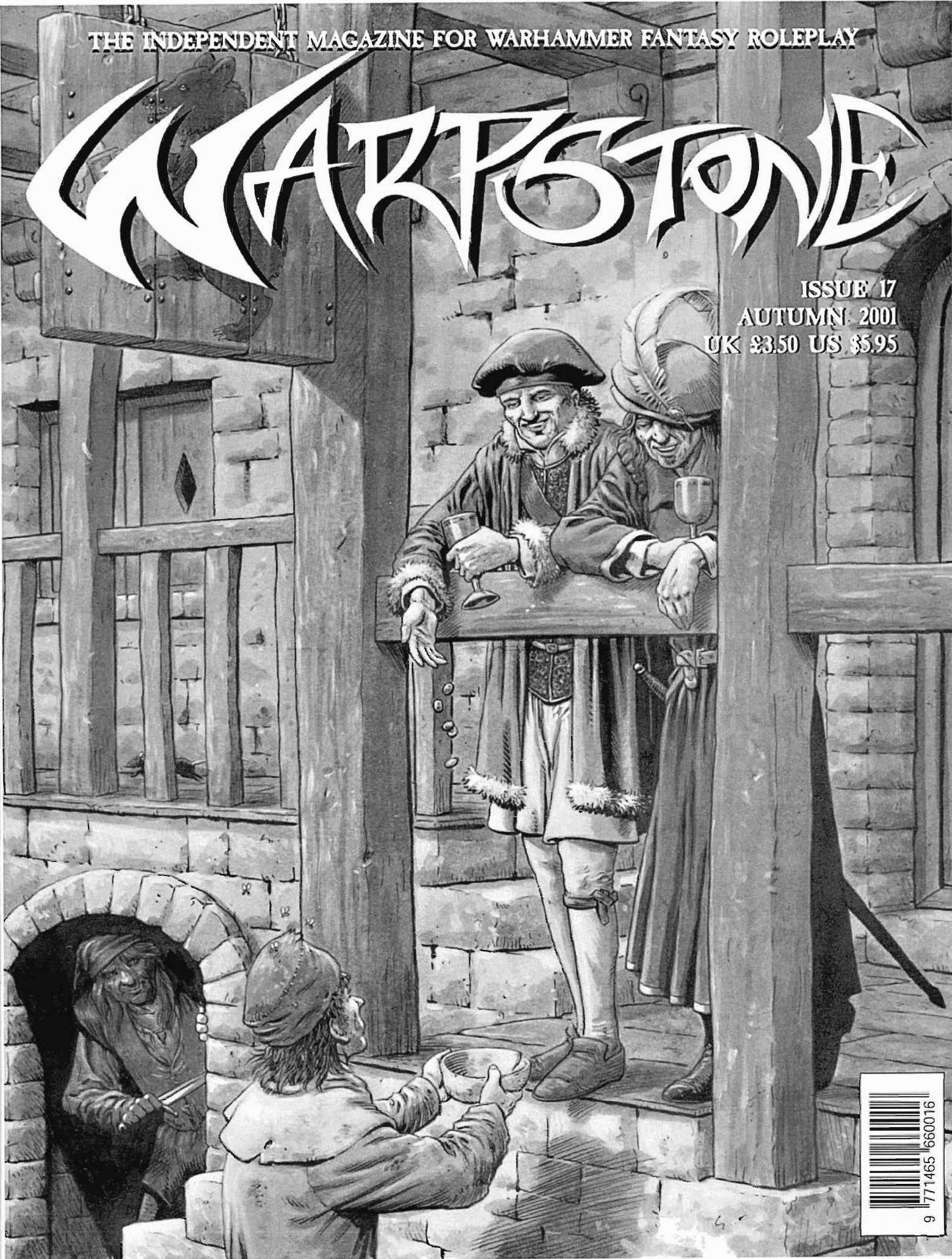


THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE FOR WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

GARTSTONE

ISSUE 17
AUTUMN 2001
UK £3.50 US \$5.95



EDITORIAL

By John Foody

Welcome once more. Last issue seems to have gone down well, with positive feedback on our Talabheim background and Doomstones' history. For the first time in a long while, we have had enough letters to fill a couple of pages. The article *A Touch of Evil?*, as we hoped, did provide plenty of food for thought. So, thanks to all those who have written in. Keep them coming.

This issue has something of a theme to it. Three of the articles, and to some degree part two of the Talabheim background, are connected to the topic of The Empire's nobility. Tim Eccles & Ryan Wileman look at the Tribes of Sigmar's time. Although at first glance it may not seem directly relevant to a modern Empire, it does provide essential background. I have already used parts of this in my own scenarios.

Tim Eccles's regular column The Correspondent has spoken a number of times about the importance of the cultural background of the game. In addition to Tim's own discussion on coins, Jody MacGregor provides some-such background this issue, looking to the Felix and Gotrek books for information. On a similar note, we are planning on reviewing all the latest products from The Black Library next issue. It has also been announced that they intend to reprint all the old novels. This is a welcome development (in some cases anyway).

This issue's scenario is a small one, simply because of the lack of space. Hopefully next issue's will be of a more usual size.

Until last years' Dragonmeet, London was without a large RPG convention. However, this year there are two, with Gencon coming to the capital. With expensive accommodation and some access problems, it is not to everyone's liking. However, it does seem to be a good way of reaching those with only a passing interest. I recently attended the Salute Wargaming convention, staged at the same venue Gencon will be using. Thus, it will be interesting to make some comparisons. Salute made a real effort to bring many people into games (especially children), something RPG convention are often guilty of not doing.

The forthcoming twelve months are very important for Hogshead Publishing. They have been promising a lot for a long time now, and it now seems as if they are ready to deliver. *Realm* (or *Realms*, no-one is really sure yet!) of *Sorcery* has been promised for a Gencon release preceded by the final part of Doomstones and followed by the Dwarf Sourcebook. If all these happen, then it is an excellent foundation for continued releases. All of these releases will be scrutinised carefully by the WFRP community. Expectations are high for *Realm of Sorcery*, but then why shouldn't they be. We have waited so long for this that we expect something special. Perhaps we are going to be disappointed no matter what. However, Hogshead have had so long to get this right, it needs to be more than just a collection of spells.

After those releases there doesn't currently seem to be anything solid in the pipeline as yet. It is vitally important that Hogshead do not ease off and continue to commission and publish projects on a regular basis. Their reputation for dealing with new projects and their writers has not always been the best, and they need to get this sorted out if they want WFRP to continue forward.

INFO








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Talabheim District Maps by Alfred Nunez. Tribes Map on page 7 by Ryan Wileman

Thanks to: Tim Eccles, Maciek Szaleniec, Tomek Kreczmar, Roderic Oswald, Alfred Nunez, N. Arne Dam, Anthony Ragan, Andrew Hind, Ryan Wileman, Luke Twigger, Tom McGrenery, Mark Bell, Zeno Collins, Toby Pilling, Carol Mulholland, Jody MacGregor, Ian Ward, Carol Johnson, Ian Sturrock, Anthony, Adam & Peter.

SUBMISSIONS

Version 1.5 - July 1999

Warpstone is happy to receive submissions of both written work and art. We will *always* respond to submissions, even if they are not suitable for publication in Warpstone. If you send a submission and don't hear back from us in good time, please drop us a line to remind us. Failure to reply is simply a symptom of the chaotic nature of the Warpstone organisation. If you take the time with a submission, we will take the time to respond.

Payment

A published contribution earns a you a free copy of Warpstone.

How?

We are happy to receive submissions by post or e-mail. Articles should be in RTF (Rich Text Format) or MS Word format. Disks should be 3.5", formatted for PC and marked with your name and article names.

Art Submissions

We are always looking for artists. You must have an understanding of the "Warhammer style" (which covers a broad range of styles, as our current artists will testify!), but we are happy to look at all kinds of work, whether your speciality is maps, caricatures, portraits or anything else. Just send us a picture you think should be included in Warpstone, and some examples of any other work you have done. Please remember not to send originals, but only copies.

Article Submissions

Warpstone tries not to include articles that rewrite game rules or are in themselves rules-heavy. In the same vein we are not looking for new monsters, careers, skills, gods etc. (That said, if you have something good send it in.) We are looking for articles that expand of the world of Warhammer, filling in the gaps that are present. We also look at how the game is played, discussing issues relevant to all gamers.

If you have an article but you're not sure whether it's suitable, send us an outline. We will tell you if we are interested in seeing it developed. If you could include a sample of some other work you've completed at the same time, this would be useful (but is not essential).

Regular Articles

Reviews: We will review WFRP material. If you wish to write a review on any other release (WFB etc.) then please check with us first to make sure no-one else is writing it. Should be 600+ words.

Comment Articles: We are always looking for articles where you put across your point of view on a particular subject. **Cameos:** Brief encounters and adventure outlines. Don't include character profiles, only descriptions.

Scenarios: Full length, detailed adventures. We are especially interested in scenarios that do not include hosts of creatures, lots of magic or loads of Chaos cultists. When these are included, they should be an integral part of the story. A tribe of goblins with +1 swords all round will prove the adage that 'the editor's red pen is mightier than the sword...' **Short stories:** Set firmly in the Warhammer World. Same guidelines as Scenarios.

The Article List

If you want to see any WFRP related article then let us know. We will add it to the article list. Only the following on the list at the moment;

Careers: As mentioned in issue 10. Not new ones, but fleshed out cultures and backgrounds for the current ones.

ETC.

Curses! They had almost broken the secret of the code. The scribe was now being stalked by the blue-beard; slavishly devoted to his strange ideas. Still it could be worse. Those in the east had proved themselves friends. However, storms ravished the land, although he was protected by the crater. Still, the killer was gaining support among the people. Time was now an enemy as well. The forgotten tomes were in danger of being forgotten. The guardians stood watch but it was not their decision whether they would be seen again. Ramble, ramble, whitter, thump, thump, wibble, ramble... Let them decipher that! He sighed - had it really come to this?

REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF CORRUPTION

Reviews

2

We take a look at the on-line Bergsburg project, the re-released Death's Dark Shadow & SLA Industries.

"This is a worthy statement, but inevitably, for the different contributions to interact without conflicting you need some degree of control and maintenance."



Bluc Blood on the Carpet

19

Some ideas for dealing with the nobility of The Empire and a look at the von Bildhofen family.

"Sometimes the level of grovelling reaches the point of being nauseating."



The Correspondent

5

Our regular columnist takes a look at Imperial Law.

"At some point during their adventuring careers most PCs are likely to find themselves involved in legal proceedings; most likely as the accused."



The Simple Coin

26

Some ideas for dealing with the humble coin and other economic topics.

"The thing to remember is that not all that glints is gold, nor is all money necessarily metal."



The Nine Tribes

7

The Empire at the time of Sigmar.

"The region now familiar as The Empire has a relatively consistent human habitation for over 3000 years, and this has to leave some traces in terms of physical structures, language, culture and other relics."

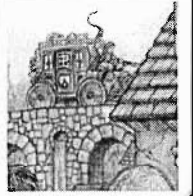


Talabheim

30

Part two takes us into The Old City among other places.

"Although the keep is part of the Old City wall, it dominates the atmosphere of the district."

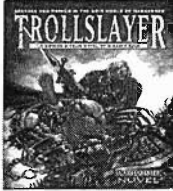


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Some cultural background from William King's Felix and Gotrek.

"His Slayer series contain a wealth of interesting background material."



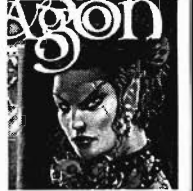
Reviewed: The Professionals

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A look at how to incorporate Bodie & Doyle into your WFRP game. Sorry, that was a lie.

A look at some games magazines.

"If this is not true, exactly what is the point of a games magazine?"



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17

How to address your betters. Some essential material for those with the Etiquette skill.

"The ranks and titles of the Old World nobility is a confusing subject."

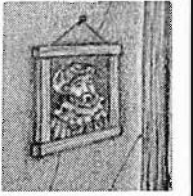


In the Name of Love

45

A short scenario.

"The Watch haven't been able to do anything, they believe she somehow brought it upon herself."



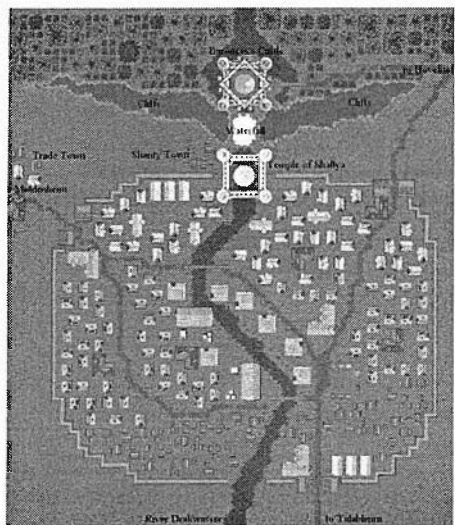
ABBREVIATIONS							
A	Number of Attacks	Fel	Fellowship	M	Movement	SL	Secret Language
AP	Armour Points	GC	Gold Crown	MP	Magic Points	SS	Secret Signs
BS	Ballistic Skill	GM	Gamesmaster	NPC	Non-player character	SW	Specialist Weapons
CI	Cool	Gu	Guildier (Marienburg Coinage)	P	Parry	T	Toughness
CR	Complexity Rating	GW	Games Workshop	PC	Player Character	W	Wounds
DB	Dodge Blow	I	Initiative	R	Range	WFB	Warhammer Fantasy Battle
Dex	Dexterity	IC	Imperial Calendar	RoS	Realm of Sorcery	WFRP	Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay
EPs	Experience Points	Int	Intelligence	S	Strength	WP	Will Power
ES	Effective Strength	Ld	Leadership	SDtR	Marienburg: Sold Down the River	WS	Weapon Skill

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REVIEWS

Bergsburg On-line WFRP Project Reviewed by John Foody



Last issue I reviewed a number of resources available on-line for use in WFRP. A unique one, in its execution, is The Bergsburg Project which aims to develop the town of Bergsburg by allowing anyone to submit locations, scenarios and personalities. By allowing all submissions, plans of this nature encourage a wide variety of ideas, many just one-offs. Thus writers are encouraged to

contribute, without ever going down the line of attempting to create a full sourcebook. The structure of this kind of project attracts those who would not otherwise be tempted to put pen to paper. However, such an undertaking comes with inherent dangers. The problem is that without any control, focus or consistency a project could go off the rails. The organisers state in their introduction, "we want a breathing, living city where things depend on each other". This is a worthy statement, but inevitably, for the different contributions to interact without conflicting you need some degree of control and maintenance.

The organisers have set out to counter potential problems by providing solid guidance for perspective contributors. They have outlined the history of the town, giving an overview of what makes it interesting. Assistance on submissions and an outline of how the submission process works is also included; all of this seems to be a sensible attempt to make things easier for contributors. Reading this aid gives a real sense that they are really trying to make this a playable city source. Part of this guide contains the welcome advice that they are trying to avoid huge conspiracies and Chaos cultists in every house.

The Project itself is available as a website maintained by Luke Twigger, one of the Project co-ordinators. He has done an excellent job of putting it all together. The site itself is simple and clean, although not always as easy to navigate as it could be. A welcome



feature is the ability to download the whole project as a compressed file if required.

Bergsburg (originally known as Virtualdorf) was chosen as the basis for the project as there were no references to it outside a gazetteer entry in *The Middenheim Sourcebook*. This allowed the city to be developed in any direction. Standing as the capital of Hochland, it was built on the site of a holy waterfall associated with Shallya. In addition to the crowds of pilgrims, prospectors have flocked to the town in recent years after the discovery of gold in the nearby Middle Mountains. The cult of Shallya provides a powerful influence here, but it is the Council of Five who rule. The Council is also the name of the Bergsburg project's five co-ordinators.

The background is supported with a number of maps of the town and surrounding area which provide an essential visual guide to the city. Although the project is a couple of years old, the amount of material here is relatively small. However, the quality is generally high. Each entry begins with raw details listing the title, author, and the history of the submission, saying when it was added to the project and if it has undergone any changes. The main part of the description finishes with links to other submissions. This is where Bergsburg really seems to be heading in the right direction. Such links make the background come alive, ensuring no submission stands alone. It also means there are plenty of ideas for others to work with. If this can be carried through, Bergsburg will become a coherent and effective environment.

Among the current submissions are three temples, a detailed description of a noble family, some traders, numerous NPCs and various other elements you would expect to find in a Warhammer city. The best of these are the Tiegel Theatre, the Shrine of Ranald and the Temples of Sigmar and Ulric. There are plenty of nice ideas, many showing what can be done without resorting to Chaos-fuelled plots. I also liked the short story, *Kasper's Gift*, although its link to Bergsburg is tenuous. The most effective submissions are those that tie in to the background of the city, using it effectively to make the location or character unique.

On the downside, a couple of the submissions feel a little unfinished and shouldn't have been allowed in without further development. A stronger editorial hand would have benefited some of the submissions which tend to waffle a little. Tightening the work up at this stage can only strengthen the project later on. There is also a tendency to fully detail every NPC, including giving them profiles. This isn't necessary, and just takes up additional space.

Although the links between submissions do make the city come alive, there is not enough material to judge how effective this will be, although the current groundwork is strong. One element of the project that is lacking, though, are scenarios. It will be scenarios that will really pull things together and allow the different parts of the city to interact. Hopefully, once GMs start using the project these will naturally become available.

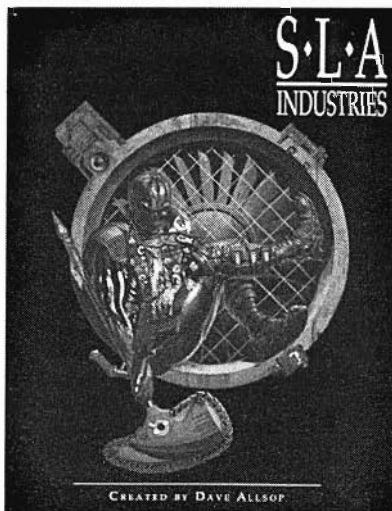
As it stands, the Bergsburg project has the foundation to be a strong and effective resource for WFRP GMs. If the Council of Five maintain a firm control on the submissions then it could grow to rival Marienburg. To date, The Council of Five has done a good job building the skeleton of the city its environs. However, it is down to others to contribute to its growth, and such things are never guaranteed. Its lack of recent development shows that this is a real danger. Whatever happens I look forward to seeing how it evolves.

The Bergsburg Project can be found at:
www.geocities.com/luke_twigger/bb_index.html

SLA Industries

Published by Nightfall Games/Hogshead Publishing

Reviewed by Martin Oliver



900 years ago the universe was at war. Races tore each other apart in an epic struggle known as the Conflict Wars. Only one person had the vision to end it all: Mr. Slayer. A strange, sharp-suited businessman who sold weapons and Biogenetic soldiers, and who eventually brought about peace by turning these same weapons on their new masters. In the wake of the destruction, he founded SLA Industries - a company that owns everything worth mentioning. The company that ruthlessly oppresses all opposition. The company you work for. Welcome to the World of Progress.

SLA Industries is a dark and brooding game, set on Mort, the planet that lies at the heart of the World of Progress. It's a grim, uncaring place, where TV pacifies the unemployed masses whilst SLA's forces struggle to keep control. Characters are Operatives, the agents contracted by SLA to do whatever needs doing - from patrolling the sewers to prime-time publicity appearances. Death is a spectator sport, and a price worth paying for your fifteen minutes of fame.

Operatives are the privileged few. They're highly trained, highly paid, and in the limelight. Most are human, but there's also Frothers (drug-crazed clansmen), Biogenetics (the Stormers that Slayer developed as soldiers) and aliens (including the noble, lizard-like Shaktar, the cat-like Wraith Raiders and the mystical Ebons, with their dark counterparts, the Brain Wasters).

The game was inspired, in part, by the writers' experiences of Thatcher-years Glasgow. It's a game with themes - the apathy of the masses, the power of the media, prejudice, the importance of finding that vital spark that makes you human, and of keeping it alive in the face of horror and atrocities - even when it's you that's having to commit them.

It's also a game full of questions - some obvious, some insidious. Why don't they just nuke the War Worlds, where conflict still rages? Why are they

still using fax machines? How do Stormers work? Where did Slayer and Intruder come from? One of the most frustrating things about the game is that these things are hinted at but not resolved in the rulebook. There is a Truth out there - but currently, you have to write to the game designers to get a copy, as they plan to reveal it gradually, through the new releases to be published by Hogshead. It's a very bizarre 'Truth', though - some GMs have rejected it and come up with something they're happier with instead. There are several alternatives available on the web; a good starting point would be www.stsm.demon.co.uk/SLA, which also contains a link to the Cognate webbing of SLA sites. There's also an active discussion list that you can join at topica.com/lists/station-analysis/.

How does it play, though? It's a distinctive style of game; most of the 'adventures' (which come in the form of Blueprint News Files, issued by SLA Industries) are short incidents. There are, of course, exceptions - but a lot of the material out there can be played through in 2-3 hours. This makes it great for short gaming sessions, and the fact that the line-up of Operative Squads can vary means that it's easy to cope if players can't make every session. The down-side, though, is that it can all feel very fragmented. To get the most from it, the GM and players will have to work on personal development and ongoing 'back story' elements.

The mechanics are fairly simple. Just about everything that needs a random element (including combat) is resolved by rolling 2d10, and some tests just involve a comparison of a character's skill with a difficulty level. The only element my players regularly find confusing is calculating damage in combat. However, this apart, the system works pretty smoothly.

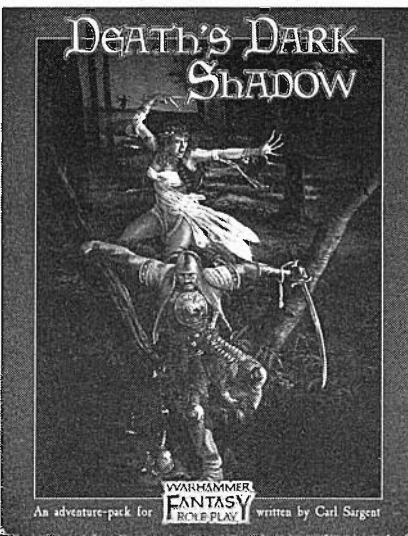
But will the game will appeal to WFRP players? Although they have a lot in common - Mort is definitely a grim world full of perilous adventures - SLA isn't WFRP in space. There's fewer good guys and more moral grey areas, less freedom to wander the world but more involvement with the powers that be, fewer dungeons but more X-Files style conspiracies. Importantly, though, the two share atmosphere, the feeling that there's a world out there full of people (most of whom are more important than you) getting on with their lives, and the promise of an elaborate background revealed through an epic campaign. What SLA doesn't have is the same opportunities for light relief. It's described as a 'personal horror' setting, and it's possible to hit a nerve or wear players down with relentless unpleasantness. New role players might want to stick to the 'big guns' bits of the game - but there's plenty there for the more experienced gamer who wants psychological depth and challenge.

Played badly, it's probably closest to cartoon-style *Shadowrun*. Played well, it's a distinctive dystopia with the potential to keep players entertained - or at least, intrigued - for a long time. And should its appeal pall, there's the potential for some seriously disturbing cross-playing with the *New Style* game *Powerkill*...

Death's Dark Shadow

Published by Hogshead Publishing

Reviewed by John Foody



Although Luke Twigger reviewed *Death's Dark Shadow* in issue 14, he did so as part of our Timewarp reviews (reviews of WFRP products unlikely to be re-released). However, Hogshead decided to publish *Death's Dark Shadow* to fill a gap in their release schedule, one left by the non-showing of *Doomstones 3: Heart of Chaos* and *Realms of Sorcery*. As I have done with every previous release I sat down and read *Death's Dark Shadow* to compile a review. It was the first time I had read the sourcebook, the original edition through Flame Publications having passed me by. When I had finished I re-read Luke's

review and found I agreed with almost everything he said. Therefore, I decided against writing a full review of the book but I did decide to do a mini-review.

The only real difference between the two editions is the removal of a

number of NPC profiles for characters found in Games Workshop novels of the eighties. The Hogshead edition comes with a new, rather average, cover and the original artwork. This ranges from the poor to the very good. Quite a bit is duplicated however, and printing the same full-page picture twice is just needlessly filling space.

The sourcebook is set around the village of Kreutzhofen, which acts as a trading point between four countries. The village and its surrounds are described in detail but it never really comes alive as a living place. I can't help but feel that, for a start, it should be the size of a town at least when you consider what goes on there. The underground river to Tilea, although not badly handled, is also just stretching things too far.

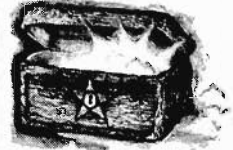
Although there are plenty of scenario ideas, I imagine many GMs will have a hard time pinning PCs down to stay in one village for a long time. The full-length scenario isn't bad, although underdeveloped. The smaller adventures range from the poor to average.

Death's Dark Shadow is written by Carl Sargent, who showed what he can really do with *Power Behind the Throne*. He also penned *Empire in Flames*, and I feel *Death's Dark Shadow* suffers from a number of the same faults as that book (and *Doomstones*). There are too many magic items and creatures floating around. Yes, these can be cut out if desired but I feel they tend to spoil the atmosphere of the book, as if it the author didn't quite get to grips with what WFRP is about. Yet, we know he obviously did.

Nothing in *Death's Dark Shadow* raises it above the average. Many ideas are clichés and some are even nicked from other WFRP books. Many of the scenarios and scenarios outlines seem to have just been shoehorned into the Kreutzhofen locale for the sake of it. Many would be better used by GMs elsewhere as the need comes along. For this reason, as did Luke in his original review, I recommend the book. You get a fleshed out village and a dozen or so scenarios. Just don't expect to use them as given.

WARPSTONE FRAGMENTS

BRIEF REVIEWS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WARHAMMER



The Dying Earth
Roleplaying Game

Based on the works of Jack Vance, the Dying Earth RPG is the first release from the UK Company Pelgrane Press. A dark fantasy game, Pelgrane Press promises "a world where the sun is in its dotage, where a flashing sword is less important than nimble wits, persuasive words, and a fine sense of fashion." Heavy in magic and encouraging roleplaying, the game looks to be taking an interesting new slant. The game is written by Robin Laws (*Doomstones 5 & Hero Wars*) and John Sneed (*Nephilim, Star Trek*).

Pelgrane Press looks to be supporting the game well with a quarterly magazine (*The Excellent Prismatic Spray*) and a number of forthcoming supplements. Their website also has a number of downloads, including sample rules, available.

The Dying Earth RPG (Hardback £19.95, \$29.95) is available from all good gaming shops or directly from www.dyingearth.com. We hope to bring you a review next issue.



THE LORD OF THE RINGS

As mentioned last issue Games Workshop are to produce a tabletop wargame based on *Lord of the Rings*. This will be released near Christmas 2001 to tie in with the first of the movies, directed by Steve Jackson. Rick Priestly is to write the rules and GW are promising a different style of game to Warhammer and 40K. Three editions of the game will be

produced, each tying in directly with a film. The first, *Fellowship of the Ring*, will be available as a boxed starter set containing the rules manual, 48 models, and scenic ruins. Supporting this GW are producing a number of box-sets, blisters and scenery.

This is an interesting development for GW. It is the first time they have stepped outside the Warhammer universes for some years. However, the Lord of the Rings films promise to be huge, with all the attendant spin-off merchandise. GW are ideally poised to attract new gamers to the hobby with the game. This also goes for the various RPG companies (Decipher have the RPG rights). It will be more interesting to see if they can keep these gamers and whether they will continue to support the Lord of the Rings' ranges once the films have come and gone.

More information can be found at www.Gamesworkshop.com/lor



By the time you read this *Realms of Sorcery* should be out there. It's written. It's approved. Hogshhead are just working on the finishing touches - chasing up artists, laying out the pages and the like. *Fingers crossed. Doomstones 3: Heart of Chaos* should also be on shop shelves now.

The new RPG's *Bloodlust & Nobilis* are both still on course to be released around the end of the year.

Hogshhead have also announced that, for the first time since 1998, they are putting up their prices.

Gencon Hits London

Wizards of the Coast have announced that the location for GenCon UK 2001 is Olympia 2 in London. It will run from Wednesday 29th August 2001 to Sunday 2nd September 2001. Twenty-four hour gaming is promised until the close of gaming at Sunday 7pm, which will be followed by a party in the evening.

Olympia 2 is not a cheap venue to hold an event at nor is it as large as the premises of past GenCons. However, it seems that Wizards are looking to increase the amount of single day visitors attending. This is a welcome development, if it can bring in new gamers. Some concern has been raised with regards to accommodation. This side of the event is being run by a third-party for the first time. The local area is full of hostels but these are of such variable quality that a number were raided recently for having three times as many people in one room than allowed. Hopefully, these will be avoided.

Gaming starts at 1am Thursday and Wizards promise that "the RPGA is running the largest programme of role-playing games events it has ever run", the D&D open and the official UK *Etric* championship. The list of game slots shows plenty of variety in the RPGs. Entrance is free on Wednesday and a day pass is £10 (increase by £5 for each additional day with half price for under 16s).

For more information check out www.wizards.com/genconuk or contact Sam Wright on bookings@genconuk.com or Miss S Wright, Events Manager, Wizards of the Coast, P.O. Box 61, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1FX, England for booking information, Wizards Customer Services can also be contacted on UK@wizards.com or phone (0345) 12 35 99 (if you're in the UK), or +44 (1628) 780 801 (international callers).



Dragonmeet

With the success of last year's *Dragonmeet*, Gameforce Ltd. have announced that *Dragonmeet 2001* will be held at the larger venue of Kensington Town hall on 1st December 2001. John Kovalic, creator of 'Dork Tower' has promised to return as special guest and more are promised. The con will run from 10am to 10pm, the trading hall closing at 6pm as the auction begins. Tickets are £5 in advance (with a group discount of 5 tickets for the price of 4) and £6 on the door. Advance tickets are available from www.dragonmeet.com or by mail from Gameforce Ltd, c/o 18 - 20 Brommell's Road, London, SW4 0BG, UK.

Dungeons & Dragons: The Movie Reviewed by Francis Plunder

Arriving in the distant but visible shadow of the *Lord of the Rings*, the D&D movie had a lot of work to do to convince many. In the end it was a mixed bag, but not one that was all bad. It was interesting to note that generally it was aimed purely at the kids' market with few late evening shows. However, this is the level at which the film worked best.

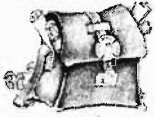
The acting and characterisation was let down by a terrible Jeremy "So much ham there is a real danger of foot and mouth" Irons, a weak central hero, and a very irritating sidekick (played by Marlon Wayans who was good in the excellent *Requiem for a Dream*). Tom Baker turned up in a very brief cameo while Richard O'Brien reprised his *Crystal Maze* role to mild amusement.

The plot was weak, with parts heavily reminiscent of *A Phantom Menace* (It was the better parts they used, but still...). However, like this, these were potentially thrown away without real development. Much was made of the battle at the end involving a host of dragons. Like the effects throughout the film this wasn't too bad, although here pointless. The end of the film felt rushed, as if they ran out of money. As to the last two minutes, urgh.... I can say no more to its cheesiness.

So, what was good about it? The main henchman wasn't bad, and the look of it worked well in places, but this was a patchy effort.

In the end, the film suffered in many of the areas I feel the D&D game suffers. The world and background was not strong enough, too much pointless magic and creatures for the sake of it and no real concentration on characters. Thus, a disappointment but perhaps not as bad as it could have been.

The picture on page 25 of issue 16 is by Oliver Bancroft not Olivier Bergarat as marked. * *Wizards of the Coast* recently have closed their flagship gaming centre in Seattle. * GW have released *Inquisitor*, a game set in the 40K universe, one with many RPG similarities. It takes the opportunity to have a dig at RPGs and the price of £40 for a rulebook and two figures is putting many off. * *Rumours* of a new *WFRP* e-zine but no details yet. * The Chart of Darkness competition was our most popular yet. Tom McGrenery was pulled out of the pot after answering that the name came from the book *Heart of Darkness* on which the film *Apocalypse Now!* was based. *



THE CORRESPONDENT

Legal Eagle: the Nature of Imperial Law by Tim Eccles



At some point during their adventuring careers most PCs are likely to find themselves involved in legal proceedings; most likely as the accused. The usual method of handling this is through charts such as those found in *Middenheim: City of Chaos*. However these have limitations. They lack the enriching ceremony and language that a court could offer. Secondly, charts that have random tariff payments, modified by checks against PC characteristics, misunderstand the nature of pre-modern law one would assume would be found in the Renaissance-like Old World. The nature of law, some background and ideas for use in scenarios will be an improvement over the current tables.

Types of Laws

GMs need to be aware of two basic (and possibly contradicting!) types and sources of law. Essentially both *Secular Law* and *Religious Law* are found in the Old World.

Secular law derives from either Imperial Law or Electoral Law. In principle, Imperial Law is universal and standardised across The Empire. In reality, it is only enforced where local rulers wish it, since The Empire is not a centrally unified nation but a series of confederated states. As one way of making a standard, and in the days when The Empire was more unified, the Emperor Sigismund created the *Coroner*, an Imperial appointment for each region to ensure the enforcement of the Emperor's laws. Coroners receive no salary and must recover their fees from trials, and are barely tolerated by local courts who see them as interlopers and meddlers. Still, in theory, the coroner must hear all crimes against Imperial Law. Local laws are extremely variable, created by historic custom and practice and by the wishes of the local ruler and other governing elites. They cover in detail what Imperial Law merely brushes over. To simplify matters, the GM can assume that Imperial Law allows for the basic right to life, the maintenance of social order and certain infrastructures, guaranteeing the value of coinage, the payment of tax, free worship of official religions and the natural hierarchical order. Its ability to guarantee or enforce these is a different matter!

For the sake of simplicity it is probably best to regard the religious courts as only concerned with religious matters, such as heresy and disputes over the divine. However, even here it is not that simple, since witch-hunters might claim most laws stem from a religious basis, and where the priesthood break secular law, it would be normal for their own court to try them. GMs might also like to adopt the old church custom, whereby anyone capable of reading and writing can choose to be tried by an ecclesiastical Consistory Court. Whilst these are only available to the priesthood, it is assumed that only they can read and write, and thus anyone proving such a skill can claim to be a cleric in the eyes of that court. Most non-clerics perceive the Consistory Court as less harsh in its punishments. This is a matter of GM choice, for in the Old World it can easily be argued that the opposite is the case - various cults have a tendency towards leniency against their own priesthood in order to maintain their (nominal) public standing, yet cases of heresy can get very nasty, very quickly.

Who Enforces Law?

Law in towns and cities is relatively easy to enforce, but rural law is much less secure. Whilst every area has a nominal coroner to enforce Imperial laws, they are even more stretched in the diverse spread of rural settlements than within the dense urban communities. Towns and cities elect *Portreeves* by a ballot of all property owning citizens. The precise numbers of portreeves varies between towns, but they liaise between the town council and the town government, and are expected to assist in legal matters as appropriate. The portreeve is technically a representative of the town to its rulers, separate from the town council, which is elected primarily by the guilds. The portreeves will usually be the most important councillors, since the council will (informally) nominate and support candidates. Similarly, rural communities elect an elder to act as mayor for the village, and this individual is responsible for accounting to its overlord and the judiciary for events within the settlement. Justices in Fyre act as a travelling court ensuring consistency and fairness. They also check on administration of local courts and collect fines (known as amercements). These are responsible ultimately to the Elector and Emperor, but will report to the local coroner and ruler. The Cult of Verena might play an open role in this - priests can theoretically be a portreeve or magistrate - or monitor the justice system via an agent.

The Law in Action: an example

Murder is against Imperial Law and falls within the jurisdiction of the coroner *in theory*. The coroner firstly needs to determine that a murder has taken place. To do this, he must call a jury, which is everyone who might know something about the death. The jury is not the modern understanding of the word, but more the witnesses and others with an interest in the case. They are there to observe and obey the instructions of the coroner. In theory, a jury is every person over the age of twelve years of age from the township or province. In reality, coroners call those most likely

to have evidence in terms of nearness - neighbours, family, work associates and the like. The purpose of the jury is to offer evidence to the coroner and act as witness to his findings as he describes them to the jury and interviews witnesses in front of them. He will then appoint a spokesman from the jury and ask him whether their verdict concurs with his. Whilst murder may appear obvious, it cannot be a murder under *Imperial Law* if the deceased had a weapon and used it in defence, was an outlaw, heretic, chaotic or non-citizen!

However, over-riding all this and enshrined in Imperial Law is the concept of *Presentment ad Plebiam*. In the event of any death, a *murdrum* fine will be charged upon the entire community in which the dead was found, unless Presentment can be made. Presentment is proof that the dead person was not a member of the nobility. It is recognised that nobles are not well loved, and this is an economic tool to persuade the downtrodden poor not to murder their betters, and discourage others from doing so as well. The fine will be a large tithe. The coroner must decide on the dead's nobility² and whether a fine is due. If the settlement can make adequate proof that the individual was a known local, this is acceptable, but dead strangers can prove very costly - and a useful source of income for coroners! For these reasons, the person who discovers the body (or witnesses the crime) - the *First Finder* - is always an important witness, and must obey certain rules such as not moving the body, raising hue and cry, and informing the authorities. Part of the role of the coroner is to judge the first finder's actions, and fine him or her if necessary. On completion, the coroner must record his findings and pass them to the local authorities. They will progress the matter with the local watch; if it is a matter for Imperial law they will act as agents for the coroner and inform him of developments, since coroners are limited in their resources. This frequently makes Imperial crimes safer to commit than local ones.

Coroners are usually housed in the Imperial garrison, although since the nature of the job requires that the individual have a private income, they are likely to maintain their own more spacious quarters. The coroner is placed with the Imperial garrison since it places all the non-local forces in one location, and away from the local judiciary. This tends to please both parties, since it means all Imperialists can be kept under observation in one place, whilst at the same time offering the coroner some protection should he need it. However, the coroner has no direct command over the garrison, since local Electors would not stand for such a situation. Similarly, the post is specifically a secular one to prevent religious ill feeling contributing to the political distrust inherent in the job. However, priests of Verena do act as coroners.

Religious Law

Most religious law is concerned with policing the priesthood and temples in both religious and secular matters. Were a priest to steal or kill, then he would be likely to be tried under religious law. This might lead some to seek revenge against clerics if they were perceived to have escaped 'justice' due to their vocation, and offers plenty of ideas for scenarios where PCs are hired to track down a priest.

One obvious area of interest concerning religious law and the secular state is the general nature of heresy, the existence of mutants and - of course - the Inquisition. Warpstone 15 examined the Church of Sigmar and the place of the Inquisition within that cult's organisation. It is important to remember in a polytheistic nation - and The Empire is more a polytheistic confederation - that no single Inquisition is likely to be able to wield much central power. Even if the Emperor authorised a Sigmarite Inquisition it might not be honoured by each elector within his or her own lands, and it would certainly not be accepted within predominantly Ulrican provinces. Therefore, even an Inquisition needs to respect the power of individuals to control events within their area of power.

It should be noted that each cult would have its own brand of religious law, in that each would have its own view on crime and punishment. It is not the place of this article to analyse each faith and offer specific statements on breaches of those tenets. Generally speaking, any crime carried out by a priest is seen as a crime against the faith primarily and so tried by a religious court. This covers all crimes from heresy to murder and from a Shallyan cleric who kills a robber in self-defence to a Sigmarite templar who does not kill a mutant through pity.

Imperial Law

Whilst laws are not necessarily uniform throughout The Empire, there is one area of law which is. All aspects of life within The Empire are controlled by a monopoly of power, be this the Emperor, the Electors, local rulers or guilds. In order to maintain and utilise this power, permits and warrants are necessary to carry out most tasks. Travel, buying and selling, using controlled items, wearing livery and many other things are only possible when allowed by the requisite controller. This obligates payment in kind or cash, and bestows permission. The law will enforce these warrants, since it serves the powers that wield them. PCs need to be aware of this, and to be

ready to be constantly questioned as to whether they have the right to be where they are, doing whatever they are doing.

There is also a second area of agreed law. The large tracts of forest, which appear on the various Old World maps and through which the PCs will travel, are not simply wilderness. In theory, the Emperor or a local lord owns them all. Of course, in reality they might indeed be effectively wild and unused, but all forest is subject to *Forest Law*. Forest Law is enforced by a Verderer, who is usually simply the senior forester or master of the hunt. Essentially the laws are as follows:

- No one except the Emperor may hunt anything within the borders of a forest hundred³. The Emperor, and the Emperor only, may grant rights to hunt to anyone he wishes⁴.
- The eagle and the griffin are Imperial animals, and anyone found guilty of killing such a creature shall be hanged immediately until dead.
- The deer and boar are protected from any of the rights to hunt that may periodically be awarded to vassals or commoners unless within a granted fief.
- No one may kill or hurt any bird of the forest, unless stated as a pest. Crow, Black-crow, Rook and Magpic are declared pest and may be hunted by anyone.
- No one may fish in the forest.
- Rats, mice and snakes are declared pest and may be killed by anyone.
- Any hide, pelt or fleece taken from hunting in the forest, belongs to the Emperor.
- Any animal attacking domestic animals may be hunted down, but will belong to the landowner.
- Any wild or stray animal feeding from crops or cottage may be hunted down, unless deer or boar, which shall be chased away.
- No one will be punished for killing any monster, as defined by the Verderer.
- Imperial and local forestry officials are allowed certain limited hunting rights, as determined by the Chief Forester or Master of the Hunt.
- Commoners are occasionally granted hunting rights on certain holy days or festivals. Other groups - such as nature priests - might be granted similar rights, including the right to hold ceremonies. Of course, some religions do not recognise the concept of ownership or laws applying to the forest.

Electoral Law

Electoral Law is that which applies within a particular electoral province. In theory, only electors may create laws and these only with the nominal blessing of the Emperor. However, just as powerful individuals might ignore Imperial Law, so might they ignore Electoral Law. Therefore, local laws are the most important, since they are the most rigorously applied and held in respect by their communities. By local, these laws might refer to a principality, a town or a village. Since such laws will tend to be associated with smaller economic areas, there is less pomp and ceremony to legal procedures. At its simplest, the accused is simply dragged in front of the person whose role is the local magistrate. Local laws revolve around two key areas:

Custom and Practice: Laws have evolved within the communities that support them. They have the support of the local populace for they trace back to their ancestors, possibly even to Sigmar or pre-Sigmar tribal customs. The Empire is a highly conservative country and its laws reflect this. Due to this cultural embeddedness, laws can be extremely localised indeed.

Power: Local power structures hold control through economic, political and physical means. They also 'own' the law. This figure is usually the local noble, but might be a group of elders, a travelling magistrate, a merchant or other local employer. These people are practically untouchable. There will always be an "Ernie's Law", that is, a local law created by a local character to his own ends. However, such power has to be used carefully, since the status quo already favours such powerful individuals. They need to be wary of upsetting this balance by too much abuse of power.

Witch-Hunters

My own views upon this career are developed in detail in *Warpstone 8*. The notion that witch-hunters can simply travel the countryside killing heretics is a common perception based upon rare instances. Peasants are a lord's source of income, and he is going to be very unhappy at their loss. His position in society also depends upon his ability to protect his vassals.

Loopholes

It is, of course, an extremely useful plot device for a loophole to allow an accused to escape. Whether this is utilised by a clever (and expensive) lawyer, is the source of the adventure itself or is taken by the magistrate who 'happens to have a job' for the defendants, none of the above should prevent use of the loophole as a gaming tool.

Therefore, he is going to need persuasion to allow them to be killed. This is not to say that lone witch-hunters will not engage in such practices, but that they are doing so outside the law. Most witch-hunters will be connected to either a local chapter of the Fraternal Order and Association of Fellow Defenders of the Law and Hunters of the Chaotic

(commonly shortened to the Order of Hunters) which are licensed by relevant authorities or a religious cult. These organisations will then liaise at the level of their powerful individuals as to who may do what and where. Warrants will then be issued to their underlings.

