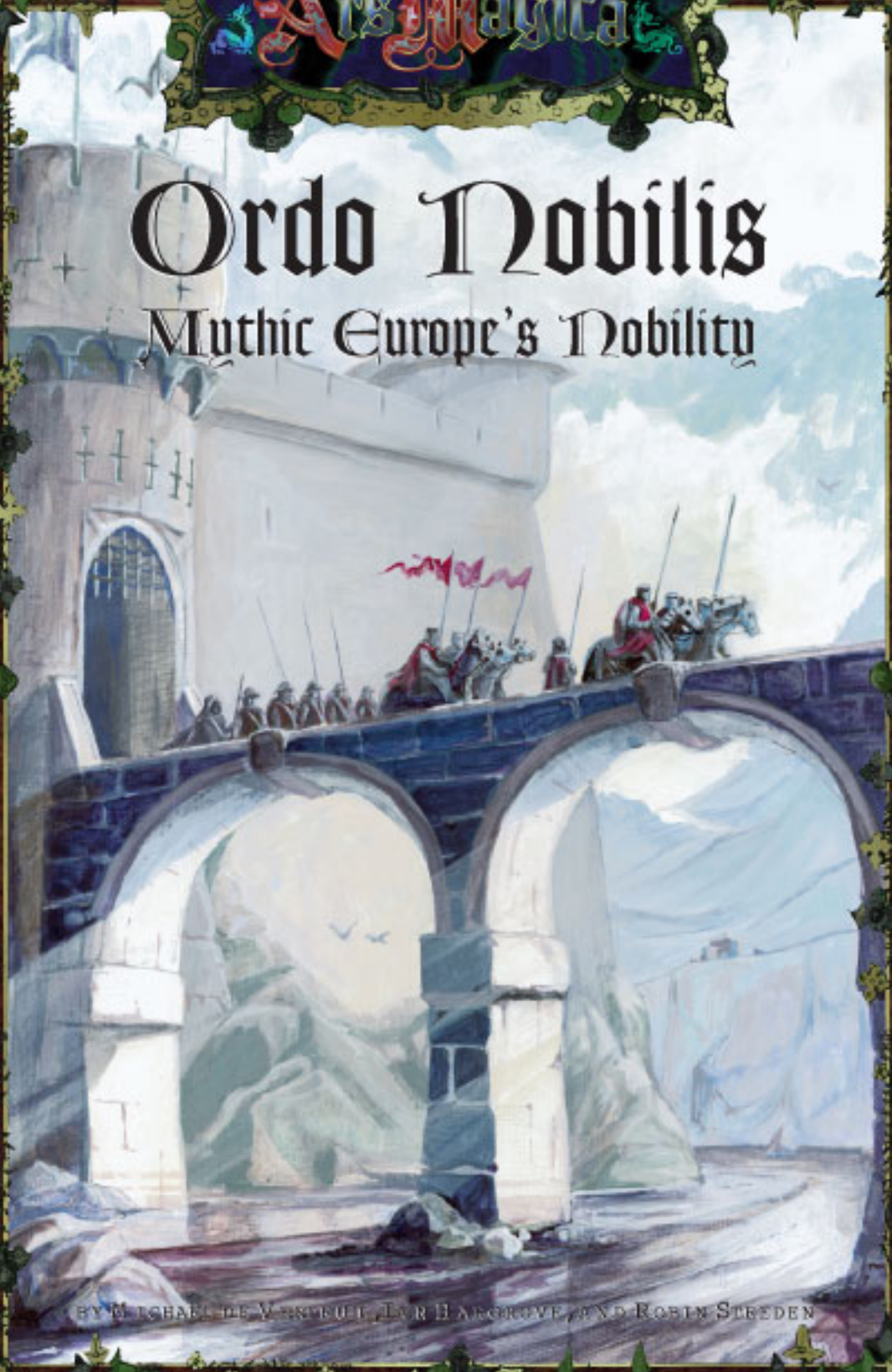
Ars Magica

# Ordo Nobilis

## Mythic Europe's Nobility



By Michael de Wintfuit, Tyr Hargrove, and Robin Steeden

# Ordo Nobilis

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# Preface

Since its release, **Ars Magica** has carved a unique niche in the role-playing market and has developed an audience of devoted and geographically-diverse fans. While published in the United States of America, a substantial portion of the game's English-language sales are made abroad — not counting translated editions.

It is thus with both excitement and some trepidation that we three Canadians offer up our own contribution to the **Ars Magica** "canon," the growing body of sourcebooks which builds and expands on the seminal efforts of Mark and Jonathan. Our excitement needs no explanation. Our trepidation, on the other hand, is due to the fact that the game remains, for many **Ars Magica** fans, a "sacred" trust. We hope our efforts will nonetheless meet with their approval.

With respect to the Mythic element of *Ordo Nobilis*, we have relied most heavily on the contemporary beliefs of the people who lived in the 12th and early 13th centuries. This may disappoint some, as it effectively excludes many of the direct romantic ancestors of modern high fantasy. But the key difference between the romances of Chrétien de Troyes and the other great 12th and 13th century poets is that, unlike the heroic epics of an earlier period, their works were understood by their contemporaries to be fiction. As such, the adventures of Sir Lancelot, a purely fictional character, are never alluded to in *Ordo Nobilis*.

Troupes and storyguides should not be held to such rigorous standards, however, and we commend the medieval romances to our readers as a rich source of color and adventure ideas. In fact, we ourselves have cheated a bit and made an exception of the Romance of Reynard the Fox. We have assimilated this work, along with the fables of Aesop and Phaedrus, with medieval legends of animal faeries.

