOTIVE

This skill is used to sense whether someone is being truthful or bluffing or to notice hidden meaning and innuendo in a conversation. A successful check lets you avoid being bluffed (see the Deception skill). You can also use this skill to

determine when something odd is going on or to assess someone's trustworthiness.

**Modifier:** PER

## DIPLOMACY

This involves knowledge of the finer points of protocol, oratory, and negotiation. Individuals with this talent may seek positions as ambassadors, mercantile representatives, public officials, and so forth. The Diplomacy skill is used to change the attitudes of others including negotiations of all types. Debates and arguments are resolved using an opposed Diplomacy check. Changing another's attitude using Diplomacy takes at least one minute to accomplish (but usually longer).

**Modifier:** CHA

## DISABLE MECHANISM

The ability to foil locks, traps, conveyances and other simple or complex mechanisms, typically with the use of some type of tools. Characters may spend more than one round attempting to open a particular lock or otherwise disable a device; for each additional minute (specified in advance), add a +1 modifier (up to a maximum of +10). On the subject of lock-picking (likely the most common use of this skill), characters can attempt to open a lock that they have previously failed to open, with a -5 modifier for each previous failed attempt. This skill may also be used to design and install lock mechanisms, traps, secret doors or passage ways, etc. although the Handicraft (artificer) skill is required to construct such mechanisms.

**Training Period:** 12 weeks.

**Modifier:** DEX

## DISGUISE

Your Omni Table roll determines how good the disguise is, and it is opposed by others' PER check results. If you don't draw any attention to yourself, others do not get to make PER checks. If you come to the attention of people who are suspicious (such as a guard who is watching commoners walking through a city gate), the Disguise check is immediately opposed. You get only one Disguise



check per use of the skill, even if several people are making PER checks against it. The Disguise check is made secretly, so that you can't be sure how good the result is.

**Training Period:** 4 weeks.

**Modifier:** CHA

## ETIQUETTE

Knowledge of proper protocol and custom for specific situations within a given culture. Characters may use their Etiquette skill rather than their CHA rating when rolling for reaction from those of similar cultures. Etiquette is normally only used in gentle society and it is up to the GM to determine the appropriate penalties to the Degree of Difficulty when attempting to use it in foreign cultures.

**Training Period:** 12 weeks.

**Modifier:** CHA

## ENCHANTMENT

Enchantment is a special type of skill used solely in spellcasting. As such, the Enchantment skill is fully described in Chapter 6: Magic, later in this book.

## FORGERY

The ability to duplicate written documents, seals, signatures, and so forth. This includes the ability to create counterfeit replicas of coins, cut stones or other valuables, which are practically indistinguishable from the genuine articles.

**Training Period:** 5 weeks.

**Modifier:** INT

## GAMBLING

Familiarity with any of a variety of games involving skill and chance, including the ability to detect or engage in illicit methods of determining the outcome of such contests (cheating).

**Modifier:** INT

## HANDICRAFT

Like Knowledge, Perform, Survival and Theology

skills, Handicraft is actually comprised of a number of sub-skills. These sub-skills are all tracked separately so you could have several Handicraft skills each at different ranks. The various Handicraft skills are used whenever you need or want to create an item.

The Degree of Difficulty depends on the item to be created. If you succeed with a Critical Success, you have created a masterpiece. This exceptional item is then worth from 150% to 300% its normal value and/or it will convey a bonus to anyone using it (usually +1 to +5 for weapons, armor or tools).

The Handicraft skill is also used to repair items. A partial success is required to repair a broken item.

A few examples of Handicraft sub-skills are included below and GM's are encouraged to create new ones as needed in their campaigns:

**Armorer:** Skill in the fashioning of protective apparel and gear using hide or metal. Type of material and style of armor is usually dictated by region, culture, and availability of goods.

**Modifier:** STR.

**Artificer:** Skill in the making of useful and decorative wares and items from crystal, stone, wood, bone, clay, silver, gold, copper, brass, gemstones, fine fabrics, needlework, glass, and ceramics. The artificer may learn how to work with one type of material per +5 ability in this skill. Artificers can identify their own and their competitors' handiwork, and appraise, as the Appraise skill, any item that they can produce.

**Modifier:** DEX.

**Artisan:** Skilled builders and craftsmen specializing in one or more of the following: carpentry, masonry, wheelwright, cartwright, etc. The artisan may learn how to build one type of device per +5 ability in this skill.

**Modifier:** DEX.

**Blacksmith:** Skill in the making of useful and decorative wares and items from iron or steel. These items are normally farm tools and other necessary implements but do include some basic weapons like spear heads, arrow heads, maces, etc. Blacksmiths can identify their own and their competitors' handiwork, and appraise any item that they can produce.

**Modifier:** STR

**Bowyer/Fletcher:** Skill in the manufacture of arrows, crossbow bolts, bows, crossbows and some siege equipment such as ballista.

**Modifier:** DEX.

**Brewer/Vintner:** Skill at brewing, distilling, or concocting one type of alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage.

**Modifier:** INT.

**Illumination:** Skill in the production of books written by hand, decorated with paintings and ornaments of different kinds. The word 'illuminated' comes from a usage of the Latin word illuminare in connection with oratory or prose style, where it means 'adorn'. These books are normally written on skin, parchment, or vellum.

**Modifier:** DEX

**Rope Making:** Skill at using various materials such as sisal, hemp and silk in the manufacture of rope and twine.

**Modifier:** DEX

**Weaponsmith:** Skill in the fashioning of quality weapons using metal. This includes such weapons as swords, axes and flails.

**Modifier:** STR.

Training period on all Handicraft skills is 8 weeks.

## HEAL

This involves skill in the arts of medieval medicine, a speculative field of study at best. Healers are able to identify and utilize common plants and herbs with reputed medicinal properties, provide aid and comfort to sick and wounded individuals, and serve as midwives. As this field is limited in its capabilities, all rolls determining the accuracy of a healer's attempts to diagnose or cure a patient's ailments suffer a penalty of -5. A successful Heal check will restore up to 4 HP (2 with Partial Success) to a character if performed shortly after the damage is received.

**Modifier:** INT.

## HERALDRY

This is the study and knowledge of the armorial bearings and genealogies of the nobility and royalty of a particular region. It also includes the ability to recognize and create particular types of blazons. The character knows the armorial bearings of one nation or region per +5 ability in this skill.

**Modifier:** INT

## HERB LORE

Ability to identify useful or harmful plants, and to use such materials to concoct simple medicines or poisons. Also includes knowledge of how to prepare and preserve the herbs collected.

**Modifier:** INT

## INTIMIDATE

You are adept at using words, whether clever rhetoric or harsh insults, to demoralize and berate others into acting in a manner you choose. You can change another's behavior with a successful check, with the Omni Table result determining the degree to which you succeed.

**Modifier:** CHA

## INVESTIGATE

Proficiency in the time-honored art of acquiring information. The Investigate skill is used in place of PER for rolls to listen in on conversations,

gather rumors and inuendo and otherwise quietly acquire information about a specific topic. A Partial Success will get you general information about a person, place or commonly known news and trivia. A full or critical success is required for more detailed information. The detail of the information sought, how common the knowledge is and whether having this information is dangerous will all affect the Degree of Difficulty.

**Modifier:** CHA

## KNOWLEDGE

Like Handicraft, Knowledge actually comprises a number of sub-skills. Knowledge skills cover academic knowledge and lore on a specific topic.

There are a myriad of potential Knowledge skills, some examples follow:

**Agriculture:** planting, producing and harvesting various crops and livestock.

**Arcane Arts:** magic orders, spells, magical creatures, faeries, ancient lore, arcane symbols, golems (does not allow spell-casting).

**Demonology:** the forces of darkness, demons and devils, summoned spirits, etc.

**Engineering :** construction techniques, architecture, aqueducts, bridges, fortifications.

**Folklore:** myths, folk beliefs, and legends.

**Forestry:** management of woodlands, game keeping, wildlife

**Geography:** cartography, physical geography. Also includes navigation and piloting.

**History:** conflicts, historic figures, battles.

**Law:** laws and customs of at least one land.

**Local:** customs and important figures and places in a given locality.

**Nature:** Plants, animals, weather patterns, seasonal cycles, etc.

**Region:** Like Local but an overview of a particular realm, trade routes, major towns.

**Tactics:** Tactical and strategic theories of warfare.

General knowledge in a particular sub-skill requires only a partial success in most cases. More obscure knowledge could require a better Omni Table result. GM's are encouraged to create their own Knowledge skills as required by their campaigns.

**Training Time:** 8 weeks.

**Modifier:** INT

## LITERACY

The vast majority of medieval Europe is illiterate. Aside from the clergy, few beyond the nobility or merchant classes have the time or inclination to learn to read and write. Occasionally, commoners are taught to read by the clergy. A player may fluently read and write any one language that they speak for every +5 ranks in Literacy. A character who is fluent or better in a particular written language (see Speak Language skill) will generally have little difficulty reading any but the most in-depth tomes on a particular topic.

**Training Time:** 30 weeks.

**Modifier:** INT

## MODE

Modes are a special type of skill used solely in spellcasting. As such, the various Mode skills are fully described in Chapter 6: Magic, later in this book.

## MOUNTED COMBAT

This involves the ability to fight from the back of a steed or mount without penalty. Mounted Combat enables a character to direct a mount to take an action in combat without incurring a multiple action penalty to the character's own actions. Steeds can be directed to move at their normal SPD or to attack or evade attacks at their Ability Level. Characters can, alternatively, engage in a charging attack, adding the mount's STR and SPD as damage modifiers in place of the character's own STR. When attacking from a mount, use the lesser of the Weapon Skill and the Mounted Combat skill to resolve the action. For example, a knight with a Weapon Skill (large blades) of +6 and a Mounted Combat skill of +4 would attack from a mount at +4. Riding is a prerequisite for Mounted Combat, but the Mounted Combat skill rating may be substituted for Ride at no penalty.

**Training Period:** 20 weeks.

**Modifier:** CR

## OPERATE CONVEYANCE

The ability to operate a single type of land or simple waterborne conveyance, such as a cart, wagon, raft, and so forth. This ability does not include navigation skills or other detailed knowledge, which is covered under Knowledge (Geography).

**Modifier:** DEX

## PERFORM

You can impress audiences with your talent and skill. Like Handicraft and Knowledge, Perform is actually comprised of several sub-skills. The various sub-skills are: dance (DEX), musicianship (lyre, harp, flute, bagpipes, etc.) (DEX), juggling (DEX), mumming (acting, mime, etc.) (CHA), oratory (CHA) and singing (CHA).

**Training Period:** 8 weeks to 1 year.

**Modifier:** DEX or CHA (see above)

## RESEARCH

This is the ability to research for specific information

in a systematic, efficient manner. This skill can be invaluable for any student, scholar or scribe. A mishap on a Research check might indicate the researcher locates incorrect or flawed information, skewing their report or the results of any further research into that subject. A partial success could mean the researcher is on the right track and with additional time spent on research, should find the information they seek. The time required to do research depends on the available resources (a well-stocked university library vs. village church records).

**Training Period:** 2 weeks.

**Modifier:** PER

## RIDE

The ability to ride one type of steed, such as a horse or camel. This skill does not allow a character to take advantage of a steed's abilities in combat, which is covered under Mounted Combat.

**Training Period:** 1 week.

**Modifier:** DEX.

## SEAMANSHIP

The ability to operate and navigate one category of seagoing vessel (Cog, Galley, Longship, etc.) This also includes basic navigational piloting. A character with +10 or better in Seamanship can read any type of chart or map needed to navigate their vessels and can recognize familiar hazards, such as obstructions and coming storms. A cursory inspection is sufficient for any seaman to determine if a given vessel is in good condition.

**Training Period:** 3 months.

**Modifier:** DEX

## SEARCH

The practiced and studied use of Perception, Search is used when carefully looking for traps, secret doors and other details that may be hidden or concealed. You generally must be within 10 feet of the object or surface to be searched.

**Modifier:** PER

## SEDUCTION

The ability to influence by charm, suggestion and sex appeal. This skill can be used in place of Deception or Etiquette in certain situations.

**Modifier:** CHA

## SIEGECRAFT

Proficiency in the use of siege weapons, such as catapults, ballistae or sows. Includes the abilities to target, fire, and load the weapon, and to accurately judge distances. This skill also includes both defensive and offensive tactics such as sapping, building hoardings, using boiling oil, etc.

**Training Period:** 10 weeks.

**Modifier:** INT

## SLEIGHT OF HAND

The ability to perform various tricks and legerdemain, including card tricks, palming (concealing small objects in the hand), passing or switching small objects without being detected, ventriloquism, picking pockets and so on. Individuals with this talent can employ it to cheat or "fix" games of chance or to detect cheaters. Knowledge of the game to fix is required.

**Training Period:** 10 weeks.

**Modifier:** DEX

## SPEAK LANGUAGE

The ability to understand and be understood in a certain language. A list of the major languages spoken by the peoples of medieval Europe, North Africa and the East follows. Characters are rated in their proficiency with a language on a four-tiered scale, as follows: Advanced, Native, Fluent, or Basic. A speaker who is at least +10 (Native) on this scale can pass himself off as a native.

**Modifier:** INT

Skill Rating	Language Proficiency
+0 to +3	Basic
+4 to +9	Fluent
+10 or greater	Native

### Sample *High Medieval* Languages

English	Welsh	Gaelic
Cornish	Breton	French
Occitan	High German	Low German
Polish	Russian	Slavonic
Norse	Italian	Castilian
Hungarian	Flemish	Finnish
Greek	Ancient Greek	Arabic
Persian	Russian	Czech
Coptic	Hebrew	Aramaic
Tauran	Turkish	Latin
Basque	Elvish	Dark Speech

## STEALTH

The ability to move silently, hide in shadows, and otherwise avoid detection. Normally Stealth is opposed by a character's PER roll. Note that using this skill in an unfamiliar environment may entail a penalty of -1 to -10, based on the Degree Difficulty involved (GM's ruling).

**Modifier:** DEX

## SURVIVAL

The ability to forage for food and water, navigate, and find or construct suitable shelter in the wilds. Also includes knowledge of the flora and fauna of a given region, including techniques for hunting, capturing, and using their remains. Each different terrain is a different Survival skill. The different sub-skills include: forest, desert, arctic, swamp, alpine and urban. GM's are encouraged to add any other terrain types they deem needed.

**Training Period:** 30 weeks.

**Modifier:** CON

## SWIM

This involves staying afloat and getting from place to place in the water. Characters can attempt lifesaving techniques using this skill, with negative modifiers dependent on conditions in the water, the

size and weight of the victim, and so forth. Note that while encumbered, such as when wearing any type of armor or even heavy clothing, a character will suffer severe penalties to their Swim skill.

**Modifier:** STR

## THEOLOGY

The in-depth study of one particular religion or philosophy. Knowledge of Theology includes the ability to recite passages of important texts or orations, explain critical teachings, describe underlying symbolism, identify relevant relics, cite historical examples, and so forth. Theology has several sub-skills, each tracked separately. There are sub-skills for the more common religions in *High Medieval* including: Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Judaism, Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam, Pagan and Heretical.

**Training Period:** 3 months.

**Modifier:** PTY

## TORTURE

The ability to acquire information by unobtrusive, usually physical methods. Failure can result in accidental death of the individual being tortured. This skill is normally opposed by a character's WIL.

**Training Period:** 6 weeks.

**Modifier:** DEX

## TRACKING

The ability to read and follow tracks and traces left by creatures or beings. A tracker can identify and estimate the age of such tracks and often determine under what conditions (flight, exhaustion, heavy encumbrance, etc.) they were made. The surrounding terrain and the age and overall condition of the traces affect the Degree of Difficulty for this skill. This skill may only be used in a natural environment. It is normally impossible to use this skill to track someone in an urban-like environment.

**Modifier:** PER

## WEAPON

Proficiency with any single category of weapon. Weapon skills are used for both attack and defense.

**Training Period:** 20 weeks for the first weapon and 4 weeks for additional weapons.

**Modifier:** CR

Weapon Skill Sub-Categories	
Blades, 2-handed	zweihander, claymore
Blades, large	long sword, scimitar
Blades, small	daggers, knives, short swords
Bows	longbows, shortbows
Crossbows	light or heavy crossbow
Flails	flail, whip, chain
Hafted	axes, maces, pick, club
Hafted, 2-handed	maul, hercules club
Lance	Lances
Pole Arms	halberd, bardiche, glaive
Slings	slings
Spears	spear, javelin, staff, pike
Thrown	knives, axes, rocks



## TALENTS

Talents are a feature of High Medieval that allow you to customize your character in a near limitless manner. Because of Talents, no two characters will be alike regardless of their starting social class, skill selection, culture or Calling.

Talents allow your character to excel in certain areas, or to bend the rules that other characters must obey. They cover a range of skills and abilities from combat, to magic to stealth, the Church and even social interaction.

### GAINING TALENTS

Talents are grouped together in Talent Trees. Each tree covers a particular set of abilities. At every level advancement, a player is able to select a new Talent for his or her character.

Talents are grouped together into collections covering related abilities. All social classes and callings have a list of available talent trees open to them. Any Talent selected must come from one of the talent trees available to the character's social class (or Calling).

### PREREQUISITES

Many of the Talents presented here have prerequisites. These could be as simple as requiring a minimum CR or other attribute rating or perhaps even requiring the character to have previously acquired another Talent in the tree or even one from another Talent Tree.

Characters must meet all prerequisites listed before they may acquire a given Talent. Similarly, if a character ever loses a prerequisite for a Talent they already possess, they may not use that Talent again until regaining the prerequisite.

*For example: If a Talent has a prerequisite of STR +2 and the player with this Talent has his STR reduced to +1 (perhaps from*

*disease), he may not use this Talent again until he has regained his lost STR.*

## TALENT TREES

The following is a list of the Talent Trees available:

- ✿ Academia
- ✿ Alchemical Sciences
- ✿ Arcane Training
- ✿ Beast Lore
- ✿ Brawler
- ✿ Church Doctrine
- ✿ Coin of the Realm
- ✿ Combat Training
- ✿ Defensive Fighting
- ✿ Dirty Fighting
- ✿ Fools and Their Money
- ✿ In the Stars
- ✿ Inventive Incantations
- ✿ Life at the Abbey
- ✿ Magical Order
- ✿ Militia Training
- ✿ Mime & Music
- ✿ Mounted Combat
- ✿ Open Talents\*
- ✿ Path of the Healer
- ✿ Path of the Missionary
- ✿ Path of the Mystic
- ✿ Path of the Righteous
- ✿ Quick & Agile
- ✿ Rank & Privilege
- ✿ Sell Sword
- ✿ Skirmisher
- ✿ Statecraft
- ✿ Wanderer
- ✿ Way of the Arrow
- ✿ Way of the Wise
- ✿ Wild Fighter
- ✿ Wilderness lore

*\* Open Talents do not have trees and may be selected at any time so long as the character has all prerequisites.*

## ACADEMIA

Antiquarian, Diligent, Expert Antiquarian, Linguistics, Memory Training, Scribe.

## ALCHEMICAL SCIENCES

Brew Potion, Chemical Resistance, Concoct Powder, Create Poison, Create Homunculus, Infuse Potion, Philosopher's Stone.

## ARCANE TRAINING

Enchanted Lore, Expert Enchanted Lore, Magical Aptitude, Magic Resistance (alter), Magic Resistance (attack), Magic Resistance (illusion), Magic Resistance (influence), Magic Resistance (transform), Memory Training.

## BEAST LORE

Animal Affinity, Animal Companion, Animal Magnetism, Natural Remedy, Nature Speak, Survival of the Fittest.

## BRAWLER

Brutal Throw, Cheap Shot, Improvised Weapons, Opportunist, Quick Draw, Sucker Punch, Taunt.

## CHURCH DOCTRINE

Ecclesiastic Training, Excommunication, Proselytize, Sacraments: Confession, Sacraments: Mass.

## COIN OF THE REALM

Coordinate, Gossip, Quick Hands, Haggle, Negotiator, Middleman, Well Travelled.

## COMBAT TRAINING

Armor Tolerance I, Armor Tolerance II, Find Weakness, Quick Draw, Shield Slam, Smite, Squire, Swing Through, Weapon Focus.

## DEFENSIVE FIGHTING

Amazing Dodge, Break Away, Defensive Fighting, Defensive Roll, Extraordinary Dodge, Two Weapon Defense.

## DIRTY FIGHTING

Cheap Shot, Improvised Weapons, Low Blow, Opportunist, Quick Draw, Sudden Strike, Sneak Attack, Taunt.

## FOOLS & THEIR MONEY

Blend In, Fleet of Foot, Gossip, Inconspicuous, Non-Lethal Force, Opportunist, Quick Hands, Speed Climb, Sure Footed, Tough Trail, Urban Tracking.

## IN THE STARS

Augury, Prophecy, Weather Sense.

## Inventive Incantations

Amplify Spell, Disguise Spell, Expand Spell, Hasten Spell, Muted Spell, Spell Extension, Spell Focus.

## LIFE AT THE ABBEY

Clever Illuminator, Diligent, Enchanted Lore, Expert Enchanted Lore, Illuminator, Memory Training.

## MAGICAL ORDER

Alchemy, Demonology, Occultism, Sorcery, Witchcraft.

## MILITIA TRAINING

Advanced Militia Training, Archery Training, Basic Militia Training, Close Quarters Fighting, Weapon Focus (pole arm OR spear).

## MIME & MUSIC

Coordinate, Expert Performer, Naturally Charming, Pied Piper, Taunt.

## MOUNTED COMBAT

Bred to the Saddle, Charge, Mounted Stride, Trample.

## OPEN TALENTS

Acute Hearing, Acute Vision, Ambidexterity,



Attribute Boost, Die Hard, Diligent, Enchanting Beauty, Exceptional Craftsman, Inheritance, Master Craftsman, Natural Talent, Night Vision, Non Lethal Force, Poison Resistance, Quick Learner, Robust, Run Like the Wind, Seamanship, Second Wind, Self Sufficient, Skill Emphasis, Strength of a Bear, Strong as an Ox, Swift Creation, Thick Skin, Tough as Nails, Tough Skin, Wealth.

### PATH OF THE HEALER

Brew Elixiri, Create Poison, Death's Door, Lay on Hands, Leeches, Natural Remedy.

### PATH OF THE MISSIONARY

Gossip, Lay on Hands Proselytize, Shield of Faith, Spell Focus.

### PATH OF THE MYSTIC

Danger Sense, Natural Remedy, Precognition, Prophecy, Sense Evil, Weather Sense.

### PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Aura of Wisdom, Close to God, Devotion, Fast & Pray, Turn the Other Cheek.

### QUICK & AGILE

Amazing Dodge, Defensive Fighting, Defensive Roll, Elusive Target, Extraordinary Dodge, Highly Mobile, Opportunist.

### RANK & PRIVILEGE

Aura of Nobility, Coordinate, Force of Personality, Inheritance, Pride and Prejudice, Royal Favor, Voice of Command.

### SELL SWORD

Archery Training, Armor Tolerance I, Close Quarters Fighting, Find Weakness, Shield Slam, Sword & Shield, Take the Reins, Weapon Focus.

### SKIRMISHER

Duck & Cover, Elusive Target, Opportunist, Skirmish, Take the Reins.

### STATECRAFT

Aura of Wisdom, Coordinate, Force of Personality, Gossip, Middleman, Naturally Charming, Negotiator, Royal Favor, Taunt.

### WANDERER

Fleet of Foot, Linguistics, Mounted Stride, Well Travelled.

### WAY OF THE ARROW

Archery Training, Advanced Archery Training, Disabling Shot, Improved Range, Point Blank Shot, Quick Reload, Trick Shot, Weapon Focus (bow or crossbow).

### WAY OF THE WISE

Augury, Danger Sense, Folk Remedies, Second Sight, Survival of the Fittest.

### WILD FIGHTER

Close Quarters, Frenzied Attack I, Frenzied Attack II, Rage, Smite, Weapon Focus (weapon appropriate to culture).

### WILDERNESS LORE

Danger Sense, Mountain Goat, Natural Remedy, Speed Climb, Survival of the Fittest, Trackless I, Trackless II, Trackless III, Weather Sense.

## TALENTS

### ACUTE HEARING

You have a trained ear or an exceptional natural sense of hearing.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to all PER Omni Table checks as they relate to sound.

**Prerequisite:** None

### ACUTE VISION

You have exceptional eyesight and see much better than most.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to all PER Omni

Table checks as they relate to vision.

**Prerequisite:** None

#### **Talent Format**

Several special terms are used in the following Talent descriptions. These terms are defined below:

#### **Talent Name**

Description of the talent.

**Benefit:** Benefits and/or penalties and associated game mechanics or rules.

**Normal:** The normal game rule the Talent modifies.

**Special:** Any special circumstances that may affect this Talent.

**Prerequisite:** All prerequisites for acquiring the Talent.

### ADVANCED MILITIA TRAINING

This training improves upon the Basic Militia Training and also includes the use of a wider range of weapons and personal defensive techniques.

**Benefit:** Increases the character's Combat Rating by +1.

**Prerequisite:** Basic Militia Training

### ALCHEMY

You have been schooled in the basics of the Alchemy Magical Order.

**Benefit:** You may cast spells of the Alchemy Order

**Prerequisite:** INT +2

### AMAZING DODGE

You have a remarkable ability to avoid being hit in melee combat.

**Benefit:** The character may double his DEX rating when calculating his defense against any one opponent in melee combat.

**Prerequisite:** DEX +1

### AMBIDEXTROUS

Either from a natural ability or training, you are

able to use both hands with near equal dexterity.

**Benefit:** You are always considered to be using your primary hand. Any actions taken with either hand suffer no penalty to the Omni Table roll.

**Normal:** Actions taken with the off-hand are usually at a -5 penalty.

**Prerequisite:** None

### AMPLIFY SPELL

You have studied one particular spell at length and have effectively doubled the normal effects of this spell.

**Benefit:** Choose one of your known spells. Whenever you cast this spell it now automatically has the maximum possible effect (maximum amount of damage done, maximum number of hit points healed, etc.) on even a Partial Success on the Omni Table.

**Prerequisite:** Level 8+

### ANIMAL AFFINITY

You have a calming effect on the creatures of the forest.

**Benefit:** If you encounter an animal and are not actively in combat, you may attempt to soothe the creature by making a successful Omni Table CHA check. On a partial success, the animal will simply retreat by the quickest means possible. A full success means the animal in question considers you to be a friend and may aid you in some manner.

**Prerequisite:** Animal Magnetism, Animal Sense

### ANIMAL COMPANION

Your affinity for animals has garnered you a natural ally.

**Benefit:** You receive a loyal companion in the form of an animal of the same type with which you can communicate (through the Nature Speak talent). This animal companion will always be of the highest possible ability level for its type.

**Prerequisite:** Animal Affinity, Animal Magnetism, Animal Sense, Nature Speak

## ANIMAL MAGNETISM

You have a natural way with animals.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Handle Animal and Ride skills.

**Prerequisite:** None

## ANIMAL SENSE

You have a natural affinity with the animals of the forest and can sense the presence of animals when they are about.

**Benefit:** You may make a PER roll on the Omni Table to try and locate any animals in the general vicinity. This works for natural beasts only, not Fey, magical or demonic aberrations and is effective to about one quarter mile. A critical success will also give you a sense of the types and locations as well as the approximate ability levels.

**Prerequisite:** Animal Magnetism

## ANTIQUARIAN

You are very knowledgeable about ancient artifacts and relics.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus on all Appraise skill checks when attempting to appraise the value of an ancient object or a +2 bonus to all Cryptography checks when deciphering ancient scripts.

**Prerequisite:** None

## ARCANE AIM

You are especially adept at targeting spell energy.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to your Omni Table roll when casting a ranged spell of the Attack Mode.

**Prerequisite:** Attack Mode +5 greater

## ARCANE RESISTANCE

You have a natural immunity to magic in all of its myriad forms.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist spells of any Mode. This applies to any beneficial spells, such as healing, cast upon the character as well. Characters may

not have both Arcane Resistance and Magical Affinity Talents.

**Prerequisite:** Character creation only

## ARMOR TOLERANCE I

You have become accustomed to wearing your armor and no longer suffer some of the ill effects normally associated with it.

**Benefit:** This Talent effectively reduces the weight of armor worn by the character by 25% when calculating encumbrance penalties.

**Prerequisite:** Lesser Nobility or Level 5+

## ARMOR TOLERANCE II

The many years you have spent in your armor have enabled you to wear it like a second skin.

**Benefit:** This Talent effectively reduces the weight of armor worn by the character by 50% when calculating encumbrance penalties.

**Prerequisite:** Lesser Nobility or Level 10+, Armor Tolerance I

## ATTRIBUTE BOOST

You have worked hard to improve your body, mind or spirit.

**Benefit:** You may increase any one Attribute by +1.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Special:** Attribute boost may be selected multiple times but no one attribute may be increased more than +2 using this Talent.

## AUGURY

Gifted with a sense of foresight, you can sometimes predict what result a particular action will bring.

**Benefit:** Once per day, you may ask a simple question of the GM concerning an action you or a companion are about to perform. An Omni Table roll is required with no modifiers and the Degree of Difficulty is set by the GM based on the question asked. A partial success will give a vague answer while a full or critical success will give the player an edge on the action in question.

**Prerequisite:** None

### AURA OF NOBILITY

You have gained the respect and/or fear of others for your perceived adherence to the ideal of chivalry.

**Benefit:** You may add your NBL rating to CHA and REN when determining Reaction Rolls.

**Normal:** When making a normal Reaction roll, CHA and REN are added together and used as an Omni Table modifier.

**Prerequisite:** None

### AURA OF WISDOM

You have gained the respect of others for your perceived wisdom.

**Benefit:** You may add your INT rating to CHA and REN when determining Reaction Rolls.

**Normal:** When making a normal reaction Roll, CHA and REN are added together and used as an Omni Table modifier.

**Prerequisite:** None

### BASIC MILITIA TRAINING

Basic training given to (or more often forced upon) peasants and freemen in times of conflict. This includes coordinated fighting tactics and some weapon training.

**Benefit:** One free rank in either Weapon (Polearms) or Weapon (Spear).

**Prerequisite:** Commoner or Freeman Social class

### BLEND IN (SPECIFIC)

You are especially adept at hiding in a particular environment.

**Benefit:** You receive a +5 bonus to Stealth checks in one of the following environments: desert, forests, mountains, steppes, swamps, tundra or urban.

**Special:** This Talent may be selected more than once. Each time it applies to a different terrain type.

**Prerequisite:** None

### BREAK AWAY

You have learned how best to disengage from melee combat.

**Benefit:** The normal free unopposed attack(s) that a character incurs when he flees from a close combat is no longer applied.

**Prerequisite:** Amazing Dodge

### BRED TO THE SADDLE

You were taught to ride at an early age and have kept up the practice.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free Ranks in the Ride skill and a +2 bonus to your skill rating in the Handle Animal skill as it pertains to one particular mount.

**Prerequisite:** None

### BREW ELIXIRS

You have been taught the finer points of brewing alchemical elixirs.

**Benefit:** You may use the Alchemy skill to brew alchemical elixirs such as medicines, aphrodisiacs, antidotes, etc.

**Prerequisite:** Alchemist level 2+

### BRUTAL THROW

When attacking unarmed, you may make a particularly damaging throw.

**Benefit:** After making a successful Grapple attack, the character may throw his opponent as normal but this throw has a chance of stunning the thrown opponent. The individual thrown must succeed in a CON roll or is stunned and unable to act or defend himself next round.

**Prerequisite:** Brawling +3 or CR +3, STR+2

### CHARGE

You have been trained in the fine art of mounted warfare.

**Benefit:** You may direct your horse to charge a specific target. You receive a +3 bonus to the *Omni Table* roll and do double the normal damage if successful.

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat 5+

### CHEAP SHOT

You have learned how to hit someone where it hurts, such as with a kidney punch or a knee to the groin. While not a particularly chivalrous type of attack, it is nonetheless effective.

**Benefit:** Reduces the effectiveness of an opponent for a few rounds. A successful Cheap Shot causes all actions taken by victim to be at a special penalty of -2 for three rounds minus the victim's WIL (minimum 1 round). A Critical Success doubles the duration.

**Prerequisite:** Brawling +3

### CHEMICAL RESISTANCE

You have built up a resistance through years of handling dangerous alchemical substances.

**Benefit:** You receive a +5 bonus to any CON Omni Table roll to resist alchemical or poisonous substances.

**Prerequisite:** Infuse Potion, Create Poison

### CLEVER ILLUMINATOR

You are able to encode secret messages in the illumination of manuscripts and books that appear otherwise ordinary.

**Benefit:** You may add your Handicraft (illuminator) skill ranks to any Omni Table roll using the Cryptography skill to encode messages. Anyone attempting to break the code of your manuscripts without the proper key receives a -10 penalty to their Cryptography Omni Table roll.

**Prerequisite:** Illuminator

### CLOSE QUARTERS FIGHTING

You have learned to fight effectively while in tight confines or in tightly packed spaces.

**Benefit:** Reduces the negative effects of using small weapons while grappled and larger weapons when there is normally insufficient room to do so.

**Normal:** There is usually a -5 penalty if trying to use a weapon while grappled by an opponent.

**Prerequisite:** Brawling +3 or CR +5

### CLOSE TO GOD

You pay special attention to the sermons of the Priest on Sunday and are particularly devout.

**Benefit:** You receive a +1 to your Piety Rating and may add Literacy to your list of preferred skills.

**Prerequisite:** None

### CONCOCT POWDERS

You have been taught the finer points of distilling alchemical powders.

**Benefit:** You may use the Achemy skill to create alchemical powders of all types.

**Prerequisite:** Alchemist level 3+

### COORDINATE

You have a knack for getting people to work together.

**Benefit:** Whenever you spend at least one round coordinating your companions, you grant them a +2 bonus to any one non-combat skill roll. You may coordinate a number of companions up to your CHA score.

**Prerequisite:** Negotiator

### CREATE HOMUNCULUS

Your skill in the alchemical arts is exceptional. You have mastered one of the inner secrets of alchemy, the ability to create an autonomous magical creature known as a homunculus.

**Benefit:** After spending £4d20 x 100 in materials and no less than 1 month, you may roll on the Omni Table using your Alchemy skill rating as a modifier in an attempt to create a Homunculus (see Chapter 9). The Degree of Difficulty is adjusted by a base of 10 + level of the homunculus to be created. You may control a number of homunculi equal to your CHA at any one time though the number in your service is essentially only limited by your wealth and time. The homunculi you create will follow your every command to the best of their abilities.

**Prerequisite:** Alchemist level 10+

## CREATE POISON

You have been taught the finer points of distilling and brewing various types of toxins, poisons and venoms.

**Benefit:** You may use the Alchemy skill to create poisons of all types

**Prerequisite:** Alchemist level 4+

## DANGER SENSE

You have the ability to sense when something is going to go badly. Possibly a vague premonition of impending danger or even just a studied knowledge of where things are likely to happen, this Talent is invaluable.

**Benefit:** Adds +2 to the character's Initiative roll at the beginning of any encounter.

**Prerequisite:** None

## DEATH'S DOOR

Your talent at the healing arts is exceptional.

**Benefit:** So long as a person requiring healing has not been dead longer than a number of minutes equal to your PTY rating, you may make a Heal roll on the Omni Table with a Degree of Difficulty modifier of -15. A full success will revive the person bringing their hit point total to 1. A critical success will see the person revived and have a total of 5 hit points.

**Prerequisite:** Heal +10

## DEFENSIVE FIGHTING

You have mastered the art of making yourself hard to hit in combat.

**Benefit:** For each -2 taken on the Attack roll, the character's Defense is enhanced by +1, up to a maximum of the character's CR.

**Prerequisite:** DEX +1 or CR +3

## DEFENSIVE ROLL

You have learned to reduce the damage taken from a successful hit by rolling with the impact.

**Benefit:** With a successful DEX roll, the character can reduce the damage taken from a successful

melee attack by one half. This reduction is done after adding the opponent's Strength but before Damage Reduction for armor and may not reduce the damage to less than 1.

**Prerequisite:** Defensive Fighting, DEX +1 or CR +3

## DEMONOLOGY

You have been schooled in the basics of the Demonology Magical Order.

**Benefit:** You may cast spells of the Demonology Order

**Prerequisite:** INT +2

## DEVOTION

You are particularly devoted to your faith.

**Benefit:** You receive a +1 bonus on all attack rolls when combating enemies of your faith. For followers of the Church of Rome this could mean heretics, Saracens or the Unholy. For Muslims it could mean Christian Crusaders. Ultimately, who and what is an enemy of your faith is at the GM's discretion.

**Prerequisite:** PTY +2

## DIENARD

You are tougher than most of your peers.

**Benefit:** You receive a one time bonus of +3 hit points. This Talent may be selected up to 3 times, each time adding +3 hit points.

**Prerequisite:** None

## DILIGENT

You have an eye for detail in everything you do.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Appraise and Cryptography skills.

**Prerequisite:** None

## DISABLING SHOT

You have learned how to disable or slow down an opponent with a missile weapon.

**Benefit:** With a stated intent of disabling his target (made before the Attack roll), a successful attack using a ranged weapon (bow, crossbow, thrown weapon, etc.) will cause only half damage but also

reduces the target's Strength, Dexterity or Speed by -2 for a duration of ten rounds.

**Prerequisite:** Point Blank Shot.

## DISGUISE SPELL

You have learned various methods to disguise the arcane signature of one of your spells.

**Benefit:** Select one of your known spells. Whenever someone attempts to counterspell this spell, you receive a +5 bonus to resist.

**Prerequisite:** Relevant Mode skill +5 or greater

## DUCK & COVER

You don't like being hit and have learned to make effective use of any cover provided.

**Benefit:** When the character is being targeted with a missile weapon, he counts any cover at twice value for determining penalties. For example, a character behind 20% cover would normally incur a -2 penalty on any attacks made against him with missile weapons. The same character with Duck and Cover would incur a -4 penalty.

**Prerequisite:** None

## ECCLESIASTIC TRAINING

You were singled out at a young age as having a particular aptitude for religion.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Theology (select religion) skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

## ELUSIVE TARGET

You have the ability to move while under fire in such a way that reduces your chances of being hit.

**Benefit:** Any attempt to hit you while you are moving will receive a further -2 penalty above the normal penalties associated with firing on a moving target.

**Prerequisite:** Duck and Cover

## ENCHANTED LORE

You have a special knowledge of enchanted items like swords, armor, wands and such.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus on all Appraise skill checks when attempting to appraise the value of an enchanted object.

**Prerequisite:** None

## ENCHANTING BEAUTY

You have been gifted by God with exceptional beauty.

**Benefit:** You receive a +5 bonus to all Diplomacy and Seduction Omni Table rolls when dealing with a member of the opposite sex.

**Prerequisite:** CHA +1

## EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMAN

You excel in your chose craft, often creating what others consider to be works of art.

**Benefit:** Select one of your Handicraft skills. You now receive a +5 bonus to all Omni Table rolls when using this skill. This Talent may be selected more than one, each time must be applied to a different Handicraft skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

## EXCOMMUNICATION

You have the power to remove someone from the sight of God, excommunicating them from the Holy Church of Rome.

**Benefit:** Once per week, you may use your station and contacts in the Church to effectively excommunicate one person. This person may no longer attend any church service, nor may they attend Mass or be buried in sacred ground should they die. They receive a -5 penalty to REN until the excommunication is lifted by you or another member of clergy of higher rank (level). In addition, they are treated as having a -5 PTY when of interacting with members of their faith.

**Prerequisite:** Member of clergy (Monk, Priest, etc.) Level 10+

## EXPAND SPELL

You have studied one particular spell at length and have effectively doubled the normal area of effect of the spell.

**Benefit:** Choose one of your known spells. You may now widen the area of effect of this spell up to twice the normal area with no increased difficulty to your Omni Table casting roll.

**Prerequisite:** Level 8+

### EXPERT ANTIQUARIAN

You are particularly knowledgeable in ancient artifacts and relics.

**Benefit:** You receive a +3 bonus on all Appraise skill checks when attempting to appraise the value of an ancient object. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from the Antiquarian Talent. Also, you may select one particular ancient civilization. You receive a +5 bonus instead of a +3 bonus to appraise checks relating to this civilization.

**Prerequisite:** Antiquarian

### EXPERT ENCHANTED LORE

You have particularly advanced knowledge of enchanted items like swords, armor, wands and the like.

**Benefit:** You receive a +3 bonus on all Appraise skill checks when attempting to appraise the value of an enchanted object. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from the Enchanted Lore Talent. In addition, you receive 2 free ranks in the Knowledge (arcane arts) skill.

**Prerequisite:** Enchanted Lore

### EXPERT PERFORMER

You are highly skilled in one particular style of the performing arts.

**Benefit:** Select on Perform skill. You receive a +5 bonus to all Omni Table rolls using this skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

### EXTRAORDINARY DODGE

You possess a near unearthly ability to avoid injury in melee combat.

**Benefit:** You may double your DEX rating when calculating your Defense in melee combat against any number of opponents.

**Prerequisite:** Amazing Dodge, DEX +2

### FAST AND PRAY

You are especially pious and seek the Lord's guidance in all that you do.

**Benefit:** Your Piety is increased by +1. Additionally, by fasting and praying for at least one day you increase your WIL by +1 for 24 hours.

**Prerequisite:** None

### FIND WEAKNESS

After studying an opponent for a time, you become familiar with his combat style and may use this to advantage.

**Benefit:** If you take a round to study your opponent in combat (make no attack, but may defend normally), you may substitute your INT rating for your STR rating to subsequent Attack rolls against this opponent.

**Prerequisite:** None

### FLEET OF FOOT

You are fast on your feet.

**Benefit:** You may permanently increase you SPD attribute by +1. This talent may be selected up to two times.

**Prerequisite:** None

### FOLK REMEDIES

The knowledge of various folk remedies and charms have been passed down to you by your elders.

**Benefit:** By spending 2 hours gathering common ingredients and carefully preparing them, you may make a potion, tincture or salve that will cure a specific disease, cure a specific poison or heal 4 hit points of damage.

**Special:** This talent may be selected more than once, each time it enables you to create a cure for a different disease or poison.

**Prerequisite:** None

### FORCE OF PERSONALITY

You have a strong sense of who you are and what you believe in.

**Benefit:** You receive a +3 bonus to any opposed



check that uses your WIL rating as a modifier such as opposing the Intimidation or Torture skills.

**Prerequisite:** None

### FRENZIED ATTACK I

Whether a berserker charge or just an all-out flurry of blows, a Frenzied Attack sacrifices Defense for damage potential.

**Benefit:** You may make one extra attack at full normal Attack bonus each round. This extra attack however, comes at a cost. When making a Frenzied Attack you are at -5 to your Defense until your next turn.

**Prerequisite:** Rage

### FRENZIED ATTACK II

An improved form of Frenzied Attack.

**Benefit:** You may make one extra attack at full normal Attack bonus each round. This stacks with Frenzied Attack I.

**Prerequisite:** Frenzied Attack I, Rage, CR +5

### GOSSIP

You have a good ear for gossip and a knack for discerning truth from embellishment.

**Benefit:** You receive a +3 bonus to all Investigate Omni Table rolls.

**Prerequisite:** None

### GUIDE MY HAND

Your faith is great and God guides your hand when fighting his enemies.

**Benefit:** Up to three times per day, you may add your PTY to your Omni Table attack roll against an enemy of your faith.

**Prerequisite:** Path of the Righteous

### HAGGLE

You are adept at the fine art of haggling.

**Benefit:** You receive a +3 bonus to all Omni Table rolls using your Diplomacy skill when used in a mercantile situation. Additionally, whenever you roll a Full Success on the Omni Table using your Diplomacy skill to buy or sell goods, you receive a +/- 20% to the value of the goods sold/bought.

A Critical Success means you may buy or sell the goods at +/- 50% of their normal value.

**Prerequisite:** None

### HASTEN SPELL

You have studied one particular spell at length and have effectively halved the time required to cast it.

**Benefit:** Choose one of your known spells. You may now cast this spell as a free action, once per round.

**Normal:** Casting a spell normally counts as an action.

**Prerequisite:** Level 8+

### HIGHLY MOBILE

You are able to move freely in melee combat.

**Benefit:** You are able to move up to half of your normal speed during your turn as a free action.

**Prerequisite:** None

### ILLUMINATOR

Your skill in manuscript illumination is near legendary.

**Benefit:** You receive a +5 bonus to your Omni Table roll whenever using the Handicraft (illuminator) skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

### IMPROVED RANGE (SPECIFIC)

Through long practice, you have improved the range of one of your ranged weapons.

**Benefit:** The effective range of the selected class of ranged weapon is increased by 50%. This Talent may be taken multiple times, each time it is applied to a different class of weapon.

**Prerequisite:** Point Blank Shot

### IMPROVISED WEAPONS

You can use almost anything at hand as an effective weapon.

**Benefit:** The character suffers only a -2 penalty when using an improvised weapon or a weapon with which he is unfamiliar (has no skill ranks in).

**Prerequisite:** None

## INCONSPICUOUS

You can pass unnoticed in most situations.

**Benefit:** You rely on your ability to stay out of site. With this Talent, You gain 2 free ranks in the Stealth skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

## INFUSE POTION

You have been taught the finer points of brewing alchemical potions.

**Benefit:** You may use the Alchemy skill to brew potions that convey magical effects upon the imbiber. You are effectively able to imbue a potion with the effects of any spell you know, thereby conveying the effects of the spell upon the imbiber of the potion.

**Special:** This Talent may be selected more than once, each time being applied to a different type of potion.

**Prerequisite:** Alchemist level 5+

## INHERITANCE

A member of your family has passed on to St. Peter and left you an inheritance.

**Benefit:** The form of the inheritance will be dependent on your starting social class and could be anything the GM feels is appropriate. This could be a sword or tool of exceptional quality, a fine steed, small cottage or what have you for the lower classes right up to a fief, manor or even a keep for those in the nobility.

**Prerequisite:** Level 3+

## INTIMIDATION TACTICS

You have learned how to scare others out of their possessions through intimidating tactics.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Intimidation skill and may use either STR or CHA as a modifier to that skill.

**Normal:** Intimidation normally uses only a character's CHA rating as a modifier.

**Prerequisite:** None

## LAY ON HANDS

Your strong faith aids you in healing the sick and meek.

**Benefit:** You may elect to use your PTY rating instead of your INT rating when performing Heal skill checks.

**Prerequisite:** PTY +2

## LEECHES

You are knowledgeable in the medicinal uses of leeches.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to all Heal Omni Table rolls when you have access to leeches.

**Prerequisite:** None

## LINGUISTICS

You have a natural affinity for languages and may learn new languages much faster than others.

**Benefit:** Characters with the Linguistics Talent gain 3 free ranks in any language they know or learn in the future, i.e. if the player buys at least one rank in a language they automatically advance to the Fluent level.

**Prerequisite:** INT +1

## LOW BLOW

You have the ability to land a particularly nasty hit on an opponent that has the potential to stun him.

**Benefit:** An opponent struck with a Low Blow may be temporarily stunned and unable to perform any action other than defend himself or move at half speed for two rounds. A successful WIL roll will negate this effect.

**Prerequisite:** Cheap Shot

## MAGICAL APTITUDE

You have a natural aptitude for the arcane arts and sciences.

**Benefit:** You receive 1 free rank in any one Mode skill. This Talent may be selected more than once, each time the bonus is applied to a different Mode skill.

**Prerequisite:** Level 8+

### MAGIC RESISTANCE: ALTER

You were born with a natural resistance to arcane energy and are better able to resist some types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Alter Mode.

**Prerequisite:** Maybe selected at character creation only

### MAGIC RESISTANCE: ATTACK

You were born with a natural resistance to arcane energy and are better able to resist some types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Attack Mode.

**Prerequisite:** Maybe selected at character creation only.

### MAGIC RESISTANCE: ILLUSION

You were born with a natural resistance to arcane energy and are better able to resist some types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Illusion Mode.

**Prerequisite:** Maybe selected at character creation only

### MAGIC RESISTANCE: INFLUENCE

You were born with a natural resistance to arcane energy and are better able to resist some types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Influence Mode.

**Prerequisite:** Maybe selected at character creation only

### MAGIC RESISTANCE:

#### TRANSFORM

You were born with a natural resistance to arcane energy and are better able to resist some types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Transform

Mode.

**Prerequisite:** Maybe selected at character creation only

### MASTER CRAFTSMAN

Part of a relatively new and burgeoning social class, you have trained long and hard in a particular craft.

**Benefit:** You receive 4 free ranks in any one Craft skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

### MEMORY TRAINING

Medieval folk do not have access to durable writing material and thus train their memories for near perfect recall.

**Benefit:** If you commit yourself to memorizing something, you can recite it, without error, at any later date. It generally takes three times as long to memorize a passage than it does to simply read it.

**Prerequisite:** Ecclesiastic Training

### MIDDLEMAN

Not a noble but not a commoner either, you are adept at dealing with members of different social classes.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Diplomacy skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

### MOUNTAIN GOAT

You are especially skilled at maintaining your balance on loose stone, rubble and steep slopes.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to all Balance and Climb Omni Table checks as it relates to the above conditions.

**Prerequisite:** Surefooted

### MOUNTED STRIDE

The ability to get the best long-range speed out of a mount.

**Benefit:** The character may double the distance traveled in one day while mounted and in

reasonably good terrain.

**Prerequisite:** Ride (Specific) +3

### MUTED SPELL

You have studied one particular spell at length and have devised a way to activate the spell without the use of sound.

**Benefit:** Choose one of your known spells. You may now cast this without any verbal components and in complete silence. Some type of somatic or material component will still be required to cast the spell however.

**Prerequisite:** Level 8+

### NATURAL REMEDY

You are knowledgeable in the medicinal uses of herbs, roots, bark and other forest plants

**Benefit:** You gain a +3 bonus to all Heal Omni Table rolls when you have access to various herbal substances. This bonus stacks with any bonus received from other Talents in this tree.

**Prerequisite:** None

### NATURAL TACTICIAN

You have studied the tactics and strategies of the medieval battlefield.

**Benefit:** You receive 3 free ranks in the Knowledge (tactics) skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

### NATURAL TALENT

You have a natural affinity for a particular skill.

**Benefit:** Select any one skill. You receive a + 2 bonus to all Omni Table rolls using this skill.

**Special:** Please note weapons skills are excluded from this talent.

**Prerequisite:** None

### NATURAL TALENT II

Your natural sense of skill exceeds most of your peers.

**Benefit:** Select any one skill for which you space already have the Natural Talent Talent. You receive

an additional + 3 bonus on any Omni Table roll using the skill. This bonus stacks with the Natural Talent bonus.

**Prerequisite:** Natural Talent

### NATURALLY CHARMING

You are a naturally charming person and you may use your charm to sway the opinions of others.

**Benefit:** You may double your CHA as a modifier to all Diplomacy and Seduction rolls on the Omni Table.

**Prerequisite:** CHA +1

### NATURE SPEAK

You have the mystical ability to understand the language of a particular type of animal.

**Benefit:** select one type of natural animal. You are able to understand and be understood by members of this species. This Talent is seen to have diabolical overtones by many members of the Church and could easily lead to the character being on the receiving end of an inquisitor's interrogation.

**Prerequisite:** Animal Affinity

### NEGOTIATOR

You are skilled at the fine art of negotiation be that in obtaining the best price for your wares or in talking your way out of a difficult situation.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Diplomacy and Sense Motive skills.

**Prerequisite:** None

### NIGHT VISION

Your eyes see better in the dark than most people.