Travelling Justice

The Empire will be served by travelling magistrates who will pass justice within their circuit. However, these will be the servants of the local political region, and so are also part of that gestalt. The Cult of Verena is also likely to send travelling justices in order to investigate the fairness of provincial laws and provide a magistrate to areas that are willing to rely on the cult. This can obviously be utilised as a source of tension, and so adventures, as a Verenan magistrate seeks "Justice" whilst a local magistrate is more concerned with containing local passions.

Urban Justice

The law found in urban communities is more prescriptive than that in the countryside since towns are less restricted by tradition and subject to a greater number of powerful interests. These means that it is harder for one single group to hold control. To this end, the nascent emergence of the bureaucracy that can be found throughout the Old World can be seen in the legal system. This is witnessed by the rise of the specialised lawyer and formal court procedures. However, this formality must still battle with the power structures behind the scenes, and are still subject to individual magistrates serving the ends of their masters - be this Verenan justice or the self-interest of others.

It is in this setting that the courtroom can be utilised. Courtrooms make excellent places to role-play and make PCs squirm. By all means create a colourful setting including benches, magistrates with wigs, (expensive) lawyers, witnesses, oaths to the gods and a jury. It is imperative that the court recognises the nature of their world. If a priest spouts some theological mumbo-jumbo and pronounces it proves guilt or innocence, then the court *will* believe this. If a lord actually deigns to turn up and take the stand, then their word *is* the law. Details such as evidence, sworn testimony and the like will likely get those responsible for it in trouble, which of course means that the Watch will lose any evidence and no witnesses will actually turn up to speak against their lord. Except, perhaps, foolish PCs - and therein lies a whole avenue for GMs to explore. Contempt of court, branded as heretics, earning powerful enemies should all be utilised to the full as the PCs try and see justice done.

Notwithstanding this, a good lawyer can play the game according to whatever rules are in play. A deep understanding of the law can utilise statutory and case law, whilst a good speech can sway the magistrates by appealing to their position and affiliation. Even being able to afford an expensive lawyer indicates that the defendant is part of the elite and to be treated accordingly.

Conclusion

Modern legal systems are based upon modern systems of rationality, accountability, judicial process and equality. It is important to realise that this is not true about the Old World. In fact, the law is much more about personality than processes, as powerful individuals essentially control sections of the world. Whatever Imperial Law might say, if Grand Prince Hals von Tasseninek refuses to enforce it in Ostland, there is little that anyone can do about it. However, the problem is much more serious than this. The ability of any normal person to seek redress is dependent upon their social position. This is not simply like the ability to pay for legal advice and representation as in our own world, but is much more fundamental. Ordinary people have no expectation that the judiciary can help them obtain their legal rights; they are dependent upon their feudal superior to assist them. This makes one's place in society very important and membership of guild, family and cult essential to obtaining protection and justice.

Therefore, before moving to a Law Court, GMs should examine the nature of the parties involved. Who is supporting them, how popular are they within their community, and what power structures might be interested in the outcome? Individuals within the Old World determine the Law. It is not a tariff, nor case law, nor statute, although these might all nominally exist. Interpretation and enactment is carried out at a local level by local judicial figures.

The aim of including law in WFRP is to create a vibrant legal system that extends beyond simply rolling dice or PC blathering, although both might play a part. The law is part of the background culture of The Empire and needs to reflect its dark and gothic nature.

A crime has been committed and someone popular has been killed/robbed/hurt. The locals think they have the right culprit and want a lynching. The local magistrate, more interested in keeping her job than in justice, agrees and seeks a quick trial "to make things official". Whether the GM uses a travelling cleric of Verena to prod along the PCs, or relies upon their good natures, is a matter of taste. But trying to find the real culprit when everyone "knows" who carried out the crime, and are obstructive - if not actually offensive - will prove difficult. What, then, if the culprit is someone extremely popular (a local beauty or family man) or powerful (such as the magistrate)? And if the magistrate has the right person after all, there might be some most unhappy PCs...

³ A hundred is a subdivision of a region. It is believed that the Emperor was originally allocated one hundred grants of forest throughout The Empire. Some historians believe that the word *hundred* is derived from an Elf word, and the idea was to maintain forests in accordance with an agreement with the Elves that lived within The Empire. Whilst the Emperor retains forest hundreds in their own province, others have been sold or lost.

⁴ In practice, most local overlords own complete rights to forests within their own lands. This is because historically Emperors have sold these rights as a means of raising income, particularly as they had little power to control hunting anyway.

THE NINE TRIBES

The Empire before Sigmar

by Tim Eccles and Ryan Wileman

Kaldur hugged the wolfskin closer to his body and sniffed the winter wind. Ulric was abroad tonight - he could feel his presence, and the thought made him feel strong and proud. His feet crunched in the frozen snow as he stalked through the trees towards the flickering light of the campfire ahead of him. He knew that his brothers and sisters were nearby, a little further away in the woods and waiting for the signal as he did.

In this article we describe the nature of the Imperial tribes before their unification under Sigmar, and the evolution of these tribes into the modern Empire. Whilst this might be a worthwhile academic study in its own right, the aim is to offer this as useful source material and scenario hooks for modern campaigns. The region now familiar as The Empire has a relatively consistent human habitation for over 3000 years, and this has to leave some traces in terms of physical structures, language, culture and other relics. The ordinary PC is unlikely to be aware or interested in any of this, but it might aid the GM in developing plots and background.

General History and Overview

WFRP describes the year -500 IC as the *Rise of Humanity*¹, which suggests that humans existed within their own communities some time before this. Imperial historians tend

to view the tribes as consistent throughout their pre-Sigmarite period, but this is unlikely. At its simplest, the earliest humans were hunter-gatherers who lived by hunting wild game, fishing and collecting natural harvests. Later, they developed settlements, necessitating a division of labour and restricting tribes to a permanent geographical location. Quite how this change arose is unclear, but before we become too critical of Imperial academics it is important to recognise two problems they face:

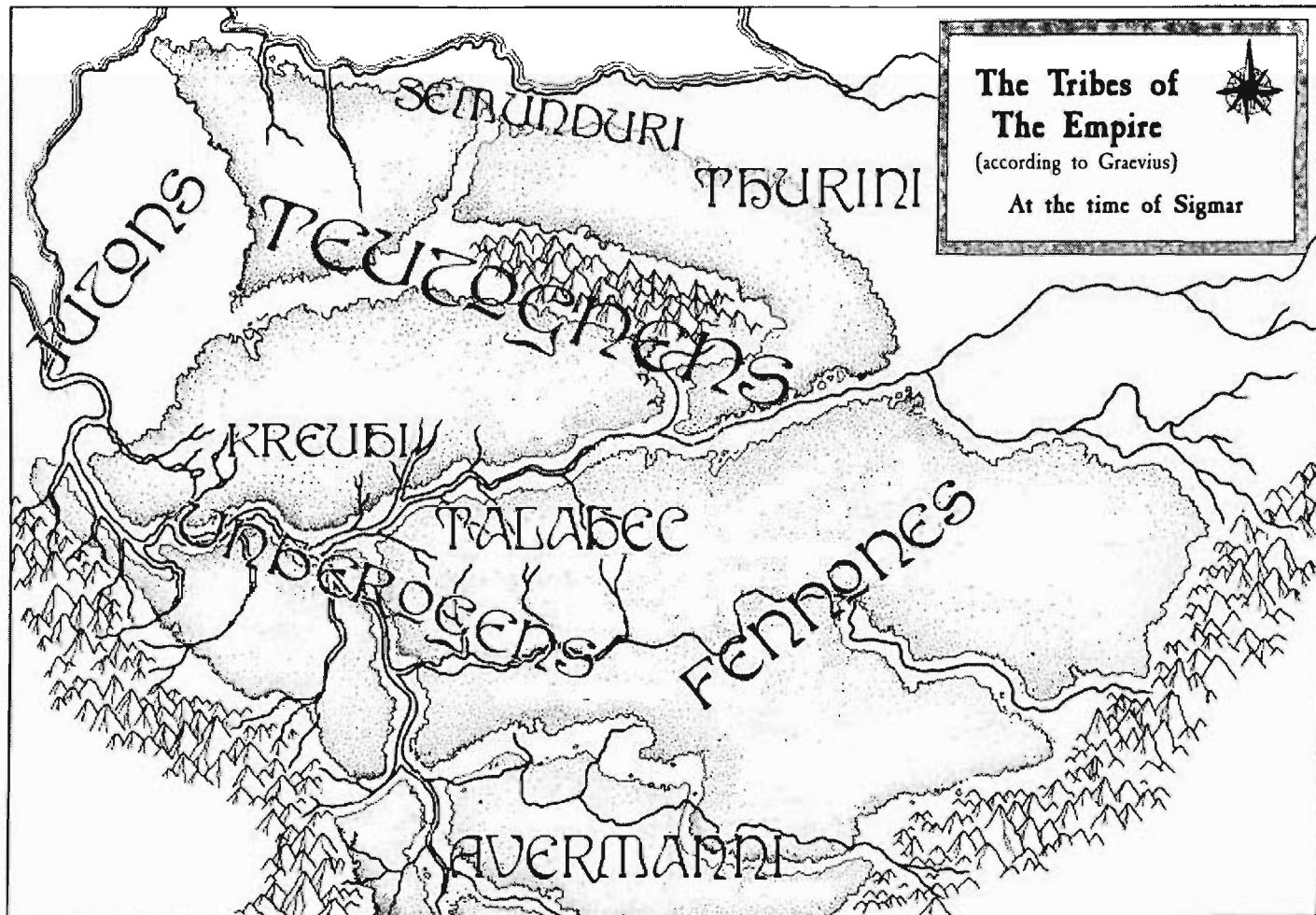
(a) Unlike the real world, there was no aggressive coloniser to conquer the tribes, study them and transform them into a uniform society. Simply, there was no Roman Empire to conquer the tribes, drive many northwards, unite them against a single enemy and record studies of the tribes in writing for posterity. Imperial scholars have no Tacitus wherein they can read about their Germanic tribesmen.

(b) Humans are products of the Slann, and thus arrive essentially completely evolved. This limits the amount of archaeological evidence that is available, since they have no evolutionary past as such. Worse, they arrive into a world with two dominant cultures - Elves and Dwarfs - which they will readily copy, and engage with in trade to develop technologies beyond an ordinary evolution. Whilst, in theory, both Elves and Dwarfs might have records of the tribes, only a fraction of them are accessible to human scholars, and those that are, are not particularly useful.

Despite these problems, historians have gathered some notable general details upon the tribes.

Illiterate: Literacy was almost unknown. The tribes of Sigmar's time did not use an alphabet beyond a simple runic system known to the Druids. Writing was introduced later, and this makes research of the tribal period particularly difficult. However, the early tribes did record some of their histories in the form of paintings. Certain extant representations in rock art are known, and show humans at hunt, and at trade with short, bearded and tall, pointy-eared figures. Wolves are shown on many pictures, although some (Sigmarite) scholars describe these as dogs. Less well known are recent discoveries by archaeologists working for the Cult of Sigmar in Wissenland. Rumours - officially denied - suggest that there are extensive paintings, but that the cult is deliberately defacing them.

Religion: Whilst the tribes of Sigmar's day did have religious idiosyncrasies, most of them had certain religious practices in common. All were followers, to some degree, of the Old Faith, and most paid respect to the spirits and totems of the natural world around them. Other recognisable gods were also revered, especially Taal and Ulric, but these were worshipped in ways that would be alien to modern Imperials. Burial practices varied from tribe to tribe, although cremation was popular, as was



¹ Whilst it is not central to this article, the rapid development of humanity from -500IC and then its relative stagnation for 2500 years, offers some speculations that the GM might find useful. The importance of the Dwarfs as a fully developed race is obviously central to the rapid early development of human society. They might have also influenced humanity with certain conservative tendencies that curtailed continued development. The retreat of the Elves would remove their influence to a greater extent. Alternatively, the Slann might have genetically programmed humanity this way. Certain scholars of Tzeentch have suggested that the dominance of chaos at the time encouraged massive intellectual development from experimentation and the thirst for knowledge. These drives receded with the weakening of chaos.

construction of burial barrows for important figures. Ulricans argue that Ulric was pre-eminent amongst the tribes, and it is universally accepted that Sigmar was crowned as Emperor by the high priest of Ulric. However, it is more likely that worship would increase at times of war - such as the Goblin Wars - and that many offerings and prayers would have been offered to Ulric in his guise of the god of war. It was this, along with the dominance of the Teutogncns, that made coronation by Ar-Ulric so important. This should not be taken to mean that Ulric was necessarily pre-eminent. The tribes worshipped in many different ways, and Sigmar himself is thought to have been primarily a follower of Dyrath.

Whereas the Old Faith is a holistic worship of nature and all within it, over the millennia this has been gradually compartmentalised with the emergence of specialised anthropomorphic gods. Initially these were nature spirits - petty animistic entities with areas of specific influence. Gradually, modern gods of nature emerged: so Taal represents forests and wild places, Ulric is the winter and Rhya is fertility. At the time of the tribes, human religion in the Old World is still very much a mixture of the above belief systems. The gradual emergence of more anthropomorphic gods continued with the process of urbanisation and specialisation, and with contact from the south, Dwarf views upon craft specialisation promoted the belief in many lesser deities, and later led to fertile ground for the creation of saints.

Slaves: All tribes took members of rival tribes in raids, and used them as slaves. The fate of the individual was usually a life of servitude, although there are stories and song which recount tales of slaves becoming free men through impressive deeds and/or daring escapes.

Democratic: It is known that society was remarkably democratic, with a universal suffrage of all free men and women. They would elect leaders, including warlords in times of strife. There was no hereditary leadership. It would appear that such elections had a tendency to degenerate into candidates offering rewards for those who would vote for them. This would usually mean that a new leader had to engage in raids against the tribe's neighbours in order to amass the livestock and other wealth to pay for these promises. Women were equally capable of being elected, and whilst it is not clear that there was equality in result as well as in opportunity, some tribes appear to have actually favoured women leaders at certain times in their history. It is also unclear as to exactly who was described as *free*. For example, whilst women were theoretically equal to men, married women were effectively the property of their husbands. If women were indeed free, it is unclear why they would enter into a marriage ceremony that forced them into effective slavery. Two solutions have been offered. The first is that freedom was a relatively privileged status, and so women would marry for a variety of economic and social reasons. The second is that current studies have so far proven incomplete, and that at some stage, the tribes moved from an egalitarian society to an elitist one. There is some support for this in the recording of certain kings in the last century before Sigmar, which appeared to be hereditary. However, the evidence is still very limited. It is likely that this change was influenced by the Dwarf belief in veneration of ancestors and their strong family and hereditary kinship. Attempts at reproducing this amongst their own short-lived people probably evolved into hereditary ownership and rule by such landowners. What is certain is that Sigmar became leader of his tribe as the son of his father².

Warlike: Burial records have proven that the tribes were proficient fighters, and that warlords had a number of professional attendants who wore armour. Some scrolls said to date back to the traders of ancient Tilea refer to these people in the Classical as *comitatus*. Most scholars believe that the tribes wore very little as a rule, and that nakedness was not unknown in battle. Shields, spear points, arrow heads, swords and axe heads have all been found in large numbers, although the evidence suggests that there was specialisation between tribes - some favoured spear and shield, others two-handed swords. The tribes appear

to have been both aggressive in their tactics and effective users of the forest terrain. They also used dogs in battle.

Fear of the dark: Despite their valour in battle, legends tell of the tribes' fear of the dark. The tribes were aware of the ancient and modern evils that dwell within the forests, and that they are frequently more powerful in the dead of night. As a race without night vision, they were very well aware of the goblins, beastmen and worse that might take advantage of this. Myths and legends often feature the darkness, especially that of the ancient forests, as a source of evil and unspeakable terror.

Loyalty: The tribes appear to have had strong codes of honour and loyalty. The given word was very strong. A number of folk stories reflect this, including examples of misfortune to those who betrayed their word. Whilst this might be linked to Dwarf influence, modern scholars tend to think that it was inherent within the tribal nature of society at the time.

Appearance: Tribal differences were clearly marked by differences in dress and hairstyle. A number of carvings found in different regions portray very different looks. Cloaks are ubiquitous, and trousers common, but both shoes and tunics seem to have been much rarer. Modern scholars frequently assume a greater use of clothing and footwear, but there is little evidence to support this. It is a topic of academic debate as to whether modern necessities for apparel can be assumed and that a lack of extant relics is the result of the degradation of materials over the millennia, or whether this actually reflects tribal clothing.

Settlements: These were very primitive by modern standards, and few remains have been found. It is clear that they were heavily influenced by both Elf and Dwarf settlements, and copied these. Structures, technology and materials were rapidly upgraded over a short period of time.

Punctuality: Limited dwarfen writings that are available are unanimous in their scorn for the untrustworthiness of the tribesmen in terms of their ability to meet deadlines or keep appointments. One dwarfen chronicler even records that their failure to rendezvous with a Dwarf force led to the complete rout of a group of goblin raiders. The goblin scouts had not detected the dwarf's human allies - since they were not there - only to be attacked by them in the rear as they sought to withdraw.

Crafts: Enough quality work has been discovered to realise that the tribes were quite skilled in their abilities to manufacture, and were not simply primitive savages.

Food: It is clear that the tribes, in general, had a varied meat and grain diet with vegetable and fruit supplements. Limited physical representations imply that the tribes were healthy and the good diet engendered a relatively tall people. However, the latter might simply be a result of a Dwarf perspective and out of scale drawings.

Development and Relationships: It is generally accepted that Dwarfs played a major part in the development of these human tribes in their early years. However, the Dwarfs did this for selfish reasons. They were in need of allies, and found that humans could cheaply produce certain items that required excessive effort themselves - most notably food. Trade with these primitive savages was much more profitable. However, it is also true that the Dwarfs had little interest in helping the tribes to develop further, and so improve their ability to trade. Whilst generally not realised by human historians, the first seeds of their continued development can be traced to the Elves. Whilst early human writing is influenced by Dwarf runes, modern languages reflect some elven influence. In addition, the move away from shamanistic and pragmatic hedge magic towards formal sorcery and trained wizardry may well be a result of Elf teachings³. Whilst the Old World humans prospered under both non-human tutelages, it was migration of people and ideas from the first human civilisations of the south that enabled the early tribes to break free of both influences and develop a particular human society.

The Eight Tribes

It is a fundamental of Sigmarite dogma that there were eight tribes united by Sigmar against the goblins - as commemorated in the sacred octagon of his symbol. This 'fact' is incontrovertible, and those who suggest otherwise are considered to be at best mistaken, and quite possibly heretical. The venerable Graevius, a monastic scholar living in the 11th century I.C, first laid down the definitive eight tribes. His work 'Die Populi Imperius' collected together the eight tribes unified by Sigmar, according to the learnings of the day. For reasons more political than scholarly, Graevius' work was declared 'inspired by the holy spirit of Sigmar' by the Grand Theogonist of the time and his designation of the tribes became canon.

However, the intervening centuries were troubled, and although the book was copied many times by Sigmarite monks, many mistakes were made and copies lost. There remains only one pre-Incursion copy of 'Die Populi Imperius', which is kept in the library of the Cathedral of Sigmar in Aldorf. The following tribes are those detailed within, and as such are the ones recognised by the Church.

The following were in reality chiefdoms of varying sizes and were not the only peoples of the lands now known as The Empire. However, their respective 'homelands' have been to some extent preserved in the form of the provinces, although this is a matter of dispute amongst ambitious nobles and even the Church itself.



The Teutogncns Children of Ulric

By far the largest and most warlike of the tribes of Sigmar's time were the Teutogncns. Their lands stretched from the Middle Mountains in the east, as far as the western reaches of the Drakwald Forest. The tribe was made up of a number of clans, all of which were tributary to the overall chief of the Teutogncns.

The Teutogncn was an archetypal northern barbarian, unkempt and clothed in rough furs. The men frequently wore wolf-pelts taken from the many packs that roamed the northern lands in numbers far greater than today. The young men were expected to kill a wolf as a coming-of-age ritual, and from that day forth were expected to allow their beards to grow uncut. Some scholars have pointed to Norsca as an example of what Teutogncn society may have been like.

In battle they were ferocious warriors, often going naked or wearing only a wolf pelt. Shields were snubbed, and spears exchanged for axes and clubs. Some Teutogncns rode into battle on horseback or chariots, but this was restricted to the war leaders only.

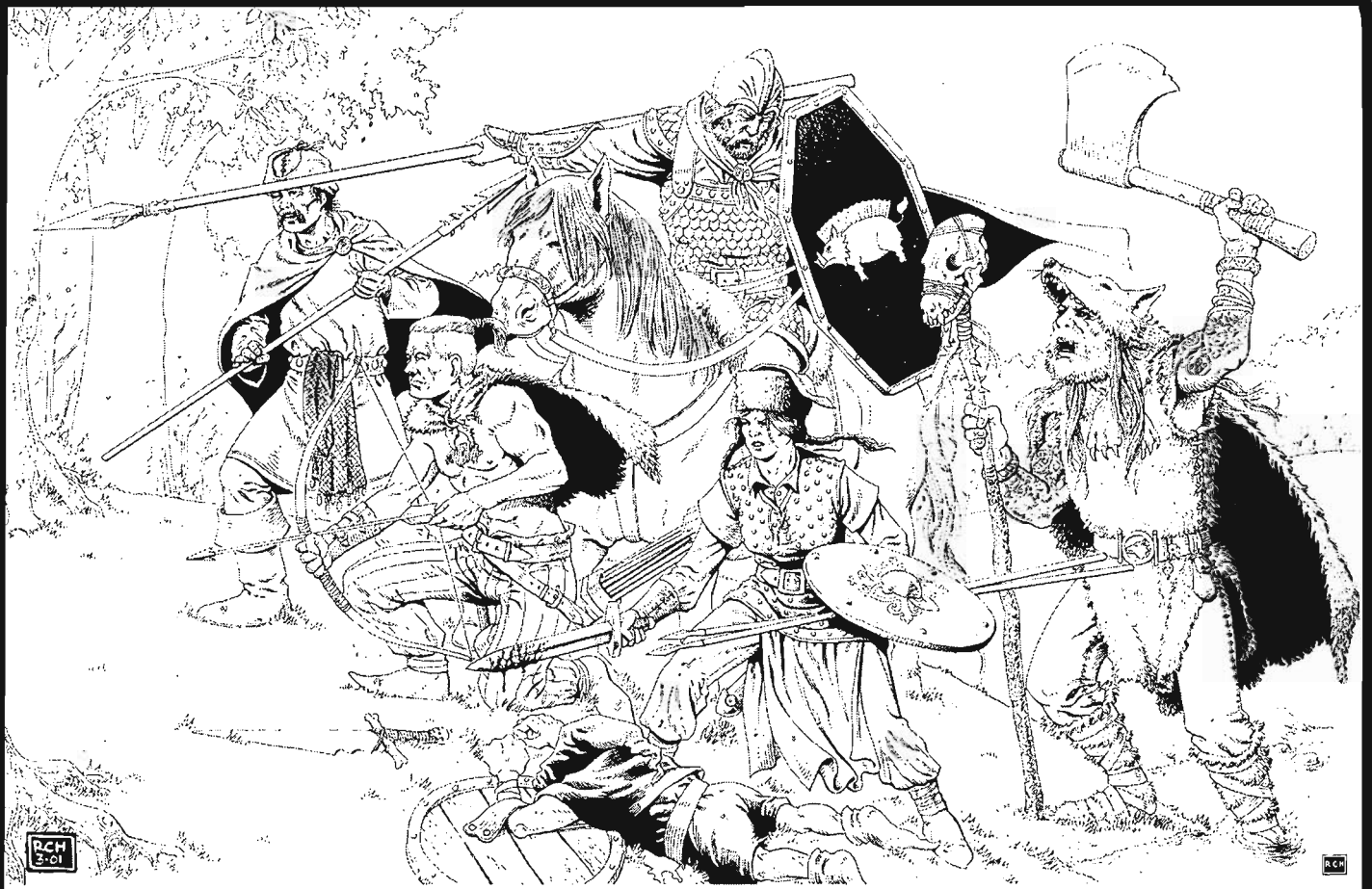
Religion: The Teutogncns were renowned, then as now, for their worship of Ulric. The cold lands of the Northern Old World were said to be his realm, and the Teutogncns believed themselves to be his chosen people, directly descended from the god himself, and reflecting his glory by ferocity in battle and the hunt. Whilst they were the closest any tribe came to monotheism, no Teutogncn was stupid enough to neglect Ulric's brother Taal and the importance of the Old Faith.

Subsistence: The Teutogncns were poor farmers, not suited to the 'inglorious' life of early agriculture. For many centuries their crops and domesticated animals provided the bare minimum level of sustenance for the tribesmen. But the Teutogncns put great stock in their ability to hunt, and they were skilled at chasing down the deer, elk and buffalo of the land. They also stole the cattle and sheep of other tribes.

Relationship with other tribes: The Teutogncns size and
continued on page 10

² This is actually stated within *The Enemy Within*, although it is conceivable that he was elected as the best candidate regardless of his father.

³ Although the coming of Teclis during the Incursions of Chaos saw the introduction of truly formal magic within The Empire, practices before this date were still well advanced beyond primitive shamanism. Some elven scholars point to evidence of earlier pre-Teclis involvement in human magicks by elven races, but precise motives or dates for these actions are not known. Some posit trade for (unspecified) human services, while others suggest good and noble deeds (by a good-aligned race) or simple spitefulness against the Dwarfs.



"Gather round, gather round!" Professor Ereckles called hopelessly to his milling students. Eventually most were listening so he began. "We are very fortunate to be allowed in to the Temple to view one of Ralf Hawksley's most famous works. You are all familiar with the story of the Great Map of Marienburg (see *Marienburg: Sold down the River*) but this is the piece that earned Hawksley that commission."

"The tapestry shows five members of tribes from the time of Sigmar. It is a great work, but of course, as a foreigner Hawksley fails to appreciate some of the details of early Imperial history. Let us begin with the Horseman at the back."

This figure shows an **Unberogen Chieftain** who may have been part of Sigmar's retinue. He wears a bronze helmet characteristic of the tribe. As you will see from the museum, such helmets usually show more elaborate swirling reliefs. His status in the tribe is attested to by the corselet of iron 'leaf-scale', which is likely to have been traded from the Dwarfs. He carries an elongated octagonal shield with a stylised boar motif, along with an iron-tipped spear. At his belt hangs a small axe. Draped over one shoulder is a fine cloak, fastened with a brooch of Dwarfen manufacture. His beard is not unkempt. He rides a horse which is poor by the standards of today, being little more than a large pony.

This simply-attired tribesman (far left) is a **Jutone Fisherman** from the northern coastline. He carries a large harpoon-like spear for fishing and defence, along with a net to obtain his catch. Upon his head is a hat made from seal fur, intended to keep the bitter winds from the Sea of Claws at bay. The cloak around his shoulders performs the same function, fastened by a brooch bearing a motif which may be a trident - indicating worship of some maritime deity such as Manaan or Olovald. The chin is shaved clean, while a thick moustache is present on the upper lip. The clothes are typical - woollen trousers beneath a long knee-length tunic held by a belt. The boots are also made from seal-skin, and would have some waterproof purposes.

This young man kneeling with the bow is **Talabec Hunter**, venturing into the dark forests to find food for the tribe. His torso is bare, and the tattoo of a stag's head can be clearly seen spreading across his chest - indicative of his special devotion to Taal. Over his shoulder he wears a short fur cloak to keep out the cold, and his rough woollen breeches lend some protection to his legs. His hair is shaved into the classic Talabec style - bald at the sides and back with the remainder pulled into a topknot. His chin is clean-shaven, and his lack of facial hair may be due to his apparent youth. He carries a short bow for hunting purposes.

This female **Avermanni Warrior** is an example of the eagrel tradition - one who has declared akin to the men of the tribe, and therefore entitled to the same respect. She wears the attire of a warrior, complete with weapons of war - the javelins are for throwing into the enemy prior to the charge. More unusually, she carries a short stabbing sword, which bears a resemblance to those used by the natives of Tilea - this is probably the product of trade or conflict with those southern people. Her shield is an oval shape and painted with an elegant geometric design.

She wears thick, layered clothes for protection, with a tunic down to her knees over thick woollen trousers. Over this is a leather 'tunic' with short sleeves. On her head is a hat, whilst her hair is worn in two thick plaits. The quality and formality of her dress and perfect styling of her hair suggest that the artist has used some licence, as it is highly unlikely that such expensive clothing would be worn on campaign. Eagrel are often favoured in pictures by artists in order to utilise their physical attractiveness and more easily sell their works to collectors. However, her prowess as a warrior is apparent from the dead goblin at her feet.

Lastly we see **Teutognen Priest of Ulric** (far right), a powerful figure from his tribe. More of a shaman than anything we would recognise as a priest, he looks savage and fearsome - exactly the qualities required to inspire fear and respect from the people of the tribe. In keeping with Teutognen tradition his hair and beard are uncut and wild. Across his muscled back is a white wolfskin, which in his case is both a symbol of his tribe and office. However, it seems unlikely that such valuable items would be worn on campaign, since they would not last well within the chase and bloody slaughter of battle, acting more as ceremonial wear. The rough fur tunic protects him from the cold northern winters along with the woollen trousers. He wears an amulet of Ulric around his neck, and the bones of many small animals threaded around his belt. His bare arms reveal many tattoos of a ritual nature - swirling lines (said to represent the winter winds) and vaguely runic devices, probably inherited from druidic traditions. As one would expect with a priest of Ulric, the figure is carrying a staff of office, surmounted by a wolf skull. He also carries an axe.

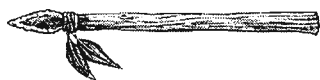
(This figure would be recognisable to modern Imperial citizens; not only does he bear some slight resemblance to the less sophisticated priests of Ulric in Norsca but more importantly he is the stereotypical 'savage, uncivilised' figure presented by the Church of Sigmar to denigrate the Cult of Ulric).

warlike nature made their relationship with other tribes problematic. Their need for new hunting grounds led them in vast numbers to expand throughout the northern Empire, and as their population grew, they pushed other tribes into migrating elsewhere - most notably the Jutones, who went to the Wasteland. Relationship with the Unberogens was one of rivalry, and before Sigmar only occasionally would they ally together against the goblins. The tribe was not adept at trade, and only rarely would they exchange furs for metal goods.

Relationship with others: The Teutogren attitudes to non-humans were as inconsistent as those with the other tribes. They clashed with the Wood Elves when hunting on the fringes of the Laurelorn Forest, but mostly they feared them. The Dwarfs were respected, but more for their tenacity in battle than their great civilisation. They were constantly at war with the goblinoids, although this was a problem for all tribes of Sigmar's time.

History: The Teutogrens did not leave much to remember them by - they were not monument builders, and lack of trade meant that others did not record much about them. The Churches of Sigmar and Ulric record the tale of their chief Artur's meeting and defeat in combat by Sigmar (although with slightly differing emphasis). Legends of the founding of Middenheim tell of the discovery of the Fauschlag by Artur, and the founding of the temple of Ulric. Some stories say that Artur was buried under the Fauschlag in a great chamber bedecked with gold and the spoils of his conquests.

There is also the legend of Uathach, a Teutogren warlord who joined Sigmar as commander of the chariots during the Goblin Wars. He betrayed Sigmar's trust and turned upon the human's dwarfen allies. Consequently Sigmar killed him and cursed him to ride the skies in search of war. During storms, superstitious Imperials claim to see skeletal charioteers riding across the sky, howling through lightning and riding the storm winds.



The Unberogens Nation of Sigmar

After the Teutogrens, the largest tribe was the Unberogens. Their homelands were around the Reik Valley extending along the river into what is now Stirland. By the time of Sigmar, the tribe had been settled for many centuries, and small villages dotted the river valleys. Most notable was the principal town of Reikdorf - the seat of the chief of the Unberogens and the future city of Altdorf.

The Unberogens were accomplished warriors, and although undisciplined by today's standards they were more restrained and disciplined than the Teutogrens. In battle they wore characteristic helmets, with a central ridge and ornate swirling designs across the surface. A number of these are held in the Temple of Sigmar in Altdorf.

Religion: All the tribes were fundamentally polytheistic, but the Unberogens especially so. However, dependence on agriculture meant that they paid special respects to the Dyrath, the goddess of fertility, and her husband Karog, god of the rivers that were of so much importance to them*. As such, the Unberogens were the most 'sophisticated' of the tribes, for whilst they respected the Old Faith, they had a well-developed specialisation of local deities.

Subsistence: In contrast to the Teutogrens, the Unberogens were accomplished farmers and fishermen. They took advantage of the fertile soil of the Reik and Stir valleys to grow wheat and oats. They kept cattle, sheep and pigs for food, leather and labour, and fished the two rivers.

Relationship with other tribes: The size and location of the Unberogens meant that conflict with the expanding Teutogrens was inevitable. While the latter were constantly looking for new hunting grounds, the Unberogens were

rooted to their farmlands. The Krucbi of Middenland and the Talabec tribes would avoid Teutogren warhosts, but the Unberogens stood firm and fought for their land. Other tribes were cautiously friendly to the more powerful Unberogens, trading with them for leather and metals.

Relationship with others: Prior to Sigmar's rescue of Kargan, there was a tenuous but cordial relationship between Dwarfs and the Unberogens. Some trade occurred, and temporary alliances against common foes were not unknown. The tribe rarely if ever encountered the Elves that remained in the Old World. The Unberogens did interact with the Brettoni tribe on many occasions - it was an inconsistent relationship of trade and warfare, a heritage that is echoed today.

History: There has been considerable research into the history of the Unberogens by the Church of Sigmar, with politics and propaganda taking precedence over fact. Priests tell many apocryphal tales of Sigmar's childhood to the faithful, and ancient legacies are abused for their supposed relevance today. However, this is not the time or place to go into the history of Sigmar himself†.

The Reikland and eastern Stirland are littered with barrows and the remains of Unberogen stone settlements and stone circles. Of note is the supposed burial mound of Sigmar's father Gertar, to be found five miles from Gluckshalt in the Reikland.



The Jutones Wandering Sons of the Sea

The Jutones originally dwelled in the western extremes of the Forest of Shadows and along the coast of what is now Nordland. But in the centuries before Sigmar they were squeezed out of their homelands by the expanding Teutogrens, and a great migration in the decades preceding the Goblin Wars saw them settle in the Wasteland after ousting the Fimir that dwelled there.

The Jutones were similar in physiology and dress to the Unberogens. Unusually for Imperial tribes however, the men shaved their chins clean, leaving only a moustache. In battle the Jutones were renowned for their skilled use of the spear, a weapon that may have had some ritual significance - there was certainly some connection to the harpoons used by the coastal fishermen.

Religion: The Jutones had special reverence for the gods of the sea and forest, depending on them for food and security. It is said that it was a vision of Olovald that told Marius to lead the tribe to the Wasteland from their threatened homelands. Otherwise, the Jutones paid due respect to the Old Faith. Leaders were buried in ships beneath barrows, along with their riches from life.

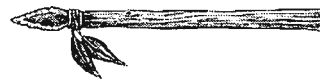
Subsistence: Prior to their migration, the Jutones had been capable farmers and expert sea fishermen. However, the poor soil of the Wasteland allowed only limited agriculture, and many herds of sheep and cattle were left in the flight from the Teutogrens. But the superior fishing skills and abundance of the Manaansport Sea enabled the tribe to survive. The Reik also allowed limited trade with the Unberogens for grain and metal goods.

Relationship with other tribes: There was no love lost between the Teutogrens and the tribes they displaced, and the Jutones were no exception. Relations with the Unberogens were reasonably strong once the tribe was established in the Wasteland, and Marius' assistance in the Goblin Wars was invaluable to Sigmar's attempt to unify the land. They were also strong allies with the now-lost Semunduri tribe, who remained on the coast for decades after the Jutones had fled.

Relationship with others: The Jutones clashed on numerous occasions with the Brettoni to the west of their new home in the Wasteland, although they also began

trading with them from time to time. In the centuries when the Jutones dwelled on the coast north of the Laurelorn Forest, it has been suggested that they made secret pacts with the Laurelornalim (the Wood Elf 'tribe'), which came to fruition over two millennia later, when the Sea Elves returned to the Old World. This is, however, little more than idle historical gossip.

History: The history of the Jutones is patchy, and can be read in more detail in *Marienburg: Sold Down The River*. Although the Wasteland remained independent for 500 years after The Empire was 'united', Marius' assistance in the Goblin Wars and political advantage means that the Church of Sigmar considers the Jutones one of the eight tribes united by Sigmar. Remains of the civilisation are few and far between for a number of reasons. Firstly, the swamps of the Wasteland are poor for the preservation of material culture, and secondly, over the past millennia the coast of the northern Empire has undergone many changes, as the Sea of Claws swallows up the low-lying land. There are a number of man-made mounds in both regions that are believed to have been the sites of Jutone settlements, and since Marienburg declared independence there have been several unsuccessful attempts to find the Spear of Marius, which was supposedly blessed by Sigmar. This is perhaps only a 'wishful' legend on the part of Sigmarites who wish to reunite the errant city with The Empire.



The Talabec Faithful of Taal

*"My ancestor stood with Talcred when he founded Talabheim and fought by his side against our enemies. Meanwhile your ancestor was digging for grubs in Kislev. That is my right to rule over you, peasant."
Count Reiner von Hoger*

The Talabec tribe were located around the river which still bears their name, and it was the lands around the valley that were granted to the tribe, led by Krugar, after Sigmar united The Empire. Prior to the Goblin Wars the Talabec dwelled in the valley as far east as the town of Volgen. After being granted the land to the east, they slowly migrated and expanded. The son of Krugar was Talcred, and it was he who founded the city of Talabheim in the crater at the 'Eye of the Forest'.

The typical Talabec tribesman was recognisable from his unusual hairstyle, which was typically a topknot, with the sides and back of the head shaved bald. In times of war the warrior would paint his skin with resins and dyes found in the forest.

The Talabec are sometimes called the 'Cherusans' by other groups in The Empire - this arises from an ancient term for 'hunter'. Although it is a respectful term, and early Imperial records use it interchangeably with Talabec, the people of Talabheim and Talabecland consider it diminishes their claims to the lands along the river that bears the name of their ancestors.

Religion: The Talabec were devout followers of Taal in his incarnation as Karnos, and his shamans within the tribe were men of power and influence. The worship of forest spirits was also particularly marked.

Subsistence: The Talabec farmed in the river valley which was their home, but the proximity of the encroaching forest made hunting a skill which most free men took great pains to cultivate. The Talabec bred the best hunting dogs, which accompanied them into battle.

Relationship with other tribes: The Talabec were a reclusive tribe, who had little contact with the other people of the land. It is said that Krugar was the last warlord to

* Most modern clerics regard Karog as simply an aspect of Taal. This almost certainly was not so at this time, even if it is true today.

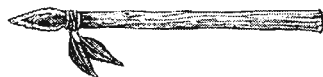
† Warpstone 15 offers more details upon this.



join Sigmar, not because of his reluctance but rather because none of Sigmar's allies knew where the great chieftain was to be found.

Relationship with others: The geographic location of the Talabec meant that other than the hostile creatures of the forest and some wandering groups of Dwarfs, the tribe rarely came into contact with any of the non-human civilisations of the Old World.

History: Records of the Talabec are very few and far between, although the forests around the river are riddled with mysterious barrows and ruins. The Church of Sigmar and the noble families of Talabheim preserve some information on lineage that reaches back to Krugar.



The Avermanni Stalwart League of Traders

In the south of The Empire, between the River Aver and the River Soll, lie the homelands of the Avermanni, a league of smaller tribes united under a common chief for many centuries before the birth of Sigmar. The tribes were probably the most 'advanced' culture within the lands of The Empire, largely due to their trade practices. Contact with the Dwarfs has resulted in the Avermanni being one of the best documented tribes of The Empire.

The Avermanni consisted of three closely allied cultural groups, the Tratten, the Geschebi and the Agbards. They were a hardened people, well used to the raids of goblins from the Border Princes and even Skaven⁶ from under the Vaults. It was this common threat that had seen the three groups grow closer and ally with each other. The chariots of the Avermanni were their most feared weapon in war. Trade with the Dwarfs and the future Tilea provided the warchiefs with better armour and weapons than the northern tribes.

Religion: The three sub-tribes of the Avermanni

worshipped broadly the same gods and spirits as the other tribes of The Empire, although there is some evidence to suggest that there was some influence from the southern Old World. Frobius of Nuln claims that the bronze statuette of an armoured woman found near Wusterburg is a primitive representative of Myrmidia.

Subsistence: The land of the southern Empire is relatively fertile and easily farmed. The Avermanni took advantage of the land, rearing animals and farming the soil successfully.

Relationship with other tribes: The Avermanni were known for their skill at diplomacy, and remaining evidence points to their tribal law being well-developed and advanced by contemporary standards. The Avermanni's ability to mediate and trade maintained good relations with the nearby Unberogens and Fennones, although their superior arms and armour may have had some influence.

Relationship with others: Of all the tribes, before Sigmar's birth, the Avermanni were the

most outward-looking. There are accounts of numerous dealings with the Dwarfs of the Black Mountains and Vaults, along with evidence of trade with the remnants of a once great human civilisation in Tilea. An old Dwarf road, which leads to Blackfire Pass, cut through the homelands of the Agbard sub-tribe, and passage of Dwarfs was frequent.

History: At the time of Sigmar, the Avermanni were united under the leadership of Brunngerta - a fearsome *Eagrel* who was respected by her allies and enemies alike. She was all too ready to ally with the Unberogens to beat back the goblin tribes that plagued her lands, and rode into battle alongside Sigmar in her chariot to Blackfire Pass.



Thurini Superstitious Horse Warriors

*"Of course Levudal followed Sigmar. We follow anyone that shows those damned Ulricans their place."
Ostland Noble*

In the north-east of The Empire, north of the Forest of Shadows, are the coastal plains of Ostland. It was here that the Thurini tribe called home, along with the most hospitable northern extremes of the forest. In ancient times, the Forest of Shadows was not as extensive as in the last millennium, and the lands between the trees and the coast were barren. The Thurini were expert horsemen, much like the Dolgans of the Steppes, although they did not live a nomadic life.

Within the forest itself are many ancient tracks and hidden routes, the origins of which are lost in time. The Thurini used these to great effect, even on horseback, in hunting down goblin raiders and beastmen. The tribe was particularly well known for its hatred of beastmen, which were more prevalent in this part of the world than in the south-western Empire. They were also famous for unflinching obedience towards their chief, a trait which

was much admired by subsequent Sigmarite priests.

Religion: The religion of the Thurini was typical of the tribes - a mixture of Old Faith belief with respect and reverence for local nature spirits. The dark forest created an atmosphere of terror and awe around the latter, whose effects could be felt on a daily basis. It is also said the Thurini were obsessed with the spirits of the forest. More 'modern' personified aspects of nature worship, such as Taal and Rhya, were not introduced to Ostland until centuries after Sigmar. The Thurini practised cremation almost exclusively, possibly because beastmen and goblins would dig up bodies for food.

Subsistence: The Thurini were primarily shepherds and cattle herders, using the plains to best effect. They also cultivated wheat, barley and hemp.

Relationship with other tribes: The Thurini had a long-standing hatred of the Teutogngens - a persistent rivalry had existed between the two tribes for many centuries before Sigmar. The great man was said to have had difficulty getting Levudal, the chief of the Thurini, to sit in council with Artur of the Teutogngens. Otherwise the tribe had little contact with other humans in The Empire.

Relationship with others: The Thurini had some contact with the few humans to have colonised Kislev at the time, and many of them were distantly related. There was some contact with the Dwarfs, although nothing is known of the nature of this.