With respect to the more mundane aspects of 13th century Mythic Europe, *Ordo Nobilis* strives to adhere as closely as reasonably possible to the strictures of historicity. Our aim here is to please the hardened history buffs without turning off those for whom history is more of an "optional extra." The "mundane" history we have included in this sourcebook (and there is a lot of it) is nonetheless probably fraught with unintentional errors, gaps, over-generalizations, and anachronisms. For this we can only apologize and plead the poverty of our scholarship and the time, space, and resources available to us. Nevertheless, we hope our readers will find between these two covers that which will help bring the Middle Ages alive for them. We trust it will prove an invaluable source of ideas and game mechanics for any saga in which contact with mundane medieval society plays a significant role.

With *Ordo Nobilis* we have attempted to look behind the common stereotypes and present a detailed picture of the life of the 13th century nobility, albeit in a mythic context. This sourcebook defines what a noble was, what the various ranks and titles meant, and how nobles interacted with each other and with broader society. It also delves into their concerns and interests, how they lived, what they did with their time, how they did it and, perhaps most importantly, why they did it.

The picture of the medieval nobility we have drawn is a composite one. Because of the intense variation in land tenure, custom, and legal practice from one place to the next, it applies fully nowhere in the Europe of the 13th century. This having been said, our picture probably applies more fully to northern France than

to anywhere else. There are good reasons for this. In the early 13th century, France was the cultural heart of Europe. It was the most populous realm; its ruler was the most powerful secular monarch; and it set fashion in all fields from food, clothing, courtly manners, and vernacular literature to formal theology. The institution of knighthood also found its origin in northern France, and this region of Europe continued to set the trend in the development of ever more expensive armor and weaponry. France was also the heart of the old Carolingian Empire, and its knights played the leading role in the successful First Crusade. Finally, French was quite literally the *lingua franca* of the 13th century European nobility.

Both for these reasons, and to stress the underlying unity of medieval noble civilization, we have chosen to adopt three conscious biases in *Ordo Nobilis* (albeit, sometimes with tongue in cheek): nobles are good, French nobles are best, and pious French nobles are best of all. This hierarchy broadly corresponds to the view universally held by 13th century nobles. How the various "non-French" nobles reconciled this with their own, often justifiable, sense of ethnic pride is of some interest.

For the English nobility the matter was simply dealt with. They considered themselves French, were recognized as French by others, and in fact *were* French (they came from Normandy, after all). The same applied to the nobility of southern Italy, and of the crusader states in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. The Germans took a slightly different tack, mentally substituting the word "Frank" for "French." As founding or (in the case of Bavarians, Saxons, Swabians, and Thuringians) adopted members of the Merovingian and then Carolingian Frankish kingdom, they were "Franks" too. The same could be said for the nobility of northern Italy. The Iberian rulers of Leon, Castile, and Portugal set great store by the fact they could trace their descent from the French duke of Burgundy, while the king of Aragon was first and foremost count of Barcelona — still a part of France in 1220. Other poorer and more distant lands in Scandinavia and eastern Europe had surprisingly few inhibitions about adopting explicitly French feudal norms and practices. What they still lacked they sought to acquire through marriages with French aristocrats and through the wholesale importation of French culture, clerks, and governesses.

From the perspective of the French nobility, the Byzantines were unfortunately too "self-opinionated" to share in this general appreciation of all things French. But even they recognized the military superiority of French knights and had begun to adopt feudal political structures early in the 12th century. In any case, it is unlikely the crusader lords of Constantinople would have been much troubled by the "unreasonable prejudices" of their Byzantine subjects and enemies.

It follows from this discussion that we have not been able to cover the Islamic nobility of Al-Andalus, and of the Arab and Turkish East. To do so would have stretched any working definition of nobility to the breaking point and would have detracted from the picture we wished to highlight for our readers: that of a common noble culture and society ruling nearly all of Christian Europe, albeit with significant regional differences.

As a parting note, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our rigorous group of playtesters for their judicious and often pointed criticism, all of which has led to notable improvement.

Finally, and in conclusion, we would like to dedicate *Ordo Nobilis* to the millions of hard-working European peasants without whose toil and back-breaking labor over the centuries this sourcebook would never have been possible.

—The Authors

# Chapter 1
# Noble Society

## Kingship

Mythic Europe is a land of kingdoms. While for the average medieval peasant (90% of the population), the local clergy and landholders are the primary source of leadership and authority, the king is looked upon deservedly with a considerable degree of mystical awe. The higher nobility of Mythic Europe may control vast estates, in some rare cases larger than some small kingdoms, but their authority, no matter how extensive in practice, is in theory derived from that of the king. From the perspective of the common man, the king's power is absolute, and there are no "bad" kings. At worst, kings are ill-informed and ill-advised.

The titled nobility of Mythic Europe, living in closer (though not intimate) contact with its monarchs, holds somewhat more sophisticated views. Nonetheless, while the rights and powers of kings vary considerably in the 13th century, monarchs are seen everywhere as more than just the first among equals. Kings belong to a select caste separated from the commonality of man by birth and by God's anointment. A powerful rebellious subject may hold his king prisoner — and may even have him murdered — but will never stoop to treating his monarch publicly with anything less than the utmost respect and courtesy. A people's honor is inextricably tied to that of its monarch, and a man foolish enough to insult his king can only lower himself in the eyes of his fellows.

## Origin of the Christian Monarchy

The Christian kings of Mythic Europe are the conscious inheritors of three different historical streams of royal authority: the imperial, the tribal, and the biblical. While essentially distinct, these three forms have fused over the centuries and appear to vest virtually unlimited power in the hands of one man or (more rarely) woman. Each of the three forms incorporates practical limitations, however, all of which impinge on the king's ability to have his way in all things.