**Benefit:** You will never suffer more than a -3 penalty to an PER checks at night.

**Prerequisite:** None

### NON-LETHAL FORCE

You have learned how to subdue an opponent using normally lethal weapons.

**Benefit:** Even when using normally lethal melee

weapons (swords, axes, spears, etc.), the character may make any attacks deal non-lethal damage instead. This intent must be made before the attack on any particular round.

**Prerequisite:** CR +1

### OCCULTISM

You have been schooled in the basics of the Occultism Magical Order.

**Benefit:** You may cast spells of the Occultism Order

**Prerequisite:** INT +2, PTY +2

### OPPORTUNIST

You can turn any nearly any situation to your advantage.

**Benefit:** Any time an opponent misses a melee Attack against the character, he may make an immediate counterattack. This attack is out of sequence and still counts as an action taken. For example, if the character had already attacked (or taken another action) this round, the counterattack is at the normal -5 penalty for multiple actions.

**Prerequisite:** DEX +1

### PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

You are zealous in your pursuit of the enemies of the Church of Rome.

**Benefit:** You receive a +1 bonus to all Omni Table checks when attacking enemies of the Church. Likewise, all successful attacks (both partial and full) gain a +1 damage bonus.

**Prerequisite:** PTY +3

### PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Your skill in the alchemical arts is exceptional. You have mastered the ultimate secret of alchemy, the ability to create the philosopher's stone, a mystical substance that can transmute other substances.

**Benefit:** After spending £2500 in materials and no less than 2 months of time in preparation, you may roll on the Omni Table using your Handicraft (alchemy) skill rating as a modifier in an attempt to create a philosopher's stone. There is an automatic

-12 modifier for the difficulty in discovering the secret of the philosopher's stone is great. Once created, the alchemist may convert any inorganic substance into any other inorganic substance of their choosing. Transformation takes 6 hours and up to 12 oz. of material may be transformed at a time.

**Prerequisite:** Exceptional Craftsman (alchemy), Alchemist level 10+

### PIED PIPER

Your skill in musicianship is often able to soothe wild beasts.

**Benefit:** You may use your Perform (musicianship) to calm animals. GM's should gauge the general demeanor of the animal in question when determining the Degree of Difficulty. A full success will make the animal completely docile while a partial success will at least prevent the animal from attacking.

**Prerequisite:** Perform (musicianship) +8

### POINT BLANK SHOT

The practiced skill of hitting a target at close range.

**Benefit:** Any attacks made with a ranged weapon within one half of the effective range receive a +2 bonus.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon (bow, crossbow or sling) +1 or CR +3

### POISON RESISTANCE

You have built up a resistance to toxins and venoms.

**Benefit:** When attempting to resist the effects of poison you may triple, rather than double, your CON as a modifier to your Omni Table roll.

**Prerequisite:** CON +1

### PRECOGNITION

Whether through a preternatural sense or skill at divination, you have an uncanny sense of déjà vu.

**Benefit:** Because of your "sixth sense" you

may never be caught unaware, nor can you be surprised.

**Prerequisite:** Level 2+

### PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

Like most nobles, your family has had a long running feud with another noble family.

**Benefit:** Select a noble family from your own or a neighboring realm. Driven by your hatred of this rival, you may add your WIL rating to your Attack roll instead of your CR when fighting a member, or agents of, this rival family.

**Prerequisite:** None

### PROPHECY

You have the gift of prophecy. Whether through visions from God, an advanced knowledge of the stars and planets or some diabolical gift, you are able to predict the future with an uncanny degree of accuracy.

**Benefit:** Twice per day you may ask the GM one specific question about something that has not yet happened and make an Omni Table roll using your combined WIL and PER as a modifier. The degree of difficulty will depend on the specific question asked, with more general or unimportant questions having a lower degree of difficulty than a life and death question. A partial success indicates a general sense of what is to come, while a full success should give fairly accurate information. Depending on the question asked and the Omni Table result, the character may receive a bonus to future Omni Table checks because of the knowledge gleaned from his Prophecy.

**Prerequisite:** Level 5+

### PROSELYTIZE

You feel a deep need to spread the word of God and convert those who do not share your faith.

**Benefit:** You may use your PTY rating to your Intimidate skill checks along with your CHA rating.

Normal: Normally only CHA modifies Intimidate checks.

**Prerequisite:** PTY +1

### QUICK HANDS

**Benefit:** Those from urban environments often find the need to steal in order to survive. From an early age, many learn to quickly pocket small items when others are distracted. Characters with this talent receive 2 free ranks in the Sleight of Hand skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

### QUICK LEARNER

You are a quick study and learn faster than your peers.

**Benefit:** You gain 2 additional skill points with each Character level.

**Prerequisite:** INT +1

### QUICK RELOAD

Through training and practice, the character has learned how to efficiently reload his ranged weapons faster than normal.

**Benefit:** Increases the potential rate of fire of a character when using ranged weapons. In effect, this Talent makes the drawing of the ammunition a free action. For example, a character fires his bow, draws another arrow (second action at -5, but since this is a simple action, no roll is required unless under extreme conditions), then fires his bow again at a -10 penalty. With Quick Reload, a second arrow may be loosed with only a -5 penalty. The same is true for slings.

Crossbows are a little different as they still require a significant amount of time to set. A light crossbow may be fired every round with this skill while a heavy crossbow may be fired every other round, both with no penalty. No normal crossbow may be fired more than once in a given round.

Thrown weapons use Quickdraw below.

**Prerequisite:** None

### QUICKDRAW

The ability to draw a weapon with startling swiftness.

**Benefit:** A character may draw his weapon as a

free action.

**Special:** This Talent may be taken multiple time, each time it applies to a different weapon.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon (specific) +1

## RAGE

You can channel your anger in combat.

**Benefit:** The character may choose to take a penalty on his Attack roll to increase the Damage dealt. For each -2 penalty taken to the Attack roll, +1 Damage is dealt on a successful hit. The player must state his intention to use this Talent before the roll to Attack.

**Prerequisite:** None

## REFINED MAGIC RESISTANCE:

### ALTER

Through practice and experience you have further refined your natural magic resistance to certain types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Alter Mode. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from Magic Resistance: Alter.

**Prerequisite:** Magic Resistance: Alter

## REFINED MAGIC RESISTANCE:

### ATTACK

Through practice and experience you have further refined your natural magic resistance to certain types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Attack Mode. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from Magic Resistance: Attack.

**Prerequisite:** Magic Resistance: Attack

## REFINED MAGIC RESISTANCE:

### ILLUSION

Through practice and experience you have further refined your natural magic resistance to certain types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when

attempting to resist a spell of the Illusion Mode. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from Magic Resistance: Illusion.

**Prerequisite:** Magic Resistance: Illusion

## REFINED MAGIC RESISTANCE:

### INFLUENCE

Through practice and experience you have further refined your natural magic resistance to certain types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Influence Mode. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from Magic Resistance: Influence.

**Prerequisite:** Magic Resistance: Influence

## REFINED MAGIC RESISTANCE:

### TRANSFORM

Through practice and experience you have further refined your natural magic resistance to certain types of spells.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 defense modifier when attempting to resist a spell of the Transform Mode. This bonus stacks with the bonus received from Magic Resistance: Transform

**Prerequisite:** Magic Resistance: Transform

## ROBUST

You are especially robust.

**Benefit:** You gain a number of hit points equal to your Commoner level as soon as you select this talent. Thereafter, the hero gains +1 hit point with each level of Commoner you gain.

**Prerequisite:** None

## ROYAL FAVOR

Because of your feudal connections, you are able to call upon favors from those more powerful than yourself.

**Benefit:** Once per week, you may make a Charisma check on the Omni Table in order to gain a favor from a noble contact. This favor can be anything from a night's lodging to a small monetary loan or the use of a sturdy mount. The form of the favor

will depend on the Omni Table result and is always at the discretion of the GM.

**Prerequisite:** None

### RUN LIKE THE WIND

The ability to run swiftly for distance.

**Benefit:** For the purpose of moving only, the character's SPD Attribute is considered 50% greater. This applies if the character is moving under his own power (i.e. not mounted) and on reasonably level and clear terrain.

**Prerequisite:** None

### SACRAMENTS: CONFESSION

You have been ordained by the Church and may now administer the sacrament of Confession.

**Benefit:** Once per day you may hear the confession of up to 7 members of the Christian faith. These individuals thereby receive a +2 bonus to all Omni Table checks for the next 1 hour.

**Prerequisite:** Member of clergy, Level 2+

### SACRAMENTS: MASS

You have been ordained by the Church and may now administer the sacrament of Mass.

**Benefit:** Once per day you may hear the confession of up to 7 members of the Christian faith. These individuals thereby receive a +5 bonus to all Omni Table checks for the next 1 hour. This bonus does not stack with any bonus received from Sacraments: Confession.

**Prerequisite:** Member of clergy, Level 5+

### SCRIBE

You have been trained in the exacting art of the scriptorium.

**Benefit:** You may add your Monk class level as a modifier to all Cryptography Omni Table rolls.

**Prerequisite:** Monk level 3+

### SEAMANSHIP

You are an experienced sailor and are at home at sea.

**Benefit:** You receive two free ranks in the Balance

skill and never suffer penalties while in combat aboard ship due to inclement weather or other turmoil.

**Prerequisite:** None

### SECOND SIGHT

You have inherited the gift (or curse) of Second Sight. You are occasionally visited by visions of the near future. Those with Second Sight can also see events happening to living people who are great distances away. This talent comes unbidden and cannot be controlled by the character.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are faced with a situation where you must choose between two or more options, you may roll on the Omni Table modified by your PER rating. A full success will allow you to ask one question of the GM concerning the possible outcomes of the options. On any other Omni Table result, no visions appear.

**Prerequisite:** None

### SECOND WIND

Used to long days toiling in the sun, you can reach into your soul for reserves of energy.

**Benefit:** Once per day you may recover a number of hit points equal to your CON. This talent will not increase your hit points beyond your full normal total.

**Prerequisite:** Self Sufficient

### SELF SUFFICIENT

You rely on few to find your way in the world.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Heal and Survival skills.

**Prerequisite:** None

### SENSE EVIL

You have a preternatural sense for those of an evil or malignant nature.

**Benefit:** You may never be surprised by any creature or individual who is truly evil in nature including demons, devils, evil spirits, undead and those men who have evil in their hearts like demonologists and necromancers.



**Prerequisite:** None

### SHIELD OF FAITH

Your faith in God is great and He will protect you in battle.

**Benefit:** You may replace your Weapon skill with your PTY in determining your defense modifier in combat.

**Prerequisite:** PTY +3

### SHIELD SLAM

The ability to strike an opponent with a shield for damage.

**Benefit:** After an unsuccessful Attack against the character, he may make a retaliatory strike against his attacker using his shield. This shield slam does 4 points of damage and may disarm the opponent unless he makes a successful STR Attribute check. This does count as a normal action and suffers the -5 penalty for multiple actions in a round.

**Prerequisite:** Shield +5

### SKILL EMPHASIS

You have focused your attention and training to a particular skill.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to one specific skill rating of your choosing.

Special: This talent may not be applied to any Weapon skill rating.

**Prerequisite:** None

### SKIRMISH

Training in the use of skirmish tactics in combat.

**Benefit:** A character may throw any one-handed thrown weapons (spears, javelins, knives, etc.) at no penalty while moving at half speed.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon (thrown) +3

### SMITE

The ability to strike an opponent with tremendous force.

**Benefit:** The character adds one half of his Combat Rating to the Damage dealt with a successful Attack.

**Prerequisite:** CR +4, Weapon Focus with the

weapon used

### SMITE INFIDEL

You are passionate in your devotion to the Church and strive to strike down the foes of the Holy Church of Rome wherever they may be found.

**Benefit:** Up to three times per day and when fighting an enemy of your faith, you may double the normal amount of damage done with your attack.

**Prerequisite:** Path of the Righteous, Guide My Hand

### SNEAK ATTACK

You have the practiced ability to strike an opponent for maximum effect when he is caught unaware.

**Benefit:** Adept at using stealth to sneak up on unsuspecting targets, characters with the Sneak Attack talent may bypass all PR due to armor when making an undefended attack.

**Prerequisite:** Inconspicuous

### SPEED CLIMB

You are as swift climbing vertical surfaces as you are walking.

**Benefit:** You may move at your regular SPD while using the climb skill.

Normal: The climb skill normally halves your SPD.

**Prerequisite:** DEX + 2

### SORCERY

You have been schooled in the basics of the Sorcery Magical Order.

**Benefit:** You may cast spells of the Alchemy Order

**Prerequisite:** INT +3

### SPELL EXTENSION

You have studied one particular spell at length and have effectively doubled the normal duration of the spell.

**Benefit:** Choose one of your known spells. You may now extend the duration of this spell up to twice the normal duration with no increased

difficulty to your Omni Table casting roll.

**Prerequisite:** Level 8+

## SPELL FOCUS

Through trial and error and much practice, you have perfected the casting of one special spell.

**Benefit:** Select one of your known spells. You receive a +5 bonus whenever you try roll on the Omni Table to cast this spell.

**Prerequisite:** Level 4+

## SQUIRE

You have acquired the services of a squire and are now responsible for his upkeep and training.

**Benefit:** You gain the services of a Knight in training known as a Squire. The Squire will be a 0-level character and will stay with the Knight until he acquires no less than 40 XP. The player and GM should work together to create this new character including all game stats as well as a creative background story. You will also be responsible to the upkeep and wellbeing of your Squire although you also benefit from his aid in day to day chores and adventuring.

**Prerequisite:** Knight level 6+

## STRENGTH OF A BEAR

Similar to Strong as an Ox above.

**Benefit:** You may carry 100 pounds more than your normal encumbrance would allow without penalty. This Talent's bonus stacks with the Strong as an Ox talent.

**Prerequisite:** None

## STRONG AS AN OX

A life of hard, manual labor has sculpted you into a strong individual.

**Benefit:** You add +1 to your STR for the purposes of calculating the maximum weight you may carry.

**Prerequisite:** None

## SUCKER PUNCH

You have a nasty punch that may render the target

unconscious.

**Benefit:** If the character is unarmed and attacking his opponent from behind or otherwise unaware, a successful Attack may render the target unconscious for five rounds. This Talent is only effective against similar sized (or smaller) opponents that have a discernable head. Any creature that is immune to stun effects is unaffected, otherwise a successful Attribute roll against WIL will negate the effect.

**Prerequisite:** Brawling +5

## SUDDEN STRIKE

The character has learned how to attack suddenly from hiding.

**Benefit:** When attacking an opponent from concealment, the character adds +2 to his Attack rolls for the first round of combat.

**Prerequisite:** Brawling +5

## SUREFOOTED

You are a natural climber.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Climb skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

## SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Forced to live on the fringes of society, you have acquired various tricks to help them survive in these dangerous areas.

**Benefit:** Characters with this talent receive 2 free ranks in any one Survival skill.

**Special:** This talent may be selected more than once. Each time it is selected it applies to a different Survival skill.

**Prerequisite:** None

## SWIFT CREATION

Your knowledge and skill allows you to create items in half the time it takes most craftsmen in your trade.

**Benefit:** Select one of your Handicraft skills. You now only require half the normal time to create and item normally produced with this handicraft.

**Prerequisite:** Master Craftsman

## SWING THROUGH

You can move from opponent to opponent in combat.

**Benefit:** When a character successfully drops an opponent in melee combat (kills or incapacitates), he may immediately make an Attack at a nearby (up to 10' away) foe. This Attack is made at full normal Attack bonus and disregards the -5 penalty for multiple actions in a round.

**Prerequisite:** CR +3

## SWORD & SHIELD

You have practiced long and hard to perfect your skills with sword and shield.

**Benefit:** When armed with any one-handed sword and a shield smaller than a Tower shield, the character gains a +1 bonus to both Attack and Defense.

**Prerequisite:** CR +3

## TAKE THE REIGNS

You can grab the reins of a mount as it moves past you.

**Benefit:** The character may attempt to grab the reins of a nearby mount and stop its movement. Unless the mount is an experienced warhorse, a character upon it no longer retains his normal Defense bonus for being mounted. Furthermore, the character holding the mount may strike the rider with a +2 bonus to all Attack rolls or he may strike the mount itself at +4.

**Prerequisite:** CR +1

## TAUNT

Sarcasm and caustic words that are intended to inflame an opponent's anger.

**Benefit:** A successful Taunt directed at an opponent will cause him to become so angry that he will likely attack the taunting character with reckless abandon. At the beginning of a round of combat, a character may attempt to taunt any one adversary or group of like individuals. If successful, they will attack the character taunting

if possible, or their current target, with rage. While enraged, an opponent's Attack and Defense ratings are reduced by -1 for each succeeding taunt action but the Damage they inflict on a hit is +1. A character may attempt to taunt every turn and the effects stack (i.e. three successful taunts at the same individual will cause him to Attack and Defend at -3, while any Damage caused by him will receive a +3 bonus).

**Prerequisite:** INT +1

## THICK SKIN

You have an unnatural ability to absorb damage.

**Benefit:** The character receives a natural PR bonus of +1. This bonus stacks with any light, non-metallic armor worn.

**Prerequisite:** CON +1

## THROW ANYTHING

You can make any object that can be picked up and thrown into a deadly missile.

**Benefit:** The character may use any handy object that is of an appropriate size (this size will differ with differently sized individuals) to make a ranged Attack. The character suffers no penalty for using an improvised weapon and the object does normal damage for a weapon of its approximate size and weight.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon (thrown) +5

## TOUGH AS NAILS

You have become inured to pain and hardship.

**Benefit:** The character may ignore up to three points of penalty due to damage, harsh environments (such as extreme cold or heat) or poison/disease.

**Prerequisite:** CON +2

## TOUGH SKIN

You have an innate talent to take a licking and keep on ticking.

**Benefit:** This Talent reduces the damage taken from bludgeoning and unarmed attacks by -2

**Prerequisite:** CON +2

## TOUGH TRAIL

You are adept at covering your tracks and shaking any potential pursuers in an urban environment.

**Benefit:** Anyone attempting to track you in a town or city receives a -7 penalty to their Omni Table rolls.

**Prerequisite:** None

## TRACKLESS I

You are adept at covering your tracks in a natural environment.

**Benefit:** Anyone attempting to track you suffers a -7 penalty to their Omni Table roll on top of any other relevant modifiers for terrain type, weather conditions, etc.

**Prerequisite:** DEX +1

## TRACKLESS II

You are incredibly adept at covering your tracks in a natural environment.

**Benefit:** Anyone attempting to track you suffers a -10 penalty to their Omni Table roll on top of any other relevant modifiers for terrain type, weather conditions, etc.

**Prerequisite:** Trackless I

## TRACKLESS III

Your skill at covering your tracks in a natural environment makes you next to impossible to track.

**Benefit:** Anyone attempting to track you suffers a -15 penalty to their Omni Table roll on top of any other relevant modifiers for terrain type, weather conditions, etc.

**Prerequisite:** Trackless I & Trackless II

## TRAMPLE

You have learned how to force your mount to overrun an unmounted opponent.

**Benefit:** A mounted character may make one extra attack on an adjacent foe using his mount. This attack is made at the full normal Attack rating for the mount in question. If charging, the mounts

STR is doubled for damage purposes only.

**Prerequisite:** Mounted Combat +5

## TRICK SHOT

The ability to make incredible shots with ranged weaponry.

**Benefit:** The character ignores all normal cover penalties when attacking with a ranged weapon.

**Prerequisite:** Improved Range, CR +5.

## TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

You are a devout follower of the Church of Rome and take her lessons to heart.

**Benefit:** If you do not use your turn to attack an opponent, you may instead add your PTY rating as a modifier for your defense along with all normal defense modifiers.

**Prerequisite:** PTY +2

## TWO-WEAPON DEFENSE

The character has learned how to use two weapons to his defensive advantage while fighting.

**Benefit:** When the character is fighting with a weapon in either hand, he may use the second weapon in a defensive manner in which case, his Defense is increased by +2. If the character uses his second weapon to make an attack his Defense reverts to normal for that round.

**Prerequisite:** Two-Weapon Fighting

## TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

You have mastered the rudiments of two-weapon fighting.

**Benefit:** He may make an additional attack during his round with the second weapon with a penalty of -3.

**Normal:** Performing a second action during a round normally incurs a -5 penalty.

**Prerequisite:** DEX +1

## URBAN TRACKER

You are skilled in following a trail through an urban environment.

**Benefit:** You may use your Tracking skill in towns and cities as normal.

Normal: The tracking skill may not be used in an urban environment.

**Prerequisite:** None

### VOICE OF COMMAND

Your feudal position means you are used to being obeyed.

**Benefit:** You receive 2 free ranks in the Intimidate skill.

**Prerequisite:** Greater Noble social class

### WEALTH

You have some source of revenue either through a business, agricultural produce or taxes.

**Benefit:** Up to once per week you may make an Omni Table roll using your Administration skill rating. A partial success will award you 1d20 shillings. A full success garners an income of 3d20 shilling while a critical success finds your revenues in the 1d20 livres range.

**Prerequisite:** Level 3+

### WEAPON FOCUS (SPECIFIC)

The studied and practiced use of a class of weapon.

**Benefit:** The character receives a +2 bonus to all Attack rolls with the class of weapon selected.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon (specific) +3

### WEATHER SENSE

You have the uncanny ability to predict the weather, a talent that is very useful in an agricultural community.

**Benefit:** You know precisely what the weather will be like up to one week in advance.

**Prerequisite:** None

### WELL TRAVELED

You have traveled the known world on business and errands for your family or lord.

**Benefit:** You gain 2 free ranks in any 2 Knowledge (local) and any 1 Knowledge (region) skill rating.

**Prerequisite:** None

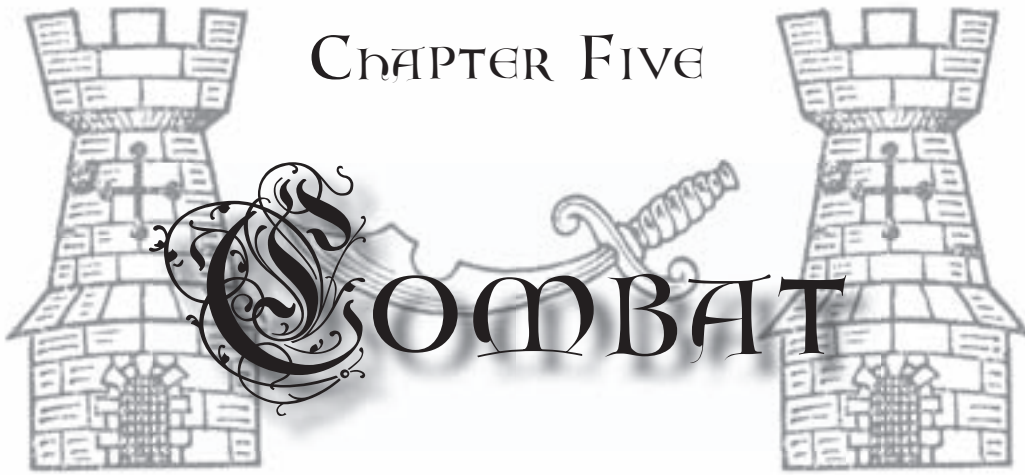
### WITCHCRAFT

You have been schooled in the basics of the Witchcraft Magical Order.

**Benefit:** You may cast spells of the Alchemy Order.

**Prerequisite:** INT +1, CHA +2

## CHAPTER FIVE



In *High Medieval*, as in real life, Combat can be a very deadly affair. Although drawing your sword should be considered a last resort when more sensible means of settling a dispute fail, there will inevitably be those instances where it is necessary. When this occurs, a familiarity with this chapter will greatly increase your character's chance of survival. This section includes information on:

**Damage Ratings:** for weapons and other attacks;

**Protection Ratings:** the protective value of armor;

**Combat Tactics:** strategies for combat.

Note that Combat and Weapon skills can be acquired and improved as explained in *Chapter 1 - The Rules*. See *Chapter 4 - Skills & Talents* for descriptions of these Skills.

### DAMAGE RATING

A weapon's Damage Rating (DR for short) is equivalent to the maximum number of Hit Points it is capable of doing in the hands of an individual or creature of "average" (0-rated) Strength. For example, a longsword with a DR of 8 will do

a maximum of eight HP damage. When using hand-held weapons, combatants add their Strength Rating (STR) to the Damage Rating total. For example, a knight with a STR of +2 will do a maximum of 10 HP damage with that same longsword (DR 8 plus STR +2 = 10). Remember that damage totals for most device-propelled missile weapons, such as arrows, are not modified by the user's STR, although many hand-thrown weapons such as javelins are. Details are provided in the Equipment chapter.

The *Omni Table* result indicates how much of the total DR a weapon does on a given attack, as follows:

- ✱ Partial Success: Half the total DR.
- ✱ Full Success: Full Damage Rating.
- ✱ Critical Success: Full DR + Critical Wound.

A complete list of Damage Ratings for weapons can be found in *Chapter 8 - Equipment*.

## EXCEPTIONAL WEAPONS

Not all weapons are created equal. The quality of weapons in the Middle Ages varied greatly, even between weapons of the same type. Exceptional weapons may either be an ingenious design or may just be crafted with a greater care. Most exceptional weapons will grant the bearer a bonus of +1 to DR. Rare weapons may grant a bonus of up to +2 to both DR and the Attack roll.

## ENCHANTED WEAPONS

A weapon can be enchanted to increase its DR, its chance to strike or even to give it spell-like abilities (such as a flaming sword). For example, a longsword with an enchantment of DR+1 has a DR of 9 - one point better than a non-magical longsword. There really is no limit to the enchantments that may be placed upon a weapon. Keep in mind that the number of magical weapons from world history (or mythology) is very limited. Not every dragon will have a +5 Flaming Sword of Wrath in his hoard.



## PROTECTION RATING

In *High Medieval*, armor is rated according to its ability to absorb and reduce damage, which is referred to as its Protection Rating (or PR for short). The PR of any type of armor is equivalent to the amount of damage it will absorb, in Hit Points from each successful hit. For example, armor with a Protection Rating of +3 will reduce the damage of an attack by three HP. This will apply to most attack forms but there may be some exceptions which will be detailed in the appropriate chapter.

Heavier types of armor usually have a higher PR, but will cause the wearer to suffer a penalty for Encumbrance unless he or she is strong enough to carry the additional weight (see *Chapter 1 - The*

*Rules for Encumbrance*). Detailed information on the Protection Rating of various types of armor can be found in the chapter on Equipment.

## EXCEPTIONAL ARMOR

Some few suits of armor in the Medieval world are exceptional. It is rare that any particular suit or piece of armor far exceeds its peers. Sometimes a suit will be made thicker than is normal, providing it with a higher PR, but this often has the effect of also making it much heavier. Occasionally, a suit will simply be designed to distribute its weight better and thus is treated as if it were lighter than it actually is when being worn.

## ENCHANTED ARMOR

Armor can be enchanted to increase its Protection Rating or to render it impervious to a specified form of attack (such as fire, cold, etc.). For example, chain mail with an enchantment of +1 has a PR of 6 - one point better than non-magical chain mail.

## SHIELDS

Hand-held shields provide additional protection by making the bearer harder to hit. When used by an individual with the Shield skill, a shield reduces an attacker's Combat die roll by the shield's rating. The disadvantage is that while using a shield the defender suffers a penalty of -2 on all Dexterity-related die rolls. Individuals who lack Shield skill can substitute their Combat Rating attribute if attempting to use a shield. However, they will receive only half the shield's benefits and must accept a penalty of -4 on all DEX related rolls while wielding the shield.

## OTHER COMBAT MODIFIERS

On occasion, circumstances will have an effect on combat, resulting in a penalty or bonus on the combatant's *Omni Table* die rolls. Here are some examples:

- ✿ Attacking from above: +2.
- ✿ Defending from below: -2.
- ✿ Mounted vs. unmounted opponent: +3.
- ✿ Limited visibility\*: -1 to -10.
- ✿ Unstable footing (mud, ice, etc.): 1- to -10.

*\*Includes fighting in darkness (unless one has night vision), in fog or mists, or with vision partially impaired; the extent of the penalty is based on visibility.*

## COMBAT TACTICS

In a game where a character's stated intent can dramatically affect the chances of success or failure, the choice of tactics plays an important role. For example, why stand toe-to-toe with a Giant and risk getting flattened when you can attack from a safe distance with a bow, or use your quickness to dodge the big brute until he's too worn-out to hit you?

There are four basic categories of tactics available to characters in *High Medieval*: Attack, Defend, Move, and Stunt. Each counts as a single action; using more than one Tactic in a single round of combat requires the attacker to take the standard penalty for Multiple Actions (see Rules section). Attacks (and any spellcasting), Movement, and Stunts can only be performed during the character's turn. Defensive tactics can be used at any time during the round.

The following section contains descriptions of each of these tactics and their most common variations.

## ATTACK

An attack can be defined as any action intended to injure, restrain, stun, or otherwise hamper an opponent. There are four kinds of attacks in *High Medieval*, close attacks, ranged attacks, grappling attacks, and subdual attacks.

## CLOSE ATTACKS

A Close Attack is a maneuver that attempts to cause damage to an opponent at close range. Any type of hand-to-hand combat, with or without weapons, is considered a Close Attack. Unless the intended target is unaware or incapable of defense, a Close Attack is considered an Opposed Action.

To simulate a Close Attack, the attacker rolls on the *Omni Table*, adding the Skill Rating for the weapon or attack form being employed. The defender's Skill Rating is used as a negative modifier (see Defense, q.v.).





A Close Attack can be used against multiple targets, at the standard penalty for Multiple Actions (cumulative -5 per extra target). Alternately, a single target can be hit multiple times with a “rapid fire” attack, with the same penalties being applied. “Rapid fire” attacks can be dodged or parried as if they were a single attack.

*Francois the beggar stabs at a city watchman who is attempting to evict him. Francois has a Skill Rating of +17 with Small Blades (the appropriate attack skill in this case). The watchman had not drawn his mace so he must defend with his Brawling Rating of +9. The total attack roll modifier is +8 (17 - 9 = 8). Francois' player rolls a 10 for a total of 18: Full Success. The GM describes how the knife cuts into the lightly armored abdomen of the watchman.*



## RANGED ATTACK

A Ranged Attack is defined as any attempt to hit an opponent or target from a distance. Common Ranged Combat attacks include shooting with a projectile weapon such as a bow or crossbow, firing a catapult or other siege weapon, or using hand-hurled weapons such as javelins, rocks, or knives.

If the intended target is unaware of the Ranged Attack or is immobile, the Degree of Difficulty is based on the target's range and availability (size, visibility, degree of cover, etc.). If the defender is actively trying to dodge or evade a Ranged Attack, the Degree of Difficulty is based on range and availability plus the defender's modified defensive Combat Skill or Attribute Rating. Penalties for range and availability are as follows:

- ☼ Target is within half effective range: no penalty.

- ☼ Target is beyond half effective range: -5.
- ☼ Target is beyond effective range: -10.
- ☼ Target is beyond 2 times effective range: -20.
- ☼ Target is moving: -3, plus an additional -1 per point of target's Speed Rating.
- ☼ Target is protected by cover: -1 per 10% cover.
- ☼ Target is smaller than man-sized: -1 to -10.
- ☼ Target is larger than man-sized: bonus of +1 to +10.

### Notes

All penalties for range and availability are cumulative. For example, if a target is beyond half effective range and is moving at a SPD of +1, the total penalty is -9.

Depending on their rate of fire, some missile weapons can be used vs multiple targets, or for “rapid fire” Ranged Attacks. The standard penalty for Multiple Actions applies to Ranged Attacks as well.

The effective range for hand-thrown weapons is 50 feet plus 10 feet per +1 STR. Ranges and firing rates for all other missile weapons can be found in the chapter on Equipment.

*Flynn is firing his shortbow into a charging group of goblins while the caravan he is protecting tries to make its escape. The lead goblin is a mere 75 feet away, which is within the effective range of Flynn's bow. The goblin knows it is about to be shot at, so it rolls to one side as it moves in. Flynn takes a penalty equal to the goblin's Defensive Skill Rating of +9. Flynn's*

*Shortbow skill rating is +14, for a total Omni Table modifier of +5. Flynn's player rolls a d20 and gets a 5 for an attack total of 10: Partial Success. Flynn's arrow does only half damage as it grazes the creature's thigh.*

## GRAPPLING ATTACKS

A Grappling Attack is any attempt to grab, restrain, or throw an opponent through the use of strength, leverage, or special grappling weapons. Grappling Attacks are handled as per Close Attacks. However, a defender who has been grabbed or restrained may take no further actions until he attempts to escape by making a successful *Omni Table* roll using his Strength Rating (doubled), Brawling -3. If the defender's escape attempt is unsuccessful, on the next turn the attacker can either throw or choke the defender without the need for a second attack roll. A thrown defender can be hurled up to 5 feet away (+1 foot per +1 STR), and/or body-slammed (DR 3 +STR). Choking causes 4 DR per round until the defender escapes or is rendered unconscious.

Grappling Attacks cannot be used against multiple targets. A single target can be both grabbed and choked or grabbed and thrown in the same turn, at a -5 penalty for the extra action. While engaged in a Grappling Attack, the attacker has a -5 penalty to his defensive skill rating and the victim has an effective 0 defensive skill rating.

*Sigurd the Norseman is having a few drinks in a bar, and has had the misfortune of drawing the attention of the local tough, Darby. Sigurd knows that Darby, who is far larger and stronger than he, will try to get him in a hold and choke him. Sigurd, who is faster, decides to be the first to try to get a hold. He jumps on the back of the brawny tough and attempts to apply a choke hold. Sigurd's Brawling Rating is +14 while Darby's is +8. The GM decides that since Sigurd is attempting a very daring maneuver (tumbling through Darby's defenses to get*

*at his back) he receives a -3 to his Omni Table roll. Sigurd's player rolls a 7 and adds the modifier of +3 for a result of 10: Partial Success. The GM rules that Sigurd has successfully grappled Darby but his chokehold causes no damage.*

Because of their unusual nature and wide variety of effects, Grappling Attacks have different *Omni Table* results than standard Close Attacks as follows:

## WHEN ATTACKING

- ✱ **Mishap:** The attacker has twisted himself into an awkward position and failed to effectively hold his opponent. The opponent receives a +5 bonus on their next attack vs. the grappler.
- ✱ **Failure:** The attacker fails to grab the defender.
- ✱ **Partial Success:** The attacker gets a partial hold but has little leverage. No choke or throw attacks may follow this attack. The defender gets a +5 bonus to his or her attempt to escape this hold.
- ✱ **Full Success:** The attacker achieves the hold they were attempting. They may throw or choke the defender with their next action, or simply continue to hold.
- ✱ **Critical Success:** The hold is especially well-placed and strong. The defender takes an additional -5 penalty to an escape attempts.

## WHEN ESCAPING

- ✱ **Mishap:** The defender twists himself into an even worse position. He takes an additional -5 penalty to any further

escape attempts. Note that further Mishap results do not add to this penalty. The maximum is -5.

- ✱ **Failure:** The defender remains in the hold.
- ✱ **Partial Success:** The defender slips part-way out of the hold. Add +5 to his next escape attempt.
- ✱ **Full Success:** The defender escapes the grapple.
- ✱ **Critical Success:** The defender performs a perfect reversal. The defender may make an immediate attack on his opponent at full skill, flee, or perform any other action.

## SUBDUAL ATTACKS

A Subdual Attack is an attempt to knock-out an opponent by non-lethal means. This Tactic requires the use of a blunt weapon (such as a club, staff, Ariane mace or bow, punch, kick, etc.) and can be used as part of any attack. Damage from a Subdual Attack is tallied the same as for other forms of attack. However, if a subdual attack causes an opponent to be reduced to 0 HP, the victim is merely rendered unconscious for 1-20 rounds. HP lost as a result of a Subdual attack is restored shortly after the victim regains consciousness (1-10 minutes, or with a successful CON roll against Difficulty 10, per the GM's ruling).

## DEFENSE

A Defense can be defined as any action intended to avoid or block an attack. There are two types of defense tactics in *High Medieval*: Dodge and Parry.

An opponent who does not have the initiative or who willingly surrenders the initiative can elect to either Dodge or Parry an impending attack. To do

so, the defender must declare the intent to defend before the opponent rolls for the attack.

The procedure for defense is the same as for attacks. The defender rolls on the *Omni Table*, adding their defensive skill rating and subtracting the attacker's skill rating. Read the *Omni Table* for the outcome of the Defensive tactic. Note that in the case of a full or critical defensive success, there is no need for the attacker to roll to hit.

## DODGE

Dodging is a defensive maneuver that moves the character out of harm's way. This may be as simple a maneuver as ducking, or as complex as a backflip. Dodging is effective against close, ranged, and grappling attacks. Any of the following Skills or Attributes can be used for a Dodge attempt:

- ✱ Acrobatics Skill Rating at -5
- ✱ Brawling Skill Rating
- ✱ Dexterity Rating or Combat Rating (as per rules for substituting Attributes for Skills)

*Flynn manages to disable all but one of the goblins before the pack reaches the caravan. The last goblin leaps aboard the wagon Flynn is on, tearing at him with his dirty knife. Not wanting to lower himself to fighting like an animal (or being dragged from the wagon) Flynn elects to dodge the goblin's attack. Flynn's Brawling Skill Rating is +10. The goblin's Brawling skill rating is +9. Flynn rolls with a +1 bonus (10 - 9 = 1) and gets a final result of 8: Partial Success. The evasive maneuver doesn't entirely avoid the goblin's attack, so Flynn will take 1/2 damage if the goblin's attack roll succeeds.*

## PARRY

Parry is a defensive maneuver that interrupts an attack by putting something in the attacker's path, such as a shield or weapon. Shields are designed expressly for this purpose, and give defenders who have the Shield skill a +3 bonus when used for Parrying (or +1 for individuals who don't have the Shield skill and are attempting this tactic). This maneuver is known as a Shield-Parry. Note that Enchantment increases the Shield-Parry bonus according to its plus-rating. For example, a +1 shield would confer a bonus of +4 to Shield-Parries.

Any of the following Skills or Attributes can be used as the modifier for a Parry attempt:

- ✿ Weapon Skill Rating.
- ✿ Shield Skill Rating.
- ✿ Brawling (no penalty if parrying a Brawling attack; penalty of -5 if parrying a weapon attack).
- ✿ Combat Rating (substitution).

Ranged Attacks can also be parried, but at an increased Degree of Difficulty (penalty of -5 to -10). Attacks by exceptionally large and powerful opponents that overwhelm the defender cannot be parried, such as blows from a Giant's club or a charging elephant or a stone from a catapult.

Note that a result of Mishap when attempting to Parry means that the defender is not only hit by the attack, but whatever was being used to parry has been damaged or destroyed (GM's ruling).

*After Abdul's attacks, the watchman decides to hit back with his fists. Abdul chooses to actively defend against this attack, by parrying with his knife. Abdul's Small Blades Skill Rating is 17 and the watchman's Brawling Skill Rating is 10.*

*However, Abdul has already performed one previous action in the round, so he takes an additional -5 to his Parry roll for a total modifier of +2 (17 - 10 - 5 = 2). Abdul's player rolls a d20 and gets a 9 for a total of 11: Full Success. Abdul will take no damage from the watchman's attack and there's no need to roll to see if it hits.*

## MOVEMENT

Movement is a tactic intended to increase or close the distance between attacker and defender. There are three variations: Retreat, Flee, and Advance. Note that in all three cases, rugged or difficult terrain can decrease the maximum distance that can be covered in a round, and may even require DEX or skill rolls to navigate safely.

### RETREAT

A Retreat is an attempt to disengage from an attack in an orderly and measured manner. The retreating opponent can move up to half her normal Movement Rate per round while continuing to fight or defend against attack without penalty.

### FLEE

Fleeing is an attempt to disengage from an attack without regard for considerations of defense or attack. Instead, the main goal is to escape as quickly as possible. A Fleeing opponent can move up to his full Movement Rate per round, but may not attack or defend while doing so. Attempting to Flee while engaged in Close Combat of any type exposes the fleeing opponent to one Unopposed attack from each opponent within range. A successful Dodge or Parry will allow an individual to Flee on the following round without being exposed to a Close Attack.

If a Fleeing character is being pursued, both the character and pursuer(s) must make Attribute Rolls vs their respective Speed Ratings once for each round of pursuit. Compare *Omni Table* die rolls and Speed Ratings to see if the Fleeing individual

escapes or gets caught, using the following guidelines:

- ✱ **Mishap:** stumble and fall; you're injured and cannot continue next round.
- ✱ **Failure:** stumble and fall; you can get up and continue next round.
- ✱ **Partial Success:** move up to half your maximum Movement Rate.
- ✱ **Full Success:** move up to your maximum Movement Rate.
- ✱ **Critical Success:** maximum Movement Rate plus you gain an additional 50' on opponent.

Note: for Mishaps and Failures that occur during aerial or aquatic pursuits, substitute stumbles for collisions, unfavorable wind/water currents, and/or crashes as applicable.

## ADVANCE

An Advance is an attempt to close with an opponent at half maximum Movement Rate or less. This tactic allows the individual to attack or defend while moving, without penalty. It is also possible to use this tactic to Advance under cover, making it more difficult for opponents to target the advancing individual with Ranged Attacks (q.v.).

A high speed Advance is called a Charge. This tactic allows the individual to move up to his maximum Movement Rate, though at the expense of any attempts at defense. Attacking while Charging is possible, at a penalty of -3 for Close Attacks and -5 for Ranged Attacks. When making Close Attacks while Charging, add the character's Speed to the damage rating, as well as Strength. See the Combat Skill, Mounted Combat, for additional modifiers.

## STUNTS

A Stunt can be defined as any type of unconventional maneuver attempted during the course of Combat. This tactic includes such flamboyant maneuvers as leaping from high places, swinging from ropes or chandeliers, vaulting over opponents, and the kind of daredevil moves that are commonly seen in most action-adventure movies. It also covers "dirty tricks" like tripping, throwing dirt in an opponent's eyes, and so on.

Any applicable Skill or Attribute can be used as a modifier for a Stunt, though most actions of this sort carry a stiff penalty for Degree of Difficulty (GM's ruling applies in all cases). Characters who possess Martial Arts, Acrobatics, and certain Performing Skills generally fare better at Stunts than those who do not have such specialized abilities.

Under certain circumstances, a Stunt can be combined with another tactic without incurring a penalty for Multiple Actions. For example, leaping over a bar counter and kicking an enemy can be accomplished in one fluid action, and need not entail any added penalty for multiple actions. However, leaping over a rail, swinging from a chandelier, and kicking an enemy who was across the room would count as an additional action, resulting in the standard -5 penalty.

Since every stunt is different, we won't provide you with an exhaustive list here. It's always up to the GM to determine what the Degree of Difficulty is for any given stunt, based on the specific circumstances and how "cinematic" she wants the game to be. It's usually a good idea for the GM to tell her players ahead of time just what sorts of stunts will be allowed.

*Abdul cuts a rope with a thrown knife, bringing down a bazaar stall on the heads of two guardsmen. (Thrown Weapons: Difficulty -10 for a small target).*

*Stefan the Gypsy whirls his cloak in the*

*rushing guardsmen's faces as he jumps behind the bar. Hopefully, the cloak will momentarily stun and blind the guards, allowing Stefan to seemingly vanish. (Acrobatics; Difficulty -15 to confuse all three guards).*

## AIMED SHOTS

An aimed shot is an Attack intended to hit a very specific target and/or cause a very specific effect. Almost any Combat Tactic can be used in conjunction with an Aimed Shot. A Ranged Attack intended to cut a windship's sail, disable a moving conveyance, or knock a weapon from an opponent's hand, is an Aimed Shot. So is a Close Attack intended to disarm an opponent by striking his hand, or a Shield Parry used to deflect a missile in a specific direction. The ability to temporarily stun or subdue an opponent with a single blow, a staple of the action-adventure genre, can also be accomplished with an Aimed Shot.

Aimed Shots are handled much like other Combat Tactics, the main difference being that maneuvers of this sort usually carry a pretty severe penalty for Degree of Difficulty — not surprising, given the fact that an Aimed Shot is by its nature much more difficult to accomplish than a standard attack. A result of Success or Critical Success is required to achieve the intended effect; for Aimed Shots, an *Omni Table* result of Partial Success is the same as Failure.

Aimed Shots can also be used to hit the small parts of an opponent that are not covered by their armor, and thus ignore its Protection Rating. The additional Degree of Difficulty penalty for this tactic is equal to the total PR of the armor worn. For example, to strike through a seam in Kang Battle Armor (PR 7) the attacker would take an additional -7 to his or her attack roll.

## CRITICAL WOUNDS

Any attack that is made with the intent to “kill” or injure that yields an *Omni Table* result of Critical

Success will cause a Critical Wound. Assuming the victim has not been reduced to zero or less Hit Points, he must make a roll vs his CON Rating (minus the DR of the attack) to determine the extent of the injury, as follows:

- ✱ **Critical Success/Success:** victim can continue without penalty.
- ✱ **Partial Success:** victim can continue, but suffers a penalty of -5 on all die rolls until the Critical Wound damage is healed (by magical or non-magical healing, or through rest and recuperation).
- ✱ **Failure/Mishap:** victim is incapacitated and rendered incapable of movement, regardless of actual Hit Point total. No further actions can be taken until the Critical Wound damage is healed.

In the case of minor NPCs, a critical hit can cause instant death or knockout (GM's ruling) without the need for a CON roll.



## RECOVERY

As mentioned in Chapter 1: The Rules, healing occurs at the rate of 5 Hit Points per day, plus one additional point of healing per +1 Constitution Rating. Individuals with negative Constitution Ratings heal at the rate of 5 HP per day, minus one point of healing per -1 CON Rating (the minimum rate of healing is 1 HP per day).

Individuals who have suffered a Critical Wound, a permanent injury, or a close brush with death may require a period of convalescence. If the victim receives immediate magical or alchemical healing, he or she may be fully recovered after just a few hours of sleep. Otherwise, recovery time could range from a day or two to a week, several weeks, or even longer. The amount of time required to

make a full recovery in such instances is up to the GM to decide, based on the nature and extent of the victim's injuries.

## CREATIVE COMBAT

All too often, combat in the game consists of little more than "I hit him with my sword", "I do 13 damage", "I dodge", "I parry". With the dramatic opportunities combat presents in *High Medieval*, this monotonous approach fails to enliven the game, or fire the imagination. Role-playing need not stop when combat begins.

## DESCRIPTION IS EVERYTHING

Combat is full of sensations and sounds. Describe the grunts and cries of combatants, the thud and clash of weapons, the expressions on individual faces, the moves opponents make, their actions and reactions, the smells and emotions.

No combatant is ever completely aware of everything going on around them in a fight. A good GM trick is to occasionally, secretly, tell one player that their character notices something another character doesn't, such as a pit their colleague may be about to step backwards into, a hidden sniper drawing a bead on their friend, an opponent blindsiding their unsuspecting compatriot, and so on, and give them a round or two to do something, even if only to quickly shout a warning. This trick can bolster the sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the players surprisingly well, and adds more dynamism to the conflict.

## CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES

Only psychopaths and other miscreants enter combat at the drop of a hat. Use of force should be appropriate to the situation, and bear in mind the character's outlook on life. Like people in the modern world, medieval Europeans are almost always aware of the possible consequences of their actions, and if their actions go counter to morality, local law, or common sense. Lethal force should only be used when faced with little recourse, unless

the character is a deviant, or a native of a violent culture. For example, someone using a knife in a barroom brawl would be considered a sick thug, unless their assailants were also brandishing such lethal weapons. Characters who behave in violent fashion, or react with disproportionate force, should expect to be reviled, hunted, imprisoned, or executed, by local authorities, relatives and allies of their victims, and so on. Consequences are something every character should consider and expect.

## THINK ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

One of the most overlooked aspects of any combat, and the first that should be born in mind, is the actual location of the fight. Considering the characters' surroundings for a moment can add a whole new dimension to a conflict. Ask yourself such questions as:

- ✱ What can be ducked behind, jumped on, off, or over, interposed between the attack and target, or might impede a combatant, such as boulders, tables, pillars, trees, balconies, etc.?
- ✱ Are there perils in the surroundings that might harm, kill, or otherwise inconvenience an incautious or unlucky combatant, such as a cliff-edge, open pit, lava flow, untriggered trap, or patch of ice?
- ✱ Does the environment in any way prohibit the use of certain weapons, or make their use more difficult? Some weapons, for example, require considerable space to be swung effectively, such as greatswords, so a fight in a short, narrow corridor would make their use very difficult. Similarly, fighting in close formation may make it hazardous to use some weapons, as the space needed to use them may be occupied by an ally.

- ✱ What are the weather conditions? Conditions such as powerful gales, thick fog, etc. can make the use of missile weapons problematic at best, and even melee combat can be effected if you can't see any opponent more than a yard away, or if a lot of flying debris, sand, etc. makes usual action difficult.

With a good grasp of the environment comes the ability to bring it into the conflict. Imagine how it can be used to the benefit or detriment of the combatants. Opponents can be forced towards perils, boulders can be used as cover, and so on. A Mishap on any roll during the combat may also involve the environment somehow, such as a trip or blunder into an object, suddenly finding oneself maneuvered to the brink of the lava flow, a missed attack resulting in the weapon getting stuck in a tree or pillar, etc.

Avoid getting caught up in precise details; keep the play fast and fluid. Accurate distances are not important; use vague terms such as “close”, “a stone's throw away”, or “right next to you”, and if ranged combat or distance matters, simply make a rough judgement of how long (in rounds) it will take to cover the area, or if the attack is basically close, short, or long range. You don't even need to consult the ranges of the weapons to make such a call. Just keep things moving. Stopping to check ranges, the amount of area someone with X SPD can cover in a single round just slows the action down.

## Beware of Bystanders

The presence of bystanders during a fight is also often overlooked. Crowds often gather to watch fights, and may goad the opponents on, and even place wagers on the outcome. Not only can bystanders get in the way, they can easily be hit by stray shots or blows, taken hostage or used as shields by nefarious individuals, or even enter the combat themselves on either side, or against both, the classic example of which is when the local



military or law enforcement attempts to stop the conflict and incarcerate the combatants and gets drawn into the conflict.

Firing into any melee, whether bystanders are involved or not, is a very dangerous proposition, due to the continual movement of the combatants. Missed shots may easily hit an unintended target, such as an ally. Aside from intelligent bystanders there are always cases of animals becoming involved somehow. Herd animals may stampede, posing a threat to everyone, while a predator may leap unexpectedly into a melee, in the hopes of taking a wounded individual on the periphery of the fight. Certain mobile plants can also provide an added element to a fight, especially if they are



not recognized as such from the onset.

## USE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

The character should also exploit the environment of the fight. Many objects, such as chairs, rocks, ropes, nets, wall hangings, and pots of oil, may be used as impromptu clubs, missiles, entangling implements, incendiaries, and so on. Rugs may be pulled from under assailants, barrels of oil spilled to create slick patches, chandeliers shot down to fall on assailants below, and so on. Even an unskilled or unarmed combatant can be terribly effective if they make intelligent use of their surroundings.

## WANTON DESTRUCTION

A battle can take a serious toll on the surrounding environment, and the effects are worth thinking about. Use of fire in any form may ignite combustibles, and create a hazard. Attacks that miss their intended target may hit something else, thereby damaging it, and the use of items as cover, fighting platforms, etc. will almost certainly result in them being ruined in some way. A fight will practically always leave signs of its occurrence, even if only in the form of splashes of blood.