History: When Sigmar united the tribes, the Thurini were reluctant to become involved in what they saw as a distant matter of little concern to themselves. It was only through Sigmar's defeat of Artur that Levudal was persuaded to join with him in his crusade against the goblinoids. A number of legends exist about Levudal; it is said that he once rode down an ox and leapt from his horse to wrestle it to the ground. In other versions of the tale the ox becomes a Minotaur from the forest⁷.

Ironically Ostland is now poor at maintaining and training horses, although there are some wild herds on the coast.



Fennones People of desperation

The torches flickered on the walls of the long hall, while the cold winds from the World's Edge Mountains tore at the timbers. Drannus sat in his seat as head of the tribe, waiting to see what the ugly man with the warts and the sly features had to say. 'My tribe are grateful for your aid, oh Drannus' - the man flattered the chieftain and smiled slyly. 'My chieftain sends thanks for your defeat of the men from the north, and would wish you to take this...' Drannus craned forward to see what the man had brought with him. From his sack he pulled a golden amulet, which responded to the light from the torches with its own dull glow. Drannus grabbed the amulet and examined it - it bore geometric designs and a stylised representation of some sort of winged bull. It felt heavy in his hand, and as he put it around his neck the metal felt warm against his bare chest. The ugly man smiled at the wordless acceptance.

The Fennones were a tribe of the south-eastern Empire, in the regions that have become Ostermark and eastern Stirland. The east was and still is inhospitable, and the Fennones eked out a sorry existence there. The proximity to the World's Edge Mountains and the Dark Lands meant that large goblin raids were a hazard both from within the future Empire and through the mountains.

The Fennones were a smaller tribe than the other seven, although they covered a large area. Survival was difficult and the tribe took many slaves in raids to make up the

⁶ It was seen as appropriate in certain learned circles at one time to regard the name as derogatory, in that it implied a negative - literally a half human - and was thus insulting. These academics promoted the name Moollander, but this was inaccurate with regard to those who did not (and had never) live in The Mool. Halfling is generally accepted as a non-insulting term today.

⁷ The parallel with Israel is obvious, but also presents the opportunity to use Hebrew words within the Halfling dialect in order to add a little flavour if one desires.



Historical Differences

The eight tribes recorded in 'Die Populi Imperius' are by no means an exhaustive or complete list of the peoples of The Empire at the time of Sigmar. As history grows as a scholarly endeavour independent of the Church, more evidence comes to light of other groups and sub-tribes. Many scholars, and even some ecclesiastical figures, have begun to question 'Die Populi Imperius' and are beginning to recognise that Gractius was interested more in fitting history to dogma than the other way around. Some debates of scholarly and even religious significance include:

The Jutones - since the secession of the Wasteland, scholars have begun to question the accepted 'Imperial' history of the Jutones. The most famous alternate theory to date is the case put forward by Albrecht von Kauhafen of Middenheim. He claims that the 'Jutones' were in reality the Merogens, a sub-tribe of the Teutogngens who were lead by Gulderic and supposedly migrated to the Wasteland prior to the Jutones. Although some evidence supports this position, few scholars are willing to support von Kauhafen.

The Kruebi - the status of the Kruebi as one of the eight tribes has long been a matter of dispute, even within the Church of Sigmar. Many believe that the Kruebi were in actuality an artisan class within the Unberogengs, and that they were deemed a 'tribe' to reinforce Sigmarite claims that Middenland was not truly the domain of the Ulrican Teutogngens.

The Thurini - although the horsemen were dominant at the time of Sigmar, some historians claim that they were relative newcomers to The Empire, having subjugated the real natives of the region - the Thuringians. The latter were a mountain-dwelling folk who came from the Middle Mountains - and recent dwarfen records have come to light that suggest that the Thurini were displaced by some unnamed threat in the east, and encroached onto the lands of the Thuringians. Ostlanders who care about this sort of thing will play down the distinction, claiming that the common root of the tribes' names reveals that they were one and the same. To this end, Professor Mikhael Bruggst at the University of Altdorf was employed to prepare a definitive history of the region by the new Elector, Grand Prince Hals von Tasseninck.

numbers who could farm the hard soil for crops.

Religion: The Fennoes worshipped the Old Faith, but the druids interpreted its tenets and strictures differently to those in more fertile regions. They believed that nature was harsh and demanding, and animals were sacrificed to appease the Earth Mother. Part of this belief was that bodies should never be cremated and must return to the Earth Mother in the form of burial. Taal was also venerated (as Kurnos), but to a lesser degree.

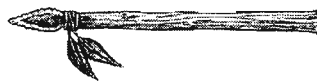
Subsistence: The poor quality of the soil combined with the constant threat of goblinoid attack forced the Fennoes to trade for food with the Avermanni. Some crops were raised, and a hardy breed of goat was domesticated - but there was not a plentiful supply of food.

Relationship with other tribes: The Fennoes were on neutral terms with the Avermanni and Unberogengs that dwelt nearby. They would

occasionally trade with them, but there was no love lost between the slave-taking Fennoes and their agricultural neighbours. The Talabec were enemies of the tribe, and clashes between the two groups were frequent.

Relationship with others: Despite relative proximity to the great holds, the Fennoes had relatively little to do with the Dwarfs, as they feared them. There are apocryphal tales that claim that the Fennoes had traffic with goblinoids, and even speculation that the chieftains were tainted with half-ore blood.

History: The chieftain of the Fennoes at the time of Sigmar was Drannus, who joined the alliance seeing an opportunity to better the lot of his tribe, and himself. When The Empire was divided up, he was granted the lands which later became Sylvania along with other parts of the east. As Sylvania was far more unwelcoming even than the majority of his homelands, he freed many slaves and sent them to live there. Modern noble opinion is that it is this 'poor stock' of Sylvania that makes the folk there so strange and prone to degeneracy.



Kruebi Forest-dwelling Craftsmen

In the Drakwald Forest between the Mirror Moors and the Five Sisters lived the Kruebi tribe. Since their passing, the forest has long since reclaimed the wood-shaded valleys in which they made their homes, and little remains of their material culture.

The Kruebi were not a warlike tribe, and would avoid the attacks of the marauding Teutogngens as far as possible. They were a heavily built group of people, with most of the men and women stronger than average. When forced to fight, they tended to use ornately carved clubs as weapons, attacking en masse and uttering terrible cries to confuse and frighten the enemy.

Religion: The Kruebi were worshippers of Kurnos, Dyrath

and Ulric, with their devotions dictated strictly by the seasons. They also revered a sun god, whose origins and name are lost to history. All that remains are carvings of a yellow disk upon a chariot.

Subsistence: Farming of the valleys in what is now the Drakwald Forest was the main source of food, although hunting and trapping amongst the trees was important.

Relationship with other tribes: The Kruebi were on good terms with the Unberogengs and the Jutones who they traded with from time to time. They avoided the Teutogngens as far as possible.

Relationship with others: The Kruebi had few dealings with non-humans or foreign tribes, although there are a number of carvings of gnomes that suggest that they had some contact with those enigmatic folk.

History: The Kruebi were famed for their wood-carvers, and the unique style in which they shaped the wood. There are some extant Kruebi woodcarvings in university and private collections throughout The Empire, and Grand Prince von Bildhofen has several in his palace in Carroburg. Any monuments that the tribe built have mostly been swallowed by the forest.

During Sigmar's time the leader of the Kruebi was Carrolus, who later lent his name to the principal city of Middenland, which was said to have been founded by him soon after the Goblin Wars.



Other Tribes

Other than the above tribes, many smaller groups of humans existed, and were subsequently displaced, annihilated or assimilated by the larger tribes detailed above.

For example, in the early centuries of The Empire, a Bronze Age kingdom flourished for a short time on the headland now known as Wrecker's Point. The fate of the kingdom is unknown, but the subjects of Pallidus - the only known king - are not thought to be descended from Imperial tribes.

The origins of the halflings are also mysterious, and their relationship with the humans of the future Empire is unknown at present. Some academics tried to deconstruct the Old Worlder (Halfling) dialect, and even the term Halfling itself, in order to assign an origin to these folk. It has been argued that the correct term found within the original Halfling dialect is haeffling or haelfling, and Halfling is a corruption*. Unfortunately, this did little to help solve the original problem of identification. Halflings themselves have vague stories that appear to refer to themselves as servants, or associates, of the Elves, and that they elected to remain behind (or were left) on the Elf withdrawal. Before the creation of The Moot they were scattered throughout The Empire, although there is evidence that there was a settlement in what is now the Moot prior to its formal creation. Indeed, the halflings always viewed The Moot as a homeland, and were quick to settle the newly recognised land, without any apparent logical rationale for so doing*. Recently, a panel of learned Halfling scholars was allowed entry to the main Dwarf records in order to test this theory, but they have yet to report their findings - or anything else for that matter. Their apparent disappearance has started to give The Moot's leaders cause for worry.

Other groups were also resident in the land. Tribes of half orcs are known to have been rife in the eastern lands of the future Empire, and some historians have claimed that the relationship with humans was not always hostile. This would not be surprising for, whilst the half-orcs have long been disliked by both their goblinoid and human 'brethren', they may have acted as intermediaries between the two. In a land where goblinoid attack made survival perilous, it would be surprising if some humans had not

seen the advantage in this. In fact, the very existence of half-fores is an indication of some degree of contact - and one that Sigmar was very keen to quash in order to maintain his alliance with the Dwarfs.

Of all these additional tribes and groupings, one additional important tribal chiefdom is known to historians, and deserves special mention. This is because it forms an important cultural icon to Imperial scholars and people alike.



The Semunduri The Lost Tribe

The Semunduri dwelled along the shores of what is now western Ostland and Nordland, particularly around Drosselspule Bay and the Embügel Peninsula. This desolate stretch of coastline now has few human inhabitants, but the remnants of the once thriving tribe can be seen on hillsides and cliff tops.

The tribe were skilled sailors and expert defensive warriors, well used to defending their villages against constant raids by the Teutogngens. The Semunduri lived within a fairly small area, and this enclosure led to a higher degree of centralised power than in other tribes.

Religion: The Semunduri were not only faithful followers of the Old Faith, but the druids held high status within the political structure of the tribe. The northern reaches of the Laureorn Forest held many sacred groves, which formed the meeting places for the druidic councils. The ordinary members of the tribe revered the Earth Mother, with only a small number of forest and coastal spirits forming a minor complement to her power.

Subsistence: The Semunduri were sea fishermen, and much of their meat came from the Sea of Claws in the form of herring, seals and even small whales. They also herded sheep on the coastal hillsides. It should be noted that they were also successful if primitive farmers, relying on the blessings of the Earth Mother for their sustenance.

Relationship with other tribes: Like many tribes whose homelands bordered on those of the Teutogngens, there was a great deal of conflict between the two. As the population of the Semunduri grew, there were no lands for expansion, and conflict with their warlike neighbours intensified. Other than this, the Semunduri had few contacts with other tribes - in past centuries they had been allied with the Jutones, but the latter's migration to the Wasteland reduced contact between the two tribes.

Relationship with others: The Semunduri had a mutual understanding with the wood Elves, which may have been negotiated by the druids. This 'unspoken' agreement allowed the humans to hunt in the fringes of the forest while avoiding certain areas.

History: By the time of Sigmar the tribe's population was considerable, while the territories were limited - food was in short supply, and the people became prone to sickness and desperation. When Sigmar called on the leaders of the tribes to unify against the goblins, the leader of the tribe Fraewulf was the first to declare his allegiance. The druids advised him that with Sigmar lay the opportunity to expand their territories and obtain land from the Teutogngens. Despite this initial motive, Fraewulf became a close compatriot of Sigmar, and the two men grew to respect each other greatly during the Goblin Wars. But Fraewulf also saw the might and numbers of the Teutogngens in battle, and realised that great leader though Sigmar was, he would never be able to break the domination of the Teutogngens in the northern lands. It was with a heavy heart that he returned to his people and informed the druids of his thoughts. The druids sat in council for many days, and consulted with the Earth Mother. When they emerged they declared that the

tribe must take to their boats and abandon their homelands. With great sadness the people loaded the tribe's simple boats with their possessions and sailed to an unknown destination.

The 'Herucynia' is a song cycle that recounts the story of the Semunduri tribe, and the final verse tells how Sigmar wept when he was told of the departure of his close ally and respected friend. Where the Semunduri sailed to is not known - some say that they colonised the mist-shrouded isle of Albion, and it is certainly true that the men of that land follow the Old Faith above all other beliefs. Followers of Ulric often believe that they landed in Norsca, where they were enslaved and killed by the humans of that harsh land. Still more legends tell of Fraewulf sailing to Lustria, where he settled with his tribe - a myth that has led to many explorers to leave The Empire to find his kingdom in the lands beyond the Great Western Ocean.

In modern times the former homelands of the Semunduri are sparsely populated with small fishing villages and only one port, Neues Emskrank. But the forest and hillsides are still marked with the abandoned earthworks of Semunduri agriculture, while the area is dotted with sites of druidic significance. Some of the tribe's abandoned villages have fallen into the encroaching sea, but others remain, abandoned and never re-settled after the tribe left The Empire.

'As I take this chisel in my left hand, it shall symbolise my oath to cleave the truth from the raw matter of nature, as did Carrolus in ancient days. In my right hand I take the mallet, fashioned by my own hand from the ancient groves of the Kruebi, where once our craft was honed by their skilful hand. In this passing from journeyman to master, I swear to uphold the standards of my brethren living and dead, and to respect my forbears as I respect the grain of the wood itself.'

- Oath from the ceremony passing a journeyman to master in the Carroburg Fraternal Guild of Carpenters and Woodcrafters.

Traces of the Past in the Modern

One of the reasons to examine the history of the tribes is to recognise that there is a clear and unbroken link between the modern Empire and the tribes. By and large, the modern Imperial is a descendent of such a tribesman, without any external invader breaking the link¹⁰. This means that elements from the past can be used in the modern setting in order to add colour to the background in which the PCs find themselves. Some of these were presented within the text above, and others are provided below.

Archaeology: It is imperative for all actors in the Old World to investigate their history as proof of their ideas and as a defence against their enemies. Therefore, every organisation is interested in uncovering the past to support their position in the current hierarchy. To make a claim that dates to the tribes and/or Sigmar is to gain prestige. This is true of families, cults, guilds, cities and all other institutions and organisations. Most particularly, the Church of Sigmar has obvious interests in developing knowledge of Sigmar and the tribes - subject to their interpretation, of course!

Architecture: Whilst little remains of actual tribal buildings or architectural styles, there have been numerous representations of the period over the ages. The most famous are Tribal and the later Neo-Tribal, but Classical, Neo-Classical and a number of the Romantic styles are influenced by perceptions of tribal architecture. Vernacular architecture also reflects tribal beliefs in places. For example, many buildings were built with carved heads over the doorframe and/or set in the walls. This is believed to date back to the times when the tribes removed their enemies' heads and placed them around the camp. As they became civilised, and built in stone, they also used stone to represent the heads. The heads are often grotesquely

demonic or goblinoid but may equally be human. The tradition is generally not continued today, although it appears to have been continued late into the last century in more remote areas.

Artefacts: The few tribal artefacts that remain in existence are items of great reverence. Some are treated as having holy significance, particularly when linked to Sigmar in some way, whilst others are a sign of a proud heritage, such as the carvings of the Kruebi. There are also semi-mythical items that form the origin of quests and folktales. These tend to be the trappings of war - the Hammer of Sigmar is the most obvious example, although other weapons and armour have been invested with significance both magical and political.

The Arts: The people and institutions of The Empire have a tendency to romanticise their tribal past, looking back to a simpler and supposedly more honourable existence that is quite at odds with the reality of life at the time of Sigmar. The artists, playwrights, poets and composers of The Empire are frequently inspired by this romantic view of history as a source for their works. Paintings and statues of tribal leaders are a common theme, both secular and religious. The canon of classic Imperial theatre contains numerous histories set in the time of Sigmar, and the dramatisation of 'tribal' religion is a popular subject for the morality plays put on at festivals. Similarly, great composers have looked to the time of Sigmar for inspiration when writing music, especially opera.

Ceremonies and Festivals: Many festivals either celebrate events from these times or are believed to date back to them.

Chaos: Whilst it is never actually stated, it is rumoured that some chieftains were corrupted by the forces of the Fell Powers. Therefore, it is quite possible that the burial mounds, artefacts, standing stones or paintings are related to chaos and foul ceremonies. Perhaps some power still remains in such items, and those who are the enemy within will work towards releasing it. At a time of religious uncertainty and with a plentiful number of minor deities and nature spirits to worship, perhaps some were not all they appeared. Others may have openly followed such malign spirits. It is clear that the tribes themselves were

An Alternative Classification: the Twelve Tribes

Knowledge of other peoples than the eight tribes from 'Die Populi Imperius' has led to Verenan historians claiming that there were 12 tribes rather than 8. This position has found favour with non-Sigmarite scholars, although within The Empire they are inclined to keep this view restricted to correspondence. The 12 tribes of modern scholarship are:

Unberogens	Semunduri
Teutogngens	Tratten
Talabec/Cherusans	Geschebi
Jutones/Merogens	Agbards
Fennones	Thurini
Kruebi	Thuringians

The Church of Sigmar does not condone this position, despite the private concern of the more liberal clerical academics that the evidence is mounting in favour of recognising Graetius' writings as a product of their times rather than divinely-inspired fact. Other scholars are quite likely to classify tribes in different styles, and numbers. Any such classification some 2,500 years after the fact is obviously likely to suffer from a tendency for revision, particularly given the general lack of evidence to support any definitive claim. We have presented Graetius' Eight as the official representation (to the Cult of Sigmar and in official WFRP material) and the Verenan Twelve as a serious academic alternative (and an attempt to conform with the latest version of WFB and The Empire Army Book). GMs can also use alternative theories (or numbers of tribes) as backgrounds to adventures, and as a parody of academic and/or religious argument. Perhaps academics start a ludicrous game of escalation: who can define the 'pre-Sigmar 100' tribes first?

devoutly against the forces of the Chaos Powers, but individual chiefs or clans might not have been so pure. As today, there would have existed an enemy within, in addition to that without.

Divorce: The concept of divorce is unknown to the majority of the poor within The Empire, but there is a custom that dates back to the days before Sigmar where a man can sell his wife to another in order to be rid of her. Usually, these sales are arranged beforehand, between a wife and her lover. The wife must actually be placed on a leash, and paraded around the market in front of prospective buyers. "Civilised" Old Worlders frown upon the practice, of course, but it is an easy avenue for a poor woman from an unhappy marriage. The exact origins of the practice are unknown, but courts recognise its validity since it is derived from custom.

Dwarfen Records: Whilst these are not readily available to human scholars, the Dwarfs have always maintained detailed accounts of all dealings with other races. Some of these take the form of grudges and favours - so if a Dwarf feels that the race has been wronged or helped in the past by one of the human tribes, then he or she may take it upon themselves to even up matters. Dwarfs take their history very seriously, and a 2,500-year old grudge is as painful a slight as if it occurred yesterday. In addition, should Imperial scholars obtain such records, they may realise that trade with the Dwarfs was largely one-sided. Histories and current relationships might be revised in this light, with serious political and religious ramifications.

Egalitarianism: Certain proto-socialist academics have pointed to the egalitarian nature of the tribes, and queried the right of the nobility to claim any hereditary rights. They believe that elections should be held of all free Imperials, as was done in the days of Sigmar. More radical individuals have even queried the divine right of the Emperor and the power of the various cults. To these people Sigmar was simply an elected representative of the people, who happened to be best qualified as fighter, hunter and leader. He did not own land or wealth, except as an agent of his people. This is also, of course, extremely useful to Tzeentchians seeking to sow discord and uncertainty.

Equality: It is possible for any woman to declare herself legally a man, and gain all the rights and privileges therein. The original practice derives from the egalitarian nature of the tribes, although again its precise origin is unclear. A woman is allowed to *declare herself Eagrel* (an ancient *Reikspiel* term) by simply walking into a council of the menfolk and doing so. Originally, she had to be prepared to defend her right by trial of arms, and if she lost submit to her victor. The modern Empire is too civilised, of course, for such barbarity, but local courts have been known to grant the right. Modern practice is normally to bring a case of *Gleichgestellte* within a court of law, and have oneself legally declared a man. Given the cost of the legal system, this tends to be an act taken by the widows of rich nobles or merchants seeking to take over their dead husband's affairs for themselves or to protect the interests of their children.

Fashions: Whilst in general most Imperial citizens have little interest in the traditions of the past, occasionally a past fashion is reinvented. Usually this is with regard to ornaments, hairstyles or beard trimmings but other things are possible. These are often linked to new discoveries glorifying The Empire's past.

Folk tales and songs: In rural areas of The Empire, and even in some of the cities and towns, there are many tales and songs which are said to date back to the time of the Sigmar. Although the facts have been twisted to fit narrative convention, there are many traces of ancient knowledge in campfire stories, accounts of bogeymen and epic song cycles. The tribal culture maintained its own history through oral traditions, and many of the sagas persist even today. The famous 'Hercynia' is one such song that recounts the history and final disappearance of the Semunduri after the Goblin Wars.

Grudges: Whilst humans have neither the racial histories

nor interest in their forebears exhibited by Dwarfs, the people of The Empire do have vague anecdotal stories of their past. These include stories about wrongs done to them by other tribes. Since the modern political boundaries are remarkably similar to old tribal ones, prejudice and distrust of other regions has continued unbroken for 2,500 years. The lack of a strong central force has tended to propagate local distinctions and promulgate old hatreds. Whilst disagreements between regions are modern concerns, it is quite easy to reach back to historic wrongs to add credence to a cause.

Guild Heritage: Many craft guilds trace their origins back to ancient times, and inherit or acquire trappings and rituals which supposedly echo their origins. Within The Empire, the most traditionally Imperial crafts often claim foundation by significant historical figures from the tribal period.

"Damned Stirlanders," spat the guard. "Just look at them." Felix did so. A group of merchants wended their way towards them. It also appeared that they had offered an escort to a group of pilgrims. "They look alright to me," he said. The guard studied him for a moment. Finally, a look of exasperation on his face, he explained, "They're descended from the Fenrones, you know." "Who?" queried Felix. "The Fenrones. A tribe." Understanding hit Felix. "You mean a tribe from before The Empire? What on earth has that to do with them?" "Look mate," said the guard with finality, "they were Fenrones. The Fenrones were orcs. Stirlanders have all got orc blood. Everyone knows that."

Heredity: A basic precept of the social structure of The Empire is the divine nature of existence and the right of birth to determine status. The ruling elites have all painstakingly developed genealogies that determine their descent from the original ruling families of the tribes. Their current station relies on their supposed ancestors' place at Sigmar's side, and his choice in their families to lead his people. This has some veracity, since the nobility from the time of Sigmar have retained their titles to this day where families have not died out or been otherwise replaced. Once the tribes developed powerful hereditary landowners, they created the ancestors of the modern nobility.

Magic: The practices of tribal shamans are not preserved, although as is often the case with magic, certain influences and facets have echoes across time and space. Those humans who use Amber magic are prone to a reversion to primitive shamanistic practices, in dress and behaviour. Although the influence of the High Elves is very clear in modern magical titles and rituals¹¹, human wizards will still utilise ceremonial gesture and ingredients which date back over millennia to their own less disciplined systems.

Tribalism: There is a relatively insignificant following of the Cult of Sigmar known as *The Sons of Sigmar* who have adopted a tribalist view of The Empire. They claim that Sigmar created The Empire with a ruling class drawn from his own tribe when he created The Empire, and that this heritage was to be continued *in perpetuity*. They claim that all positions of authority within The Empire should be only awarded to native Unberogens, and that the nobility should remember their racial heritage and not demean their race by marrying those of other tribes. As can be seen, the difficulties of determining tribal origin for most Imperial citizens are insurmountable and even claims to heritage by the nobility are in reality usually tenuous. This does not prevent the Sons seeking to push the cause of blond-haired and blue-eyed "Unberogens" who resemble Sigmar's representation, but it does prevent most people taking them seriously.

Scenario Hooks and Cameos

Archaeological Dig: Just about everyone is interested in the past, whether they wish to maintain the status quo or destroy it. There are plenty of opportunities for PCs to be involved in digs, protecting them or destroying them.

The Artist: Depicting tribal life in art is not entirely without

its problems - one can be fairly sure that any representation of a particular tribe will offend *somebody* within The Empire. The PCs could be hired by a painter, playwright or patron to research certain elements of their forthcoming great work or to act as protection from a particularly furious 'critic'. While the PCs are away the artist could disappear, maybe into the hands of an extremist cult insistent on protecting the reputation of a particular tribe?

Burial: The varied burial customs of the tribes offer rich pickings for adventure ideas. Whilst burial mounds offer traditional sources of inspiration, GMs should not be afraid to remind the PCs of the vast number of bodies that have been buried in Sylvania according to the customs of the Fenrones tribe. Of course, some of the more recent inhabitants of the region have found a particular way to make use of the unusual practices of their ancestors, and indeed made use of what's left of the ancestors *themselves*.

Chaos Tribe: Hired by an academic to protect him on a journey into the Ostermark wilderness, the party find themselves bored hanging around an old barrow whilst the scholar makes notes and investigates the stones standing on the site. He claims to be investigating the site of a chieftain, but is this true? Perhaps, in reality, the Dark Powers had tempted the chieftain and the scholar is actually there to release him, or gain those powers for himself. Can the PCs prevent themselves being sacrificed to this purpose? Can they prevent this foul ceremony?

The Curse: Stories and songs from the tribal period of The Empire are full of curses and spells, which the hero is burdened with at some point in his adventures. Whilst most of them are dismissed as the superstitions of a more primitive people, some of them did (and still do), hold considerable power. A scholar or wizard may pay the PCs considerable amounts of money to investigate the truth behind these ancient magicks, which pre-date more modern sorcerous practices.

Gone Native: The Gesellschaft Schwarzhirsch (Black Stag Company) is a hunting lodge whose members are made up of first sons of Talabheim nobility. They place great stock in the honour of the hunt, fraternity and the history of the region. They claim that the lodge has been in existence since the times of the Talabec tribe, and have incorporated a number of tribal traditions and references into their initiation rites and rituals. However, in recent years some of the members have begun to take this element of the society too seriously, and things are getting out of hand. On a recent hunting excursion into the Great Forest one of their number, Karl-Heinz of the von Nebelsfeuer family, began acting very oddly, acting in a savage way, painting his skin with resins and urging his companions to join him in his 'return to true Talabec tradition'. Days later, angered at their unwillingness to join him, he disappeared into the forest with some of the party's hounds. Reports from local woodsmen began to come back of a 'wild man' attacking other hunters with his dogs. Upon their return, conscious of having gone too far, the members of the lodge decided that something must be done before any Von Nebelsfeuer was discovered to be missing. Three members of the lodge will recruit the PCs and sheepishly (well... sheepishly for a Talabheim noble, anyway) explain that they must bring von Nebelsfeuer back to the city unharmed, and no-one must know anything of this - least of all Karl-Heinz's father.

Heresy: Apocryphal tales tell that Sigmar discarded all armour before entering Blackfire Pass and leaving The Empire for the last time. The Church officially denies these, but rumours have returned to Aildorf from deepest rural Averland of a humble farmer who claims to have found Sigmar's shield upon his land. The farmer has become a local celebrity and has a growing following of peasants and simple folk, claiming to have been chosen by Sigmar to find and bear the shield. This nascent cult is not yet a threat to the Sigmarite hierarchy in the region, but the Church has no intention of letting it become one, and neither do the local aristocracy. Enter the PCs, either as agents of the Church, Averland nobility, or caught up in the vicinity as the cult grows in size and influence.

Lost Tribe: The migration of the Semunduri offers a GM

with many options. Most immediately, the Church of Sigmar can use the idea of the lost tribe as a means of supporting Imperial expansion into any nation that they declare to have been the ultimate destination of the tribe. In other words, the Church is duty bound to discover and free its lost brothers, re-uniting them within the church and the fold. Alternatively, others might use the claim of being descended from the lost tribe to engender Imperial support for their cause. In addition, myths of lost tribes make excellent story hooks wherever they might be found - whites in Lustria or the Southlands, Reikspiel speakers in a hidden Kislevan valley or pale-skinned, blonde human slaves in the Badlands.

Men at Work: The labourers who are working on the Baron's new schloss are on strike. They say that work will not continue until the site of the schloss is relocated. The architect is tearing his hair out, the masons are leaving for more lucrative work and the Baron is going insane with rage. The Labourer's Guild and the foremen are supporting the men's claims that the foundations of the new schloss have disturbed something that should have been left alone. Enter the PCs - employed by the Baron to investigate the men's claims, they will also have to contend with an escalating industrial dispute exacerbated by the Baron's hiring of scab labour and thugs to intimidate the guild. The truth is that the schloss is being built on top of a tribal graveyard, which dates back to the time before Sigmar. How the PCs resolve the matter is up to themselves and the GM. Oh - and we should also mention that if the schloss is not completed before the Bretonnian delegation arrives for negotiations next spring, the Baron will lose face in front of no less than three Electors.

Orc Emissary: A party of humans arrives in Bechafen, claiming to be messengers from an orc proclaiming himself as King Krum. The leader of the group is chamberlain to the orc, and is likely a half orc himself. Krum offers an alliance against the invading host of a chaos warlord, offering a number of artefacts in exchange. More, he claims that these artefacts are from his own ancestors who traded with the Fennone tribe, and were on good terms with the humans. Should negotiations progress, he will even offer proof that he is himself a descendent of the tribe. In the long term, he seeks protection for his tribe from those outside The Empire, and a permanent arrangement. After all, he says, brothers must stand together, and the future of all non-chaotic races rests upon uniting against the incursion.

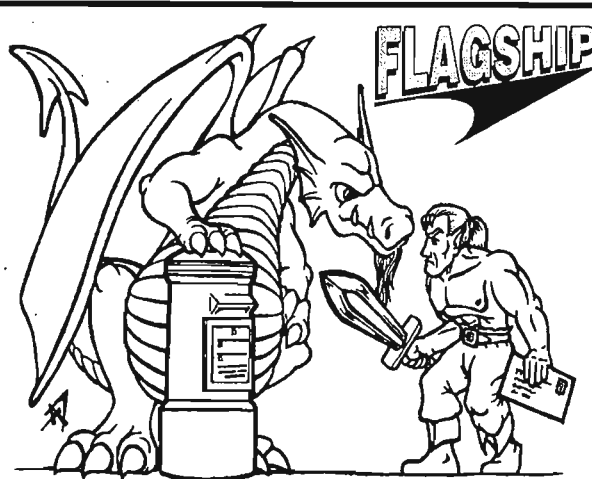
The Protector: The folktales of the Kruebi tell of a young woodsman called Till, who when his village was threatened by a Fimir warband, slew the Meargh with his axe and routed the invaders single-handed. In the many intervening centuries Till the Woodsman has been celebrated as a reluctant hero - and legends tell that whenever the village of Dunkelbild is under threat, then Till will return wielding his woodsman's axe. Amazingly, this is true - one of the families within the village is descended from that ancient Kruebi line. Countless generations of fathers have recounted the tale to their sons and imparted them with their responsibility. Recently, beastmen have been spotted skulking about near to the village - an attack seems inevitable and there isn't sufficient time to send for aid from Carroberg. The PCs are approached by young Sigmund Neider, who was only this morning told the tale of Till the Woodsman by his father, and handed an ancient, rather rusty and poorly hafted axe. His father then took the unprecedented move of announcing to the entire village the identity of the family, before promptly disappearing and leaving the desperate villagers looking hopefully at poor Sigmund. Can they help him defend the village from the beastmen?

Pruning the Line: The Wardens of Pedigree are a secret society largely made up of bookish nobles and patriotic librarians who have made it their aim to purge the Imperial nobility of all 'tainted' blood. The philosophy that unites these quiet fanatics is an analogy with the fine Imperial tradition of breeding dogs - the finest warhounds are bred by removing the 'degenerate' dogs and signs of mongrel ancestry. The society have access to extensive genealogical records, from the recorded oral traditions of the early Empire to modern family trees, and these are used to identify those nobles whose ancestry is suspect. Non-human or mutant blood is the main focus of the Warden's investigations, although the more extremist members deem all foreign blood to be inferior. Years of diligent study of a bloodline may end in the Wardens carefully engineering an 'appropriate' marriage through their influence in the courts of The Empire. On other occasions, the research may end in a single devastating act of violence, wiping out a whole family or deposing a local noble by force. The PCs could find themselves walking over a particular estate on the very day that the local noble is found killed with his wife and children - murdered by the Wardens' agents.

Sigmar as Poor Man: There is a rise in a sub-cult of the Church of Sigmar that is spreading the belief that Sigmar was simply a poor huntsman, and not a rich noble. It is currently quite small, but is causing concern within the church and some local nobles. After all, it could easily develop into a call against inheritance of position and wealth, and already questions the right of the cult to own wealth, personally or institutionally. This is probably best developed as a genuine cult, but GMs might wish to use Ulricans or Tzeentchians as agents provoking the movement. PCs might be hired to investigate, beat up the leaders, or it might simply be a backwash to a scenario.

Wood Elf Brothers: A Wood Elf emissary presents himself to the Graf of Middenheim and claims that his people are the Semunduri, the lost tribe. He claims to have evidence and requests permission to present his case to the Graf, and thence to the Emperor. His people wish their ancestral lands returned. Needless to say, this causes a furore. What is going on? Of course, the case could be valid, since none of the extant archaeological evidence actually proves the tribe was human. Baron Werner Nikse and (to a lesser extent) Grand Prince Hals von Tasseninck are clearly interested in stopping this farce before it can be taken seriously. They need some deniable and expendable help to uncover the truth, and - if necessary - bury it. As to the Elf, is he a genuine emissary, part of a dissident Wood Elf faction or simply a Dark Elf up to no good?

They moved like shadows through the forest, barely disturbing the fallen leaves and branches on the forest floor. There was a sound, and the shadows stopped. Again and again. Snorts. The shadows moved again, and saw before them a clearing. There beside two adolescents was a mighty haul indeed - a herd of pigs. The tribe would eat well tonight.



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(imagine is a paper based magazine, it is just distributed across the net.)

Excerpts from Doktor Brauer's Book of Fable and Fancy, Nuln College Press, 2503

Background from the Felix and Gotrek Books by Jody Macgregor

William King's Felix and Gotrek stories from his Slayer series contain a wealth of interesting background material, even though the latest ones do tend to contradict the 3rd edition of the Warhammer World. For those who haven't read the novels (and I recommend you do) I have summarised a few brief snippets of detail in the form of entries from that great reference work 'Doktor Brauer's Book of Fable and Fancy' (Nuln College Press, 2503). I've tried to avoid spoilers but some will inevitably have crept in around the edges, along with a couple of the Doktor's brandy-soaked observations - these things can't be helped.

Ancient brethren, the: Dwarfs. Term traced back to the Unfinished Book, in common usage among Sigmarites.

Beloved of Verena, the: infamous house of negotiable affection, situated on the grounds of the University of Nuln.

Blessed Lord, the: alternate name for Sigmar.

Blindfish: eyeless fish that dwell in the deep cisterns of the dwarfholds. Considered a delicacy.

Devil-python: large snake native to the jungles of Lustria whose skin is prized by collectors.

Dwarf Friend: title given by a Dwarf to a man who has performed some great service, such as saving the life of a fellow Dwarf. Rarely given.

Eisenstern: astrologer who was burned at the stake when he first posited that the sun traces a circuit around the earth, an idea now widely accepted.

Elder Race, the: flattering title for use on Dwarfs.

Feast of Verena, the: common observance among worshippers of the goddess of wisdom. On the evening of the first of Nachexen they fast and pray for a year free of bigotry and injustice. In Nuln, the city of which she is patron, Verena's followers in the Guild of Mechanics hold a real feast, rather than a spiritual one, sponsored by Countess Emmanuelle von Liebewitz.

Frederick: hero of the Southern Empire. Founder of Fredericksburg but not much else.

Geistmund Hills: set of hills in the Border Princes about which many a strange tale is told. A group of sorcerous Bretonnian exiles are said to have raised an army from the ancient barrow mounds among the Geistmunds, before being defeated by an alliance of the Princes and the mountain Dwarfs. The necromancers retreated to the tombs, before being sealed in by powerful dwarfish runes (and equally powerful dwarfish stonework). Their voices may be heard if you pass by those barrow mounds, especially on Geheimnisnacht and Hexensnacht.

Healing of the Five Thousand, the: one of Shallya's most celebrated miracles, in which 5,000 assorted lepers and other sufferers were healed in the waters of the Reik in Nuln.

Iron Tower, the: Countess Emmanuelle von Liebewitz' personal prison in Nuln.

Judgement Day: according to prophesy, the day when the forces of Chaos will return to claim the world.

Karsten: Prince Karsten laid siege to Castle Siegfried for two years before finally undermining its defences. According to legend, Karsten had help from the skaven, who later exacted a terrible price for their aid.

Magnets: strange black stones that stick to metal, made by the Dwarfs for paperweights aboard ships.

Malum se delet: "Evil destroys itself," in the Classical tongue. A phrase coined by the philosopher Neustadt in his opus De Re Munde, in which he argued that all living creatures have souls, and that even the changed (mutants) are sentient beings capable of love and worthy of life.

Morr's interdict: forbids grave robbers from entering the gardens of Morr under pain of supreme chastisement, which is to say death.

Myrmidia's Watchers: the guards who patrol the rooftops of Myrmidia's temples,

watching out over the city walls.

Nuln: greatest city of The Empire. Its said that when you are tired of Nuln, you are tired of life.

Night Circus: depraved bordello where mutants cater to the jaded; part of the Night Market myth.

Night Market: alleged undertown of mutants located in an abandoned cemetery on the edge of Nuln, according to those who would slander this fair city.

Oathkeeper: title given by Dwarfs to those who are bound by oaths to them.

Oats: food of horses in The Empire and men in Albion.

Old Bridge, the: first bridge across the river Reik built in Nuln, at the most convenient crossing point before it flows into the Reikwald. To this day, the bodies of those found drowned in the city are put on display here to be identified.

Old Man Morr: aspect of Morr worshipped by the common folk. Old Man Morr pulls names out of his big black hat, when he gets to your name he takes you away to his misty grey realm.

Old Mouldy Leaf: famed Dwarf variety of smokeweed or 'tabac'.

Penitent's Litany: prayer to Shallya, full of grace, repeated by those seeking relief from illness.

Rememberer: title given by Dwarfs to those who honour the spirits of their ancestors.

Sainted One, the: another title given to Magnus the Pious.

Sanctifying hammer: ceremonial hammer used by priests of Sigmar to sanctify weddings and other contracts.

Scurrying Lord of the Pit: god of the mythical skaven. Also known as the Horned Rat and Lurker in Unknowable Darkness.

Secrets of the Harem: book by Al Hazim, popular in certain circles, with much to show of the debauched nature of Araby's people.

Sigmar's crown: honour payment. A buyer might give a pedlar a Gold Crown to hold an item until his return, this is known as 'Sigmar's crown'. If the buyer did not return, the pedlar would keep it. Among servants of the nobility it is common for this to be changed to the master's crown, e.g. "Take the Baron's crown as insurance."

Sign of the Hammer: made by touching the left shoulder, right shoulder, centre of the chest and finally, gut. A widespread ward against Chaos.

Skavenroot: drowsiness-inducing deliriant.

Snotling fonder: common dwarfen insult.

Sunblossom: rare flower that grows on the highest slopes of Mount Blackfire. When combined with weirdroot in the correct dosage, makes a concoction to prevent senility.

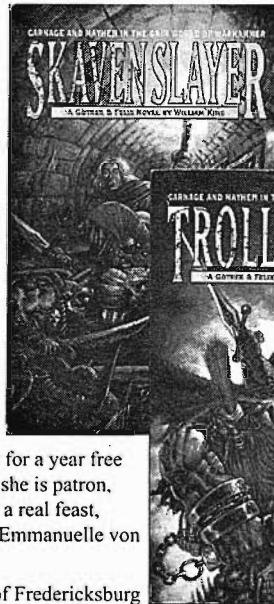
Tanugh aruk: Khazalid war-cry with no printable Reikspiel equivalent.

Ulric's Children: shapeshifting beings born of Ulric's unions with mortal women, able to take the form of man or wolf. In one version of the legend the coming of Chaos tainted their blood, causing them to hunger for human flesh. In some backwoods areas of The Empire simple folk still make sacrifices to appease them.

Uruk mortari: "Death to Ores," loosely translated from the original Khazalid. A dwarfish battle-cry.

Vespasian: Nulner artist, the equal of any of the great Imperial artists of the last three centuries. Has painted Sigmar, Magnus the Pious, Countess Emmanuelle, and several lesser figures like Frederick the Bold.

Warpstorms: tempests of the Northern Wastes, characterised by monstrous winds and green lightning. They are reputedly able to make stone flow like water and turn men into beasts or mutants.



FORMS OF ADDRESS

By Toby Pilling. Additional Material by John Foody

A blare of trumpets heralded the unexpected arrival of the Grand Duke of Middenland. Otto von Licherwitz saw Werner pale suddenly, but both rose as one as the noble swept in with his entourage to receive them.

"Greetings, Your Lordship" stammered Werner. Otto groaned inwardly and an icy hush descended on the proceedings. The Duke raised a steel grey eyebrow. "I see I have been demoted to a Count. The Emperor must have neglected to inform me."

Werner gulped...

The ranks and titles of the Old World nobility is a confusing subject and only those schooled in the art of Etiquette stand any hope of never making a mistake when speaking with their betters. The following guide is a treatise on the correct ways of addressing various levels of nobility. However, it cannot be guaranteed to be correct in every instance, for not every part of the Old World follows the same rules. Titles are aligned in order of importance, but again this may not be true in all cases. A Baron in one area may be above a Margrave in another. To further confuse matters one Baron may be higher ranked than another Baron. But to ignore these complications is to risk a serious faux-pas and that has been known to put one's very life at risk...

Where <forename>, <surname>, or <place name> is used, replace these as appropriate. For example Earl Riegheim of Andelsdorf would be addressed as Lord Andelsdorf.