### *The Imperial Dignity*

In ancient times, the core of Mythic Europe formed part of the Roman empire. In 1220, the kings of Mythic Europe see themselves as the inheritors of imperial authority. Historical memory in the 13th century is hazy, but legal treatises and law codes that have come down through the ages clearly indicate that the ancient emperors enjoyed supreme legislative, executive, and judicial powers. Unfortunately for the kings of Mythic Europe, this authority had to be exercised through law, drafted, codified, and proclaimed with the help of a loyal bureaucracy of clerks and lawyers that is no longer available to them. While operating in degraded times — present times are always degraded when compared to the glories of the past! — and under tighter constraints than the emperors of old, the kings of Mythic Europe all aspire to regain this lost authority.

## *Tribal Kingship*

The tribal confederacies that swept over the Western Roman empire in the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries were led by war-chiefs. The more successful of these carved out kingdoms from the corpse of the defunct empire in which to settle their followers as the new landowning class. These kingdoms evolved through a process of partition and consolidation into the contemporary monarchies of Mythic Europe. The essential features of tribal kingship — an intensely personal relationship between king and subject, and the king's role as war-chief — persist into the 13th century.

Obedience is due to the king even in private matters such as whom to marry and where to live, though his instructions can normally be evaded when received indirectly through an intermediary. Because of this, Charlemagne and the early

Carolingians insisted on frequent public gatherings at which the population could be made to hear the king's instructions and swear its "consent." This custom has fallen into abeyance, though demonstrable ignorance of the king's will remains a valid legal defense. The great territorial princes tend to avoid attending the king's court, in part so as not to be pressed with royal instructions they have no intention of carrying out. According to established protocol, a noble can normally ignore instructions until they are conveyed to him by a social equal. Unfortunately for the king, counts and bishops usually have better things to do with their time than carry the king's mail. Tribal kingship is thus a double edged sword, theoretically unconstrained by the formal legal restrictions of Roman law, but practically limited by its highly personalized nature.

This aspect of tribal kingship also has military implications. The royal forces fight for the king and not for an abstraction like the state. As such, a king must take the field with his forces to prevent his army from losing all cohesion and being consumed by internal bickering (a frequent enough occurrence even in the king's presence). While kings need not actually get involved in the fighting — though many do — they at least have to be present. This is true even when the king is a minor child, having to be paraded on the battlefield by his guardians so the troops can remember for whom they are fighting.

## *Biblical Kingship*

*Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it over Saul's head, and he kissed him and said, "the Lord anoints you prince over his people Israel; you shall rule the people of the Lord and deliver them from the enemies round about them."*

*— I Samuel, 10:1*

The re-enactment of Saul's anointment by the prophet Samuel is performed by the ranking bishop or archbishop at the coronation ceremony of every Christian king in Mythic Europe. Some of the territorial princes are also crowned when they come into their inheritance, but anointment is reserved for kings and is the operative part of the ritual. The ceremony underlines the sacred nature of the office as a divine trust and imbues kingship with its sacred character. While this assurance of divine election protects and reinforces royal authority, it comes at a price. In the same way that God's election and subsequent rejection of Saul was given voice through Samuel, the Church and its bishops act as guardians of the covenant between the Christian king, his subjects, and his God.

## *Election and the Hereditary Principle*

Kingship in the 13th century is both hereditary and elective. Kings are normally succeeded by their eldest sons, but this is not always the case, and it is not unheard of for younger sons or even more distant heirs to inherit the throne. In England, for example, William I the Conqueror's eldest son, Robert Curthose, was passed over in favor of his younger brother William II Rufus. When William II died, his younger brother Henry I successfully claimed the throne, again bypassing Robert. When Henry I died, Maud, his daughter and designated heir, was bypassed by his nephew Stephen, who in turn was succeeded not by his own sons, but by Maud's son Henry II. Henry was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Richard the Lionheart, but Richard in turn was succeeded by his brother John, thus bypassing Arthur of Brittany, the son of his next oldest brother, Geoffrey. John was succeeded by his eldest son Henry III. Thus, in this rather convoluted example, the rules of primogeniture have been respected in only two of seven cases of succession in England.

In fact, kingship is normally only hereditary within a given line or dynasty, preferably time-honored and venerable in the exercise of royal authority. As an added precaution, most kings during their lifetime have their direct heir (usually, but not always, the oldest son) "elected", crowned and associated in the running of the realm. This strategy has proven notably successful in France, but only because the Capetian kings have had the good fortune to be survived consistently by male offspring of unquestionable legitimacy.

In theory, royal election is done by the people. In practice, this right is reserved to those who carry the most weight and whose dissent would cause the most difficulty: the great lay and ecclesiastical lords. While the willing consent of the electors is always preferred, it is not strictly required, as they can be compelled to agree under threat of violence and dispossession.

Normally, when a king dies, various claimants who can demonstrate some tie to the deceased king by blood or marriage come forward, taking the field with their followers. If one can overawe or otherwise carry the overwhelming majority of the electors with him, less favored candidates normally bow out, and the winner is crowned by the presiding bishop or archbishop. This is what usually happens when a king dies leaving an adult son who has already secured the consent and support of the great men of the realm. If the top claimants are more evenly balanced, a civil war normally ensues, and they and their supporters usually fight it out. Losers who do not submit are usually exiled, immured in a monastery or, if necessary, executed.

# The Sacred Character of Kingship

The original barbarian kings traced their lineage back to pagan gods. In the more enlightened 13th century, this is widely thought of as having been an impious fraud. At best, they might have been descended from powerful malevolent fairies. At worst, their ancestors were demons masquerading as divinities. The fact that all the original royal houses have since died out is seen as evidence enough that God has decreed a new dispensation for his chosen (Christian) people in Mythic Europe. Kings now ascribe their sacred character to the ritual of anointment, just like the biblical kings before them.