## FIGHT WITH STYLE

The majority of weapons can be used to perform a variety of strikes, in a variety of ways. Give some thought as to what form an attack takes. Is it a thrust, a lunge, a wild swing, an overhead blow, a feint, or a backhanded swipe? A weapon can even be used in unorthodox ways. A strike may be made with the flat of the blade, possibly subduing or intimidating an opponent. A staff may be used to thrust. A blow to knock out can be made with a weapon's handle or pommel. Many melee weapons can even be thrown if the situation is desperate enough.

The reach of a weapon (its comparative length) is also worth bearing in mind. A character with a

notably longer weapon than their opponent (such as a halberd being used against an opponent with a sword), may not only keep their opponent at bay, and strike them first, but they may effectively prevent their opponent from attacking, if the opponent is unable to get inside the reach of their weapon. However, should the opponent with a shorter weapon manage to step inside the reach of the longer weapon, they may make its use next to impossible as well.

The sword the character bears is not their only weapon. Try and add the occasional unarmed strike into a combination of blows; it is more interesting, and can surprise an unexpecting opponent. A swift kick can force an opponent back, giving the character room to maneuver or flee, while a solid punch can stun, and a headbutt can bring you in so close that your opponent cannot bring any weapon larger than a dagger to bear.

Consider how a combatant can be taken out of the fight quickly without necessarily being gradually bludgeoned or sliced in a protracted melee. Opponents can be disarmed, tripped, pinned, grappled, thrown, knocked out, entangled, or knocked over, for instance.

Few combats should ever be to the death; only the most deeply unintelligent, insane, frenzied, or foolishly courageous combatants will continue fighting when badly wounded or outclassed. A hasty retreat is a key survival strategy for practically every living being. Particularly bloodthirsty or lethal maneuvers, such as attempts to slice an opponent's head off, pierce their eyes, or eviscerate them should be rare, and used only when dramatically appropriate. Should players continually attempt such maneuvers against every opponent, they should expect all of the NPCs they fight to respond in like fashion.

## DON'T JUST STAND THERE

The way some combats are conducted, it is hard to imagine the combatants doing much more than standing toe-to-toe trading blows. In truth, combat is continually in motion. Bear some thought as to how the characters move about, and how this can be used to advantage or disadvantage.

- ✿ Do they try and outflank an opponent, or move to a better attacking position?
- ✿ Do the combatants circle each other warily?
- ✿ Do they attempt to close in, or move away?
- ✿ How do they dodge: duck, sidestep, roll, or leap?
- ✿ Do they press an opponent, forcing them back, or yield and give ground?
- ✿ Do they charge or leap into a fight, weapon raised high, calmly walk forward, or wait for their opponent to come to them?

Once again, the environment is very important when considering the motion of the various characters. Chandeliers or ropes may be swung from, sails slid down with a dagger, pillars ran around, tables dived under, jumped on or over, and so on. Characters with the Acrobatics skill can make particularly impressive use of motion, such as cartwheeling, backflipping, somersaulting, and going into elaborate springs or rolls, although anyone can roll, leap, or dive.

Combatants who find themselves on the ground may be in peril if their opponent is still standing, and may be forced to roll or flail wildly in an attempt to avoid being struck, and provide themselves with the moment needed to regain their feet.

Motion in certain environments can add a whole new dimension, quite literally, to a fight. Airborne combats, for example, can feature attacks from above or below, diving attacks, swoops, and so on, while underwater combats also occur in three

dimensions, but slow down motion, and make non-thrusting weapons far less effective.

## KEEP TALKING

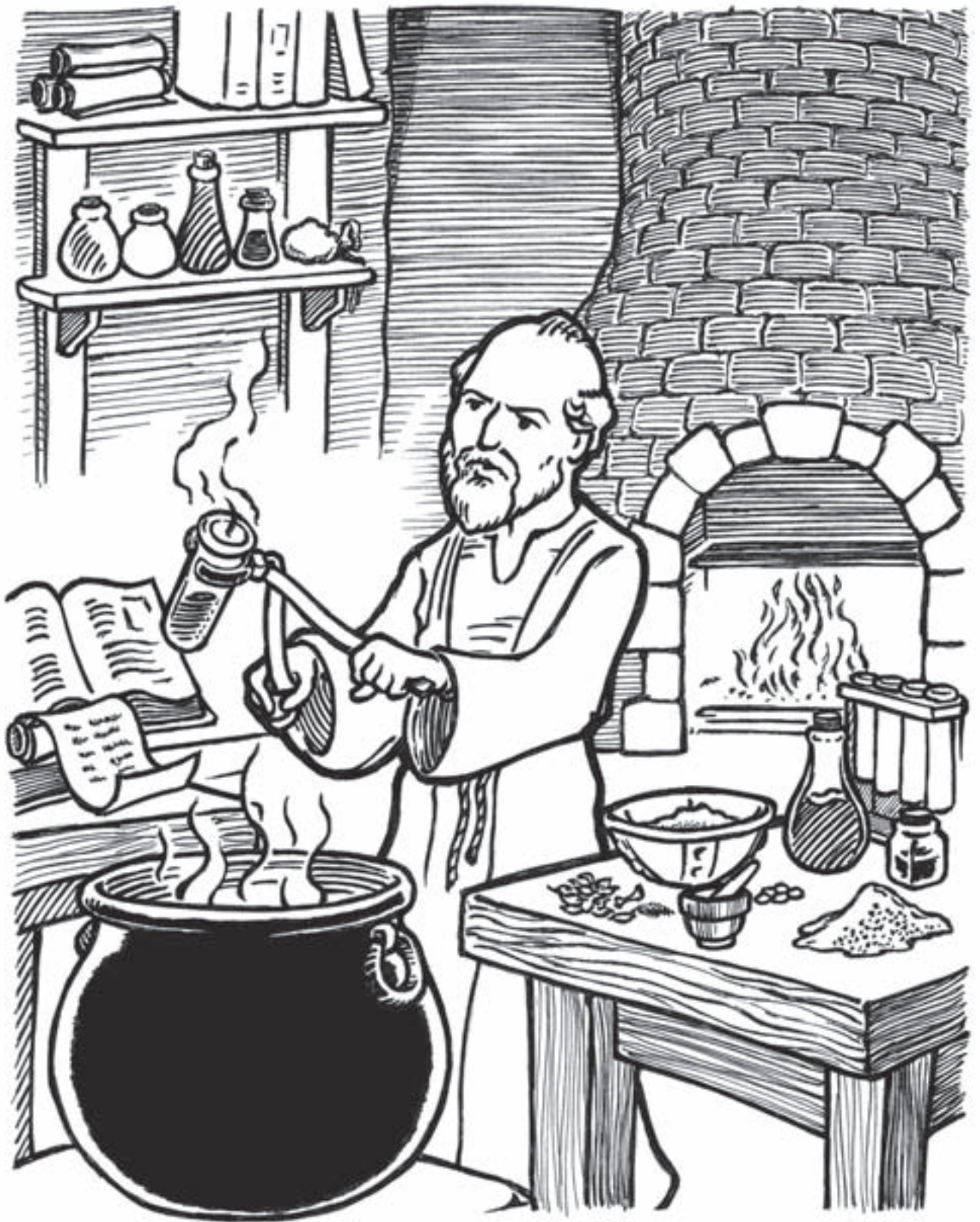
Just because the action has started, doesn't mean the talking has ceased. Characters should engage in appropriate dialogue when fighting, hurling expletives, insults, and imprecations at opponents, shouting warnings and encouragement to colleagues, screaming battlecries, engaging in the cut and thrust of witty repartee with like-minded antagonists, and so on. Just as players speak the words of their characters when roleplaying any other situation, they should do so in combat sections of the game.

## COMBAT IS A BLOODY AFFAIR

The damage opponents suffer can be as detailed or as vague as befits the gaming group's tastes, playing style, and campaign style.

Never simply state the amount of Damage inflicted by any blow -- describe it. Small amounts of damage comparative to the character's HPs might be cuts, nicks, grazes, or bruises, while heavy damage can be bone-crunching impacts, deep slices causing blood to flow, and so on. GMs of truly Grim campaigns may even inflict penalties on a character's actions if they are significantly hurt, and may interpret particularly damaging strikes as incapacitating or mutilating. Likewise, Heroic campaigns may seldom involve damage worse than bad cuts or broken bones, all of which they recover from very quickly. At worst, a Heroic character might lose an eye or a limb, giving them a dramatic reason to seek revenge.

Combat in a game can, and should, be as gripping and exciting as any fight scene in an action movie, and if given as much thought and effort as possible, will take its place alongside any other roleplaying scene for a sense of character and drama.



## CHAPTER SIX

# MAGIC

### MAGIC IN HIGH

### MEDIEVAL

Although it is often feared and misunderstood by the majority of the population, *High Medieval Europe* is a land filled with magic. This magic takes myriad forms, from the poultices of a wise woman to the incantation of a sorcerer used to summon mighty demons. The material in this chapter explains how Magic is used in the *High Medieval* game. In it you will find information on:

- ✿ An overview of Magic in *High Medieval Europe* and the Near East.
- ✿ Spellcasting Modes: the backbone of the system.
- ✿ The various Orders of Magic.
- ✿ Rules for creating and using Enchanted Items.

If you're a Gamemaster, you should read this chapter so that you'll understand the basics of how magic works. If you're a player with a spellcasting character you need only concentrate on the sections that describe your character's Order(s) and the Modes in which he is proficient. Players with

non-spellcaster characters can skip this chapter altogether, if they like.

### MAGIC IN THE GAME

Because the number of spells, charms, powers, and principles at work in the various magical disciplines of *High Medieval* is nearly limitless, the game system does not try to cover them all. Rather, a solid framework is provided for the mechanics of magic, allowing players and GMs to create their own spells using the eleven Modes as guidelines.

In the section where Orders are described you'll find some sample spells for various Modes. Use spells similar to these when you first begin playing *High Medieval*. Then, once you are more familiar with the rules, you can create additional spells. As play progresses, you can record the spells that your character commonly uses, building your character's personalized "spellbook".

In *High Medieval*, only characters that have at least one character level in a spellcasting class may actually use their magical knowledge to cast spells. Others may study the arts and learn about magic through the Knowledge (arcana) skill but without

a level in a spellcasting class such as Priest, Mage or Alchemist, spellcasting is beyond their ability.

## MAGIC IN THE WORLD

Magic has existed since ancient times, and can be found in the richly furnished halls of stately Ducal Palaces and in the filthy hovel of the village wise women alike.

Magical arts are traditionally taught only to initiates and usually in secret, although in some regions magical knowledge is sometimes passed on through inheritance. A distinction is usually made between the Dark Arts, which are used to bring death and destruction, and more benign magic, normally used to protect against the forces of Darkness and to help prevent natural calamities. In itself, magic is neither good nor evil; it is the spellcaster's intentions that make the difference. In the eyes of the Church, this is not always the case however, so would-be spellcasters had best take note of what forms of magic are acceptable to Rome and which forms are outlawed. When in doubt, discretion is always the best route to take.

In *High Medieval* Europe, the magical arts can be divided between Low Magic, such as witchcraft and the magic of creatures like faeries, and High Magic, in which we find a more scholarly approach to magic like kabbalah, theurgecraft and the hermetic style of sorcery. This distinction is mostly one of style and does not necessarily reflect the relative power of one Order over another. There are tales of witches who wield incredible power and faeries are feared for a reason.

## ABOUT ORDERS & MODES

An Order is a field of magic or magical tradition, such as Witchcraft, Sorcery, and Alchemy. Members of the same Order derive their magical powers from the same source, and tend to observe similar rituals and practices. In *High Medieval* Europe there are eight main magical Orders. Some believe that other Orders may have existed in ancient times; and still others still are practiced in

secrecy on the fringes of western civilization.

Most spellcasters belong to a single Order, though some elect to gain proficiency in additional fields of magic; Scholars, for example, often study many different magical traditions at the various renowned universities such as those in Paris and Bologna. To acquire the knowledge of a new Order, a student must study with a teacher for no less than 52 weeks. However, Orders are not Skills per se, and are not used for *Omni Table* die rolls.

A Mode is essentially a spell-effect, such as Conjure, Alter, and Transform. Modes are used as a basis for creating original spells, if the player or GM so desires. Each Order uses Modes in a different way; the differences are substantial enough that even if a spellcaster knows the Mode Alter in one Order, he will not be proficient in the same Mode as it is practiced by members of other Orders. Therefore, a character's Mode skill ranks must be tracked separately for each Order with which they are familiar.

## LIMITATIONS OF MAGIC

Modern magic is neither free-form nor spontaneous. Rather, it is a precise discipline that involves the memorization of formulized spells. A spellcaster cannot "make up" a spell at a moment's notice or improvise while spellcasting. It is the player's job to come up with interesting spell names and effects before game play begins. The spells that the player invents must fit within the style of the spellcaster's Order, the game-mechanics of the chosen Mode, and the practical restrictions of all modern *High Medieval* magic.

Modern magic cannot:

- ✱ Return the dead to life;
- ✱ Create life;
- ✱ Affect time or causality;
- ✱ Control two Powers at once (no spells of Fire and Earth together);

- ✿ Cast more than one spell at a time, or blend two spells together (use two Modes at once).

Note that these restrictions may not apply to some powerful foreign or unknown magical Orders, or Orders of the ancient past like those of ancient Egypt, Babylon or Atlantis. Nor does it apply to Angelic or Demonic magic.

## Modes

Every spell that can be cast in *High Medieval* has one primary effect, or Mode. This idea holds true regardless of the outward form the spell takes. Does the spell heal injury? Does it move objects? Does it create illusions? Once you know the spell's primary effect, you know its Mode, and how it works in the game. The following is a list of the twelve Modes and their primary effects. Each is described in detail later in this chapter.

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| ✿ Alter    | ✿ Influence |
| ✿ Attack   | ✿ Move      |
| ✿ Conjure  | ✿ Reveal    |
| ✿ Defend   | ✿ Summon    |
| ✿ Heal     | ✿ Transform |
| ✿ Illusion | ✿ Ward      |

Unlike other Skills, Modes can only be acquired by members of a spellcasting Calling. Like all other skills though, Modes are improved as per the rules in *Chapter 4 - Skills & Talents*. When a character learns a new Mode, they are actually learning many different concepts and theories of how to manipulate magic in the particular function of the Mode in question.

Spellcasters never refer to Modes by name. Instead they discuss specific spells and their effects, such as the fiery tendrils of "Baal's Flame Whip". Most spellcasters realize that modern magic is restricted to certain types of effects, but these types haven't been researched and catalogued much since ancient times. Another thing that modern magicians are

very conscious of is the limitations of their magic when compared to the supposed glories of past ages.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT MODE

As previously stated, choosing the correct Mode to represent a spell is a process of determining what the spell's primary effect is. The appearance and form of the spell make little difference when picking a Mode. An important point to remember is that the spellcasting character does not "know" the Modes. Rather they know the theory and function of magic as it pertains to twelve broad categories represented by the Modes. If a spell falls into a category that the spellcasting character hasn't studied, then it cannot be cast, regardless of its outward form. He simply has not studied how to make magic create the desired effect. This notion can seem confusing at first, so an example is provided below to act as a guideline for the GM.

*The player of Hubert the Demonologist describes his spell "Infernal Terror": "I summon a lesser demon that will arc through the air and claw someone's face, then disappear back from whence it came." The spell involves summoning a demon, but the primary effect here is a simple attack. Though it may seem to be a summoning spell at first, the Attack Mode is actually the better choice. Later, Hubert's player describes a different spell, "I want to summon a demon that will fight the whole band of outlaws while I run away." This spell's primary effect goes beyond simply doing damage to a target. The player wants to create an autonomous entity which can fight, create a diversion, and move about on its own. This is truly a Summon Mode spell.*

## SPELL CREATION & SPELLBOOKS

Before game play begins, players of spellcasting characters have a bit more work than other players. *High Medieval* uses a flexible magic system and as such, players are free to create their own unique spells for their characters. Before game play, players of spellcasters receive 2+INT spells to put into their grimoire. They must use the rules presented in this chapter to create the spells that their characters know or may choose from the sample spells given. These spells may be of any Mode the character currently has ranks in and must follow the rules associated with the character's particular Order of magic.

These spells now become the core of the character's spellbook. As the character progresses in level, he may learn additional spells depending on his profession or he may gain access to new spells through adventuring. Regardless of their source, any new spell learned must be carefully copied to the spellcasters spellbook. If, at any time, the character loses his spellbook, he will start to amass penalties to his casting abilities. This takes the form of a -2 special penalty to all attempts to cast any known spells the following day and increases by -1 every day thereafter (maximum -10) until the book is found or replaced and a full day is spent in study. Magic is complex and magicians usually study from their tomes for several hours every day just to keep their formulae and incantations fresh. Replacing a lost spellbook from scratch takes 4 weeks and could cost up to £5.

### HOW DO ORDERS USE MODES DIFFERENTLY?

Even though all of the spellcasters of *High Medieval Europe* use the same twelve Modes as part of the game system, the specific effects of spells cast by each Order can be quite different. It's not as if every spellcaster in *High Medieval Europe* knows the same twelve basic spells and simply calls them by different names. In fact, even

spellcasters form the same Order are likely to know very different spells. The number of spells and incantation that exist in the world are as limitless as the stars in the midnight sky. In fact, finding an as yet unknown spell should be a very important event for any spellcaster. Perhaps even the basis for a quest. A spellcaster's Order forms the basis for how his spells work in practice. In addition to the game mechanics associated with the Modes, each Order has side-effects based on the type of energy that its spells control. These should always be kept simple and obvious; fire burns, winds blows, spirits are creepy, etc. Sometimes these side-effects are beneficial and sometimes they're a limitation.

*For example, Morag casts a Witchcraft spell that her player calls "The Touch of the Wind". This spell moves objects around by blowing them with a powerful breeze. This is obviously a Move Mode spell. This spell would be perfect for blowing leaves from Morag's workroom, but would not work well for moving a torch across a room since the winds would blow out the flame.*

*Hussein the Sorcerer (Hermeticism Order) also wants to cast a Move Mode spell, "Pillar of Emerald Fire". This spell makes a jet of green flame appear beneath an object, lift it, and then move across the ground as the sorcerer wills. This spell would be very poor for clearing out a dusty workspace, but the flames cast a faint light which would help the sorcerer guide the spell in the dark.*

Neither of the above example spells would be good for moving a piece of fragile, old parchment. The blowing winds might rip the paper, and flames would certainly singe or even burn it. However, a sorcerer casting "Magic Fingers" would have no trouble carefully manipulating the fragile document with disembodied hands of arcane force.

## MODE FORMAT

Several special terms are used in the following Mode descriptions. These terms are defined below:

**Area:** The maximum spatial area the Mode can affect. Modes without this component listed affect a pinpoint-sized area.

**Duration:** The amount of time the effects of the Mode last. Modes with duration of "Instant" last only a moment and then expire. Their effects (damage done, for example) may linger, however.

**Casting Time:** The amount of time it takes to cast a spell of that Mode. If the spellcaster takes any other action during the time she is casting the spell, the spell automatically fails. Modes with no casting time listed take one round to cast.

**Range:** The maximum distance a spell of the given Mode can travel from the caster.

**Resistance:** The means by which the Mode can be resisted by the target (if any). If no resistance is listed, spells of that Mode may be Dodged like any normal attack, assuming the target is aware of the spell (see *Chapter 5 - Combat* for details).

## ALTER

### Alter in Brief:

**Specific Alteration:** +1/-1 per 3 Spell Levels

**Broad Alteration:** +1/-1 per 5 Spell Levels

**Range:** Touch

**Subjects:** -1 to casting roll for each extra subject

**Duration:** 1 minute (-1 to casting roll for each extra minute of duration)

The Alter Mode deals with spells that modify a being's abilities or gifts or an object's properties. A spellcaster can increase or decrease a single,

specific quality (like a skill rating) by one point for every 3 levels of the spell. More general alterations (like modifying an attribute, for example) require five spell levels for each point changed. At the end of the spell duration, the subject instantly reverts to normal. There is usually some outward sign that the subject has been altered: muscles enlarge as the subject grows stronger, or shrivel as he weakens. The exact appearance of the spell depends on the Magical Order.

Alter spells generally do not have any directly harmful effects. However, if an attribute rating is lowered to -7 or below, it is not possible for the target to take any action associated with that attribute. For example a character with -7 PER cannot see or hear clearly, a character with -7 DEX is too clumsy to move without falling, and a character with -7 INT is too confused to make decisions.

Alter can also change the Damage Rating of weapons and the Protection Rating of armor (both of these are specific alterations). Note that this effect can increase the Damage Rating of a being's bare-handed attack, or add a Protection Rating to normal skin and clothes. Damage or Protection Rating cannot be reduced below 0.

Abstract qualities such as value, appeal, status, or authority can also be manipulated with this Mode. Abstract qualities are almost always considered broad alterations. To alter an abstract quality, the GM will simply rate the item or individual from 1 to 10 in the chosen quality, then allow the spellcaster to manipulate the rating up or down as usual.

Alter spells are not cumulative in effect. One cannot gain +5 Strength by casting five consecutive +1 STR spells on oneself. If multiple Alter spells are cast on a single subject that alter the same attribute, only the highest level spell takes effect. Alter may be used on multiple subjects simultaneously, so long as all the subjects are in direct physical contact (holding hands in a circle, for example).



The spellcaster takes a -1 to his *Omni Table* roll for casting for each extra subject affected.

The GM makes the final decision on what constitutes a specific alteration and what constitutes a broad alteration. In general, the more applications a given quality has, the more likely it is to be a broad alteration. For example, altering a character's Weapon (large blades) skill is a specific alteration since it has a very narrow application. However, altering a character's Combat Rating would be a broad alteration. Not every Order can Alter all possible qualities. See the individual Order descriptions for examples of what kinds of abilities can be altered.

## ATTACK

### Attack in Brief:

**Damage:** 1 Hit Point per Spell Level

**Range:** 50 feet (-1 to casting roll per 10 extra feet of range)

**Duration:** Instant / 1 round per level (no range)

**Area:** -1 to casting roll per foot of radius

The Attack Mode deals with channelling destructive magical power and hurling it at an enemy. Attack Mode spells have an instant duration and do damage in Hit Points equal to the spell's level; for example, a level 6 Attack spell has a Damage Rating of 6. A spellcaster may also cast an Attack spell meant to subdue, rather than kill. See the rules for subdual in the *Chapter 5 - Combat*.

Most Attack effects are Ranged Attacks, meaning that they are subject to penalties based on the range and availability of the intended target (see *Chapter 5 - Combat* for details). Ranged spell attacks may be Dodged by rolling against the spellcaster's Attack Mode rating. Close Combat attack spells can also be cast, such as a fiery blade or magical claws. These effects last for a number of rounds equal to the spell level. When targeting spells of this type, the spellcaster must use the appropriate combat skill (sword, brawling, etc.)

rather than her Mode rating. Area-effect attacks can also be created (a swirling wind, a circle of fire). Every foot of effect radius counts as -1 to the casting roll.

## CONJURE

### Conjure in Brief:

**Maximum Mass:** 10 pounds per Spell Level

**Maximum Area:** 1 cubic foot per Spell Level

**Range:** 50 feet (-1 to casting roll per 10 extra feet of range)

**Duration:** 1 minute (-1 to casting roll per extra minute of duration)

Conjuring creates material objects from magical energy. Up to 10 pounds of matter can be created per spell level, covering an area up to 1 cubic foot per Level. Living matter cannot be conjured in this way. The caster must be familiar with the object or material to be conjured, though simple shapes like staves, swords, rope, etc. require no special training. The creation of exact replicas or finely detailed pieces incurs a penalty based on the degree of difficulty entailed (GM's ruling). For detailed pieces, the penalty should approximate the number of days it would take a skilled artisan to create it. For replicas, the penalty should directly oppose any attempts to perceive it as a copy.

When the duration of the spell ends, the item disappears, unless it has been consumed or mixed with other material. If a character drinks conjured water, it will quench his thirst, even after the spell duration expires.

## DEFEND

### Defend in Brief:

**Hit Point Rating:** +2 points per Spell Level

**Range:** Self / Touch / -1 to roll per 10 feet

**Flat Barrier Size:** 4 feet squared (4'x4'). (-1 to casting roll per extra foot squared)

**Cylinder/Cone Barrier Area:** 4 feet high, 2

ft. radius. (-1 to casting roll per extra foot of height or radius)

**Dome/Sphere Barrier Area:** 2 feet high, 4 ft. radius. (-1 to casting roll per extra foot of height or radius)

**Barrier Armor Rating:** 1/3 the Spell Level

**Duration:** 5 rounds (-1 to casting roll for each extra round of duration)

Defend spells absorb damage the target would normally suffer. All Defend effects can absorb a number of Hit Points equal to 2 times their Spell Level before dissipating; for example, a shield created with a level 3 Defend spell will absorb 6 HP of damage before it dissolves into nothingness.

There are two basic types of Defend effects: Auras and Barriers. Both last for a minimum of 5 rounds or until destroyed (whichever comes first).

Aura spells cover a single individual or item with a protective shield. The composition and appearance of this field depends on the Order being used, and may look like a glowing “second-skin”, ornate all-enclosing armor of energy, etc. Alternately, aura spells may take the form of satellites; a number of small “shields” that hover about the subject of the spell, swiftly moving to intercept any attacks, physical or magical, directed at the subject. The satellites could look like small dancing shields, strange flying imps, etc. depending on the Order being used. Unless an Illusion effect is cast to conceal it, an aura is always visible to normal senses. Auras are air and light permeable, allowing the spellcaster to breathe and see. For this reason, auras do not protect against blinding lights or harmful gasses. The aura also moves with the spellcaster. Only a single aura may be worn at a time. If a second aura is cast on the same target, only the aura offering greater protection remains.

While protected by an aura, a character is immune to the special effects of critical hits in combat, since there is no way to “go around” an aura to

hit a vulnerable spot. Non-damaging attacks such as grapples, disarms, and other stunts take their normal effect on a critical success.

A Barrier is a two-dimensional shield of magical energy that can take whatever simple shape the caster desires. Like auras, their appearance depends on the Magical Order employed. A barrier can be a wall of ice, a bridge of arcane force, or a column of swirling winds.

All barriers have an armor rating equal to one-third the Spell Level. So, a Level 12 barrier would have an armor rating of 4 and would stop 24 points of damage before dissipating.

The barrier can cover a flat rectangular area (such as a doorway), or it can be curved into a cylinder, dome, cone or sphere. The basic size of a flat barrier is 4 feet squared (4'x4'), though the barrier can be made smaller in either dimension if the caster wishes. Each extra foot squared of coverage yields a -1 to the casting roll. So a 5'x5' barrier would be cast at -1, a 6'x6' barrier at -2 and so on. The basic size of a cylinder or cone shape is 4 feet high with an interior radius of 2 feet. The basic size of a dome, or sphere shape is 2 feet high with an interior radius of 4 feet. In both cases, each extra foot of height or interior radius yields a -1 to the casting roll.

The barrier must be created in sturdy form. It cannot lean without some type of support. If it crosses open space, such as a pit or chasm, both ends must be on solid ground. Barriers are immobile. Like any other wall, most magical barriers can be climbed, but they cannot be toppled. Barriers also prevent the passage of physical objects and energy (including light, depending on the nature of the barrier). They do nothing against subtle magical effects such as Influence or Illusion. If a barrier is sealed on all sides, it also prevents the flow of air.

## HEAL

### Heal in Brief:

**Effect:** 1 hit point per Spell Level / 1 disease level per Spell Level

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant

Heal restores lost hit points. It can be used on living beings and inanimate objects alike. A creature or object can only be healed back to its starting Hit Point total. A Heal spell can be used to cure disease, though to be effective it must be cast at a Spell Level greater than the level of the disease. Missing limbs cannot be regenerated with this Mode, nor can the dead be restored to life.

## REVERSE: HARM

Harm does damage by creating wounds or disease. Unlike Attack spells, spells based on the Harm Mode can only be inflicted by touch. Wounds created by a Harm spell cause 1 Hit Point of damage per level of the spell. A disease may be inflicted by casting the spell at a level equal to the level of the desired malady.

## ILLUSION

### Illusion in Brief:

**Basic Illusion:** Level 1

**Features:** +3 Spell levels per each additional feature

**Range:** 50 feet (-1 to casting roll per 10 extra feet of range) / scrying

**Duration:** 5 rounds (-1 to casting roll for each extra round of duration)

The Illusion Mode creates phantasmal images that can appear to be real but are devoid of actual substance. The spell Level determines the quality and complexity of these images. The basic level 1 illusion affects a single sense and has no motion. An example would be an illusory image of a small dog. The animal would have no real detail and would not look like a specific creature.

Each additional feature of the illusion adds an extra +3 Spell levels. Features include:

### Additional Senses

Illusions can be enhanced by the addition of other sensory elements such as sound, scent, taste, and even touch. Like all aspects of the illusion, these sensory enhancements may seem real to others but have no actual substance.

### Motion or Animation

An illusion can also be made to move. The caster must be within the spell's range and be able to sense the illusion in order to control its motion. An illusion may also be tied to an object or being so it moves with it; for example, a spellcaster could create and "wear" an illusory cloak.

### Precise Details or Complex Elements

Reproducing a complex map, copying an individual's exact facial features, or greatly enhancing the apparent quality and value of an item or garment would each be an additional feature. Extremely complex elements or effects may be subject to a penalty based on the Degree of Difficulty entailed (GM's ruling).

### Magnitude

The sound volume, brightness, apparent size and/or overall impression of an illusion can be enhanced by increasing its magnitude. For example:

#### 1 feature added:

*As loud as a shout, as bright as a torch, as big as a man.*

#### 2 features added:

*As loud as a trumpet, as bright as a campfire, as big as a horse.*

#### 3 features added:

*As loud as a cheering crowd, as bright as a full moon, as big as a wagon.*

#### 4 features added:

*As loud as thunder, as bright as a bonfire, as big as a house.*

### 5 features added:

*As loud as a hurricane, as bright as the sun,  
as big as a ship.*

Spellcasters can detect illusions by casting a Reveal spell, with the level of the illusion being used as the Degree of Difficulty for the attempt. Non-spellcasters must rely on their wits and observation to determine if something is real or not. This is simulated by having the character make an Attribute roll vs his Perception Rating, using the level of the spell as the Degree of Difficulty. Success indicates that the viewer suspects the image to be unnatural in some way. Spellcasters can also use their powers of Perception in this way, if they choose.

Illusion spells can also be used to produce illumination. A small, stationary globe of light is a simple level 1 illusion. By adding 3 levels, the ball of light will move with the caster. This light can be used to blind enemies by directing it into their eyes. To accomplish this, the spellcaster must make a ranged attack roll using her Attack or Illusion Mode rating with an additional penalty of -7 for aiming at a small location. If successful, targets are blinded for three rounds, +1 round for each magnitude feature added to the spell.

The Illusion Mode can also be used to render a target invisible. Invisibility is a very complex spell as it must exactly mimic the environment around the target. Invisibility for a single, stationary individual is a level 10 spell (1 level for the basic illusion plus 9 levels of complexity). If the character wants to stay invisible while moving, add 3 levels for a total of 13. Illusions can be produced anywhere within the range of the spell, and can also be cast while Scrying (see Reveal). In this case, the range of the Illusion is unlimited.

## INFLUENCE

### Influence in Brief:

**Range:** 5 feet

**Duration:** 1 round (-1 to casting roll for each

extra round of duration)

**Resistance:** WIL roll - 1/2 Spell Level

Spells that control or affect a being's thoughts and emotions are simulated with the Influence Mode. The subject of an Influence spell will obey a single simple instruction from the caster, such as "*Stand still*", "*Attack the priest*", or "*Go to sleep*." The command is transmitted directly to the subject's mind; it need not be spoken aloud. As this is a mental command, a common language is not needed. The subject will attempt to carry out the instruction to the best of its ability until the duration of the spell elapses. A subject cannot perform a command that it does not comprehend or is physically incapable of doing. For example, commanding an seagull to "*pick the lock*" would not work any better than commanding a horse to "*fly*." In addition, a subject will take no action that involves doing harm to itself directly, i.e. a subject cannot be commanded to stab itself or jump off a cliff.

The target of an Influence spell can resist being controlled by making a Willpower roll. For every 2 levels of the spell, the target takes a -1 to its WIL roll.

The subject of an Influence spell will remember everything that happens while he is under the control of the spell. If the spellcaster gets a Critical Success when casting the spell, however, the subject will think that his actions were his own idea, no matter how bizarre they seem in hindsight.

## MOVE

### Move in Brief:

**STR:** +0 (100 lbs.) (+1 STR per 3 Spell Levels)

**Range:** 50 feet (-1 to casting roll for every 10 feet of extra range)

**SPD:** -9 (10 feet per round) (-3 to casting roll for each +1 SPD rating)

**Area:** 0' radius (-1 to casting roll per foot of radius)

**Duration:** 5 rounds (-1 to casting roll per extra round of duration)

All spells that move or levitate objects or beings are based on this Mode. Move spells require the spellcaster's full concentration in order to maintain control of the object or individual being moved. For example, it is not possible for a spellcaster to cast other spells while moving a sword through the air, though he could leave a levitated object suspended and turn his attention to other matters without cancelling the spell.

A Move spell can affect up to 100 pounds of material at STR +0, and allows the spellcaster to control the target to a range of 50 feet. Each +1 STR rating adds 25 pounds to the amount of weight the spellcaster can lift. Objects or beings manipulated with this Mode travel at a default Speed of -9 (10 feet per round) and can be moved anywhere within the spell's effective range.

The STR rating of a move spell must be divided between holding onto the target and lifting the target. For example, a spellcaster might want to grab a struggling thief who was trying to run off with the spellcaster's purse. A level 9 spell would allow the spellcaster to hold the thief with a STR rating of +3. If the spellcaster wanted to also levitate the thief off the ground, he would have to add 6 more spell levels for a lifting STR of +2 (enough to lift 150 pounds).

A spellcaster using a Move spell can perform Grappling attacks such as throwing or choking. In this case, the spellcaster cannot hold the target in place or restrain them in any way beyond what the effect of the Grapple or choke would normally do.

Distant manipulations are also possible; for example, pulling a lever from across a room. The default Strength Rating that can be applied at a distance is +0. This effect can also be used to wield a weapon or employ a physical ability such as juggling or writing. In this case, the spellcaster's

applicable Skills or Attributes are used to determine the success or failure of the manipulation. For example, a spellcaster using a Move spell to pick a lock from across the room must first roll on the *Omni Table* to cast the spell, then roll again for the lock picking attempt. If the spellcaster has the skill, Disable Mechanism, his Skill Rating is used as a modifier on the lock-picking attempt. If he has no such skill, the spellcaster's attempt is subject to the standard substitution penalty (q.v.).

Depending on the effects of their Order, some spellcasters can fly with this mode, by simply using enough STR to lift themselves. Range doesn't apply in this case. Flight Speed Rating is -9 unless increased, as per moving inanimate objects. Tricky aerobic maneuvers may require a Dexterity or Acrobatics roll for the spellcaster to maintain control, and a failed roll may result in a crash or other unfortunate mishap (GM's ruling).

## REVEAL

### Reveal in Brief:

**Sense:** +1 PER per Spell Level

**Range:** 50 feet (-1 to casting roll per 10 extra feet of range)

**Scrying Range:** 1 mile (-1 to casting roll for each extra mile of range)

**Duration:** 1 minute (-1 to casting roll for each extra minute of duration)

Reveal spells are used to simulate supernatural senses, such as the ability to detect lies, divine the location of lost objects, see in darkness, or see through illusions. For purposes of Opposed actions, a Reveal spell's Rating is equal to its Spell Level. For example, a Level 4 spell used to detect lies on a thief who has a Deception Skill Rating of +6 would be subject to a Degree of Difficulty penalty of -2 (4 - 6 = -2).

Reveal spells can also be used to detect the presence of other spells, such as illusions, wards, or curses. In such cases the level of the magic being detected is applied as the Degree of Difficulty vs. the level at which the Reveal spell is cast. A

successful Reveal will only confirm the presence of the magic and possibly hint at its origin, use or power. A Critical Success should give more details such as duration or specific effects of the spell. Perhaps even give the caster a bonus to any attempts to dispel the effects.

Another popular Reveal effect is Scrying -- the ability to see and hear what is happening in a distant locale, as if one was standing there. The range of a Scrying spell is usually limited to one mile per spell level. The caster must employ a reflective surface of some kind in which to view the images, and cannot automatically locate a particular spot within the Scrying area unless he or she has previous knowledge of the location to use as reference. Only normal sight and hearing are effective while Scrying; supernatural senses are cancelled while using such a spell.

### REVERSE: CONCEAL

The reverse of this Mode conceals objects, beings, or areas from normal senses and even other Reveal spells. For example, an individual or specific location can be protected against scrying, a lie can be masked with magic to make it seem more believable, or magical senses may be confused. Use the level of the Conceal spell as Degree of Difficulty modifier vs. attempts to divine what is being hidden. Conceal cannot be used to make anything truly "invisible". The Illusion Mode is used for that. However, Conceal could be employed to make it more difficult for guards to find someone who was hiding, for example.

## SUMMON

### Summon in Brief:

**Ability Level of Summoned Creature:** 1 per Spell Level

**Casting Time:** 1 round per Spell Level

**Duration:** 1 minute (-1 to casting roll for each extra minute of duration)


Spells that use the Summon Mode involve consorting with one of three possibilities: the

powers of Darkness, the spirits of nature or the spirits of the dead. Since the Church of Rome view these things as one and the same, the practice of summoning is completely forbidden by the Church. It is also forbidden by all known Muslim and Jewish religious authorities. Aside from the dire consequences of being caught, there are many other reasons why Summon is by far the most dangerous Mode. At the higher levels, when summoning more powerful entities, the risks involved in mishandling the incantations or protections can prove disastrous. Only extremely capable or foolish spellcasters dabble in potent exercise of this magic. That said many a churchman has conveniently ignored the dictates of the Church and dabbled in these dark arts.

The primary effect accomplished with this Mode is the summoning of demonic entities or nature spirits (sometimes know as elementals). Spells of this kind transport a creature from their native Hell or spirit realm to Earth. The type of creature summoned is up to the summoner to decide, though all Orders have some restrictions regarding the type of entities that may be called upon. The level at which a Summon spell is cast determines the level of the entity that will be summoned. For example, using a level 3 spell to summon a forest spirit will yield a spirit with an overall Ability Level of +3.

If a spellcaster wants to summon a being for which no specific statistics are provided, the GM will determine the statistics based on those of a similar creature. For example, the summoned spirit of a dead knight would have attributes similar to those of a living Knight of similar level. Summoned creatures may have additional special abilities such as flight or immunity to normal weapons, as determined by the GM. As with all summoned entities, the Ability Level of the being is equal to the spell level.

A spell of summoning requires a number of rounds to cast equal to the Spell Level. The basic duration of a summoned creature's servitude is



one minute, plus one minute for every -1 to his casting roll the summoner is willing to take. The summoner can extend the duration indefinitely, however, provided he has the magical means to do so. Certain enchanted items can be used to imprison summoned creatures in gemstones, crystal orbs, brass lanterns, and so forth. If the being is not restrained, it vanishes instantly when the spell ends.

If the Summoning spell is cast correctly, the intended subject will appear at once. Constrained by the forces of the spell, it will be unable to do harm to the caster or move without his permission. In return for the caster's promise to release it, the creature can be compelled to answer up to three questions, or to perform a single, specified service. This it will do, to the best of its capabilities. Summoned beings can only provide useful answers to questions they are likely to know. For example, the spirit of a murder victim may be able to name its killer, assuming it saw the murderer. The GM is the final judge of what the summoned being does and does not know.

If the spellcaster fails to cast a Summoning spell properly, (getting a result of Failure on the *Omni Table*) the intended creature still appears but will be unrestrained by the forces of the spell. Malign entities may seek to slay the caster and his associates, while chaotic nature spirits may engage in acts of wanton destruction. Diabolical beings may avenge themselves by more subtle means, such as a curse of ill-fortune, lingering disease, etc. Even normally benign creatures may resent being summoned, and if so will make their displeasure known.

In the event of a Spell Mishap, an inter-dimensional rift is created. This is the most terrifying prospect for any that consort with spirits and demons. Legions of horrifying creatures might find their way through the rift, laying waste to everything in sight. Or, the caster may be hurled across far dimensions and driven insane by the mad geometry of elder worlds. A mishap while employing

Summon is always extraordinarily bad. This spatial rift will last for one minute per Spell Level. Just exactly what happens during this period is left to the twisted imagination of the Gamemaster.

### REVERSE: BANISH

Cast in reverse, this Mode returns a summoned creature to its home dimension. Attempts to Banish are subject to a Degree of Difficulty penalty equal to the creature's overall Ability Level. Like Summon, Banish spells take 1 round per level to cast. A spellcaster can attempt to banish entities that she cannot summon, but she takes a substitution penalty when doing so, determined by the GM (usually -5 to -10).



## TRANSFORM

### Transform in Brief:

**Level Required:** 3-25+ (see table below)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 1 minute (-1 to casting roll for each extra minute of duration)

Transform spells turn one type of person or thing into another by changing the subject's shape and form. The level of the spell required to achieve the desired transformation depends on how great the difference is between the subject's original form and the form into which it will be changed. For example, changing an insect into another type of insect is a lot easier than changing that dragon into an insect. Despite this obvious complexity and the power involved, stories persist about witches turning people into newts.

The following examples can be used to determine the required level of a Transform spell. Note that these modifiers are cumulative, and should be applied to determine the minimum spell level

needed to affect a transformation:

- ✱ Trivial Change (same species and sex; for inanimate objects, same material and form but enhanced appearance or minor change in size): Level 3.
- ✱ Minor Change (same species but different facial features; same material but different form): Level 5.
- ✱ Major Change (human to near human race, small unnatural alteration such as feathers rather than hair; two objects of similar but different material and form, such as lead sinker to iron knife): Level 10.
- ✱ Radical Change (two completely different species; two completely different materials like wood to stone): Level 15.
- ✱ Total Change (Animate to Inanimate, such as human to stone): Level 20.
- ✱ Increased ability level: +1 levels per ability rating of new form.

Transformation can only be used to affect a single subject at a time. Animate subjects changed by a Transform spell retain their mental faculties while acquiring such physical abilities as their new forms will allow. The Ability Level of the new form is determined by the number of extra spell levels added by the spellcaster.

In order to take the form of a creature, the magician must add enough spell levels to match the minimum Ability Level of that creature type. Spell levels cannot be added to increase a creature's Ability Level beyond its normal maximum (if it has one).

If the subject was injured before transformation, it remains injured after being changed. Cast as a counterspell, this Mode can be used to return transformed subjects to their original forms. Each

Magical Order has guidelines for what sort of metamorphosis it can accomplish. Regardless of Order, magicians can not take the form of extra-dimensional entities with this Mode.

## WARD

### Ward in Brief:

**Base Level:** 10

**Range:** Touch

**Area:** -1 to casting roll per foot of radius

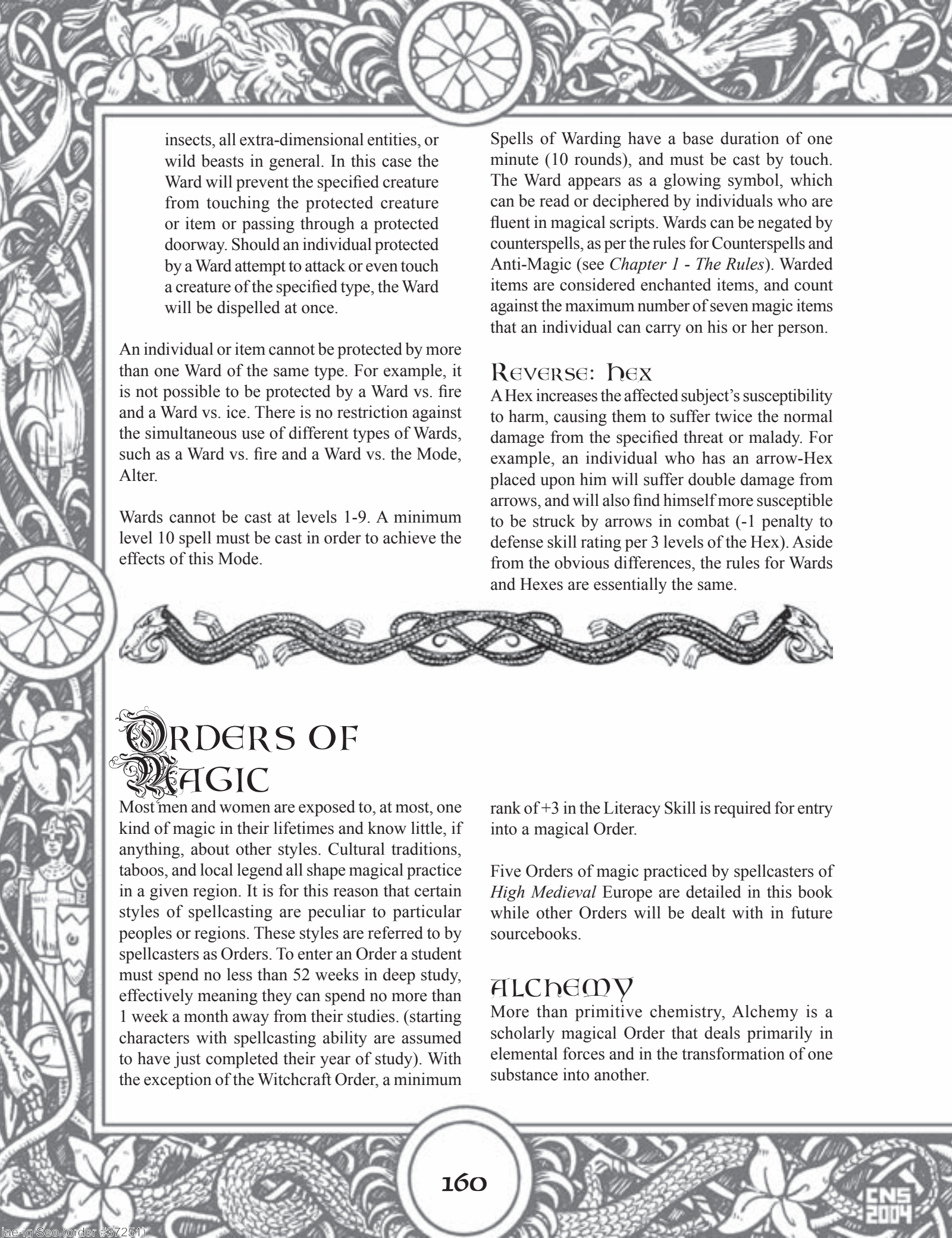
**Duration:** 1 minute (-1 to casting roll for each extra minute of duration)

Wards are defensive spells that can be used to protect against certain specified threats or maladies. Wards can be cast upon living creatures or inanimate objects such as doors, locks, shields, etc. In either case, the Ward only confers protection to the creature or item it is cast upon. For example, a shield that has been Warded against fire will make the shield immune to flame, but not the bearer himself.

Wards can be used to confer protection from any one of the following types of threats or maladies:

- ✱ A single type of weapon such as longswords, shortswords, or greatswords; not short blades or weapons in general.
- ✱ A single element or elemental effect such as fire, ice, lightning, cold, or heat; not all elements.
- ✱ A single type of thieving skill such as legerdemain or disable device; not thieves or assassins in general.
- ✱ Any single type of Mode (regardless of Order) such as Alter, Transform, or Attack; not Magic in general. It's not possible to cast a Ward against Wards, though it is possible to cast a Ward against Hexes.
- ✱ Any single type of creature such as mosquitoes, demons, or wolves; not all





insects, all extra-dimensional entities, or wild beasts in general. In this case the Ward will prevent the specified creature from touching the protected creature or item or passing through a protected doorway. Should an individual protected by a Ward attempt to attack or even touch a creature of the specified type, the Ward will be dispelled at once.

An individual or item cannot be protected by more than one Ward of the same type. For example, it is not possible to be protected by a Ward vs. fire and a Ward vs. ice. There is no restriction against the simultaneous use of different types of Wards, such as a Ward vs. fire and a Ward vs. the Mode, Alter.

Wards cannot be cast at levels 1-9. A minimum level 10 spell must be cast in order to achieve the effects of this Mode.

Spells of Warding have a base duration of one minute (10 rounds), and must be cast by touch. The Ward appears as a glowing symbol, which can be read or deciphered by individuals who are fluent in magical scripts. Wards can be negated by counterspells, as per the rules for Counterspells and Anti-Magic (see *Chapter 1 - The Rules*). Warded items are considered enchanted items, and count against the maximum number of seven magic items that an individual can carry on his or her person.

### REVERSE: hex

A Hex increases the affected subject's susceptibility to harm, causing them to suffer twice the normal damage from the specified threat or malady. For example, an individual who has an arrow-Hex placed upon him will suffer double damage from arrows, and will also find himself more susceptible to be struck by arrows in combat (-1 penalty to defense skill rating per 3 levels of the Hex). Aside from the obvious differences, the rules for Wards and Hexes are essentially the same.



## ORDERS OF MAGIC

Most men and women are exposed to, at most, one kind of magic in their lifetimes and know little, if anything, about other styles. Cultural traditions, taboos, and local legend all shape magical practice in a given region. It is for this reason that certain styles of spellcasting are peculiar to particular peoples or regions. These styles are referred to by spellcasters as Orders. To enter an Order a student must spend no less than 52 weeks in deep study, effectively meaning they can spend no more than 1 week a month away from their studies. (starting characters with spellcasting ability are assumed to have just completed their year of study). With the exception of the Witchcraft Order, a minimum

rank of +3 in the Literacy Skill is required for entry into a magical Order.

Five Orders of magic practiced by spellcasters of *High Medieval* Europe are detailed in this book while other Orders will be dealt with in future sourcebooks.

### ALCHEMY

More than primitive chemistry, Alchemy is a scholarly magical Order that deals primarily in elemental forces and in the transformation of one substance into another.

### NEOPLATONIC TRADITION

A philosophical movement founded by the Greek philosopher Plato, it became the single most influential philosophy in the history of the Western world. It heavily influenced Pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religions in addition to forming the basis of the Western mystic traditions for two thousand years. The basis for Platonic philosophy is that human senses perceive reflections or shadows of the ultimate truth of the realm of spirit or Being. These truths were called Forms or Ideas, and Plato taught they could be directly perceived with special training. While Plato himself had no interest in magic or mysticism, others with such interests readily incorporated his teaching into their traditions.

### DEMONOLOGY

Universally feared and reviled, practitioners of the Dark Order draw their power from the forces of Darkness. Demonologists are actively hunted by the Church although many a churchman can be found consorting with Dark powers.

### OCCULTISM

Whenever the Church encounters magical teachings that are not antithetical to Church doctrine, they are often not only tolerated, but studied in depth by pious scholars and priests alike. The Occultism Order is essentially the sum total of ancient and pagan magical traditions that the Church has found useful. The practitioner calls upon their faith in God for power and deals primarily in the areas of agricultural magic, healing magic, and various charms and talismans. Characters that wish to enter this Order must have a Piety score of +3 or greater.

### SORCERY

Sorcery is the dispassionate and scholarly study of magic for magic's sake. Removed from the religious trapping of other orders like Theurgy and Occultism, the Sorcerer seeks nothing more than magical power. Sorcerers gain their powers by manipulating the flux of arcane energy that permeates everything.

### WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft is the folk magic of the rural population, tracing its heritage to the pagan faiths of old. It is openly accepted in some areas (like the Highlands of Scotland and Wales) and feared and distrusted in others. For the most part it is tolerated by the Church so long as its practitioners keep to themselves and do not flaunt their talents. That said however, the Holy Inquisition has begun investigating Witchcraft more deeply and only time will tell whether they start actively suppressing this practice. Unlike the other Orders, practitioners of Witchcraft do not require any ranks in the Literacy skill.

### ORDER SUMMARY

Several special terms are used in the following Order descriptions. These terms are defined below:

**Not available:** Some Modes are not available or not practical for certain Orders.

**Bonuses:** Most Orders have a certain affinity for some Modes. This bonus is applied when casting a spell of the stated type.

**Penalties:** This penalty is applied when casting a spell of the appropriate Mode.

**Effects:** Certain Modes have very definite effects achievable with certain Orders. These are detailed here.



## ALCHEMY

More than primitive chemistry or turning lead into gold, alchemy is an important part of the Western occult tradition that concerns itself with the idea of transmutation. In alchemy, all material things come out of some common substance or combination of substances which follow patterns laid out by nature. These substances are transformed over time to their ultimate form given the right circumstances and quantities. For example, all metals start out as a fusion of two principles, mercury and sulphur, but with the right pressure, heat and time, metals can become gold, their ultimate form. Most of the time these transformations will not happen unless nature is assisted, because of incorrect proportions or other factors, thus the alchemist steps in to help nature in reaching its ultimate form.

This is done by separating a substance into its component parts, purifying them, and recombining them in the correct proportions and under the proper conditions to effect transformation. This will turn base metals such as lead or iron into gold or silver. When done with healing herbs, powerful medicines are produced. Alchemy is not merely concerned with turning lead into gold, but transforming all forms of matter into their ultimate state of being. When this process is carried out on the human mind, spiritual enlightenment is the result, and hence the goal of the alchemist is met.

The change of matter through these processes is the lesser work of alchemy as it requires each substance to go through a number of long and slow processes. The great work of alchemy is finding a means to do the same thing quickly and easily by simple contact. Hence, the search for the Philosopher's Stone or the Stone of the Wise, which can transmute base metals to gold with only a few minutes of contact.

Alchemy was created through the same fusion of cultures in Egypt that created the Hermetic tradition as used in the Sorcery Order. Egyptian religious

reverence for the smithing arts was combined with the quest of Greek philosophers for one substance that would explain all of creation, forming a fusion of the two that used craft to find the ultimate forms of creation. At the time of alchemy's birth Stoicism was the dominant Greek philosophy and imbedded in it was the idea of semi-material pneuma or breath that shaped all things, helping form the basics of alchemy. Alchemy remained a common practice amongst mystics for many centuries, with most of its practitioners remaining in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Byzantium, and Persia.

In the middle of the fifth century, with the rise of the Christian church, many Pagans fled the Roman Empire to avoid persecution. Some of these ended up in the Persian Empire where they taught Greek philosophy and alchemy. The Arabs conquered the Persian Empire in the eighth century and the practice of alchemy continued on with the Arabs putting much of the alchemical lore of their new subjects to their own use, starting the long tradition of Saracen.

Arab alchemists greatly developed and refined the alchemical processes, introducing a wide variety of advancements to alchemical study. Jabir ibn Hayyan (died 808 AD), the most influential of the medieval alchemists, set the standard for furnaces used in alchemical studies of the 13th century and was the first writer to describe the preparation of nitric acid. In terms of theory, he created the mercury-sulphur theory of metals, proposing that all metals were made from the fusion of sulphur (the principle of dryness and flammability) and mercury (the principle of moisture and volatility). Arab alchemists also greatly advanced the use of alchemy in medicine, specifically through the works of Abu-Bakr Muhammad ibn-Zakariya al-Razi who gained international renown as a healer and alchemist.

During the Roman Empire and the early medieval period, Western Europe had little knowledge of alchemy due to its lack of contact with areas such as Persia and Egypt where such studies continued.

In 1144 Robert of Chester made the first translation of an Arabic alchemical text into Latin, allowing European scholars to learn of the alchemical lore scholars in the East had been studying for centuries. The growth of alchemy from this starting point was slow due to the obscurity of alchemical literature and the great expense involved in undertaking alchemical experimentation. The components used and the equipment required were often very rare and often had to be imported. Despite these limitations an alchemical subculture has developed in Europe and within a century of Robert of Chester's translation the first purely European alchemical works are beginning to be circulated among the scholars and universities of the West.

## PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

Alchemists use all types of chemical and herbal substances in their spellcasting efforts (see Limitations below). For more complex transformations and experiments, a full lab is required.

## ADVANTAGES

Alchemists receive a +1 bonus to spell casting rolls when using alchemical substances they have prepared themselves.

## LIMITATIONS

An Alchemist must have access to various chemical and herbal material components. Without such substances, an Alchemist may not cast any spells at all.

## ENCHANTMENT

Common enchanted items created with Alchemy include:

- ✱ Potions that cure wounds or disease (Heal);
- ✱ Reagents that transform other metals into gold (Transform).

## ALCHEMY MODES

**Not available:** Conjure, Illusion, Move, Reveal, Summon

**Bonuses:** Heal +2, Transform +3

**Penalties:** Influence: -2

**Alter Effects:** Alchemists can only Alter naturally occurring, inanimate objects such as metals, stone, etc.

**Transform Effects:** Alchemists can only Transform creatures or objects into naturally occurring, inanimate objects such as metals, stone, water, etc.

## SAMPLE ALCHEMY SPELLS

### Healing Balm (Heal)

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** Self or Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (12th level, +2 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** By the application of common herbs or other alchemical ingredients, the alchemist can use this enchantment to heal wounds (up to 12hp of damage). The spell's natural components are placed directly on the wound.

### Quicksilver Globes (Defend)

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** Self

**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (8th level)

**Description:** By taking a handful of mercury and tossing it into the air, the alchemist can use this spell to create a number of mercury bubbles that hover in the air. These magical spheres will follow the alchemist wherever he goes, and will move to intercept incoming attacks, bursting as they absorb the blow. The globes can sustain a total of 16hp damage before they are all expended. As the globes are destroyed, they vaporise and no further effect occurs.

### Shards of the Northwind (Attack)

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (12th level)

**Description:** This spell can be used to create alchemical shards of ice (variations exist that use stone or metal as the main component) which may be hurled at a target, inflicting 12hp of damage. To cast the enchantment, the alchemist must have a small amount of the chosen element in hand.

#### **Shield of Vapors (Ward)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -14 (10th level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** With this spell the alchemist can protect a designated subject from the effects of the elemental forces of Air. This spell will protect the target from the effects of storms, winds or vapors. To cast this spell, the alchemist requires a small amount of dust which he blows off of his hand.

#### **Earthen Ward (Ward)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -14 (10th level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** With this spell the alchemist can protect a designated subject from the effects of the elemental forces of Earth. This spell will protect the target from stone, earth, or mud in any form. This also includes protection from all minerals, metals and gems that are still in their natural state. Refined or smelted items, such as most weapons, are not protected against. To cast this spell, the alchemist requires a small amount of dirt or rock dust, tossed into the air.

#### **Sunshield (Ward)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -14 (10th level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** With this spell the alchemist can protect a designated subject from the effects of the elemental forces of Fire. This spell will protect the target from all forms of heat, and flame. To cast

this spell, the alchemist requires a small quantity of ashes, tossed into the air.

#### **Elemental Ward (water) (Ward)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -14 (10th level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** With this spell the alchemist can protect a designated subject from the effects of the elemental forces of Water. This spell will protect the subject from all forms of water by ensuring that water cannot touch him, including rain, ice and steam. This ward does not protect the subject from the associated temperatures. A warded character will still take damage from heat if subjected to steam and may still be frozen in ice. It also provides no protection against drowning. To cast this spell, the alchemist requires a small amount of water, tossed into the air.

#### **Petrification (Transform)**

**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -21 (20th level, -1 for extra duration)

**Description:** Using this spell, an alchemist can turn a living being or creature into stone. The spell may be resisted with a Constitution check at -7 (half the spell level, rounded down). On a partial resistance the spell still turns the victim to stone, but spell duration is reduced by half. To cast this spell, the alchemist requires a small amount of water, tossed into the air. A small stone of exceptional hardness is required to cast this spell. It crumbles to dust after the spell expires.

#### **Pyroclasm (Attack)**

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** 50 feet

**Area of Effect:** 5 foot radius sphere

**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (10th level, -5 for area of effect, +3 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** This spell creates a stream of coruscating flames that will inflict 10hp damage to

all in the area of effect and ignite all combustible materials. Victims caught in the area of effect may continue to take an additional 3 hp of damage per round from burning clothing, hair, and/or other items until they spend at least one round to extinguish the flames. Items of paper or light cloth (such as books and normal clothing) will almost certainly be set aflame, while other items may get a roll at the GM's discretion. Individuals targeted by this spell may attempt to evade or dodge as usual, but at a -5 penalty (in addition to the normal penalty of the caster's Attack rating) due to the spell's area of effect. An alchemist requires an existing flame, such as a torch or lantern, nearby to cast this spell.

**Wall of Stone (Defend)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 0

**Area of Effect:** 9 feet high, 20 feet wide

**Casting Modifiers:** -22 (15th level, -10 for increased area [14x14 area], +3 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** This spell allows an alchemist to manipulate elemental forces from deep inside the ground and raise a wall of solid stone. This barrier will remain standing until it has taken 30 points of damage. The wall of stone has an armor rating of 5. In order to cast this spell, the alchemist requires a quantity of minerals that are present in the region which he scatters on the ground where the spell is to be cast.

## **D**EMONOLOGY

Demonology is, as its name suggests, the study of demons. More to the point, Demonology is a form of magic that works through the summoning and commanding of the forces of Darkness. The Church regards all Demonology as the epitome of evil and sinfulness and members of this Order are invariably hunted by the forces of the Holy Inquisition.

Demonologists have two types of spellcasting available to them: simple spells and rituals. Simple

spells are cast just as they are by magicians of other Orders. These generally involve the Alter, Attack and Defend Modes. These types of spells could see tiny implings flying through the air and attacking the foes of a Demonologist (attack) or the transforming of the caster into a foul creature from Hell (alter). Of greater interest to most Demonologists is the primary focus of the Order, that is the summoning and control of demonic forces.

Through the use of rituals, Demonologists strive to gain power through the enslavement of, or cooperation with, various entities from Hell. Rituals are essentially complex spells and, as such, they commonly take anywhere from a few minutes to several hours to successfully complete. The most complex, and most dangerous, can take days and often require very rare, expensive or morally corrupt components that are consumed with the casting. Demons respond to sacrifices.

All rituals invoke one or more (usually more) spirits by name. These names are outlandish, and nothing like human names. Some examples are Oymelor, Demefin, Lamair, Masair, Tentetos, and Tatomofon. As the Demonologist must recite these names when invoking the spirits (see below) it is a good idea to come up with the names for each ritual. The number of names is independent of the power of the ritual, because the power of the demons varies.

Individual spirits also have symbols, which are worked into the rituals. These symbols often look like slightly modified letters, but some are much more complex. These, along with the magic circle, must be drawn on the scroll that the magician uses to invoke the spirits, so it adds to roleplaying if the player designs some for each ritual.

## **PHYSICAL COMPONENTS**

Demonologists often require exotic and rare components to cast their rituals. This is especially true for Summonings and can range from herbs and powders to human sacrifice.

## ADVANTAGES

Demonologists gain a +1 to their *Omni Table* rolls when dealing with a Demon that they are familiar with from past experience (i.e., that they have successfully summoned and controlled more than five times). They also receive a +2 bonus to rolls when the requested service from the summoned Demon closely aligns with its interests.

## LIMITATIONS

Aside from the obvious limitations that a demonologist encounters as a result of being universally feared and despised, they practice what is undeniably the most dangerous form of magic imaginable. Even with a successful casting of a summoning ritual, most demons are malevolent beings who will twist their commands to their own ends when possible.

## ENCHANTMENT

Common enchanted items created with Necromancy include:

- ☼ Talismans that ward away or control demons (Ward, Influence).

## DEMONOLGY MODES

**Not available:** Conjure, Heal, Illusion, Transform

**Bonuses:** Summon +3

**Penalties:** Move -3

**Alter Effects:** Demonologists can only use the Alter mode on themselves and all alterations have the side effect of molding the Demonologist's features into a demonic form. For example, any Alter Mode spell could find the caster's skin taking a reddish or black hue, horns sprouting from his forehead or other similar effects.

**Summon Effects:** A Demonologist may summon any demonic entity for which he knows its name, symbol and summoning ritual.

- ☼ Weapons or items enchanted with unholy strength (Attack).

## SAMPLE DEMONOLGY SPELLS

### Black Breath (Attack)

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (10th level)

**Description:** Noxious black vapors pour from the demonologist's mouth, enveloping the target in a suffocating cloud. The black vapor does 10hp of damage. By taking an additional -5 penalty to his spell roll, the demonologist may direct the breath through a tiny opening such as a keyhole or the crack below a door.

### Circle of Summoning (Alter)

**Duration:** 4 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Time:** 50 rounds (5 minutes)

**Casting Modifiers:** -15 (12th level, -3 for extra duration)

**Description:** While it is certainly possible to summon beings without the benefit of a Circle of Summoning, thereby relying on the Pact alone for safety, wise demonologists will take the time to prepare a circle first, to give themselves an extra margin for error. A circle of summoning must be seven paces across and inscribed clearly with dark ink or sprinkled blood. Initially creating the circle requires a number of hours equal to the Ability Level of the demon summoned. Once the circle is complete and ready, it gives +4 to the summoning roll, although it must be used immediately. Many demonologists will have such a circle inscribed into their floor and enchanted.

### Infernal Communion (Reveal)

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (12th level)

**Description:** By communing with the infernal realm, a demonologist may learn mysteries and uncover secret knowledge. The player may ask a question such as, "Where have the gate keys

been hidden in this room?" or "What is the secret that is being hidden by pastor Jonathan?" and then roll on the *Omni Table* using the Perception rating of the spell as a positive modifier (+12). The degree of difficulty (1-20) is determined by the GM, based on how well concealed or esoteric the information is.

### **Command the Beast (Summon)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Casting Time:** 20 rounds

**Casting Modifiers:**

-24 (20th level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** This spell is often employed by a Demonologist to call forth the mighty beings of Hell and force them to do his bidding. These creatures have an Ability Rating of +20 and most Attribute ratings are +10 or more (per GM's ruling). This spell is very dangerous and a Mishap often ends with the caster's death...or worse.



### **Dark Coercion (Influence)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 5 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (8th level)

**Description:** By locking eyes upon the intended victim of this spell, the demonologist reaches beyond the physical realm to coerce the subject's soul into obedience. If the spell is successful, the caster may force the victim to obey any single, relatively simple instruction, such as "Guard this door" or "Attack your companions". The intended target is allowed a Will check (at -4) to avoid the caster's gaze and its intended effect. On a partial success the victim is still coerced, but if given

a command that would go against her deepest beliefs she will break free of the spell. On a mishap resistance roll, the subject will not even remember being coerced, recalling only a mysterious gap or blank spot in her memory.

### **Darkening Veil (Ward)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Area of Effect:** 10 foot radius sphere

**Casting Modifiers:** -24 (10th level, -10 for area of effect, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** Darkening Veil creates a swirling dome of black mists twenty feet across. Spiritforms and otherworldly creatures are unable to pierce the spectral substance, which is a solid wall to them. Living beings who approach or pass through the Veil will feel a sense of creeping doom, as of death being close at hand. Note that certain magic items such as focuses and soulbound items will not be able to pass the barrier as they are repositories for spirits.

### **Demonic Swarm (Attack)**

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -20 (15th level, -5 for area of effect)

**Description:** When this spell is cast, a momentary stream of demonic force is unleashed, allowing hundreds of 1-inch sub-demons to streak out and attack anything in the area of effect, causing a total of 15hp damage. Those unfortunate enough to be subjected may attempt to dodge, but at -5 due to the area of effect (in addition to the normal penalty of the caster's Attack rating). Once the sub-demons have inflicted their damage, they fade back to nothingness.



**Ebon Armor (Alter)****Duration:** 2 Minutes**Range:** Self or Touch**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (9th level, -1 for extra duration)**Description:** This incantation causes the demonologist's skin to erupt with tough scales and bone spurs, and envelops him in a fearsome looking suit of black armor. The armor has a PR of 3 but is weightless. NPCs suffer a -3 to their morale when facing a foe in Ebon Armor.**Energy Drain (Alter)****Duration:** 1 minute**Range:** Touch**Casting Modifiers:** -15 (15th level)**Description:** By touching a hand to the target, the demonologist drains living energy from the subject to himself, inflicting 5hp damage and adding 5hp to his own total. The damage done is treated as normal, but the hit points added to the demonologist are stolen energy, and will fade at the end of the spell's duration. Any damage the demonologist takes will be subtracted from these phantom hit points first before his own body sustains damage.**Secret Eyes (Reveal)****Duration:** 5 minutes**Range:** 1 mile**Casting Modifiers:** -5 (1st level, -4 for extra duration)**Description:** This spell was devised to spy on remote locations. The demonologist must plant a small object, a focus for the spell, at the location he wishes to spy upon before it may be used. At any later time, he may cast his spell and a small invisible imp will streak to the focus. The demonologist may observe the area through the eyes of his minion. There is no real limit to the number of focuses that a demonologist may have in existence at one time, but if one is discovered and destroyed or moved, it may no longer be used.**Shred the Soul (Attack)****Duration:** 6 rounds (36 seconds)**Range:** Touch**Casting Modifiers:** -6 (6th level)**Description:** An effective, if short-ranged, spell of attack, Shred the Soul is one of the most feared spells available to a demonologist. When used, the hand of the caster takes on a pale, deathly hue and wicked, curved claws sprout from the finger tips, becoming a most alarming weapon. The demonologist may then push his demonic hand into a victim as though the body were made of clay, causing terrible agony and eventually death. The victim suffers 6hp of damage per round until he frees himself from the necromancer's grasp or the spell expires. This spell is often used for ritual sacrifices.**Wall of Souls (Defend)****Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)**Range:** 10 feet**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (6th level, -4 for area)**Description:** By calling upon the damned souls of the dead, the demonologist can command them to form a howling, spectral barrier 10 feet wide and 6 feet high. Within the barrier the faces of the dead can be seen moving about, howling their eternal agony. Nothing living can pass through the barrier, although unliving matter can pass through with ease. The barrier has an armor rating of 2 and can be broken by inflicting 12hp damage.**Unlife (Summon)****Duration:** 10 minutes**Casting Time:** 1 round**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (1st level, -9 for extra duration)**Description:** By touching any corpse, the demonologist calls forth a damned soul to reanimate it in a mockery of life. The undead thing created is mindless, and will obey simple commands for the duration of the spell. It has an overall ability level of +1, and its attributes are the same as a living version of the corpse, with the following modifiers: +3 to Strength and Constitution, -2 to Speed and Dexterity. Intelligence, Charisma, and

Will are not applicable. More potent undead can be created by increasing the level of the spell. If a focus is used, or a soul-binding item bound within the body (usually the skull) then the spell persists until the focus is destroyed.

## OCULTISM

The relationship between the Christian religion and the occult is not as distant as many think. Shortly after his death, rumors were rampant that Jesus of Nazareth was a magician and not a prophet. The many magical acts such as healing, transforming food, and divinations recorded in the Bible as being performed by Jesus can be seen as supporting this idea. While the church claims these divine events are different from other forms of magic, many occult traditions claim an equally divine source for their magic.

The Roman Empire looked upon most magic with suspicion and regularly prosecuted those who practiced it. The only types of magic the Roman Empire approved of were medical, weather, and natural magics, though other types of magicians were allowed to practice their arts as long as they did not try to enter politics. This meant there was a large amount of magical information within the Roman Empire, much of it dating back to the Greeks. As the Roman Empire declined into the Dark Ages, the Church was able to salvage quite a lot of its scholarly achievements. When the church came across magical texts they absorbed those that did not overtly reference non-Christian spirits or deities. Those works that did reference non-Christian entities were either destroyed or rewritten into a more Christian paradigm. Thus a great portion of older magical traditions were absorbed into the church in the hopes of absorbing the power, knowledge, and followers of those traditions, consolidating the church's hold on Europe. Apollo became St. Apollinaris and Woden became St. Swifthold.

This resulted in the emergence of a Christian magical tradition in Western cultures that was

completely acceptable to the church and practiced in all levels of society. This tradition included astrology, agricultural magic, healing magic, and a large assortment of charms for luck, protection, and success.

To a smaller degree, secreted deep within the halls of the Inquisition, goetic magic, or the summoning of demons, is still being studied, adapted for the Christian mindset using the Christian metaphysical universe. This tradition is spread through the Christian church via a secret network of monks, priests, and inquisitors, the better to fight the powers of Darkness with. In 1250 Christian magic, seen as blessings and benefices from God, is a regular part of life and readily accepted in most areas.

## PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

Spells of the Occult Order require a verbal component, often a prayer or chant. They also require simple gestures and signs to communicate with the spirits who do not comprehend spoken language. Many Occult spells also require a focus, which often takes the form of a cross or holy relic and is rarely consumed in the spell casting.

## ADVANTAGES

Occult magic is especially attuned to holy places. The GM may award a casting roll bonus of +0 to +5, depending on the sanctity of the environment of the spellcaster. (cathedral, parish church, Vatican, etc.)

## LIMITATIONS

Occult practitioners suffer a casting roll penalty of -1 to -5 while using their magic in particularly unholy surroundings. (unsanctified graveyards, sites of massacres or battles, etc.)

## ENCHANTMENT

Most Occult practitioners do not practice enchantment. Those that do sometimes create:

## OCCULTISM MODES

**Not available:** Summon

**Bonuses:** Reveal +2, Heal +2

**Penalties:** Attack -2, Transform -2

**Alter Effects:** Occult magic can alter only physical properties.

**Attack Effects:** Most attack effects used by Occult practitioners will take the form of cleansing fire or heavenly light. Occasionally these are also accompanied by thunder or wind.

**Transform Effects:** An Occult practitioner can transform creatures into natural objects such as trees or stones. Some may cast this type of spell on themselves to better commune with their environment. Occult Practitioners can also transform one physical material into another; turning water to wine and vice versa, for instance. Occult practitioners are loathe to use their transformative magic in a way that harms others.

- ✿ Holy symbols. Crosses and rosary beads are often used as focuses for wards.
- ✿ Enchanted swords and other weapons for the defense of their lands and people (Alter, Attack).

## SAMPLE OCCULT SPELLS

### Conjure Water (Conjure)

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -6 (2nd level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** This spell conjures enough water to sustain two average-sized adults for one day. A suitable receptacle must be provided to hold the water until it is consumed, and it must be consumed before the spell expires, after which the water evaporates swiftly. A variation of this spell summons a like quantity of wine.

### Heavenly Light (Illusion)

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -13 (1st level base, +12 levels for Magnitude)

**Description:** With this spell, the invoker beseeches God to shine a great holy light down upon the believers (or non-believers) and fill them with grace and power. A golden glow emanates from the caster, covering an area as large as a house and as bright as the morning sun. Believers will be filled with a great sense of peace and understanding, while outsiders may feel cowed or threatened by the massive radiance.

### Laying on of Hands (Heal)

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (10th level, +2 mode bonus)

**Description:** By touching the subject and invoking the power of God, an invoker can heal up to 10 hp of damage with this simple spell. Wounds will close, bones will knit and infection will be cleansed.

### Light of the Word (Influence)

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 5 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (10th level)

**Description:** Christian priests sometimes use this spell while traveling to simplify dealing with non-believers. The target may resist with a Will check at -5. On a partial success, they will generally agree with the priest on matters of religion, but will not do anything out of their nature. On a failure, they will be complete believers in God for the duration of the spell, as far as their knowledge of Christian dogma allows, and will obey simple commands given to them. On a mishap they will continue to believe in Christianity, even after the spell's duration, and as long as they are not exposed to anything outside this teaching, they may remain that way until the magic is dispelled or countered in some way.

**Shield of Faith (Defend)****Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)**Range:** Self or Touch**Casting Modifiers:** -9 (9th level)**Description:** An invoker can call on the protection of God when he is faced with danger. The Shield of Faith surrounds the caster with a glowing aura and will absorb 18 hp of damage before dissipating.**Sword of Michael (Attack)****Duration:** Instant**Range:** 50 feet**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (10th level, -2 mode penalty)**Description:** With this simple spell, a Priest can summon a brilliant shaft of blazing energy which strikes a single target within 50 feet, doing 10 hp of damage.**Wisdom of Solomon (Reveal)****Duration:** 1 minute**Range:** 50 feet**Casting Time:** 2 rounds**Casting Modifiers:** -Variable (see below) +2 due to Order modifier.**Description:** By inscribing an ancient symbol in the air above a page or other written surface, the Wisdom of Solomon will render any form of writings or inscriptions clear and intelligible to the caster. The spell functions no matter what language the original inscriptions were written in, or what efforts may have been used to obscure the message (codes, obscured letters, etc.) The level of difficulty entailed in the translation is used as a spell penalty in this case. For foreign languages, the penalty is -1 to -10, depending on the age and/or relative obscurity of the writings. For codes and cyphers, subtract the skill level of whoever devised the encryption. Obscured writings may cause a penalty of -1 to -20 to be applied, depending on how badly distorted, faded, or smudged the original inscriptions are. All penalties are cumulative.**Bountiful Showers (Conjure)****Duration:** 15 minutes**Range:** 50 feet**Casting Modifiers:** -15 (10th level, )**Description:** This simple spell brings into being a small rain cloud that remains for a quarter-hour and thoroughly soaks the ground within its radius. This soaking will not make the ground exceedingly muddy or treacherous to walk on. Normally used to ensure rainfall for a crop, it will also put out small natural fires of less than two feet in diameter. Anything larger will be reduced in size but the force of the rain is not sufficient to quench it. This spell may only be used out of doors and will not create water in a desert or during a harsh drought.

## SORCERY

The world is drenched in waves of fluctuating magical power, known to magicians and spell casters as Arcane Energy. During ancient times, certain magicians developed incantations, gestures, and rituals that could tap into the flow of this Energy. These procedures, known as Sorcery, have survived many ordeals and still exist today. Though many of the ancient arts are long forgotten, some remain in practice and yet others await rediscovery.

In its natural state, Arcane Energy is an ambiguous, flowing force with no discernible positive or negative characteristics. When directed by a skilled magician, this Energy can take on a nearly limitless range of forms (excluding elemental forces, which cannot be replicated by Sorcery).

Arcane Energy can be used to surround the caster with a shimmering aura of protective energy; to conjure simple shapes such as ropes, swords, or walls of force; or to manipulate the physical world with grasping tendrils or "magic hands". Arcane Energy can also manifest as destructive beams of force or the intricate conglomerations of swirling light and shadow used to create illusions.

Compared to more practical arts such as Witchcraft or Occultism, Sorcery is a very complex magic

Order to learn and use. As a result, its use is limited to those who have access to great libraries or other storehouses of ancient knowledge.

## PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

Sorcerers must gesture with both hands and speak arcane phrases aloud in order to cast spells. A device such as a wand or staff is sometimes used to direct spells, but is not required.

## ADVANTAGES

**Specialization:** The Sorcerer may pick one Mode to represent the type of spells he regularly practice. This Mode receives a bonus of +3 to its overall rating.

## LIMITATIONS

**Obvious:** Spells of sorcery are always accompanied by glowing lights, an electrical charge in the air, and a strange humming sound. Anyone nearby that makes a successful PER roll with a +5 bonus will be aware that magic is being used and will be able to discern its source. Because of this, subtle illusions that are meant to appear “real” are very difficult to accomplish with this Order. Likewise, anyone affected by a spell of Wizardry (magical influence, protection) will have a noticeable glow and shimmer about them.

## ENCHANTMENT

Common enchanted items created with Wizardry include:

- ✱ Wands and staves that store defensive magic. (Attack, Defend)
- ✱ Rings that levitate the wearer on a pillar of arcane force. (Move)
- ✱ Weapons empowered with destructive arcane energies. (Attack)
- ✱ Globes, glass spheres, and mirrors that produce entertaining illusory scenes. (Illusion)

## SORCERY MODES

**Not available:** Transform, Summon

**Bonuses:** +3 to one Mode chosen by the magician.

**Penalties:** None.

**Alter Effects:** Only simple physical qualities can be altered with Wizardry through the careful application of Arcane Energy. For example, a character’s strength might be altered by applying a field of Arcane Energy that helps the character lift, push, and swing. Or a sword’s damage rating might be altered by adding a nimbus of destructive energy to the blade. Subtle alterations (like increasing a character’s memory or charm, for example) are not possible with this Order.

## SAMPLE SORCERY SPELLS

### Animated Warrior (Move)

**Duration:** 5 rounds

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -9 (3rd level spell, -3 for area of effect, -3 for complexity)

**Description:** This complex spell causes a suit of armor and one weapon to animate as though the sorcerer himself were in it. This will appear as though a ghostly, glowing warrior were wearing the armor and holding the visible weapon. The weapon will be swung with the same skill as if the caster were holding it, although the strength is +1. The caster can perform no other action while moving the armor and weapon.

### Solomnent Radiance (Influence)

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds, plus see below)

**Range:** 5 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (8th level)

**Description:** The caster holds his hand out, and with a quiet word of Power a glowing ball of soft light springs into being in the wizard's palm. The target's eyes are drawn to it, and he feels a drowsiness come over him as his eyes sink into it's depths. When the target falls asleep, the glowing

ball will float over his resting head until the spell expires. The target may resist with a Will roll at -4. On a partial success, he may be awakened by sounds or a gentle nudge, and will awaken at the end of the spell's duration in any event. On a failure the target will sleep for the full duration, regardless of sounds and such (but will awaken if struck.) On a mishap, the target will sleep through anything, and will continue sleeping normally after the spell duration expires, although they can be awakened normally after such time.

**Invisibility (Illusion)**

**Duration:** 10 rounds (1 minute)

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (1st level base, +3 levels for Magnitude, +3 levels for Motion, +3 levels for complexity)

**Description:** With this spell the caster makes himself or any man-sized target in spell range invisible. Sound, scent, and other senses are unaffected. In combat, the invisible fighter receives a +5 to his effective combat rating, unless the opponent has other reliable means of detecting him, such as magical senses, the invisible character standing in water, etc.

**Unseen Blade (Conceal)**

**Duration:** 3 minutes

**Range:** Self or 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (8th level, -2 for extra duration)

**Description:** There are the occasions when a mage must carry a weapon hidden on his person. This spell will not make the weapon invisible, but will cause everyone to be much less likely to notice its hiding place. Anyone not looking for it will not see it, and anyone looking for it will have a -8 to their perception. If this lowers their perception to -7 or lower, they cannot perceive the weapon at all, regardless of their roll, even if the sword is an obvious bulge under a cloak.

**Arcane Armament (Conjuration)**

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (1st level, -9 for extra duration), *for a sword*

**Description:** A favorite of martial spellcasters, this spell is taught throughout the continent. When it is cast, a sword made of glowing energy forms in the hands of the caster or any chosen recipient within range. The blade has a weight of 6lbs, a DR of 8, a minimum strength of 0, and sheds a faint nimbus of light equal to a candle flame.

**Casting Modifiers:** -15 (6th level, -9 for extra duration), *for a suit of armor*

**Description:** When this spell is cast, a suit of chain mail forms around the body of the caster or any chosen recipient in range. The armor weighs 40 lbs, a PR of 5, a minimum strength of +3, and sheds an arcane light equal to an oil lamp.

**Arcane Aura (Defend)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds

**Range:** Self/Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -10 (10th level)

**Description:** A standard spell for all wizards, the Arcane Aura spell causes the target's skin to shimmer with arcane energies. Any blows or physical spell effects that strike the target are absorbed by the magical aura, until 20hp of damage has been taken, at which time the aura fades.

**Healing Numinae (Heal)**

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (12th level)

**Description:** The Wizard using the Healing Numinae passes his hands over the wounded individual, and a soft light emanates from the Wizard's hands. This light seeps into the wound, and will continue to glow for several seconds, after which it fades and the wound is healed, or nearly so. A total of 12hp damage can be healed with this spell, and once a target has been magically healed no more can be done that day unless further damage is taken.

**Crimson Bands of Ibn Mahood (Move)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 80 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -18 (15th level, -3 for extra range)

**Description:** No one knows who Ibn Mahood was, although a few strange references hint that he may have been a Sorcerer supreme. When his spell is invoked, seven shimmering arcane rings of ruby hue coalesce out of the air and constrict upon the target, holding it immobile with a strength of +5.

#### **Arcane Eye (Reveal)**

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -13 (4th level, -9 for extra duration)

**Description:** The Arcane Eye is a common spell throughout Europe, although it is known by different names in many lands. When this spell is cast, the Sorcerer's eyes take on a piercing look. Any magical effect, regardless of Order, becomes apparent to the Sorcerer's eyes. Magical items shine, spell effects are obvious, and beings that are magical by their nature (demons, conjured beings, undead) stand out easily. Note that if the magic is concealed, an opposed resistance roll is required.

#### **Bladepact (Hex)**

**Duration:** 2 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -11 (10th level, -1 for extra duration)

**Description:** Bladepact is a curse on the target, causing them to be particularly susceptible to edged weapons. A hazy, barely perceptible glow surrounds the target, and the haze flashes whenever he is struck with a bladed weapon, such as an axe or sword. The target then sustains normal damage from the weapon but the wound will bleed profusely for two rounds, causing one half of the normal weapon damage each round.

#### **Chaotic Miasma (Illusion)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -19 (1st level, +12 levels for

Magnitude, +3 levels for Animation, +3 levels for Sound)

**Description:** With a wave of the hand, the caster of this spell calls into existence 30 feet of swirling lights and colored mists which completely obscure vision in the area of effect. In addition to the sights, random bursts of sound emanate from every direction; barks, clashes, rolling thunder, screams, etc. The net effect of this chaos is that anyone in the area of effect will be unable to see or hear anything, and all *Omni Table* rolls will be at -4 (one-third the magnitude). The caster can then escape unseen, or attack the confused opponents, or take the time to cast some other spell.

#### **Lethe's Embrace (Influence)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds, plus see below)

**Range:** 5 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -20 (20th level)

**Description:** When cast, a small sphere of arcane energy comes into being at the tips of the caster's fingers. As the target's eyes are drawn to it, the caster says "Forget I was here." The target must make a Will check at -10 or forget. On a partial success on the resistance roll, the target will remember everything after the spell expires. On a failure, the target will remember that someone was there, just not who. On a mishap, the target will forget the entire encounter.

#### **Speed of Lightning (Alter)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -25 (21st level, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** Used for quick escapes from uncomfortable situations (angry tribe of Goblins approaching, angry demon just summoned, angry jilted husband just entered the room) this spell causes a crackling of arcane energy to surround the feet of the caster, increasing running speed by +7. Note that the Speed attribute is not increased, just running speed.

# WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft is perhaps the oldest Magical Order in existence, tracing its heritage back to the dawn beyond the dawn of history. The principles of the Order operate according to the ancient Law of Association, which states that "like breeds like", and all things are connected.

Witchcraft relies heavily on physical components for its spells to work. A connection must always be made between the witch, the materials of the spell, and the target. This connection is often metaphorical - a witch may break a handful of twigs to symbolize the breaking of bones, for example - but the spell will work so long as the metaphor has meaning for the witch. The act of association connects magician, materials, and target as if they were one. The most powerful spell components are personal effects owned by a subject, or, better yet, discarded parts of the target; for example, a splinter from a wagon wheel or a lock of hair.

The magic of witchcraft is about relationships, not power. If a witch wants to break a stone in two, he does not hurl destructive energy at the stone. Rather, he associates the stone with a bit of clay, and breaks that instead. To bring a curse on someone, the witch might obtain an article owned by the victim and cast his magic upon it, thereby doing harm to the intended victim. Witchcraft is one of the most subtle forms of spellcasting, often having none of the obvious external effects of other Orders, such as lights or loud noises.

Many cultures (and lately the Catholic Church) consider witchcraft to be "black magic", and openly persecute its practitioners. For this reason, witchcraft is taught and practiced mostly in secret. Passed down from generation to generation, witchcraft is an oral tradition without texts, scrolls, or magical tomes. Some witches practice their art more openly but disguise it as simple folk wisdom and medicine. These are becoming increasingly rare as the Church closes in on practitioners of the

art with its Inquisition.

## PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

A witch must have both hands free and be able to speak aloud in order to cast spells. Some sort of symbolic object must also be used, and is often destroyed as part of the magic ritual. The player is free to improvise appropriate metaphors for the spell components. If the target of the spell is a person or beast, a personal item should give a bonus to the casting roll on the *Omni Table*, as judged by the GM.

## ADVANTAGES

Witches possess the power of Binding, allowing them to work their magic across any distance, provided they have a strong mystical connection to their target. Any object that has been on the target's person for three or more days, or a physical piece of the target (such as hair, fingernails, or blood) will suffice. This material can be used for a single ritual only, and is consumed as the spell is cast. Spells that incorporate the power of Binding act as if the witch is touching the target.

## LIMITATIONS

The forces that empower a witch's magic can be somewhat capricious. On a natural casting roll of 13 on the *Omni Table*, the spell has no effect, regardless of the various modifiers involved. This is not treated as a mishap; the spell energy simply fades and has no effect at all.

## ENCHANTMENT

Common enchanted items created with Witchcraft include:

- ✱ Medallions or brooches that protect from harm (Ward, Defend)
- ✱ Rings or stones that render a subject invisible to scrying (Conceal)
- ✱ Crystals or mirrors for viewing distant locales (Reveal)



## WITCHCRAFT MODES

**Not available:** Conjure

**Bonuses:** Heal: +2, Ward: +2, Reveal: +2

**Penalties:** Attack -3

**Alter Effects:** A witch can alter virtually any quality, provided he has the appropriate physical components. The heart of an ogriphant might help the witch alter a subject's strength, for example. No alteration can be made without a metaphorical connection like this.

**Transform Effects:** A witch's "curse" sometimes takes the form of a transformation of the target into an animal. Once the "curse" is cast, it takes one day per level of the spell for the target to transform completely. The process is a gradual one, adding a new animal feature each day as the spell runs its course. Once fully transformed, the target will remain in that state for seven days and then instantly revert to its normal form. It is rumored that the witches of old could transform a victim permanently, but those ancient spells were lost long ago in the depths of witchwood.

**Summon Effects:** A witch can summon minor spiritforms to perform simple tasks. These spiritforms are Ability Level 7 or less and can do no harm to living things. They do have unique qualities, however, including invisibility, immunity to normal weapons, and the special power of Weirding (see sample spell, below).

## EXAMPLE WITCHCRAFT SPELLS

### Sympathetic Magic (Harm)

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** 50 feet (or Binding)

**Casting Modifiers:** -6 (9th level, +3 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** this spell allows the caster to do harm to another creature or individual by harming an object that symbolizes the intended victim. A crude doll or fetish made from a piece of the target's hair or clothing will suffice to effect the magic, which

can cause up to 9hp damage to the

intended victim. Optionally, the nature of the damage done to the victim (fire, strangulation, stabbing, etc.) is determined by the type of damage done by the caster to the object. The spell may also be used to cause minor damage or inconvenience, such as shooting pains in a hand or limb, tripping, obscuring vision, etc. The GM determines resistance rolls based on the nature and intended severity of the attack.

### Weird (Summon)

**Duration:** 1 minute

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Casting Modifiers:** -1 (1st level)

**Description:** This spell summons calls a minor spirit and allows the caster to compel it to retrieve any small object or item that rightfully belongs to the caster. A Weirided spirit will recover any object that was lost, stolen, dropped, or even thrown; however, it will not retrieve any item that was sold or freely given away. Once the service has been rendered, the spirit will then return to its home, unless the summoning is made permanent with an enchantment.

### Mending (Heal)

**Duration:** Instant

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (10th level, +2 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** This spell allows the caster to heal up to 10hp of damage to any living creature, or to mend a similar amount of damage done to any inanimate object.

### False Dweomer (Illusion)

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** 50 feet

**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (1st level base, +3 levels for magic sense, -4 for extra duration)

**Description:** this spell enables the caster to imbue any item with a false aura of magic, causing it to appear to be enchanted.

**Changeling (Illusion)****Duration:** 5 minutes**Range:** 50 feet**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (1st level base, +3 levels for Complex Elements, -4 for extra duration)**Description:** By means of this spell the caster is able to alter the appearance of any individual to match that of any other person. Auditory, tactile, and other elements may be added to the spell, as per the rules for Illusions.**Witch Glass (Reveal)****Duration:** 2 minutes**Range:** 1 mile (or Binding)**Casting Modifiers:** 0 (1st level, -1 for extra duration, +2 due to Order modifier for this mode)**Description:** This spell allows the caster to temporarily turn any reflective surface (such as a mirror or crystal ball) into a scrying device. By staring into the Witch Glass, the caster can view any target of choice, including a person, an object, or even a location. The target must be known to the caster in order for the spell to function. Range is one mile unless some form of Binding object is used, in which case the range is unlimited.**Hide Magic (Conceal)****Duration:** 3 minutes**Range:** 50 feet**Casting Modifiers:** -8 (8th level, -2 for extra duration, +2 due to Order modifier for this mode)**Description:** This spell allows the caster to disguise any enchanted object, artifact, creature, or being, causing it to appear to be non-magical in nature. In practical terms, this spell may be used to make an enchanted blade appear to be ordinary, or to make a potion seem like a vial of plain liquid. Or, it could be used to hide the fact that an individual is under the influence of a ward, curse, or other spell. A PER roll at -8 must be made to see through the spell's effect.**Eldritch Barrier (Defend)****Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)**Range:** Self or Touch**Area of Effect:** 10 foot diameter sphere**Casting Modifiers:** -18 (12th level, -6 for area of effect)**Description:** This spell allows the caster to erect a 10-foot diameter sphere of eldritch force that will provide protection from physical and magical attacks. The barrier has an armor rating of 4 and can withstand up to 24hp damage before being destroyed.**Enfeeblement (Alter)****Duration:** 2 minutes**Range:** Touch**Casting Modifiers:** -16 (15th level, -1 for extra duration)**Description:** This spell allows the caster to cause weakness in a designated creature or being by touch. The victim will suddenly feel exhausted, as through strenuous activity, and suffers a -3 penalty to all rolls for the duration of the spell.**Aura of Allurement (Alter)****Duration:** 5 minutes**Range:** Touch**Casting Modifiers:** -16 (12th level, -4 for extra duration)**Description:** Through the use of this enchantment the caster can make a designated subject appear more attractive and alluring. In game terms the spell adds +4 to the beneficiary's appearance, but does not affect leadership or other facets of the Charisma attribute. Members of the same (or similar) race will usually respond far more favorably to the subject for the duration of the spell.**Jinx (Summon)****Duration:** 5 minutes**Casting Time:** 1 round**Casting Modifiers:** -16 (12th level, -4 for extra duration)**Description:** This spell summons a 1st level spirit

to hound a given subject, wreaking all manner of mischief. Until the Jinx expires or is removed, the subject will suffer a penalty of -4 (one-third the spell level) on all actions, and will experience numerous minor mishaps and misfortunes at the GM's discretion.

### **Obsession (Influence)**

**Duration:** 5 rounds (30 seconds)

**Range:** 5 feet (or Binding)

**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (12th level)

**Description:** This spell enables the caster to afflict a subject with an overwhelming craving or desire of the caster's choice. For example: the urge to eat or drink to excess, affection for a particular person or creature, a fixation upon obtaining some object of desire, or compulsive behavior of some sort (laughing, crying, counting things, etc.). The subject may resist the spell with a Will check at -6. On a partial success they will still feel the obsession, but can control it with repeated will checks for the duration. On a failure, they will experience the obsession for the spell's duration. On a mishap they will continue to experience the obsession after the spell expires until something shocks them out of it.

### **Eldritch Vapors (Transform)**

**Duration:** 3 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -17 (15th level, -2 for extra duration)

**Description:** By inhaling vapors, smoke, or fog, the caster transforms into magical vapors. In this form the witch can seep through any crack, no matter how small, and move in any direction at 50 feet per round (-5 Speed).

### **Safekeep (Ward)**

**Duration:** 5 minutes

**Range:** Touch

**Casting Modifiers:** -12 (10th level, -4 for extra duration, +2 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** This spell can be used to imbue any

object or item with an invisible magical aura that will protect it from theft. No one but the caster can touch the item while the spell is in place. Note that touching a protected item with gloves, tongs, or other objects affords no protection from a Safekeep, which can only be dispelled by magic.

### **Bewitch (Hex)**

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Range:** Touch (or Binding)

**Casting Modifiers:** -27 (10th level, -19 for extra duration, +2 due to Order modifier for this mode)

**Description:** This spell makes the victim more vulnerable to a particular threat or malady and causes this threat to be more attracted to him or her. For example, the caster could Bewitch a victim with a susceptibility to broken bones. This would cause the victim to suffer more serious injury in a fall or accident and make such an accident more likely to occur. In game terms, the victim takes double damage from whatever threat or malady they have been Bewitched by.

### **Curse of the Beast (Transform)**

**Duration:** variable

**Range:** Touch (or Binding)

**Casting Modifiers:** variable

**Description:** Among the most common spells of Witchcraft, this curse transforms the subject into an animal; typically, one which represents some less-than-flattering aspect of the victim. The process is gradual, taking one day per spell level. With each day the target develops another animal feature (eyes, hair, claws, etc.) until the transformation is complete. The animal form lasts seven days from that point, at which time the target will revert to its original form.



# CREATING ENCHANTED ITEMS

Enchantment is the process of investing items with lasting magical power. Enchanted items continue to produce their effects without the need for further Spellcasting. For example, a stone could be enchanted to give off a soft light when a command word is spoken, allowing it to be used as a source of illumination whenever it is needed.

In game terms, Enchanting and Spellcasting are very similar. The Modes and magical Orders are used in the same way and the actual game mechanics are nearly identical. The big difference between the two talents is time. Enchantment takes considerably longer to perform than Spellcasting and is much longer lasting. Enchantment also requires an investment in specialized and costly materials.

Enchantment counts as an individual skill of the character's magic Order, in the same way a Mode does. Skill Points costs for learning and improving Enchantment skills are the same as for any Mode. As such, it is possible to be an accomplished enchanter within one field of magic, but still be a novice in another.

## ENCHANTMENT TYPES

There are two types of enchantments: Limited and Continuous.

Limited enchantments function three times per day. A magic item invested with a Limited enchantment may recharge itself everyday, or may need to be recharged manually by some means (prayer, ritual, exposure to moonlight, or whatever). Examples include a wand that shoots lightning bolts, a ring that gives the power of flight, or a staff that heals wounds.

Continuous enchantments function all the time

unless their magic is somehow disrupted, and never need to be recharged. Examples include an amulet that confers continuous protection from fire, magically enhanced weapons, and enchanted armor. Continuous enchantments take considerably longer to make than limited enchantments and require finer and more expensive materials. Modes with a duration of "Instant" cannot be incorporated into Continuous enchantments.

Note that regardless of the method employed, a single item can have only one enchantment. For example, a sword cannot be both +2 damage and capable of producing light.

## OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR ENCHANTMENT

The following is an overview of the procedure for enchanting an item. Each of the steps is explained in detail below.

1. Player states Intent (what is the item's Mode, Spell Level, and intended use? Will it have a Limited or Continuous enchantment?)
2. Determine Enchantment Requirements (how long will the item take to make, and how much will it cost?)
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the magician's Enchantment skill rating, the item's Spell Level and casting penalties, and other factors.)
4. Player rolls to see if the Enchantment was successful
5. GM judges result

## THE ENCHANTMENT ROLL

### 1. Stating Intent for Enchantment

Like stating intent for spell casting, the player decides what spell-effect (Mode) the item will have, and its spell level. The player also decides whether the item will have a Limited or Continuous

Enchantment. If the enchantment is Limited, the player must decide whether it must be recharged manually and, if so, by what means.

## 2. Determining Enchantment Requirements

Before an item can be enchanted there are two requirements a GM needs to determine. First: how much time will it take to make the item described by the player? And second: how much will it cost the character to buy the materials needed for the procedure?

The requirements for Limited and Continuous Enchantments are determined as follows:

### LIMITED ENCHANTMENT

- ✿ Time required: 2 weeks (80 hours) per Spell Level (one and a half weeks if the item must be recharged manually)
- ✿ Cost of materials: 2 times the average price of the item that is to be enchanted.

### CONTINUOUS ENCHANTMENT

- ✿ Time required: 6 weeks (240 hours) per Spell Level
- ✿ Cost of materials: 4 times the average price of the item that is to be enchanted.

Note that the Enchantment process does not require special materials or rare ingredients, such as those used in the field of Alchemy. Instead, Enchantment is accomplished by investing ordinary items with the power of magic spells. The Cost in Materials reflects the fact that most Enchanters prefer to use items of good quality, which tend to be more durable. Enchanted items can be made from sub-standard materials, though such items may function erratically or may prove to be defective in some way.

## 3. Determining Bonuses or Penalties for Enchantment

After reviewing the requirements for the enchanted item, the GM must determine if any bonus or

penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls to enchant the item.

Apply a bonus equal to the character's Enchantment skill rating. Additional bonuses may be applied if the magician is using a magical device that enhances his powers, has access to superior materials, or is operating under highly beneficial conditions or surroundings.

Apply a penalty of -1 per spell level plus any additional casting roll penalties the spell might have as a result of increased range, duration, etc. Additional penalties may be applied if the magician is using sub-standard materials, or is working under poor conditions or extreme duress.

Comparing applicable bonuses and penalties, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's *Omni Table* roll.

## 4. The Enchantment Roll

To determine whether the Enchantment is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the *Omni Table*, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

## 5. Judging Results

A Critical Success means the item has been enchanted, plus it functions even better than intended. Possibilities include: the item functions at a higher level than planned, works more times per day, does not have to be re-charged, etc.

A Full Success means the item has been enchanted and works as planned.

A Partial Success means that the enchantment failed to take hold, but the item and all materials survived intact and can be used again. To do so, the character must repeat the "Time Required" segment of the procedure, then roll again and check the results.

Failure means the enchantment did not take hold

and the item and all materials were ruined. If the character wants to try again he must start from scratch.

A Mishap is equal to a critical failure, and may yield disastrous consequences. Some of the worst magical mishaps have occurred as a result of failed attempts at Enchantment.

## TIME & ENCHANTING

Unlike Spellcasting, Enchanting does not need to be performed all at once. Many enchanters work on more than one item at a time, spacing out their work over many months. More than one enchanter may work on an item, to complete it more quickly. As long as all the enchanters make their Enchantment roll, the item will be a success. Regardless of how many magicians are working on an item, only 24 hours of work can be put into it in a single day.

## CREATING TRIGGERED ENCHANTED ITEMS

If desired, any enchanted item can be made so that it will be activated by a specific circumstance, or a "trigger" (for example, a ring of levitation might activate when the wearer falls more than ten feet). Creating an enchanted item with a trigger adds an additional week to the time required.

## USING ENCHANTED ITEMS

Anyone can use an enchanted item, provided they know how the device functions. Some enchanted objects require precise command words or must be physically manipulated in a particular way in order to function. Others are always active (like most enchanted weapons, protective amulets, etc.), are activated by touch, or by a specific trigger of some sort.

Spellcasters can divine the operation of an unfamiliar enchantment by studying it for one hour and making a successful Enchantment roll, using the item's spell level as the Degree of Difficulty.

The spellcaster is allowed three attempts to identify a given item; if unable to do so, the spellcaster will have to seek the help of another spellcaster. Optionally, the magician can wait until he has improved his Enchantment skill by at least +1, and then try again.