Emperor

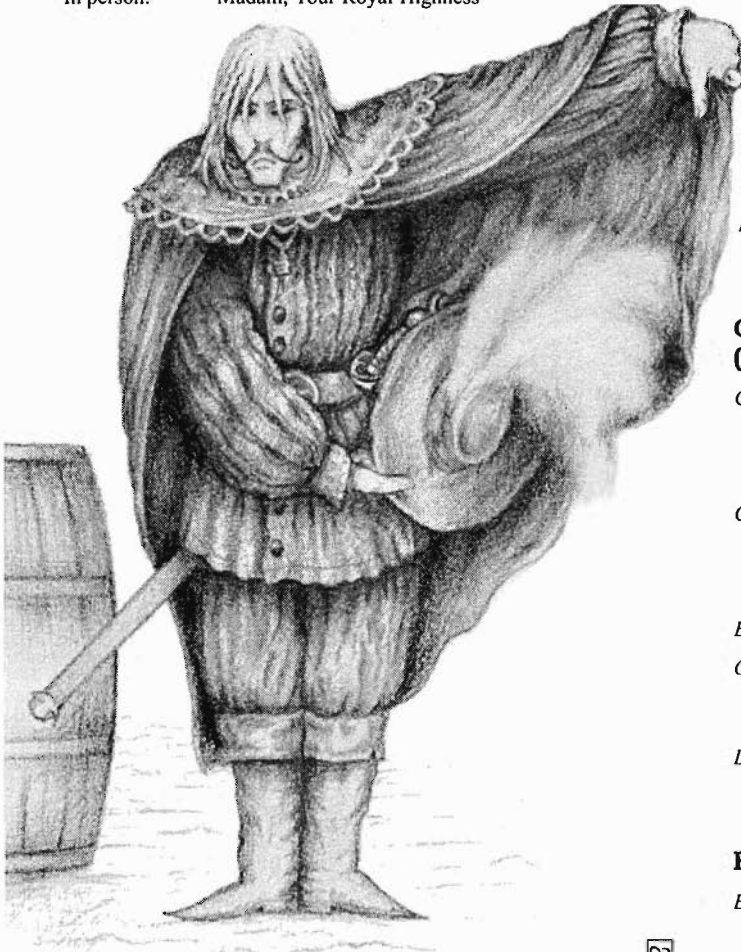
Written: His Imperial Majesty
In person: Your Imperial Majesty

Prince

Written: His Imperial Highness Prince <forename>
In person: Your Royal Highness

Princess

Written: Her Imperial Highness Princess <forename>
In person: Madam, Your Royal Highness



SP

Dukes and Grafs - for the former, insert the prefix 'Grand' as required to signify the title holder is an Elector

Duke

Written: His Grace the Duke of <place name>
In person: My Lord Duke, Your Grace

Duchess

Written: Her Grace the Duchess of <place name>
In person: Madam, Your Grace

Eldest Son

Takes title of Baron

Other sons

Written: Lord<forename>
In person: My Lord, Your Lordship

Daughters

Written: Lady <forename>
In person: Madam, Your Ladyship

Marquis

Marquis

Written: The Most Honourable Lord <place or surname>
In person: My Lord, Lord <place name>, Marquis <place name>

Marchioness/Marquise

Written: Lady <surname>
In person: Your Ladyship, Lady <place name>, Marquise <place name>

Sons

Written: Lord <surname>
Written: The Honourable <forename>

Daughters

Written: Lady <surname>
In person: Your Ladyship

Counts

(For Viscount simply replace Count with Viscount)

Count

Written: The Right Honourable the Count of <place name>
In person: My Lord, Your Lordship, Lord <place name>, Count <place name>

Countess

Written: The Right Honourable the Countess of <place name>
In person: Madam, Your Ladyship, Lady <place name>, Countess <place name>

Eldest Son

Takes title of Baron

Other sons

Written: The Honourable <forename> <surname>
In person: Sir

Daughters

Written: Lady <forename> <surname>
In person: Madam, Your Ladyship

Earls

Earl

Written: My Lord
In person: Lord, Lord <place name>, Earl <place name>

Countess

Written: Lady <surname>
In person: Your Ladyship, Lady <place name>

Sons

Written: The Honourable <forename>

Daughters

Written: The Honourable <forename>

Margrave

Baron

Written: The Most Honourable Lord <place name>
In person: My Lord, Your Lordship

Baroness

Written: The Most Honourable Lady <place name>
In person: Madam, Your Ladyship

Sons

Written: The Honourable<forename> <surname>
In person: Sir

Daughters

Written: The Honourable<forename> <surname> (if unmarried)
The Honourable Frau <surname> (if married)
In person: Madame

Barons

Baron

Written: The Right Honourable Lord <place or surname>
In person: My Lord, Your Lordship, Baron <place name>

Baroness

Written: The Right Honourable Lady <place or surname>
In person: Madam, Your Ladyship, Baroness <place name>

Sons

Written: The Honourable <forename> <surname>
In person: Sir

Daughters

Written: The Honourable <forename> <surname> (if unmarried)
The Honourable Frau <surname> (if married)
In person: Madame

Knights/Baronet

Knight

Written: Sir <forename> <surname>
In person: Sir <forename>

Lady

Written: Lady <surname>
In person: Your Ladyship

Sons

Written: The Honourable<forename>

Daughters

Written: Lady <surname>
In person: Your Ladyship

Notes

Remember, rulers of City States are Grand Dukes or Grafs. Heirs to Baronies are known as Baronets, and heirs to Principalities known as Crown Prince. The ruler of the League of Ostermark is known as Chancellor.

Hopefully the above list can add some realism and a little spice to any WFRP campaign. It can be kept as a GM reference and to PCs with the *Etiquette* skill. Other characters may need to make Intelligence or Fellowship tests to remember the correct form of address in any specific situation, with applicable modifiers as devised by the GM.

The above information may not correlate historically to the various ranks and titles. It is also a mixture of titles from time periods and countries. However, this is to fit in with the confusing nature of Imperial nobility.



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BLUE BLOOD ON THE CARPET

Nobility in The Empire by N. Arne Dam and Alfred Nuñez Jr.

"Look at the filthy beggars. If not for our magnanimous rule, they'd be little better than the animals they raise." – Reiklander Baron von Auerswald on his way to the Great War against Chaos 2302 IC

In *Apocrypha Now*, the Noble careers were (re-)introduced into WFRP along with the skills particular to the specialist careers. Moreover, the article provided some background information; the reasons why a noble would become an adventurer, and the manner in which a successful adventurer may enter into and advance within the nobility.

The purpose of this article is to provide more

information on the noble class. The article will look at, amongst other things: How a person is elevated to nobility, what happens when a noble line dies out, how nobles marry for advantage, and how the success of a House is dependent upon the capabilities of the patriarch. These areas should provide a framework for GMs to create more detailed family background for noble PCs as well as to run a campaign setting where all the PCs are from the noble class.

This same information could be used to develop a more recent history of events involving the most powerful noble families in The Empire. Such information is important, especially if any character has the noble skill of *Dynastic*

Knowledge. Furthermore, this article details certain individuals in the von Bildhofen family, which also serves as a perfect example of how the fortunes of a noble family can ebb and flow with the tidal forces of circumstance and history.

One point of caution. There are regional differences within The Empire which means that the ranks and titles in different areas are of different importance, and that the article cannot speak for every region on each point. Instead, this article speaks in general terms, leaving the exact details for the GM to develop.

The Tiers of Nobility

Apocrypha Now details the careers of five levels of nobility. While this fits for game mechanics, the careers can be broken down to the four tiers described below.

The most powerful of the nobility are the Provincial Electors (the others, known as the Clerical Electors, are elevated by their religious office), including the Emperor, all of whom rule either powerful city-states or large swathes of land, the latter of which are known as the Electoral or Grand Provinces. In some cases, they are also the liege-lords of the non-Electoral or Lesser Provinces. All of the current Provincial Electors come from noble families that trace their lineage to The Empire's first millennium. Actually, many of these noble families are interrelated to some extent. It should also be noted that the Provincial Electors have the financial means to support relatives who have the wherewithal to reach the other tiers of nobility. The Noble-Rank 5 career is appropriate for these important personages.

The second tier of Imperial nobility are the Lesser Provincial rulers. Powerful and just as protective of their status as the Electors. This high office of nobility is represented by the career Noble-Rank 4 (Duke), even though the actual office title of the ruler usually differs (as exemplified by the Baron of Nordland or the Count of Wissenland). Close or otherwise important blood relatives of the Electors also comprise this tier of Imperial nobility, such as Baron Heinrich Todbringer (*Middenheim: City of Chaos*) and Karl-Franz I's cousin Count Siegfried von Walfen (the head of the Graukappen as described in *Warpstone 11*, Behind the Scenes).

The third tier of nobility are the landed nobles who nominally owe allegiance to the provincial rulers. These nobles tend to be ambitious and seek alliances through marriage to improve their relative position. They will also resort to whatever means necessary to gain the favour and patronage of their liege, especially if it is at the expense of their peers. Such activity is highly risky and costly to those whose ambitions are unquenchable. This tier of nobility is represented by two ranks of Nobles: Rank 2 (Baron, Margrave) and Rank 3 (Count). The latter tends to be the more experienced and influential of this level of landed nobles while the former are often individuals who have just acquired their inheritance or are less than competent in their abilities. Note that Barons can be the vassals of a Count or Duke, who in turn is the vassal of the provincial ruler.

A number of landed nobles have property in addition to their primary holdings, some in other Imperial provinces. An example of this is the village of Kammendun, which is located in Middenland where the River Schaumfluss enters the Schadensumpf. The mining and fishing village is one of the Imperial possessions of Graf Boris Todbringer, even though it's one hundred and ten miles west of Middenheim. In fact, many of the more powerful Imperial noble families own property in other



Old World domains (Bretonnia, Wasteland, Kislev and the Border Princes are the most likely) as a result of marriages, inheritances and various other means.

The lowest rank of nobility (the one detailed in the *WFRP Rulebook* as the Noble career and *Apocrypha Now* as Noble-Rank 1), encompass those without land or newly elevated to the status of nobility. These include those awaiting their inheritance and those who are excluded from land owning for whatever reason.

Since the time of Emperor Magnus the Pious, the number of young nobles left out of their family inheritance (all children save the eldest son, in most cases) has increased. Many of these landless nobles flock to military careers in their pursuit of fame and fortune. Some also hope to carve out a land of their own, mostly in the northern wilderness (north of the Middle Mountains), eastern marches (Ostland along the Kislevite frontier, Ostermark, Sylvania, and the outlying portions of Averland), and near the Imperial enclaves of Akendorf and Mortensholm in the Border Princes.

Other unlanded nobles are entering the mercantile trade in increasing numbers in hopes of continuing the lifestyle to which they've become accustomed. It is also a means for these nobles to regain some influence. Judicious use of money can provide an unlanded noble with allies from higher levels of nobility but unwise disbursement can leave them bankrupt and at the mercy of their enemies.

"Jus' look at them, all proud and full o' themselves. I bet not a one o' them has ever done a thing in their lives. Gods, how I wish I was born one."

— anonymous Middenlander peasant.

If You Cannot Beat Them, Join Them

What now passes as titled nobility had its antecedents well before the time of Sigmar. In fact, some of the ancient tribes, including Sigmar's, seemed to have had hereditary chiefs. Others elected their leaders based upon skill and circumstance. In times of peace and prosperity, a leader with mediating skills would be more beneficial to the tribe. When war came, those skilled at arms with the abilities to lead men and defeat tribal enemies were preferred.

As the tribes grew in size, strong local leaders established themselves as enforcers of the tribal chief's law and peace. In exchange of the martial protection they would demand tithes from their fellow peasants. With Sigmar's ascendancy as Emperor, the tribal leaders became provincial rulers. Furthermore, the local leaders serving these rulers likewise ensured their positions (as well as that for their descendants) and thus joined the hereditary chiefs in founding the ancient families of nobility, the so-called *Uradel*.

By the time of Emperor Sigismund II the Conqueror, many of the noble families of The Empire had been firmly established. It is believed to be around this time that the first nobles were granted present day titles by their liege-lords (e.g., Imperial records show that Sigismund II elevated several of the noble warriors that campaigned with him to Barons). Since each Elector maintained the right to appoint nobles and award them titles, by the end of the first millennium their use had become the utter mess we know today.

A few years after Sigismund II's death, a feud between Baron von Manstein of Marburg and Baron von Spec of Kemperbad led to the latter's death. Emperor Siegfried the Lawgiver faced competing claims of Baron von Manstein and Baroness von Schliester of Auerswald for his land and wealth. He decided on a third candidate: Marshal Heinz Guderian, a loyal general who served his father and himself. In elevating his choice, Emperor Siegfried issued the Imperial Edict of 525 IC:

"Should a Fief become vacant; whether by misdeed, misfortune, or death; as decreed by Sigmar, Ulric, and Mörr, the Elector of the

The Forms Have to be Kept! – Roleplaying a Noble

By Roderic d'Arcon and Alfred Nuñez Jr.

When roleplaying a Noble, a player should always keep in mind that the mindset of Nobility is considerably different than that of common folk. Given their major role as hereditary landholders and lawgivers, Nobles firmly believe that their station grants them rights and privileges well beyond those of the common people. The range of behaviour and attitude of a Noble character towards commoners varies greatly from the benevolent ruler to the ruthless power monger or cruel liege lord. Generally a Noble character should display a subtle form of arrogance and a good amount of confidence, especially when dealing with people below one's station. The following shall provide possible examples of a Noble's interactions with different classes of people.

Interaction with Lowly Folk

The lowly folk are generally the provincial peasantry, living in outlying villages and farmsteads. It is here that a Noble wields considerable power and authority...

"Ah yes good man, we are in need of fresh horses. It may seem to me that those two coursers there will do just fine. What? You expect me to pay for these horses? How dare you speak to me in such voice, you miscreant. Does it seem necessary to you that you need to be reminded of who your liege pays dues to? Ah yes, to my uncle, isn't that right? So now ready our horses and heave yourself away before I lose my good manners! Filthy peasants! By the way, why does it seem so unlikely to me that someone like you is in possession of such well bred horses as these?"

Players should note that the Noble does not give even the slightest respect to the peasant, who has no power to bring to bear against a Noble. It is with these interactions that the Noble's power weights the most. Their arrogance will rise to surface in some form or another and should be portrayed accordingly. Exceptionally harsh behaviour of Nobility may lead to some form of revolt or uprising against the ruling house, ranging from sabotage to murder or even full fledged rebellion. Such callous conduct on the part of Nobles is seen as being fairly common. In actuality, the few that are so inclined do not truly reflect the overall general attitude of all Nobles!

Interaction with Townsfolk

The ever growing wealth and influence of towns and cities with their guilds and merchant leagues cuts more and more into the power of the nobility. The ever growing number of non-noble landholders begins to drastically undermine the hereditary power of Nobility over land and natural resources.

"...well I understand, but I see a conflict of sorts as this document does not seem worded well enough in regards to the rights of forestry and fishing within this area, don't you agree my dear burgomeister? I know, I know that it has been set up by the town council with the help of several Verenan legalists, but I think you miss the point here. Well now, let us go over it again and see if we can't find a mutual consent, shall we?"

The above is an example where the Noble can still bring his waning power and influence to bear with careful, yet mocking, arrogance over the lowly commoner. At times, the Noble must remind himself not to underestimate the townsfolk influence on the imperial politics through their guilds and various associations of mercantile and financial powers.

Interaction with Clergy

A Noble generally knows to tread carefully in dealings with the priests and clergy of the major religious factions, as their influence can be considerable and is better not to be taken too lightly.

"I assure you most reverend mother that my men had no deliberate intention nor order to disturb the sanctity of this convent, but were merely in pursuit of well known

and notorious outlaws when they forced their way into the cloister. No greater harm has been done and only a few worldly furnishings suffered slight damage. Of course it is mine to see to the repair of these minor things. Please accept my humble contributions to the new dormitory wing."

With these situations, a Noble is rather careful, especially if the priesthood is of an influential and powerful divinity or if the Noble is a devout follower. Still, Nobles often despise powerful individuals of a religious order as they are often just common folk alleviated into higher ranks. A clever Noble does not miscalculate the powers and influences of faith as many an uprising is fuelled by religious agitation.

Interaction with other Nobility

When dealing with their own kind, all of a Noble's wit and charm are put to the test. This is especially true at the various provincial courts and even the great imperial court in Altdorf. These interactions range from exchanging courteous pleasantries to intricate political plots and intrigues.

Nobles are very conscious of their standing among their own. They are condescending towards those of lesser rank, though not nearly as much as they are towards the peasants. The goal here is to keep any would-be competition down so that the Noble can concentrate on joining the ranks of those higher up the social ladder. To this end, a Noble would never pass on an opportunity to upstage a potential rival in order to prevent them from recognition by a superior.

"I daresay, do you really think that Count von Aldrich would appreciate you passing the ill news that his youngest daughter ran off with that commoner merchant, Josef Seidehandler? I realise that his parasitic tendencies have garnered a considerable amount of wealth, but there's our Lord's reputation to uphold. Leave the matter to me, my good man, and I'll see that the scoundrel pays for placing our Lord in an embarrassing situation. No need to thank me. Yes, I'll be sure to mention your concerns to our Lord. In that, you can trust me."

When addressing one of Superior rank and ability, a noble tends to be deferential, especially if that someone is a very capable liege-lord. Sometimes the level of grovelling reaches the point of being nauseating. In other cases, a noble uses the flowery language of the court to disguise his disgust over a thoroughly disdainful and incompetent superior. The difference between the two methods of communication has more to do with the tone that these words are delivered rather than the words chosen.

"Yes, Milord, that was a splendid and clever idea. I would never have considered using cavalry in such a creative manner. The boldness of sending your gallant knights headlong into a barrage of cannon fire was a stroke of genius. Your sworn enemy, the Count of Alteisen, was caught unawares by your audacious manoeuvre. You would have carried the day masterfully if not for the sudden cowardice of your former champion, the late Otto Bradenburg. Had he continued the charge instead of balking at the last minute, the field of battle would have been yours as surely as I stand before you now."

"A thousand pardons, milord, but I have babbled far too long. Did you say that you have an offer for me? You want me to take command of your personal retinue? O sire, you flatter me with such an offer. I would be honoured to accept your generosity, but I fear that I am hardly qualified to undertake such a position in your esteemed court. I am but a simple soldier whose experience in battle pales in comparison to the valiant Baron Conrad von Mannheim. Perhaps it would serve you better, milord, if the brave Baron commanded your retinue while I learn the art of war as leader of your archers."



Province shall have the right to elevate any man whose loyalty and strength can ensure that his Lord's laws are upheld and fealty obligations met. Should the House of an Elector or Imperial Holding become vacant, then the Emperor may elevate any noble who holds land in that Province and has proven himself able to maintain Order and enforce its Laws."

Although this avenue is rarely used nowadays, there have been incidences in the recent Imperial past when a person of common birth has been elevated to nobility. However, this is likely to be the lowest, unlanded tier of nobility. Newcomers to the ranks of nobility are invariably scorned by members of the *Uradel*.

In contrast, there is only one example where an Emperor declined to elevate a noble to a vacant Provincial seat. In 2305 IC, Emperor Magnus the Pious decided to accept the offer of the burghers of Marienburg and declared that the Barony of Westerland (an Imperial Holding) no longer existed. In its place, the Emperor proclaimed the Province of Westerland to be governed by an appointed Council drawn from the burghers (see *Marienburg: Sold Down the River*).

'Sigmar's beard, man, they were just peasants. So, my son got a little drunk with his friends and killed a few. What's the big deal? It's not like anybody important got hurt. I even sent a few Crowns to the grieving families. Why is that Priest of Verena making a big to-do about it by demanding justice? One of those killed was his daughter? Bloody hell!'

—Averlander Count von Oxhoft, shortly before his mansion was set aflame.

Noble Privileges and Responsibilities

Control of the land and its resources gives the nobility great power and wealth. Peasants working the land are required by law to pay their lords a sizeable share of the fruits of their labour in exchange for their homes and protection from bandits and goblins.

The lot of a landed noble is not as easy as the muck-raking agitators would mislead the ignorant masses to believe. In addition to administering their liege-lord's laws

and maintaining the peace, landed nobles are responsible for collecting taxes and protecting the peasants that work the land, as well as commoners plying their trade in towns and villages. Additionally, they are required to raise troops whenever their liege-lord requires such service (though the more creative vassals seem to find a way around even this requirement). Landed nobles who wish to remain on good terms with their Liege Lord are also expected to throw lavish parties and arrange spectacular hunts whenever he visits. Failure to perform such duties has been known to lead to a noble being stripped of title and holdings.

As compensation for their onerous tasks, nobles gain privileges beyond that of the common rabble. They are relatively immune to the laws that govern the behaviour of the lower classes, considered above such crimes as robbery,

murder, and rape. However, should such crime occur against one of their own, only the guards of the liege-lord (i.e. the Imperial Guard in the case of the Emperor) may arrest the accused noble. Although extremely rare, the liege-lord may issue an Imperial warrant to certain individuals other than their retinue (e.g., Bounty Hunters) to seize the indicted noble and return them for judgement.

Statutes in many lands expressly forbid the Watch from arresting any noble, no matter the crime. Should the Watch witness a crime committed by a noble, they must report the activity to the proper authority (their Watch Captain) without taking any direct action to stop the foul deed; small comfort to any victim of the noble's actions. Most nobles know not to push their immunity from the Watch too far. Most have heard of young nobles who have turned up dead in some back alley or hung from a tree outside a village with nary a witness to be found.

Nobles are likewise immune to the judicial system that commoners must face. Any noble charged with a crime must be tried in a special court where their noble peers judge them. This is by no means a lark for the accused, because many verdicts rendered in this court are based upon political considerations as much as upon legal issues. It is therefore not surprising that most criminally inclined nobles prefer to find commoners upon whom they can shift any blame.

Given the privileges of the nobility, real or perceived, it is small wonder that there are people of common blood who fraudulently pose as nobles. The noble class protects its birthright by passing laws that severely punish "commoners who falsely present themselves in a manner that strongly suggests they are of noble blood." In Talabheim, such impersonation is considered a capital crime and the perpetrator is usually executed if convicted (in rare situations imprisonment in Tarnhelm Keep is a possibility, though it is considered a close second in severity to death). In Nuln punishment tends towards a week in the stocks and restitution to the noble family whose good name the perpetrator sullied (if unable to pay, then a sentence to a debtors' prison would be added to the punishment).

The Art of Politics and Intrigue

Being a noble is not an end in itself as most commoners believe. Competition for the most powerful seats is fierce

and a "take no prisoners" mentality is prevalent. In past centuries, such rivalries inevitably led to war. Although the occasional conflict flares up these days, the contest is far more subtle, but no less deadly. Intrigue and innuendo are the primary weapons of ambitious nobles.

In the face of such manoeuvring, alliances are formed between nobles with a common goal. These alliances can be a fickle thing; a key ally at one moment can very well become an ambitious noble's most implacable enemy the next. This shifting of power requires the utmost delicacy since a noble must not completely burn all their bridges unless absolutely certain that a particular ally will never be needed again. The key to thriving in the game of politics is timing. A noble must keep all options open and be willing to change their schemes quickly should a better situation present itself.

Ambitious nobles must be ever on guard against scandalous rumours aimed directly at them. The most innocent comment, framed in a particular manner, could derail the best-laid plans. A suggestion that a certain ambitious nobleman was openly seen in the company of his liege-lord's young mistress at her apartments in the dead of the night has spelt the doom of many young gentlemen. Thus, those seeking to better themselves must be ever mindful of how their enemies may portray their actions. Conversely, daring nobles may actively place themselves in situations where the appearance of a scandal is assured. Creating such an occasion against an enemy may force that rival into a position where action or inaction may diminish their own standing among their peers.

For Richer or Poorer: Marrying for Advantage

A common political ploy of the noble class involves marriage. Scheming nobles use their daughters, and sometimes sons, to cement political alliances through use of arranged marriages. Among the more powerful noble families, marriage is also used to "seal" recent de-facto peace treaties. By making family bonds, families assure each other that they will restrain from aggression in the future, since "who in their right mind would struggle with their brother-in-law?" The opinions or desires of those being joined in matrimony rarely matter to those arranging the match. This can lead to complications as the wedded couple seek other lovers to deal with the imposed circumstances in which they find themselves.

In other situations, the child of ambitious nobles may be offered to their superior in hopes of advancing their

The Price of Friendship

One example of a fallen noble was the Stirlander Count Ludwig von Striessen, friend and confidante (as well as sycophant) of Emperor Dieter IV. Von Striessen was one of those who encouraged the Emperor's ambitions to conquer the Border Princes. Sensing a means to increase his own prestige by adding to his own holdings, von Striessen sunk the family's fortunes into the enterprise and was rewarded with the command of part of the Emperor's army. He was to lead his force into the unruly lands to the south by way of the Winter's Teeth Pass. All but the noble and his friends saw a sudden snowstorm as an ill omen, especially when they lost several field cannons. The campaign was a three-year disaster which nearly bankrupted The Empire and von Striessen returned home a ruined man with his family abandoning him and his lands confiscated to pay the debts he incurred in his Emperor's name. He would receive no help from Dieter as the Emperor himself was deposed and fighting for his survival. Unable to face life as a penniless noble (only life as a commoner held more terror), von Striessen fell upon his sword and died. As a final insult, the people who were once his servants tossed his body into a pauper's grave.

own status. Usually, a young daughter is offered to a liege-lord in hopes the enamoured (lustly) superior grants a boon or elevates the inferior's status in gratitude. There are instances where a young son is offered as husband to a liege-lady for favour. These marriages are the most unhappy of all for the younger spouse since the age difference ensures that they are little more than a trophy. Of course, the situation could lead to some interesting twists should the older spouse meet an early demise leaving the younger one as heir to the title and lands of the deceased.

On rare occasions, a patriarch of one noble family may marry a matriarch of another to further their mutual goals and ambitions. The intention of this joining of families is generally to leave the new noble house more powerful and influential than either family was previously. This mutual arrangement has the added benefit of changing the political landscape by infusing new blood into faltering family fortunes. A recent example is the merging of a branch of the von Krieglitz family of Talabecland with the old, and declining, Talabheimer noble family Untermensch.

"Give me a thousand men at arms, and I shall conquer Middenland. Give me a thousand loyal peasants, and I shall keep it!"

The Duke of Altdorf in a drunken stupor circa 2252 IC

Money and Bloodline: The Role of Wealth and Inheritance

Despite much talk of good breeding and famous ancestors, wealth is the overriding factor that determines the power and influence a noble wields. Even the most politically astute is little more than an interesting bit player without the fortune to bankroll his lifestyle and schemes. Wealth generally takes the form of land holdings which generates the tax revenues that a noble collects. This, in turn, binds the landed noble and the commoners who work and live on his lands to one another.

Unlanded nobles understand the need for wealth very clearly. This drives them into the mercantile and mercenary careers. It may also compel the more ambitious to do whatever is necessary to obtain a fief.

The foundation of a noble's wealth is the inheritance they received, whether this takes the form of land or income. In the first millennia, it was customary in several provinces that the land of a dead noble was divided between the sons. This led to countless conflicts as well as numerous fiefs too small to finance the obligations of a vassal. Hence, since the time of Magnus the Pious, the rules of inheritance principally benefits the eldest surviving son. The key word here is 'surviving', and fratricide is not an uncommon occurrence. Although few nobles contemplating such action would actually 'soil their hands', they have no compunction about hiring someone else to do the foul deed. Such attempts could be as subtle as slowly poisoning an older brother to outright assassination.

In the more traditional Ulrican families, inheritance by the eldest son is not automatic. Instead, they take the view that only the strongest should prevail is prevalent in these areas. In the past, the sons of a conservative Ulrican noble have been pitted against one another in deadly combat to determine the right of succession. Unfortunately, families became weaker as the surviving son may not have necessarily been the strongest as luck or fate played the key role in these struggles rather than skill at arms. With the rising strength of the Cult of Sigmar following the ascension of Magnus the Pious to Emperor, Ar-Ulric issued the 2320 Bull of Succession which formalised the rules of Inheritance by Combat so as to reduce mortality and ensure that the strongest succeeds in inheriting the family lands.

Should there be no surviving sons, the next in line is usually the eldest surviving daughter. The most ambitious of young noblewomen are equal in cold-heartedness to

their male brethren. In fact, a scheming noblewoman typically has more tools of persuasion available to her than any male counterpart. This makes them more likely to use an accomplice to further their aims.

In the event that there are no surviving offspring the line of succession falls to the eldest surviving male child of the oldest son and follows the same progression as with the deceased noble's children. If there are no direct heirs, then any inheritance is awarded to the oldest male relative.

Bastard children have no claims unless they meet the following three criteria:

- 1) There are no living immediate family members (spouse, children, and grandchildren).
- 2) They have documented proof of their heritage. Ideally, a signed will by the noble recognising the bastard as his heir. Failing that, there are few other documents which would grant a bastard the title and lands. In the more settled regions, this might be a certificate issued by the cult of Verena and countersigned by either a Sigmarite or Ulrican priest (depending upon the Imperial province).
- 3) Their rights of inheritance have been recognised by the liege of the deceased lord or his lawful representative.

These conditions were set down in law as a compromise reached at the Synod of Tannbruck. Traditionally, Ulricans considered bastards as equals, while Sigmarites and Verenans gave them no rights what so ever. Regional divergences still exist.

On rare occasions were there are no proven heirs (though many claimants usually come forward), such lands become the property of the liege-lord to dispense as he wills. Such situations generally occur during devastating wars or ravaging plagues.

"We fought and defeated Chaos. And for what? So a bunch of money-grubbing, ungrateful peddlers could convince His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Magnus the Pious, to allow them to govern the richest city in The Empire? By Sigmar, when will reason again prevail in this great land?"

- Wastelander Baron van Erlich, lamenting the Emperor's decision to allow the Barony of Wasteland to become a province of commoners, 2305 IC

The Decline of a Noble House

While external events can lead to the demise of a noble house, a number of internal causes can lead to a family's downfall. Most likely is that the family runs out of heirs due to natural causes; all the more since younger sons in the clergy or military tend to remain unmarried throughout life. Only a few of the myriad of the other more interesting possibilities are covered below.

Foremost among these is where the family battles among themselves. A Family War typically starts when different family factions find themselves in opposition over a variety of issues. The resulting break divides the family into separate camps, each struggling for supremacy. Even if one faction prevails, the remnants of the family lose a tremendous amount of prestige and influence. Much of its wealth is exhausted and many of the issues that caused the fallout remain unresolved and fester. In this case, conflict upon conflict is likely to recur.

There are occasions where the fragmented family cannot pull itself together under any circumstances. Too evenly matched for one or the other to succeed, allies must tread carefully to avoid being caught up in the internal quarrel. To do otherwise may result in their own break-up. In rare conditions, the warring family exhausts their entire fortune, so incapable are they of overcoming their differences. Their liege-lord may have no other recourse but to strip the subordinate noble family of their title and lands, especially if such actions prevent the

money-grubbing creditors (often commoners) from claiming the bankrupt family's estates.

Another possible cause of the fall of a noble family is the competence of its patriarch and/or matriarch in handling the family's responsibilities and wealth. This managing of resources and influence range from preparing the heir apparent for their future role to selecting which faction to support in a struggle between two powerful nobles. Backing the wrong faction, or even remaining neutral, could involve great risk when one side emerges victorious and vengeful. The more productive (in terms of tax revenue) portions of one's estates may be stripped away and awarded to a rival house, leaving them vulnerable to other predatory peers.

Nobles who carelessly use their wealth to fund ill-considered ventures often find themselves on the wrong end of a loan to a moneylender or heavily indebted to their liege-lord. Either condition courts disaster, should the ruined noble default on their obligations. In these situations, their abilities and skills are put to the supreme test. Those with aptitude will find ways to discharge their obligations. Divesting themselves of the costly enterprises, entering into a treaty or political marriage or agreeing to undertake additional service to their liege in order to lessen their obligations may all be ways of handling the situation.

Others, whose arrogance typically exceeds their sense of reality, will take a hard fall from grace. Nobles reduced to a penniless and landless state can expect little consideration from their former peers other than disdain and ridicule. Even the spouses and children have been known to disassociate themselves from the fallen by abandoning the impoverished noble to his fate.

Conclusions

As detailed above, the nature of the nobility and their seemingly unquenchable need to improve their power and position provides fertile ground for a GM who wants to add elements of intrigue and scandal to their campaigns. The PCs can either be agents for a member of the nobility or just find themselves caught up in events beyond their abilities or station. Ambitious GMs may even want to use elements of this article to run a campaign where the PCs are all members of the nobility, specifically those who may not be in line of successor to their parents' estate as the first or second heir.

The following section provides some suggestions for a GM to insert the ruthless and scheming world of Imperial nobility into their campaigns.



There are ample fictional and non-fictional sources that a GM or player could use for inspiration. A Movie such as *Dangerous Liaisons* is an excellent choice. Literary sources include *Richard III* and *Othello* by Shakespeare as well as several Alexandre Dumas novels. Historical accounts of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I amply demonstrate the role of politics among the ruling class.

Adventure Hooks

Family Tree

Count Karrick has recently died, leaving his northern lands without a direct heir. Baron Stefan von Mittelmund has hired the PCs to search the archives at the Collegium Theologica in Middenheim to find proof that he's the closest living relative to the deceased Count and, hence, his rightful heir. Unfortunately, Baron Stefan's half-sister, Lady Katarina, has hired others to prove that another sired her brother and that she is the rightful heir. Both siblings want evidence to support their respective claims, no matter what the source. Crafty and creative PCs need to be careful as there are strict laws governing the legitimacy of the proof required to support a claim. Those who carelessly skirt the laws, and are not themselves noble, may face some harsh penalties. In the end the PCs may learn the true depth of a noble's loyalty to those they employ.

A Rich Bastard

Baron Otto von Braun is dying, leaving no legal heirs. The barony is prosperous, and the liege-lord seems pleased to take it back for himself. However, a poor and nervous bard called Erich Humperdinck approaches the PCs claiming to be the Margrave's bastard son. The Baron knows of a bastard child, but he has never seen it, and his old mistress is long dead. However, Erich claims that the Rhyen midwife who delivered him can prove his identity, and he wants the PCs to assist and protect him from the liege-lord's assassins. Since the liege-lord's pawns will stop at nothing to eliminate Erich, a risky and hectic search of the countryside for the midwife is necessary, followed by getting the necessary declarations before the Baron dies. If they succeed (and Erich honours the agreement) the reward is enormous.

Masquerade

An Altdorf lawyer named Frederick Langnase contacts one of the PCs via a courier. Herr Langnase has been commissioned by the von Eschetel estate to find a descendant from a branch of their family that moved to the Reikland some sixty years before. Apparently, the old Baron is dying and doesn't have any possible heirs to take over the prosperous estate in western Ostland. Through months of research, Herr Langnase has uncovered the fact that one of the PCs (to whom the lawyer bears a passing resemblance with the same colour hair, eyes, features, and build) is actually the only family relation whom the Baron may be willing to recognise as his heir. Herr Langnase has arranged for a meeting to take place within a few days and gives the PC a letter, which details the time and date of the meeting. Family business requires Herr Langnase to be elsewhere.

There is one small twist that the lawyer will not divulge: the meeting is not with the Baron. Herr Langnase has been masquerading as a member of the von Eschetel family for a number of months: A very serious crime in the Imperial capital. Herr Langnase recently learned from reliable sources that his charade has been uncovered. He had only a few days to find a likely scapegoat upon whom he could frame his illegal activities before he is to meet a magistrate from Ostland to arrange for his surrender. Failure to make this meeting would ensure the issuance of an Imperial arrest warrant. The Ostlander has never met Herr Langnase, but does have a general description of the criminal (and the PC in question). The task of the PC's companions should be obvious, unless they would rather see their comrade convicted of another's crimes.

"It is my divine right to rule and to do as I please."

The Von Bildhofens

In the Middenheim sourcebook, one finds a family tree of the houses of von Bildhofen and Todbringer without any text to support it. In fact, one could conclude from this limited information that the von Bildhofens ruled no less than three Electoral Provinces at the same time, one of them reigning as Emperor for no less than 65 years. Given that "Power behind the Throne" scenario provides PCs with their first opportunity to interact with the High Society of Middenheim, more information of its rulers and their ties to other noble families is clearly needed. In the last part of the article, we attempt to account for the events that lead to the rise of the von Bildhofens and their "struggle" to maintain their position.

In the library of the Collegium Theologica one can find an invaluable tome for those researching the members of the extraordinary House of von Bildhofen. During the first half of the 24th century the leading members of the family went from an anonymous life at the court of the Stirland Grand Count to the thrones of Reikland, Middenland, Middenheim and the very Empire of Sigmar Divine.

The von Bildhofen family traces its roots back to the myths of Sigmar himself. The first documents showing the name are from the sixth century where one Lothar von Bildhofen played a leading role in the Grand Conquest of Emperor Sigismund II. Apparently, it was at

this occasion that the head of the family was appointed Baron.

The next significant event in the history of the von Bildhofen is the Age of Wars. In 1215 IC Friedrich von Bildhofen was appointed Count of Saxburg in recognition of his loyal assistance to the Grand Count of Stirland in the war against Talabeccland. Friedrich is the first person described in the book, but our interest is in more recent events:

Extracts from *The von Bildhofen Chronicles* by Dr. Albrecht von Kauhafen & Lord Alfred von Nula

**Magnus, 2280-2369
Grand Prince of Reikland 2303-2369,
Emperor 2304-2369**

Duke Josef's oldest son, Magnus, was born in the year 2280 I.C., the first von Bildhofen to be born at the newly erected family estate, Schloss Bildhof. Sadly, as described elsewhere, Elizabeth von Bildhofen never quite seemed to recover from the birth. The duke was thrilled to have an heir to the duchy he had won for his family. He demanded that Magnus should have an education befitting a prince and hired the best scholars, swordsmen and priests as tutors for his son. He proved to be a bright pupil, though some say his father was worried that Magnus seemed to be more interested in legends of Sigmar than in governing a duchy. And the rest, as they say, is legend. At the age of twenty-two Magnus received a vision from Sigmar himself and initiated his legendary rally of The Empire in the battle against the vile forces that we shall leave unnamed.

In these battles at the End of the World the Grand Prince of Reikland died defending his people. He left no heirs and thus became the last of the House of Holzkrug to rule the Principality. A distant relative made claims to the throne, though this was completely ignored when the Order of the Holy Unity and the Grand Theogonist announced Magnus was to take the responsibility of ruling the Principality.

Magnus had gained such popularity and influence that it seemed a mere formality to gather the Electors in Nuln the following year, where he was unanimously elected "Emperor of Sigmar's Empire Restored". He decided to make his old city Nuln the centre of the restored Empire. Wilhelm Holswig-Schliesstein, the Duke of Ubersreik, was elevated to Chancellor and Plenipotentiary of the Reikland, while Magnus - successfully - concentrated on re-establishing Imperial institutions. (When it became obvious that Magnus would have no (legitimate) offspring, he



named Wilhelm Holswig-Schliesstein heir to the Grand Principality of Reikland. As is known, one of Wilhelm's descendants would become Emperor as Wilhelm II (the Wise).

For sixty-five years Magnus ruled The Empire and what better way to end this short biography than with the words of His Holiness Kazgar XIV:

"And thus I command Thy Soul to the eternal grace of Sigmar Divine. Few, if any, have done more for this illustrious Empire the Lord Sigmar entrusted to us, and it is indeed a united Realm that mourn Thy Departure. Fare well, Magnus, most pious of Servants."

Gunthar, 2305–2387

Grand Duke of Middenland 2329–2369

Duke Josef's second son, Gunthar was the only child from the duke's second marriage. Born in 2305 IC, his brother Magnus had already reigned a year as Emperor. Hence, historians who connect Gunthar with the War against the Ruous Powers are clearly either manipulating or plainly incompetent. Since Magnus was still a young man and thus expected to marry and have sons of his own during Gunthar's childhood, Gunthar was named heir to the Duchy of Saxburg rather than to the Grand Principality of Reikland.

Meanwhile, the Carroburg Scandal was evolving. Allow us to quote Eberhardt Weiss's *The Scandal of Carroburg*:

"In the year 2329 IC it had been fifteen years since the public had last seen the Grand Duke of Middenland. It was clear that he would never fully recover from the disease he had contracted during the Incursions of Chaos. His son, Count Friedrich, and Chancellor von Kempf had de-facto ruled the duchy for years now. Officially, the Grand Duke was ill, yet fresh in mind, and he took all major decisions in the royal bed chamber. I suppose no modern historian believes this. Whatever has been claimed over the years, the bare facts are undeniably clear: at Ulric's Great Feast, the Grand Duke appeared raving like a lunatic (which he probably was) in front of the Ulrican priests' procession. It seems that all eyewitnesses can confirm that his frail body was twisted in the most bizarre ways. I am in great doubts regarding the validity of these statements. To this day I have not found two statements describing the mutations as being even remotely alike."

"Whatever reasons caused the Madness of the Grand Duke, no one doubts the political consequences of his fatal appearance: The Witchfinder General in Nuln publicly accused Count Friedrich of hiding and collaborating with a man obviously marked by Chaos, while public riots ravaged the streets of Carroburg. Ar-Ulric was pressed to excommunicate Count Friedrich who fled with his most trusted men to Marienburg pursued by numerous (primarily Sigmarite) witch hunters. According to rumours, Count Friedrich ventured to the Border Princes. The fate of Grand Duke Jürgen since that fatal day remains a mystery."

Since all members of the Chancellery had been compromised in the Scandal, it was hard to find a suitable man to rule Middenland. Enter Gunthar! At the age of nineteen he shocked the Imperial Establishment by journeying to Middenheim with Ulrican pilgrims (including Emperor Magnus' military advisor General Jurgen). Also, he argued enthusiastically (and maybe a bit naively?) against the Church of Sigmar's increasing meddling in the political affairs of The Empire. On his return, Gunthar spoke highly of his discussions with Ar-Ulric, much to the discomfort of the Grand Theogonist. Thus, when Magnus suggested Gunthar be installed as

Grand Duke of Middenland and Gunthar again went to Middenheim, this time as a pilgrim himself, no one seemed to protest. After all, the man was not only the Emperor's brother; now he appeared to have become a devout Ulrican. As the reader will know, Middenland has been ruled by Ulricans since the days of Sigmar himself. Within months of his appointment as Grand Duke, Gunthar married Magda Burg, the daughter of Margrave Wilhelm-Friedrich Burg, head of the very influential Middenland Burg clan.

Some have claimed that Magnus abused his power by appointing Gunthar as Grand Duke of Middenland; it pleases us to be able to reject this hypothesis. Upon the death of the Count of Klein Elgut, father of Josef's first wife Elizabeth, Gunthar inherited his lands in Middenland. Hence, he was indeed a member of the Middenland nobility and thus his claim for the duchy was as good as any other.

Lord Alfred von Nuln has presented the hypothesis that one of Magnus' more subtle objectives was to get a man he could trust close to Marienburg. Living in Carroburg enabled Gunthar to keep an eye on the new and unfamiliar force in Imperial politics, the Directors of Westerland, and report to Magnus. As plausible as it is, it would for obvious reasons be virtually impossible to document.

Although Emperor Magnus had obvious concerns with Gunthar's blind faith in Ulric, he trusted him throughout his life and named him heir to the Imperial Throne. After Magnus' burial, the Grand Theogonist refused to support Gunthar, feeling Gunthar had betrayed the Church of Sigmar. The fact that Gunthar would have been a stronger character on the throne than Leopold von Krieglitz may well have had some influence on the Grand Theogonist's schemes. True or not, they resulted in the Sigmarite provinces' support for Grand Count Leopold von Krieglitz's candidacy. Hence, Leopold was elected Emperor in Nuln in the year 2369 I.C..

In his fury Gunthar publicly criticised the Grand Theogonist as well as Emperor Leopold so strongly that the recently appointed Ar-Ulric had to disassociate himself from Gunthar's statements. Almost overnight Gunthar had lost the political support of the Establishment, including his own Chancellery. A majority of the Middenland nobility now claimed that he had had no right of inheritance to the duchy in the first place. Utterly disappointed, he abdicated after ensuring his loyal Marshall Heinrich von Streissen succeeded him as Grand Duke. Extraordinarily, Gunthar was allowed to keep the title of Grand Duke. He left for Middenheim where he would stay at his son's court in the Middenpalast for the rest of his life. After some years of futile attempts to return the political scene, he ended his long life as a pious Ulrican, allegedly spending much time with the veteran Templars of the White Wolf.

Magnus, 2330–2381

Graf of Middenheim 2355–2381

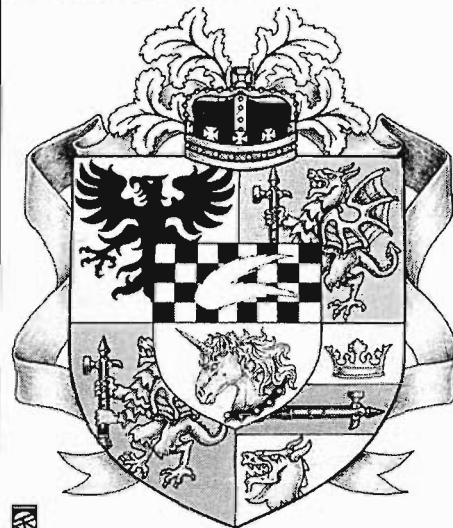
Born one year after the marriage of his parents, Grand Duke Gunthar and Grand Duchess Magda, he was appointed heir to the Grand Duchy of Middenland on the day of his birth. Twenty-five years later he was the Graf of Middenheim. To explain why, we have to look at the then ruling family of Middenheim, the von Kärzburgers. Von Kauhafen has previously given an account of these matters in *The Fall of the von Kärzburgers* and the following is a brief account of the details relevant to our subject.