## *Kings and Divine Might*

By virtue of their anointment, Christian kings are invested with Divine Might in proportion to the size, dignity, and antiquity of their realms. The Holy Roman emperor, once crowned and anointed by the Pope, is endowed with a Divine Might of 35. Until then, if he has been crowned by the archbishop of Mainz, the king of the Germans (the title the emperor-elect holds until crowned by the Pope) has a Divine Might of only 30. This same rating — 30 — is also held by the king of France, once crowned by the archbishop of Reims. The king of England has a Divine Might of 25, once crowned by the archbishop of Canterbury, and all other kings have Divine Mights of 20. Until the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, the Byzantine emperor was the senior monarch of Christian Europe with a Divine Might of 40 — the same as the Pope — once anointed by the patriarch of Constantinople. In extraordinary cases a king may benefit from some form of divine protection even before being crowned, such as when a he demonstrates unusual piety or the time is one of crisis.

A royal consort, duly crowned and married, also has Divine Might, normally 10 points lower than that of her spouse, unless she is queen in her own right or is acting as regent until her children come of age, in which case she enjoys the full Divine Might associated with the royal title.

Divine Might does not protect a king from sinfulness, nor does it ensure his rule will be wise or just. It does, however, provide some level of protection against sorcerous or infernal attacks, and is a sign of the divine institution of monarchical rule throughout Mythic Europe. Kings can lose their Divine Might if they are successfully deposed or excommunicated, or through apostasy if they renounce their faith or indulge in diabolism. In such cases a king's Divine Might can only be regained if he becomes reconciled with his people and makes his peace with the Church.

## *Kings and Miraculous Powers*

Certain kings are also given the power, by virtue of their anointment, to heal or bless. The kings of France and England can cure skin diseases, such as leprosy or scrofula, by laying hands on the affected body parts and expending a Fatigue level which can only be recovered through sleep (see the Purifying Touch Virtue, ArM4 page 40). The Holy Roman emperor can ensure, also through the laying on of hands and the expenditure of a Fatigue level, a bountiful harvest to any man who plows his own field. Given the disabling Fatigue loss of these miracles, they are normally only performed on special occasions, such as just before going on crusade. Whether other kings in Mythic Europe have similar powers is up to the troupe or storyguide.

## *Kings and Holy Relics*

Few kings in Mythic Europe have True Faith. In 1220, the future St. Louis IX, grandson of King Philip II Augustus, is one notable excep-

tion. So was the late St. Ferdinand II of Castile (who died in 1188). Nonetheless, kings rely on more than their Divine Might for protection against supernatural attack. Through their great wealth and patronage of the Church, they are well-placed to acquire saintly relics. Few kings travel publicly without wearing holy cloths or amulets bearing teeth, locks of hair, or bone fragments of deceased saints.

Not all of these relics contain Faith points, and some may well be fakes. Nevertheless, a good number are undeniably effective, and provide the king and those around him with additional protection against ill fortune and hostile sorcery. As a rule of thumb, kings normally bear on or about their persons relics imbued with a number of Faith points equal to the magnitude of their Divine Might. On ceremonial or public occasions this may be significantly greater, while on casual or informal occasions the number of relics carried would be significantly smaller.

Note that while a king can benefit from both his Divine Might and from protective relics, the two forms of protection are not cumulative but act separately. If a king is targeted by a hostile spell, curse, or magical effect (including faerie or infernal powers), the storyguide first rolls a simple die. If the roll is less than or equal to the king's combined True Faith and Faith points, he is immune to hostile magic for the remainder of the scene. If Faith has proven inadequate, the spell or effect must still overcome the king's Divine Might.

Holy relics are among the king's most valuable possessions. Their accumulation is a sign of both piety and sound rulership. As a supplement to their spiritual value, royal relics (and those relics possessed by others) are often encased in gem-encrusted gold and silver containers or amulets called reliquaries. Reliquaries, along with the relics they contain, are normally kept in the king's chapel, which often does double duty for the storage of other gold and silver valuables. It follows that the chief official of the chapel, the chancellor, is normally one of the main financial officers of the realm.

# The Sources of Royal Power

## *The Royal Demesne*

Ultimately, all forms of temporal power in Mythic Europe are based on landholding. In the 13th century the kings of Mythic Europe are all the largest landholders in their respective realms. The only exceptions are absentee rulers such as the king of Ireland (a title held by the English king) and the king of Burgundy (a title held by the Holy Roman emperor). As a result of this great land-wealth, kings can normally collect larger revenues — as many as tens of thousands of pounds per year for the greater monarchs — and field larger armies than their most powerful vassals, though rarely as much as their combined baronage.

## *The Royal Bureaucracy*

In ancient times an immense and sophisticated bureaucracy translated the Roman emperor's will into law. A general decline in culture and learning following the collapse of the empire in the West led to a shortage of competent literate officials. These Dark Ages (roughly 500-800 AD) came to an end with the founding of the Carolingian empire (and incidentally, the formation of the Order of Hermes). By 1220, all the major kings of Europe are served by a small but growing cadre of officials whose ranks are dominated by learned clerics trained in the universities and the cathedral schools. Most of these officials are salaried (clergy are usually assigned for their maintenance to some lucrative religious office in the king's gift) and serve as clerks, lawyers, judges, book-keepers, secretaries, and bailiffs. Many come from junior branches of noble families, some from the urban merchant classes, and some even from the ranks of the unfree. While often grasping and corrupt, these "new" men largely serve their royal masters loyally and diligently, and are becoming an indispensable instrument of royal power.