If an enchanted item must be aimed to work properly, the character can use any Ranged Combat skill or an appropriate Mode. Lacking these, the character defaults to Combat Rating or Magic Rating and takes a substitution penalty determined by the GM (usually -5).

## ENCHANTED WEAPONS & ARMOR

Most magical weapons carry enchantments that enhance their basic Damage Rating. The Alter Mode is used to accomplish this effect. Attack spells are sometimes enchanted into normal weapons, staves, or wands, allowing the wielder to fire the spell from the item. Attack enchantments never add to the base damage of a weapon, and cannot be combined with a normal attack.

Enchanted armors typically have enhanced Protection Ratings or carry a Ward that repels certain types of damage, such as fire, cold, or Attack spells.

## EXAMPLE ITEMS

The following are some examples of enchanted items, illustrating the Mode used in their creation, their Level and Type, and their cost in time and materials.

**Item:** A pair of magical boots that levitate the wearer all the time.

**Mode:** Move

**Spell Level:** 6 (can lift up to 150 pounds)

**Type:** Continuous

**Time Required:** 36 weeks

**Item:** A ring that lets the wearer create a small

sphere of light 3 times per day.

**Mode:** Illusion

**Spell Level:** 4

**Type:** Limited

**Time Required:** 8 weeks

**Item:** A dagger enchanted with magical sharpness (+2 Damage Rating).

**Mode:** Alter

**Spell Level:** 6

**Type:** Continuous

**Time Required:** 36 weeks

**Item:** A sword whose blade produces a stream of magical flames up to 3 times per day, and must be plunged into fire to be recharged.

**Mode:** Attack

**Spell Level:** 8

**Type:** Limited

**Time Required:** 12 weeks

**Item:** A brooch that protects against scrying when activated, and can be used 3 times per day.

**Mode:** Conceal

**Spell Level:** 10

**Type:** Limited

**Time Required:** 20 weeks

## ANTI-MAGIC VS.

## ENCHANTMENT

Enchantments can be truly dispelled only by reversing the enchantment process (which takes half as long to perform as the original enchantment), or by destroying the item. However, Enchantments can be temporarily suppressed through the use of Spellcasting.

Counterspells take effect on enchantments just as they do with normal spells. To suppress an enchantment, the level of the counterspell is applied as a positive modifier, and the spell level of the enchanted item is used as the Degree of Difficulty. When the duration of the counterspell ends, the enchantment is fully restored with the same capabilities and charges it had before being suppressed.

## CHAPTER SEVEN



# The Church

The Church is the body of Christ's faithful. The Church Militant is the Church on Earth, as opposed to the Church Triumphant, which is composed of the saints in heaven. The Church Militant, then, is also a human institution, with all the politics that entails.

The majority of the men in positions of power have the interests of their inferiors at heart far more often than the nobility do, and the Church often acts to defend the poor and weak. It is not perfect, however, and is capable of misjudging the best thing to do in a situation. In addition, not a few selfish or positively malicious individuals have managed to rise through the ranks.

### BASIC THEOLOGY OF THE Church

Theology, the beliefs of the Church about God, virtue, and the place of man in the universe, is a complex subject, but it is impossible to understand the Middle Ages without some idea of the basics of Christian doctrine. The summary that follows is extremely brief, and glosses over distinctions that people have died and killed for. It also tends to pick one position from medieval theology, even

when, historically, there was some dispute.

A fairly common concept is that of the mystery. A mystery in this sense is a theological belief that cannot be truly understood with merely human reason. Most mysteries appear to be incoherent, but God can see how they fit together and make sense.

### GOD

There is only one God. He is eternal, existing without beginning and without end, and depending on nothing but Himself for his existence. God made everything that exists, and keeps it in existence. The world only persists because God chooses that it should.

God is absolutely simple. That is, He has no attributes. God is not large, or wise, or loving, if these are conceived of as things added to God. Instead, God is simply God, and being God he is also ultimate wisdom, ultimate love, and all the other perfections. While these perfections are different when they are found in imperfect humans and other creatures (things created), in God they are all the same, and all God.



As God is simple, He cannot change in any way. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. As a result, God is outside time. He knows everything, as knowledge is a perfection, and thus God is perfect knowledge. He knows the future, but to Him the future is no different from the present.

Although God is one, simple, and has no attributes, He is also three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Son is begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, but all three are one, and simply God. The nature of God is the greatest of the theological mysteries.

No human intellect can hope to understand how God can be as He is.

## CREATION

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth. He created the angels, and the highest of the angels was Lucifer, the light-bringer. Then He created time, and the world. In six days He made the world, and on the seventh day, He rested. Thus all Christians rest one day in seven, on Sundays.

Man was created on the sixth day, and the first man was Adam, made from the dust of the ground. God

placed him in the Garden of Eden, and brought the animals to him to be named. No animal was a suitable companion for Adam, so God placed the man into a deep sleep, took one of his ribs, and from it fashioned the first woman, Eve.

At the center of the garden were two trees, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life. God forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree of Knowledge.

## THE FALL

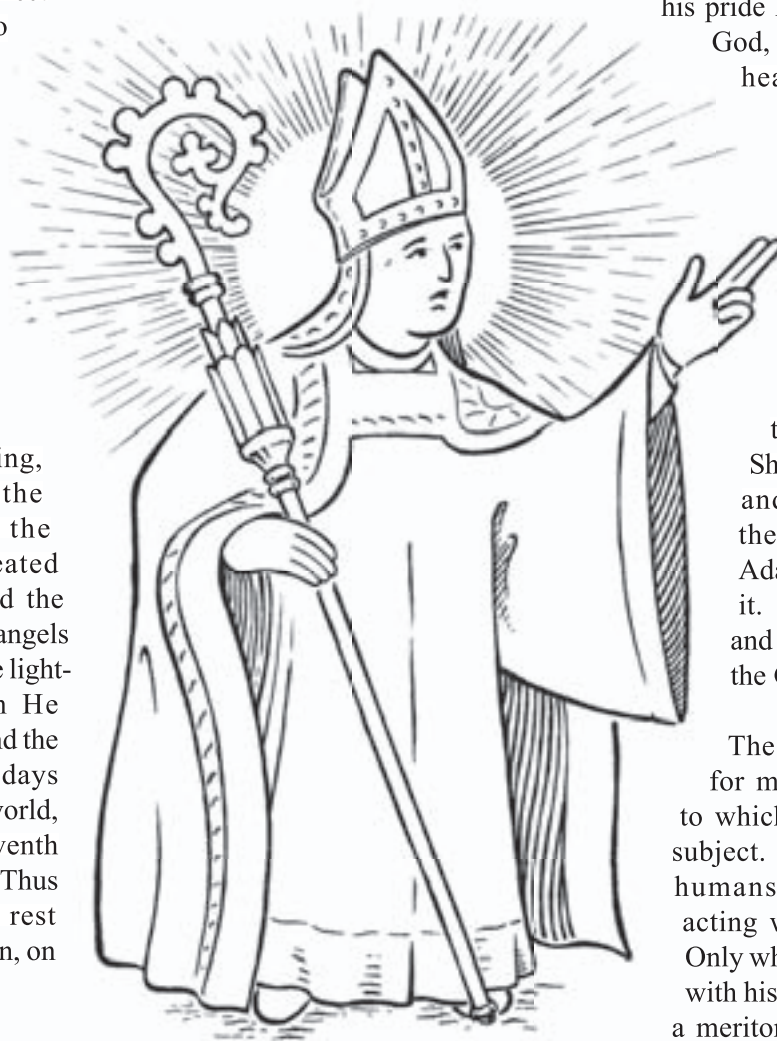
Lucifer was the first creature to sin. In his pride he desired to be like God, and so he fell from heaven. One third of


the angels listened, and fell with him. In his sin and wickedness Lucifer wanted to corrupt others so he turned to the world and tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.

She fell to the temptation and ate the fruit and then gave the fruit to Adam, who also ate of it. For this sin, Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden.

The Fall is responsible for many of the miseries to which human beings are subject. Most significantly, humans are incapable of acting well by themselves. Only when God infuses them with his grace can they act in a meritorious way. Thus no

human can earn any merit, and all humans are tainted by the original sin of Adam and Eve.





Further the ailments of the human body in the imperfections of the mind are all due to the Fall. Before the Fall, the world served Man willingly; now the rest of creation turns against him. None of the evil in the world is God's fault; all of it is due to the actions of men, the actions of demons, or the lingering effects of the Fall.

## THE INCARNATION

God did not leave human beings in sin and damnation, however. God the son was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary and incarnated as Jesus Christ. Christ was wholly God and wholly man, perfectly human but no less perfectly divine. The nature of Christ is another of the great mysteries, for, as God is unchanging, Christ was truly human before the universe was even created. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit were not incarnated, and so are not human, but nevertheless God the son is exactly the same as God the Father, and has no properties, not even the property of being human. It is, as said before, a mystery.

As a human being, Christ preached his message through Judea, in the time of the Roman emperors. After three years he was arrested, charged with treason by the chief priests of the Jews, and crucified under Pontius Pilate. On the cross, Christ took upon himself the just punishment for all human sins, and thus redeemed the human race. Through Christ, all human beings can become worthy of heaven once more. On the third day after his death, Christ rose from the grave, and promised his followers eternal life before ascending into heaven.

## SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Human beings, since the Fall, are naturally inclined to sin. The seven deadly sins which bring damnation are: Pride, Wrath, Envy, Sloth, Gluttony, Avarice, and Lust. It is the sin of lust to have sex with your wife because you enjoy it, just as it is a sin to commit adultery with every woman in town. Irritation with someone who was walking too slowly ahead of you is wrath just as is a rage

that derives you to kill thousands. All sins are evil because they are rebellion against God, and their consequences for other people are of relatively little importance.

At birth, all humans are stained with the original sin of Adam and Eve. Baptism washes the stain away, and also cleanses the stain of any sins that the person has committed. A baby who dies unbaptized is damned to hell for eternity by the stain of original sin, so all Christians are baptized as quickly as possible. Baptism can be performed by anyone, even a non-Christian, as long as they intend to baptize in the way the Church does.

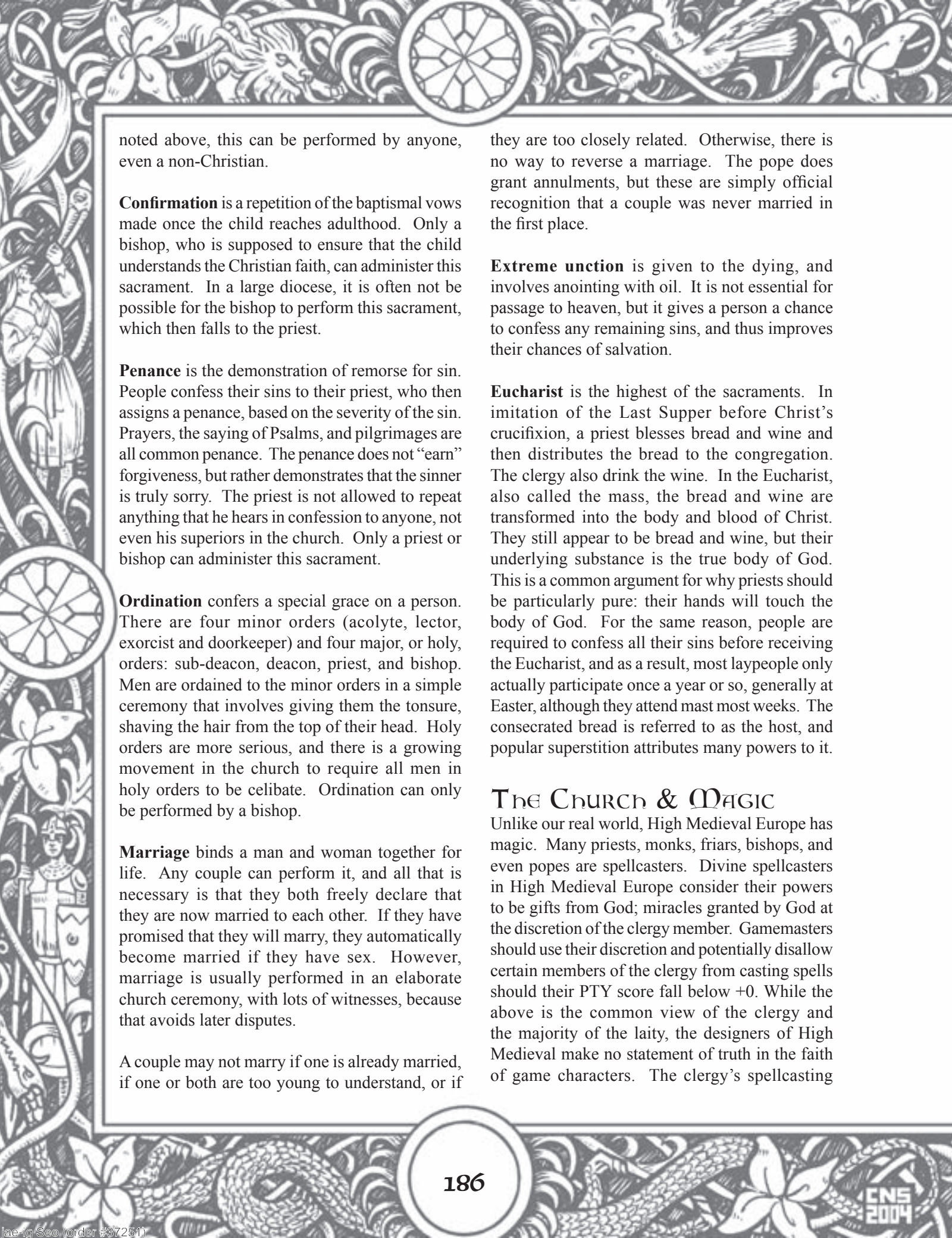
After baptism, fallen humanity commits more sins. If a person truly repents of her sins and asks for God's mercy, she can be forgiven through Christ's sacrifice, and become without sin once more. Only those who are without sin can enter heaven; anyone who remains stained with the slightest sin is damned to hell where she will be tortured for all eternity. The problem is that fallen man cannot truly repent, so no one can repent unless God grants his grace to them.

There are many mysteries here, such how eternal torment is compatible with perfect love, or how it can be just for God to punish those to whom he has freely chosen not to offer his grace. God understands, and the Saints understand God, but those on Earth cannot.

## THE SACRAMENTS

The seven sacraments are central to Christian life in this world. They are essential for celebration, and the church tries to maintain a monopoly on them. The sacraments work regardless of the intentions or state of sin of the person performing them, so that ordinations performed by a devil-worshipping Bishop are still valid.

**Baptism** washes away sin, and is performed by dipping a person in water, or anointing them with water, while saying "I do baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit". As



noted above, this can be performed by anyone, even a non-Christian.

**Confirmation** is a repetition of the baptismal vows made once the child reaches adulthood. Only a bishop, who is supposed to ensure that the child understands the Christian faith, can administer this sacrament. In a large diocese, it is often not possible for the bishop to perform this sacrament, which then falls to the priest.

**Penance** is the demonstration of remorse for sin. People confess their sins to their priest, who then assigns a penance, based on the severity of the sin. Prayers, the saying of Psalms, and pilgrimages are all common penance. The penance does not “earn” forgiveness, but rather demonstrates that the sinner is truly sorry. The priest is not allowed to repeat anything that he hears in confession to anyone, not even his superiors in the church. Only a priest or bishop can administer this sacrament.

**Ordination** confers a special grace on a person. There are four minor orders (acolyte, lector, exorcist and doorkeeper) and four major, or holy, orders: sub-deacon, deacon, priest, and bishop. Men are ordained to the minor orders in a simple ceremony that involves giving them the tonsure, shaving the hair from the top of their head. Holy orders are more serious, and there is a growing movement in the church to require all men in holy orders to be celibate. Ordination can only be performed by a bishop.

**Marriage** binds a man and woman together for life. Any couple can perform it, and all that is necessary is that they both freely declare that they are now married to each other. If they have promised that they will marry, they automatically become married if they have sex. However, marriage is usually performed in an elaborate church ceremony, with lots of witnesses, because that avoids later disputes.

A couple may not marry if one is already married, if one or both are too young to understand, or if


they are too closely related. Otherwise, there is no way to reverse a marriage. The pope does grant annulments, but these are simply official recognition that a couple was never married in the first place.

**Extreme unction** is given to the dying, and involves anointing with oil. It is not essential for passage to heaven, but it gives a person a chance to confess any remaining sins, and thus improves their chances of salvation.

**Eucharist** is the highest of the sacraments. In imitation of the Last Supper before Christ’s crucifixion, a priest blesses bread and wine and then distributes the bread to the congregation. The clergy also drink the wine. In the Eucharist, also called the mass, the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. They still appear to be bread and wine, but their underlying substance is the true body of God. This is a common argument for why priests should be particularly pure: their hands will touch the body of God. For the same reason, people are required to confess all their sins before receiving the Eucharist, and as a result, most laypeople only actually participate once a year or so, generally at Easter, although they attend most weeks. The consecrated bread is referred to as the host, and popular superstition attributes many powers to it.

## THE CHURCH & MAGIC

Unlike our real world, High Medieval Europe has magic. Many priests, monks, friars, bishops, and even popes are spellcasters. Divine spellcasters in High Medieval Europe consider their powers to be gifts from God; miracles granted by God at the discretion of the clergy member. Gamemasters should use their discretion and potentially disallow certain members of the clergy from casting spells should their PTY score fall below +0. While the above is the common view of the clergy and the majority of the laity, the designers of High Medieval make no statement of truth in the faith of game characters. The clergy’s spellcasting



ability could just as easily be explained as a force of will rather than a gift from a higher power. How divine magic is explained in individual campaigns is solely at the discretion of the GM.

The church does not necessarily view other forms of magic as inherently evil. Some types of magic, most notably folk magic and nature magic, are tolerated although sometimes suppressed by the Church. Likewise, those practicing the arts of alchemy and astrology are often highly devout Christians. Their arts and sciences are also tolerated, if not embraced, by the church.

What is expressly forbidden is any form of consorting with devils most commonly in the form of a demonology. Demonology, by its very nature, is antithetical to the Church's teachings and therefore vigorously suppressed. Members of the Holy Inquisition actively seek out demonologists and bring them to justice wherever they may be found.

## CHURCH HIERARCHY

### THE PARISH

Everyone in Western Christendom is a member of a parish. A parish is centered on a single church, in which a priest, called the rector, is supposed to serve. People are supposed to confess to their parish priest, and receive all the sacraments from him. The parish church is one of the main meeting places, and often the largest and highest quality building in the area. As a result, it sometimes gets used for storing furniture or supplies, a practice on which the Church frowns.

All laymen (Christians who are not clergy) are expected to go to their parish priest with any religious problems. Wealthy and powerful individuals may get permission to have a personal confessor, or chaplain, and people who are traveling are allowed to go to the local church, but otherwise people are not allowed to choose their priests.

Parishes vary considerably in size, from a block or two in London or Paris to large parishes covering substantial areas like Yorkshire in England. They are still being organized in the early twelfth century, and in some parts of England the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon style of a large church, with multiple priests serving a large area, survives. These areas are slowly being broken up into smaller parishes.

Many different people appoint rectors. The default position is that they are appointed by the bishop of the diocese, and he must approve any appointment made by someone else. Many parishes are under the control of monasteries, and in that case the abbot appoints the rector. In other parishes (most notably in the Holy Roman Empire), local lay lords have the right to appoint whomever they wish, subject to the bishop's agreement. This is often seen as a good career for younger sons, who will not inherit the lay position.

A rector need not oversee the parish by himself. He should reside there, although not all do, but he may appoint a curate, another priest to assist him, out of his income. The rector may choose his curate freely, as long as he has been ordained a priest. In addition, the rector may pay deacons and sub-deacons to assist him with those parts of the role that do not involve administering the sacraments.

### SECULARS

The clergy is divided into two groups, the regulars and the seculars. The secular clergy, which includes all parish priests and most bishops, is responsible for dealing with the world, helping laymen and women to live holy lives and ministering to the sick and needy. The regular clergy are supposed to follow rules that restrict their contact with the world, helping primarily through their prayers.

Regular clergy typically take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They swear to own no personal property, abstain from sex, and obey the head of their monastery. The clergy also promise

stability, agreeing to remain in the monastery. They move or leave the monastery if the head of the monastery commands it.

Secular clergy are generally required to be chaste, but they do not take vows of poverty, and they are expected to spend much of their time involved in the world. This leads to a split in attitudes towards the regulars. On the one hand, the regulars take more severe vows, and are thus holier than the seculars. In addition, most people have little contact with regular clergy, so they do not see their faults and foibles. This tends to create a picture of monks and nuns as superior to seculars. On the other hand, many monasteries are extremely

rich, and tales of monastic corruption are far from uncommon. In addition, monasteries are often harsh landlords, showing little compassion for their tenants. Thus, it is quite common for people to think that monks in general are good, while thinking that the local monks they have actually met are all corrupt.

## BISHOPS & THE DIOCESE

The bishops are, in many ways, the highest authority in the Church. Even the Pope is primarily the Bishop of Rome. They have authority over an area, called their diocese, which varies enormously in size. Dioceses in England and Wales are very large by European standards; those in northern France are more typical. In the course of the late eleventh and early twelfth century, some reorganization of diocese and creation of new ones has taken place, removing some of the very largest diocese.

In principle, the bishop is responsible for investigating the behavior of all Christians in the diocese. In practice, the bishop concentrates on the clergy, relying on parish priests to keep an eye on the laity. Bishops investigate their diocese through visitations to a parish church or monastery and make sure that everything is in order. Often there are minor problems, and occasionally the bishop finds things in such disarray that he has to take radical action, including suppressing a monastery and sending its monks elsewhere.


Bishops are supported by archdeacons, who are their main deputies. In the largest dioceses, such as York and Toulouse, there are many archdeacons, who achieve authority within the area almost the same as that of the bishop.

Archbishops are responsible for coordinating the bishops in a particular area, called a province. Each archbishop has a diocese for which he is the bishop, but outside that area he does not usually have the authority to perform visitations.

This picture is complicated by many exemptions



RECTOR



and privileges. There are a number of monasteries which are exempt from all ecclesiastical authority other than the Pope's. There are others which are exempt from the authority of the local bishop, but which are under the archbishop. The same applies to some parish churches. A few monasteries, such as Glastonbury in the west of England, are even exempt from the authority of the King, in particular. For the most part, these exemptions are respected, but they can lead to lengthy court cases when people disagree about the details.

Bishops are nominally chosen by the members of their diocese. In practice, this means that they are elected by the chapter of their cathedral. About half of a cathedral's chapters are made up of monks, the other half of secular canons. The King must approve the elected bishop, because he is a powerful noble of the realm, but the King is not supposed to impose bishops on reluctant chapters. This does, of course, happen.

### THE COLLEGE OF BISHOPS

Successors of the Apostles, the Bishops of the particular Churches throughout High Medieval Europe form the College of Bishops. Individual bishops have charge of a particular diocese as explained above. Together as a group, the Bishops may exercise power over the Universal Church by coming together in an ecumenical council. However, even ecumenical councils must be recognized and agreed to by the Pope to be valid. To the extent that the College of Bishops is not united with its head, the Pope, then it has no authority at all.

### THE POPE

At the head of the College of Bishops and called to lead the whole Church of Christ is the Successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, the Holy Roman Pontiff, the Pope. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ on Earth. He stands in Christ's place, on Christ's behalf, to shepherd Christ's flock.

### THE TITHE

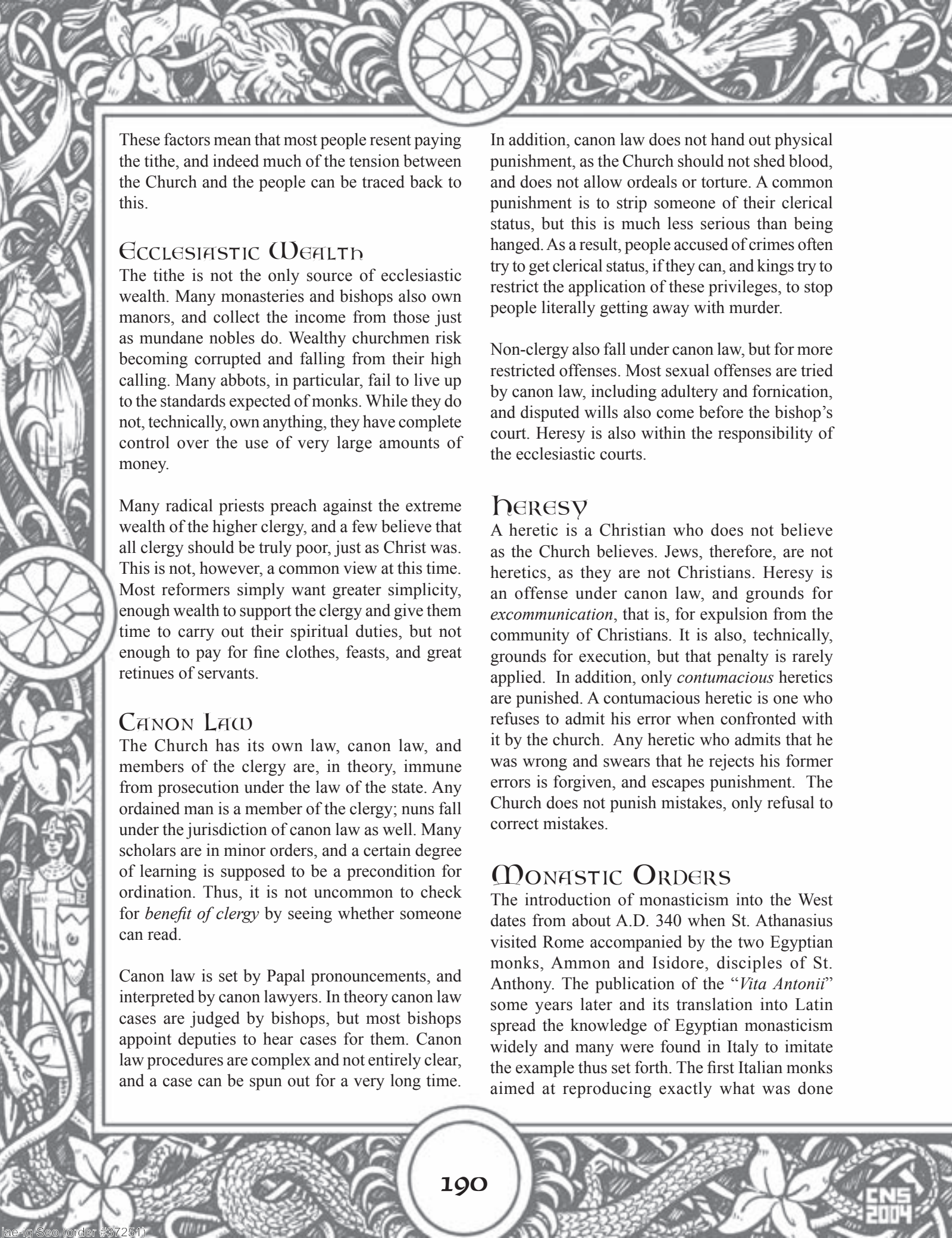
The Church is entitled to one tenth of everything which God gives the world. This, essentially, means agricultural products, and as the economy is overwhelmingly agricultural, this means that the Church gets about a tenth of the wealth. The tithe is not a voluntary donation, and many churchmen are harsh in collecting it. In theory it always goes to the rector of the parish, who is supposed to give a third to his bishop, a third to the poor, and keep a third for himself.

In practice, many factors interfere with this. First, some rectors do not live in their parishes, instead putting a curate into the position and paying him out of the tithe. This means that the person in the parish gets much less than one third of the tithe, while an absentee gets most of the benefit. Some absentee rectors hold more than one parish, which makes them quite wealthy. This is called pluralism, and is not popular with Church reformers.

Second, many parishes are controlled by monasteries. The monastery is the rector, and gets the tithe. The monks pay a curate to look after the parish, and thus act much like an absentee rector. Many monasteries hold many parishes, but this practice is not as unpopular with the reformers as is pluralism.

Third, the poor rarely get their full third of the tithe. In some cases, this is because the parish is too poor to support a rector, let alone give alms. This often happens with urban parishes, because the tithe covers few urban activities. In other cases, it is because the rector simply refuses to pass it on. In still others, it is because the resources are nominally passed to the poor, but actually go to a wealthy monastery.

This is not to say that the poor usually get nothing. Most parishes do support the destitute, just not to the full extent that they should. The money that goes to the bishop normally disappears into diocesan administration and supporting the bishop's household; the poor rarely see much.



These factors mean that most people resent paying the tithe, and indeed much of the tension between the Church and the people can be traced back to this.

### ECCLESIASTIC WEALTH

The tithe is not the only source of ecclesiastic wealth. Many monasteries and bishops also own manors, and collect the income from those just as mundane nobles do. Wealthy churchmen risk becoming corrupted and falling from their high calling. Many abbots, in particular, fail to live up to the standards expected of monks. While they do not, technically, own anything, they have complete control over the use of very large amounts of money.

Many radical priests preach against the extreme wealth of the higher clergy, and a few believe that all clergy should be truly poor, just as Christ was. This is not, however, a common view at this time. Most reformers simply want greater simplicity, enough wealth to support the clergy and give them time to carry out their spiritual duties, but not enough to pay for fine clothes, feasts, and great retinues of servants.

### CANON LAW

The Church has its own law, canon law, and members of the clergy are, in theory, immune from prosecution under the law of the state. Any ordained man is a member of the clergy; nuns fall under the jurisdiction of canon law as well. Many scholars are in minor orders, and a certain degree of learning is supposed to be a precondition for ordination. Thus, it is not uncommon to check for *benefit of clergy* by seeing whether someone can read.

Canon law is set by Papal pronouncements, and interpreted by canon lawyers. In theory canon law cases are judged by bishops, but most bishops appoint deputies to hear cases for them. Canon law procedures are complex and not entirely clear, and a case can be spun out for a very long time.

In addition, canon law does not hand out physical punishment, as the Church should not shed blood, and does not allow ordeals or torture. A common punishment is to strip someone of their clerical status, but this is much less serious than being hanged. As a result, people accused of crimes often try to get clerical status, if they can, and kings try to restrict the application of these privileges, to stop people literally getting away with murder.


Non-clergy also fall under canon law, but for more restricted offenses. Most sexual offenses are tried by canon law, including adultery and fornication, and disputed wills also come before the bishop's court. Heresy is also within the responsibility of the ecclesiastic courts.

### HERESY

A heretic is a Christian who does not believe as the Church believes. Jews, therefore, are not heretics, as they are not Christians. Heresy is an offense under canon law, and grounds for *excommunication*, that is, for expulsion from the community of Christians. It is also, technically, grounds for execution, but that penalty is rarely applied. In addition, only *contumacious* heretics are punished. A contumacious heretic is one who refuses to admit his error when confronted with it by the church. Any heretic who admits that he was wrong and swears that he rejects his former errors is forgiven, and escapes punishment. The Church does not punish mistakes, only refusal to correct mistakes.

### MONASTIC ORDERS

The introduction of monasticism into the West dates from about A.D. 340 when St. Athanasius visited Rome accompanied by the two Egyptian monks, Ammon and Isidore, disciples of St. Anthony. The publication of the "*Vita Antonii*" some years later and its translation into Latin spread the knowledge of Egyptian monasticism widely and many were found in Italy to imitate the example thus set forth. The first Italian monks aimed at reproducing exactly what was done



in Egypt and not a few actually went to live in Egypt or Palestine, thought to be better suited to monastic life than Italy. As however the records of early Italian monasticism are very scant, it is best to discuss the early monastic tradition as set out by St. Benedict.

## BENEDICTINES

Saint Benedict was not the founder of Christian monasticism, since he lived two centuries after its beginnings in Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor. He became a monk as a young man and thereafter learned the tradition by associating with monks and reading the monastic literature. He was caught up in the monastic movement but ended by channeling the stream into new and fruitful ways. This is evident in the Rule which he wrote for monasteries, which was and is still used in many monasteries and convents in High Medieval Europe.

Tradition teaches that St. Benedict lived from 480 to 547, though we cannot be sure that these dates are historically accurate. His biographer, St. Gregory the Great, pope from 590 to 604, does not record the dates of his birth and death, though he refers to a Rule written by Benedict. Scholars debate the dating of the Rule though they seem to agree that it was written in the second third of the sixth century.

According to Gregory's Dialogues, Benedict was born in Nursia, a village high in the mountains northeast of Rome. His parents sent him to Rome for classical studies but he found the life of the eternal city too degenerate for his tastes. Consequently he fled to a place southeast of Rome called Subiaco where he lived as a hermit for three years tended by the monk Romanus.

The hermit, Benedict, was then discovered by a group of monks who prevailed upon him to become their spiritual leader. His regime soon became too much for the lukewarm monks so they plotted to poison him. Gregory recounts the tale of Benedict's rescue; when he blessed the pitcher of poisoned wine, it broke into many pieces. Thereafter he left the undisciplined monks.

Benedict left the wayward monks and established twelve monasteries with twelve monks each in the area south of Rome. Later, perhaps in 529, he moved to Monte Cassino, about eighty miles southeast of Rome; there he destroyed the pagan temple dedicated to Apollo and built his premiere monastery. It was there too that he wrote the Rule for the monastery of Monte Cassino though he envisioned that it could be used elsewhere.

The thirty-eight short chapters of the Second Book of Dialogues contain accounts of Benedict's life and miracles. Some chapters recount his ability to read other persons' minds; other chapters tell of his miraculous works, e.g., making water flow from rocks, sending a disciple to walk on the water, making oil continue to flow from a flask. The miracle stories echo the events of certain prophets of Israel as well as happenings in the life of Jesus. The message is clear: Benedict's holiness mirrors the saints and prophets of old and God has not abandoned his people; he continues to bless them with holy persons.

## AUGUSTINIANS

The Augustinians date from 1243 when a decree, *Incumbit Nobis*, issued by Pope Innocent IV, called on several monastic communities in Tuscany to unite themselves into a single religious order with the Rule and way of life of St. Augustine.

They began to exercise pastoral care around their hermitages and soon spread to Rome and Florence. By 1250 they had spread to England, Iberia, France and the Holy Roman Empire.

Ordained a priest in 391, Augustine obtained the use of a garden at Hippo (in modern day Algeria) to build a monastery for his lay community. He later wrote a Rule for his brothers, inspired by the Christian community in Jerusalem:

*Before all else, live together in harmony,  
being of one soul and one heart seeking  
God.*



When he became bishop of Hippo he chose to reside in his episcopal house but continued to live a community life with his clergy. Later a monastery of women was established within the city. Augustine's ideal soon spread to other parts of Africa. Several of the brothers were ordained bishops and brought their previous monasticism to other local churches. In fifth-century Africa Augustinian-inspired monasteries numbered approximately 35. Between the years 430 and 570 this life-style was carried to Europe by monks and clergy fleeing the persecution of the Vandals.

Tradition holds that monks and hermits, dispersed by the Vandal invasion of North Africa in the fifth century, fled to Europe where they established monasteries, particularly in northern and central Italy. In 1244 Pope Innocent IV formed the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine by uniting several groups of hermits and ordered them to follow the Rule of St. Augustine. The Order spread rapidly throughout Europe, taking an active part in ecclesiastic and university life. The English

Augustinians were known as the Austin Friars, Augustinian Hermits, or White Friars, because they sometimes wore a white habit.

The order has been apostolic from its beginning, following the model of fraternity lived by the Apostles and found in the early Christian community. It also carries out the mandate of the Church to proclaim the good news of the Gospel. From the beginning, the Augustinians have tended toward a universal service to the needs of the Church. The medieval orders work to make Europe the common home of Christianity by apostolic activity in the churches and by a presence in the universities. They are able to move from country to country with a sense of universality which overcomes national boundaries, thus Christianizing culture through study and spreading the gospel through missions.

## CISTERCIANS

On 21 March 1098, the saintly abbot of the thriving Benedictine Abbey of Molesme, Robert, led twenty-one of his monks into the inhospitable thickets of Citeaux to establish a new monastery where they hoped to follow Benedict of Nursia's Rule for Monasteries in all its fullness. The unhappy monks of Molesme, grieved by the loss of their holy leader, soon obtained a papal command for his return. The new struggling community continued until 1109 under the leadership of Alberic, who introduced the idea of lay brothers being accepted as full members of the monastic family, making it possible for the monks to be free to follow all the demands of the Benedictine Rule. Stephen Harding, who succeeded Alberic at the helm of the community, welcomed the dynamic Bernard of Fontaines, who came in 1112 with thirty relatives in tow.

Before Bernard died in 1153 he had not only founded the great Abbey of Clairvaux which would become a focal point for all of Christendom, but he personally sent forth men to start sixty-five other houses while his brother abbots started another 235. Stephen and the other founders were



## ST BERNARD

Bernard, the founding abbot of Clairvaux Abbey in Burgundy, was one of the most commanding Church leaders in the first half of the twelfth century as well as one of the greatest spiritual masters of all times and the most powerful propagator of the Cistercian reform. He was born in Fontaines-les-Dijon in 1090 and entered the Abbey of Citeaux in 1112, bringing thirty of his relatives with him, including five of his brothers-- his youngest brother and his widowed father followed later. After receiving a monastic formation from St. Stephen Harding, he was sent in 1115 to begin a new monastery near Aube: Clairvaux, the Valley of Light.

Bernard's spiritual writing as well as his extraordinary personal magnetism began to attract many to Clairvaux and the other Cistercian monasteries, leading to many new foundations. He was drawn into the controversy developing between the new monastic movement which he preeminently represented and the established Cluniac order, a branch of the Benedictines. This led to one of his most controversial and most popular works, his *Apologia*. Bernard's dynamism soon reached far beyond monastic circles. He was sought as an advisor and mediator by the ruling powers of his age. More than any other, he helped to bring about the healing of the papal schism which arose in 1130 with the election of the antipope Anacletus II. It cost Bernard eight years of laborious travel and skillful mediation. At the same time he labored for peace and reconciliation between England and France and among many lesser nobles. His influence mounted when his spiritual son was elected pope in 1145. At Eugene III's command he preached the Second Crusade and sent vast armies on the road toward Jerusalem. In his last years he rose from his sickbed and went into the Rhineland to defend the Jews against a savage persecution.

He laid out a solid foundation for the spiritual life in his works on grace and free will, humility and love.

Bernard died at Clairvaux on 20 August 1153. He was canonized by Pope Alexander III on 18 January 1174.

determined to keep alive the pristine observance of the Rule which they had come to Citeaux to establish. To this purpose they created a *Charta caritatis*, a constitution which bound all Cistercian abbots to come to Citeaux annually for a general chapter. It also bound all the houses to a common observance and set up a system of visitation which respected the autonomy of each house but assured its fidelity. The order continued to expand and by 1200 there were over 500 houses.

## FRANCISCANS

It is customary to say that St. Francis founded three orders: the Friars Minor, the Poor Ladies (or Clares), and the Brothers and Sisters of Penance.

Having gathered about twelve disciples around him (1207-08), St. Francis of Assisi appeared before Innocent III, who, after some hesitation, gave verbal sanction to the Franciscan Rule. Thus was legally founded the Order of Friars Minor (*Ordo Fratrum Minorum*), the precise date being, according to an ancient tradition in the order, 16 April 1209. His friars having rapidly increased in number and spread over various districts of Italy, St. Francis appointed, in 1217, provincial ministers (*ministri provinciales*), and sent his disciples farther afield. At the general chapter of 1219 these missions were renewed and other friars dispatched to the East, to Hungary, to France, and to Iberia. Francis himself visited Egypt and the East, but the innovations introduced during his absence by


some of the friars caused his speedy return in 1220. In the same year he resigned the office of general of the order, which he entrusted first to Peter of Cattaneo, on whose early death (10 March 1221) he appointed Elias of Cortona. Francis, however, retained a certain supreme direction of the order until his death on 3 October 1226.

Elias of Cortona, as the vicar of Francis, summoned the regular Pentecost chapter for the following year, and on 29 May 1227, Giovanni Parenti, a jurist, was chosen as first successor of St. Francis and first minister-general. He has often been regarded as a native of Florence, but he probably came from Rome. Gregory IX employed the new

general on political missions at Florence and Rome, authorized the Minorites to lay out their own cemeteries (26 July 1227), and charged them with the direction and maintenance of the Poor Clares (1 December 1227). In 1228 and the succeeding years, Elias of Cortona laboured zealously at the construction of a church to be dedicated to Francis of Assisi, who was canonized by Gregory IX on 16 July 1228. On the day following, the pope himself laid the foundation stone of this church at Assisi destined to receive the body of St. Francis, and he shortly afterwards entrusted to Thomas of Celano the task of writing the biography of the saint, which he confirmed on 25 February 1229. The transportation of the saint's body from the church of San Giorgio to the new basilica took place on 22 May 1230, three days before the appointed time, and Elias of Cortona, possibly fearing some disturbance, took possession of the body, with the assistance of the civic authorities, and buried it in the church (where it was discovered in 1818). Elias was censured and punished for this action in the Bull of 16 June 1230.

Elias meanwhile devoted all his energy to the completion of the magnificent church (or rather double church) of S. Francesco, which stands on the slope of a hill in the western portion of Assisi, and of the adjacent monastery with its massive pillars and arcades. His election as general in 1232 gave him freer scope, and enabled him to realize the successful issue of his plans. As a politician, Elias certainly possessed genius. His character, however, was too ostentatious and worldly, and, though under his rule the order developed externally and its missions and studies were promoted, in consequence of his absolutism there arose in the order an antagonism to his government, in which the Parisian masters of theology and the German and English provinces played the most prominent part. Unable to stem this opposition, Elias was deposed, with Gregory IX's approval, by the Chapter of Rome (1239), and the hitherto undefined rights and almost absolute authority of the general in matters of income and legislation for the order were considerably restricted. Elias later





threw in his lot with Frederick II (Hohenstaufen), and was excommunicated in consequence.

Albert of Pisa, who had previously been provincial of Germany and Hungary, was chosen at the chapter of 1239 to succeed Elias, but died shortly afterwards (23 January 1240). On All Saints' Day 1240, the chapter again met and elected Haymo of Faversham, a learned and zealous English Franciscan, who had been sent by Gregory IX (1234) to Constantinople to promote the reunion of the Schismatic Greeks with the Apostolic See. Haymo, who with Alexander of Hales, had taken part in the movement against Elias, was zealous in his visitation of the various houses of the order. He held the Provincial Chapter of Saxonia at Aldenburg on 29 September 1242, and, at the request of Gregory IX, revised the rubrics to the Roman Breviary and the Missal.

After Haymo's death in 1244, the General Chapter of Genoa elected Crescenzo Grizzi of Jesi (1245-47) to succeed him. Crescenzo instituted an investigation of the life and miracles of St. Francis and other Minorites, and authorized Thomas of Celano to write the "*Legenda secunda S. Francisci*".

John of Parma, who succeeded to the generalship (1247), belongs to the more rigorous party in the order. He is most diligent in visiting in person the various houses of the order. John of Parma also shares the apocalyptic views of the Joachimites, or followers of Joachim of Floris, who had many followers in the order. These beliefs have the distinct possibility of brining the Franciscans and the Papacy in conflict.

## THE MILITARY ORDERS

Included under this term is every kind of brotherhood of knights, secular as well as religious. Historians of the military orders have enumerated as many as a hundred, even after eliminating the apocryphal and stillborn. This great number is explained by the eagerness with which the Middle Ages welcomed

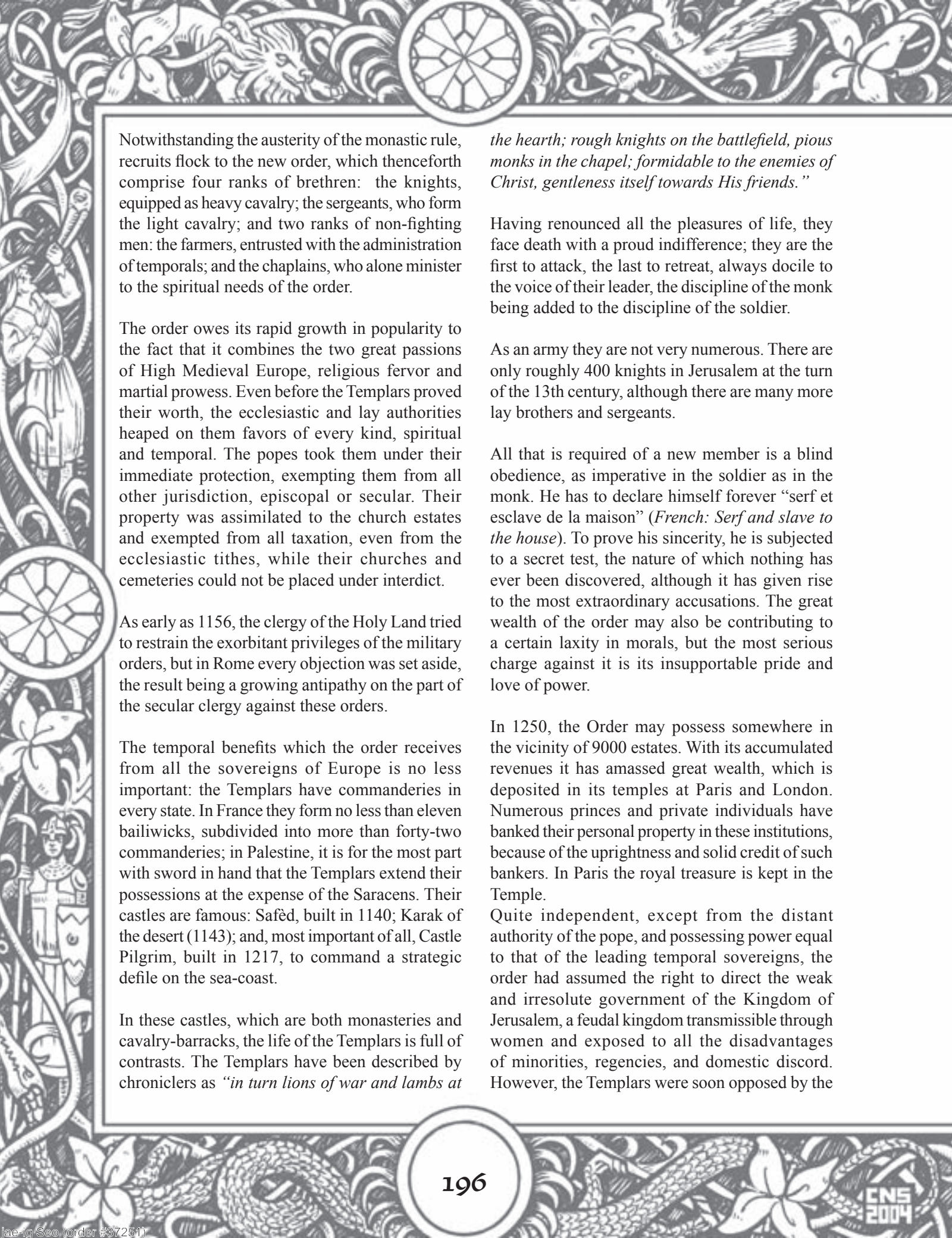
an institution so thoroughly corresponding to the two occupations of that period, war and religion. Royalty afterwards utilized this new idea to strengthen its own position or to reward faithful nobles, creating secular orders of knighthood until there was no country without its royal or princely order.

## THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

The Knights Templars were the earliest founders of the military orders, and are the type on which the others are modelled.

Immediately after the conquest of Jerusalem, the Crusaders, considering their vow fulfilled, returned to their homes. The defense of this precarious conquest, surrounded as it was by Saracen neighbors, remained. In 1118, during the reign of Baldwin II, Hugues de Payens, a knight of Champagne, and eight companions bound themselves by a perpetual vow, taken in the presence of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, to defend the Christian kingdom. Baldwin accepted their services and assigned them a portion of his palace, adjoining the temple of the city; hence their title "pauvres chevaliers du temple" (Poor Knights of the Temple). Poor indeed they were, being reduced to living on alms, and, so long as they were only nine, they were hardly prepared to render important services, unless it was as escorts to the pilgrims on their way from Jerusalem to the banks of the Jordan, then frequented as a place of devotion.

The Templars had as yet neither distinctive habit nor rule. Hugues de Payens journeyed to the West to seek the approbation of the Church and to obtain recruits. At the Council of Troyes (1128), at which he assisted and at which St. Bernard was in attendance, the Knights Templars adopted the Rule of St. Benedict, as recently reformed by the Cistercians. They accepted not only the three perpetual vows, besides the crusader's vow, but also the austere rules concerning the chapel, the refectory, and the dormitory. They also adopted the white habit of the Cistercians, adding to it a red cross.



Notwithstanding the austerity of the monastic rule, recruits flock to the new order, which thenceforth comprise four ranks of brethren: the knights, equipped as heavy cavalry; the sergeants, who form the light cavalry; and two ranks of non-fighting men: the farmers, entrusted with the administration of temporals; and the chaplains, who alone minister to the spiritual needs of the order.

The order owes its rapid growth in popularity to the fact that it combines the two great passions of High Medieval Europe, religious fervor and martial prowess. Even before the Templars proved their worth, the ecclesiastic and lay authorities heaped on them favors of every kind, spiritual and temporal. The popes took them under their immediate protection, exempting them from all other jurisdiction, episcopal or secular. Their property was assimilated to the church estates and exempted from all taxation, even from the ecclesiastic tithes, while their churches and cemeteries could not be placed under interdict.

As early as 1156, the clergy of the Holy Land tried to restrain the exorbitant privileges of the military orders, but in Rome every objection was set aside, the result being a growing antipathy on the part of the secular clergy against these orders.

The temporal benefits which the order receives from all the sovereigns of Europe is no less important: the Templars have commanderies in every state. In France they form no less than eleven bailiwicks, subdivided into more than forty-two commanderies; in Palestine, it is for the most part with sword in hand that the Templars extend their possessions at the expense of the Saracens. Their castles are famous: Safed, built in 1140; Karak of the desert (1143); and, most important of all, Castle Pilgrim, built in 1217, to command a strategic defile on the sea-coast.

In these castles, which are both monasteries and cavalry-barracks, the life of the Templars is full of contrasts. The Templars have been described by chroniclers as *"in turn lions of war and lambs at*

*the hearth; rough knights on the battlefield, pious monks in the chapel; formidable to the enemies of Christ, gentleness itself towards His friends."*

Having renounced all the pleasures of life, they face death with a proud indifference; they are the first to attack, the last to retreat, always docile to the voice of their leader, the discipline of the monk being added to the discipline of the soldier.

As an army they are not very numerous. There are only roughly 400 knights in Jerusalem at the turn of the 13th century, although there are many more lay brothers and sergeants.

All that is required of a new member is a blind obedience, as imperative in the soldier as in the monk. He has to declare himself forever *"serf et esclave de la maison"* (*French: Serf and slave to the house*). To prove his sincerity, he is subjected to a secret test, the nature of which nothing has ever been discovered, although it has given rise to the most extraordinary accusations. The great wealth of the order may also be contributing to a certain laxity in morals, but the most serious charge against it is its insupportable pride and love of power.

In 1250, the Order may possess somewhere in the vicinity of 9000 estates. With its accumulated revenues it has amassed great wealth, which is deposited in its temples at Paris and London. Numerous princes and private individuals have banked their personal property in these institutions, because of the uprightness and solid credit of such bankers. In Paris the royal treasure is kept in the Temple.