At the all-too-soon death of Graf Heinrich, his only child, Baron Ruprecht, was appointed Graf of Middenheim but soon proved to have very little interest in ruling the city. Rather, he was found in the taverns and whorehouses of the more dubious districts of the city. On more than one occasion the Knights Panther successfully searched these places for him at sunrise and dragged the dead drunk Graf back to the Middenpalast so that he could be present at council meetings and audiences.

One dark Kaltzeit night in the fourth year of his rule,

Heraldry

The von Bildhofen family's coat of arms is a black and white check pattern, whose origin is unknown and predates Baron Lothar from the sixth century. All members of the family carry this symbol in the heart of their coat of arms.



Coat of Arms of Emperor Magnus I (the Pious)

Magnus displayed the Imperial Griffon in the upper right and lower left corner of his shield, signifying his emperorship. In the upper left corner is the Black Reikland Eagle, signifying that he was Grand Prince of Reikland, while the symbols of Altdorf in the lower right corner shows that he was Lord of Altdorf. In the centre we see the inner shield. The upper half contains the symbol of the von Bildhofen family, upon which Magnus included the Sigmarite two-tailed comet; the lower half contains the Unicorn head of Saxburg, since Magnus held hereditary claims to his father's duchy. On top of the shield sits the closed Imperial crown.

Graf Ruprecht found himself in the arms of a young woman. Just as the Graf had begun charming the lady, her husband turned up and became utterly enraged at seeing his wife in the young brat's arms and challenged him to a duel. Graf Ruprecht may have been incompetent, but he was no coward. He drew his rapier and asked the man to step outside with him. The Knights Panther found the Graf's body in the snow-white alley the following morning, his opponent had disappeared, never to be found.

With Ruprecht's death this branch of the von Kärzburgers had died out. A distant relative made claims for the throne but the Middenheim nobility had had enough of them. A priest of Ulric had a vision during a sermon in the Temple; "Behold the descendant of Magnus! He shall lead thou, my faithful, into prosperity. He shall be the end of thy misery."

Ar-Ulric (a very close friend of Grand Duke Gunthar) quickly sanctioned the vision as a true divination of Ulric. The Middenheim nobility happily accepted the von Bildhofen candidate, plausibly believing a young Graf with neither friends nor family in the city would be easily manipulated. Whatever their schemes, they did indeed have things the way they wanted during the rule of Graf Magnus for he was a rather weak if well liked Graf.

Prior to his appointment as Graf of Middenheim, Magnus married Wanda von Krieglitz, older sister of the later Emperor, Leopold von Krieglitz. Allegedly, Magnus the Pious had convinced his brother Gunthar to join forces with one of the major Sigmarite families. Since his

conversion to Ulric, Gunthar had been far from popular with the Sigmarite nobility of the southern provinces. In order to strengthen his position as heir to The Empire, Magnus knew Gunthar had to gain allies among the influential Sigmarites. The von Krieglitzes of Stirland, the major branch of the ancient House of Unfähiger, were one such leading family. Thus many have speculated that the marriage of Gunthar's son and Leopold's sister was to secure Gunthar the support of the von Krieglitz family. As we have already recounted for, Gunthar never received anything even remotely like such support.

During a summer hunt in the Drak Wald forest in his fifty-first year a wild dog bit Graf Magnus. He was infected with Rabies and died within weeks.

Solveig, 2352–2415

Gravin of Middenheim 2381–2415

Since the laws of succession in Middenheim follow the principles detailed in the Tannbrück Synod Solveig, the oldest child of Magnus and Wanda, would normally have been third in line to the City State of Middenheim in favour of her younger brothers. Instead she was appointed heiress to Middenheim upon Magnus' accession in the year 2355 IC. What follows is the result of Lord Alfred's investigations into these matters. His work is partly based upon the testimonies of noble sources whose identities for obvious reasons must remain a secret.

With the death of Ruprecht von Kärzburger, the house of the Todbringers came into its own right as the most powerful of the old Middenheimer noble families. Manfred Todbringer used his political and economic might to convince the other noble families into supporting Magnus von Bildhofen's candidacy for Graf of Middenheim. Unbeknownst to any of the other families,

Manfred had reached a secret agreement with the old Grand Duke that Magnus' daughter would wed Manfred's first born son when both came of age. In addition, Manfred would continue to be von Bildhofen's main benefactor in exchange for the designation of Magnus' daughter as his heir. The old Grand Duke agreed to the terms hoping that Magnus might in time prove to be his own master. Unfortunately, Magnus was proved to be as weak as Manfred suspected.

Appeasing Magnus' first born son Gunthar was not a problem. Like his father, Gunthar was not terribly astute. He was content to live on the country estate and pension that the Todbringers arranged for him. In fact, Gunthar's line figured into the plans of the von Bildhofens to recapture Middenland.

Solveig proved to be a far more capable and confident ruler than her weak-willed father. Many historians, in fact, consider her reign as Gravin to be the Golden Age of Middenheim. The greed and incompetence of the von Kärzburgers dynasty had drained the City-State's treasury and its bureaucracy was in shambles. Several families profited during this time of anarchy, corruption was rampant and the control of her father by the Middenheim nobility continued the status quo. On taking power Gravin Solveig moved quickly to correct the deteriorating situation.

Backed by her grandfather's influence, Gravin Solveig reached an accord with the Ar-Ulric to use his Templars to assist in the reformation of the Knights Panther. One of these Templars, Wolf Eisenzucht, was elevated to the position of Grandmaster of the Knights Panther upon the ousting of the old, incompetent Ernst Schlafenbär. Another Templar, Heinrich Wüendstier was promoted to Midden Marshal to whip the unfit and inattentive soldiers of Middenheim into a respected fighting force.

The Gravin knew that reforming Middenheim's knights and army could never succeed without money. Using Manfred Todbringer's influence and fortune she pushed the three (all of whom were reputed to be comatose) Law Lords into early retirement. The capable replacements were charged with reinforcing Middenheim's laws, reinstating the tax code, and improving compliance. Some members of Middenheim's nobility initially resisted Gravin Solveig's reforms, but quickly became enlightened after a personal interview with the Grandmaster of the Knights Panther.

With these reforms in place, Middenheim began to recover her past glory. The tax codes were revised so the burden of filling Middenheim's treasury did not fall solely on the merchants and tradesmen. Corruption was reduced and the perpetrators imprisoned in locked suites within the fastness of the Fauschlag.

In the year 2410 IC, Gravin Solveig Todbringer defied the Imperial Edict of Sigmarzeit 2362 IC by secretly resurrecting Grand Duke Gunthar von Bildhofen's Schwarzmantel organisation. The purpose of this small covert organisation was to ferret-out and discretely dispose of hidden cultists and other enemies of Middenheim. Gravin Solveig also created the position of Privy Councillor whose responsibilities include overseeing their activities. She named her second son, Baron Bengt Todbringer, as the first Privy Councillor.

Werner, 2411–2481

Grand Duke of Middenland 2443–2481

The von Bildhofen plans to recapture Middenland were first formulated by the old Grand Duke and his wife and passed down to Solveig. They entailed marriages to tie the von Bildhofens to the other influential Middenlander families: Solveig's brother married Renata Teim, heiress of the Teim banking and mercantile family of Carroburg and Gunthar's son Otto to Selena von Wartburg, the youngest and most intelligent daughter of Baron von Wartburg (and the sister of Graf Bertholdt Todbringer's wife, Hildegard) amongst others. One of Solveig's last acts was to reach an agreement for Otto's eldest son, Werner, to marry Marlene von Streissen, descendant of the Grand Duke Heinrich von Streissen and heiress to the Grand Duchy of Middenland. As part of the arrangement (and with some financial incentives to the indebted von Streissen house), Werner von Bildhofen became heir to the reigning Grand Duke, Reinhardt von Streissen.

Thus, twenty-eight year old Werner married Baroness Marlene von Streissen in the Verenan temple of Carroburg. Being a man of action he soon rose to a leading position in the Middenland Army where he would become a popular man for the next dozen years.

In the year 2443 IC the old Grand Duke Reinhardt died. As usual there were disputes over Werner's claim for the throne. An army man, Werner was not used to debates over his orders and within the very week that the Grand Duke had passed away, Werner declared that any further protest against his candidacy would be considered "a threat to the safety of Middenland and the Holy Cult of Ulric. Thus, we are obliged to eradicate the source of such a protest with all the power accessible to ourselves." Allegedly, this was his councillor's rephrasing of Werner's own words: "Any Middenlander thinking that I would even consider giving up Middenland as my great, great, grandfather did so long ago is a damn fool!"

Meanwhile Werner gathered a major contingent of the Middenland army outside Carroburg. The Middenland nobility got the message loud and clear, and Werner was appointed Grand Duke of Middenland within weeks. Not really interested in politics, Werner left most of the ruling to his chancellor (and distant relative) Baron Karl Uwe Teim. His eldest son and successor, Siegfried, proved to be far more capable and interested in politics and during the last part of Werner's almost forty years of reign, the Barons Siegfried and Teim were the de facto rulers of Middenland.

The Case of Hans-Dietrich von Bildhofen



One of the interesting parts of von Bildhofen history surrounds the person of Hans-Dietrich von Bildhofen. The official history of the noble family mentions this controversial figure as only a footnote; the bastard son of Selena von Wartburg, accepted as a protégé by her husband, Otto von Bildhofen. He was murdered in the year 2437 IC by an unknown assassin.

During his research in the Collegium Theologica of Middenheim, Dr. Albrecht von Kauhafen has found several unofficial sources alleging that Hans-Dietrich was recognised as the oldest son of Otto von Bildhofen and brother of Werner von Bildhofen. Apparently, Hans-Dietrich was the son destined to succeed Grand Duke Reinhardt von Streissen of Middenland. He married the Grand Duke's daughter Marlene to ensure his succession.

However, the unscrupulous Hans-Dietrich von Bildhofen was involved in an incident during an

Orc incursion in 2435 IC There were accusations that Hans-Dietrich sent envoys to the Orcs and bribed them to attack the forested region north of his lands (the border region between Middenland and the southern reaches of the Laurelorn Forest). Rumours flew that the Orcs found and destroyed an Elven village and its inhabitants.

An enraged Wood Elf envoy reached Grand Duke Reinhardt von Streissen's court in Carroburg with proof of Hans-Dietrich's duplicity and demanded restitution. The political debacle proved very embarrassing and Hans-Dietrich's timely death gave the von Bildhofen family an opening to rewrite their family history. Hans-Dietrich's place in the official family history was altered, while his marriage to Baroness Marlene von Streissen was annulled and stricken from the record. Werner von Bildhofen then married the Baroness and was proclaimed heir of Grand Duke Reinhardt von Streissen.

THE SIMPLE COIN

By Tim Eccles

"We're rich," crowed Fulk, as he examined the spoils that fell heaped from the chest. There, sparkling in the torchlight, were more golden crowns than he had ever thought existed. He and Konrad begin to sweep them into their saddlebags. "Stop lurking, and do something useful for once," Fulk menaced at their third companion, a young wizard, by his robes and ridiculously pointed hat. Pushing back his spectacles, he was examining one of the coins. "I am not familiar with these markings," he remarked to his companions who, ignoring him, continued to remove the money.

Three days later, having taken rooms at the best inn the town had to offer, the three prepared to order another fine bottle of wine, but there was no sign of the landlord. "Landlord," roared Fulk. The man appeared, with a dozen of the Watch. "That's them," he said. The Watch sergeant walked up to the three befuddled heroes, and announced, "You are under arrest." "On what charge," demanded Fulk? "Non-payment of services and...", as he was interrupted by indignant protests to the contrary, "fraud." All three froze. "The coins you have been liberally throwing around town are Kislevite marks. Not only are they not legal tender in this town, they are also Dolgan trash, minted with bugger all gold to try and pay off the Dolgans about 1000 years ago. You better have some decent money on you, as you are going to need a good lawyer..."

Examining the nature of the humble coin in the Warhammer World, both as an academic exercise and to improve the cultural background of the world, is excellent source material for GMs seeking to twist the last morsel of surprise from an adventure. The thing to remember is that not all that glints is gold, nor is all money necessarily metal.

GMs need also to be aware that coinage is only one part of the Old World economic system. Because PCs tend to be transients and only partially integrated into the social structures of The Empire, they are likely to depend upon coinage much more than the traditional Old Worlder. For example, the daily wage of the labourer at 7/- a day

would appear to equate to the basic minimum necessary for survival. However, NPCs do not need to eat others' produce and stay at taverns and the like. They are able to grow their own food in their own small gardens, to barter with their neighbours, to haggle for better rates with friends and members of the same community, and to obtain other benefits in kind. PCs do not have these benefits. This article does not intend to examine the full nature of economics, or comment upon the incomes and costs within the WFRP rulebook. This article deals solely with coinage, but GMs need to note that money is only a small part of the overall picture.

History

The history of economics within the Old World is a confusing study. For a large part of recorded time, various forms of barter appear to have been perfectly acceptable. This is not so much an indication of a lack of sophistication of earlier civilisations, but more the peculiar nature of resource allocation. Various parties appear to have had near monopoly access to particular food, metal and skills, allowing for a mutual development of specialisation and direct trade. It is easy to overstate this apparently idyllic early period, as has been done by the philosopher Johann Rooskinn, but it is still true that most Dwarf clans rely on verbal and "paper" transactions (actually finely beaten gold sheets) for the recording of trade agreements and the settlement of debts.

The precise origin of coinage is traced to the creation of stamped bars of bullion to facilitate trade, and the increased need to spread this method of payment to lesser denominations with the rise of waged labour (over obligated service). However, the origin of such bullion is equally uncertain. It is true that Sea Elf traders accepted bullion for payment of shipments, but they have never accepted any certification marks but their own (and still do not). Some have argued that the development was copied from the Sea Elves as a statement of sophistication; others suggest that the vanity of leaders led to their desire to be pictured on means of exchange as a statement of their power over regions. The most likely source is with increased human interaction with Dwarf settlements. Whilst Dwarfs themselves trade on their word as bond, they relied on payments on delivery, and not on the short memories of humans, in the form of raw materials including bullion. Technically the certification marks were irrelevant to the Dwarfs, who would test payment themselves, but it insured against fraud by human agents against their own employers. When bartering for foodstuffs to augment their own harvests, Dwarfs tend to use crafted goods for exchange, once more nullifying the need for money as a means of exchange.

"Take their word, their women, their horses, their goods, their food. Just leave their land and their money." Mercantile folklore from the western Old World on trading with Kislevites.

Coinage

The essential principle of the coin in the Old World (and elsewhere) is weight and purity of metal. Whilst the latter is a little difficult to measure, all traders will use weighing scales to determine the true worth of a coin. Larger retailers will also use a variety of mechanical and alchemical methods to test coins on larger payments. Where they do not own their own equipment, they will often hire an alchemist or coiner to do this for them. A coiner is an early form of banker, and will be happy to authenticate coinage and also convert different weights and national standards (for a small fee of course).

Since coins are based upon weight, it is to be expected that national accounting units based upon fraction weight be used. Each nation has its own national standard of pure metal to base metal, and is theoretically standardised at this level. However, individual rulers in individual city-states have on occasion devalued local currency in order to solve some local fiscal difficulty. Thus, although trade should be assisted by the use of coin and standard terminology, the reality is much more difficult, and merchants are frequently more concerned in what coinage a price is to be paid than in the price itself.

In Kislev, the Mark is the common unit of currency, and is technically a half-pound (weight) of silver, together with the Noble, or quarter pound of silver. However, in reality no Kislevite coins in circulation have anywhere near this amount. Officially, the Mark equates to an Imperial Silver Shilling and under Tsar Radii Bokha the Noble has been re-aligned to the value of the Penny. In reality, the Kislevite currency has all but collapsed. Hoarding and bartering are the norm, and prices are quoted in foreign currency, particularly



that of The Empire. Those purchasing items in Kislev can get good value for their money, should they survive the cold, bandits and official bureaucracy which seeks to maintain the Mark and prevent the use of foreign money.

States are not alone in playing at economics and seeking to debase the weight of the currency without affecting its value. Working in the same secrecy, but without the support of officialdom, is the clipper. Clipping coins may mean cutting, filing or abrading by rattling together in a bag to produce gold or silver dust. Whichever form it takes, clipping is widespread, and another cause for wariness in the value of a coin.

It is quite normal to have far more coins than notionally needed to make up a known sum. The Kislevian Mark should consist of 12-penny coins, but it usually requires 20 to complete the weight required. Whilst the situation in Kislev is excessive, The Empire has similar problems, if on a smaller scale.

Coin Manufacture

Within The Empire, there exists more than just a "central mint" for coinage, though there is a royal (imperial) mint, or at least a royal (imperial) minter. Coins are produced locally and contractually from several different minters. These tend to be goldsmiths and free master jewellers, such small mint operations depending greatly upon skill, feudal grant (from the provincial ruler), and reputation. It should be noted that minters would be carefully scrutinised by local officials; a dishonest minter could easily become very rich at the expense of a little debasement. Minters caught debasing coinage have their right hand cut off and mounted over the doorway to their mint.

Coins are minted by placing an individual slug between two dies, which are engraved with the desired image, and the top die is then struck with a hammer. A slug is a pre-cast disc of metal, although some smaller minters cut them from sheet bullion. This transfers the impression of whatever images are engraved on the dies. It is becoming more common practice for certain coins to be cast. Striking is usually more precise than casting because of the greater detail; moulds are limited in the sharpness of lines that can be cast, and are prone to stick. It also doesn't require that the smith handle hot metal every time they make a coin.

The master die (or mould in the case of casting) is obviously closely guarded and access is controlled to prevent unauthorised minting of coin. Each moneyer is issued with an official stamp for one side of the coin and use their own licensed stamp for the other. An interesting adventure could revolve around stealing or recovering a set of master copies for a region's coins.

One important point of distinction between coinage of the elder folk and human kingdoms is the use of milling. Milling is where a pattern is stamped along the edge of a coin to clearly define its edge to prevent clipping or shaving. Since clipping seems to be a problem, as it is specifically mentioned as a career, human kingdoms may lack the techniques to consistently create a coin of uniform size and shape.

Coin Description

Coins are circular, and tend to be milled around the edges in an attempt to prevent cutting. The obverse of the coin is termed *head*, and pictures the issuing authority in the form of their profile, motif or similar. The reverse describes in some form the value, legitimacy and the minter of the coin, and is colloquially known as *smallprint* to reflect distrust in the value of many coins.

The head contains the picture of the ruler who authorised its minting. It should be noted that this might not be a specific portrait of the person in question, although that is likely with most modern coins. However, the purpose of the head is to symbolise sovereignty and not necessarily a sovereign. It is frequently cheaper or more flattering to mint coins with an idealised picture of the noble. For similar reasons, coins often simply proclaim the legend in classical as *Imperator ex Sigmar* (Emperor Sigmar, or Sigmar's Emperor) without reference to an individual. Most modern rulers are too vain to follow the cheaper alternative, of course, unless the coin is for devaluation purposes and they would rather distance themselves from the process.

The purpose of the coin design is essentially to prevent forgery, and consists of designs of varying complexity. Usual motifs include heraldry, the purpose for the minting of the coin (if there is one) and statements about the validity of the coin. These are frequently pictorial to convey their message to the illiterate. Imperial coins obviously use the Imperial eagle, but in varied manners, as it became too easy for forgers to melt down and re-cast coins with a standard design.

"Spend it today, for tomorrow we re-mint it"

Attributed to Bretonnian nobility.

Coins and Inflation

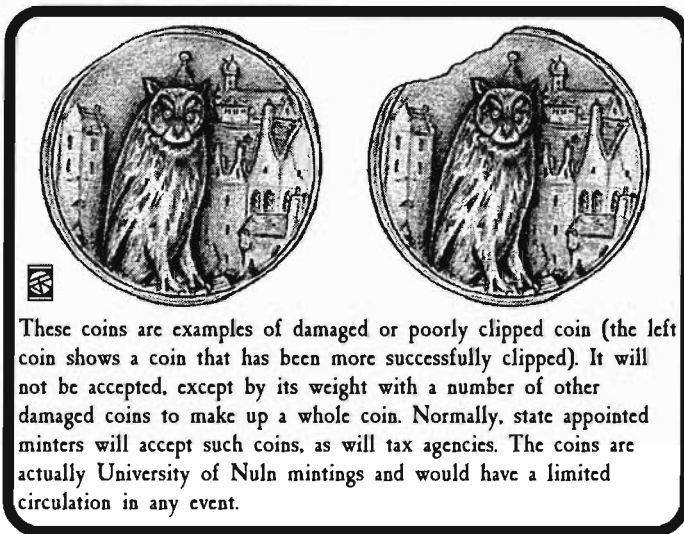
Monarchs throughout the Old World have traditionally minted coins in order to pay their debts, and for conducting their own exchange (as individual consumers) as well as that of their royal administrations. Minting is a closely held royal privilege, and has little to do with encouraging trade. The simplest way to afford to mint a coin, is to melt down an existing one and re-cast it as either a smaller coin, or one with a proportion of less valuable metal added to make up the weight. This is illegal

if done by anyone other than the licensed minter (obviously), but even where authorised it creates a distrust in the currency and a natural fall in the coin's value. In the long term such degradation of the coin is self-defeating, but many rulers need to survive the short term, before worrying about the long. Consequently, a fairly steady rate of inflation has occurred over time.

This customary practice of debasement is the chief motivating factor behind the re-minting of old coins. In order to preclude the hoarding of older, more valuable currency, old coins are recalled by edict, and re-minted to the depreciated standard. Everyone is required to periodically trade in their old coins for new coins in the ratio of 10:9, and this is a primary means for the local rulers to raise income tax. Debasement simply increases the tax burden. The primary restrictions upon this are the localised nature of much currency and the paucity of gold and silver in some areas, coupled with the international standard of the Gold Crown. Occasionally, particularly cheap rulers will simply authorise a countermarking of the existing currency, rather than a re-minting. It is a peculiar characteristic of Imperial currency that it is minted locally by regional rulers, and yet appears to hold a universal standard for international trade purposes.

"Re-invest it today, for tomorrow they re-mint it".

Attributed to Bretonnian merchant.



These coins are examples of damaged or poorly clipped coin (the left coin shows a coin that has been more successfully clipped). It will not be accepted, except by its weight with a number of other damaged coins to make up a whole coin. Normally, state appointed minters will accept such coins, as will tax agencies. The coins are actually University of Nuln mintings and would have a limited circulation in any event.

"Coins were created by merchants to facilitate trade, and then minted by princes to facilitate their spending"

Andriuw Kholtt, Treatise on the Wealth of Nations

Coinage and Trade

Generally, quality coins are very hard to come by, and inhibit trade. The tendency to debasement and the ease of taxation make holding coins very inefficient for businessmen, and tend to make arrangements for payment of goods difficult.

The general solution to this problem was offered by a number of powerful gnome families, who extended the dwarfish system of payment. Hence the evolution of merchant banking, dominated by the gnomes. Gnomes are ideal, as they are generally seen as honest and external to most conflicts throughout history. In addition, they are backed by centuries of their own wealth accumulation, and their links to Dwarf communities for protection and distribution. Therefore, these gnome families, who approve each local minting, monitor the Gold Crown. It is obviously a source of political ill feeling for human leaders to be dependent upon the approval of gnome merchants, and has led to violence in the past. However, trade requires trust and standard measuring systems; the gnomes provide this. Those who dislike dealing directly with the gnomes may also use a number of human institutions and the Church of Verena. However, in reality, devoutly pro-Empire Sigmarite xenophobes would find it very difficult to not find themselves dealing ultimately with a Marienburger or a gnome - or even both, as the two are often the same.

Trade is conducted primarily at fairs and entails a formal settling of accounts at the end, which results in only a fraction of currency actually changing hands. As trade comes to be dominated by the cities, bills of exchange are evolving between the vast network of merchant bankers at every major city and fair to avoid the transportation of cash. Most small-denomination coins are used only regionally, sufficient to handle the volumes exchanged between towns and surrounding rural areas. For large-scale trade (handled by merchant capitalists operating from cities and towns and shipping goods by way of professionals), when hard currency is absolutely necessary, a generally accepted international coin of high denomination is used - The Imperial Crown or the Marienburg Guilder.

Old Coins

Collecting coins as a hobby is a rather recent idea in the real world, and not one that would tend to occur in the Old World. The value of a coin was inherent in its metal content. For most of history, old coins would be evaluated at their metallic content. Since the merchant might not accept payment in an odd coinage, the bearer would probably have to cash it in to the local jeweller, who would evaluate it as specie and then melt it down for the metal.

Whilst older coins are likely to have a higher metal content, it makes economic sense to melt them down. Certain exceptions might be made concerning coins that celebrated certain events (Magnus' victory) or were dated from the time of mythic heroes (Sigmar for example), and the non-human coinage of the elder races might be seen as works of art to human eyes.

Generally, merchants will be very wary of unfamiliar coins, and seek validation (at the other's expense) of their worth. In particular, coinage withdrawn to raise revenue would be illegal to own. PCs finding old treasure ought to be very wary where they show off such coinage, and seek a friendly smith promptly.

Banking Institutions

Banking firms can be found in every city (and several large towns) throughout The Empire. Players may deposit their money in the bank, which then provides them with a promissory note to cover withdrawals at banks throughout The Empire. The bank charges a fee for the service.

Finance Houses

Local businesses in most parts of the Old World, particularly those without banks, are able to accept a deposit with an institution (usually a merchant house, pawnbroker, local revenue office or temple). In this case, a contract (or receipt) is drawn up indicating that the holder of the funds is responsible for their return in X days, or possibly less subject to a penalty charge imposed. X tends to be less for larger sums to account for reduced transaction costs per unit value handled.

Church of Verena

Whilst a number of temples offer a limited deposit service, the Cult of Verena offers a more widespread banking service, and is the only institution to offer a serious alternative to the major gnome and Marienburg banking families. However, the Church offers the service more from doctrinal philosophy than the desire for economic return, and so lacks the commercial cutting edge of its competitors. The Church is generally cheaper and more secure than the others, but is extremely conservative with whom it deals.

Gnomes

Gnomes have found themselves to be excellent middlemen in the game of global trade and investment. Racially, they live in small tight-knit communities that have avoided most of the world's major upheavals, and are conservative hoarders, rather than ostentatious spendthrifts. With relatively few dangers, and on good terms with human, Dwarf and Elf, they have amassed both personal wealth and a high degree of inter-racial trust. This has led them to become excellent bankers to the world. It is worth noting one peculiarity of gnome psychology, in that they can be seen to be both conservatively risk-averse, whilst also being risk-takers. The resolution of this dichotomy is one of perspective. Gnomes have an innate ability to judge risks, and assume a long-term perspective on events. This means that gnomes are some of the best gamblers and cardsharps in the Old World, which is hardly the typical stereotype of a banker, because they can calculate probabilities and accept short-term losses. An example of this long-term approach is the rumour that they have invested heavily in the exploration of the New World, despite the apparent inability of any group to make a profit on the exploration and exploitation of Lustria.

Like Dwarfs, gnomes have strong (and extended) families and believe in hard work and the strength of one's word. This has meant that families have proven able to extend their interests throughout the Old World (and into the New) without having to rely on those outside their family to any great extent.

The success of gnome financiers is seen in the fact that they are invisible. Gnomes are interested in their own communities, and creating their own wealth. They are not, as a race, interested in politics or military conquest. A perfect example is that there is apparently no gnome influence in Marienburg, despite its pre-eminent trading status. This is simply another example of how gnome families operate, for they have major interests with a number of the directors, including Arkat Fooger and the van der Kuypers.

It should be noted that in certain areas of the Old World, gnomes are resented as rich outsiders, and may be on the receiving end of racial hatred. They are also easy targets for impoverished rulers, who can simply blame gnome moneylenders for economic problems. It is in these cases that gnomes rely on their Dwarf partners for help in both personal escape and the movement of their local valuables. GMs should note that rulers relying on this ploy are facing a very dangerous enemy. Gnomes

have mercantile as well as banking interests, which might seriously devastate a local economy, especially where it was accompanied by striking Dwarf artisans (including armourers).

*"Coinage is a waste of good metal."
Dwarf Saying*

Dwarfs

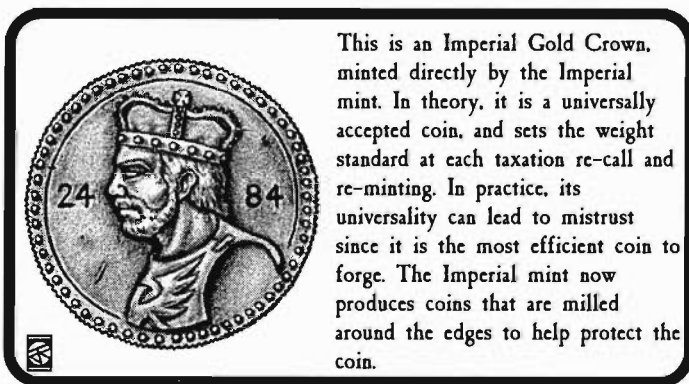
Whilst Dwarfs would appear to be a major banking institution within the Old World, and make fine bankers because of their honesty, integrity and secrecy, they tend to have little interest in wealth accumulation via usury. They are craftsmen and manufacturers, and that is the source of their wealth. However, certain Dwarf families retain strong links with gnome financiers. Since they also deal with bullion and jewellery, they are well placed to store and transfer wealth. Therefore, Dwarfs living in human lands are known to offer storage facilities and accept deposits.

The basic Dwarf interest in finance is simply as a means to obtain raw materials for their workshops, and ensure payment of their finished goods. To this end, they are concerned in both merchant capitalism and rentier (finance) capitalism. However, their merchant and banking concerns are subservient to their manufacturing interests. To them, banking is all about making sure that they receive fair payment for their goods, and do not have to trust middlemen to finance their deals.

*"Never ask for credit, as your coinage offends".
Sea Elf humour. Apparently.*

Sea Elves

As international traders, Sea Elves obviously have complex financial arrangements. In particular, they have extensive paper-based transactions, although usually these are between various merchant houses. These are not, however, available to non-Elves, and so need not be examined.



"The worst part of being a mercenary? When they pay you off with campaign coinage. Campaign coinage is minted specifically for paying the army. They claim it makes it safer, as anyone stealing it can't use it. We know it means they've debased it."

Value

Coinage has a number of value problems linked to devaluation, and the ease of its taxation. This also means that older coins tend to be hoarded, as they have not been debased, but also that they are illegal, as they should have been re-minted. Whilst a capital offence, the practice of coin clipping also affects the usefulness of coins, and all coins would be checked (probably weighed) before acceptance.

The issue of a standard value has already been remarked upon, and it is always tempting for a local ruler to secretly debase in order to score off his neighbours or for the Emperor to do so to pay off his debts cheaper. That this does not occur (often) is due to the agreements surrounding coin production. The standard weight, purity and value of a coin are decided by the Prime Estates during the periodic central Imperial taxation review. Coincidentally, the Marienburg Stadsraad (led by the Directorate) carry out their own review at the same time. Of course, the Prime Estates do not liaise privately with the Directorate over the matter. Certainly not.

How to Inspect Coins

The following simple steps are carried out by all traders, but most would expect the person using the coin to pay for independent inspection by a moneyer or minter if necessary. In any event, they can add simple colour to playing out a particular transaction.

Weight: silver or gold coins should be of a standard mass, checked by weighing scale.

Size: coins that have not been clipped should be of a standard size, possibly milled.

Purity: coins should have standard precious metal content, which can be most simply checked with a magnet since precious metals are not magnetic, and base metals are.

Strength/thickness: the old "coin bend between the teeth" is a simple further test. Soft metals bend.

Noise: when rattled, or tossed onto a table top, true coins will tend to clink; base coins to clunk.

Paper Money

An alternative to coins, and one that avoids certain types of fraud and all tax, is the use of the paper transaction. Paper transactions are likely in use between merchant houses, temples and rulers. Paper wealth has its own problems, especially for dungeon-crawling adventurers. Loss of the paper means loss of wealth, and even damage (soaking, burning, and bloodstains) may render the paper useless. To this end, a variety of materials might be used in place of paper. Dwarfs are known to use thin stone and metal sheets, and bone is also not unknown. Hide is also cheaper than paper, and used by many human kingdoms. To an illiterate character, of course, the value to any such "scribbling" may also be very tenuous.

Paper transactions are unlikely to prove of direct interest to PCs, although PCs may prove useful couriers for paper transactions. Paper debts would not carry termination dates, and so could conceivably be found in treasure hoards, and used by the PCs. The likelihood of success would depend upon the wording of the paper, and the (dis-)honesty of the person to whom it is presented. A more likely source of payment would simply be for the return of the paper to one of the two parties involved, or even to a third party with an interest in the deal.



This coin was minted by Ludwig the Fat. Despite the traditional associations with Ludwig's reign, he is regarded by many economists as a careful ruler who built up confidence and trade - partially by the strength of his coins. Note the use of the raised edges to prevent clipping. Unkind commentators point out the use of Sigmar and Imperial iconography by less than attractive rulers.

Coinage in Scenarios: Some Examples

For those who are disinterested in the intellectual arguments concerning coinage in the Old World, what does all this mean in practice for hard-pressed GMs? Well, from the above it is possible to develop both general principles for Old World coins, and specific relationships. I will dwell more on the general than the specific, to allow individuals to tailor this to their own campaigns.

Coins vary in value: Old coins are worth more than newer coins, because they contain more pure metal. Coins from different nations are minted to different standards. Possibly, coins from different regions are minted to different standards. Within the Old World, Kislevite coinage is realistically worthless, and the Imperial crown and Marienburg guilder are the standards upon which all others are based. However, within The Empire, GMs may like to utilise the fact that certain areas have debased their coinage.

Minting is a secret activity: This is for obvious reasons. However, if one elector were to debase his coinage, the longer it remained a secret, the more he would make by the acceptance of his under value coins at full value. Anyone getting in the way, would be ruthlessly dealt with by him, or well rewarded by those who were saved losses. Need I say more? A second point concerns obtaining the raw metal for creating coinage. Since mining is a very dangerous and expensive business, tight-fisted governments have been known to cut corners. Instead of employing engineers and miners, some employ slaves to mine their metals, and whilst the life span of such a worker is minimal, few are going to worry about the death of slaves. The fact that slavery is technically illegal makes the authorities doubly secretive. GMs might also like to consider that a source of slaves that no one would miss are mutants. Since it is known that human mutants are born into society, those caught make disposable workers. The only possible drawback might occur if the nature of the miners became known, and the ignorant populace believed that the slaves passed mutation into the metal. In this case, the local currency would crash dramatically. In any event, secrecy and PCs accidentally happening upon a mining operation are obvious sources of GM inspiration.

Coins are only valid in certain areas: Each province mints its own coins, and only

these are valid within that area. The ruler's name, and likeness (idealised or otherwise), is usually a good guide to a coin's validity. Other coins may be exchanged for a charge.

Coins are only valid for certain periods: All coins have a finite life, and are then recalled for re-minting as a form of taxation. This means that all "dungeon money" is illegal, since it should have been melted down at some time in the past. Old money may be melted down, of course, but unless it is illegally minted as new coins, the PCs are left with precious metal. Precious metal, not validly marked, is illegal, as bullion is an imperial monopoly.

Coins are exact change only: Particularly devious GMs might like to note that only moneylenders can break down coinage into smaller units. Therefore, traders are not allowed to give change. It is exact money only. Of course, balances can be paid in additional goods instead.

A coin is not a coin: In my view, GMs should make much more of faked coins. Clipped coins or forgeries should be more common, and traders should make much more interest in the quality of coins handed over them. All traders should have, at the least, weighing scales, a magnet and a good set of teeth.

Metal is worth more than coin: In order to ensure that coinage minted by rulers has to be used, trade in bullion is not allowed, unless one purchases a warrant to do so. These are only issued by the Emperor, and are an important source of income for him. PCs carrying around metal bullion are thus breaking Imperial law.

Coins as weapon: A group of Sigmarite merchants from the Schwarzmantel have devised a plan for the economic destruction of Marienburg, in order to ease a military take-over of the city and return it to the Imperialist fold. The plan is to bankrupt the city and undermine its currency by flooding the city (and Bretonnia) with faked Guilders. This will cause a collapse in the city's trade, as merchants will refuse to deal in the currency. The plan has yet to be enacted, as even debased currency needs gold from the Imperial exchequer, and the plan is deemed risky. Firstly, the Bretonnians might involve themselves, and secondly, the Marienburgers might re-mint their coins quickly enough to avoid massive distrust in their currency.

"Manling coins are like their words: never trust them. Use your weighing scales and keep your axe handy."

Dwarfen saying

Old World Coins

To summarise the nature of coinage in the Old World, we have the following denominations:

The Empire: Gold Crown; Silver Shilling; Brass Penny. Whilst these are minted locally, WFRP implies they are of a standard quality.

Marienburg: Guilder; Shilling; Penny. These seem to be on a direct equivalence with Imperialist coinage.

Kislev: Mark; Noble. No one takes Kislevite coinage seriously, due to the fragmentation of the nation, its weak leadership and the fact that it is in the economic periphery of the Old World. Both are also silver coins, since Kislev has never belonged to a gold standard.

Bretonnia: Gold Livre; Gold Mark; Silver Sous; Copper Breton. The exact value of the Bretonnian coin depends upon one's conception of Bretonnia - purist WFRP or heavy influence of WFB. The livre is purely a royal coin, printed by the king and used for payment of royal debt. A strong king protects his currency; a weak one debases it. In practice most Bretonnians use the sous, and it is available in weights of double-sous, sous and demi-sous.

"A good pair of scales, and a strong set of teeth. That's all you need to spot a light coin."

Anonymous Merchant

Conclusion

The humble coin need not be taken as a simple characterless trade token. Of course, much of what is suggested here will involve extra book-keeping. Not only will money totals have to be kept, but also they will have to be split by age and region. However, it does make the Old World a little more interesting, and allow larger treasures to be handed out in the safe knowledge that the PCs will see little of it. Running coinage this way improves the place of the thief (or similar) in the party, as fences and illicit minters become necessary contacts for PCs. Urban environments become much more important, and the thief who is neither warrior nor wizard grows more central to the party.

Whether or not one decides to adopt variable currency, it is certainly possible to add a little colour to trades by the use of testing apparatus and poor merchants who are going to have to sell their mothers if they accept this particular coinage at parity.

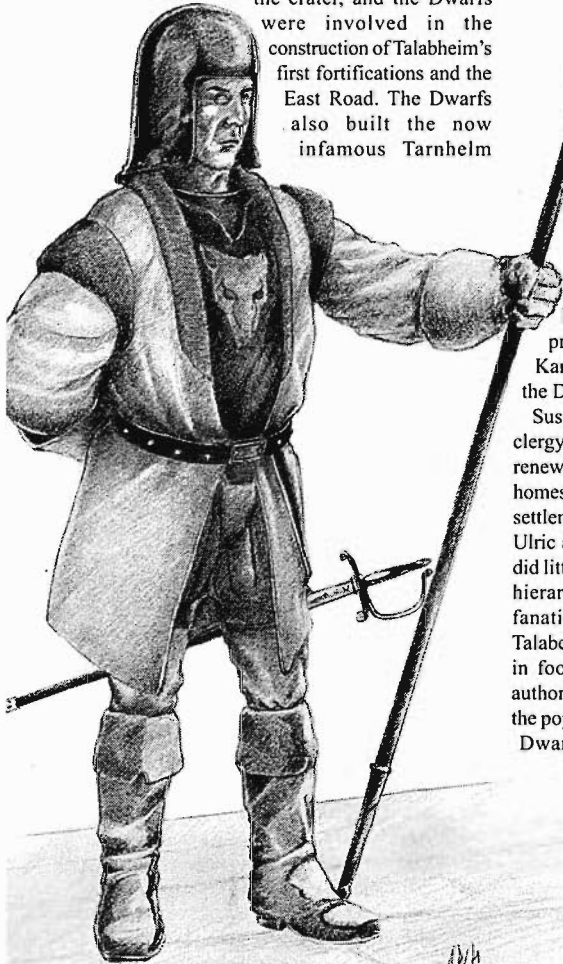
TALABHEIM

Part Two: The Noble Heart

DEMI-HUMANS IN TALABHEIM

The Dwarfs of Iron Town

With three hundred or so individuals, Talabheim has the second largest population of Dwarfs in the northern Empire (Middenheim has far more). Most of the Dwarfs live within a section of the Silbertor district known as Khazid Angaz or "Iron Town" and have had a long and bitter history in Talabheim. Their warriors and artisans accompanied Talgris when he led the Talabec tribe into the crater, and the Dwarfs were involved in the construction of Talabheim's first fortifications and the East Road. The Dwarfs also built the now infamous Tarnhelm



Keep upon the solid foundations of some ancient ruin from the time before the Elf-Dwarf War (its origins are not certain; the ruins are definitely not Elven).

The Dwarfs were an important part of Talabheim life, the defence of the city, and its commerce, but things took a turn for the worse in 1360 I.C. when Ottilia Untermensch gave refuge to the Ar-Ulric at her court and declared herself Empress. Fanatical Ulricans from across The Empire descended upon Talabheim and, in support of the Sigmarite Heresy, Ottilia outlawed the cult of Sigmar. The fallout from the anti-Sigmar riots also affected the Talabheim Dwarfs, with many fanatical Ulricans suspecting them of being Grand Theogonist agents. Battles raged across Khazid Angaz as the Dwarfs defended their homes. Many on both sides died until Ottilia's soldiers separated the combatants. The Talabheim nobility not only knew the importance of the Dwarfs to Talabheim's prosperity, but they feared the Dwarf Empire of Karaz Ankor should the mob succeed in slaughtering the Dwarf population.

Suspicious of the Talabheimer nobility and Ulrican clergy, the Dwarfs knew they must tread softly or face renewed persecution. They slowly began to fortify their homes and Iron Town in general. In 1547 I.C., a political settlement between the Graf of Middenheim and Ar-Ulric allowed the latter to return to Middenheim. This did little to allay the Dwarfs' concerns since the Ulrican hierarchy in Talabheim still contained anti-Sigmar fanatics. A few years later, with Middenheim and Talabecland at war against each other, severe shortages in food and other provisions forced the Talabheim authorities to impose a draconian rationing program on the population of Talabheim. The amount allotted to the Dwarfs was less than the poor classes received.

However, Dwarf losses were far fewer than those from the general populace due to the Dwarfs' ability to live off their ale and years of hoarding dried food in secret cellars or (where the ground was too hard) behind false walls.

The Dwarfs' sufferings continued through the rationing implemented during the

1900 Ungol invasion, as well as in 2010, during the War against the Vampiric Counts of Sylvania, and the 2122 invasion of the Kislevite Tsar. The restoration of The Empire in 2304 under Magnus the Pious seemingly ended the Dwarfs' troubles. Unfortunately, the recent tensions between the cults of Ulric and Sigmar and rumoured enfeeblement of the Emperor may signal another period of hardship for the Talabheim Dwarfs.

Currently, there are five Dwarf clans in Talabheim: the Ironhelms, Stonefists, Steelclads, Mightyhammers, and Earthbracers. The Ironhelms are the largest of the clans and its Elder, Skaldor Ironhelm, is the chair and spokesmen of the Elder Council. Many among the city's government, as well as in the Peer House, mistakenly consider Skaldor to be the leader of the Dwarfs. The fact of the matter is that if there is anything that could be interpreted as a government it is the Elder Council itself – no single individual has the power to direct them, even when one is (temporarily) permitted to lead.