## *Judicial Authority*

The main basis for royal legal authority is the king's role as supreme judge. The royal courts, whose judges serve at the king's discretion, settle disputes between royal vassals and administer justice in the king's lands. Judicial fines are an important source of revenue, and the threat of dispossession for rebellion, treason, or the refusal to recognize or obey court rulings (contumacy) is one of the main tools for keeping restless vassals in line.

In practice, however, judicial authority only extends as far as the king's ability to enforce the decisions of his courts. Because of this, the king has the most serious cases involving his principal vassals tried by their peers. In this way, the powerful men of the realm become associated with the rulings and can be expected to cooperate in their enforcement. As supreme judge, though, a king is always free to set judicial convictions aside and pardon offenses against his law and his person.

## *Tenancy in Chief*

Anyone holding lands directly from the king — that is, without an intermediary — is a tenant-in-chief. This category includes a wide array of vasals, from humble knights to great territorial princes. In the latter case, these individuals often exercise royal rights over their territories. These rights were either freely granted or were usurped centuries ago (the end result being the same), and vary considerably from tenant to tenant. This loss of these royal rights to the great landholders is the main limitation to the full exercise of royal power by the king. Outside his own lands and properties (the royal demesne), the king has to rely on his principal tenants-in-chief to administer justice and maintain order. This leaves great scope for independent action on the part of the main feudatories of the realm. This inescapable delegation of power can lead to conflict between the monarch and his vassals. Nonetheless, while exceptions are frequent, the king can normally count on the loyalty of these great men — albeit, often at a price — and this loyalty must be considered one of his main strengths.

## *Appointment of Bishops*

The spiritual care of the population and the upkeep of the poor are the responsibility of the bishops. Canon law, which they administer, covers a wide range of subjects including oaths, marriages, wills, education, Church property, and clerical discipline. Bishops are also great landholders by virtue of the properties and revenue rights (called temporalities) permanently assigned to their bishoprics (sees) in order to fund their operations. Unlike the king's secular vassals, the bishops do not hold their positions by hereditary right, and are instead appointed for life. Kings normally have the right to nominate or confirm new bishops, and they tend to favor candidates of known and proven loyalty. As such, bishops usually make more obedient vassals than their lay counterparts. Indeed, bishops are at times torn between the loyalty they owe their royal patrons and the obedience they owe the Pope as head of the Church. In most cases, however, Pope and monarch work in harmony, and the control over the appointment of new bishops is another major reinforcement to royal authority. When Popes and kings do quarrel over episcopal appointments, the effects can be debilitating for both.

# The Royal Family

The king is the head of a family that holds a special place in medieval society. A man's primary responsibility is to his kin, and the same applies whether one is a peasant or a king. The conventional requirements of paternal (or fraternal) affection prevent the king from applying the full force of the law against members of his immediate family. Like him, they are effectively above the law and can only be disciplined by loss of favor or privileges. This superior right is recognized and grudgingly accepted by the nobility as inevitable, even in the face of serious abuses, though a king who cannot or will not keep his kin in check will lose respect and be considered weak.

## *The Queen*

Though the stereotypical queen is pious, demure, and generous, much of the king's authority and prestige rubs off on his consort. The queen has her own court with her own officials and servants. Normally, one third of the king's discretionary income is assigned to her for life as her dower. This usually consists of her original marriage dowry, supplemented by the revenues from various royal properties and estates. The resulting income pays for the queen's household and is used to fund the royal couple's pious donations and charities.

In theory, the queen disposes of these revenues as she sees fit. In practice, the king can surround her with hostile courtiers and officials, and otherwise meddle in the management of her

affairs. If the queen is popular or comes from a powerful family, the king may find that mistreatment of his consort comes with a high political price. An unhappy queen with adult children is also in a position to turn the king's heirs against him.

Royal marriages are rarely affairs of the heart. While most royal couples beget children and enjoy a modicum of marital peace and mutual respect, kings often avail themselves of the opportunity to seek solace in the arms of other women of the court. A consensual relationship with an unmarried woman, while sinful, is not normally considered adulterous in Mythic Europe. So long as a queen's dignity is not publicly offended or the rights of her children threatened, she normally acquiesces in these dalliances. She is expected to remain chaste and true, however.

## *The Royal Progeny*

Once they reach adulthood, royal sons are normally given estates and households of their own. The marriage of royal daughters is one of the most delicate affairs of state, as it is the traditional means of sealing an alliance between two houses. Not only must a suitable dowry be provided, care must also be taken to secure the most advantageous matches without offending disappointed suitors. Given the enormous prestige associated with marriage into a royal family, restless vassals can be pacified, and loyal ones rewarded, by the prospect of a royal match.

The royal progeny also includes the king's illegitimate children. They are raised with their half-brothers and sisters. Estates and good (if less spectacular) marriages are arranged for them once they come of age. While they are normally barred from inheriting, the Pope will usually legitimize them (for this purpose only) if they wish to enter the Church to serve as bishops, or abbots or abbesses of royal monastic foundations.

## *The Royal Brothers*

In an earlier age, all the king's legitimate (and often illegitimate) sons were deemed equally eligible to inherit the throne. Kingdoms were often divided between them, by agreement or through war, sometimes even before their father's death.

In the more enlightened 13th century, the king's brothers are normally given, according to their individual abilities, an informal share in the running of an undivided realm as the king's principal advisers. They sit on the king's council and have a say in all state affairs and family matters. Their role becomes particularly prominent when the king dies and is succeeded by a minor child. While the queen usually acts as regent — she can be trusted to rule in the interests of her son — the royal uncles sometimes exert an overbearing influence on state affairs that can extend even beyond the new king's minority, thanks to their greater experience and the strength of their personal followings.