Quite independent, except from the distant authority of the pope, and possessing power equal to that of the leading temporal sovereigns, the order had assumed the right to direct the weak and irresolute government of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, a feudal kingdom transmissible through women and exposed to all the disadvantages of minorities, regencies, and domestic discord. However, the Templars were soon opposed by the

Order of Hospitallers, which had in its turn become military, and was at first the imitator and later the rival of the Templars. This ill-timed interference of the orders in the government of Jerusalem only multiplied the problems of the embattled Kingdom, and this at a time when the formidable power of Saladin threatened the very existence of the Latin Kingdom. While the Templars sacrificed themselves with their customary bravery in this final struggle, they were, nevertheless, partly responsible for the downfall of Jerusalem.

## THE KNIGHTS OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN

The origins of the order have given rise to learned discussions, to fictitious legends and hazardous conjectures. The unquestionable founder was one Gerard, whose birthplace and family name has been sought in vain. On the other hand, his title as founder is attested by a contemporary official document, the Bull of Paschal II, dated 1113, addressed to "*Geraudo institutori ac praeposito Hirosolimitani Xenodochii*". This was certainly not the first establishment of the kind at Jerusalem. even before the crusades, hostelrys were indispensable to shelter the pilgrims who flocked to the Holy Places, and in the beginning the hospitia were nothing more. They belonged to different nations; a Frankish hospice is spoken of in the time of Charlemagne; the Hungarian

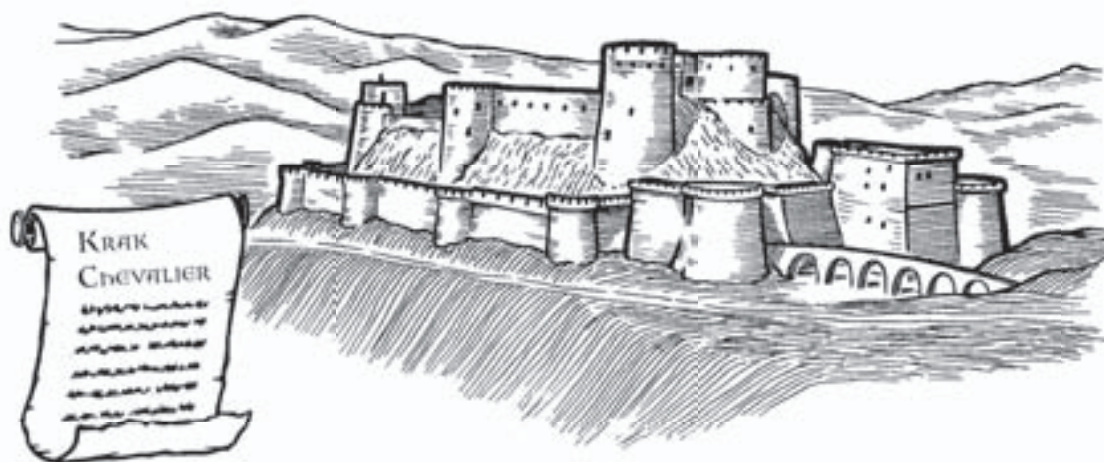
hospice is said to date from King St. Stephen (year 1000). The most famous was an Italian hospice about the year 1050 by the merchants of Amalfi, who at that time had commercial relations with the Holy Land.

Attempts have been made to trace the origin of the Hospitallers of St. John to this foundation, but it is obvious to remark that the Hospitallers had St. John the Baptist for their patron, while the Italian hospice was dedicated to St. John of Alexandria. Moreover, the former adopted the Rule of St. Augustine, while the latter followed that of the Benedictines.

Like most similar houses at that time, the hospice of Amalfi was in fact merely a dependency of a monastery, while Gerard's was autonomous from the beginning.

Before the Crusades, the Italian hospital languished, sustained solely by alms gathered in Italy; but Gerard profited by the presence of the crusaders, and by the gratitude felt for his hospitality, to acquire territory and revenues not only in the new Kingdom of Jerusalem, but in Europe -- in Sicily, Italy, and Provence.

Thanks to the resources accumulated by Gerard, his successor, Raymond of Provence (1120-60), caused the erection of more spacious buildings near the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and



henceforth the hospice became an infirmary served by a community of hospitallers.

Strictly speaking, therefore, the Hospitallers of Jerusalem only began with Raymond of Provence, to whom they owe their Rule. This Rule deals only with their conduct as religious and infirmarians, there being no mention of knights. It especially sets forth that the hospital shall permanently maintain at its expense five physicians and three surgeons. The brothers were to fulfil the duties of infirmarians.

A pilgrim, from about the year 1150, places the number of sick persons cared for at 2000. Raymond continued to receive donations, and this permitted him to complete his foundation by a second innovation. To accompany and defend at need the arriving and departing pilgrims, he defrayed the cost of an armed escort, which in time became a veritable army, comprising knights recruited from among the crusaders of Europe, and serving as a heavy cavalry. He recruited men from among the natives of mixed blood, who served as light cavalry armed in the Saracen fashion. With this innovation originated the most ancient military dignities in the order: the marshal, to command the knights, the turcopolier, for the light cavalry. Later the grand masters themselves went into battle.

Thus the Order of St. John imperceptibly became military without losing its hospitaller character.

The statutes of Roger de Moulins (1187) deal only with the service of the sick; the first mention of military service is in the statutes of the ninth grand master, Alfonso of Portugal (about 1200). In the latter a marked distinction is made between secular knights, externs to the order, who served only for a time, and the professed knights, attached to the order by a perpetual vow, and who alone enjoyed the same spiritual privileges as the other religious. Henceforth the order numbered two distinct classes of members: the military brothers and the brothers infirmarians. The brothers chaplains, to whom was entrusted the divine service, formed a third class.



The history of the Hospitallers of Jerusalem is involved in that of the Latin Kingdom of the same name, with which the order was associated in prosperity and adversity. When the kingdom was at the height of its glory, the Hospitallers possessed no fewer than seven strongholds, some situated on the coast, others in the mountains; of these Margat and Krals, in the territory of Tripoli, are the most famous. They enjoy the revenues of more than one hundred and forty estates (casalia) in the Holy Land. As to their European possessions, in the thirteenth century, the Hospitalers have about nineteen thousand manses or manors.

## ORDER OF SAINT JAMES OF COMPOSTELA

Founded in the twelfth century, the Order of Saint James of Compostela owes its name to the national patron of the Iberian kingdoms, St. James the Greater, under whose banner the Christians of Galicia began in the ninth century to combat and drive back the Muslim Moors. Compostela, in Galicia, the centre of devotion to this Apostle, is neither the cradle nor the principal seat of the order. The Knights of Santiago are headquartered in the town of Uclés, in the Castilian Province of Cuenca; here the grand master habitually resides, aspirants pass their year of probation, and the rich archives of the order are preserved. The Order of Santiago (Castilian for James) is one of the Military Orders akin to the Knights Templar and Teutonic Knights.

The order received its first Rule in 1171 from Cardinal Jacinto (later Celestine III), then legate in Spain of Alexander III. Unlike the other Reconquista orders of Calatrava and Alcántara, which followed the severe Rule of the Benedictines of Citeaux, Santiago adopted the milder Rule of the Canons of St. Augustine. In fact at León they offered their services to the Canons Regular of St. Eloi in that town for the protection of pilgrims to the shrine of St. James and the hospices on the roads leading to Compostela. This explains





the mixed character of their order, which is both hospitaller and military.

They were recognized as religious by Alexander III, whose Bull of 5 July 1175, was subsequently confirmed by his successors. The order comprised several affiliated classes: canons, charged with the administration of the sacraments; canonesses, occupied with the service of pilgrims; religious knights living in community, and married knights. The right to marry, which other military orders only obtained at the end of the Middle Ages, was accorded them from the beginning under certain conditions.

Their military history is linked with that of the Spanish states. They have been pivotal in assisting in driving out the Moors, doing battle with them sometimes separately, sometimes with the royal armies of Castile and Aragon.

Authority is exercised by a grand master assisted by a Council of Thirteen, which elects the grand master and has the right to depose him for due cause; they have supreme jurisdiction in all disputes between members of the order. The first grand master, Pedro Fernández de Fuente Encalato, died in 1184.

## KNIGHTS OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER

Neither the name of a founder nor a date of foundation can be assigned to the so-called Order of the Holy Sepulcher. It is, in reality, a secular confraternity which gradually grew up around the most august of the Holy Places. It was for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulcher that the crusades were organized; it was for its defense that military orders were instituted. During the Middle Ages this memorable relic of Christ's life on earth is looked upon as the mystical sovereign of the new Latin state.

Godfrey of Bouillon desired no other title than that of Defender of the Holy Sepulcher, and

different Latin princes, Bohemond of Antioch, and Tancred, acknowledged themselves its vassals. It was natural that the Holy Sepulcher also had its special knights.

In the broad sense of the word, every crusader who has taken the sword in its defense might assume the title from the very moment of being dubbed a knight. Those who were not knighted had the ambition of being decorated knights, preferably in this sanctuary, and of being thus enabled to style themselves Knights of the Holy Sepulcher par excellence. The fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1244 does not suspend pilgrimages to the Tomb of Christ, or the custom of receiving knighthood there, and, once the custody of the Holy Land is entrusted to the Franciscans, they continue this pious custom and give the order its first grand masters.

The official arrival of the Friars Minor in Syria dates from the Bull addressed by Pope Gregory IX to the clergy of Palestine in 1230, charging them to welcome the Friars Minor, and to allow them to preach to the faithful and hold oratories and cemeteries of their own. Thanks to the ten years' truce concluded during the preceding year between Frederick II of Sicily and the sultan, the Franciscans are able to enter Jerusalem, but they are also the first victims of the violent invasion of the Khorasmians in 1244.

Nevertheless, the Franciscan province of Syria continues to exist with Acco as its seat. The monks quickly resume possession of their convent of Mount Zion at Jerusalem, to which they have demonstrated their claim with the blood of their martyrs and where they have obstinately retained their foothold in spite of continued persecution and attacks.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# EQUIPMENT

### EQUIPMENT

This chapter covers some of the equipment that is available to characters in High Medieval Europe. The items presented include the weapons and armor common to Western Europe as well as some common items that may be useful during your travels. This section is not meant to be comprehensive, nor is it representative of all areas of Europe at all times.

### MONEY, COINAGE & PRICES

Prices fluctuate wildly during the medieval period, from day to day and even between towns and villages. Silver coins of varying weight, purity and worth are circulated by nearly anyone who can afford to build and staff a mint. Most mints are run, at least in name, by the king but there are some that are run by rebellious nobles, and even some banking houses. Nominally, there is a set number of coins that can be made from one pound of silver. In practice, this number varies substantially between mints and kingdoms. It is common practice to weight coins to determine their value in the medieval world. Gold coins exist but generally they are used only for very large transactions and very few nobles, let alone commoners, will ever see one.

For ease of play, we will assume a standard coinage for all areas and tone down the cycle of inflation/deflation. The standard coin is the silver penny but the GM is encouraged to call it by its regional name (denier, denarius, etc.) to add atmosphere. We will use the English version of the penny (d) for our calculations. The prices that follow for goods and services also do not accurately reflect the medieval period. They have been adjusted for game balance.

### BARTER & SERVICE

There are many parts of the countryside where a silver coin is practically valueless. When this is the case, value in kind, whether service or goods, can usually be substituted. GMs are encouraged to use this as an effective means of limiting money in their campaign. Though the use of coinage is becoming widespread, especially in towns, the accumulation of a large amount of money is simply not feasible. True power in Medieval Europe is tied to the land, not the coin.

## WEAPONS

Weapons come in all shapes and sizes, with men being very creative in the way they go about killing their fellow man. The following chart contains a sampling of the weapons commonly found on the medieval battlefield. The variations of weapons that are developed during this period make a complete list impossible but a fairly broad spectrum is represented. If you want or need something specific, simply take the closest item from the list and adjust as appropriate.

The Weapon table consists of the following items:

- ✱ **Weapon Type:** corresponds to the name of the weapon in common usage.
- ✱ **Class:** corresponds to the Skill that is required to effectively use the weapon. Though most Weapon Classes comprise several weapons with differing capabilities, they are generally used in a similar manner and training in one will benefit the use of the other.
- ✱ **DR:** corresponds to the Damage Rating of the weapon. This is the base damage, in Hit Points (hp), inflicted on a successful attack.
- ✱ **WT:** corresponds to the weight of the weapon in pounds.
- ✱ **Attribute:** corresponds to the character's attribute to be used as a modifier when attacking with this weapon. Some of the weapons presented use different Attributes when used in different manners. These are detailed in the weapon description later in this chapter.
- ✱ **Cost:** corresponds to the price of the weapon from a reputable smith or dealer.

- ✱ **Range:** corresponds to the range increment of the weapon. Some weapons are marked as “thrown” and this indicates that the weapon may be used as a ranged weapon without penalty to the attack roll if you have skill ranks in that weapon class.

*An asterisk (“\*”) next to one of the items in the following table means that the item has special properties. See item description for details.*

## WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

**Arrows:** Arrows may be used as melee weapons and are treated as an improvised dagger. Sometimes arrows may be retrieved after an encounter. Assume 50% are retrievable and may be used again.

**Bardiche:** The bardiche is essentially a heavy poleaxe. As a polearm it may be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Battleaxe:** A huge, often double-headed axe, the battleaxe requires two hands to wield.

**Bolts:** Bolts may be used as melee weapons and are treated as an improvised dagger. Sometimes bolts may be retrieved after an encounter. Assume 50% are retrievable and may be used again.

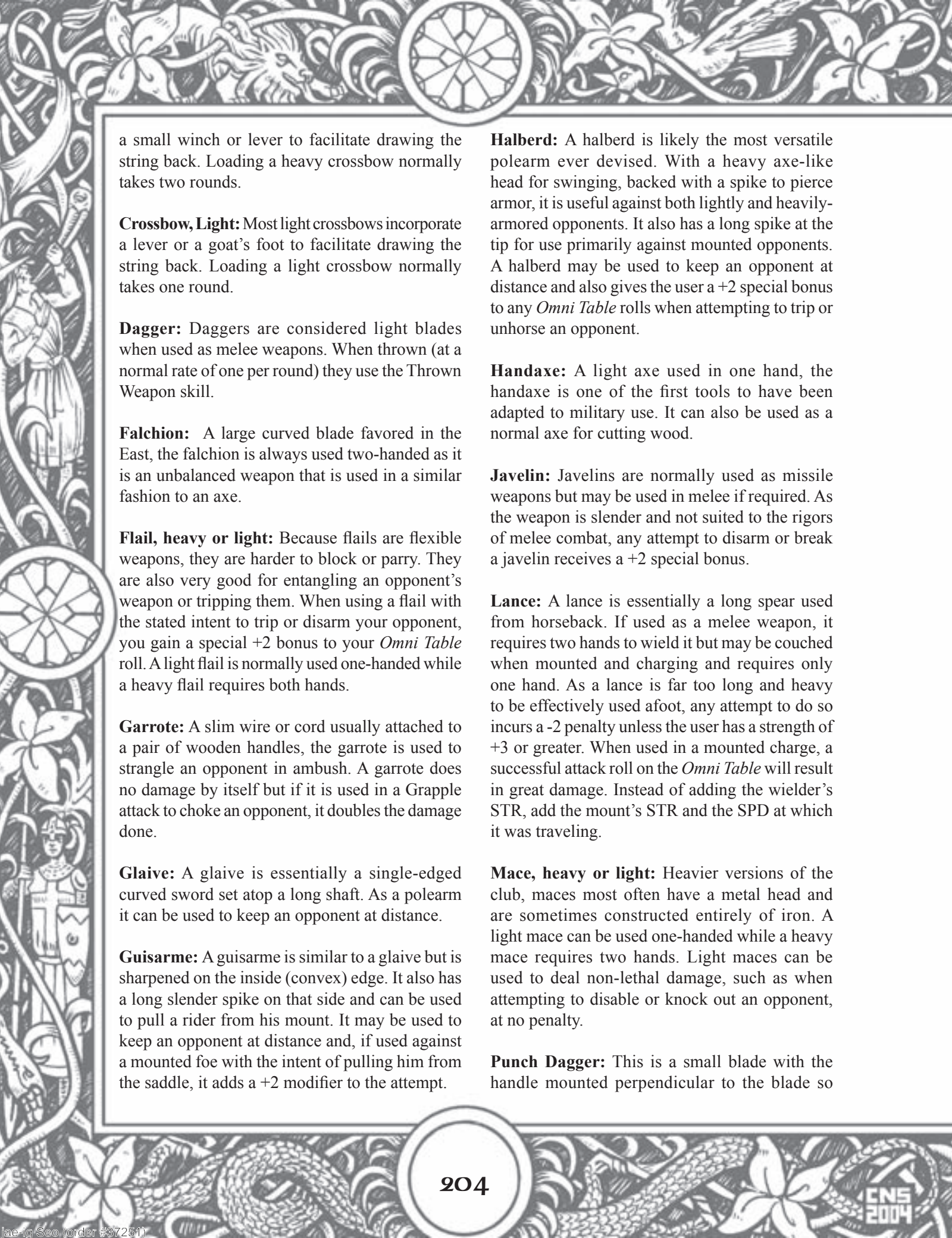
**Bow, long:** You need both hands to use any bow, regardless of its size. Longbows are far too large to use from horseback. A longbow may normally be fired every round.

**Bow, short:** You need both hands to use any bow, regardless of its size. With the proper training, shortbows may be used while mounted. A shortbow may normally be fired every round.

**Club:** Simply a piece of stout wood or a tree limb, a club can be found nearly anywhere.

**Crossbow, Heavy:** Most heavy crossbows include

Type	Class	DR	WT	Attribute	Cost	Range
<b>Bladed weapons</b>						
Dagger	Blades, light	4	2	DEX	2d	thrown
Falchion	Blades, 2-h	10	14	STR	60d	
Punch dagger	Blades, light	4	2	DEX	4d	
Scimitar	Blades, heavy	7	5	STR	15d	
Sword, 2-handed	Blades, 2-h	12	15	STR	75d	
Sword, bastard	Blades, 2-h*	10	10	STR	35d	
Sword, long	Blades, heavy	8	6	STR	15d	
Sword, short	Blades, light	6	4	DEX	10d	
<b>Hafted weapons</b>						
Battleaxe	Hafted, heavy	8	7	STR	10d	
Club	Hafted, light	6	6	STR	-	
Handaxe	Hafted, light	6	5	STR*	6d	thrown
Mace, heavy	Hafted, heavy	8	10	STR	12d	
Mace, light	Hafted, light	6	6	STR	5d	
Warhammer	Hafted, heavy	10	9	STR	12d	
<b>Spears &amp; Polearms</b>						
Bardiche	Polearms	9	20	STR	9d	
Glaive	Polearms	9	15	STR	8d	
Guisarme	Polearms	9	16	STR	9d	
Halberd	Polearms	10	18	STR	10d	
Javelin	Spears	6	4	STR*	2d	thrown
Lance	Spears	10	12	STR	10d	
Quarterstaff	Spears	6	4	STR	-	
Ranseur*	Polearms	8	13	STR	10d	
Spear	Polearms	6	6	STR*	3d	thrown
Trident	Polearms	7	8	STR*	3d	thrown
Voulge	Polearms	9	14	STR	9d	
<b>Ranged weapons</b>						
Bow, long	Bows	8	6	DEX	75d	300'
Bow, short	Bows	6	4	DEX	30d	150'
Crossbow, heavy	Crossbows	8	9	DEX	50d	200'
Crossbow, light	Crossbows	6	6	DEX	35d	150'
Sling	Sling	4	-	DEX	-	100'
<b>Other weapons</b>						
Flail, heavy	Flails	9	10	STR	15d	
Flail, light	Flails	6	5	STR	8d	
Garrote	Garrote	*	*	STR	-	
Sap*	Sap	4	2	STR	1d	
Whip*	Whip	2	4	DEX	2d	



a small winch or lever to facilitate drawing the string back. Loading a heavy crossbow normally takes two rounds.

**Crossbow, Light:** Most light crossbows incorporate a lever or a goat's foot to facilitate drawing the string back. Loading a light crossbow normally takes one round.

**Dagger:** Daggers are considered light blades when used as melee weapons. When thrown (at a normal rate of one per round) they use the Thrown Weapon skill.

**Falchion:** A large curved blade favored in the East, the falchion is always used two-handed as it is an unbalanced weapon that is used in a similar fashion to an axe.

**Flail, heavy or light:** Because flails are flexible weapons, they are harder to block or parry. They are also very good for entangling an opponent's weapon or tripping them. When using a flail with the stated intent to trip or disarm your opponent, you gain a special +2 bonus to your *Omni Table* roll. A light flail is normally used one-handed while a heavy flail requires both hands.

**Garrote:** A slim wire or cord usually attached to a pair of wooden handles, the garrote is used to strangle an opponent in ambush. A garrote does no damage by itself but if it is used in a Grapple attack to choke an opponent, it doubles the damage done.

**Glaive:** A glaive is essentially a single-edged curved sword set atop a long shaft. As a polearm it can be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Guisarme:** A guisarme is similar to a glaive but is sharpened on the inside (convex) edge. It also has a long slender spike on that side and can be used to pull a rider from his mount. It may be used to keep an opponent at distance and, if used against a mounted foe with the intent of pulling him from the saddle, it adds a +2 modifier to the attempt.

**Halberd:** A halberd is likely the most versatile polearm ever devised. With a heavy axe-like head for swinging, backed with a spike to pierce armor, it is useful against both lightly and heavily-armored opponents. It also has a long spike at the tip for use primarily against mounted opponents. A halberd may be used to keep an opponent at distance and also gives the user a +2 special bonus to any *Omni Table* rolls when attempting to trip or unhorse an opponent.

**Handaxe:** A light axe used in one hand, the handaxe is one of the first tools to have been adapted to military use. It can also be used as a normal axe for cutting wood.

**Javelin:** Javelins are normally used as missile weapons but may be used in melee if required. As the weapon is slender and not suited to the rigors of melee combat, any attempt to disarm or break a javelin receives a +2 special bonus.

**Lance:** A lance is essentially a long spear used from horseback. If used as a melee weapon, it requires two hands to wield it but may be couched when mounted and charging and requires only one hand. As a lance is far too long and heavy to be effectively used afoot, any attempt to do so incurs a -2 penalty unless the user has a strength of +3 or greater. When used in a mounted charge, a successful attack roll on the *Omni Table* will result in great damage. Instead of adding the wielder's STR, add the mount's STR and the SPD at which it was traveling.

**Mace, heavy or light:** Heavier versions of the club, maces most often have a metal head and are sometimes constructed entirely of iron. A light mace can be used one-handed while a heavy mace requires two hands. Light maces can be used to deal non-lethal damage, such as when attempting to disable or knock out an opponent, at no penalty.

**Punch Dagger:** This is a small blade with the handle mounted perpendicular to the blade so

that it forms a “T” shape. When held, the blade protrudes out from the front of the fist and is used in a punching motion. Considerable force may be applied this way but the need to keep the blade fairly small renders this weapon no more effective than a standard dagger or large knife. The punch dagger cannot be effectively thrown.

**Quarterstaff:** A quarterstaff is simply a long pole or walking stick. Not well suited for offense but superb for defense, a quarterstaff adds +2 to a user’s Defense but all *Omni Table* rolls to attack are penalized by -2. A quarterstaff can be used to deal non-lethal damage at no penalty. This weapon is used primarily by pilgrims and travelers in the middle ages.

**Ranseur:** A ranseur is basically a long spear with two smaller blades at the base of the point that sweep back. These smaller blades are designed to hook and pull an opponent from their saddle and grant the wielder a +2 special bonus to any *Omni Table* rolls for purposes of unhorsing or tripping an opponent. As a polearm, it can be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Sap:** A very simple but nonetheless effective weapon, the sap is used to render an opponent unconscious. It is created by filling a long leather bag with lead shot. The sap can thus be used to strike an opponent upon the head and causes no real damage beyond unconsciousness and a headache. A sap always causes non-lethal damage and when used with the stated intent of stunning or knocking out an opponent, confers a +2 special bonus to the *Omni Table* roll.

**Scimitar:** A light curved blade common to the Middle East, the scimitar is not considered a chivalric weapon in most European courts.

**Shield, Heavy or Light:** A shield can be used to bash an opponent but when used thus it loses its Defense bonus. A tower shield is far too cumbersome to be used to attack. The use of a shield to bash counts as a normal action and may

incur the penalty associated with multiple actions in a round.

**Sling:** A sling is a pliable piece of material or leather that is used to deliver a stone or other small object at great force. When determining damage, add the wielder’s STR.

**Spear:** A spear may be used as both a melee and a ranged weapon. As a polearm it can be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Spetum:** Similar to a ranseur but with the smaller blades pointing forward instead of back, a spetum is designed to be used to disarm opponents. When used in this fashion, a spetum grants its wielder a +2 special bonus to the *Omni Table* roll. As a polearm, it can be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Sword, 2-handed:** A huge sword, taller than most men, the 2-handed sword is far too large and heavy to use in one hand. Meant to be swung in a large arc and capable of crushing the heaviest armor, a 2-handed sword places one at a severe disadvantage when in close quarters.

**Sword, Bastard:** A bastard sword, or hand-and-a-half sword, is between a 2-handed sword and a longsword in size. Normally used with both hands, it is light enough to be used in one hand if the wielder is strong enough. To use a bastard sword one handed, you must have an STR of +2 or better.

**Sword, long or short:** The typical swords used during most of the medieval era of European history, these swords are both versatile and deadly.

**Trident:** The trident is basically a three pronged spear. It may be thrown and used in melee at no disadvantage. If used in an attempt to disarm an opponent, it adds a +2 special bonus to the *Omni Table* roll. As a polearm, it can be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Voulge:** Similar to the bardiche but with a smaller axe head, the Voulge is primarily a chopping weapon. As a polearm, it can be used to keep an opponent at distance.

**Warhammer:** A massive weapon that can crush nearly any armor and most men wearing it as well, the warhammer is a weapon greatly feared on the battlefield. Due to its weight and the ungainliness, the warhammer is a two-handed weapon.

**Whip:** The whip is not a weapon made for combat. Rather it is an adapted tool that sees use in combat or combat-like situations and therefore merits inclusion here. It is unlikely that a whip will cause any damage to an opponent wearing any amount of armor. Where the whip does shine is when it is being used to entangle or disarm. With a stated intent to disarm or trip, the wielder receives a +2 special bonus to his *Omni Table* roll.



## ARMOR

As creative as man is at finding new ways to destroy himself, he needs to be equally good at finding ways to protect himself. Armor has served this purpose from time imemorial and has been produced in a bewildering array of forms from whatever materials and tools are at hand. From the lowliest padded linen armor to the most modern reinforced mail, we present all that you need to keep yourself safe from those that would do you harm.

Most types of armor may be donned in a few minutes by anyone who is proficient in its use. If that person has help, this time is significantly reduced. Armor is not meant to be worn for extended periods of time, nor is it meant to be slept in. Armor is also generally restrictive to the wearer's movement. Depending upon the type of armor worn, this can be a significant hindrance

when attempting to perform actions requiring dexterity or speed. The Dexterity penalty simulates this and is used as a negative modifier on several skills. The skills affected have a note in their description in *Chapter 4: Skills & Talents*.

The Armor table consists of the following items:

- \* **Armor Type:** corresponds to the name of the armor in common usage.
- \* **Class:** corresponds to the Talent that is required to use the armor effectively without extra penalties.
- \* **PR:** corresponds to the amount of damage the specific armor can absorb in Hit Points (hp).
- \* **WT:** is the weight of the armor in pounds.
- \* **DEX Penalty:** corresponds to the negative modifier that is applied to certain skills as detailed in *Chapter 4 - Skills & Talents*.
- \* **Cost:** corresponds to the price of the armor in pennies (d) from a reputable armorer or merchant.

*An asterisk (\*) in one of the items in the following table means that the item has special properties. See item description for details.*

**Demi Cuir-bouilli:** Cuir-bouilli is made by boiling thick leather in oil to soften it up and then shaping to the desired form. Upon drying the leather becomes quite rigid. Demi Cuir-bouilli consists of a chest piece and braces for the forearms and shins. Sometimes it also includes shoulder protection.

**Heavy Leather:** This is thick leather fashioned into armor and worn much like normal clothing. Heavy leather is usually made by gluing several

Type	Class	PR	WT	DEX Penalty	Cost
<b>Light Armors</b>					
Demi Cuir-bouilli	Light Armor	4	10	-2	35d
Heavy Leather	Light Armor	4	12	-2	25d
Quilted	Light Armor	3	12	-3	10d
Soft Leather	Light Armor	3	10	-1	15d
<b>Medium Armors</b>					
Bezainted Leather	Medium Armor	5	30	-3	45d
Cuirass	Medium Armor	5	25	-2	65d
Cuir-bouilli	Medium Armor	6	25	-3	70d
Mail Shirt	Medium Armor	7	35	-2	100d
<b>Heavy Armors</b>					
Mail Hauberk	Heavy Armor	8	50	-4	125d
Reinforced Mail	Heavy Armor	10	60	-5	200d
Scale mail	Heavy Armor	7	50	-4	90d
<b>Armor Accessories</b>					
Aillettes	Accessory	+1	4	-	10d
Greathelm*	Accessory	+1	6	*	35d
Grevieres	Accessory	+1	5	*	12d
Helm*	Accessory	+1	4	-	15d
Mail Coif*	Accessory	+1	5	-	20d
Vambraces	Accessory	+1	4	*	12d
<b>Shields</b>					
Buckler	Shield	-	2	-	2d
Heater Shield	Shield	-	4	-1	5d
Kite Shield	Shield	-	5	-2	5d
Round Shield	Shield	-	5	-1	4d
Tower Shield	Shield	-	12	-3	10d

\* - This item has special properties, see description for details.

layers of regular leather together to form a sheet about a quarter inch thick.

**Soft Leather:** Soft leather armor is simply light armor made from standard leather. This is often worn alone by archers or as a layer to prevent chaffing under heavier armor. Soft Leather armor usually consists of a jerking or shirt, with sleeves and a pair of leggings.

**Quilted Armor:** Usually created by sandwiching cotton or similar padding material between two layers of cloth; quilted armor is both cheap and easy to produce. Quite often the only armor available to peasants, it provides little protection from any but the crudest weapons. Quilted armor can also be layered over or under most other types. When worn beneath heavier armor or on its own, quilted armor normally consists of a coat and leggings. When worn as an outer layer, it normally



consists of a sleeveless vest that sometimes reaches the knees.

**Bezainted Leather:** Generally soft leather armor with attached metal rings or disks, bezainted leather, and the closely related ring mail armor, are quite popular for their ease of construction and cost. The rings or discs, called bezaints because of their similarity to coins, are often sewn to the leather backing in a pattern. This type of metal reinforced leather armor usually is worn as a coat and leggings.

**Cuirass:** A cuirass, the French term for a breastplate, is simply a metal covering for the upper torso. Although it covers the chest and stomach area of the wearer along with the back, it provides no protection at all for the legs or arms. Though now rarely seen on the battlefield, the cuirass is sometimes worn over soft leather or quilted armor, but is too restrictive to wear with anything heavier, like mail.

**Cuir-bouilli:** A full suit of boiled leather armor. A cuir-bouilli suit normally consists of a breastplate, full arm and leg coverings and a helmet, all worn over a suit of soft leather armor. The soft leather armor is included as part of the table.

**Mail Shirt:** A shirt or vest made of interwoven metal links. The mail shirt is a shorter and lighter version of the standard chain mail hauberk. It usually only covers the torso of the wearer and may have sleeves that reach the elbows. This armor does not provide any protection for the head or legs.

**Mail Hauberk:** Chain mail armor is currently the very best money can buy. The hauberk is similar to a chain shirt except longer, often reaching the knees and worn over a suit of quilted armor to prevent chaffing. Heavy yet pliable, mail armor can turn most weapons with ease.

**Reinforced Mail:** A term given to mail armor when it is augmented with metal plates in vital areas, reinforced mail consists of a standard mail

hauberk with added protection at the shoulders, the lower legs and the forearms. This type of armor is popular with wealthy crusading knights.

**Scale mail:** Metal plates attached to leather backing, scale mail armor has been around for centuries. It gets its name from the fact that the metal plates often resemble fish scales in shape and pattern. A standard suit of scale armor consists of a long shirt that covers the torso and upper arms and reaches just past the waist.

**Aillettes:** Aillettes are metal shoulder guards that are attached to other armor to provide added protection from downward slashing attacks. Aillettes are often painted or inscribed with heraldic or chapter symbols.

**Greathelm:** A large and heavy helmet with full face protection, the Greathelm is most often worn by mounted knights. Due to the enormous protection that this helmet provides, any attempts to stun or render the wearer unconscious suffer a special -2 penalty. Furthermore, since the Greathelm restricts the wearer's ability to see, he receives a special -2 penalty to all PER-based skills.

**Grevieres:** Grevieres are metal plates that provide protection to the lower legs of the wearer. For our purposes here, we will also assume grevieres may include knee guards and possible upper leg plates as well. Wearing grevieres reduces your movement by 5' per round.

**Helm:** This is one of a number of metal or hard leather helms intended to protect you from strikes to the head. Helms differ from region to region and are too numerous to catalogue here. This type of helm is normally open faced and does not restrict vision to the degree of the greathelm. Wearing a helm reduces the chances of being struck unconscious or stunned by -1 and also reduces the wearer's PER-based skills by a special penalty of -1.

**Mail Coif:** A hood made out of chain mail, this

coif was often worn under a greathelm for added protection but could be worn alone as well. Aside from the added DR, it provides no added protection versus stunning or other strikes, but does reduce PER-based skills by -1.

**Vambraces:** Vambraces are metal cuffs that cover the forearms for added protection. These may include elbow guards and upper arm protection as well. Vambraces, because they restrict movement of the arms somewhat, reduce any attacks you make by -1 on the *Omni Table*.

**Buckler:** A small shield held in one hand, the buckler is most often used by skirmishers or anyone not intending to get into melee combat. Small and usually round, the buckler is of limited use on the battlefield against the heavy weapons being used but it does well when used as an agile parrying shield in one-on-one combat.

**Heater Shield:** The standard knightly shield used throughout Europe, the heater shield is often decorated with heraldic symbols to ensure its user is recognized in combat. The similarly sized round shield used in Muslim lands counts as a heater shield.

**Kite Shield:** A long shield that tapers to a point at the bottom, the kite shield is favored in areas with a strong Norman influence. As effective as a heater shield in melee, it adds an additional +1 your defense if used from horseback because its added length protects the legs better.

**Round Shield:** A large round wooden shield used primarily by Norse warriors, it is often bound with a strip of metal around the edge. This metal edge does not prevent a heavy strike from biting into the wooden shield, rather it serves to make the weapon harder to remove, thus enabling the shield-bearer to disarm his opponent. If you are using a round shield, you receive a special +2 bonus to any stated attempts to disarm an opponent who is using a slashing weapon.

**Tower Shield:** A large heavy shield made of wood and covered with leather, the tower shield is usually rectangular and wraps around the user somewhat. Too heavy to be used effectively alone, the tower shield is designed to be used in formations where each overlaps the ones on either side. It is also sometimes used when conducting a siege as shelter for crossbowmen. By ducking behind it, the tower shield may be used as a form of cover from distance attacks.

## COMMON EQUIPMENT

Aside from weapons and armor, there are many things that any character will find useful in his travels across the medieval landscape. Some of the more common items that are available are listed below.

The Other Equipment table consists of the following items:

- ☼ **Item:** corresponds to the name of the item in common usage.
- ☼ **WT:** corresponds to the weight of the item in pounds. Keep in mind that some items have no associated weight (a night's lodging at an inn) or they are not normally carried (a horse).
- ☼ **Cost:** is the price of the item in pennies (d) from a reputable merchant.

Common Items		
Item	Cost	Weight
Backpack (25 lb. capacity)	2d	2 lb.
Blanket, wool	1d	3 lb.
Bottle, glass	4d	—
Candle, 12 (1 hour, illuminates 10' radius)	2d	—
Case, map or scroll	1d	½ lb.
Chain, iron (25 ft.)	5d	16 lb.
Chalk, 12 pieces	3d	—
Chest (wood)	5d	25 lb.
Fishhook, 1 dozen	1d	—
Fishing net, large	3d	15 lb.
Fishing net, small	2d	5 lb.
Flask (glass)	3d	1½ lb.
Flint and steel	1d	—
Grappling hook	3d	5 lb.
Hammer, carpenter	2d	2 lb.
Hammer, smith	4d	3 lb.
Ink, 1 oz.	10d	—
Lantern (6 hours with 1 pint of oil, illuminates 30' radius)	3d	2 lb.
Lock, Simple	1d	1 lb.
Lock, Average	3d	1 lb.
Lock, Good	15d	1 lb.
Musical instrument, common	10d	3 lb.
Musical instrument, large or complex	25d	1-35 lb.
Oil, 1 pint	1d	1 lb.
Paper, 12 sheets	3d	—
Parchment, 12 sheets	1d	—
Pick, miner's	3d	8 lb.
Pot, iron	2d	10 lb.
Pouch, small	1d	½ lb.
Rope, hemp (50 ft.)	2d	8 lb.
Rope, silk (50 ft.)	10d	4 lb.
Sack, large	2d	½ lb.
Sledge	4d	10 lb.
Spade or shovel	2d	8 lb.
Tent, canvas (4 people)	5d	20 lb.

Item	Cost	Weight
Torch, pitch	1d	1 lb.
Vial, glass	1d	1/10 lb.
Waterskin	1d	4 lb.
Whetstone	1d	1 lb.
<b>Food &amp; Lodging</b>		
Inn stay, night		
Good		—
Common		—
Poor	½d	—
Meals, 1 day		
Good		—
Common		—
Poor		—
Trail		1 lb.
Beer or Ale, glass		1 lb.
Common (pitcher)		6 lb.
Wine, glass		½ lb.
Common (pitcher)		6 lb.
Fine (bottle)		1-1/2 lb.
Stabling (per day)		—
<b>Mounts and Related Gear</b>		
Barding, Chain	250d	125 lb.
Barding, Cloth	50d	15 lb.
Barding, Padded	75d	25 lb.
Bit and bridle	2d	2 lb.
Feed (grain, per day)	½d	10 lb.
Donkey	16d	—
Horse, draft	200d	—
Horse, pack	750d	—
Horse, riding	150d	—
Horse, war	1200d	—
Pony	30d	—

CHAPTER NINE

GAMEMASTERS  
ONLY

The following material is designed for use by the Gamemaster. Players are advised not to read this section, as it contains information that their characters should not know.

RULES TIPS FOR  
GAMEMASTERS

The *High Medieval* game uses a simple rule system based on the *Omni Table*. All actions in the game are resolved by the same procedure: compare the character's Skill or Attribute Rating with the Degree of Difficulty. Then take the difference (positive, negative, or zero) and add it to a d20 roll. Consult the *Omni Table* for the result.

Players contribute by describing the Intent of their character's actions to the GM before rolling on the *Omni Table*. The GM combines the character's Intent with the *Omni Table* die result to interpret the outcome of the attempted action. With a few variations pertaining to the use of Combat, Magic, and Skills, these are the basics of the rule system.

Make sure you have a good grasp of how the rules

work before starting to play. Take it slowly at first, and don't be too concerned if you or your players make mistakes at first. Once everyone becomes acquainted with the rules and their respective roles, the game will run much more smoothly.

INTERPRETING OMNI TABLE  
RESULTS

Here are some tips for interpreting *Omni Table* results:

Describe the *Omni Table* result in terms of how close the character came to their stated intent. When the player describes her character's action in the scene, picture what could happen if:

- ✱ The character performs extremely well (Critical Success)
- ✱ The character performs at their skill level (Full Success)
- ✱ The character barely succeeds (Partial Success)
- ✱ The character fails in the attempt (Failure)
- ✱ The character bungles the action (Mishap)

Use the player's intended result as the basis for your description. For example:

**Player:** *"I approach the guard, attempting to capture his attention with my outrageous costume and conspiratorial demeanor. Hopefully, his back will be turned long enough for Pierre to slip the keys from his belt."*

**GM:** *"Okay. Roll on the Omni Table and add your Deception skill rating to the result."*

**Player:** *"Hmmm. A 10: partial success."*

**GM:** *"The guard is not really fooled by your act, and seems very suspicious. He can't help but look your way, however, giving Pierre the chance he needs. He'd better be careful with those fingers, now that the guard is on the alert."*

If the *Omni Table* result is associated with a number (such as damage in combat) try to include a bit of description as well, to add color to the scene. For example:

*Instead of saying: "You take 6 hp of damage," try something like: "The bandit's serrated blade bites into your upper arm, drawing a jagged line of blood across your sleeve."*

Don't forget the environment. Characters don't always fail due to a lack of skill. Sometimes things just don't go their way. When a Player Character fails at a task that they ordinarily could accomplish (striking an inferior opponent, for example, or scaling a simple wall) you can describe their failure as a result of unforeseen circumstances or unfavorable conditions. For example:

*"The Moor's shield does not buckle as you anticipated, but instead deflects your*

*expertly placed blow" or "The brick you were using as a foothold crumbles just as you place your weight on it."*

Be careful with this technique, though. Too much of it and the game becomes slapstick comedy.

## DETERMINING DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Setting the degree of difficulty for a given action is another important GM job. For many actions, the rulebook provides guidelines for selecting difficulty numbers. In combat, for example, the degree of difficulty in hitting a foe is equal to the combat skill rating of the defender. When spellcasting, the Level of the spell acts as the degree of difficulty. Not all actions are so cut-and-dried, however.

As a tool for the harried GM, a sliding scale of difficulty numbers is provided below. Remember that degree of difficulty is always based on how hard it is for an average, "novice" (0-rating) practitioner to accomplish the action.

Difficulty	Modifier
No chance of failure	No need to roll
Any fool could do it	+10
Very Easy	+7
Easy	+5
Simple	+3
Routine	+0
Tricky	-3
Difficult	-5
Very Difficult	-7
Extreme	-10
Beyond extreme	-15+

Armed with these numbers, the ratings of the characters, and some common sense, the GM can run a *High Medieval* campaign without ever looking in this book for a rule. For any given

action, no matter how unusual, ask yourself: "Would this be difficult for the average skilled practitioner? Very difficult? Routine?" When you have your answer, you have your degree of difficulty and you're ready to roll. Or not to roll, as the case may be.

## TO ROLL OR NOT TO ROLL

There's no need to call for an *Omni Table* roll for each and every action. Sometimes, simply knowing the character's trait rating is enough to judge the outcome of an action.

*For example, Cailean the Hunter is wandering through an open market while visiting the city of Dublin in Ireland. Cailean's Hansa companion, Heinrich, is somewhere in the sea of men, frantically searching for the Hunter. Frustrated, Heinrich stands on a cart and begins yelling and waving his arms, "CAILEAN! OVER HERE!" The GM decides that Cailean is quite a distance away, and is entranced by a collection of Moorish pottery. Still, there is no need to roll in this case. With his +5 PER, Flynn is one of the most observant beings on the island. He hears Heinrich's vulgar hooting and begins moving in the opposite direction.*

Only during stressful or unusual situations is a roll required to accomplish an ordinarily simple task. Just be consistent about what does and does not require a die roll in your game.

## INTERPRETING SPELL

### CASTING DIE ROLLS

Interpreting the results of spell casting die rolls can be tricky for beginning Gamemasters, particularly when the player-spellcaster is still getting used to the peculiarities of *High Medieval* magic. In each case the GM should try to take into account the individual circumstances, be fair and patient, and use common sense. Here are some examples:

A full success does not always yield the same result.

*A full success while hurling fireballs underwater may not be as impressive as the same stunt used on wooden carriage wheels while on dry land. These secondary effects are important, and depend a great deal on the vividness of the player's roleplaying, description, and statement of Intent.*

A full success isn't always required for an attempted action to be effective. Even pathetic results can sometimes do the trick, if the Intent is good:

*"I use a puff of elemental air to blow that vial of poison into the fireplace."*

Even a critical success doesn't always work. If the player's Intent is flawed, no amount of powerful Spellcasting will help.

*A critical Influence success still has no effect on illusory people or mindless undead.*

Intent should always be clear and to the point. If a Player is having difficulty interpreting her characters' intentions, don't be afraid to apply penalties.

*"I whip up a swirling wind of hurricane force, knocking my enemies to the ground as I soar into the air and hurl lightning at the incoming Venetian warships. Oh and the wind is actually a summoned Air Elemental."*

One thing at a time, please. Explain to your players that Intent should be limited to a single, clear course of action.

# CHARACTER

## CREATION & THE GM

Character Creation is an important part of the game, not just for players but for the Gamemaster as well. As GM, you should be ready to help players create their characters and help fill in their characters' personal history. The procedure for Character Creation is explained in *Chapter 1 - The Rules*.

During the course of play you'll also need to create a number of Non-Player-Character (NPCs), who'll be used to play all of the "supporting" roles in your adventures: from villains to friends and relatives of the Player Characters, plus "extras" such as traders, shop owners, inn keepers, bandits, and so on. Not all NPCs will need to be fleshed out enough that stats are required. Indeed, the lone beggar the characters speak to on their way into the town or the guards upon the walls need no stats at all. Even with this in mind, players, being the creative bunch they are, will invariably do something unexpected that requires a certain amount of information be known about a certain NPC. To help you get started, we've included a list of NPCs that can be used as Player Contacts.

## QUICK NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS (NPCs)

Instructions on quick NPC creation, i.e. , social class plus culture template x ability level.

OR

**Alchemist:** INT +2; Alchemy +4, Appraise +2

**Assassin:** DEX +1, PER +1, CR +2; , Deception +3, Stealth +3, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Bounty Hunter:** STR +1, CON +1, PER +1, CR +3, HP +10%; Brawling +2, Ride +3, Stealth +2, Tracking +3, Weapon <choice> +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Courtesan:** DEX +1, CHA +1; Etiquette +2, Perform <choice> +2, Seduction +4

**Craftsman:** DEX +1; Handicraft (Armorer/Artificer/Artisan/Weaponer) <choose one> +4, Appraise +2

**Engineer:** DEX +1, INT +1; Handicraft (Artificer/Artisan) <choose one> +3, Knowledge (Engineering) +4

**Entertainer:** DEX +1, PER +1, CHA +1; Etiquette +2, Perform <choice> +4, Perform <choice> +3

**Farmer:** CON +1; Knowledge (Agriculture) <choose one> +4, Operate Conveyance <choice> +1, Profession (Laborer) +1

**Fisherman:** CON +1; Operate Conveyance (boat) +2, Swim +2

**Healer:** INT +1, PER +1; Heal +4, Herb Lore +3

**Laborer:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +1, HP +10%; Brawling +1, Gambling +1, Profession (Laborer) +4

**Magi:** INT +2, MR +4; Knowledge (Arcane Lore) +3, Language (latin) fluent, Language <greek> +2, Magical Order <choice> plus 4 Modes <choice> +3

**Miner:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +1, HP +10%; Brawling +1, Gambling +1, Profession (miner) +4, Weapon (pickaxe) +1

**Official:** INT +1; Administration +2, Etiquette +2, Perform (Oratory) +1, Diplomacy +4

**Priest:** INT +1, WIL +1, CHA +1, MR +2; Theology +4, Heal +1, Perform (Oratory) +3, some have Invocation plus 4 Modes of choice +3

**Rogue:** DEX +1, PER +1, CR +1; Evade +1, Knowledge (Streetwise) +3, Stealth +3, Disable Mechanism +3, Weapon (club or dagger) +1

**Scholar:** INT +2; Language <choice> fluent, Knowledge <choice> +4, Knowledge <choice> +2

**Sentinel:** STR +1, PER +1, CR +3, HP +10%; Brawling +1, Concentration +3, Weapon <choice> +3



**Spy:** INT +2, PER +2, CR +1; Deception +4, Evade +3, Language <choice> native, Stealth +3, Deduce Motive +3, Disable Mechanism +3, Weapon <choice> +2

**Thug:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +3, HP +10%; Brawling +3, intimidate +2, Gambling +1, Profession (Laborer) +1, Knowledge (streetwise) +1, Weapon <choice> +3

**Trader:** INT or PER +1; Appraise +3, Diplomacy +3, Operate Conveyance <choice> +1

**Warrior:** STR +1, CON +1, CR +4, HP +10%; Siegecraft/Command/Mounted Combat/Knowledge (tactics) <choose one> +3, Brawling +2, Weapon <choice> +4, Weapon <choice> +2

## HIRELINGS

The following is a list of various trades and professions and the average salaries earned by members of these groups. It should be noted that, like merchandise, the price of services can vary considerably according to the laws of supply and demand. GMs should feel free to adjust pay rates by as much as -50% in areas where members of a given profession are common or up to +200% in areas where the reverse is true.

### Administrator

Individuals of this profession include foremen, castellans, seneschals, officials, agents, bureaucrats, and all others hired to oversee the operational details of a business, estate, or government agency. Salary is 2-10 shilling per week per level of the administrator.

### Artificer/Artisan

Included in this category are all builders and craftsmen, such as metalsmiths, gemcutters, glassworkers, tanners, clothiers, woodworkers, carvers, carpenters, masons, limners, wainwrights, cobblers, tinkers, armorers, weaponers, fletchers, and so forth. Salary is 1-4 shillings per week per level of ability.

### Astrologer

A qualified astrologer will generally charge about 15 shillings for a complete and detailed reading of an individual's future aspects. Gypsy fortunetellers, rural mystics, or persons of similar repute may charge considerably less — or a good deal more.

### Beast Handler

These individuals can be hired to tame and train wild beasts, either full-time or on an individual basis. Salary is typically 2-6 shillings per week per level of ability; double or triple this amount if the beast in question is particularly dangerous.

### Boatsman

Private boat or barge owners may agree to transport individuals, their mounts, and/or cargo by river or lake for 1-4 shillings per passenger, mount, or hundred pounds of cargo. Large passenger carriers may offer reduced rates; conversely, fishermen and small-craft owners may demand unreasonable sums for their services. Boatsmen asked to venture into dangerous waters may demand two, three, or even four times the usual rates.

### Caravan Master

Caravan masters will transport large sums of goods overland for fairly reasonable rates: generally, 10-20% of the value of the goods. Caravans may agree to take on passengers for a fee of 6-10 shillings per hundred miles; food and water may or may not be included.

### Crew

Crewmen can be hired to help operate any type of sea vessel for 1 shilling per week per level of ability. Crew trained as guards may command twice normal salary.

### Engineer

Engineers can be hired to design plans for roadways, fortifications, excavations, structures, or conveyances, typically for a fee of about 10% of the estimated cost of the construction.

### **Guide**

Most wilderland guides will work for 1 shilling per day per level of ability. Double or triple this salary if the guide must venture into extremely hazardous regions.

### **Healer**

A healer's services may be obtained for as little as a few copper pieces, or as much as a small fortune. Much depends upon the healer's reputation and past accomplishments, as well as the demand for her talents. Faith healers commonly work for "free," but request that the recipients make a generous donation to their cause.

### **Laborer**

Individuals in this category include bearers, farm workers, herders, mud miners, iron miners, sand miners, kitchen help, stable hands, and so forth. Most laborers are grossly underpaid, averaging just 2-6 pennies per week per level of ability.

### **Magician**

A spellcaster can be hired to cast a single spell or counterspell for 2-20 shillings, or more if the spell or counterspell desired is of a very dangerous sort. Those who seek full-time work typically charge a minimum of 10 shillings per week; generally speaking, the more skillful and/or renowned the spellcaster, the higher his or her fees will be. In places where individuals of this profession are sought by the Church or secular authorities, fees can be triple or more.