As expected, Dwarfs make up a considerable portion

Talabheim: Credits

Project co-ordinators

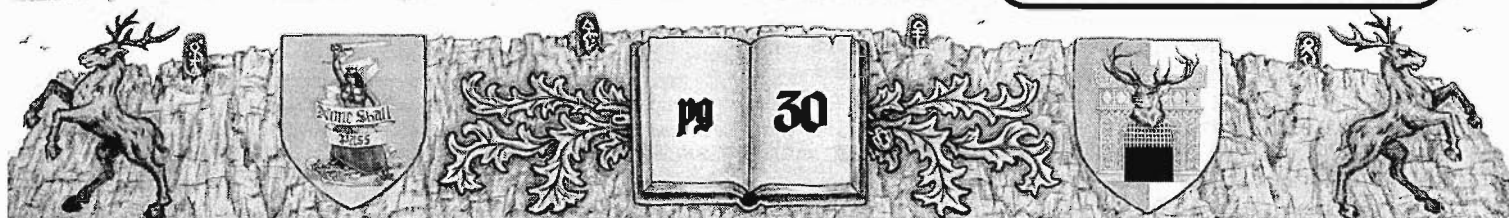
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of Talabheim's armourers, blacksmiths, jewellers, militia, soldiers, and stonemasons. There are some though who take up other professions such as merchants, rat catchers, tradesmen, and watchmen. Bardin Stonefist, clan elder, is one of the more successful merchants in the city. Bardin has not only cultivated favourable trade arrangements with Karak Kadrin in the Worlds Edge Mountains, but also represents the interests of Director Arkat Fooger of Marienburg. (See *Marienburg: Sold down the River* for details on the Fooger family).

Halfings on the other hand tend to find the place too dour and humourless. However, a small enclave has established itself, many of whom are families of cooks working for the nobility. The area is often called Cookstown.

Very rarely seen in the town are **Elves**. In fact a tiny number have their home here, although most of these are 'retired' adventurers. The reception they get isn't always friendly. Some of the more backward locals tend to see them as a kind of forest-spirit.

"Don't worry, their bark is worse than their bite. You may have heard different, but a few crowns soon removes any sharp teeth. Off course, you need to be sure whose mouth you're trying to feed first."

TALABHEIM CITY WATCH

Unlike so many Watches in other Old World cities, that of Talabheim known as "the Dogmen" is well respected in many parts of the City. Certainly, the Nobles look down upon such low-born fools with high ideals of justice to which they themselves are not beholden, but the populist stance of the ranking Watchmen and the organisation as a whole has given them great prestige among the working and middle classes. Of course, in the more crime-ridden areas they are hated, but they tend to avoid these when they can.

But this image is somewhat incorrect: the Dogmen are as corrupt as many Talabheimers, and aren't always as efficient as they could be. Still, they are traditionally regarded as a band of decent men. Perhaps this is because the Watch have their main headquarters, where recruits are trained and duties assigned, in the down-to-earth Nyesnavistny district (though they still take their orders from Blutberg). Perhaps it's because joining the Watch is often the only way for a poor Talabheimer to make a good and, more-or-less, honest living.

The Dogmen wear a grey and white checked tabard above leather armour. They wear a metal helm and carry a sword at all times. On patrol they are armed with halberds. The average watchman works two six-hour shifts per day, with two shifts off of equal length. These hours ensure most Watchmen live near their barracks. Apart from the occasional non-paid holiday or sick leave, Dogmen work every day the gods give them.

The Watch is limited in two major ways in its pursuit of criminals – citizens of The Empire or Kislev (though not other foreigners) may only be arrested on days when the Peerhaus is in session. It is perfectly acceptable to have people "brought in for questioning" on Peerhaus recess days, but no one may be charged with a crime if they are taken into custody on one of these days. Even worse, while recesses are rare in the Peerhaus, they can be taken at any time, with only a day's warning. This

has put paid to many Watch raids and operations over the years.

Secondly, they cannot arrest Nobles without a warrant issued by a Judge, Oath Keeper or member of the Peer House. This is common to much of The Empire, but in Talabheim where many seem to be a "second cousin to Count What's-his-name" it can be difficult. In fact the Watch Headquarters employ a full time expert on the various noble families of the city.

The chief of the watch, the Wächterhauptmann (currently Margrave Art von Ketemup), has as his offices a relatively small building attached both physically and in administrative terms to the outside of the Peerhaus. He and his staff are all minor nobles – only a noble can become a senior Watch officer, but few actually want to. Thus, the Watch Yard is home to a gang of disgruntled aristos who were considered too disruptive or incompetent to be given more serious duties. As such, little real work is done here apart from the occasional medal-giving and a lot of hard drinking. Local Watch offices are forced to organise themselves, and to ask for help from their headquarters as rarely as possible. Thus in reality the Dogmen are run by the Watch Sergeants, who are promoted from the ranks. The senior officers are not included in the count of Dogmen, as they are technically part of the City Guard (and the Watch is considered deputised to their command). The City Internal Defence, as this collection of well-heeled rejects is known to the government, number around forty.

Each district (except Nordengatter, Eldenstadt & Suden Eldenstadt) has a Watch Barracks, known locally as the Kennels. A typical kennel is little more than a stone cuboid, generally situated on a cross roads or major street corner.

There are two small holding cells in a kennel, with the classic-style iron bars and a small bed in the corner. One is generally used for prisoners, while the other is better kept, and is for the use of Dogmen with nowhere to sleep, or any members of the moneyed classes who get arrested. The central feature of the front office is a heavy oak desk with writing implements, surrounded by a few rickety chairs. In daylight hours the station scribe records the details of prisoners and watchmen's shifts. At other times he is not present, so the necessary paperwork must be completed after the fact.

"Why are the Watch called the Dogmen?"

An often asked question by visitors. Some will shrug, drunks may bark, some will say it's on account of their fierce nature but others will take great glee in telling the true story.

When the Watch was established, it was determined that the officers would wear a wolf's-head crest on their tunics, to distinguish them as policemen. Due to a clerical error, however, this was passed on to the Heraldic College at Diszipunterr as a dog's head. Once this was entered in the records, it became illegal to change it, and any watchman wearing a wolf crest would have no legal enforcement powers. Thus the Watch became, in common parlance, "the Dogmen".

Accepting the silliness of the badge, many watchmen now choose less than intimidating breeds for their own uniforms – spaniels and terriers are not unknown.

The Sicherheit Abwehr Büro

The Sicherheit Abwehr Büro (Security Protection Office) is the Talabheim Watch's secret police unit. Known to those few aware of their existence as the Quiet Squad, the unit has advanced enforcement powers compared to those of the Dogmen. For a start, they don't have to wear a uniform, which helps going undercover no end. They are permitted to ignore lesser crimes in order to chase those of greater magnitude, something the standard Watch charter does not allow for. Most of all, though, and most upsetting to those in Blutberg, the Quiet Squad can arrest anyone at any time, even a noble during a Peerhaus recess. Although the Büro hasn't tried exercising this power yet, the fact remains they could, leaving many in the halls of power ill at ease.

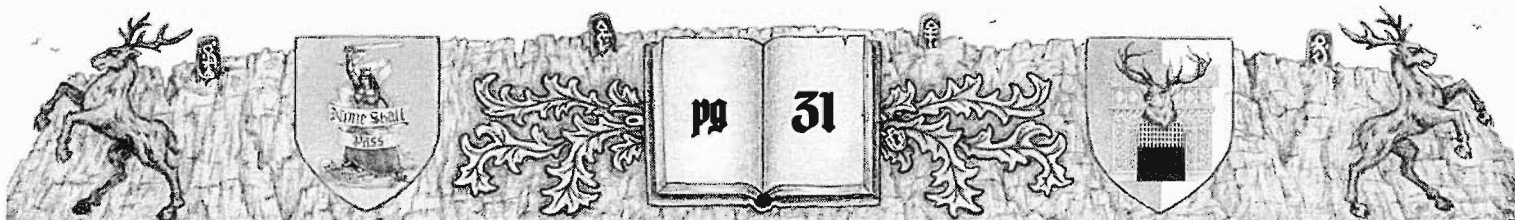
The Sicherheit Abwehr Büro mainly recruits from the Dogmen, but some nobles and graduates from the Diszipunterr are brought in for their specialised expertise, whatever that may be. Very occasionally, a criminal captured by the Quiet Squad may be persuaded to 'defect' to the side of the law. These agents are little trusted, however, and usually don't last long when their former compatriots in crime find out what has happened.

The Sicherheit Abwehr Büro is something of a thorn in the side of the Palace. At its inception, the unit was intended to be directly under the control of the Chancellor – in other words, a tool for the benefit of the government. As it is, the sudden death of the then-Chancellor meant the necessary papers were never signed, the Dogmen took over being the SAB's parent organisation, and the Büro itself has since vociferously defended its (little) autonomy. The Büro is now factionalised to some degree – there are those among its ranks who feel they should be working for the benefit of the city and its rulers as a kind of covert defence force, and not dealing with crime like "simple policemen". The other view held within the ranks is that if the Palace wants someone to do their dirty work, there are plenty of soldiers and bureaucrats to deal with that sort of thing.

In recent times, somewhat unofficially, Baron Ivan von Happelheim, secretary to the grand Duchess and her father before her, has managed to wrest some control over them. His loyalty is to the Royal Family and thus he is willing to use certain members to his own ends.

"We had been hounding Zeigler for the last year or so. We could never come up with anything solid on him, though. Yes, very funny, we do need evidence in the Quiet Squad, too. Eventually, one of those fops up at the Peerhaus kennel started asking exactly what we were being paid for. We needed to get Zeigler in a hurry. When the Dogmen grabbed Zeigler's coachman Hans Pyotrvtich, I think he was called – it was too good to be true. We took the man in and extracted a few words. Nothing we didn't know already, but that wasn't the point. We got him to show us a couple of minor runners for Zeigler. Again, we already knew these people, but now we were able to spread the word on who'd given them up for arrest. We let Hans wander off, but we kept a couple of men on him, so that when Zeigler turned up, they were around. Hans got both his kneecaps shattered to start with, but I think Zeigler was in a hurry – he only took twenty minutes with the crossbar. Twenty minutes was long enough to get more squaddies to the place and then we had the man and the body and eyewitnesses. Zeigler's corpse is hanging on the gate as we speak. I don't know about Pyotrvtich, I imagine his widow will take care of that."

Erik-Jarl Hocken, Sicherheit Abwehr Büro



THE CITY

The City of Talabheim is divided into sixteen districts (see map last issue). Only a handful of these areas have a clear-cut boundary and often those on the edge of one area claim to belong to the better of the two. Many of the districts have a proud sense of community or at the very least a dislike of other nearby areas. The districts' boundaries are judicial ones, each having its own courts. The only exceptions are Steinhaus (part of the Silbertor Judicial Ward) and the Field of Justice (part of Goldstrades or under Military Law), both of which are deserving of their own section. Other areas, for example the Dwarf ghetto of Irontown, although separate in the minds of many people, fall firmly under a larger ward, in this case Silbertor.

Talabheim is poor compared to other Imperial cities, and its buildings reflect this. Though Talabheim has long since outgrown its original city walls (an area now known as the Old City) the poorer housing is as cramped and dejected as any other. Though Nobles may have larger grounds, the designs are older and the buildings cheaper than their western cousins.

Ostenstrade

Not a district as such, Ostenstrade, or the East Road, runs from the Wizards Way through the centre of the city and out the other side. It was built by the Dwarfs and is wide enough for three wagons. Approaching the Old City it has been raised four feet, so the people in the slums cannot get onto the road easily (this is an offence anyway).

Custom & Law
Animals

Within the walls of the Old City, no draft animal may be tethered unless under the supervision of a Priest of TaaL. This is an ancient law, one of the very first to be found in the Book of Records. It has been totally unworkable since Talabheim grew larger than a village, although it has been utilised on occasion to prosecute those who the Watch wished to persecute for other reasons.

The beating of domestic animals is forbidden between sunrise and sunset. 'Beating' shall constitute a blow with some force to the body of the animal.

Owners are not permitted to name animals with names that are held by current or past nobility of the city. This law was amended in 2435 to include the name of any public official. Consequently, animals in Talabheim are often given bizarre and obscure names.

It is illegal to be drunk in possession of a cow.

Geese may only be sold or purchased on Angestag. This law originated in the mind of the peer Otto von Brunckhorst (2312-2378) who held the belief that geese were poisonous - it was passed during a late sitting at the Peerhaus, when few peers were in attendance. Otto von Brunckhorst's descendants insist that he was not mad.

The Old City



"this fearsome and devilish cancer at the heart of our great city"

Standing at the heart of Talabheim is the Old City. A cramped and oppressive place, its boundaries are marked by the wall and towers of the area where Talabheim once stood. Some centuries ago the city began to spread out beyond the walls. In time the ruling classes went, leaving the Old City to fall into disrepair. Now its inhabitants are the poorest of the city or those criminals who find it easy to operate their trade here. Over the years, there have been many campaigns to demolish "this fearsome and devilish cancer at the heart of our great city" (according to one Peer) but they have always failed due to lack of political will and funds. For a city so rooted in tradition the move out of the Old City and abandonment of the original Peerhaus and Palace was done with little outcry.

With the building of the New Peerhaus (which most now agree was built in the wrong area) it was decided to knock down two sections of the wall to create gateways, with a road constructed between them running from Federdorf to Blutberg. With this went any pretence that The Old City could still be used for defensive purposes. The road that was built, the Neustrabe, is one of the best maintained and most heavily patrolled in the city. It is also one of the most dangerous, with coaches speeding through, their well-to-do passengers afraid of being contaminated by the despair and decay. Last year alone, seventeen people were killed, ten of whom were children. It is a common sport to pelt coaches with rotten fruit and stones, running away before an armed patrol makes chase.

Outside the Neustrabe the Old City is a maze of alleyways, buildings oppressively bordering its narrow roads. Most houses are three stories tall but the larger residences of the old inhabitants still stand. However, no matter what their past glory all the buildings are rotting. Although The Old City was once spilt into districts, these are now forgotten.

The Old City has an evil reputation amongst those who live outside. When they say that the Festival of Spirits is now used to keep the malevolent spirits inside the Old City, they are only half-joking. Most are willing to travel the two main roads during daylight as they are

well patrolled by units from the Temple of Ulric. However, the night is a different matter. Strange things happen in the darkness and it is worth remembering the words of Captain Assyn: "If you're unlucky in Talagraad you get a dagger in your back. If you're unlucky in the Old City, you'll wish you had a dagger in your back."

The people of the Old City are generally powerless. Many work from day-to-day for a pittance and few belong to any labour organisation or guild. Many are driven to crime by the oppressive society that treats them so harshly. Most simply cannot live on such meagre wages. Violence is an everyday part of life. The rate of disease and child death is frighteningly high, encouraged by the open sewers that run through the area. Although many houses lie empty, few people would willingly live here. Those that do so pay rent to the "Ratchetts", the landlords of the area. The nickname comes from a particularly nasty member of their breed and they easily live up to his legacy. Always surrounded by a group of heavies, they will quickly throw families onto the street if the small rent is not paid. They also give loans at extortionate rates to the truly desperate. Those in debt to the Ratchetts are often offered other means to pay, prostitution and crime amongst them.

However, not all is bad in the Old City. Its reputation is generally undeserved, certainly in the daytime at least. The people form a close community and although suspicious of strangers are generous towards those they perceive as their peers. Nobles and the middle classes are treated with disdain.

The Old City is also home to various attractions that bring the people in; although not too far in, of course. Many of the poor of the city and some of the middle-class travel here to visit the numerous alchemists, seers, mystics and astrologers that ply their trade. Many are fakes but most of their clients go away happy; the Old City seeming to give these people a veneer of authenticity. Still, most hope to gain the favour of a rich patron and be whisked to less depressing surroundings. Brothels are another speciality of the area, although again they appeal to the lower end of society and disease is a real danger. That doesn't stop the younger rakes making their way here. A recent example of the divide between the rich and poor was the murder of Vera Jager, a nineteen-year-old mother of two. It is common knowledge that Lord Sven Keusch, a blue-blooded bully, murdered her after he paid for sex. Nothing has been done to bring him to justice and the aristocracy do little but tut and shake their heads at the "boisterousness of youth". Meanwhile street corner agitators use it as the latest reason for the people to throw down their oppressors.

Temple of Ulric

The Temple of Ulric forms the western gate to the Old City. The gatehouse itself is topped with a passageway that connects the main temple on the north side and the barracks of the Templars of the White Wolf to the south. The main temple is square in shape and built of grey stone quarried from the lower reaches of the World's Edge Mountains.

Like other temples of Ulric, the top of the external walls of the Talabheim structure has battlements and looks like a small fortress. A wolf's head engraved onto the keystone surmounts the large double doors to the main temple. Large bell towers are located at the corners of the main temple, each of which is crowned by a large clock. These clocks were constructed by Dwarf's





hundreds of years ago and three of them are still in working order. The fourth was damaged in 2273 I.C., when a sorcerous assassin tried to kill Talabheim Emperor Reinhardt IV. The hands of the clock are stuck at one minute to twelve and serve as a reminder to Talabheimers to be wary of the lure of Chaos. Local legend has it that the broken clock will chime midnight when the city is in danger.

Within the temple is a large stone statue of Ulric cloaked in wolfskin and flanked by snarling stone wolves. The statue stands before the eternal fire in the centre of the temple. Trophies of enemies defeated in combat hang from the otherwise bare interior walls. The only decoration of note is a fresco on the northern wall which depicts Ulric battling some large-eyed creatures in a snowy landscape.

Grandmaster Manfred von Nordenhafen leads the Talabheim chapter of forty Templars of the White Wolf. The Grandmaster is a grizzled veteran of many campaigns and an ardent traditionalist. His men eschew helmet and shields. They prefer to wield two-handed warhammers in battle. Over the years the Templars have taken on some of the duty of patrolling the Old City. Seen as independent of the city authorities they are more tolerated by the people here than the Watch or City Guard.

Tarnhelm's Keep

Tarnhelm's keep is an ancient structure, and the stories of its foundation are lost save for a few obscure references in the archives of the Verenan temple in Talabheim. Until relatively recently, the dark bulk of Tarnhelm's Keep served as a fortress for soldiers of Talabheim's rulers, who traditionally have kept a tight rein on their populace. The keep was turned into a prison in 2429 I.C., soon after Talabheim became a City State. Its grim walls and lone tower are built of granite worn with age and splotted with lichens. The von Krieglitz-Untermenschs are a notoriously frugal family, and they rarely spend more than the minimum necessary for Tarnhelm's upkeep - many of the stones along the walls are cracked and broken, looking so much like worn teeth that locals refer to the keep as the "old man of Talabheim." Full details of Tarnhelm's Keep can be found in *Apocrypha II - Chart of Darkness*.

The Old Palace

Once the most beautiful building in Talabheim, the Old Palace is now a mass of rubble. Little remains except a shell of the first floor of the east wing, where the guest rooms were once situated. Many speculate that cellars and dungeons are still intact but it is likely many are

rubble filled. What is true is that the ground is weak and approaching the site brings the risk of crashing through into one of these lost rooms.

Why the Old City was abandoned is still openly speculated upon by many. What is agreed is that the migration began in earnest with the announcement of the building of the New Palace. This itself was in response to a fire in the west wing, which killed a dozen staff. It had long been realised the Palace was a fire trap, much of it being constructed from wood. The fire had only been stopped from spreading by the quick action of the Storm Guard, who collapsed part of the wing. This happened to include the Duke Norbert II's gaming room and he famously said, "I would rather the loss of a dozen servants than a single of my Cathyan chess sets. Damned easier to replace too." Indeed, many servants lost their lives as he ordered them into the blaze in save some of the prized collection.

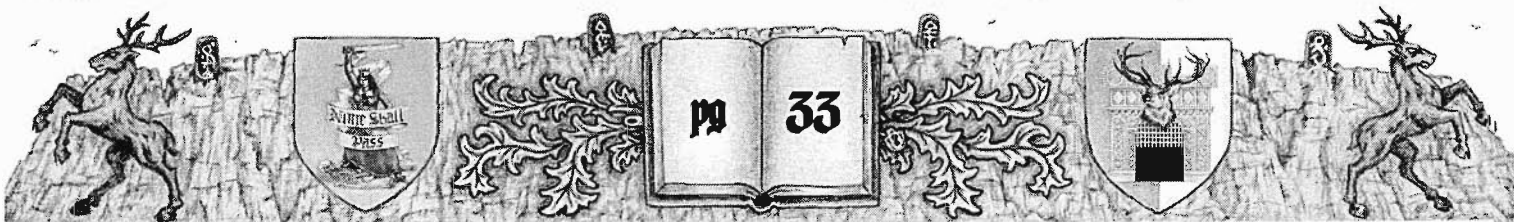
With the announcement of the construction came the announcement of the Fire Tax, designed to pay for the New Palace. A crown would be charged for every fireplace in the city. This led to many bricking their fireplaces up, especially nobles doing so in their servant's quarters. This led to an increase in deaths from smoke as fires were lit in buckets in closed rooms. Worse was to follow as there was an unusually cold winter that year. However, by Hexenstag, enough money had been raised and the tax was lifted. Even now bricked up fireplaces are still to be seen, especially in the servants' quarters of the older houses.

Mere days before the last of the servants left, a second fire ravaged the remaining parts of the Old Palace and half a millennium later it stands as it did then. Many local stories and rumours speak of the rubble being haunted; certainly an aura of evil hangs over the ruins. The parties behind the haunting changes from story to story but many believe there is truth in them. Even locals avoid the place. Whatever the truth is, is up to the GM to decide but Chaos Cults, vampires, criminals or numerous others may have chosen to make their base here, safe from casual prying.

Old Peerhaus

Abandoned with the rest of the Old City, the Old Peerhaus is a grand aged building. Its style once reminded visitors of a cathedral. Circular in shape, its roof was a golden dome. Reaching up to it were twenty-five feet tall windows. Inside the main chamber, the seats were of red velvet, the family name of the peer engraved with gold. All this was stripped out before it was abandoned and now it stands forlorn, most of its windows smashed and the roof filled with holes. The central floor is a duelling pit, something not so obviously carried over to the current Peerhaus. Below the main chamber lies the corridors of the Keeper of the Law and rumours persist of lost artefacts forgotten in secret rooms.

However, in recent times the Old Peerhaus has gained a degree of infamy. Every city has its beggars, those who look on the goodwill of their fellow man to survive. Talabheim has more than most - a sign of the difficulty eking out a living for the poor here. The perception of beggars changed radically two hundred years ago with the publication of the pamphlet, "The Life of a Beggar at the Court of the King". The author, Johann Stow, told the tale of being thrown out of his home, forced to beg. On the streets he discovered the beggars of the city were organised in a hierarchical way. Above the common pauper were the "Upright Men", whose ranks Stow



would eventually join. At the top of this society was the King of the Beggars who Stow called Kancer. Stow described the life of these downtrodden folk, although he seemed careful not to go into detail. He did imply that the beggars met in the Old Peerhaus in a mockery of the real Peerhaus. Kancer would sit in the same seat where the Grand Dukes and Emperors of Talabheim had once sat. Stow described his life as an Upright Man as "the best of my days" but after hiding enough money and making some enemies he returned to the city. Here he continued his trade as a tanner, and in time, set down his life's account. Soon after publication he was found dead in the gutter, a rat stuffed in his mouth.

Since Stow's exposé was first released, the city came to believe in an army of beggars ruled by a beggar-king. The truth of the matter seems impossible to verify. For every beggar that declares it is nonsense, another will say it is the truth. Ask these two the next day and they tell you the opposite. A couple of searches of the Peerhaus have been made, but all that was found were a few sheltering beggars.

However, Stow's story is basically true. The beggars of Talabheim are organised in a loose way and ruled by the mysterious figure known as Kancer. If this is the same Kancer that Stow spoke of, or whether the name is symbolic, is unknown. Either way, the society the beggars have created is a strange one and virtually closed to outsiders. Amongst the beggars there are ranks and authority, the rules being passed on early in the beggar's career. Anybody found begging on the streets of Talabheim may be challenged by an Upright Man to declare who they are, who introduced them to the world of the beggar and any other questions needed to identify if they are allowed to beg. If the Upright Man is not satisfied with the answer he may arrange for a severe beating or introduce them into the fold. The Upright Men are good at identifying fakes and charlatans. Despite this many beggars remain outside this alternative society.

Stow's chronicle romanticised the world of Talabheim's beggars which in truth is nasty and hard. Most live on the edge of starvation and suffer violence from the Watch, ordinary citizens and other beggars. The life span of a beggar is far shorter than other Talabheim citizens.

The mass of beggars ("these unwashed and unwanted" according to Lady Ivana Ketriddoff) ply their trade wherever they can. They spend their days asking for alms and avoiding the watch. There is a tradition in Talabheim that giving money to beggars brings you blessing from the gods. However, this is tempered by a simmering hatred for "these leeches". Anyone arrested for begging must pay a fine of 2GC 7/10. If they cannot they are to be placed in the stocks (a very rare occurrence these days) or thrown into jail for up to week. Beggars end up in the worst and most squalid parts of prison and not all make it out alive. Some are simply forgotten. There is a subtle pecking order amongst the beggars, but the main divider is whether they are "true-born" or "shlcapers" (a word only used amongst Talabheim's beggars). The "true-born" are born into the beggars' society and understand its rules and codes whereas the "shlcapers" have been forced into, or chosen, the life.

Maintaining order amongst the beggars are the Upright Men. Some of them were once beggars but many are ex-mercenaries and soldiers that have been compelled into the life, after being discharged or deserting. They "beg" by asking for money in return for the service they have given to the city. Some have visible



injuries while others fake them. Although they are part of the begging society they are usually thought of as common by those outside the Old City.

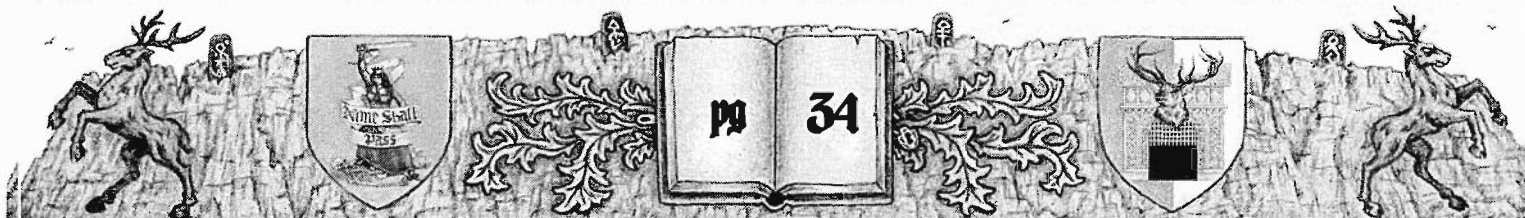
Living in the tunnels of the Old Peerhaus is a community of indigents (some 200 people, among them 20-30 families). Many have their own space, while others sleep in the corridor. The largest room has been turned into a communal meeting place, where food is cooked and eaten. Duties are shared amongst everyone except the Upright Men who come and go as they please. The atmosphere below is not unfriendly. Should PCs ever enter they will be watched warily but not threatened. Watches are kept around the area, the Peerhaus giving a good view of its surroundings. When an alarm is sounded

all those who can flee do, leaving the old and sick. Escape is helped by the presence of a multitude of secret passageways and hidden doors, all once used by the Nobility. In addition, the beggars always seem to hear what is going on and if it concerns them are quick to tell their comrades.

"Never was a more rag-tag hunch of people seen under one roof."

Johann Stow

At least once every six months, but sometimes more often, the beggars are summoned to the Peerhaus. Under cover of night they enter the Old City and stream into



the main chamber, cramming in amongst the seats. This is the "Court of Fools and Vagrant Lords" Johann Stow spoke off. When most have gathered, Kancer, the King of Beggars, enters the balcony overlooking the chamber. Some of the older members remember a handsome young man, a gypsy perhaps. Now, Kancer is bent over, carrying his weight on a staff (it is topped with a carving of a Magpie). A priest of Ranald then blesses the court. These priests are the officers of the Court, Kancer its judge. Much of the night is then spent passing judgements and listening to near riotous debate.

During the sitting, marriages are arranged based on Beggar Law, the bride smashing a jug upon the floor. The number of pieces it breaks into is the number of years the couple will be married. Complaints against other beggars are heard. Kancer passes judgement (wisely most say) and decides the punishment. Stealing from another beggar is one of the worst crimes that can be committed and should an accused be found innocent, the accuser suffers the punishment. After this, any beggar who wishes to tell a tale of something he has seen may do so. Kancer cuts ramblers short with a rap of his staff. Many beggars believe that Kancer's power spreads far and wide. Five years ago a noble was responsible for the death of two beggars and at the Court others told tales of his brutality. Some weeks later the noble went missing, never to be seen again.. This myth of Kancer's invincibility is wide spread, and he is believed to be the holder of ancient power.

The benefit of belonging to this underground society is mainly the feeling of belonging to a community. As the mainstream has thoroughly rejected them, and indeed treats them with contempt, this is important to many. The beggars' society has rules, traditions and a sense of community. There is even a sort of justice handed down by the Beggar King. It also offers protection, and not just in numbers. Members are free from the attentions of the Upright Men and can even call on their support on (rare) occasion.

In return certain obligations are expected. Should the Beggar King ever ask for a task, and he rarely does, the request would have to be obeyed. Also beggars are required to pay a tithe of ten-percent of all their earnings to the Court. Anyone found to be avoiding this is required to pay fifty-percent and receive a beating in the process.

PCs are likely to encounter beggars in the city on a day-to-day basis. Eventually someone will tell the tales of the Beggar King and his court. Even if they are interested it is unlikely they will find anything substantial. However, there are a number of ways they may encounter the court. If a beggar is given help then the favour may be returned. If information is needed for

a reason that Kancer decides is in his favour, then the beggars may come up with it. The truth behind Kancer is left to the GM to decide. He may simply be a chosen Beggar looking out for the good of his people, or the truth could be stranger. Perhaps he is a noble, immortal, Undead even, maybe a Vampire feeding off his followers. What then are his goals? Is his appearance a disguise? Kancer is an all-powerful figure, and not easy to track down. He should rarely be brought forward from the background and if he is acting on behalf of the PCs, a price should have to be paid by them.

Shrine of Ranald the Protector

This unusual place lies hidden amid the warrens of the Old City. Its exact location and description remains unknown to the officials and Ecclesiastic Court of Talabheim. Although rumours speak of its location, it is easily portable and its appearance unassuming. Other rumours suggest that selected members of the Beggar King's Court maintain the shrine, but this is untrue. In fact clerics of Ranald take turns to administer it, usually sent to Talabheim by a vision or omen. These clerics are not only responsible for the maintenance and protection of the shrine but are supposed to look after its worshippers.

As would be expected, the Shrine is usually disguised as something else, as are the clerics. When a new site is set-up, the word goes out amongst the followers of Ranald and they come to offer sacrifices (usually coins). The shrine is always busy, the poor coming to ask for his protection and blessing.

Töpfer Pottery

Hans Töpfer lives and works in The Old City. His family have been potters on this site as long as anyone can remember. Once they made pottery for the upper classes, much of which still sits in their collections. However, unlike many of their contemporaries, who set up shop in the Silbertor and Goldstrades districts, the Töpfer's stayed in The Old City. Now, Hans makes cheap and basic pottery for the locals. He does have a reputation for being honest and having a good heart. This has led to some taking advantage of him and he is owed money by many.

Hard times have led him to opening his back room as a tavern. Here he sells ale and vodka on the cheap; most of it is smuggled or brewed in The Old City. From early afternoon the room begins to fill and doesn't empty until the early hours. Hans has been lucky so far and the atmosphere remains good-natured.

Anya

Forger, ex-Artisans Apprentice (Calligrapher & Engraver)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
3	31	26	3	4	6	54	1	63	40	69	40	43	55

Alignment: Neutral (Ranald)

Skills: Ambidextrous, Art (Painting, Sculpture, Calligraphy), Etiquette, Excellent Vision, Read/Write (Kisleavian and Imperial), Ride

Possessions: Engraving Tools, artists tools, copies of common Talabheim documents

Quotes: "Oxhide Vellum? That will cost you extra."
"Serge, check out Herr Feher for me. He's put a lot of money my way but I don't trust him."

Serge

Burglar, ex-Labourer, ex-Footpad, ex-Thief (Pickpocket)

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	46	38	3	4	8	55	1	43	37	28	32	30	28

Alignment: Neutral (Ranald)

Skills: Concealment Urban, Dodge Blow, Drive Cart, Evaluate, Excellent Vision, Flee!, Lightning Reflexes, Night Vision, Palm Object, Pick Lock, Pick Pocket, Read/Write, Scale Sheer Surface, Secret Signs-Thieves, Silent Move Rural, Silent Move Urban, Spot Traps, Strike to Stun

Possessions: Leather jack, sword, bottle of vodka

Quotes: "Giz' us a 'odka."

When standing together Anya and Serge are obviously siblings. Anya is very quiet and speaks little, especially when in the company of her brother Serge, although she possesses a pleasant voice. She has a cheerful face and content disposition, but she worries about her brother. A hard looking individual, Serge's broad shouldered appearance with his thick hair pulled back into pony-tail and

hard, cold eyes just shouts "thug". He is also a heavy drinker and often drinks until he is ill.

Orphaned at an early age, the twins Anya and Serge patrolled the streets in search of people kind enough to drop them a coin or two. For several years they lived in this fashion, begging as a way to survive, living in gutters and alleyways, and nearly starving to death, all the while staying ahead of the Upright Men.

While begging door-to-door one day, they ventured upon the home of a local artist and craftsman, Dieter and his wife Gretchka. The two children were taken into the artisan's home, offered a place to live and learn. Anya quickly picked up the trade and learned directly under Dieter, while her brother performed odd jobs as a labourer and handyman.

Years passed and Anya delighted in expressing herself artistically while Serge grew tired of his life. He wanted wealth and wanted it quickly. Dieter was well off but it was not Serge's fortune. He eventually hooked up with a band of thugs and pickpockets, discovering he excelled at the more brutal arts.

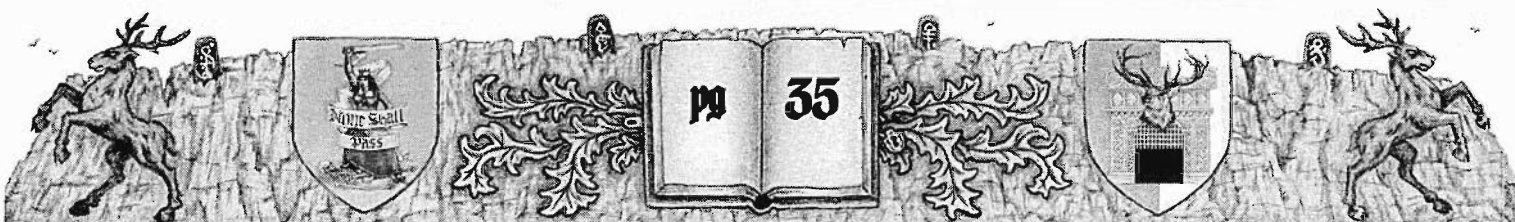
Dieter knew of Serge's involvement with crime, and of Anya's considerable talent, and was pleased by both. Dieter was connected to the Vory and went about harnessing the twins' talents so that one-day they could join as well. When the twins learned of Dieter's criminal ties, Serge was entranced and quickly agreed to join, but Anya took more time to convince.

Today, Anya is a respected if somewhat secretive member, using her skills to forge documents and replicating famous works of art that her brother uses to replace the originals he takes to sell on the black market. Anya has recently set up home on the edge of the Old City in what used to be the merchant quarter and Serge often spends time here. He has grown into the leader of a thriving burglary ring. However, his drinking problems are making things increasingly difficult as he is making more mistakes than ever while losing any respect he had.

Custom & Law

No more than five

Peasants shall not assemble together in numbers greater than five, unless in a marketplace or square, or during the defence of the city. This law is difficult to enforce in the poor areas. It should be noted that the last caveat was added in 1552, during the war with Middenheim, when many common folk who knew of the law tried to use it as an excuse to avoid being forced into battle as levy troops.



Kaspar's Well

A deep well providing fresh water for many families. The area is usually full of local women who also use it as a social gathering point. Two guards stand by here, their job to ensure nobody does anything to the well. It is illegal to put anything down the well except for a wooden or tin bucket. At night the well is covered over and bolted, a large slab placed on top.

Custom & Law No Peer

Members of the Peerhaus may not be impersonated at any time. Punishment is death.

Saint Tomas of the Snows

Although there has been a church of Verena in Talabheim from its earliest days, Talabheim has not proved to be the most fertile of fields for the growth of the faith. The oldest foundations of the church of Saint Tomas of the Snows date back to 1115, and the ancient structure remains one of the principle landmarks of the old city. The edifice is a mass of different architectural styles, continuously added to and modified during the centuries before its fall from grace. Since then its development has been slower, although most obvious decay has been avoided. The Church is built around a graceful stone spire, encrusted with bosses, gargoyles and other embellishments. Various vestries, transepts and halls are appended to this structure the whole of which is a solemn black. According to local legend the soot of the burning of the Old Peers Palace stained it. It is said that when Old Talabheim died, only Verena stayed on in mourning.

Many see the church's stubborn refusal to abandon the decaying old city in the 14th century to be the original cause of the church's fall from grace, although it was not until 1550 that the Cult's loss of power became fully acknowledged. It was during this period of war with Middenheim that the first draconian laws of the ruling peers were brought into force, under the guidance of Absolon von Auster, The Record Keeper. Faced with rising civil unrest and the rising unpopularity of the peers, Von Auster introduced the "Acta Seditia", a draconian set of laws entirely disregarding the principles of Natural Justice for which the church of Verena stood. Some say that in old age Absalon's mental health deteriorated into a state of paranoia, to the extent that he would refuse to leave his lodgings without a disguise, fearing the anger of the people he had helped suppress. Some consider this to be the origin of the custom of the Record Keeper's wearing of a mask to this day. The church of Verena vigorously opposed the Acta Seditia, and approbation was rained down on Talabheim from many parts of The Empire, but the peers remained obdurate, and the Acta remained. Many Historians consider this to be a root cause of Talabheim's present day isolation. In any case, the prestige of the cult of Verena in Talabheim suffered a heavy blow from which it has never recovered.

It was hoped that the rise to power of Budimir Untermensch, the present Record Keeper on the basis of his high standing in the church of Verena would be the first step in redressing the wrongs of the past. Thus far however, these hopes have not been realised, Untermensch having cut out of all but the most formal relations with the church hierarchy.

Although the prospect of political power remains

slight, the size of the congregations has been slowly but surely increasing as the church earns the grudging respect of the Old City dwellers, abandoned by the other religions. Although many a cleric has cursed Father

Paulus Entenburger's intransigence, the church of Verena may one day bless his foresight.

The Verenan presence in Talabheim numbers three dedicated priests and five laymen. They are responsible

Johann Dister

Seer and Blackmailer

Charlatan, ex-Physician, ex-Physician's Student

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	33	25	3	2	6	44	1	45	52	51	50	42	54

Alignment: Evil (Fakes worship of Rhya)

Skills: Blather, Charm, Cure Disease, Disguise, Divination, Evaluate, Heal Wounds, Manufacture Drugs, Mimic, Palm Object, Prepare Poisons, Public Speaking, Read/Write, Scroll Lore, Secret Language - Classical, Seduction, Surgery, Wit

Possessions: Fake certificates on walls, wide variety of strange instruments (most useless), fine clothes, moon-rim glasses

Quotes: "Just relax, this won't hurt at all."

"The moon is strong in your stars. A good sign for you. His lordship will have a son within a year but only if you put two drops of this in his wine before bed."

"Udo, I believe we have just found another golden cow."

The method of operation of the seers, mystics and astrologers in The Old City is varied and marvellous. From chicken entrails to tea leaves, they all claim to offer secrets in return for a small payment. Charging a higher payment than most is Johann Dister, self-proclaimed "wiseman and organ trembler".

Now in his sixties, Dister is a sprightly, grey haired old man. However, his eyes have not dimmed with age, seemingly able to look right into people. His voice is husky and deep, a result of many pipe smoking years. Many women find him attractive, something he has used to his advantage over the years. He is a cold, evil man who hates everyone and is willing to take advantage of them. It is not their money he is after but power. He dresses in simple black clothes and long cloak, wearing a silver necklace of a tree around his neck. This he tells his clients is to honour Rhya, the Earth Mother, "source of all fertility, watcher of the circle of life."

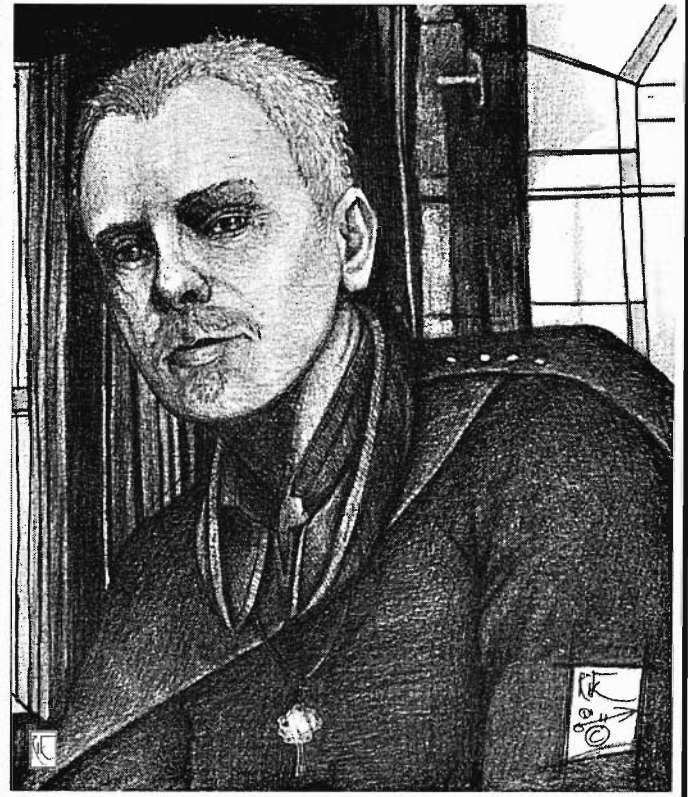
This is central to his profession and his success. Women who want children come to Dister so he may tell them if they are with child, barren or soon to be pregnant. Their reasons for coming to him are numerous but for most parts he is a charlatan. However, he has been a success for thirty years and many noble women visit the Old City to see him. He is an expert manipulator and if these

women become pregnant (when they want to) he takes full credit, but if they don't he blames them and the gods.

Dister started his career as a physician's student and later found the rewards for performing back street abortions were good. However, he saw a market for something more than this. Thus began his career as a predictor of births and "explorer of barren lands". Soon his reputation spread and the people of The Old City could not afford his services anymore. He decided to move into Barrer, nearer to his wealthier clients. However the local physicians tried to have him arrested. He found that outside The Old City his strange brand of science would not be tolerated. Occasionally, he does pay home visits when the client is too powerful to come to him.

Almost without fail those who come to him are desperate. Dister takes full advantage of this, charging two or three times the rates of a standard physician. However, he also takes advantage in other ways. He seduces those that are charmed by him and often embarks on short affairs. Occasionally, he arranges for them to be blackmailed by his servant Udo and collects the money. He has also blackmailed those who have come to him pregnant (or believing themselves to be so) from illicit affairs.

The PCs may encounter Dister for a number of reasons. They may hear rumours that another NPC in a scenario visited him (this could simply be a red herring) or be investigating a case of blackmail. They may also hear that he has information on many nobles - information he is willing to sell for a price. PCs will find him manipulative and intelligent, but really have no idea just what a nasty man he is.





the church of Verena back to the forefront of Talabheim's political machinery. Using his own personal charm and guile, as well as contacts in Altdorf and the local Nobility, he has managed to acquire the loyalty of some influential members of society. He used his excellent knowledge of legal precedent to force the peers to allow the construction of a chapel in the royal court. Hosting lavish religious festivals in the otherwise Spartan court has made the church of Verena quite fashionable in certain circles. Needless to say, the other churches are furious at these vulgar and inappropriate practices.