## *The Extended Family*

Anyone who can claim descent from the current dynasty or who is linked to it by marriage has a claim to the king's special favor and consideration. In most cases, due to intermarriage, the extended royal family corresponds quite closely to the major landholders of the realm and the collected royal houses of Mythic Europe. This can make for close ties, but also means that wars often take on the bitter edge of family feuds.

# The Titled Nobility

Any man who holds substantial property, who holds at least one castle by hereditary right, who administers some level of local justice, and who can muster a group of well armed followers is normally considered a baron. This is not a title, merely a designation. Other equivalent designations used in France alongside "baron" include "seigneur," "sieur," "castellan," and "captal." A given baron might hold his property from the king or from another baron, or from both. In England, the term "baron" is often used in a more technical sense to describe a direct vassal of the king, or more narrowly to describe any vassal the king summons to his council (parliament). Colloquially, however, "baron" in England has the same meaning as on the continent, and an earl will often refer to his major vassals as "his" barons. Those who hold their property directly from the emperor are normally referred to as "princes." A small number of major barons, the

titled nobles (counts, marquis, and dukes), also generically referred to as "magnates," "territorial princes," or simply "great men," form a select group and are the true higher nobility of Mythic Europe.

## Origin of Feudal Titles

On Christmas day of the year 800, Charlemagne was crowned in Rome as the first Carolingian emperor by Pope Leo III. The successor states to Charlemagne's empire, spanning France, Germany, and northern Italy, adopted a system of government derived from it. Saxon England was never part of the Carolingian empire, and was the only other major 9th century Christian monarchy in the West. Nonetheless, it evolved along similar lines to its Carolingian counterpart, in part because of the enormous prestige associated with Charlemagne's empire.

The Carolingian monarchs personally held extensive properties throughout their realm. These estates provided the crown with considerable revenues, but these were normally in kind (see page 24) rather than money. Limited facilities for storage and transportation meant that the produce could only be consumed on the spot. The royal court thus normally moved on a rotating basis between estates as supplies ran out. Most of the estates never saw their royal masters, however, and were dedicated to the maintenance of local officials who undertook the king's business in his absence.

Normally these officials were rotated throughout the realm every few years to broaden their administrative experience and prevent them from becoming too tied to any one locality. As royal authority declined, however, these officials became increasingly reluctant to move. They intermarried with local landholders and tended to acquire local property of their own. The right to retain a specific local office for life, originally an exceptional favor, gradually became the norm. From this it was only a short step to making their offices hereditary.

# Counts

The main Carolingian official was the count (*conte* in Italy, *comte* in France, *Graf* in Germany, and by analogy, earl in England and *jarl* in Scandinavia). The count ruled a "county" consisting of a town and its surrounding countryside, administered justice in the king's name, collected the royal revenues, and called out and led the levy in time of war. Over time, particularly as the comital office became hereditary, the counts tended to treat the royal estates assigned for their maintenance as their own private property, along with the royal taxes and dues. In addition, as the king's local representatives, they were often able to subordinate lesser officials (such as their deputies, the "viscounts") and extract oaths of fealty from the local barons.

Resigning themselves to the inevitable, the kings attempted to regularize this situation and salvage what remaining local authority they could by extracting oaths of fealty from the counts, thus turning royal offices into feudal fiefs. They hoped to tie these local potentates more closely to the crown in this way. They were unable, however, to stop the gradual usurpation by the counts of royal rights and prerogatives such as minting, salvage (looting of shipwrecks), treasure (first claim to buried gold and silver), and the lucrative commendation or advocacy (protection and oversight in exchange for a fee) of royal abbeys. By the 13th century, counts have become semi-autonomous property holders, vigorously defending their time-honored inherited "rights" against any royal "usurpation."

## *Bishop-Counts*

Carolingian counts normally lived on the royal estates assigned for their maintenance rather than in the main local town. As a result, kings often split comital jurisdiction between the count and the local resident bishop. The count governed the countryside while the bishop ruled the town, assuming responsibility for public order and the maintenance of the city walls. In exchange the bishop received royal revenues stemming from tolls, market fees, and any fines levied in the town.

Both the count and the bishop were originally royal appointees, so this arrangement worked reasonably well. As the loyalty and obedience of the hereditary counts became less dependable, however, the Carolingian monarchs often found it expedient to grant whole counties to local bishops when these lands returned into royal hands through inheritance, dispossession, or the extinction of the comital family (escheat). Besides assuring themselves of more dependable vassals, the kings were thus also able to strengthen their reputation for piety by giving land to the Church.

The practice of endowing bishops with comital authority was particularly pronounced in Germany and Italy, and ultimately became an issue of contention between the Pope and the emperor. Because of the new secular military and administrative responsibilities of these bishoprics, emperors tended to pick candidates on the basis of their worldly rather than spiritual attributes. The resulting ongoing efforts by the papacy to wrest episcopal appointments out of the hands of secular monarchs seriously threatens to undermine the ability of the emperor and other monarchs to reward and surround themselves with loyal and obedient vassals.

# Marquis

Originally, it was a basic principle that a man could only hold one county, though a given family could supply several counts. Early exceptions included border areas (marches) where several counties were consolidated or where unusually large counties were established. This consolidation provided for a kind of super-count, normally called a marquis (*Margraf* in Germany, *marchese* in Italy), who would then have sufficient resources at his immediate disposal to organize an initial defense against hostile invaders. Some of these marcher lords, such as the count of Barcelona, never claimed the title of "marquis," but are still considered such for all practical purposes. Great counts, like those of Toulouse and Flanders who were able to secure the fealty of lesser neighboring counts, are in a similar situation.