### **Mercenary**

This profession includes common infantry, sell-swords, caravan or harem guards, sentinels, and "specialists" such as archers. Few are paid more than 5 shillings per week, regardless of ability, though specialists and personal bodyguards often command more. Sergeants earn 1-3 shillings per week more.

### **Merchant**

Merchants receive a commission of 10-60% of the retail price on all goods that they sell.

### **Scholar**

Understudies, such as scribes and apprentice linguists, will generally charge only a token fee (1-20 pennies) for a consultation or for each day required to research a particular subject. Master-level scholars can command as much as 20 shillings per day, or even more.

### **Spy**

Spies specialize in information-gathering, ranging from the common informer to the most artful saboteurs. The fees charged by these individuals also vary widely, from as little as a few pennies to hundreds of livres.

## CALENDAR OF NOTABLE DATES

Though Christians in Medieval Europe celebrate many holidays and festivals during the year, some are more important than others. Many of the most important Christian feasts and festivals are adapted from earlier Roman or pagan festivals and centered on the agricultural calendar. These dates mark the beginning or end of a season or certain crop rotation cycles. Others celebrate Biblical events such as the death and resurrection of Christ or the deaths or births of the many Christian saints. The following list of feast days and holidays is by no means complete but should give a good overall view.

## MAJOR CHRISTIAN FEAST DAYS

**Michaelmas** – September 29. Marking the feast of Saint Michael, Michaelmas is often celebrated by the eating of a well-fattened goose and coincides with the date upon which the harvesting of the summer season is completed. Traditionally, this event also marks the day to settle accounts and make new leases. A major pagan holiday, Mabon, exists near this date as well, marking the autumnal equinox.

**Christmas** – December 25. Medieval Christians celebrate their grandest feast during the harshest time of year. Celebrating the birth of Christ, this two-week period, from Christmas Eve to Twelfth Day (January 6), becomes an extended vacation for all workers. In many rural areas, the Lord of the manor often gives gifts of food, clothing and extra firewood to servants. New Year's takes place during this time and adds to the festivities, and "First Gifts" are often exchanged on this day, thus beginning the tradition of gift-giving. The Christmas season ends with the celebration of Epiphany.

Several older holidays take place near this time of year as well. Saturnalia, an ancient Roman festival, was celebrated with orgies and wild parties and the Celts marked this time of year as well as one of renewal.

**Easter** – the date varies, usually between March 22 and April 25. The most important date in the Christian calendar, Easter marks the resurrection of Christ and the rebirth of hope for humanity. All work ceases, even that of Kings, on this most holy of days. The week preceding Easter is marked with extra prayers and contemplation and is taken very seriously both by the Church and the people. Not only work, but also hunting, games and sports are forbidden during this period to ensure that everyone attends mass. Easter coincides with the Vernal equinox as well, and many of the traditions from earlier celebrations and feasts have made their way into the Christian holiday.

**Whitsunday** – Also called Pentecost, this occurs 50 days after Easter. The Vigil of Pentecost is traditionally a day of fasting. Whitsunday, is the second greatest Feast of the liturgical year, following Easter, and celebrates the coming of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples. Vestments on Whitsunday are red, and attendance at mass is mandatory, especially for those newly baptized to the church.

## LESSER CHRISTIAN CELEBRATIONS

**Candlemas** – February 2. This feast of the purification of the Virgin Mary is so-named because it involves a penitential procession with the people carrying candles through the church yard, past the graves and into the church. The candles carried this day are decorated and kept throughout the year to be burned as protection against storms and sickness.



**Mayday** – May

1. Never actually a Christian festival, Mayday is a pagan holdover from several older cultures that celebrated the arrival of spring. Eventually the Church outlawed Mayday but it still survives under any number of disguises. There are a number of traditions which vary by region, but gathering hawthorn or 'may' blossoms is prevalent nearly everywhere. Women dance around the may-pole and sing songs. It is a day of merry-making and fun where a person pairs off for the day as a couple with a person of their own choosing, though not necessarily with a person they will eventually marry.

## DISEASES AND AFFLICTIONS

Physicians in medieval society are a busy lot. Though wounds or other injuries are the main reason the services of a physician are sought, they are also called upon to treat a variety of ailments and disease.

Medieval medicine is an amalgam of the scientific and the spiritual. In the early middle ages, following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, most medical knowledge is based upon surviving Greek and Roman texts, preserved in monasteries. Ideas about the origin and cure of disease are not purely secular, but are often based on a spiritual world view. In this era, there is no clear tradition of scientific medicine, and accurate observations go hand-in-hand with spiritual beliefs as part of the practice of medicine.

Arabic anatomical and pharmaceutical knowledge, far greater in scope than that of medieval Europe's learning, is quickly assimilated. However, practical anatomy, viewed best through dissection of corpses, is rarely studied due to the Church's proscription against desecrating a person's corpse.

Treatment vary from physician to physician, but some practices are adopted by much of the continent. Isolation of the sick and contagious is commonplace and possibly the greatest step taken in medieval medicine. Bleeding and the use of leeches to draw "excess blood" from the patient are commonplace. Some surgeries are performed to cure patients of common ailments, such as hernias, cataracts and the removal of gallstones. Surgery is often more dangerous than the actual ailment.

Folk cures and poultices made from herbs are often the only options for rural peasants. Most villages have wise women who tended to the sick and the pregnant.

Hospitals are beginning to be built in Europe during the 13th century. These early buildings are mostly constructed of wood, whitewashed to appear clean, but often are less sanitary even than common housing.

Some of the diseases that plagued medieval society during the middle ages are detailed below.

### **The Ague** (Malaria)

A parasitic disease spread by mosquitoes.

**Symptoms:** Shaking chills, then severe fever and headache. After several hours the sufferer begins sweating profusely whereupon the headache and fever disappear. Attacks recur every two to three days. Weakness, some anemia.

**Results:** Survivable. Limited immunity.

**Game terms:** Level 7. Rarely fatal with proper attention to the fever. -2 to all Abilities for the duration during an attack, due to fever and shakes. Normally, the infection runs its course in two to three weeks.

**Notes:** Chronic in southern and low-lying areas of Europe, including southern and eastern England. The name "malaria" comes from the Italian for "bad air," which was believed to cause the disease before the connection to mosquitoes was discovered.

### **The Bloody Flux** (Dysentery)

An infection caused either by bacteria or amoebas, normally spread through consuming food and water contaminated by infected fecal matter.

**Incubation:** 1-6 days (bacterial), 1-4 hours (amoebic)

**Symptoms:** (bacterial): diarrhea, fever, cramps, dehydration. In advanced stages, bloody stools, meningitis, conjunctivitis, and arthritis. (amoebic): Acute form - watery, bloody stools, cramps, fever, weakness; Chronic form - intermittent diarrhea, mild abdominal discomfort.

**Result:** Generally weakened condition.

**Game terms:** Level 5. After incubation, the character suffers -1 to CON and STR for each week of infection until -5 CON is reached and death occurs.

**Notes:** Endemic in medieval armies and pretty common in cities. Dysentery likely caused more deaths in a medieval army than actual combat. Infantile diarrhea was a leading cause of death for infants.

**St. Anthony's fire** (ergotism ) also called "holy fire", "evil fire", "devil's fire", "saints' fire"

Not a disease but treated as such by the physicians of the day, ergotism is actually poisoning from a fungal infection of grain, especially rye.

**Symptoms:** (Convulsive): degeneration of the nervous system causing anxiety, vertigo, hallucinations, and the sensation of being bitten or burned; stupor, convulsions, and psychosis. (Gangrenous): constriction of the blood vessels causes reddening and blistering of skin, then blackening, with itching and burning, and finally necrosis.

**Result:** 40% mortality. Many survivors develop mental difficulties.

**Game terms:** Level 10. After consuming the infected material, characters will quickly develop the stated symptoms and -1 INT for each day untreated. If the character reaches -5 INT, the character is removed from play as he has permanently lost his mind.

**Notes:** Ergotism is primarily a rural disease, particularly in marshy areas. It most often follows crop damage or famine; especially after a severe winter and a rainy spring. As with most poisons, children are more susceptible because of their smaller body weight.

### **Gonorrhea**

A bacterial infection of the genital tract, transmitted through sexual contact.

**Incubation:** 2-8 days

**Symptoms:** (Male): After incubation, urgency and burning sensation on urination, profuse discharge of pus. Inflammation of the prostate and seminal vesicles may lead to fever and difficulty urinating. (Female): After incubation, mild urethritis; occasionally there is no outward sign of infection. If infection spreads to the upper tract, acute fever and abdominal pain. Bacteria may invade the bloodstream and produce infections in other parts of the body, most commonly arthritis; the sufferer develops fever and hot, swollen, painful joints.

**Result:** In males, symptoms normally subside in three to six weeks; in females, in a month or two. Serious infections may result in infertility for both

males and females. Sufferers may remain infectious for several months following infection.

**Game terms:** Level 10. Rarely fatal, -1 CON for duration, -5 to any Influence rolls made on the *Omni Table* where the target knows of the character's infection.

### **Influenza**

An acute, extremely contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory tract, spread by inhalation or contact.

**Incubation:** 1-2 days

**Symptoms:** Sudden onset of chills and fever, headache, general body pain, and overall malaise; weakness, nausea, eye pain, mental confusion. After 1-5 days the respiratory symptoms increase: dry or sore throat, cough, runny nose. Serious complications include bronchitis and bacterial pneumonia.

**Results:** A few months, maximum, of resistance to repeated infection. Rarely deadly in itself, influenza, if left untreated, often leads to pneumonia, which killed thousands.

**Game terms:** Level 10 (Level 15 for infection check). -2 CON for duration. If pneumonia results, a further -1 CON per week is suffered until death occurs at -5 CON.

Note: Because influenza is very contagious, it often forms epidemics, generally occurring in the winter or early spring.

### **Leprosy**

A bacterial infection, transmitted by respiration or contact, leading to disfigurement and eventually death.

**Incubation:** Variable, possibly years

**Symptoms:** Facial features begin to coarsen and the voice becomes hoarse. Pale spots appear on the skin and eyes that turn into red, raised, blister-like nodules. Skin spots are insensitive to cold, touch, and pain; hands and feet lose feeling and eventually muscle weakness and paralysis set in, usually in the extremities. Secondary infections of lesions or unnoticed wounds often become gangrenous and lead to further complications. In most cases, blindness occurs after several years. In time, the

nose, fingers and toes decay and rot and the hands become clawed.

**Results:** Eventual, lingering, inevitable death, sometimes taking over 20 years.

**Game terms:** Level 5. -1 CON and -1 CHA per year of infection until death occurs at -5 CON.

**Notes:** Though leprosy is one of the most feared diseases in the medieval world, in actuality, many people are immune. The remainder have varying resistances which causes much variation in the form and pace of the disease. Horribly, the disease may have assumed its worst form among the upper classes, as the organism requires cholesterol to grow. Lepers were quickly segregated as soon as their symptoms became obvious, though many beggars in cities suffer to varying degrees.

### Measles

A mild, highly contagious viral disease transmitted via respiration.

**Incubation:** 7-14 days

**Symptoms:** Cold-like symptoms (runny nose, dry cough, high fever, aching), plus inflamed and sensitive eyes. After three days of initial symptoms, red spots appear in the mouth, followed quickly by a red rash which starts on the face and spreads over the rest of the body. Most symptoms disappear after only a few days.

**Results:** Survivable; complications are rare but can include blindness and heart or brain damage due to high fever. Survivors are nearly always completely immune to further infection.

**Game terms:** Level 7. -1 CON and -1 INT for duration due to fever.

**Notes:** Occurs mostly in late winter and early spring. The disease is so ancient in Europe that humans tend to survive it. Primarily a childhood disease, but infants younger than 6 months have temporary immunity passed on from their mother.

### Plague

A bacterial infection, transmitted by flea bites (or occasionally by respiration), takes several different forms.

**Symptoms:** (Bubonic): After 2-6 days, necrosis of

the flea bite and heat and swelling in the nearest lymph nodes (neck, groin, or armpit); buboes can be as large as an orange and extremely painful. Headache, fever, delirium. Approximately one in five will go on to develop the pneumonic form. (Pneumonic): less common but more infectious, involves a lung infection, with coughing and sneezing. (Septicemic): rare, the infection spreads throughout body in the bloodstream; death occurs too fast (within hours) for buboes to form.

**Results:** Bubonic form: 50% to 70% mortality; other forms: 100% mortality. No immunity.

**Game terms:** Level 15 (Level 25 Septicemic). -1 CON per day after symptoms appear until death occurs at -5 CON. Survivors are generally immune for years after.

**Notes:** The horror of plague is not only in its virulence but in the frequency of its recurrence. Though the Black Death has yet to strike Europe, plague does exist and occasionally strikes towns or cities, decimating the populations.

### Smallpox (the "red plague")

A severe, highly contagious viral disease transmitted by inhalation.

**Incubation:** Approximately 12 days

**Symptoms:** High fever, chills, severe headache and backache, and general malaise. Hemorrhages (bleeding) may occur in lungs or other organs. After 4 more days a distinctive itchy rash of red lesions appears on face, arms, legs, and sometimes the trunk. The bumps soon become pus-filled blisters and, if secondary infections do not occur, they break and begin to dry up in about one week.

**Results:** Most often fatal in children of the sickly, severity varies widely between cases. Many survivors have distinctive pitted scars and complete immunity to further infection.

**Game terms:** Level 12. -2 CON and -2 STR for duration. Survivors have a 45% chance of suffering a permanent -1 CHA due to scarring.

**Notes:** Varies in severity from a mild form with few skin lesions to a highly fatal hemorrhagic form. The majority of deaths occur in the second week of the disease.

## TRAVEL RATES

All figures listed here represent the average rate of movement in miles per day (assuming 12 hours of travel time, not including rest periods or stopovers), or in some cases, miles per hour (MPH). The Gamemaster may modify these figures as necessary, according to game circumstances.

### OVERLAND TRAVEL

Method	Distance	MPH
Walking	20 miles	1.7
March, militia	23 miles	1.9
March, trained soldiers	28 miles	2.3
Mounted, riding horse	35 miles	2.9
Mounted, warhorse	37 miles	3.1
Caravan	12 miles	1

Roads, especially the many surviving Roman highways, increase movement by up to 10% and negate the penalty due to inclement weather such as rain. Roads have no effect on extreme weather or snow and ice. The bonus for road movement somewhat negates the penalty for bad terrain. Rugged terrain includes hills, light woodlands, broken terrain, etc... and reduces movement by up to 25%. Movement speed while mounted or with wagons is limited to 50%. Very Rugged terrain includes mountains, swamps, deserts, etc.... and reduces movement by up to 75%. Movement while mounted or with wagons is generally impossible, though mounts may be led at the walking speed. Inclement weather conditions may reduce rates by 50% or more on top of the above terrain restrictions.



## WATERBORNE TRAVEL

Vehicle	Distance	MPH
Cog	120 miles	10
Dragonship	192 miles	16
Galley	144 miles	12
Hulk	108 miles	9
Longboat	192 miles	16

Halve listed figures for unfavorable winds/currents, navigational hazards, etc... Crafts without oars have an effective speed of '0' if becalmed. Crafts with oars will normally move at 25% of their speed when under oar.

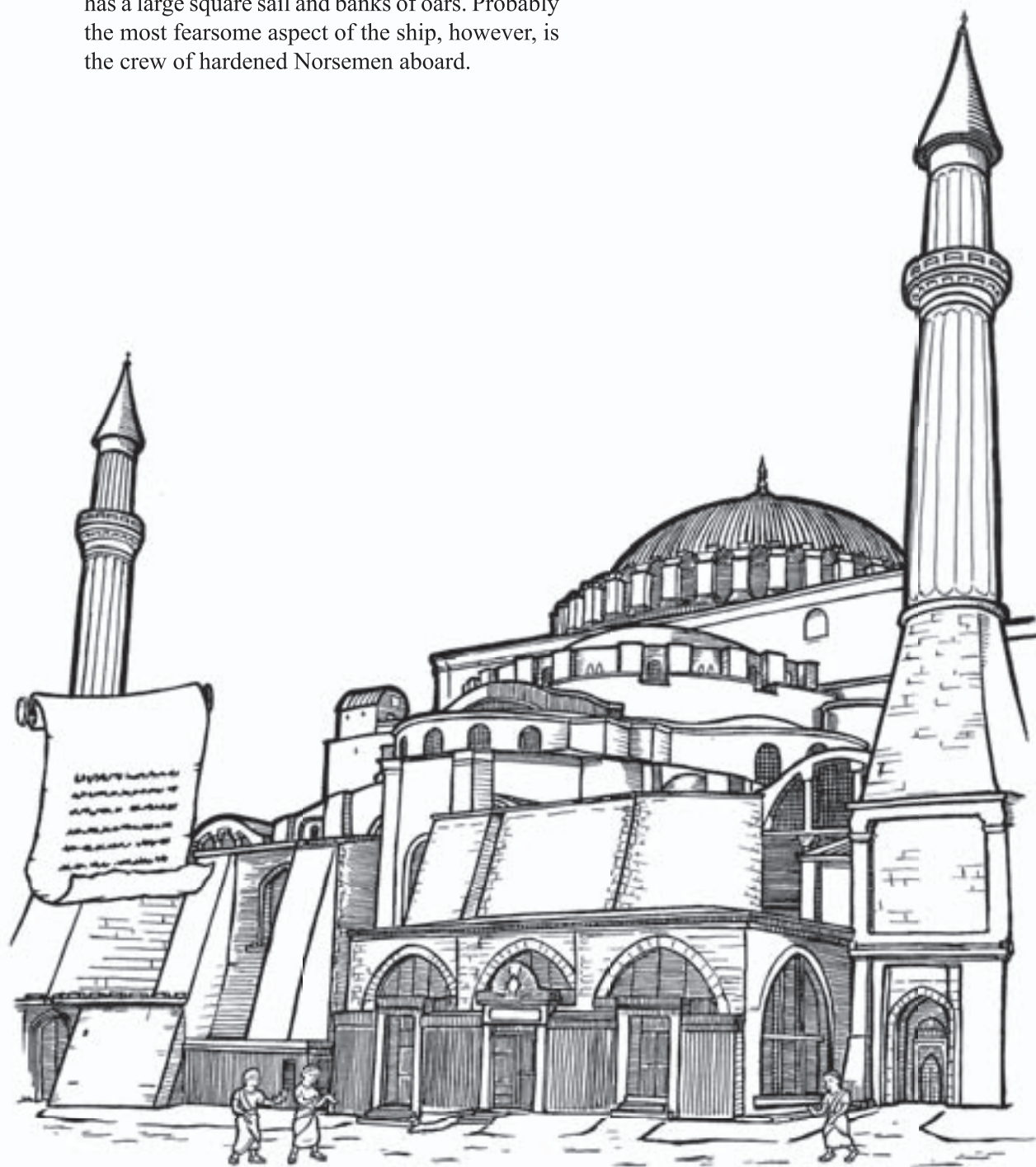
**Cog:** A cargo-carrying vessel of northern Europe, the cog developed along similar lines to the hulk. With steep sides and a flat bottom, it is mostly used in rivers or near the shore. Slightly faster and more seaworthy than the hulk, the cog is developing and becoming the primary merchant vessel of the north, most especially in the emerging Hanseatic league.

**Dragonship:** A huge version of the Viking longboat, the Dragonship is most often a great chieftain's fleet flagship. Often capable of carrying up to 300 warriors, who also serve as the oarsmen, a dragonship is the most feared vessel of her day.

**Galley:** Long and sleek, a galley is used mostly in the Mediterranean. Its main means of propulsion is by use of a large square sail but it also features one to four banks of oars for use in battle or when the wind sails.

**Hulk:** A relatively unsophisticated ship normally relegated to rivers and bays, the hulk is mostly used in the low countries of Europe. Capable of carrying large cargoes, it is not really seaworthy, nor is it very fast. The hulk is capable of movement in shallow water due to the fact that it has little or no keel.

**Longboat:** The feared ship of the Vikings, the longboat is a high-prowed, shallow draft lean craft. Made for speed and seaworthiness, the longboat voyages to all parts of the known world. Similar in layout to the classic galley of the Mediterranean, it has a large square sail and banks of oars. Probably the most fearsome aspect of the ship, however, is the crew of hardened Norsemen aboard.





## CHAPTER TEN

# BESTIARY

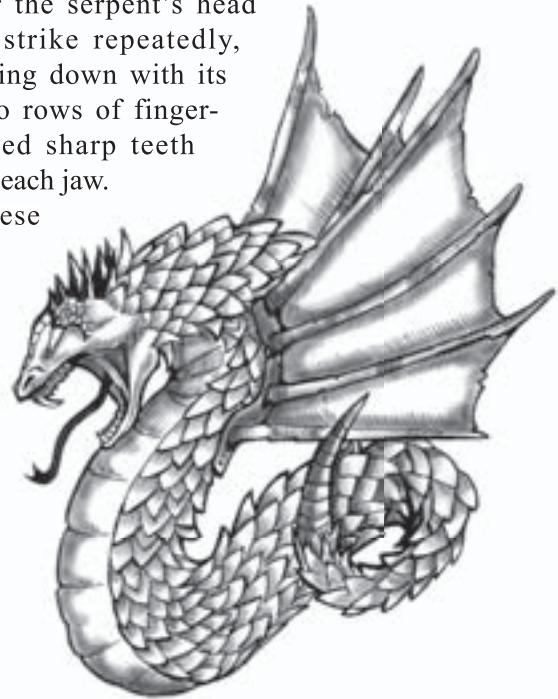
### AJATAR

A breed of winged serpent that dwells in the frosty northern climes of Europe, the Ajatar is a monstrous snake that is known to attack lone travelers or small groups. An adult Ajatar is as thick around as a strong man's thigh, and usually grow to three meters in length. It is covered in thick white scales that have defeated the sword thrusts of many a warrior, and the creature's large snake-like head is covered in spiny ridges of protruding black bone. An Ajatar's eyes are milky white, for the creature is nearly blind and can see no further than a few feet in front of its face. However, it possesses an unrivalled sense of smell; a sense which is used by the Ajatar flicking its tongue out and tasting the air.

While it is not the largest of the dreaded serpent creature of the world, it more than makes up for any perceived weakness with its unrivalled ferocity. When an Ajatar strikes, it does so from the sky. A telltale screech, like that of a hawk or eagle, is often a traveler's only warning, the noise being produced by air rushing through the ridges and bone

protrusions from the Ajatar's head and spine. When attacking, it leaps to wrap around an opponent's limbs and torso, beating its bat-like wings to further unbalance the victim. Once the prey is entangled, it is small effort for the serpent's head to strike repeatedly, biting down with its two rows of finger-sized sharp teeth on each jaw.

These



teeth break off easily and grow back in a matter of weeks. They are also known to leave vicious scars on anyone unlucky enough to be attacked.

The Ajatar is also capable of spitting poison, though it may only do this when biting a victim. This toxic saliva is capable of causing paralysis if it comes in contact with a victim's skin, or worse, a death-like sleep if it is ingested. Ajatar saliva-venom is a potent poison sometimes used to coat weapons.

Though the "snow serpents" are native to the northernmost realms of the world, regional varieties of these savage hunters exist worldwide. Ajatar that dwell in more temperate climes are green-scaled and often coil in the branches of trees before dropping on unsuspecting prey below. In desert regions, the "Lyndwurm" is a black-scaled variation of the Ajatar, and often buries itself in the sand before leaping out to fly at its prey.

**Size:** 7'-10' in length, 170 lbs.

INT -9            PER +1  
WIL +1            CHA n/a  
STR +3            DEX +1  
CON -1            SPD +1

**Ability Level:** 4-6

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 6, Tail: DR 5 per round from constriction.

**Armor:** Dense scales: PR 2

**Special Abilities:** Flight, Constriction: Treat a Constriction attempt as a Grapple attack with a +3 bonus for the agility of the serpent, Paralyzing Bite: -10 to all rolls for an hour (CON roll to resist).

**Hit Points:** 20

**Habitat:** Tundra, Icy terrain (Ajatar), Deserts, Plains (Lyndwurm).

## ANIMALS

### Brown Bear

**Size:** 8'-12' in length, 600 lbs.;

INT -9            PER +3  
WIL +1            CHA +1  
STR +8            DEX +1

CON +2            SPD +1

**Ability Level:** 4-6

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 5, Claws: DR 4

**Armor:** dense fur: PR 2

**Special Abilities:** Bear Hug: treat a Bear Hug attempt as a Grapple attack with a +1 bonus. If successful, the bear will inflict DR 2 per turn from the hug and may Bite with a special +3 bonus

**Hit Points:** 20

**Habitat:** across Europe, mostly forest and mountain.

### Lion

**Size:** 6'-8' in length, 450 lbs.

INT -7            PER +2  
WIL +1            CHA +3  
STR +6            DEX +3  
CON +1            SPD +2

**Ability Level:** 5-7

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 6, Claws: DR 4

**Armor:** thick fur: PR 1

**Special Abilities:** none

**Hit Points:** 16

**Habitat:** savannas in Africa. Lions usually live and hunt in prides of up to 12 individual adults. They are very proficient pack hunters and often lay in ambush.

### Wolf

**Size:** 5'-7' in length, 120 lbs.

INT -5            PER +4  
WIL +1            CHA +2  
STR +3            DEX +2  
CON +1            SPD +2

**Ability Level:** 3-5

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 3

**Armor:** thick fur: PR 1

**Special Abilities:** none

**Hit Points:** 14

**Habitat:** Across Europe, often near built-up areas.

### Elk

**Size:** 8'-12' in length, 650 lbs.

INT -9            PER +3  
WIL +2            CHA +0

STR +5      DEX +1  
CON +1      SPD +2

**Ability Level:** 3-5

**Attacks/Damage:** Slam, Antlers: DR 4

**Armor:** thick fur: PR 1; Special Abilities: none

**Hit Points:** 18

**Habitat:** Across Europe, mostly forests and hills.

### Boar

**Size:** 5'-6' in length, 400 lbs.

INT -9      PER +0

WIL +3      CHA -1

STR +7      DEX +1

CON +3      SPD +1

**Ability Level:** 5-7

**Attacks/Damage:** Gore: DR 6

**Armor:** thick fur: PR 2

**Special Abilities:** Boars are very aggressive when provoked. They will continue fighting for 3 rounds after being reduced to 0 HP

**Hit Points:** 18

**Habitat:** Across northern Europe, mostly forests.

### Horse, riding

**Size:** 6'-10' in length, 850 lbs.

INT -7      PER +1

WIL +1      CHA +1

STR +7      DEX +2

CON +2      SPD +4

**Ability Level:** 5-7

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 2, Stomp: DR 4

**Armor:** none

**Special Abilities:** none

**Hit Points:** 18

**Habitat:** Wherever men exist, horses are present.

## BASILISK

The lizard-like creature known as Basilisk is among the most deadly creatures in the known world. This reptilian predator resembles the vicious lizard kings that roamed the world in prehistory and it stands to reason that, along with the terrible Sea



Serpents, this monster echoes that lost age. The Basilisk is most famous for its ability to paralyze enemies and turn them to stone with a mere glance. This ability is not a greatly exaggerated legend by any means. In fact, it is all too accurate and the main reason these beasts are ruthlessly hunted.

A Basilisk roaming the wilds near a settlement is a disaster that needs immediate action. Hunters and trackers will head into the wilderness seeking to kill the creature before it can approach the settlement and wreak havoc among the people and their livestock. It is a voracious carnivore and preys mercilessly upon wild deer, cattle, sheep and even humans. It only uses its petrifying gaze as a last resort, though it is an extremely savage killer even without this power.

A Basilisk stands approximately as high as a pony or small horse. It stands on two legs that are well built for short-distance sprints and powerful leaps; each tipped by curling claws that serve as vicious kicking talons. The lizard-like head is crested with

bone spines and spikes on the forehead and around the eyebrow ridges, and the long jaws boast two rows of sharp, thin teeth that are used to scissor meat in chunks from the bone.

A Basilisk's eyes are stone-grey with black pupil slits, and only when the reptile uses its petrifying ability do they cause harm. The skull of a Basilisk can bring a surprising amount of money on the market in some cities: as much as a year's wages for one of the peasantry.

**Size:** 5'-6', Weight

INT -5            PER +3  
WIL +1            CHA n/a  
STR +3            DEX +5  
CON +3            SPD +15

**Ability Level:** 1-10

**Attacks/Damage:** Jaws: DR 9, Foot-claws: DR 7

**Armor:** Thick scales: PR 3

**Special Abilities:**

**Hit Points:** 33

**Habitat:** Forests, Plains

## BRAYGLIN

None of the relatively common Unholy races are regarded as civilized creatures by the rest of the world, and though the Brayglin is of a rare breed, it is likewise reviled, as befits a race of goblin-kin. A Brayglin is human-sized, much like an ordinary goblin, though its skin is a sickly yellow as though it suffers from a severe organ sickness. They are almost always thin to the point of emaciation, and few see the need for clothing for they dwell on the plains of Europe and far from the settlements of men. Facially, the Brayglin's eyes are slanted and completely black, set in shallow sockets. His teeth are short and flat, unsuited to chewing the flesh of animals. And, yet, a Brayglin is most definitely a carnivore, preying in packs on those who enter their lands and eating the victims raw.

Most notable about the Brayglin's obvious difference from its goblin-kin is that this strange creature is forever stagnating in a curious



prehistoric culture and mindset. They have never developed tools of their own beyond sharpened, fire-hardened wooden spears or sharp rocks to use as knives. Yet they steal the tools and weapons of those they kill (and eat) without hesitation, clearly recognizing the superiority of such items. In speech, they "converse" in a gruff, breathy form of the goblin tongue which is extremely difficult to understand, even for intelligent goblins.

The Brayglin are also adept shape-changers. Not all of these creatures appear able to perform this feat, but many can change their shape to that of a horse, albeit a malnourished and near-skeletal version of such an animal. In raids on small frontier villages or traveling groups, the Brayglin are known to ride into the battle on skinny horses, doubling their number when the "steeds" change into fellow warriors and assist the attackers.

**Size:** 5'-6', 110-150 lbs. (Goblin) / 6'-7' (Horse)

INT -3            PER +1/-1  
WIL -1            CHA -3  
STR +1/+2        DEX +0/+2  
CON -1            SPD +1/+4

**Ability Level:** 1-4

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon / Hooves: DR 3

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Shape-changing: Brayglin can change shape between their two forms as a Full Turn action.

**Hit Points:** 10+

**Habitat:** Plains

## CORPSE MAIDEN

Anyone traveling across the land and coming across the aftermath of a battlefield should be wary. In addition to the hordes of carrion birds such as vultures and crows that feast on the bodies of the slain, a traveler might chance upon a wretched demon known as a Corpse Maiden. This creature is attracted to the scent of anything freshly dead, and frequently seeks out battlefields in order to eat the flesh of the killed soldiers.

It appears as a filthy young woman covered in a mixture of grime and dried blood and has long, ragged hair that often has “mementos” of previous meals (finger bones, teeth, etc....) entwined within the dirty strands. A Corpse Maiden also has chalk-white skin under the filth on her body, and she is



never seen wearing more than scraps of clothing stolen from the dead bodies she feasts upon. Most distinctively, a Corpse Maiden always has very long, dark fingernails that she uses to slice open cadavers and skewer organs and choice hunks of flesh. These nails are iron-hard and almost unbreakable.

Corpse Maidens are feral and near-mindless demonic creatures, rendering them incapable of speaking human language. They will attack those who seek to prevent their feeding, but otherwise keep out of the way of living opponents.

On the eve of war, many soldiers pray they will not lie injured after the battle's end, and hope that their last sight in this world will not be a Corpse Maiden crouching next to them, awaiting her feast.

**Size:** As human

INT -6            PER +2

WIL +2            CHA -9

STR +2            DEX +1

CON +3            SPD +1

**Ability Level:** 1-6

**Attacks/Damage:** Claws: DR 5

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Demonic Regeneration: 1d6 HP per turn

**Hit Points:** 20+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## DEMON - FALLEN ANGEL

Exiled from the grace of God, these beings were the rebel angels that were cast into Hell when Lucifer's war against Heaven failed. They walk the underworld with hearts full of bitterness and revulsion for the world above and all of God's works. These renegade beings have been stripped of much of their former power, and now serve as little more than foot-soldiers in Hell's legions. Despite their humble status and lessened power, these beings are mighty demonic warriors when summoned to the mortal world.

Poems cannot do justice to the ethereal, haunting

beauty of true angels, though Fallen Angels have left their glory and divine appearances behind millennia ago. They are shadows of their former selves, and though they resemble the angelic beings they once were, it is a beauty hidden under layers of rusting armor, decayed robes, filthy blood-spattered skin and features wracked by anguish. When summoned by a Sorcerer, a Fallen Angel appears as a sneering and bitter creature, with rotting wings that shed blackened feathers when the demon moves. Fallen Angels are knowledgeable creatures and are summoned for their insight into the Black Arts, though they are also exceptionally useful assassins and soldiers to battle against a magician's foes. To summon a Fallen Angel, esoteric spell components are required and the summoning chamber must be washed in the blood of baptized children.

**Size:** 6', Weight

INT +10      PER +6  
WIL +15      CHA -4  
STR +18      DEX +10  
CON +12      SPD +8

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** Rusted Battle-armor: PR 5

**Special Abilities:** Flight: Fallen Angels can fly through the air at running speed. Anguished Cry: These Angels can release a terrible cry of pain and loss that resonates within the minds of all who hear it. Every time a Fallen Angel cries out in this manner, those nearby suffer a -2 to all rolls for the next three turns as their ears ring painfully and the awful scream fades from their hearing (WIL roll to resist).

**Hit Points:** 60+

**Habitat:** No restrictions

## DEMON - IMP

The lowliest and weakest beings in the realm of Hell are known as Imps. They are pesky and troublesome creatures, capable of cunning thought and malicious planning to get what they desire. However, they lack real intelligence and are physically weak compared to their betters.

Imps often appear as child-sized creatures with twisted visages, bloody skin, and stunted bat's wings. Though individual demons can appear completely different from one another, Imps seem to take great delight in appearing as demons are portrayed and described in church texts. They are sometimes summoned by magicians to carry out menial tasks or to spy on enemies. When they are in Hell, they spend their time either serving or avoiding the larger, more powerful demons and hoping to capture human souls for themselves. Summoning an Imp requires very little in the way of sacrifice.

**Size:** 1'-2', Weight

INT +1      PER +1  
WIL -1      CHA n/a  
STR -2      DEX +4  
CON +1      SPD +4

**Ability Level:** 1-8

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Limited Flight: Imps can use their stunted wings to float from great heights, ignoring the rules for falling damage. Demonic Regeneration: 1 HP per turn.

**Hit Points:** 12

**Habitat:** No restrictions

## DEMON - TORTURER

The archetypal demon that makes up the ranks of Hell's legions is the Torturer. This is the creature that wreaks pain and suffering among the trapped human souls, and serves as a powerful guard and soldier when summoned to Earth by dark sorcery. It is intelligent and undeniably malevolent, seeking to accomplish its goals by the most savage methods possible, and by inflicting as much pain as possible on those who stand in its way.

Torturers number in the millions and they are all unique in appearance. Most are vaguely human-like, though additional limbs, razor-sharp claws, chains puncturing flesh and weapons growing from the body in unnaturally-shaped jagged bone



formations are all common. A demon's face is a visage of horror in its truest form, for there are no creatures with more malice than the beasts of Hell. Summoning a Torturer requires dedicated effort and demanding sacrifice.

**Size:** 5'-8', Weight

INT -2	PER +0
WIL +3	CHA n/a
STR +10	DEX +2
CON +10	SPD +3

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Claws: DR 11, Jaws: 12 or as weapon

**Armor:** Scales/Thick hide/Bony growths: PR 4

**Special Abilities:** Flight: Winged Torturers can fly at running speed through the air. Demonic Regeneration: 1d6 HP per turn. Additional Limbs: Torturers with extra arms and legs can make 1 additional attack per turn with each limb.

**Hit Points:** 50

**Habitat:** No restrictions

## ELEMENTALS

If ghosts are the spirits of the dead, Elementals are the spirits of the world. Sometimes, because of a Sorcerer's summoning or a harrowing event in the area, the land is infused with magical energy and a primal intelligence. When this happens, an Elemental is formed from one of four elements of nature: Earth, Air, Water and Fire.

An Air Elemental can form from a man's death scream or a family's fear of a wind storm, magically and spontaneously instilling the air itself with sentience and personality. A Fire Elemental might form from the funeral pyres of vast battlefields or the raging flames that consume a peasant home. A Water Elemental might come into being from the thrashings of a drowning fisherman or through flood waters that ravage a coastal region. An Earth Elemental might be birthed from the digging of a mass grave or the merciless onslaught of an earthquake. The only unifying fact with the natural creation of every Elemental is that powerful negative emotions are felt nearby. The world itself senses these emotions, and Elementals are born in the wash of potent suffering.

They are destructive and dangerous beings that lack all moral or ethical intelligence. Akin to natural disasters themselves, Elementals ravage the surrounding area in a bid to extinguish all nearby sentient life. It should come as no surprise that these creatures are inordinately powerful, harmed only by their opposing elements, by magic, or by enspelled weaponry.

Elementals that are summoned into being by magical means differ from their naturally-occurring counterparts in that they are often obedient to the summoning mage, though they are no less dangerous if improperly bound.

### Fire Elemental:

**Size:** Approximately human-shape, Weightless

INT -3	PER +2
WIL +9	CHA n/a
STR n/a	DEX +8





CON n/a SPD +20

**Ability Level:** 1-19

**Attacks/Damage:** Special: see below

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Immunities: Elementals are immune to all mind-controlling effects. Fire Elementals can only be harmed by magic or by magical weapons. A Fire Elemental is immune to fire damage, and regenerates d6 Hit Points for every level of fire damage inflicted. Weakness: a Fire Elemental can leave its birth-flames, but suffers 5 Hit Points of damage per turn that it stands away from a source of flame. It regenerates d6 Hit Points per turn that it spends standing with a source of flame that is at least the size of a campfire. Flight: Fire Elementals can fly at double their "running" speed, though it costs 10 Hit Points per turn to do so, as the magical flames wither in the air. Living Flame: A Fire Elemental inflicts DR 4 fire damage on its foes, using its WIL score as the STR for a touch attack.

**Hit Points:** 100+

**Habitat:** No restrictions

#### **Water Elemental:**

**Size:** Approximately human-size, Weight

INT -3 PER +2  
WIL +9 CHA n/a  
STR n/a DEX +8  
CON n/a SPD +20

**Ability Level:** 1-19

**Attacks/Damage:** Special: see below

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Immunities: Elementals are immune to all mind-controlling effects. Water Elementals can only be harmed by magic or by magical weapons. A Water Elemental is immune to drowning damage. Weakness: A Water Elemental can leave its water source, but suffers 5 Hit Points of damage per turn that it stands away from a pool of water. It regenerates d6 Hit Points per turn that it spends standing with a source of water that is at least the size of a cauldron. Flight: Water Elementals can fly at double their "running" speed, though it costs 10 Hit Points per turn to do so, as the magical water dries in the air. Drowning Touch:

A Water Elemental inflicts DR 2 drowning damage on its foes by forcing its liquid body into their mouths and noses, using its WIL score as the STR for a touch attack. Every 15 Hit Points inflicted on a victim forces the target to vomit some of the water back up, effectively inflicting a -6 to all rolls for his next turn. When the target has no more Hit Points, he is considered drowned/asphyxiated.

**Hit Points:** 100+

**Habitat:** No restriction

#### **Earth Elemental:**

**Size:** Height, Weight

INT -3 PER +2  
WIL +9 CHA n/a  
STR n/a DEX +8  
CON n/a SPD +20

**Ability Level:** 1-19

**Attacks/Damage:** Special: see below

**Armor:** Rock-hard skin: PR 9

**Special Abilities:** Immunities: immune to all mind-controlling effects. Weakness: Unlike other Elementals, these creatures can be damaged by mundane weapons, though they are still exceedingly difficult to destroy. An Earth Elemental will never willingly leave the ground at any time, and suffers 5 Hit Points of damage per turn that it is held away from the earth. It regenerates d6 Hit Points per turn that it spends standing with its feet on the ground, drawing strength for the earth itself. Mighty Strikes: An Earth Elemental inflicts DR 11 damage on its foes, using its WIL score as the STR for a brawl attack.

**Hit Points:** 150+

**Habitat:** No restriction

#### **Air Elemental:**

**Size:** Approximate human-sized, Weightless

INT -3 PER +2  
WIL +9 CHA n/a  
STR n/a DEX +8  
CON n/a SPD +30

**Ability Level:** 1-19

**Attacks/Damage:** Special: see below

**Armor:** Special: Special: see below

**Special Abilities:** Immunities: immune to all

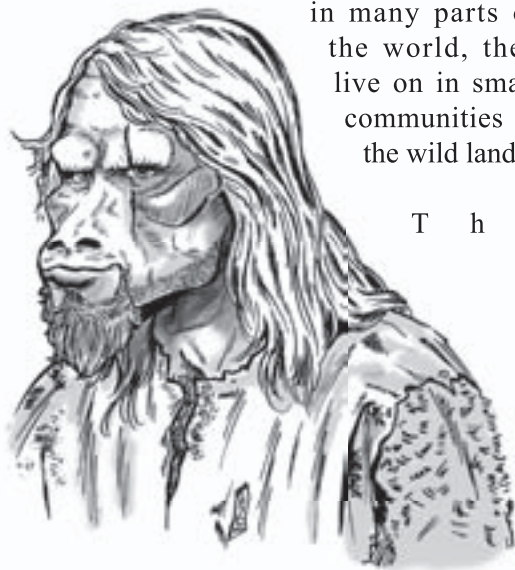
mind-controlling effects. Air Elementals can only be harmed by magic or by magical weapons. **Weakness:** An Air Elemental will never willingly touch earth, and suffers 5 Hit Points of damage per turn that it spends on the ground. It regenerates d6 Hit Points per turn that it spends hovering in the air, using the air itself to rebuild its form. **Flight:** Air Elementals can fly at double their “running” speed with no penalties. **Howling Winds:** An Air Elemental attacks by hurling nearby objects at its victims, or by throwing the targets themselves. This attack uses the creature’s WIL as its STR in telekinesis attacks, in a manner similar to Ghosts.

**Hit Points:** 80+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## FIR BOLG

It is said that in the dawn of the world, two races of Man walked the land. The first breed of humans was more intelligent and cunning, and adapted to its environment in order to survive and evolve. The lesser race was made up of primitive and simple folk with odd bone structures and was known as the Fir Bolg – the “ugly people”. Their skulls were distorted compared to the head of a normal human, with thick brows and protruding jaws, almost apelike in appearance. Though they are now merely a legend in many parts of the world, they live on in small communities in the wild lands.



T h e

remaining Fir Bolg cling to a culture that has failed to develop past the simplest of tools. Barbarous hunters known to prey upon humans and other civilized races for the meat of their bodies, these Neanderthals dwell in hidden cave communities or in deep forest, venturing from their dwellings only to hunt and defend territory.

The name Fir Bolg is the name applied to these primitive barbarians in the British Isles, and other nations either appropriate the same term for these rare people, or simply refer to them as “cannibals”, “cave-men” or the “eaters of men”.

**Size:** As human

INT -3            PER +2

WIL +2            CHA -3

STR +3            DEX +2

CON +2            SPD +0

**Ability Level:** 1-8

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** Fur cloak: PR 1

**Special Abilities:** None

**Hit Points:** 11+

**Habitat:** Plains, Forests

## FOMORIAN

Myth and history often clash where tales of demonic creatures are concerned, but surely the aquatic demon known as a Fomorian is among the most sinister monsters that dwell in the lands of men. Differing legends either speak of a tribe of men that was cursed with demonic blood, or a race of demons that was born in the black depths of the largest seas. Whatever the truth might be, Fomorians are a grotesque race of abominations that threaten the residents in many of Europe’s coastal communities and port towns.

They appear mostly human (at least from a distance) but close inspection reveals they possess little more than an insidious pretense of humanity. Their flesh is corpse-pale and the veins are darkly visible under the thin skin, like blue cracks in their bodies. The eyes of a Fomorian are outwardly similar to a human’s, though the creature blinks



with a thin white membrane covering the eyes for a moment, sliding from the sides of the monster's eyes. These creatures also possess webbed hands and toes, to aid in swimming. A Fomorian can breathe on land, though its gills do not function as adeptly as they do underwater, leading to straining and gasping noises when it walks on the surface. The weapons carried by this creature are usually curiously-shaped pieces of coral or undersea rocks, painstakingly chipped and carved into lethal stabbing swords and long daggers.

Fomorians rarely surface alone. Small bands of the creatures use the suction cups on their webbed hands and feet to climb aboard vessels at sea in order to kill the crews and feast upon the slain, and in rare incidents a Fomorian army might rise from the sea and storm a village or town. Such raids are feared by the peoples of coastal settlements, for the Fomorians' love of salty human flesh is well-known.

**Size:** As Human

INT -1	PER +3
WIL -1	CHA -5
STR +1	DEX +1
CON +0	SPD +3

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** Rubbery skin: PR 1

**Special Abilities:** Surface-climbing: Able to cling to any surface and move at ½ speed.

**Hit Points:** 8+

**Habitat:** Seas, Coasts

## FLESHLESS DEAD

When one of the Walking Dead has decayed to the point of complete muscle atrophy, it dies a true death. For a skeleton to walk again once its flesh has rotted away, it must be animated by the blackest sorcery. This is not a return from the grave, for the original soul of the body has long since passed onto judgement. Instead it is merely a form of puppetry, where the remains of a dead person are manipulated through foul magic.

These skeletal automatons possess only the most basic intelligence to carry out their appointed tasks. They pursue their orders with relentless efficiency, though any orders more complicated than "guard this room" or "carry this item to that room" are likely to be followed with hesitancy and misunderstanding. The clicking and rattling of bones when a group of Fleshless Dead gather is a horrifying sound, and coupled with the sight of the skinless bodies moving, these creatures make fear-inspiring servants.

In battle, the Fleshless Dead fight with whatever weapons have been handed to them. They are not particularly strong or agile, nor can they resist significant damage before crumbling to pieces. However, the ease of control and ability to evoke horror makes them ideal slaves for Sorcerers that have no qualms with violating the rest of the dead.

**Size:** As human, Weight

INT n/a,	PER +0
WIL n/a	CHA n/a,
STR -1	DEX -1
CON -1	SPD -1

**Ability Level:** 1

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** Obedience: Fleshless Dead must obey the spoken commands of whoever created them. They have no free will of their own and will never act without direct orders. When creating Fleshless Dead minions, the magician often orders them to always act to defend both him and themselves.

**Hit Points:** 8

**Habitat:** No restrictions

## GHOSTS

When some people die their souls remain trapped in the mortal world and do not pass on to the just reward of Heaven or the punishment of Hell. In these cases, the earthbound soul stays anchored to the world in the form of a ghost. These beings are also referred to as wraiths, specters and apparitions, and are notoriously hard to destroy once and for all.

Ghosts are the fleshless souls of the dead, appearing much as they did in life. Many also show evidence of the wounds that killed them, most especially if they died in an accident or by foul play. As spectral entities, ghosts are completely incorporeal. They can only manipulate the physical world by employing supernatural powers, such as telekinesis (allowing them to move objects) or by evoking

horror at their manifestation. Usually ghosts remain invisible unless they choose to manifest, though there are always those that claim they can see the restless spirits of the dead at all times.

It is said by some that Ghosts remain in the physical world in order to complete some task or achieve some goal that remained unfinished in the person's life. While there are cases where a soul has been put to rest after living people helped to complete its task (revenge upon a murderer, retrieving a lost heirloom, etc.) there are many more instances where the manifestation of a Ghost seemed to occur for little more reason than the spirit's wish to cause harm and wreak evil upon the living.

**Size:** As human,

Weightless

INT +0

PER +2

WIL +8

CHA n/a

STR n/a D E X

+2

CON n/a SPD +1

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Special: See below

**Armor:** None

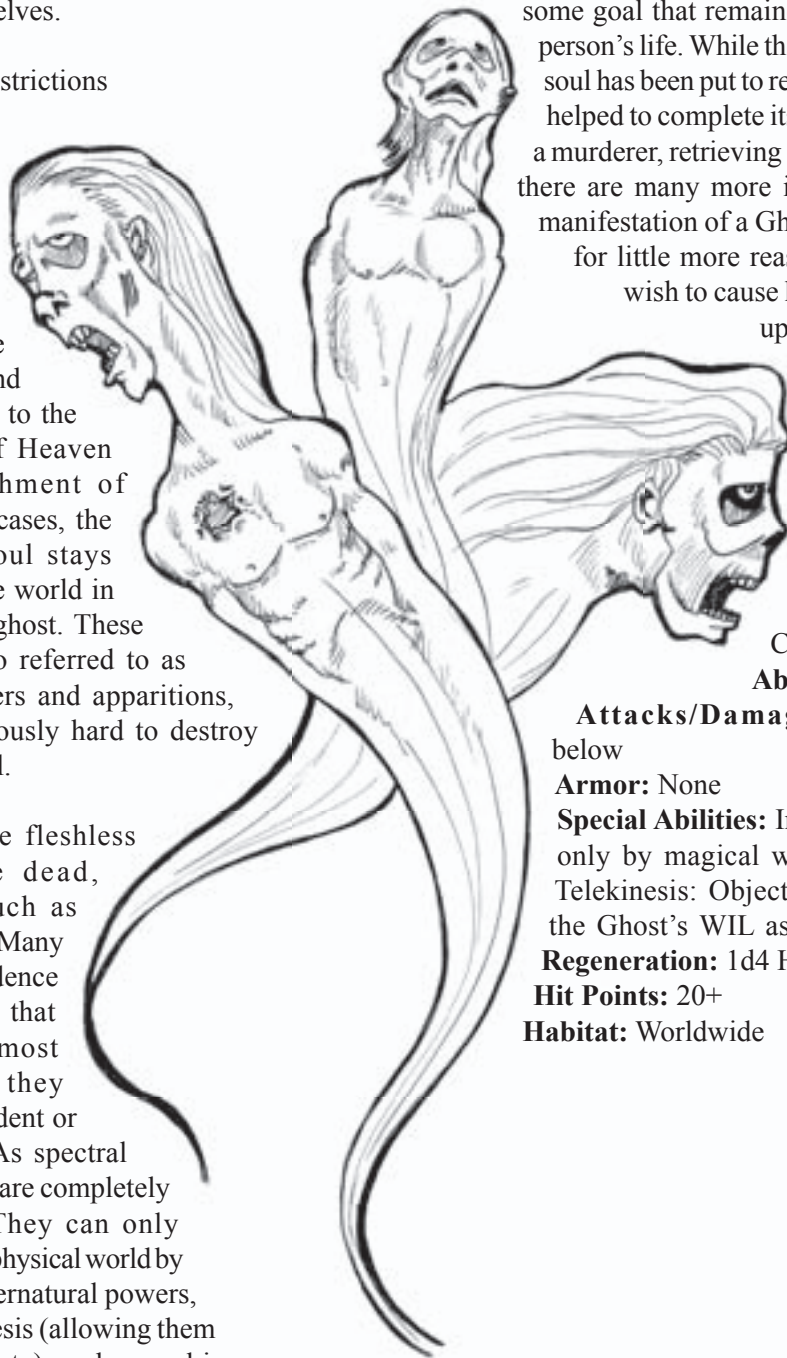
**Special Abilities:** Incorporeal: Harmed only by magical weapons and spells.