Cleric Jurgen Kurski is the only member of Talabheim's Verenan priesthood to have grown up in the city. His parents were Kislevite immigrants, and when Jurgen was seven they were burned at the stake at the orders of Helmut von Nebelsfeuer, during a wave of particularly intense anti Kislevite feeling. The church of Verena adopted Jurgen, and his dearest wish is to bring von Nebelsfeuer to justice. Jurgen stretches his privileged access to the Book of Records to the limit, searching its Byzantine entries for a means to further his ends.

Jurgen has recently been approached by the Cult of the Light of Truth, and will be formally admitted to their ranks soon.

for maintaining the smaller temple in Blutberg.

Father Paulus Entenburger has become a figure of local legend in the Old City, and many stories are told of his eccentricities. It is said for example that he was brought up by a Kislevite Nurse, who would put vodka in his milk to make him sleep - and by the time he was weaned the nurse had to use more vodka than milk to have any effect at all. However, Father Paulus' heroic drinking habits have caught up with him in old age as he suffers from the most acute gout. This is often quoted as being the reason the church never moved from the old city; Father Paulus was bedridden and the pain of moving would be too great. Less charitable souls say that he wanted to stay near his supply of cheap booze.

Jetta Fischer is most senior priest of Verena in Talabheim. She is originally from Altdorf, but despite endless frustrations with the decadence and lack of faith of the Talabheimers, she has come to love the area for its dark mysteries and timeless grandeur. She reached the rank of solicitor after presenting a dissertation on the Compass Monoliths recognised by most scholars to be the definitive work on the subject to date. Jetta has been known to remark that if as many people came to hear her sermons as came to her lectures, Talabheim would be a much better place to live. Jetta is not at all popular with the cult of Taal on account of her speculations. Jetta's primary interests are History and Theology. She has little interest in politics, and if it were left to her, the church of Verena in Talabheim would remain a quiet and uneventful place.

Chronicler Hans von Ahrteil is an entirely different animal however. The second son of the Baron von Ahrteil, a small fief 30 leagues to the south of Talabec, he was sent to study theology in Altdorf. As well as the robes of a Chronicler in the church of Verena he managed to acquire the political cunning that one can only learn in the Imperial capital while also falling in love with Jetta at the Altdorf seminary. He decided to return to Talabheim with her, and see if he could win back the birthright denied him by his elder brother, or Jetta's heart, or better still, both. Neither of these undertakings is trivial, but Hans is a gifted young man and is making progress in both endeavours. Hans suspects that Jetta now returns his love, but is still refusing to face the fact. Until she does, Hans has dedicated himself to dragging

Nyesnavistny

"It's safer to drink home-made vodka than the water and the locals do that a lot"

The Cult of the Light of Truth

This small cult is unique to Talabheim, and has risen from frustrations caused by the city's strict hierarchy, and its inflexible, labyrinthine legal system. Whereas the church of Verena acknowledges what it refers to as ethical subjectivity (that every case must be judged on its own merits and that what is wrong under some circumstances is acceptable under others) members of this cult believe in a set of fixed laws, which apply to everyone equally under all circumstances. The group includes many who have seen evil deeds reprieved because of rank, wealth, or obscure loopholes. The Cult of the Light of Truth keeps track of all legal proceedings in the city, and is rumoured to maintain a secret copy of the Book of Records itself. The cult attempts to judge all cases brought before the courts according to its own principles, and to carry out the sentences which it feels the court should have applied. A number of merchants and even nobles have been brought to justice at the hands of the cult.

One notable case that occurred recently was that of Henrietta von Pierer. Henrietta was a witness in the trial of Jurg Feldmaus, a gardener at the von Pierer estate. According to the Henrietta, she was strolling in the gardens when Feldmaus and his assistant attempted to molest her. Fortunately a young noble man was nearby and heard her desperate cries. Scaling the garden walls, this noble attacked the miscreants, killing the assistant and chasing off Feldmaus, saving Henrietta's honour and quite possibly her life. Feldmaus was sentenced to be hung. The Cult of the Light of Truth announced a different verdict, revealing that the "passing nobleman" and Henrietta had been indulging in activities unbecoming of an unmarried noblewoman in the summerhouse when disturbed by Feldmaus and his assistant. The "passing noble" attempted to kill the unfortunates rather than risk Henrietta's honour. Two days later Jurgen von Unterburg (the "passing noble") was murdered in the street at night. Henrietta was later found bound to the public stocks with her tongue cut off.

Sprawling from the East Road along its north side and wedged against the Blutberg on the southwest stands the district of Nyesnavistny. Barely better than a slum, much of the housing is old, of poor quality and owned by the nobility. Some groups of newer houses have been built along the outer edge of the district but are no better constructed than the rest. Some merchants have managed to buy up housing from nobles who sold partly to pay off debts or to raise capital, but they treat their tenants no better. Repairs are infrequent and mostly performed by the tenants, building materials are cheap and the labour is both cheap and "shoddy" (a Dwarf term for buildings built by humans).

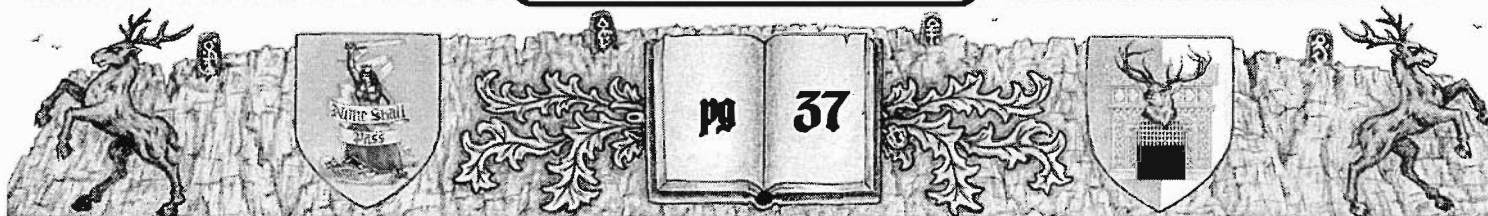
Streets are unpaved and narrow, while the alleys between houses can become a warren of twisting ways and sudden small courtyards between tenements. There is too much sewage for the drains and the streets often become clogged with rubbish or mud after a sudden downpour, especially in winter.

With little sanitation, a poor diet, and generally hard manual jobs, disease is rife. It's safer to drink home-made vodka than the water and the locals do that a lot, leading to a lot of random violence, both domestic and on the streets. Any sort of official intervention is greatly disliked; violence against rent collectors, tax collectors and so forth is all too common and the majority of City Officials are wise enough to only go in to Nyesnavistny with a few City Guards backing them up. This dislike stems partly from the reasons for their visits; almost always to collect money the locals can't afford to give.

Custom & Law

Bring out your dead!

It is illegal to fail to report a death or a dead body (regardless of how ancient) to the House of Records, the Cult of Morr, the Cult of Taal and the Watch. This is a sensible law to ensure that a body do not fall into the wrong hands, but in typical Talabheim fashion it has been made unworkable and over-complex, and as such is largely ignored.



and a general dissatisfaction with the poverty and disease they are forced to live in. Official bounty-hunters are seen here sometimes, and are feared and hated for they can virtually do what they want. They have the law on their side, and those who enforce the law care little what happens to the poor when the bounty-hunters serve their warrants.

Those that have jobs work almost exclusively at the lower end of the market as labourers, cleaners and servants in Blutberg, Nordengatter, Schaffenhorst or Federdorf. Most employers are noble houses, merchants or the well off middle classes. Crime is an easy way to gain a second income and there is a lot of it in or emanating from Nyesnavistny. Several street gangs and one or two larger groups run by crime bosses operate from here though they don't extort much from Nyesnavistny as there is little to extort. They often make their real money in Schaffenhorst or Silbertor through theft, but in Nyesnavistny their thugs and the populace's dislike of authority can protect them. The Watch comes here in force on occasion but the local Watch are low paid and suffer from widespread corruption. To those on the streets turning a blind eye is part of the job. With so much crime and so little hope of legal advancement, the worship of Ranald is quite extensive, though the emphasis on violent crimes by those heading the local crime gangs make him mainly popular with the poor and part-time or non-affiliated thieves. His worship doesn't bother the crime gangs and some even give lip service to him to appease those lower down the organisation.

Relations with the small Halfling enclave know as Cooks Town are good, as the halflings don't tend to work in the same jobs as humans who freely admit that Halfling cooking can't be bettered. Several have used their natural talents for stealth and climbing as part of the criminal fraternity. Unfortunately relations with the dwarfs are not always so good. So much of the construction of the Nyesnavistny is "shoddy" because nobles financing the building would not meet dwarfen prices for labour and goods of high quality, and the bad housing is blamed on both the nobles and the dwarfs who would not work cheaply enough. While this does not often flare into racial violence those that wish to can add the poor housing in the Nyesnavistny to the list of complaints against the Dwarfs.

Sisters of Shallya

With so many unfortunates needing extra help, particularly the elderly and the young, the Cult of Shallya is often seen here trying to assist the poor, who take every advantage of them they can. The Sisters of Shallya can be seen (in groups) passing out blankets to the poor and elderly before winter, running soup kitchens to feed children and the infirm, and offering medical assistance to the sick. Sometimes one or two Merciful Knights of the Hospitals of Shallya (see Warpstone 10) stand guard, and occasionally they hire guards to protect them against

assault. PCs could easily fulfil this role, and though not well paid, they will gain contacts in the Cult of Shallya and maybe in Nyesnavistny. Since physicians are as rare here as halfling's leftovers, almost all medical care comes from Shallyan charity or herbal remedies. The strong Kislevite influence of the city and Rhya worship colour these traditions; many of the little chants that accompany such amateur healing are based on Kislevite prayers to Rhya or spirits. PCs left bleeding in an alley after spending a Fate Point in this area will be rescued and cared for at a convenient hospice once the Sisters find them. The Sisters could also pass information to the PCs from those who don't trust outsiders. Some of the Sisters of Shallya have sympathies with the Markovite Ukase

about setting up in practice in Nuln his student days had given him an interest in politics and he was curious to see Talabhiem again. He originally travelled to the city to visit old friends but a chance meeting with a Markovite activist reawakened Kinski's political ideals and he was soon a convert to the cause. Now he lives and works in Nyesnavistny, donating his time to the Cult of Shallya, as they are the most organised group who bring healing to the poor. He is a member of the Guild and does have a few paying patients, renting a small office in Silbertor to treat them, but any money he makes goes on assisting his work with the Shallyans or on printing anonymous pamphlets espousing the Markovite cause. He has so far avoided any direct action against the nobility of



Talabhiem but he campaigns with the Shallyans for the rights of the poor and his views have made him no friends in the Guild. He would be a good person for Player Characters to befriend as he offers medical treatment for little or no cost (assuming the PCs are as poor as PCs usually are) and no questions asked. He may even be able to arrange hiding places amongst the slums of Nyesnavistny or act as a go-between for PCs and the Shallyans or Markovite activists, as long as the PCs don't betray any confidences and pay lip service to his ideals. He can also offer cheap tuition in most medical and pharmaceutical skills to PCs who need it. Doctor Kinski may also bring in the PCs to help with problems in the slums. If a Sister of Shallya was kidnapped while tending the sick, Dr Kinski might ask the PCs to rescue her to avoid the bounty hunters or city militia storming the slums and slaughtering dozens of locals until she was returned. Rogue PCs may be asked to acquire medical supplies at a very low cost (that means stolen) for his work in the area. Perhaps payment would come in the form of free medical treatment and the odd bit of help from the slum dwellers.

Watch Headquarters

The main headquarters of the Dogmen are located in this squat, grey stone building. The windows are barred and arrow slits are subtly placed either side of the two entrances. Inside are offices, cells, storerooms and a dining room run by the fearsome Hungry Hans. As with all the Dogmen buildings, the locals refer

to it as the Kennel. Outside the front gate sits a badly sculpted statue of a wolf. Awarded by the then captain to his cousin, it was supposed to restore the dignity of the watchmen and act as a mascot; much to the amusement of the locals its unveiling showed a squat hairy beast. It was soon named Ludwig in honour of the Emperor.

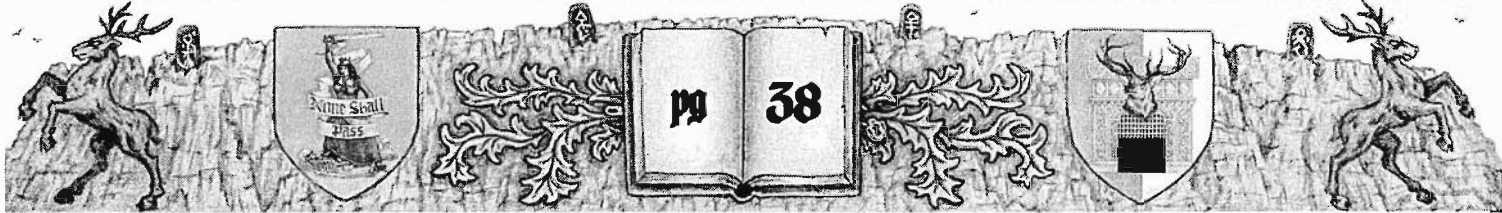
Doctor Mortmore Kinski

One man who could earn enough to leave these slums is Doctor Mortmore Kinski, a physician who trained in Nuln. Although originally born in Talabhiem, the early death of his parents meant that he was taken as a ward by his mother's half-brother, Paulus Langenburg, a physician practising in Nuln. A widower with no children of his own, Paulus took on Mortmore as son and then protégé when he recognised his intelligence. Kinski began training as a physician as soon as possible and effectively having a private tutor in his half-uncle meant he qualified quickly. Although Kinski did think

to it as the Kennel. Outside the front gate sits a badly sculpted statue of a wolf. Awarded by the then captain to his cousin, it was supposed to restore the dignity of the watchmen and act as a mascot; much to the amusement of the locals its unveiling showed a squat hairy beast. It was soon named Ludwig in honour of the Emperor.

The Nyesnavistny Theatre

An old crumbling building, the theatre is one of the most popular destinations in the city. Reasonable prices and entertaining shows keep the crowds coming back here. They are mostly the poorer classes but the nobility and middle classes are also frequent visitors, many acting as Patrons. Its cross-class success is due to Josef



Schatzstuffel, the Imperial playwright and darling of the Talabheim arts scene. Klaus Kohl, the owner, secured Schatzstuffel's loyalty by cleverly making him a partner in the theatre. Since then, every night has been a sell out.

The Field of Justice

When the original Talabheim city walls were built (the area that is now the Old City) an area outside the city was given over for military training, Judicial Combats and other assorted uses. As the city expanded it was forced to grow around this area which early on became known as the Field of Justice. Decades after the Old City was all but abandoned the City Guard built a large barracks at the edge of the Field. Heavily fortified but relatively comfortable, it contains much of their supplies, stables and living quarters.

The Field itself is something of an oddity. It is now a field of lush grass, maintained by a small staff of retired officers. To one side stands the barracks, the other three sides fringed with a sparse wood. It is in fact a very pleasant place. The area is regularly used for training and the perimeter is well patrolled. It is an offence for a commoner to walk here, punishable by three days in the stocks or a flogging for repeat offenders. Ignorance is not a defence and many a visitor has found themselves in the stocks being pelted by fruit after wandering onto the field. A couple of centuries ago an Eldenstader who worked in the Silverstrades district refused to take the long way round and ended up with numerous floggings. His protest came to an end when he wandered into "arrow practice" by mistake. Nobody made too much of the fact it was the Captain of the Talabheim Archers doing the practising.

Much to the City Guard's chagrin the nobility have 'discovered' that the area makes a nice place to picnic in the summer. They turn up in their carriages with their hampers and proceed to make themselves at home. The military have made moves to have a perimeter fence erected but this is forbidden under an obscure section of law. They tend to get even more upset every ten years when a fair is held on the Field. Talabheim Emperor Brutus the Bloated decreed that to celebrate his tenth anniversary as Emperor a festival would be held every ten years. The first year a grand fair was set up outside the city. However, when Brutus reached the Field of Justice he declared he would go no further and the fair would come to him. It did. The day is no longer celebrated as a festival but the fair still takes place.

Barracks

Officially known as the Heilig Unterhalt Talabheim most locals know it as the Barracks. Here the City Guard is housed in addition along with some of Talabheim's standing army. It is surrounded by a water-filled ditch and a fifteen foot wall with arrow slits and other defences built into it. Two entrances lead inside both of which open into courtyards designed to act as killing grounds. Internal buildings (stables, living quarters, kitchens, store-rooms) are simple and solidly built, none higher than two stories. Months of food is stockpiled and a solid supply of weapons is always keep available. The atmosphere is one of military efficiency. Any PC wandering around will find themselves constantly challenged.

A large staff lives in the compound to keep the

barracks running. The guard roster is comprised of all men currently resident. Organising all this is a group of Sergeants each with specific duties. The Sergeant of Stables for example is currently Max Juger, a cavalry officer missing a leg. He is responsible for all the stable hands and making sure the horses are well cared for, their armour and all ceremonial garments are well maintained. In charge of the Sergeants is the Barracks Commander, a currently vacant position. Each of the Sergeants is also responsible for a myriad of rituals and ceremonies, many carried out on a daily basis.

The reason for the Barracks Commander vacancy is that the current Guard Captain, Ulrich Regear (aka Lord Regear of Stelheim) has based himself here. Officially, the Captain of the Guards is located in Blutberg but Regear hates the area and avoids it as much as possible. He leaves his Aides-de-Camp to cover him and they successfully do so. Meanwhile he gets on with running the Barracks. Regear is a strict traditionalist and punishes anyone who deviates from the rules. He was promoted to his current position after the death of the last incumbent through poisoning. Who was responsible for the death is still unclear but whisperings mention the Count de Rankov, a notorious womaniser who has recently fallen on hard times. Since the death, he has often been seen in the company of the widow. However, Regear believes it may be a plot to undermine the Guards and thus is paranoid about everything he eats and drinks.

Also permanently stationed at the barracks is a company of the Knights Panthers. This famous knightly order was founded in Talabheim but they are best known for providing the Royal bodyguard to the Graf of Middenheim. However, although the two groups are separate organisations they do share a similar uniform and traditions. The Order split in the 15th century after the crusading Knights Panther returned to The Empire. Although this split was the source of much bad feeling, the two orders have moved closer in recent years.

The Knight Panther provide the palace guard in Talabheim (although not the Royal Guard) and their Commander in Chief is the Grand Duchess. Knights split their time between guarding and living at the palace and training at the barracks. Relations between the City Guard and the Panthers are not always good, as the Panthers are often accused of being arrogant and haughty.

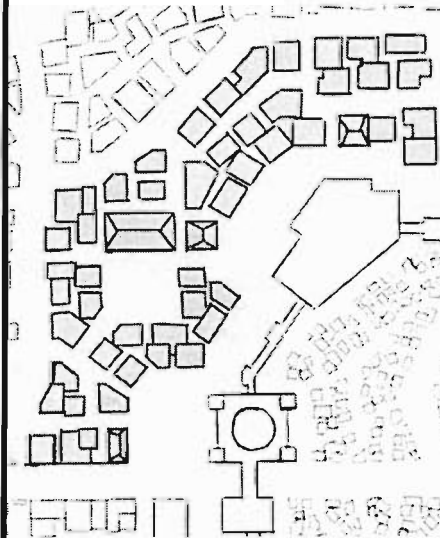
Custom & Law

Keep off the graves

The practice of burning bodies has long been widespread in Talabheim. However, many traditions, most now long forgotten, show how seriously this was once taken. Until late in the first millennium it was believed that those walking across the grave of someone who had been buried in the ground could bring dire consequences. Not only did the sound of footsteps threaten to awaken the deceased who would rise as the Undead in revenge but the trespasser could well catch the dreaded grave-merels. This was a horrific disease that would transform the afflicted into the walking Undead. It could only be cured by bathing the body in a boiling bath of water, mixed with a handful of earth taken from a temple of Taal and a dozen feathers from a raven.

The Book of Talabheim Folklore,
published 1976 IC

Schaffenhorst

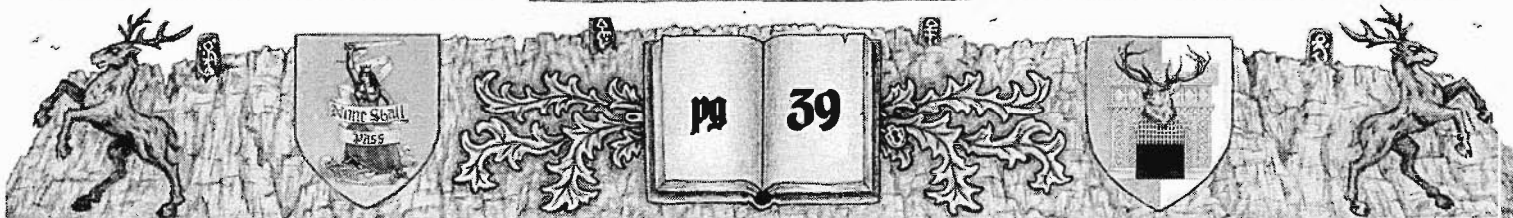


"On a hot day, the smell from the tanneries is near unbearable."

Casting a long shadow across Schaffenhorst is the dark presence of Tarnhelm Keep. Although the keep is part of the Old City wall, it dominates the atmosphere of this district. The residents are mainly small shopkeepers, although the southern area contains a large number of tanneries and butchers. On a hot day, the smell from the tanneries is near unbearable. Cattle enter the area direct from the Ostenstrabe and are guided to the various tanneries by the Herders. This small Guild is responsible for all herds once they enter the city. Few realise they are a specialised trade but they have a long tradition. However, they are currently in trouble. The price they are paid for their service is generous but they are also responsible for missing or injured cows. In recent years, large numbers of cattle have gone missing, seemingly without trace and to the bafflement of the Guild and Watch.

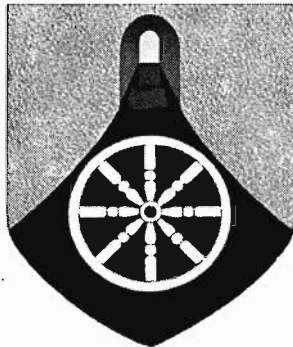
During the day, the streets are filled with hundreds of stalls, as the shopkeepers pull down their shutters to use as tables. Here can be found food, clothes, weapons and various other strange and wonderful items. The streets are bustling and pick pocketing is rampant. A number of the platzs also hold markets, mostly for traders from outside Talabheim. High rents mean that equivalent items are more expensive here but the variety still attracts people. The most famous of these is Lampe Platz, where once-a-week during the summer months the market continues until the early hours, illuminated by large fires and tens of lamps. It is a popular place to buy candles and lamps.

Many Merchants have their offices here and the Merchants' Guildhall, although small, is always busy. Just a short walk away is the Crawl of a Hundred Tankards, so named because of the numerous inns and taverns that are concentrated here. Many visitors, stay here in their first few days. It is the presence of Tunnelway Coaches that has made the area convenient



for arriving travellers.

The local Dogmen have a bad reputation here, being seen as corrupt and brutal. While on patrol many take any item they take a fancy to, and protests are ignored. However, thieves are dealt with by violence, beatings often taking place in the open. Dogemen are issued with short clubs, known as finger-clubs and pick-pockets often find they cannot practice their trade after such an encounter.



Tunnelway Coaches

The Tunnelway offices are located in an ornate and heavily decorated building- in its heyday it was the epitome of fashionable architecture - however, closer inspection reveals that it is in heavy decline. It is in a bad state of disrepair, paint is peeling, cracks have appeared and the roof leaks.

The fortunes of the company match those of its offices. The company was launched with much fanfare in 2430IC to serve the burgeoning merchant trade which had flourished since Talabheim declared itself an independent City State in 2429IC. The founder was Johann von Hasselbaink, a member of Talabheim's Premier Families. The rival coach firms of the time were small, family-run concerns with neither the backing nor the prestige to compete with Tunnelway. This was especially true once Johann had used his influence to insert a clause in the City Charter in 2432IC, granting Tunnelway the sole right to convey fare-paying passengers through the Wizard's Way. The other firms were forced to re-locate to Talagraad and all eventually collapsed due to the resulting financial hardship. This naturally caused some bitterness and protests but Tunnelway and the von Hasselbainks prevailed. Following its initial success however, Tunnelway Coaches has suffered a steady decline - a trend which the current owner, Hedric von Hasselbaink, seems unlikely to change.

The only reason that Tunnelway survives at all is due to the original City Charter which gives them sole rights to the route (see sidebar). This causes much resentment among other coaching firms, such as Four Seasons, whose routes terminate in Talagraad as a result. The only firm to challenge Tunnelway's monopoly is Hochland Crossing Coaches, located in Sibertor.

Tunnelway's Talabheim service runs from Talagraad to the Temple of Ulric. In fact, this is the only route the company operates - it has never even remotely considered running coaches to other cities. There are two classes of travel. First class costs 12GC plus 1GC per bag or chest - this buys you a seat in a comfortable coach. Second class involves being crammed into the back of a cart but costs only 4GC. In both cases the fee

includes the Wizard's Way entry toll.

Despite its monopoly position and the high charges, Tunnelway is not making much profit. A lot of the blame for this rests with Hedric von Hasselbaink whose business sense is terrible. He is also not at all popular with his staff. The poorly paid staff "top up" their wages by under-declaring passengers and pocketing the cash - they don't regard themselves as being "thieves" - they see it more as making their wages up to a fair amount. There is some competition between the coachmen to get on the more lucrative coach run rather than the cheaper cart run.

Hedric inherited the ownership of Tunnelway from his father, Anders. The business was in poor shape when he got it and he has done nothing but make it worse. This is partially because he has no interest in the company whatsoever.

A vain, shallow man, the only reason that Hedric pays any attention to the company at all is that he does not want the shame of a failed business to sully his noble name. He spends most of his time on the social circuit, surrounded by lackeys and sycophants. When he does go into his offices, his decisions often bring further losses.

A famous example was his conclusion that it would attract more business if the coaches were more luxurious. A fortune was spent on carpeting them in thick rugs, shipped at great expense all the way from Ind, and arriving in Brauzzeit during the "great soak" of 2510. They lasted approximately one week before the heavy mud and constant soaking ruined them beyond recognition. The following week the old floor coverings were re-fitted and nothing more was said on the matter.

One coachman - Otto Ludwigson - has contacts with various criminal gangs. He passes on information about wealthy-looking coach passengers to them in exchange for an 'arranger's fee'. Otto has always operated on the wrong side of the law after growing up in abject poverty in some of the worst slums in Talabheim. He spent many years as a petty thief - mainly pick-pocketing but with the odd burglary or mugging if the target looked like easy pickings. Many of his childhood friends were in criminal gangs and he'd pass on occasional tips and information on targets he didn't have the guts to take on himself.

About five years ago, while visiting Talagraad, Otto happened to pass by the Tunnelway offices and noticed how wealthy some of the waiting passengers appeared.

Volume 18, Chapter 3, Section 47.
Paragraph 22

"As of this day, Marktag 10th Pflugzeit 2432, no coach, cart, wagon, double-axled haywain or similar, shalt be allowed passage through Wizard's Way, if any person conveyed on such vehicle has given any sum of money in exchange for such conveyance. The only exception is to be vehicles carrying the mark of Tunnelway Coaches of Talabheim."

He wished he knew what their destinations were in Talabheim so he could help himself to such rich pickings later but he knew he'd never beat the coach in a race up the hill - then he hit upon a scheme. He persuaded a couple of his more respectable friends to act as references and managed to talk his way into a job as a coach driver (the hefty bribe to the clerk he spoke to also helped). Since then, he has stopped carrying out robberies personally and instead points out likely targets to various crime gangs in exchange for a small cut of the "profits".

Adventure Hooks: Hedric is convinced that Hochland Crossing, Tunnelway's only rival firm, must be acting in contravention of the City Charter, not that he's ever read it himself. His advisors have assured him that the City Laws are so complex that an upstart company from out of town must be breaking some kind of law - even if it's an archaic one from centuries ago, forgotten by all and no longer adhered to - such as the law from 1893 which states that "anyone using foul and abusive language before a child, shalt be placed in the stocks for a period of time not less than one week". Then it's just a case of ensuring that an appropriate witness is on hand to report the law being broken.

If the PCs are of a scholarly or legal-minded nature then they might find themselves embroiled in a situation like this. They could be paid by Hedric to sift through the myriad city laws to find an appropriately old and unenforced law. They might then be involved in observing or setting up various Hochland Crossing employees so they can be tried for breaking the law in question.

Alternatively, they could be drafted in by Hochland Crossing who are faced with a sudden and bizarre lawsuit. Naturally suspicious of the Talabheim legal system, Hochland Crossing might be grateful of some independent legal advice.

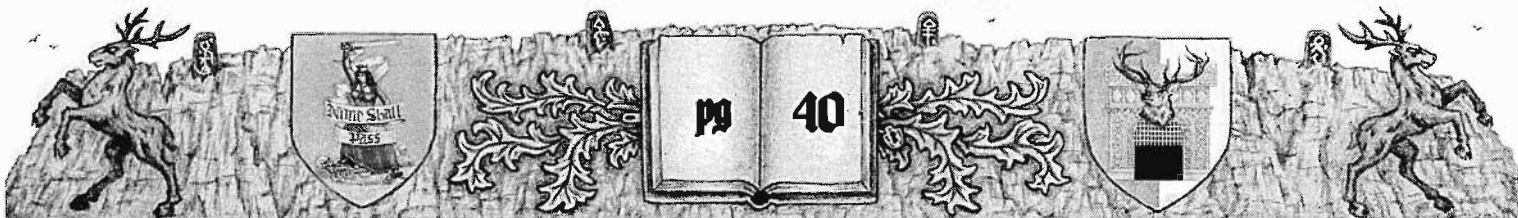
If the PCs take a ride in a Tunnelway coach, it may be one driven by Otto. If they are visibly ostentatious or wealthy then he will make a mental note of their description and destination. Later that night, one or other of Otto's criminal gang contacts will pay them a visit. They might be mugged in the street as they return from the theatre or perhaps their inn room will be ransacked (while they're out or while they're asleep). If you run this encounter while the PCs are embroiled in some other dispute or scheme, they could easily misidentify the source of the attack so this could be a handy red herring or other distraction. Otherwise it could easily happen to an associate of theirs, with the party asked to investigate.

Shrine of Handrich

The Shrine is found in a small corner of the Merchant's Guildhall on Marktplatz. Its placement here is a concession to the followers of Handrich among the merchants and recognition that a number of Talabheim's upstanding citizenry owe a considerable amount to the moneylenders in Marienburg.

Urine Collector

Max Grotheim is a Urine Collector and proud of it, his career advertised by the silver bucket hanging over his front door. Like others in his line of work he has a licence from the city to operate. The collected urine is sold to make soap or to treat leather hides in the local tanneries. Max is very serious about his job and he takes a very dim few of those that say he "makes a living from taking the piss!"



Cameo

Noble Privilege

As the PCs are travelling through the forest outside the Crater they hear a group of people arguing followed by the sounds of a struggle. If they investigate they see several masked men attempting to hang a young well dressed man. The majority of the masked men are obviously peasants armed only with quarter-staves or clubs, but one is armed with a hunting bow, sword, dagger and two throwing axes and wearing a mail shirt, and is obviously in charge. If they have met or seen him before they may recognise Stephan Hanson. If challenged or questioned he will explain that the man tied up about to be lynched is a minor noble from Talabheim who raped a young girl from the nearest village. She was able to point him out in Talgaard when he was on a drinking spree with friends. As he was a noble, Hanson knew that there was no chance of him being convicted on the word of a peasant without title, property, money or political influence, so he decided to punish himself. Hanson and the girl's father and brothers kidnapped the noble and brought him here to hang him. There is no other way to punish him and a commoner who committed rape against a noble would suffer an equal fate. If the PCs suggest freeing the noble Hanson will point out that the noble knows his victim's name and could easily have her or her whole family killed or framed for some crime that would see them hang. If he is freed now the PCs will be condemning a fourteen year old girl and her whole family to death as well as

freeing a rapist. On the other hand there is no evidence against the noble other than the girl's word. The PCs should never learn the truth either way; there are no witnesses, and they have only the word of the girl (who is not present) and no way to tell if she is lying or not.

Encourage the PCs to discuss the matter amongst themselves and role-play their social roles. Hanson and the girl's family will not let the man go, though the farmers could probably be overpowered easily. If given a chance the man will insist he is innocent but like the girl's family has no proof. If he is hung the young man will proclaim his innocence to the end and Hanson and the father will wait to make sure he is dead and leave

him hanging there. If he is released by the PCs his father will reward the PCs and have the girl's whole family hung for the attempted murder of a noble. There is no way for the PCs to stop this short of relocating the whole family to another part of The Empire. The father will probably offer the PCs the chance to detain the family (and gain the reward he will offer) and bring them into Talabheim for hanging as they were kind enough to rescue his son. Whatever they decide to do someone will suffer. Whatever they decide the PCs are either freeing a rapist or murdering an innocent man by letting him hang.



TALABHEIM ERRATA

We managed to miss an entire paragraph out of the politics section (issue 16). This concerned another, very important, level of nobility in the city. It was directly related to The Royal Families Sidebar on page 23.

The Claimants and the Royal Families

The Duchy of Talabheim is hereditary. At the death of the Duke, his eldest son is anointed by the Fræi-Ulrik (the leader of the cult of Ulrik in Talabheim). If there are no sons, the eldest daughter is anointed. Should the late Duke be childless, it is not quite clear what happens. So far, such situations have been resolved by one of the *Claimants* allying with a majority of the Peers, thus convincing Fræi-Ulrik to anoint him. The Claimants are the heads of the so-called Royal Families. Of these, three can show a lineage back to the early rulers of the first centuries. Another is a newcomer of Kislevite heritage, whose ancestor briefly ruled the Duchy some centuries ago. Finally, there is the rather new von Kriegfritz-Untermensch dynasty, which is often considered to be an independent Royal Family.

Some bits also went awry during editing. Here's what it said and what it should have said.

A Small Enquiry...

What it did say...

When news of this arrived in Nuln and Altdorf, the nobles of Nuln and Stirlant removed Dieter's title of Grand Count of Stirlant, and Wilhelm was appointed as the head of the Haupt-Anderssen dynasty in his place.

What it should have said...

When news of this arrived in Nuln and Altdorf, the nobles of Nuln and Stirlant dethroned Dieter as Grand Count of Stirlant, and Wilhelm appointed the head of the Haupt-Anderssen dynasty in his place.



"Also nominally on full time duty are Baron Rougestar's Tithe-men. However, as the City doesn't know what to do with them, they do little but sit around, drink and brawl."



Reviewed: The Professionals

Dragon, Games Unplugged, Valkyrie & Others. A Fragments Special by Tim Eccles

This review is based upon two principles. Firstly, since these magazines are *professional* they should be better than amateur magazines, in both production and quality. Spelling errors, grammatical mistakes, lost paragraphs, uninteresting articles and poor art are not acceptable. Secondly, they should not be supported simply because they happen to be (British) professional magazines, a point espoused by a number of people including the editors of *Warpstone* and *Tales of the Reaching Moon*. These productions need to be worth their price intrinsically. This might seem harsh, but I am suspicious of a group of magazines which seem to continually produce the same authors, reviewing the same types of products in the same manner and writing the same style of generic article. People should be in their jobs - and so writing in pro-zines - on merit that is reflected in the quality of their product. If this is not true, exactly what is the point of a games magazine? This is a consumer test from someone who has paid good money for these publications and the following analysis is based purely upon their merit.

The Magazines

Dragon magazine has recently revamped itself, and certainly talks a good game about the new D&D, effectively its sole interest. One thing that is clear about *WotC* is that



their products look very good indeed. More, they are able to cover some longstanding concerns. For example, in *Dragon* 275, Peter Whitley offers an erudite editorial upon the chainmail bikini, and the need for perspective in stereotypes. D&D 3e is not about such offensive and simplistic stereotypes he argues in a most praiseworthy move. Unfortunately, that issue, as with most, is filled with scantily clad female figures. True, many of these are advertisements, but if *WotC* truly believes in equality and standing up against sexism should it not carry through with this policy? The magazine offers a number of 'PC Portraits' in each issue for us to adopt as one of our characters; in the same vein I have yet to see an unattractive female drawing. *Dragon* is a devoutly D&D

magazine. Despite the claims of the new D&D - and I *have* played it - I see nothing in the new *Dragon* that wasn't in the old one: new spells, new monsters, new classes. The idea of background seems to resolve primarily upon simply having different gods, magic items and spells. It remains to my eye primarily a game of powerful characters and one-upmanship - I mean, when introduced to some playtesters in issue 274, each tries to outbid the other in how long they have played the game and one even claims to have been playing D&D since he was 3. Sure. There is little of real use for WFRP in *Dragon*. Recent issues do cover some general RPG matters, such as how to make doors more interesting and how to work as a group of players. I am rather too long in the tooth to be interested in general 'how to' RPG articles, and in this magazine they are very much linked to the D&D philosophy. Articles such as that on doors have promise, but how can one write an article on the door without understanding basic concepts like the different types of lock and their technological development in our own world? *Dragon* magazine revolves around how interested one is in the new D&D. I am saddened that this new revamped edition still needs so many clarifications, new monsters, spells, character classes, feats and the like. Was it not tested before production? This is made worse by the fact that *Dragon* is capable of interesting articles as the *Volo* and *Elminster* expansions of the *Forgotten Realms*, the pseudo-scientific ecology of monster articles and the occasional special project. *Dragon* 277 describes a steampunk *Greyhawk*, *Dragon* 278 provides a Dwarf spectacular and *Dragon* 279 offers interesting insights into Elves. Unfortunately, the desire to translate material into classes, deities and spells spoils the promise. Still, *Dragon* has useful articles, it has *Dork Tower* and it has (variable) fiction.

Free with an annual subscription (or for purchase normally) *Dragon Annual* offers an end of year spectacular for the D&D game. Previous Annuals have contained interesting expansions in the vein described above, but *Annual 5* is awful. For instance, it has one hundred and one evil schemes for NPCs to plot and PCs to foil, which all seem to involve excessive magic and such hard work that hiring a bunch of ores to do the job for you would be far simpler. Polymorph your followers into pets and sell them to important civic characters. A merchant sells the cloaker creature as cloaks. A madman hires the PCs to bring him a sphere of annihilation so that he can destroy the world. An agent hires a dragon to kill local livestock. A tanar'ri ventures into a high technology universe and steals a nuclear weapon. I think I need say no more.

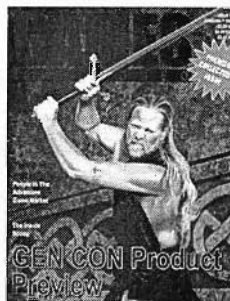
Dungeon, however, offers real promise for WFRPers, since it provides a steady stream of scenarios replete with ideas. I dislike the glossy format, as I find it difficult to read,

but the magazine looks good. Unfortunately, the new edition's scenarios seem to follow the pattern of the old, in that each adventure revolves around a new monster, spell or magic item. This makes application to WFRP problematic. *Dungeon* 84 contains scenarios placing the PCs against a drow deity, a coven of vampires in their mansion, "a classic dungeon crawl" and a new species of lycanthrope. Worse is the arbitrariness of the adventures. For example, the drow deity is a daughter of *Loth* seeking to overthrow her mother, involving a mysterious ceremony and sacrifice of an Elf priest. So, the PCs stop the ceremony and kill the goddess. Possible, but wrong. Despite the daughter's attempts to kill the mother, this chaotic evil entity will exterminate the party if they harm her daughter. Why? We're not sure, even by the end. *Dungeon* 83 adventures generally revolve around new monsters (as if the *Monster Manual* had not just been released), but there is a neat *Dark Matter* scenario set in London that has potential (for WFRP). Whether this magazine is worth the gamble depends upon your need for adventures. There are many alternatives including free Internet source material and *Hogshead* releases.



White Dwarf is familiar to all WFRPers as the house magazine for Games Workshop, and needs little description. Since GW dropped WFRP, there is obviously little of direct use, apart from an occasional background piece on some aspect of the *Warhammer World* being utilised for an army or game expansion. To illustrate, *White Dwarf* 252 provides a long overdue introduction of the real world Hussites into the Old World in the form of *Leon Huss*, a disgruntled cleric of *Sigmar*. Whilst much of what GW does infuriates me, I tend to find their games playable and fun. Continuity issues might be the bane of WFRP, but GW are still capable of producing the goods, albeit rather expensively. Production values in *White Dwarf* are high, advertisement padding is even higher, and their fiction is limited to colour commentary for the battle reports. *White Dwarf* really is not worth its price and one would have to be a real *Warhammer World* completist to invest in it. Perhaps of more interest is the development of the various *Black Library* publications that are now offering direct magazine support for the likes of *Warmaster*, *Bloodbowl*, *Mordheim* and *Battlefleet Gothic*. A particularly neat development is *Inferno*, a quarterly 'magazine' that contains fiction set in the GW game worlds. I have to say that much of it is your typically hack fantasy fiction writing, but at about £5 per issue (less on subscription) it does offer material directly set in the Old World. Whilst I am not particularly impressed with the writing standard, it does offer source material for *The Empire* and elsewhere, and contains the occasional gem - including one *James Wallis* and his stories of a priest of *Morr* in *Middenheim*. If one is happy to read hack fantasy on the bus into work, then this is a publication worth the money. If you dislike the genre, then you will dislike *Inferno*.

Games Unplugged immediately raises concerns in my view. It is a professional magazine



that sets out to offer critical analysis and news of the professionals. Can it actually pull this off in a small industry where everyone knows everyone else and personal ego conflicts seem endemic? I think not. I have a personal example of my problems with the judgement of *Games Unplugged* reviews. *GU3* reviews the revised edition *Sovereign Stone* RPG and awards it an A grade. So? Well, I bought the original *Sovereign Stone* on the strength of some fiction I had read, set in the world of *Sovereign Stone*. The premise is of a coming darkness, not dissimilar to WFRP or *Gemini*, and so has interest to me as a WFRPer. The game was, however, very disappointing and lies unused on a shelf. The fact that

they award it an 'A' grade is not in itself suspicious, although I think the commentary is extremely generous. However, one of the authors of the game is *Don Perrin*, a gentleman who reviews other products within the issue. We, therefore, have a professional writer reviewing products of other professionals' games in the same issue as his own is reviewed, and of a product that I own and believe to be considerably worse than *GU* would have me believe. This is unsatisfactory and leads me to the conclusion that I find that I cannot trust *Games Unplugged* reviews. I am reminded, however, of the film industry where complaints about reviews by critics revolve around the fact that they are not "creative" folk themselves, which lends support to the *Games Unplugged* position. I think one major difference here is that I am not necessarily proposing that employed critics or journalists should be trusted any more than writers.

The people that I trust most to offer me a neutral viewpoint on a game, the people who paid money for the product. Of course, we all have varying levels of prejudice about types and styles of game, but this can be partially covered by offering more than one perspective, rather than pretending to offer a definitive, neutral-perspective deconstruction. Aside from this, GU3 certainly looks professional with good layout and an Elmore cover. The news is concisely presented, but I am unsure whether I really care who owns the Star Trek license, how WotC formed and who GU believe to be the most promising small game companies, particularly as most of those reviewed are about 5 years old. I also found their news section more like a collection of corporate press releases than a serious reporting of news. GU3 is a complete games magazine, and not simply for RPGers, although I doubt whether board gamers would find it worth purchasing simply for those reviews. I ought also to praise the exclusion of computer games in GU3 for I am not entirely convinced of their worth. I know the common argument that computer RPGs can bring in new blood, but I do not buy into that belief. It seems to me that many kids (says he, sounding very old) actually believe that an RPG game is purely a computer game, and have no interest or understanding of our own games. RPGs are much more setting-up intensive and need more people in a given location, and are always going to struggle against computer versions. Certainly, I can imagine RPGers are likely to support turn-based games over real time games, and the computer industry generally rubbishes the former. This might make it harder for games that we want to appear. Still, I think there are many other places for computer reviews, and too little space for RPG (and board) game reviews. GU3 also offers a free game, not uncommon with game magazines, but I really doubt anyone bothers to play them. Since GU3 reviews a number of cheap games - many for less than £5 - and praises them, do we really want a pullout centre and to cut up the magazine for poor quality counters?