# Dukes

The title "duke" comes from the Latin *dux*, meaning "leader." It was originally used in the late Roman empire as a designation for individuals exercising autonomous civil and military

authority over a large area nominally dependent on the emperor. It was later applied to someone exercising local leadership, under the king, over a vast area sharing a common historical, ethnic, or linguistic identity. Such duchies were commonly set up as concessions to local sentiment, which was often resentful of rule by "outsiders."

By the end of the Carolingian empire, these great duchies included Saxony, Lorraine, Franconia, Bavaria, and Swabia (also called Allemania) in Germany; and Aquitaine, Burgundy, Normandy, and Neustria in France. By the 13th century, the great dukes no longer enjoy the same leadership over the local counts in their duchies that they had previously. Further, ducal authority is normally limited to the counties held by the duke directly. Nonetheless, ducal estates tend to be quite vast, and dukes are generally considered the most powerful titled nobles in Mythic Europe.

In the second half of the 13th century, the title will sometimes be applied to the younger brothers and sons of the kings of Mythic Europe, once they have been granted estates of their own. While these estates may amount to little more than a county or two, the ducal title sets the holder apart from the rest of the nobility, and emphasizes his links to the royal family. It should be stressed, however, that this is not yet an established practice.

# The State of Knighthood

Alongside a nobility of birth based on the possession of land and vassals, there is also a nobility of service based on the practice of arms.

## Origins and Development

Changes in military technology and tactics originating in northern France early in the 11th century have had a profound influence on the evolution of European nobility. Cavalry played an important role in Carolingian armies, but soldiers rarely fought while mounted. Instead, they rode to the battlefield and then fought on foot. The development of the stirrup changed horsemen from skirmishers to heavy shock troops with the ability to charge home using a lance. The innovative use of high-backed saddles assisted this transformation by providing greater stability when the lance struck.

By the 13th century, cavalry has become the main element of armies in Mythic Europe to such an extent that the old Latin term for soldier, *miles*, is now applied only to knights. Footmen are now described as *pedites*. Whereas the great men of the past measured their might by the number of armed tenants and freemen they could call up, these mass levies have become increasingly obsolete. A lord's true strength is now determined by the number of knights he can bring into the field.

Paying for the maintenance of horses, weapons, and armor is extremely expensive. Lords initially had to rely on a small group of knightly retainers whom they equipped and fed. While this kind of household knight is still common, he has been supplemented by enfeoffed knights. These are usually senior household knights who have been granted an estate for their maintenance in exchange for past and continuing service, or prosperous freemen able and willing to equip themselves at their own expense in exchange for agreed rights and privileges. By the 13th century, knighthood has gained such respectability that even powerful landed nobles eagerly claim its status.

## Accouterments

A knight's most important accouterment is his warhorse or "destrier" (see page 90), for without a horse he cannot perform his prime function. Although he often fights on foot, it is as a mounted warrior that a knight is defined. Besides the destrier he uses in battle, a knight usually also owns a riding horse and one or more pack horses.

Then there is the sword. Even more than the lance, the sword is the knightly weapon *par excellence*. Swords are expensive and more personal than lances, and are also excellent cavalry weapons. In the more formal ceremonies, the sword of a newly dubbed knight is occasionally blessed by a priest before it has drawn blood, granting the knight a modest +10 defense against hostile magic so long as he behaves morally and honorably (see +1 Blessed Sword Virtue, page 36). Swords also often have holy relics (real or fake) inserted in their hilts, and these can pro-

vide even stronger supernatural protection. It also bears mentioning that the shape of the sword is a symbolic suggestion of the Cross, and is expected to remind the knight of the duty he owes to protect the Church and vanquish its enemies. The sword is seen to have a double edge, emphasizing the knight's dual duty to justice and honor, the main objects of chivalry.

All knights are expected to be proficient with the lance, the weapon with which the dreaded chivalric charge is pressed home. A sword may frequently rebound from well armored opponents, but a lance can pierce even the strongest mail — one of the few weapons that can do so.

A knight's spurs should be made of gold (or be gold plated, at least). Lesser cavalrymen (squires and sergeants) wear ordinary spurs.

Knights also need armor. Every knight wishes to have a full coat of mail, making him almost invulnerable in combat. However, some poorer knights make do with less complete suits, or even with lesser forms of armor. But without armor, no one will think a warrior is a knight, even should he fight from horseback. Plate armor becomes available in the 14th century.

Lastly, a knight must have a shield. As the sword should punish the wicked, the shield should protect the weak. The shield also bears the arms of the knight — his "heraldry." Arms are generally hereditary, although they may be combined as families ally through marriage, or modified to represent secondary lineages. The main colors of the arms are frequently reproduced as "livery" on clothing, facilitating recognition of friend or foe. Arms are thus a vital battlefield device.

## The Code of Chivalry

The idea of a chivalric code has evolved from the notion (very popular with clerics) that knights should foremost be soldiers of God. As such they need a code to guide them. If a knight is dubbed in a formal ceremony, he normally takes an oath defining his obligations. Even if he is hurriedly dubbed on the field without swearing an oath, he is normally assumed to be bound by the usual chivalric principles, nonetheless.

In general, the chivalric code ordains that a knight will defend the Church; protect widows, orphans (this is normally understood as "noble" widows and orphans), and the poor; and pursue criminals. Besides these usual commitments, there are many additional strictures that vary from place to place. Some examples include not slaying vanquished foes, not taking part in false judgements or acts of treason, not giving evil counsel to ladies (women being conventionally seen as somewhat naïve), and not ignoring — "when possible" — fellow beings in distress. This is grudgingly admitted to include law-abiding serfs and other peasants.