Telekinesis: Objects are thrown using the Ghost's WIL as its STR. **Spectral**

**Regeneration:** 1d4 Hit Points per turn.

**Hit Points:** 20+

**Habitat:** Worldwide



## GOBLIN

The most populous of the Unholy races, the Goblins are an ugly, bestial race that has repeatedly failed to flower into its own society. Whereas the Seelie and Varangar maintain their own dominion and the Hansa often attempt to blend into human society, the Goblins have broken into hundreds of smaller tribes and clans of a few dozen individuals, wandering the world and having little contact with others of their kind. When Goblin groups do meet, the result is often a pitched battle between tribal warriors. Truly, this is a race that is incapable of uniting.



Goblins might find “legitimate” work as bodyguards, sell-swords or trade route guards, though more often the ruthless and cunning creatures turn their desires to banditry, theft or murder. Though Goblins are not inherently evil, their treatment at the hands of other races (and at the hands of each other) often makes them spiteful and malicious creatures. They are regarded across the world as the spawn of Satan, though the more tolerant Islamic lands have a few cities that house relatively large populations of Goblins.

In battle, an average Goblin is capable with a blade,

quick-witted and sharp-eyed. The creatures have finely-tuned senses of sight and smell, though they are notorious for being able to eat anything as they lack a strong sense of taste. Their bodies are often muscled and wiry (even if underfed) and some are approximately the same height as humans, though many are shorter. Their faces are twisted in comparison to the features of other races’, often described as “skull-ish” by those who come across them. Prominent facial bones often poke through the greenish skin in little clusters of spiky bone at the cheeks, eyebrows and chin. Instead of eyelids, Goblins have a milky-white membrane that flickers from the side across their bulbous black eyes every few seconds. In poorly lit conditions, a Goblin’s eyes reflect light like a cat’s.

**Size:** 5’-6’, Weight

INT -3            PER +2

WIL +0            CHA -4

STR +2            DEX +1

CON +2            SPD +0

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 1, or as weapon

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** None

**Hit Points:** 10+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## GOLEM

The creation of life from nothingness is the divine gift of God alone. Humanity has its ways of propagating naturally, and yet there are those Humans that still seek to copy God’s power and infuse the unliving with life. For some this is achieved by demonic magic and necromancy. For others, it is attained by the creation of a Golem. Base matter (mud, soil and clay, in imitation of the clay God used to create Adam) is formed into the shape of a man, and magically infused with sentience. This creature obeys its creator without question.

Golems make excellent servitors and guardians for those who have the mystical knowledge and arcane skill to create them. They are unfailingly

loyal, tireless and fearsome combatants. Though they usually stand only a few feet taller than a mortal man, their flesh is hardened like stone and they can batter their opponents and break bones with their massive rocky fists.

Golems usually have some kind of “command object” they use to recognise their master. In most cases this is the scroll detailing the spell used to enchant the Golem and serves as the monster’s sense of identity. Whoever destroys this scroll will destroy the life within the Golem, so the creature slavishly obeys the scroll’s owner without fail.

**Size:** 6’-10’, Weight

INT n/a	PER -2
WIL +0	CHA n/a
STR +12	DEX -3
CON +15	SPD -3

**Ability Level:** 1

**Attacks/Damage:** Fists: DR 14 or as weapon

**Armor:** Stone skin: PR 8

**Special Abilities:** Obedience: The Golem must obey the spoken commands of whoever carries the “control” item. It has no free will of its own, and the only action it can undertake with direct order is the defense of its current owner.

**Hit Points:** 85

**Habitat:** No restriction

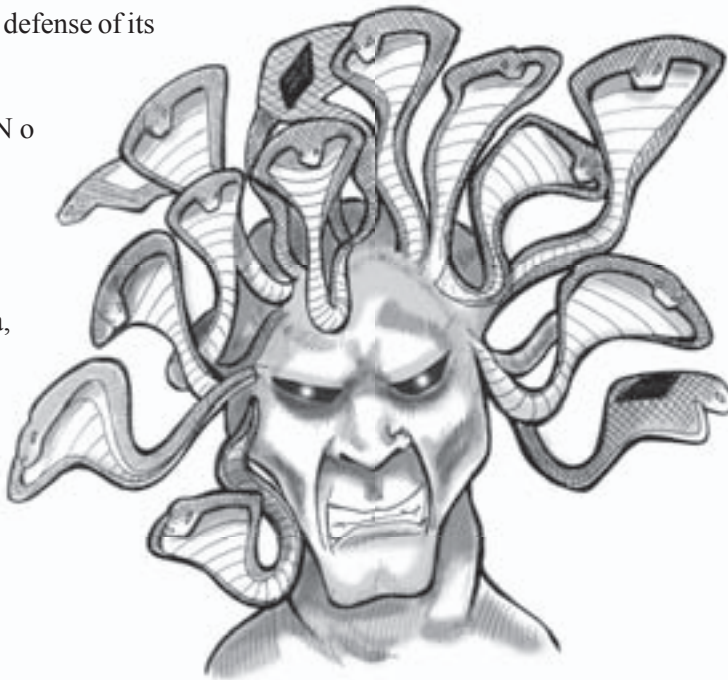
## GORGON

Akin to the Lamia, the Gorgon are another breed of creature that abandoned their souls and humanity for short-lived power in life. Whereas the Lamia are snake-

blooded shape-shifters and vampiric parasites, the Gorgon wield the power of dark magic and have no control over the mutation of their physical forms. Like the Lamia, a Gorgon can be either male or female.

A dozen flesh-colored snakes grow from a Gorgon’s skull and writhe independently of the host’s desires. These cobra-like serpents have needle-sharp fangs that drip with a clear syrupy poison. This venom causes paralysis and seizures if a snake manages to bite any prey, and in rare cases can also be used as a sweet-tasting poison in a meal or drink, inflicting similar contortions upon the victim.

Individual Gorgons often rule over sinister cults of demon-worshipping acolytes and magicians. In some rare cases, they share the rule with a Lamia or another Gorgon, but these cults most often serve as a way for the demon-touched creature to spread its influence through the human world. It would come as a sickening shock for many lords to learn that Gorgon cults exist in the hidden alleys and bowels of Europe’s finest cities.



Most dreadful of all is a Gorgon’s ability to petrify an enemy with its gaze. Legend has exaggerated this power, for it is intensely draining, and a Gorgon will most often rely on whatever weapons it carries and the wrath of its head-snakes if it needs to defend itself. As a last resort, the Gorgon can petrify an opponent by expending great energy in a single spell. This power

is difficult and draining, and the victim must be looking directly at the Gorgon for the magic to take effect. If successful, the target of the spell will begin to turn to stone over the course of a single minute. Destroying the Gorgon will reverse any “in-progress” petrifying and allow totally petrified victims to revert to normal.

**Size:** As human

INT +3            PER +3  
WIL +5            CHA -4  
STR +1            DEX +0  
CON +3            SPD +0

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Snake-heads: DR 1 each, or was weapon or spell.

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** Venomous Bites: causes seizures, -6 to all rolls for a minute (CON roll to resist). Petrifying Glare: Usable once per day, causes -1 to all rolls with a further -1 penalty stacking each turn, and -1 HP per turn. Once the target has reached 0 HP, he is considered petrified. (WIL roll to resist)

**Hit Points:** 10+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## GRYPHONIC BEASTS

The so-called ‘Gryphonic Beasts’ (the Gryphon and the Hippogryph) are often used as symbols of heraldry; respected and admired for their savage hunting prowess and wild nobility. Gryphons dwell in mountainous regions and verdant forests, and are among the deadliest creatures in the woods. Hippogryphs prefer to claim flat land and tundra as habitat, and strike fear into the other creatures that roam the plains. They are both aberrational beings (akin to the Manticora) that appear to be hybrids of other animals, but are capable of reproducing without magical interference and are thusly considered “natural” creatures rather than monsters born of sorcery.

The Gryphon has the body of a great lion, with the fore-claws and head of a massive eagle. Stretching from the beast’s shoulder blades are a huge pair

of black-feathered eagle wings that are powerful enough to allow the Gryphon some degree of flight. Usually the wings are used for gliding and control when pouncing on prey, though the beast can take to the sky albeit in an ungraceful manner.

The Hippogryph is larger than its ‘cousin’ breed, though less muscled and overtly savage. The body of a Hippogryph is that of a horse, though the front limbs and head are those of a large hunting hawk. The beast also boasts wings extending from its shoulders, and is capable of the same limited flight as the Gryphon.

When hunting and in battle, the Gryphonic Beasts strike out with viciously-curved beaks that cut like scimitars. Secondary attacks come from the creatures’ bird talons, which are more than capable of tearing open armour and flesh with ease.

The pelts (and feathers) of these beasts are incredibly valuable in certain markets and to certain collectors, and there are a rare few nobles that have successfully had one of these beasts trained for use in hunting or riding.

### Gryphon:

**Size:** 5’ in height, 9’ head to tail, Weight

INT -4            PER +4  
WIL +1            CHA n/a  
STR +9            DEX +4  
CON +11          SPD +8

**Ability Level:** 1-9

**Attacks/Damage:** Beak: DR 13, Front Claws: DR 12, Rear Claws: DR 10

**Armor: Thick hide:** PR 2

**Special Abilities:** Flight: Gryphonic Beasts ignore all falling damage provided they can use their wings to halt descent. They can fly at running speed, though they require a Full Turn action to prepare for the leap into the air.

**Hit Points:** 80+

**Habitat:** Forests, Mountains

### Hippogryph:

**Size:** 7’ in height, 11’ head to tail, Weight

INT -5      PER +3  
WIL +0      CHA n/a  
STR +8      DEX +5  
CON +13     SPD +11

**Ability Level:** 1-9

**Attacks/Damage:** Beak: DR 12, Front Claws: DR 11, Rear Hooves: DR 9

**Armor:** Thick hide: PR 2

**Special Abilities:** Flight: Gryphonic Beasts ignore all falling damage provided they can use their wings to halt descent. They can fly at running speed, though they require a Full Turn action to prepare for the leap into the air.

**Hit Points:** 90+

**Habitat:** Forests, Plains



## HARPY

In Ancient Greece, many stories were told of inhuman creatures that plagued mankind. Many of these were, in some form or another, variations upon a true story and a real creature. The tale of the Harpies is no exception, and indeed seems to hold a greater degree of accuracy than many presumed myths.

These hybrid beasts, having both human and avian traits, seem to exist purely to spite humans. They are scavengers and carrion feeders akin to vultures, picking apart the remains of the dead with cackling joy as they feast. Indeed, Harpies can digest no other meat beside the flesh of the deceased. Animal or human, it matters not as long as the meal is at least a few hours' dead. Harpies have been known to follow groups of travellers in the hope of singling out one member of the party and attacking when he becomes separated from his fellows. Any group of adventurers that attracts a Harpy circling the sky above is in for several days and nights of rocks dropped on their heads and shrieking from above. It takes these monsters a great deal of time before they will relinquish the chase of potential prey.

Harpies are almost always thin to the point of emaciation. Though they are human-bodied, their bones are prominent enough to make them

almost skeletal in appearance. The wings that rise from a Harpy's shoulders are bony and more like a bat's than a bird's, with thin easily-ripped skin membranes making up the flesh of the wings. Strangely, though the race lacks any apparent metalworking skill, the feet and hands of these creatures are flexible bronze talons that mimic the claws of a bird of prey. These metal claws are frequently filthy with the blood of previous meals, but serve as devastating natural weapons if the Harpy wishes to strike out and kill its own dinner.

**Size:** As human

INT -2      PER +3  
WIL -1      CHA -5  
STR +3      DEX +6  
CON +1      SPD +3

**Ability Level:** 1-12

**Attacks/Damage:** Claws: DR 6

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Flight: Harpies can fly at running speed.

**Hit Points:** 11+

**Habitat:** No restriction



## HELL HOUND

There have always been tales of animals coming under demonic possession, or falling into the service of dark powers. Legends of Greece and the ancient world speak of the three-headed demonic guard dog of the underworld: Cerberus. To the hardy Norse and the other people of the north, these beasts are called Garm wolves; named for a wolf god in their ancient and fallen pantheon. To most of the European people, these vicious and ravaging canines are called Hell Hounds.

It is unknown whether Hell Hounds truly emerge from the depths of the underworld, or if they are ‘merely’ a supernaturally-tainted breed of wolf. What is known without a shadow of a doubt is that these beasts are consummate hunters and killers. They usually live in packs of half a dozen or so, though they stalk equally efficiently even when alone.

A Hell Hound differs from a wolf in several easily recognizable ways. Firstly, a Hell Hound has bale-red eyes that slowly trickle drops of blood at all times. Secondly, it tends to be slightly larger and more muscular than a normal wolf, and possesses night-black or snow-white fur (no one has ever seen a Hell Hound with any other color fur – or never survived to tell of it). Lastly, this beast is capable of understanding speech, for it often serves as a guardian, scout or sentinel for other evil or malign creatures. Though it lacks the ability to communicate in complicated languages, even the simplest of these creatures can communicate clearly with growls, howls, snarls and snorts, while a rare few can growl out several words in human tongues. It has savage, curling claws on each paw, and a mouthful of finger-length fangs that are capable of leaving terrible scars upon the beast’s victims.

**Size:** 4’ tall/7’ head to tail, Weight

INT -3	PER +6
WIL +4	CHA n/a
STR +9	DEX +14
CON +4	SPD +10

**Ability Level:** 1-5

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 10, Claws: DR 9

**Armor:** Thick hide: PR 2

**Special Abilities:** Demonic Regeneration: d4 Hit Points per round

**Hit Points:** 20+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## HOBGOBLIN

Bridging the gap between humanity and goblinkind, Hobgoblins are born of the union of human and Unholy. They are frequently known as the Half-Blooded, and this term has become a common reference for these creatures when they deal with the civilized races. Though they are extremely rare, they are known to possess the best traits of both their parents’ races (such as they are, in the case of goblins). Also, given the level of depredation that the Unholy show to captured and enslaved humans, Hobgoblins are not as rare as those in human lands might hope.

These bastard offspring of the two races often find derision and scorn wherever they go, even in the rare instances they rise to positions of power or authority. In a goblin clan, a Hobgoblin has the advantage of a deeper intelligence and a reasoning mind behind his actions. It is not unheard of for a Hobgoblins to claim rule over a small clan, though such a warleader must be ever alert for his “pure-blood” brethren’s attempts to remove him. In human lands, a Hobgoblin will have the advantage of heightened senses and reserves of strength, but will suffer because of his appearance and his heritage as a descendant spawn of Satan.

Hobgoblins appear human with a distinct demonic cast to their features. Their skin has a faint greenish tint and sunburns easily. A Hobgoblin’s eyes are never any color but black – there are no instances of brown or blue-eyed Half-Blooded in recorded history. They have the advantage of natural strength and are often the average height for a human of their gender and age, but their skulls are an unusual shape with strange facial bone structure. A Hobgoblin’s mouth is also filled

with goblin-like teeth, which can appear as though the creature has filed them to points. Grotesquely enough, their eyes possess the sideways-closing white membrane of goblinkind underneath normal human eyelids.

**Size:** 5'-6'5", Weight

INT +0	PER +2
WIL +2	CHA -2
STR +2	DEX +1
CON +2	SPD +1

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 1, or as weapon

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** None.

**Hit Points:** 8+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## LAMIA

When someone sells their soul, they trade their chance at eternal paradise for a short period of temporal power. The greater demons of Hell answer the call of any dedicated occultist who wishes to surrender his or her soul to eternal torment in exchange for a few decades of arcane and physical might. The beings called Lamia are the result of these infernal pacts. They were once human, but after forsaking their souls to dark powers, they have been imbued with sinister and malevolent sorcery.

Greek mythology tells conflicting stories of vampires who kidnap children for their blood, and snakes with the features of human women. The truth is somewhere between these myths. A Lamia of either gender has been given the ability to shape-change into a hybrid of human and serpent features. The creature's torso, arms and head remain human (though the muscles swell with unholy strength), while the waist and legs fuse and elongate into the scaled and muscled tail of a huge snake. In this hybrid form, the Lamia is preternaturally fast and many times stronger than a human. This form can be adopted at will, and is primarily used to attack anyone who poses a threat to the Lamia.



In addition to this form, a Lamia also possesses several unearthly qualities that differentiate the soulless creature from the human it once was. Its blood is always cold like that of a reptile, making it sluggish in cool weather and prone to weariness. A Lamia is also recognizable by its eyes, for all members of this strange "race" are known to have eyes that are black and orange, and slitted like a serpent's. These eyes possess a hypnotizing quality on the Lamia's prey, and this power is used for the blasphemous feeding rites, where the creature uses its fang-filled mouth to feast on the blood and flesh of other humans.

**Size:** As human (Human) / 7'-8', Weight (Snake hybrid)

INT +3/+3	PER +0/+1
WIL +4/+4	CHA +0/ n/a
STR +0/+5	DEX +0/+5
CON +0/+5	SPD +0/+3

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Bite: DR 5, or as weapon or spell.

**Armor:** None / Thick skin PR 1

**Special Abilities:** Cold-blooded: -2 to all rolls in freezing temperatures. Hypnotizing gaze: Renders a character unable to act for d6 turns (WIL roll to resist)

**Hit Points:** 10+

**Habitat:** No restrictions

## MANTICORÆ

Occasionally a heraldic beast, the Manticora is a curious aberration of nature that seems to sport the most dangerous features of several animals. Legends tie it to a creation of ancient gods or a once-noble beast twisted by the influence and magic of Hell. More recent explanations insist these creatures are the product of some foul magician's enchantments, though that would hardly explain the sheer number of these creatures. Though hardly common, they are still sighted across the civilized world and appear to have no "home" region.

A Manticora's body is that of a lion – typically the slender, rangy mountain lions of Europe (though larger African variations do appear). The Manticora's claws are the equal of any lions', and kept honed through constant hunting. Extending from the end of the spine is a ridged and chitin-coated scorpion tail, easily as thick as a man's arm and tipped with a dagger-long barbed tip. Unsurprisingly, it is this barb that plunges into opponents and injects Manticora venom into the



creature's prey, which is a potent intoxicant and a powerful hallucinogenic that creates delusions in the victim's mind and senses. It is fast-acting and strong enough for the beast to strike out at its distracted prey without need of lengthy battling. Lastly, a Manticora's head is a horrible blending of human and demon features; often with warped bone structure, elongated tusks, rows of fangs and malicious red eyes.

**Size:** 5' in height, 8' head to tail, Weight

INT -5

PER +3

WIL +1

CHA n/a

STR +10

DEX +3

CON +6

SPD +8

**Ability Level:** 1-5

**Attacks/Damage:** Jaws: DR 16, Claws: DR 13, Tail-Barb: DR 10

**Armor:** Thick hide: PR 1

**Special Abilities:** Venomous sting: Characters who take damage from a Manticora's barbed tail may suffer hallucinations, and the exact nature they take is at the GM's discretion (CON roll to resist).

**Hit Points:** 30+

**Habitat:** Forests, Plains

## OGRE

The race known as Ogres (from the Latin *Orcus*: meaning demon or creature of the underworld) are a terror that have always haunted the civilized world. Though they live in the wilderness and are known for their cowardice when faced by multiple foes, Ogres are ever-present in the fears of isolated settlements and farming communities. They are dim-witted and lumbering creatures, but possess immense physical strength and are well-known to hunger for the taste of human flesh.

An average Ogre is around 7-9 feet in height with a body shape resembling a human male with long, powerful arms that reach its knees. They are massively muscled under a thick covering of rough black or brown fur, and their mighty arms end in meaty fists that are capable of breaking bone without difficulty. One of the strangest features of

the Ogre race is that they each possess two heads with similar facial features. These heads appear nominally independent of each other, though control of the body seems to belong only to a single head. Both of these twin faces are perfectly capable of snarling and yelling in the rudimentary Ogre tongue at any creature that crosses the beast's path, and when consuming prey, the heads share the food equally. The features on an Ogre's faces are often feral and animalistic, with black, dog-like eyes being extremely common, along with massive horns or antlers and oversized bear- or wolf-like jaws.

Ogres rarely associate with others of their kind. From all evidence gathered, they are just as likely to attack one another when they meet as they are to band together to hunt for prey. Even the longest-lived Ogre "friendships" can deteriorate into a savage battle between beasts at any moment, usually over some curious event or circumstance of obvious importance to the Ogres but that any other witness is unable to comprehend at all.

**Size:** 7'-9', Weight

INT -3            PER -2  
WIL +2            CHA -4  
STR +10          DEX +1  
CON +12          SPD +3

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon, or Double bite:  
DR 3

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** None

**Hit Points:** 40+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## Phouka

Named by the Irish because of the malicious spirit's repeated appearance in that land, the Phouka is not a native to a single region. Worldwide, they are called either Nightmares or Wild Hunters, depending on the shape they manifest. In horse form, the Phouka is a large horse of similar size and build to the finest warhorses. It has sulfurous, glowing eyes that trail yellow smoke as the beast

moves, and a tail and mane of crackling white fire. Its hooves are bronze and cause the ground to rumble like thunder as the creature runs. In its other form, the Phouka appears as a ten foot tall goat-legged man. This figure has a muscled chest and arms, and wild black hair from which sprouts a set of long, many-branched antlers like the most ancient of deer might possess.

The Phouka is a creature of dangerous mischief at the best of times, delighting in destroying the farms and villages of humanity. At worst it is a spirit of vengeance, hunting down every member of a bloodline in a bid to completely destroy that family from the face of the world. For those whose family has somehow wronged the Phouka and earned this enmity, it is only a matter of time before one of the spirits smashes down the door to his home and impales him on its antlers, or, in the shape of a demonic horse, chases him down across a moonlit field.

Celtic legends name these creatures as one of the fae races, though to the rest of the world they are simply a dangerous and troublesome breed of demons that deserve to be spitted on the blessed blades of noble knights. Churches all over the world watch for signs of the Phouka, and spell-wielding priests join with soldiers, knights and militia in order to bring back the creature's head.

**Size:** Height, Weight (Nightmare), Height, Weight (Wild Hunter)

INT +4            PER +1  
WIL +9            CHA n/a  
STR +6/+10      DEX +6/+4  
CON +15/+19    SPD +15/+3

**Ability Level:** 1-6

**Attacks/Damage:** Hooves: DR 8 / Antlers: DR 12 or as weapon

**Armor:** Iron-hard Skin: PR 8

**Special Abilities:** Shape-changing: The Phouka can change between its forms using a Full Turn action. Flawless Tracking: When someone (or an entire bloodline) angers one of these demons, it sets off in the Wild Hunt. The Phouka is able to track

its prey relentlessly across the world, no matter how far the victim flees. It knows the location of its target at all times, and it is just a matter of time before it catches up to him.

**Hit Points:** 50+

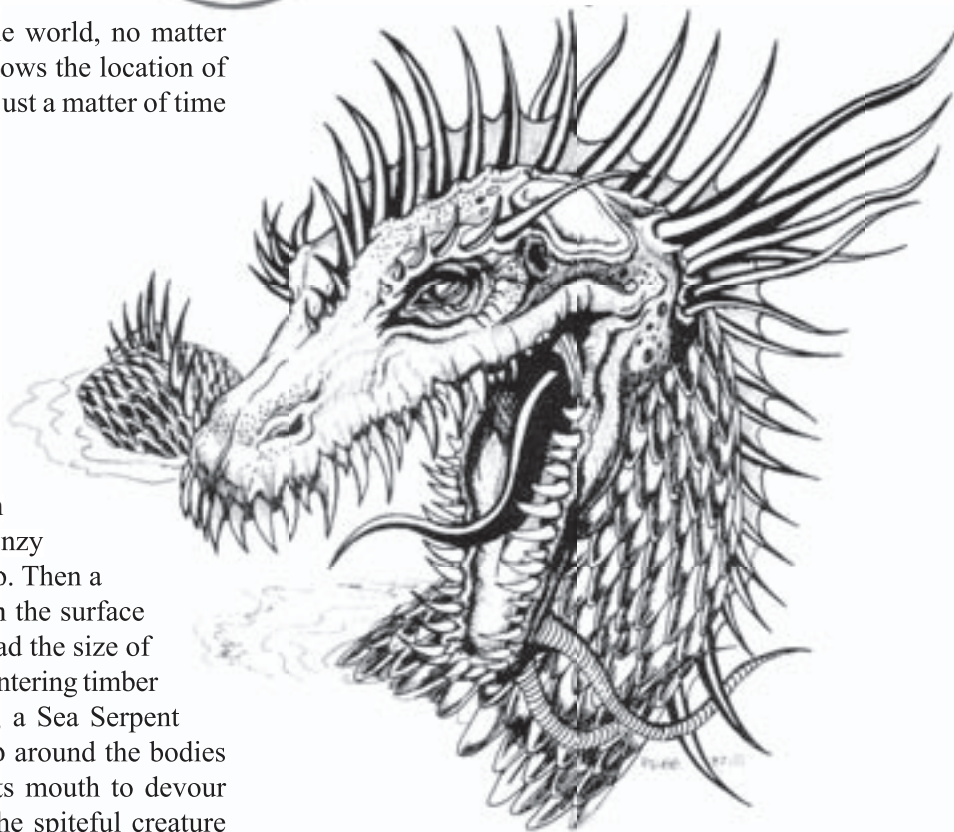
**Habitat:** Deep wilderness

## SEA SERPENT

Gigantic horrors from the seas have always held a terrible place in the hearts of sailors. These demonic beasts first appear as massive shadows in the water, inciting fear and frenzy into the men on board the ship. Then a serpentine neck will rise from the surface of the water, and a snake's head the size of a large house lashes down, splintering timber and shredding sail. To strike, a Sea Serpent flicks its thick tongue to wrap around the bodies of men, drawing them into its mouth to devour whole. Once it has feasted, the spiteful creature might lash the crewless ship to shards with its powerful tail, before diving back into the lightless depths of the sea.

Many ships (especially wealthy merchant vessels) have been known to employ "dragon hunters" in order to fend off Sea Serpent attacks. Flaming harpoons and flasks of burning oil are the weapons of choice against a marauding monster from the deep sea, though few people survive long in such a dangerous career as battling ancient creatures many times the size of a ship.

Some captains refuse to allow women aboard their vessels for fear that the blood of menstruation attracts these fearsome serpents. Logically the amount of accidents and bloodshed that occurs on a large vessel anyway dictates that such a stance is nonsense and superstition, but it is a popular superstition in the Mediterranean nevertheless. Massive naval battles (and some smaller engagements between only two ships) are known to draw the attention of Sea Serpents, as the



gigantic snake-monsters surface in the hunt for a veritable feast of crews.

**Size:** 60' in length, Weight

INT -7            PER +1

WIL +3            CHA n/a

STR +15           DEX +10

CON +25           SPD +10

**Ability Level:** 1-5

**Attacks/Damage:** Jaws: DR 22, Tail: DR 17

**Armor:** Thick scales: PR 6

**Special Abilities:** Tongue attack: The Serpent makes a Grapple attack to wrap its tongue around a human-sized victim. Success means the prey suffers a -6 penalty to all rolls and the Serpent is free to use its jaw attack the next round. The tongue has 10 HP.

**Hit Points:** 40+

**Habitat:** Sea, Coast

## SEELIE

Outside of an actual elven settlement, the most common type of Seelie encountered by humans are the woodsmen and rangers that make up the Elvenkind's border patrols. They are often vain and aloof if approached, and it takes very little for them to react violently to questions or perceived threats.



Elvenkind foresters hide at the edges of Europe's great woodlands, watching for any intrusion into their lands. They dress in muted colors that match the turning of the seasons, helping them to remain unseen as they perform their duties. Some Seelie go so far as to weave fallen leaves onto the backs of their cloaks in order to achieve the most efficient camouflage possible. All Seelie wood-watchers are commonly armed with a hunting knife and a powerful composite bow, though individuals might favor a more unusual or exotic weapon. There are tales of exceedingly vicious and skilled Seelie hunters called "Redcaps" that wear faceless masks as they stalk their prey and ritually wash these metal masks in the blood of their enemies.

For more information on the Seelie, see the *Introduction*.

**Size:** 5'-6'4", Weight

INT +0            PER +1

WIL +1            CHA -1

STR -1            DEX +3

CON +0            SPD +2

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** None

**Hit Points:** 7+

**Habitat:** British Isles, Forests

## THIAZI

The Thiazi are the second "nation" of Elvenkind, though to name them such is to exaggerate their numbers and their desire to stand united as a people. They travel the northern lands in small, nomadic clans, subsisting on what they can take from the land. They are rightly regarded with fear and respect, for they bear no love for the civilized races and are matchless hunters, stalking prey over many miles with spears and bows.

Any group that encounters a Thiazi is likely to be meeting one of the tribal hunters, though Thiazi clans have been known to raid the villages in the northernmost lands of Europe from time to time. There is always a chance that by some unnatural sorcery, the Thiazi barbarian is able to shape-shift into the form of a white wolf when threatened. Elves that have shape-shifted in this manner are even more vicious, as they attack with all the feral instincts and ferocity of a true wolf.

For greater detail on the Thiazi, see the *Introduction*.

**Size:** 5'-6'6", Weight (Elf) / Height, Weight (Wolf)

INT -2/-2            PER +1/+4

WIL +1/+1            CHA -2/ n/a

STR +0/+2            DEX +3/+5

CON +1/+2            SPD +3/+6

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon / Fangs: DR 3,

Claws: DR 1

**Armor:** Fur cloak: PR 1 / Thick fur: PR 1

**Special Abilities:** Shape-changing

**Hit Points:** 9+

**Habitat:** Northern Europe, Cold regions

## TROLL

Trolls are a horrible race of lesser giants that have spread in small numbers from the north of the world. Legend has it that these creatures are related to the Jotunn, but while frost giants appear mostly human but for their size, Trolls are hideous in appearance and even more barbaric in behavior.

An average Troll is between 9 and 12 feet in height, and there appears to be little difference between genders. Trolls possess rough, lizard-like skin that is usually a curious blue-green hue. The backs and shoulders of these creatures are thickly scaled and leak some kind of clear, foul-smelling grease. It is rumored that Thiazis hunters use troll-slime to poison the tips of arrows, and if ingested or touched, the grease can cause symptoms of sickness and dizziness. This slime is highly flammable and is the reason all Trolls fear open flame. Fire ravages these monsters and is the single exception to their incredible resistance to injury.

A Troll fights with its tusks and its claws. Tusks grow upward from a Troll's lower jaw, sometimes growing more than a foot in length over the beast's life. These are used to impale prey, and are sometimes used in battles between Trolls over mating rights or territorial disputes. The beast's claws

frequently grow as long as a man's forearm, and are cracked and chipped from use. Infections from Troll-inflicted wounds are all too common.

Trolls show little capacity for understanding the speech of the civilized races, though simple commands and gestures might penetrate the creatures' incredibly thick skulls. Though these are solitary beasts in the main, the further north one ventures, the closer one comes to the ancient homeland of the Trolls in Scandinavia. The roars of a united Troll clan are terrifying to hear, sounding as though a hundred lions are warring with each other. Individual Trolls still roar this unnatural howl to the night sky when they wander alone, though it remains a mystery as to why.

**Size:** 9'-12', Weight

INT -4 PER -2

WIL -1

CHA -5

STR +12 DEX +4

CON +15 SPD +5

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Claws: DR 18,  
Tusks/Bite: DR 14

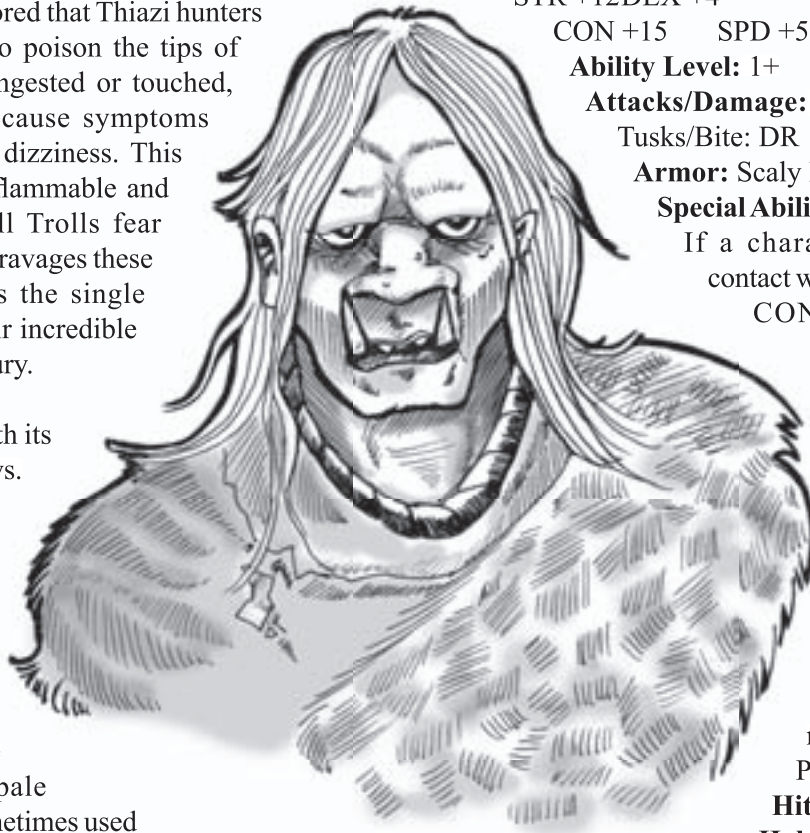
**Armor:** Scaly Hide: PR 8

**Special Abilities:** Troll-slime:

If a character comes in contact with a Troll's skin, CON roll to resist poison effects (intense nausea: -4 on all rolls for 6 turns). Fire: Trolls suffer double damage from flames and fire damage ignores the monster's armor PR.

**Hit Points:** 40+

**Habitat:** Mountains,  
Tundra, Plains



## UNICORN

It is thought that these magical horses emerged from the lands of the Seelie, though the Elvenkind have never confirmed or rebuked such a legend. Whatever their origins, Unicorns are powerfully-built, graceful horses that are unusually intelligent. Though claims of these beasts being able to speak are clearly exaggerated, they are more alert and have shaper perceptions than other horses, though outwardly they appear little different. Unicorns are usually white or pale grey, though brown-and black-coated specimens exist. No matter a Unicorn's coat colour, the mane is always a white or pale grey.

The most renowned feature of these creatures is undoubtedly the arm-length horn emerging from their foreheads. This horn, formed of a spiralling protrusion of bone, is used when the Unicorn hunts. Unlike other horses, Unicorns are carnivores. They chase down their prey (usually deer or wolf) and strike the creature with the lance-like horn, inflicting dreadful impaling wounds. Though Unicorns are often associated with maidens and innocence in storytelling, few troubadours would sing of such tales if they came across one of the beasts covered in blood and feeding from the punctured carcass of a forest bear.

Unicorns are one of the few creatures of the wilderness that are not openly hostile to humans. Indeed, these creatures live lives akin to other wild horses, though they are remarkably difficult (almost impossible, in fact) to train. They thrive on freedom, and when incarcerated in stables or paddocks they are known to attempt to injure their keepers at every opportunity. When individual Unicorns do attack humans, it is often because they have been hunted a great deal in the past. Unsurprisingly, this is because the creature's spiralling horn is worth a great deal to those concerned with the magical arts and serves as a prized spell component, as does the creature's mane-hair and blood.

**Size:** 7' in height, 10' head to tail, Weight  
INT -4            PER +2

WIL +2            CHA n/a  
STR +4            DEX +5  
CON +3            SPD +11

**Ability Level:** 1-8

**Attacks/Damage:** Horn: DR 9, Hooves: DR 5

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** None, beyond its obvious value for spell components.

**Hit Points:** 15+

**Habitat:** Forests, Plains, Tundra

## UNSEELIE

Though any human would be hard-pressed to tell the difference between the different societies of Elvenkind, the Seelie and Unseelie appear to be bitter enemies that oppose each other at all times. It is a hatred that allows for no alliance, no quarter and no cessation of conflict.

The Unseelie (to human eyes) frequently appear much the same as the Seelie; for the two societies are part of the same race. However, Unseelie are often unpredictable. A Seelie woodsman will repel intruders with words, unleash a spell or curse, or simply attempt to kill the humans with his weapons. An Unseelie border guardian is as likely to behave in such a way, though he is just as likely to invite the trespassers to sit and share his rations before gleefully slitting their throats.

Rumors make their way to human settlements of the difference between Seelie and Unseelie. To the human mindset, both are often evil and malicious without question. By rumor, the marked difference between the two societies is that the Seelie kill humans who trespass, simply to keep them away, while the Unseelie are rumored to kill humans for pleasure, or for use in their dark magical rites. Rumors aside, it is established that Unseelie practice more sorcery than their Seelie kin, though it is not known why or how this magic differs from that of other Elvenkind.

**Size:** As Seelie

INT +1            PER +2  
WIL -2            CHA -1  
STR -1            DEX +3



CON -1      SPD +2

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon or spell

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** None

**Hit Points:** 6+

**Habitat:** British Isles, Forests

## VAMPIRE

For those that commit truly abominable acts against God, a fate much darker than Hell awaits. Though cases of such great and devoted heresy are thankfully rare, when a deeply holy man renounces the Lord and commits acts of utter atrocity, divine retribution comes in swift measure. This judgement comes in the form of vampirism; a curse inflicted upon those whose souls are too fouled to even deserve torture in Hell.

Among the Vampires are the few men and women that have been banished from any form of true afterlife. With their soul destroyed they are doomed to walk the world without ever aging, but with a host of banes that could end their life at any moment. Every waking moment in a Vampire's existence is one of aching pain, for they are soulless and can never know happiness. Each night, the creature must feed from the blood of a human or animal, and though they do not need to kill their prey, it is still a frequent occurrence when feeding.

A Vampire is destroyed by the touch of the sun, for it is God's light upon the world. These creatures are also repelled and harmed by holy symbols and words, for they cannot approach those who show signs of God's grace. The herb garlic has long been known to force these creatures to flee, for the scent of these bulbs creates maddening pain in the cursed creatures' heads. Running water, rose petals and wooden stakes are worthless against these monsters, though decapitation is assuredly fatal. Wooden stakes driven through a Vampire's heart are most often used to pin the slumbering creature to the back of its coffin, preventing it from rising while a slayer takes the Vampire's head.

The rare Vampire is an accomplished spell-casters, calling on the magic of Hell to answer his call. Most rely on their incredible strength and resilience to wounds, and often fight their enemies with skills honed fine from centuries of practise. The bite of a Vampire is often lethal, though it is the talk of fools to insist that anyone bitten by one of these monsters returns to feed upon the living as a creature like its master. People who have survived a Vampire bite suffer no ill-effects past the original injury, though people who have died as a result of the bites are known to rise as the Walking Dead and serve the Vampire as a living soldier would serve a human lord.

**Size:** As human

INT +4      PER +6

WIL +10      CHA +2

STR +9      DEX +5

CON +6      SPD +2

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Fangs: DR 3 or as weapon/spell

**Armor:** As worn

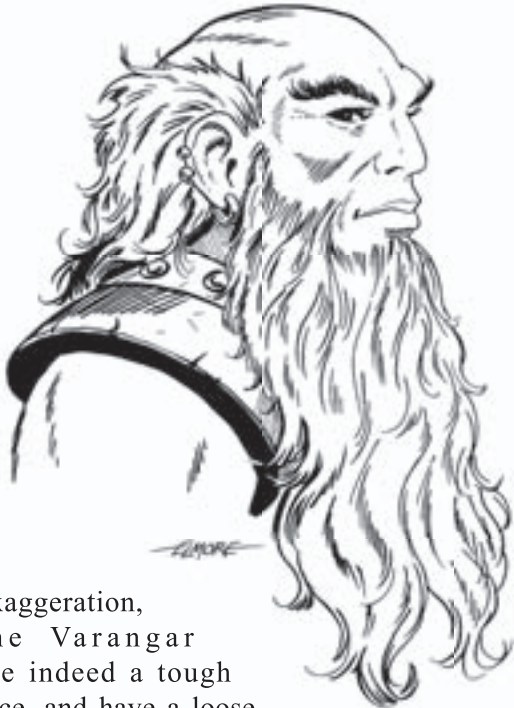
**Special Abilities:** Demonic Regeneration: 1d10 Hit Points per turn. Shape-changing: the Vampire can spend a Full Turn action transforming into a Hell Hound, using the template for that creature. Immunities: Vampires are immune to all mind-controlling effects. Weaknesses: Vampires suffer -2 on all rolls per turn from exposure to the scent of garlic or if confronted with a holy symbol. They suffer double damage from attacks that deal fire damage, and Vampires lose 10 Hit Points per turn they spend in direct sunlight.

**Hit Points:** 70+

**Habitat:** No restriction

## VARANGAR

The doughty dwarves originated in the north of Europe, where they established small mining colonies close to human trade routes. They are stout folk, rumoured to be able to run all day and night without rest, and make war for days on end without need of slumber. Though this would seem to be an



exaggeration, the Varangar are indeed a tough race, and have a loose alliance with some human settlements in the north of the world.

Individual Varangar are likely to be adventuring for reasons of their own. It might be that they are exiled from the clan and must walk the world alone, or they are seeking to discover something of great interest or value to bring honour to their clan name. Others turn their backs on the community lifestyle of their kin and seek their fortunes among the human folk that populate the rest of the world. A rare few Varangar actually seek to carve out territory of their own in order to found a new settlement in mainland Europe or elsewhere in the world.

Varangar typically dress in finely-forged heavy armour and bear weapons that are of a quality that human nobles would treasure. In battle they are fierce and grim, often hacking into their foes without a word and slaying in silence. For more information on the Varangar, see the *Introduction*.

**Size:** 3'5" -5', Weight

INT +0      PER -1  
WIL +2      CHA -2  
STR +1      DEX -1  
CON +2      SPD -1

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** As worn

**Special Abilities:** None

**Hit Points:** 12+

**Habitat:** Mountains, Hills, Tundra

## WALKING DEAD

The dead do not always rest easy. In instances where a body is never interred or is buried outside of holy ground, or in cases of severe demonic possession, it has been known for corpses to rise from the earth and seek the flesh of the living.

These walking dead are slow but relentless killers. They seem to lack all but the most primal intelligence and are known to attack anything living that crosses their path. The Walking Dead maintain a keen sense of hearing, though the eyes of these accursed creatures succumb to decay quickly, and they appear to have poor eyesight.

Though they suffer from natural decay and can exist only for a few years at the absolute longest before rot completely ruins their muscles, some hapless folk have been taken unaware by the strange un-life that remains in such a seemingly decayed body. These creatures shamble and stumble as they move, and crawl along the ground if they lose the use of their legs. With the nerves inside the body deadened, the Walking Dead feel no pain and are able to ignore most injuries, to the point of fighting on despite the loss of limbs and massive amounts of flesh and bone from the torso. Limbs that are separated from the body revert back to a state of true death, and the only way to destroy one of the Walking Dead is to bodily hack it to pieces or remove its head from its shoulders.

It should come as no surprise that these creatures reek most foully of death and decay. Though they show no capacity to understand language, many of the Walking Dead cry out with dull, lifeless

moans until their throats and lungs are too rotted to produce sound. God only knows if these cries are some form of attempted communication or moans of pain at some terrible inner torment.

**Size:** As human

INT -8      PER +1  
WIL +1      CHA n/a  
STR +4      DEX -4  
CON +4      SPD -6

**Ability Level:** 1

**Attacks/Damage:** As weapon

**Armor:** None

**Special Abilities:** Immunities: Walking Dead to not suffer the effects of mind-altering magic or extreme temperatures.

**Hit Points:** 10

**Habitat:** No restriction

## WEREWOLF

There have always been tales of men cursed to live and run like beasts. Whether it is a disease, a curse or some kind of wilful magic-fuelled change, the beasts known as Werewolves stalk the land and hunt for human flesh. Under the harsh light of the full moon, these men and women change. A terrible curse lives in their blood and bones; uncontrollable, insatiable, it forces them into the shape of a wolf until the rising of the sun.

A Werewolf appears outwardly normal until the change takes place. The first time an afflicted human sees the full moon at night, his body warps and changes into that of a large, powerfully-built wolf. There is no reason or memory left within the beast's mind; it assumes the heart, instincts and senses of a true wolf just as it assumes its body. The only difference is that a Werewolf in canine form is supernaturally strong, possesses incredible resistance to injury, and is driven to hunt for the blood and flesh of humans.

Silver is anathema to Werewolves. Something in the metal burns them and leaves hissing, burning wounds in their wolf-bodies that do not heal easily. As is popularly believed, the injuries inflicted by a Werewolf's jaws are enough to cause lycanthropy

in any victims, as it is the beast's saliva that carries the disease. However, few Werewolves leave their prey alive after a hunt, so the rate of infection is understandably low. It is thought that rubbing an herbal poultice of wolfsbane and several other herbs into injuries is a way to prevent catching the disease, providing that it is applied swiftly after the wounding.

The following statistics are for the creature in its wolf-form transformation.

**Size:** 3' in height/6' head to tail, Weight

INT +0      PER +7  
WIL +2      CHA n/a  
STR +8      DEX +6  
CON +6      SPD +10

**Ability Level:** 1+

**Attacks/Damage:** Jaws: DR 9, Claws: DR 8

**Armor:** Resilient Flesh: PR 3

**Special Abilities:** Shape-changing: A Werewolf can change between his human and wolf forms as a Full Turn action. Lycanthropy: every Hit Point of damage inflicted by a Werewolf's bite has a 10% chance of infecting the victim with lycanthropy. Herbal or magical remedies can be found at the GM's discretion, but on each night of the full moon, the character adopts this supernaturally-tainted wolf form and has no control over his actions.

**Hit Points:** 30+

**Habitat:** No restriction

# INDEX

## A

Abbot 45  
Aimed Shots 141  
Ajatar 224  
al-Andalus 66  
Albigensian Crusade 53  
Alchemist 80  
Alchemy 101  
Alchemy Order 162  
Alter Mode 151  
Anti-Magic 182  
Aragon 66  
Archbishop 45  
Archer 81  
Armor 206  
Astrology 102  
Attack Mode 152  
Attributes 12,15,16  
Attribute Rolls 17  
Augustinians 191

## B

Bandit 82  
Barter 201  
Basilisk 225  
Benedictines 191  
Bishop 45  
Brayglin 226  
British Isles 59  
Burglar 83  
Byzantium 67

## C

Calendar 218  
Callings 79  
Canon Law 190  
Castile 66  
Cathars 53  
Cenedl 38  
Chivalry 51  
Church 44  
Church Hierarchy 187

Cistercians 192  
Close Attacks 135  
Combat 26  
Combat Damage 19  
Combat Tactics 135  
Commoner 73  
Common Equipment 209  
Conjure Mode 152  
Constantinople 67  
Corpse Maiden 227  
Corruption 46  
Corsair 84  
Counterspells 31  
Courtier 85  
Creation 184  
Critical Wounds 141  
Crusade 52  
Cultural Templates 77

## D

Damage Rating 27,133  
Death & Dying 20  
Defend Mode 152  
Degree of Difficulty 13,213  
Demon 227  
Demonologist 86  
Demonology Order 165  
Denmark 59  
Diseases 219  
Dodge 138

## E

Elementals 229  
Elvenkind 34  
Enchanted Armor 134,181  
Enchanted Items 179  
Enchanted Weapons 134,181  
Encumbrance 19  
England 59  
Equipment 201  
Exceptional Armor 134  
Exceptional Weapons 134  
Experience Points 20

## **F**

Fallen Angel 227  
Feast Days 218  
Fir Bolg 232  
Fleeing 139  
Fleshless Dead 233  
Florence 63  
Fomorian 233  
Forester 87  
France 64  
Franciscans 193  
Freemen 74  
Friar 88

## **G**

Gaining Levels 71  
Gaining Talents 110  
Germany 62  
Ghibellines 63  
Ghosts 234  
Goblin 235  
God 183  
Golem 235  
Gorgon 236  
Grappling Attacks 137  
Greater Nobles 76  
Gryphonic Beasts 237  
Guelphs 63  
Guilds 42

## **H**

Hansa 33  
Harpy 238  
Healing 20  
Heal Mode 154  
Hell Hound 239  
Heresy 190  
heresy 48  
Hirelings 216  
Hit Points 20  
Hobgoblin 239  
Holy Roman Empire 61  
Hospitalers 56  
Humans 32  
Hungary 69

## **I**

Iberia 65

Illusion Mode 154  
Imp 228  
Improving Skills 26  
Influence Mode 155  
Inquisition 48  
Intent 13  
Ireland 61  
Italian City States 63

## **J**

Jester 89  
Jotunn 240

## **K**

Khantate of the Golden Horde 68  
Knight 90  
Knights Orders 55  
Knights of the Holy Sepulcher 200  
Knights of the Hospital of St. John 197  
Knights Templar 195

## **L**

Lamia 241  
Language 108  
Leon 66  
Lesser Nobles 75  
Louis IX 53,64

## **M**

Mage 91  
Magic 29,47,147  
Man-at-Arms 92  
Manticora 242  
Medicinal Arts 43  
Merchant 93  
Minstrel 94  
MODES 149  
Modes 29  
Money 201  
Mongol Horde 69  
Monk 95  
Movement 18,139  
Move Mode 155  
Multiclassing 71  
Multiple Actions 14

## **N**

Navarre 66  
Nobility 49

Norway 58

## O

Occultism Order 169

Ogre 242

Omni Table 11

Opposed Actions 13

Orders 29

Orders of Magic 160

Order of Saint James of Compostela 199

Order of Saint Lazarus 55

Order of the Glorious Saint Mary 55

Order of the Hatchet 55

Outcast 72

## P

Parry 139

Phouka 243

Pisa 63

Pope 45,189

Portugal 66

Priest 96

Protection Rating 27,134

## R

Ranged Attack 136

Reaction Rolls 18

Reconquista 66

Recovery 141

Relics 46

Retreating 139

Reveal Mode 156

## S

Sacraments 185

Scandinavia 56

Scholar 97

Scotland 60

Sea Serpent 244

Seelie 245

seneschal 41

Serfs 41

Sethari 8

Shields 134

Sienna 63

Sin 185

Skills 24,25,99

Skills List 100

Skill Benchmarks 99

Skill Ratings 12

Skill Rolls 24

Social Class 70

Sorcery Order 171

Spellbooks 150

Spellcasting 29

Spell Creation 150

Spell Penalty 31

Stunts 140

St Bernard 193

Subdual Attacks 138

Summon Mode 157

## T

Talents 110,112

Talent Trees 110

Tauran 40

Templars 56

Teutonic Knights 55

Theology 183

The Fall 184

Thiazi 58,245

Tithe 189

Town Life 42

Transfrom Mode 158

Travel Rates 222

Troll 246

## U

Unholy 39

Unicorn 247

Unseelie 247

## V

Vampire 248

Varangar 36,248

Visigoths 66

## W

Wales 60

Walking Dead 249

Ward Mode 159

Weapons 202

Werewolf 250

Witch 98

Witchcraft Order 175

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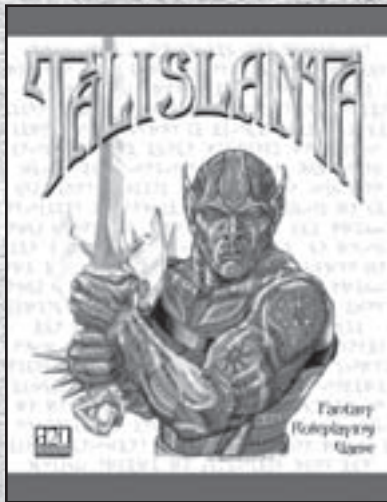
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