Valkyrie is the much-hyped independent British RPG magazine, although it received rather a savaging from the professionals in a previous Warpstone interview. On a production level, I find the presentation and typeface unhelpful and the general level of artwork poor - with some major exceptions - compared with the better amateur efforts. The magazine offers news and reviews, but I find them unconvincing on the whole in their neutrality on behalf of their readership. Valkyrie 20 is a dreadful attempt at a parody of the early RPG games. Given that the new D&D continues in the vein of monsters and traps, I found it rather ironic. Valkyrie 21 offers four game-specific scenarios of varying length and features on the nature of evil and assassins. The latter offers promise, since the assassin is an underdeveloped persona.

Unfortunately, what we get is a rendition of the history of assassins and a potted history (sorry) of hash. Quite why RPGers need to know that Abel (1980) - no bibliography to check the reference - states that the Talmud mentions cannabis between 500-600AD I have no idea. This is another example of a fundamental flaw in professional magazines, since they try and produce generic articles. If I wanted a history lesson, I could go to far better sources. What I want from a magazine is history utilised in a game-specific article that I can use in my game that week. Does the Old World have assassins? How are they organised in WFRP? Does the Emperor fear them? Is there an Old Man in Araby? History is obviously a rich source for ideas, but I think that a professional gaming magazine has to do more than simply offer a potted history. It needs to be applied to gaming, and (ideally) a game world and game mechanics. I also found it rather like a lecture, a tone that seems to pervade the magazine. One feels that certain self-appointed experts are deigning to explain how to role-play, and writing the same articles that they wrote in every other independent professional magazine. And they wonder why they fail! Still, Valkyrie does contain useful articles within the morass. The assassin article is redeemed by its concluding part in which someone explains how they developed the class within their C&S game. Why could the whole piece not be more like this? Two of the adventures in this issue are actually quite good. Still, Valkyrie is best summed up to me by its article on Victorian London, a period very much in vogue and upon which much material has already been written. Its sub-title of "a fresh perspective on a stale metropolis" is ironic beyond belief.

To my mind *Knights of the Dinner Table* is a comic, but it won an award at GenCon as a magazine and so is included here. Whilst there are gaming articles in some of the issues, the centre is the KoDT comic strip and the magazine lives or dies by the reader's reaction to this. Whilst the strip is variable, I like it and everyone has to read KoDT at least once. Like the other magazines reviewed here, I find their product reviews suspiciously positive, but they do provide useful synopses of web



material for niche game systems. Anyone who can take the space to provide me with reviews and links for Star Frontiers has to be worth supporting.

Conclusion

I have been harsh, but as professional products in a commercial market these products have to withstand such consumer criticism. To my mind, a magazine product has to serve one of the following functions:

News: If one is willing to pay £3-4 for a news sheet, whose news is at least one month out of date, then a magazine can provide a useful throwaway for reading on the ubiquitous bus into work. My issue with professional magazines here is that, because they are part of the establishment, the reader must remain cautious the extent to which their news is independent. Always a fine line to tread; to what extent do they wish to peddle unsubstantiated rumours that might hurt friends or report accurate news that might upset potential employers? For those with access to the Internet, this source of news is likely to be cheaper and more garrulous; in the professional magazines, it will be better edited and more accurate given that time will have allowed them to weed out the more hysterical versions. This is a choice call.

Reviews: An important function given the cost of gaming, but one that I cannot dispel my cynicism about. Professional magazines reviewing professional products by professionals is simply asking for bias.

System-based scenarios: I firmly believe that since most games have their own nuances, the best scenarios are purposely written for specific game systems. We know that WFRP is not likely to have its own adventures published in professional magazines as the game is just too small. Still, basics such as whether a system has a 'detect lie' spell are essential to the formulation of an adventure. Unfortunately, most magazines historically favour generic scenarios - or simply attach statistics at the end - as reaching the greatest market. *Dungeon* adventures are universally far too high fantasy for WFRP, which leaves me with little interest in their adventures. Worse, as outlined above, I find very few scenarios of any real quality in any form. Still, despite my generally negative comments, Valkyrie does score quite well here.

Ideas: The root of any magazine has to be the ideas and enthusiasm it plants in us to go away and improve our games. Am I a jaded old scrooge? Either that, or these magazines are simply not worth the money. With some notable exceptions, they seem to offer a conveyor belt of repetitive generalisations on the nature of gaming, how to run better games and what we should be put on our games. These things might need to be said, but do they have to be repeated in every magazine in every issue? Worse, good ideas were very scarce indeed, and herein lies the primary problem facing these magazines. Given the vast range of literature, audio and visual media available, can we not get these same ideas from other sources more easily and cheaply? Allow me to give an eulogy to *Farscape*, a Science Fiction serial that has just completed its second season on the BBC. The basic premise is that a group of disparate individuals are thrown together (sound familiar?) on a space ship and chased around the galaxy. This might sound typical science fiction fare, but the characterisation - via excellent acting and writing - is magnificent. The group dislikes each other (a familiar feeling for me at the moment) and are warring against themselves as much as their enemies (they must have been watching me play). Of course, over two series friendships blossom, enemies change and problems are solved. The point? It reminded me exactly what a party of PCs is facing, what they would act like and how to create dramatic tension as a GM. Now we are not professional actors or writers of the calibre of the *Farscape* cast, we are simply people who game after work. However, I remembered more about what the game should be like by watching a single TV serial that cost me nothing than spending some £100 on assorted magazines in the last year. I personally found *Farscape* riveting and almost Shakespearean in its scope. It might do nothing for you, but in the worlds of film and literature there must be other books or films that can inspire to play or run a game better, that can produce ideas to stimulate. I am not simply suggesting that poor Valkyrie and the rest must compete with *Farscape*, but I am of the opinion that it has to enthrall me. Many of the amateur fanzines actually do this. The love of a game or an idea seeps through the pages, whereas with too many of the magazines in this review I get no such sense. These magazines should be a hotbed of gaming ideas; they are not to me.

I found very little to commend any of these magazines. There is very little WFRP specific material in any commercial periodical these days, and in my view of the products here, even less originality or enthusiasm for gaming. This is very disappointing. However, the number of failed commercial magazines suggests that I am not alone in this feeling. After all, if miniature wargaming can manage to support two commercial products available at all high street newsagents, I would imagine that FRP can support one at specialist retailers. However, this is not really the purpose of me writing - I have no interest in the economics of magazine production; I want to know whether a particular product is worth my subscription payment. On this evidence, the answer is no, and even more sadly this is not simply because of the paucity of WFRP material. It is due to the lack of new ideas, passion and perspective.

NEXT ISSUE OUT WINTER 2001

REALMS OF SORCERY

Here it comes – we hope to bring you a review

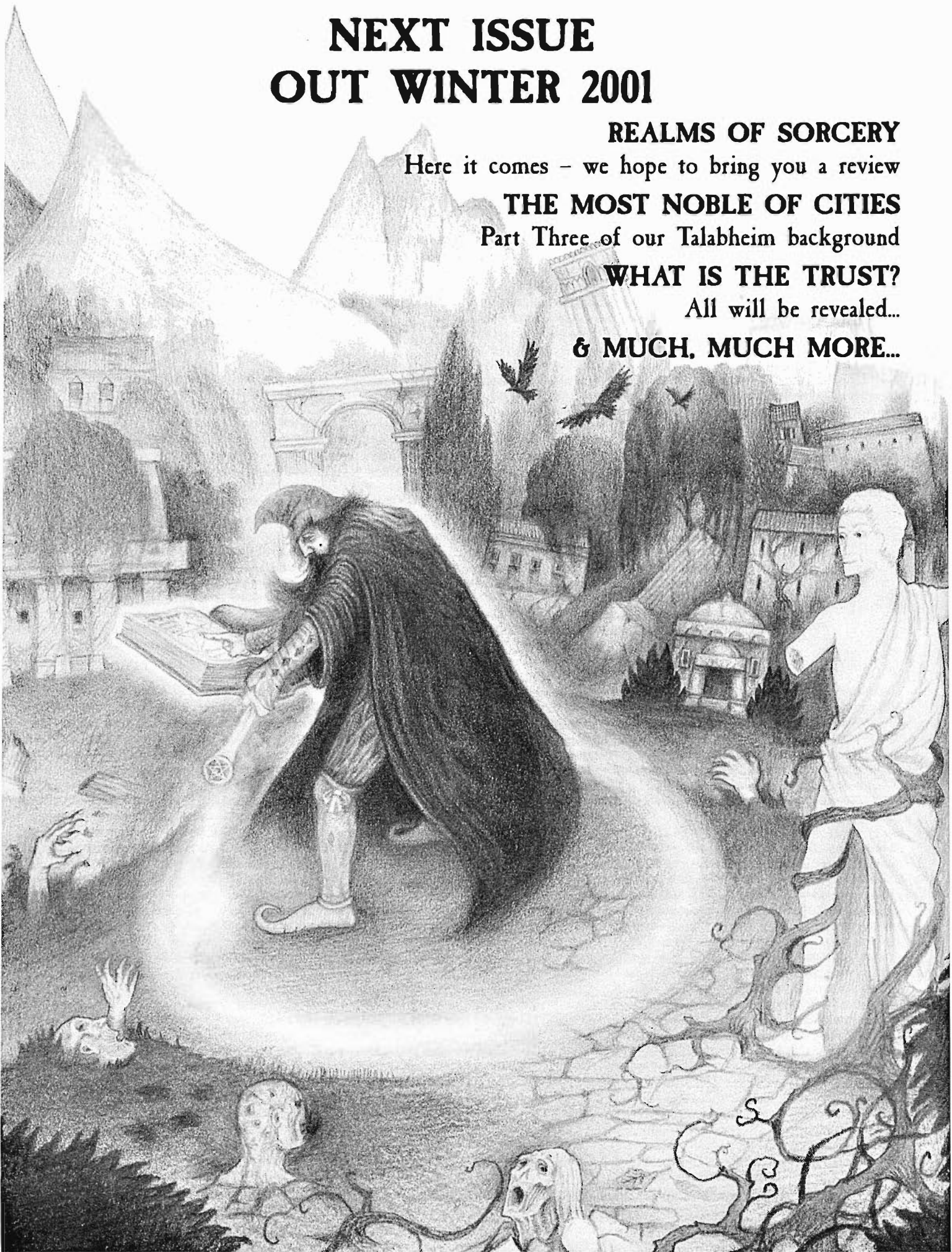
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IN THE NAME OF LOVE

A Short Scenario by John Foody

"They come to our towns; strangers, pedlars and gypsies. We know not of their past, their crimes, their families. Is it not right we look to them first when evil is done?"

Magistrate Hans Angemhigh

This scenario is based in the town of Schoppendorf but can be relocated to any small to medium sized town without any difficulties. It is not really suitable for a city as it features a Pedlar. The goods and services a Pedlar offers are not generally needed in a city, which has large markets and traders to meet the same need. In fact many towns will also have these and Pedlars usually ply their trade among villages and farmsteads. They bring items that can be easily found locally, items purchased from larger centres. In this case the Pedlar has come to the town to sit out the harsh winter.

The scenario should easily be finished in one session and is thus designed to be played as a filler between large scenarios. The plot centres on an alleged rape. Rape was said to be common during Medieval and Renaissance times but prosecutions were seldom made. Certainly 'Gentlemen' could expect little condemnation. The scenario does also make certain assumptions, most noticeably the reactions of the witness to the "rape". She is seen as not being familiar with the sounds of sex. It can be argued that in a time where people lived very close together, a master's bedroom was often at the top of the stairs so all had to travel through it. Similarly, it can be argued that since villagers would likely live in one room, this ignorance would be unlikely. However, even a cursory glance at folk songs and the like show just how unprepared some young maidens were...

Behind Closed Doors

Vorster and Alexia Juler have been married for ten years now. When they married,

Vorster was an established artisan, ten years a widower. Alexia was seventeen years of age, the daughter of a merchant, forced to marry an older man. Her father believed this would advance his own position, not to mention getting rid of a drain on his resources. Vorster idolised his young wife, even if he never really loved her. The couple remained childless, with a number of stillborn pregnancies. Alexia was fond of her husband and generally enjoyed her life, socialising with the other ladies of her station in town.

A year ago, Franz Stotter, her husband's tailor, began to woo her after she collected some items from him. Unmarried, Stotter is a serial womaniser. Charming, well spoken and a great wit, the pair began an affair. They would grab lustful moments in his shop or at his house and, unusually for Stotter, he began to fall in love with Alexia. This was to last until a month ago, when Alexia called off the affair, much to Stotter's anger. He was not used to being discarded by his mistresses and his ego was bruised. Three days ago, Alexia's maid Agnes came to collect some clothes ordered two months ago. While she waited she told Stotter that she was due to visit her mother for three days, leaving the following morning. Stotter spent two days pacing up and down, fighting with himself whether to go to Alexia's house while her husband was at work. In the end he could not resist.

As soon as Alexia opened the door the old lust was ignited. The pair made their way upstairs, away from the accident of prying eyes through windows. However, Agnes returned early from her visit home. She entered to hear what she believed was her mistress in pain. Sneaking upstairs she spied the pair making love and believed her mistress was being attacked. Quickly she turned and ran from the house for help.

From passionate embrace to panic within a heartbeat, the illicit pair knew they had been seen. Alexia believed that she would be ruined if her husband found out. Thinking quickly, she told Stotter that he was to strike her. He refused but she insisted and he did so. He struck hard and she was knocked unconscious, bleeding from the nose and lip. Stotter escaped through the back of the house.

When the Watch arrived they found the half-naked Alexia sprawled across the floor. The Watch sent for her husband and waited. When she came to she said she had been attacked but could not remember anything about the man. Ashamed of her actions, she did not want her husband to know the details. However, she gave her version of events to her brother, Gregor Glaser. Angrier than she had ever seen him before he swore that he would find the culprit and see him brought to justice. All her protests amounted to nothing. Alexia was now afraid that her brother would discover the truth and she didn't know how he would react. Thus, she set about making sure her story would be vindicated.

A Pedlar, from whom she had bought some lace, had visited her that same morning. She thought that he would probably have moved on by now and if he hadn't then his word would not be believed over hers. By the time her brother meets the PCs she is ready for them.

Enter the PCs

One afternoon the PCs are approached by Gregor Glaser, a well-dressed artisan, who offers to buy them a drink. How he came to choose them is for the GM to decide. Perhaps they have been recommended to him or are the only people in town he thinks can undertake this task. Once they have agreed to listen to him, he begins his story, obviously upset.

"Two days my younger sister Alexia was... was raped." He whispers the last word and takes a swig from his drink before continuing. "I want you to find the bastard responsible. The Watch haven't been able to do anything, they believe she somehow brought it upon herself. I want him brought to justice. Her husband Vorster is a good man and he is devastated, while my sister, is course, extremely distraught. If we can catch this scum it will help them both. Will you not help me?"

Assuming the PCs say yes he will offer them a sum of money to be decided by the GM. He cannot afford too much as he does not have cash to spare. He is a jeweller



of some standing in the town and thus could offer the payment in jewellery instead. If the PCs ask for this they would be able to earn more (though if they then sold it on they would likely get less). After this he tells them "the facts".

"Agnes, the household maid, returned home yesterday afternoon to see Alexia being assaulted. She rushed out of the house and knocked at a neighbour's. This woman sent her young boy to fetch the Watch. However, by the time they arrived the attacker was gone. They have been able to find no sign of him. Indeed, the investigating Sergeant made it clear to me that Alexia must have encouraged her attacker somehow. My sister remembers little but she is willing to talk to you."

Glaser knows nothing else but will take the PCs to the Vorster's home if they ask. Talking to the various participants will allow the PCs to build up a picture of what happened, enough to be able to track the Pedlar down.

Agnes

Seventeen years old, Agnes is an innocent. She was raised in a nearby village protected from life by her widowed mother. When she was fifteen her mother died of consumption and a family friend arranged for her to take a position with the Vorsters. She now lives in the family home, and although competent at her job, takes little notice of what goes on around her. She has no idea that her mistress is having an affair. She is devoted to Shallya and visits the Temple each day. Shy natured, she will be embarrassed talking to the PCs, male or female, about what she witnessed.

On the day of the attack she returned home from visiting her aunt to find the house quiet. Once she left her newly purchased vegetables in the kitchen she headed for her room. It was in the hallway that she heard cries of pain from her mistress. Quietly she sneaked upstairs. At the top of the stairs in the master bedroom she saw the man attacking her mistress. She bounded down the stairs and knocked on Frau Strauberger's door. When she told her what has happened she sent her six-year-old son to get the Watch and when they arrived she followed them in. Inside her mistress was on the floor, unconscious and bleeding. There were no signs of the attacker.

Further questioning of Agnes is needed to get the details. She had been visiting her aunt in her home village for two days, as she was ill. However, she recovered and Agnes had returned a day early. Her mistress' cries of pain were in fact the sounds of sex, but Agnes has no idea of this. The man was only half dressed and she remembers him wearing a brown shirt. He also had brown hair. Frau Strauberger told her not to go back into the house until the Watch arrived and she was so scared she didn't. Once the watch had searched the house, the Sergeant sent for Master Juler.

Alexia

Alexia is willing to see the PCs, as she knows she needs to try and convince them that she is the innocent victim. She will speak to them in a darkened drawing room, a veil covering her bruises (and generally hide her face, as she believes people will see she is lying). On the table beside her is a bottle of vodka, from which she frequently refills her glass.

As the PCs begin she apologises and says she can remember very little, "and for that I am glad". She was in the bedroom, when she was grabbed from behind and didn't see the attacker, although she does recall that he smelt very bad. If asked she says he was "dirty and sweaty".

If Alexia is asked about a pedlar, she recalls buying lace from him that same day. She bought six pieces of lace and five of these are now stored in a drawer. The sixth piece has been planted to help incriminate the beggar.

The House

There is little to be gained by searching the house. The only clues lie in the master bedroom. This has been cleaned since the attack and is spotless. However, the PCs will find a piece of lace and a cut of fine silk under the bed. Most will recognise them as the small kind of material that pedlars sell from door-to-door. Alexia and Agnes both deny they have ever seen them, although Alexia says the lace is similar to that she bought from the pedlar. If the PCs ask her to show them, it will confirm that this is the case. She will claim to have bought five pieces.

Juler

Alexia's husband is devastated at what has happened but is trying to banish it from his mind. To that end, he has thrown himself into his work. He was at work when it happened and was summoned by the Watch. He knows nothing and will be very upset and angry if it is suggested his wife was having an affair.

The Neighbours

All the neighbours are shocked, and many are scared, by recent events. During the day most nearby homes have only mothers and their children present. Until the PCs convince them they are not a threat they will have to talk to them through the door. All will say they do not remember seeing anyone suspicious that day. However, if asked, nearly all remember the pedlar's visit. One elderly lady remembers him very well as he asked her for tea in exchange for needles and thread. She describes him

as around thirty, bearded and grubby. He said his name was Otto and he originally came from the town of Bonstad. She doesn't think he seemed too bright but he was pleasant and polite. Any neighbour who spoke to the Pedlar will be able to say he was selling lace, needles, pins and other nik-naks, as well as some fine silk. This is an expensive commodity and he only had a small piece, enough for a handkerchief or two.

Another neighbour, if asked if she saw anyone else, remembers seeing a well-dressed man, tall with a trimmed beard knocking at the Juler's door, carrying a parcel. This was Stotter but Alexia will claim it was her brother. However, if asked, her brother says he did not visit that day and had not done so for a week. Additionally his description does not match that of Gregor Glaser.

The Pedlar

If the PCs decide to track down the Pedlar, they won't have too much difficulty. The guards at the town gate clearly remember him arriving two days ago. He is a regular visitor to the town and the guards consider him no trouble. He always stays at The Great Eastern inn, located a couple of streets away from the gate.

In his thirties, Otto has been a Pedlar since his early teenage years. Not very bright, it is his happy nature that gets him by. He usually travels the rural areas locally and is a familiar face that many are glad to see. He has come to town to treat himself to a bath and a couple of days of luxury (i.e. sleeping in a bed).

He will answer any questions the PCs ask as best he can but becomes terrified at even the most low-key threats. PCs will feel he is telling them the truth but whether they believe their own instincts is another matter. He denies attacking anyone but does remember the woman he sold six pieces of lace to. He happily shows them similar items from his bag. This also contains two pieces of blue silk, similar to the one planted in the bedroom (although they are a noticeably different shade). However, he says he has not sold any of these in town, nor for some weeks.

The Tailor

Assuming the PCs believe Otto, it is possible that the PCs may decide to try and track down the origins of the silk. Such an item is still rare enough to be unusual. The number of tailors depends on the size of the town, and all deny knowledge of the silk. The few that have stocks happily show them and it is apparent that none match the sample they have.

However, when they visit Franz Stotter's shop, his calm professionalism slips quickly into nervousness when questioned. He denies having seen such a sample before. Certainly it matches none of the other silk rolls in his premises, but that is because it was the last of a batch. If the PCs force him on the issue, he sends his apprentice running for the Watch, proclaiming the PCs are threatening him. PCs should be aware that it is likely that he will be believed above them.

Outcome

What happens here really does depend on the PCs. The scenario should play out based on their actions and motives. There is neither easy answer nor grand climax, instead just a messy situation. Whatever they do someone will get hurt. If they do nothing, Vorster Juler will be forever eaten with guilt and shame for the attack. Perhaps he buries himself in drink or work, but either way he will never be happy. Quite possibly this will finish driving Alexia away and she will end up with Stotter - only to be discarded soon after.

Should the PCs arrange for Otto the Pedlar to be arrested and do nothing to discover the real story, then he will be hung days later. PCs may be called to give evidence, and depending on their testimony, Otto's sentence might be reduced. In this case the guilt is both Stotter's and Alexia's and both deal with it in different ways. Alexia soon sinks into alcoholic depression while Stotter just beats his apprentice ever more often, although in time he forgets about Alexia and Otto.

Another option open to the PCs is to blackmail the couple. Whether Otto has been charged at this stage depends on how willing they are to pay. Stotter will certainly pay up for a short period but will soon become angry and call the PCs' bluff. A couple of months after the incident has passed, PCs will be able to do little to bring the case back to the authorities' attention.

The best way of ensuring the scheming couple are brought to justice is for the PCs to contrive to set them up. This can be done by luring them together with the threat of discovery so that they can be overheard. This will partly depend on whom they get to listen. If the PCs can find someone respectable to trust them and the result is the pair incriminating themselves, then both will suffer. The matter will become public and they will be punished. Certainly disgraced, they will be sentenced to a year in prison, after which both leave the town forever. If this happens Glasner refuses to pay, saying the PCs should have come to him; "I did not hire you to disgrace my sister."

If the PCs go straight to Glasner, he will listen gravely to their story. If they have enough to convince him, he will thank them for time, pay them, and ask for the matter to remain secret. He then approaches his sister, who confirms the facts. If Otto has been arrested, he pulls some strings for him to be freed.

The PCs should be rewarded for Experience Points ensuring Otto remains free, but also for discretion in following their enquiries.

THE FORUM

My word! I don't what happened but we have got a load of letters. The shock is so much we have given over two pages to them. Thanks to all those who wrote in. Keep them coming.

Thomas Larue: A few comments on issue 13 to begin with. What was *The Warriors' Grimoire* all about? Come on! Didn't you state that Warpstone "... tries not to include articles that rewrite game rules or are themselves rules-heavy." The whole article goes against the idea of the swift combat system of WFRP. Rules of engagement should be simple, not like law books. The original 'unadorned' design of the WFRP combat rules should not be interpreted as a source or an excuse for a sterile and dull 'combat environment'. Instead I would argue that it displays the flexibility needed for different players such as 'Lars the Barbarian' or 'Pierre the Duellist' to live up to their roles. Let the players act out and improvise: "So... let me get this straight... you want to do a back-flip while chopping the mutant's two heads off and throw your dagger into the fleeing cultist's throat at the same time... well, here are the dice, give me a 1-roll with -30 to begin with... Oh, I see, you only have 135 and you lack the *Acrobatic* skill. Well, this should prove interesting..." Role-playing sessions should not evolve to rule debating seminars. Just go with the flow! In the same spirit, I second Robert Rees' criticism on the *Live by the Book* article in issue 12 and talking about articles on books: Good job on the *Between the Lines* article, Richard! When time is short and your burglar PC start to repeat the phrase "But what books are in the library?" for the third time, the article's *bouquet* of titles certainly comes in handy. Anyway, returning briefly to issue 13, it greatly improved through *Sold in the Hills*. A perfect short scenario to put in between great chunks of an epic campaign. I especially liked the depressed magistrate (and the note on play test results, good detail!). Turning our attention to issue 14, I am looking forward to the follow up for the very worthwhile 'I know not...' The slavery article was OK. One could only have wanted a place description (wouldn't the almost abandoned ports of Neue Emskrank or Salkalten make a good unofficial slave market?) together with it, although Ulnar Morgan's Ship of Fools was a nice touch. Last but not least, Tim Eccles is doing a great job on his *Correspondent*. Well, this has been an awful letter. Almost nothing but praise... hmmm, will have to work on that until next time...

The Correspondent Replies

Tim Eccles: Peter Butterworth referred to my article (issue 15) on women as advocating a 'politically correct' Old World. This certainly was not the aim, and I think my other pieces in the series have stressed the dark, gothic and unfair nature of the world consistently. Essentially, I was trying to offer a template for examining the place of women in RPG societies and place WFRP within that. To my mind the WFRP rulebook clearly shows women in positions of power and engaging in 'male' careers, and so I was suggesting that this should be reflected more in adventures. That is not the same as suggesting a perfect equality, although Peter is not alone in thinking that I was suggesting this. In the UK, it is a reasonably well proven contention that women are paid less for doing the same job, are less likely to advance into senior positions and are subject to having to work harder within the same function, than male colleagues. I would envisage that the Old World operates in this vein; in other words women can be found in senior positions, but this is not common, they have to continuously face prejudice and find themselves having to work harder for less than male equivalents. This was the simple message of the article.

Richard Iorio: Issue 15 was the usual mix bag of great articles and not so great articles. The highlight of the issue for me was *In Defence of The Empire*, without a doubt one of the best articles I have read in a long time. Finally the Cult of Sigmar was detailed. This is an article I will continue to refer to and use for inspiration in my own games.

The flip side of this was *The Lore of the Ranger*. I had numerous problems with this article and I think it suffers from the writer not understanding the structure of the game.

By ranger, does Ouroboros mean an actual character class, or the associated careers? This is an important distinction because a lot of these these skills do not fit with the careers associated with rangers. Why should a herdsman be able to learn Legend Lore? Why would a poacher be able to learn Rope Craft? Why exactly is Wilderness Cooking needed when the Cooking skill already exists?

Now if the writer happened to play a game with a ranger character class I can see the need for the skills described. In WFRP, there is no such over reaching character class. There are groupings of similar careers that fall under the title of ranger. These careers are different in tone and background, and many of these skills are not needed. Similarly many of these skills should not belong exclusively to ranger careers as well.

Legend Lore is a skill that could be learned by academics and makes more sense there. Similarly Rope Craft fits better with rogues. Build Basic Structure is logical for laborers, while Joinery is appropriate to artisans. These skills are just a few examples of the writer not seeing the forest for the trees.

In addition to the number of hair splitting skills we are presented with skills that can easily be replicated by using the existing skills already in place. For example, Wood Carving. Isn't this a skill that can be replicated under Art (Wood Carving)? For the life of me I can not see any difference between Make Clothing and the existing skill Tailor.

Two of the funnier skills are Whitewater Rowing and Hiking. In the case of Whitewater Rowing, allow a character with Row to make an unmodified Initiative test when navigating rapids. As for Hiking, is this needed? You can assume all of the great insight gained from this skill with the character's Intelligence statistic. Checking for dangerous spots in the trail can be handled with an Observe test, actually all of the activities listed in Hiking can be covered with Observe tests.

Then we come to the experience cost. Why should the cost not be similar to what is already presented in the WFRP rulebook? As with his earlier article, exactly how many Experience Points does he award his players? Ouroboros claims that the skills can make a truly 'master woodsman,' and thus needs something to spend his experience points on when a wizard is buying spells. The last time I check the cost of spells were 100/100/200/300/400 for wizards and 200/400/600/800 for specializations. If this is still the case, wouldn't the ranger be powering up on these new skills at a faster rate than the wizard is buying new spells?

I understand the desire of players and GMs wanting to power up PCs. They often confuse WFRP for a typical high fantasy, level based RPG set in forgettable realms. I think there is a need to clear up the rules on tests, and that there is a need to expand the skills presented in the book. Yet 'The Lore of the Ranger,' was not a good attempt, and suffered from poor planning on the writer's part.

I have noticed a trend in Ouroboros' pieces to tilt things in favor of one group of careers. It was at first evident with 'Warriors' Grimoire,' where fighters were given a wide range of power stunts so they could lay waste to hordes of bad guys. Now with 'The Lore of the Ranger' ranger careers have been treated to an upping in power. I shudder to think what is in store for the academics.

Am I an out of touch old timer? No, I simply think it is not too much to ask for rules to be consistent to what is given in the rulebook. If a writer wants to change the rule, then I would like to see justifications for the said changes. Thought should have been given as to what careers gain access to these skills. Thought should have also been given to assigning these skills to all ranger careers. Thought should have been given to the skills that currently exist and how they can be applied to other situations.

In regards to John Foody's editorial, I have no problem with new ideas or different articles. I do have a problem with consistency of the rules, and once again Ouroboros fails to be consistent with the rules. His ideas were good, but this was clouded by the lack of consistency.

Jeff Rogers: I noted with some interest the discussions

concerning WFRP, the magic system, the probable revamping of said magic system, and the concern over the game becoming a slugfest for high powered magicians and priests (whew!). My main response is that this can all be taken care of by the GM. Repeated in the game the authors have always made it clear that spells may not be available for a variety of reasons. There is actually a ton of situations available for a GM to retain control of a campaign. That said, I feel whole heartedly that the system should be revamped and the option of a high powered campaign be made available.

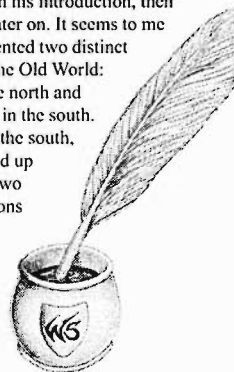
Why? Well, in my gaming group we have two brothers. The elder is like myself and most of the others, and has been a jock for most of his life. His little brother, however, was born some 3 months premature and has suffered quite a few physical handicaps because of this (bad eyesight, poor hearing, stunted growth, physical weakness, and poor coordination and stamina... not fun). This kid absolutely cannot identify with a warrior. He has always played mages. Always.

But the system doesn't allow mages or priests to reach the epic proportions that characters in the background fluff have. Why not? What's wrong with that? In the campaign series characters have the possibility of becoming major movers and shakers in the empire...if you're a warrior. At least it seems geared that way. I've seen how some people are against the game becoming a 'high powered' or 'high fantasy' game. Guess what? When you have daemons running around due to hyperactive cultists summoning them willy-nilly...dwarfen rune encrusted stones of earth shaking power...wargates opening in cities in the empire...it becomes a HIGH FANTASY CAMPAIGN!

Let the mages have fun. Its all up to the GM anyway.

Mark Saunders: I just wanted to congratulate you on *A Touch of Evil!* in Warpstone 16, which was very thought-provoking, and aired issues that as you said are all too often little thought of. I've often pondered on the implications for play using pacifist or pseudo-pacifist characters. If (for example) your party includes a cleric of Shallya, do adventures always rely on them having to compromise their principles or turn a blind eye as others do the killing? Most published adventures require a certain amount of killing to bring about a successful resolution of the plot. Admittedly there is a lot to be said for the challenge of roleplaying a character whose principles are always tragically higher than the realities of life will permit, but isn't there a place for allowing creative non-violent solutions on occasion? If players believe at the end of the day there is no option but kill or be killed then the sense of genuine moral struggle is lost. If a character genuinely believes that it is wrong to kill the corrupt merchant, and finds a creative way to punish him but leave him alive (a particularly creative scam might be especially appropriate for a devout follower of Ranald), this should be rewarded, not seen as obstructing plot development.

I also wish to make some response to Stephen Cumiskey's article on religious history in Warpstone 15. His initial presentation of the development of the Old Faith from spirit worship and of individual gods from the Old Faith seems plausible, but after that it falls apart a bit. He mentions the north/south divide in his introduction, then goes on to ignore this key issue later on. It seems to me fairly obvious that you have presented two distinct pantheons of major licit gods in the Old World: Taal, Rhya, Ulric, Mannann in the north and Verena, Morr, Myrmidia, Shallya in the south. Ranald seems more connected to the south, and Sigmar is essentially a jumped up patron saint of The Empire. The two pantheons have obvious connections within themselves, and obviously developed coherent theologies in isolation from each other. At some point (probably through simple movement of ideas between urban centres) the southern pantheon also spread



to the north and vice versa, without any overt theological links being made between the two pantheons. Thus no attempt seems to have been made to claim that (for example) Morr and Taal are brothers. This makes far more sense than to see each cult as having developed individually and then been bound briefly together in a proto-Sigmarite unified church (which seems a faintly bizarre notion - Sigmar as Constantine?!?)

Robin Low: Some good stuff in issues 15 and 16. Ranger Lore was a sensible follow-up to the Warrior's Grimoire (which wasn't that bad either, a perfectly reasonable expansion to an otherwise bland sequence of exchanged blows). I hope we'll see similar articles for Rogues and Academics. I think this sort of rules article is quite important - whilst characters should be a lot more than just attributes and skills, it's vital that there's variety amongst those skills and attributes. One wonders if an advantage/disadvantage or quirks system of some sort is worth developing as well?

The article on the Church of Sigmar was excellent. It would be good if it could be developed even further and eventually find its way into an official publication. It struck me that lengthy campaigns could be run purely from a church perspective, with all the PC connected directly to the church in differing capacities.

Issue 16 stands out, not least for the first part of Talabheim, which is clearly going to develop into something special. A Touch was Evil was a valid, interesting article, with implications beyond Warhammer, that avoided getting bogged down with what PCs should and should not do in games. Personally, I have a certain amount of respect for Tim Eycles if he can continue to play Blabby. I once tried to give one of my characters a harder edge and had her torture an NPC for information. Very quickly I realised I'd rendered my character unplayable, at least by me. Fortunately, my GM and fellow players were happy to strike the unhappy event from the record.

I agree wholeheartedly with the opinions expressed in The Correspondent, and I'd like to see the ideas expanded and added to. That said, GMs need to manage this sort of background colour carefully, or else it can become nothing more than archaic trivia.

Despite John Foody's concerns, I found Tintabriel and Aurora a worthwhile exercise, as it highlighted the significance of an easily forgotten (er, sorry) aspect of the Elven nature. The ability of an individual to completely

wipe away a memory has important implications for roleplay and plotting.

News and reviews don't seem to provoke much comment, but I continue to find these sections useful and interesting. All those artistic types deserve a pat on the back, too. Oh, and whoever is responsible for those Hogshhead adverts on the back of every issue deserves some sort award.

Robert Rees: I enjoyed 16 far more than 15 and *A Touch of Evil* definitely leaps out as one of the best articles I have read in any roleplaying publication recently. There is a temptation to reply while 'hot', but that implies an emotional response rather than an intellectual one.

The whole thing reminded me of the Clerks skit on the number of contractors killed by the rebels when they blew up the second Death Star. More seriously though, I'm glad that a roleplaying session generated so much food for thought as I think its an important and productive part of the hobby.

From my own point of view I was surprised the party managed to stick together after such a divisive falling out. Within the games I have been involved in such an event usually leads to a break up of the party or a Stalinist purge of one or other of the factions involved.

As a GM I have no particular point of view on the killing of helpless NPCs. One thing that was clear was that there was a lot of bleed through from the player's ethical position rather than trying to determine what the character's position might have been. All credit to Tim there for making the effort. John K. seemed unclear about his objections as he made an argument almost entirely consisting of references to modern cases.

There is a general principle of GM'ing I hold to that states that you can only brutalise the characters once. After that they will tend to respond to the brutality directed towards them with greater brutality. This is fine for some games but GMs usually have responsibility for the level of brutality a game contains as they more often than not determine the environment the group operates within. Occasionally an aggressive player or set of players might initiate a chain of violence but more commonly with WFRP the GM starts it.

I felt John F. had some double standards with his mention of the 'incompetent watch', 'going underground' etc. One only has to look at the oppressive law and order system of Talabheim to see that if you kill all potential witnesses you are no worse off than if you left them alive. In fact you are

better off for killing everyone because you do not have to go 'underground' or anywhere else. It isn't a choice between the watch looking for a Halfling thief or a Halfling murderer with no witnesses, they are simply looking for 'someone'.

In the opening to the scenario 'Privileges' the characters are meant to see a friend falsely accused, imprisoned, beaten, tortured and then hung without a fair trial. Having witnessed that are they really likely to respect law and order or the lives of those that stand in their way? The GM has already shown to them that their lives are worthless and that the social system they occupy is irredeemably corrupt. Only paragons can turn the other cheek and offer love in the face of such a situation and paragons are far and few between in WFRP.

I am also interested in the answer to one of Tim's questions: would it have mattered if the guard was an Orc, what if it was a Skaven?

The retro-look at the 'original' Doomstones campaign was long overdue and well-deserved. The original modules are definitely worth picking up beyond their historical interest. As a set of WFRP modules? I think they lose a lot of their original appeal, appearing too contrived.

I want to say that I admire the fact that Warpstone is covering games outside the mainstream WFRP. The 7th Sea review was inspired as the game is set in the epoch after that portrayed in the WFRP main book. Perhaps the next step might be to present an alternative campaign set one or two hundred years into the 'future' of the Old World. 'After the closing of the Warp Gates' perhaps, or the 'Return of the Slann'. It would be interesting at least.

Seeing a review of 'Pavis and the Big Rubble' struck me as a bit braver as there is no immediate connection between Glorantha and the Old World. Pavis though is one of the best city settings I have read and offers inspiration for all fantasy games and for running and describing cities in general.

Thanks for the kind mentions of *Carnel*. Hits on the website soared as a result but unusually not one extra subscriber was generated. Perhaps I have shot myself in the foot by providing a copy on the web, now everyone can see how bad the zine is without having to do me the courtesy of writing a letter or sending an e-mail.

Editor (JFF): Robert is the editor of *Carnel* (see page 15 for more details). Check it out ad subscribe. As to alternative campaigns set in the future, well you could be lucky there...

DYING OF THE LIGHT SPOILERS

Neil Lennon: I am writing to offer what I hope is some constructive criticism about the first entirely new adventure Hogshhead have published, namely *The Dying of The Light*. I am a big fan of WFRP and I admire greatly the effort being made to keep the line going.

I was therefore largely disappointed by the first of what I hope will be a whole series of new WFRP adventures. Both myself and my players have played role playing games for more than ten years and most of the group were the same players I took through *The Enemy Within* Campaign. We were therefore expecting a high standard in how the adventure was written and everyone was looking forward to playing it. I think the best way to explain our criticism of this adventure is to describe the story as it progressed over the two sessions we ran with it. At the very least this tale should provide some amusement.

As I said we began the game in high spirits, I had read the adventure thoroughly and to be honest I didn't see any real problems at this point. The game began well enough with the PCs in Marienburg, enjoying the feel of a new city and getting involved in the plot as it developed. The problems started when they left the city and began the journey to find The Egg.

Players, being what they are, never do what the adventure expects and in this case the adventure for some reason assumes the PCs are going to follow a straight line going in the direction shown by the demons tooth they are given. Not my group though. They took one look at the Players Map and decided they were not going to walk through a swamp and that it would be quicker to follow the road. Their plan was simple - carry on along the road taking a couple of bearings with the demons tooth, mark these on the map with

a ruler and pencil and travel to where the lines cross.

At this point I was trying hard to keep a poker face as I realised that by travelling this route the PCs will bypass more than half the encounters in the book. Those they do travel through they will do so in the reverse order and will need to be changed drastically. In other words the adventure only allows for the PCs to travel in one direction! I tried my best to dissuade the group but I didn't want to directly tell them they couldn't go that way. I reminded them that they were warned not to use the tooth too much - that's OK, they said, we only need two or three bearings. Then I tried to stress the number of refugees on the road which were slowing them down. Big mistake. As the PCs were aware that they were on a mission to save Marienburg and possibly the world they decided that this justified stealing some horses to speed up their progress. Then one player got it into his head that what they really needed was a horse and cart. In the process of stealing a cart one PC tried to knock a merchant unconscious with Strike to Stun, rolled two successive 6's and accidentally killed the merchant! This was made worse by the fact that there were witnesses and that the party just left the body by the side of the road.

What followed was then probably my own fault as I hoped that the threat of the law would force them to leave the busy high road and travel across country (thus salvaging some of the adventures planned encounters). While the PCs travelled along the road in their newly acquired cart I told them that a group of Road Wardens could be seen moving up the line of refugees questioning people. Of course they were asking about the cart, but the PCs decided they could not travel across country in a cart nor would they abandon it. They decided to bluff their way out, failed miserably and ended up in a fight with the Road Wardens. As the smoke cleared six Road Wardens lay dead and the refugees who had witnessed

the fight had all fled.

At this point the PCs decided it was easier to go on than turn back. They reached the forest following the road and as The Egg was not there to dissuade them the party massacred the pathetic mutants they encountered arguing that they were chaos mutants and didn't deserve mercy. When they got to the village of mutants they went around it to avoid any further unnecessary bloodshed, thus bypassing another encounter.

On the other side of the forest they found that the swamp had spread further North than they expected and so they decided to follow the edge around in that direction rather than risk travelling through it which could take even longer. At this point we had reached the end of the second session of gaming and by mutual consent we threw in the towel. The PCs had managed to avoid almost every written encounter, they were now wanted outlaws and if they travelled back down the road as they planned they would no doubt be arrested and thrown in jail.

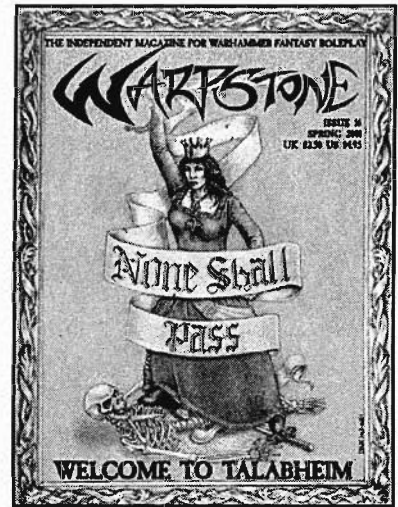
My hope in writing this letter is that by bringing these faults to your attention you may avoid repeating them in future adventures. What led to the most problems with *The Dying of The Light* was that it does not allow for any original thought on the part of the players. My group were right in thinking that it would be easier to travel by road and yet the way the adventure was written assumed the PCs would follow a straight line through a swamp to reach their goal. In all, this is the weakest WFRP adventure I have run and I am only hoping that any future adventures will return to the standard we have been led to expect from WFRP. The game itself is of a superior class to most other fantasy RPG's and I do not think it unreasonable to expect the adventures to be of the same quality.



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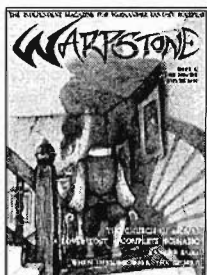
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