# Protocol, Prestige, and Precedence

## The Feudal Ladder

Members of the Mythic European nobility are very prickly about questions of status. Gradations of rank are extremely important. Along with the spread of French ideals of chivalry and courtly manners comes the need to know and understand the meaning and significance of foreign noble designations and titles. Where exactly does one stand when compared to a German *Freiherr*, a Danish *jarl*, or a Hungarian *lovag*?

The answer is found by comparing positions on the feudal ladder, shown at a glance in the table below. In 1220, not every realm has every rank or title, and these have been left blank where appropriate. The parenthetical titles given in English (marquess, duke) do not exist in England in the 13th century and are given for purposes of comparison only. There are often a variety of designations for "baron," normally meaning "lord," and only the principal ones have been included.

Clergy are not part of the feudal ladder, but priests enjoy status roughly analogous to that of knights; abbots, priors, and archdeacons to that of barons; and bishops to that of titled nobles (counts and above).

# Precedence

The concept of social equality is largely alien to Mythic Europe. Medieval society is highly conscious of rank and order, and even bishops can come to blows over issues of precedence. This attitude pervades all layers of society. Even among peasants, a wife will rise to greet her husband, younger brothers will stand up when an older brother enters a room, married women have precedence over maidens, and married men over bachelors.

Precedence determines who gets the best seat, the best food and wine, and the best sleeping quarters. It also determines who greets whom first (lesser greets greater), who presides at meetings, and who gets to attend on the king or lord. The rules of precedence are involved, but not too difficult to grasp. Amongst nobles, rank is determined primarily by one's position on the feudal ladder, but even commoners can determine their precise standing according to seven basic principles, which are presented in the sidebar on the next page in decreasing order of significance. To determine who has precedence between two individuals, you work your way down the list until one of the contrasts applies.

There are, of course, many other factors which may come into play in informal or casual situations. These include wealth, charisma, friendship, reputation, piety, and learning. In formal situations, however, breach of precedence can lead to brawls, life-long enmities, and even murder. Mind your manners!

# High Officers of the Realm

The final arbiter in all matters of precedence and protocol is the king, who can settle disputes either formally, by changing someone's rank, or informally, by making an exception. Thus, the most important exceptional factor affecting one's standing in society is the king's favor. Members of the immediate royal family are assumed to have the king's ear, and so enjoy status beyond what their titles would otherwise indicate. The same is true to a lesser degree for royal lovers and mistresses, though this is widely resented.

More legitimate, however, is the status enjoyed by the king's "official friends," the men chosen to manage the various functions of the royal administration. Originally, officials of the royal household were tasked with largely menial responsibilities. They have since acquired a reflected glory from the royal presence and have evolved into the great officers of the realm. The original tasks are normally no longer performed by the office holders themselves except on ceremonial occasions. They are performed by substitutes instead.

The main royal officials are usually drawn from the titled nobility. If an untitled noble gains such preferment, however, the office normally confers comital status on him. The relative importance of these offices varies from one realm to the next and may change over time, but normally the most important are the justiciar, the chancellor, the treasurer, the chamberlain, the butler, the steward, the constable, and the marshal. In activities specifically or symbolically related to their functions, these royal officials

## The Feudal Ladder

| Latin | *Miles* | *Baro* | *Viscomes* | *Comes* | *Marchio* | *Dux* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **English** | knight | baron | sheriff | earl | (marquess) | (duke) |
| **French** | *chevalier* | *baron* | *vicomte* | *comte* | *marquis* | *duc* |
| **German** | *Ritter* | *Freiherr* | | *Graf* | *Margraf* | *Herzog* |
| **Italian** | *cavaliere* | *barone* | *visconte* | *conte* | *marchese* | *duca* |
| **Norse** | *ridder* | *lenderman* | *jarl* | | *hertog* | |
| **Castilian** | *caballero* | *barón* | *vizconde* | *conde* | | |
| **Magyar** | *lovag* | *fönemes* | | *ispán* | | *ban* |
| **Polish** | *rycez* | *pan* | *kastellan* | *hrabia* | | *ksaze* |
| **Russian** | | *boyar* | | | | *knyaz* |
| **Serbo-Croat** | | | | *zúpan* | | *knez* |

enjoy the highest precedence after the king and queen. Most of these officers do not receive a salary as such, though they may be the beneficiaries of special grants or estates made over to them to cover their expenses. They are expected to pay themselves from the proceeds.

## *The Justiciar*

As the king's main responsibility is to give justice, it is only reasonable that his chief legal official, the justiciar, has become the most powerful officer of the realm. The justiciar often deputizes for the king in his absence. Some kings have preferred to do without such over-mighty subjects and have either decided to attend to judicial matters themselves or have divided the justiciar's responsibilities between a number of lesser officials.

## *The Chancellor*

The chancellor was originally the king's secretary, recording and managing the royal correspondence, and as such is normally responsible for foreign affairs. Since literacy was uncommon in the early medieval period, the office was normally held by a cleric, who by extension became the king's principal advisor in Church affairs, making recommendations on Church appoint-

# Principles of Precedence

### *Nobles vs. Commoners*
Nobles always outrank commoners. Nobles by birth (barons and above) have precedence over nobles by service (knights). Bishops, abbots, and abbesses are all considered nobles by birth by virtue of their office, whatever their actual provenance, as are the high officers of the realm (see page 17).

### *Clergy vs. Lay Folk*
Clergy always have precedence over lay folk of equivalent rank. Bishops are the equivalent of titled nobles, abbots and abbesses of barons. The Pope is considered the equivalent of a king and so outranks all the monarchs of Mythic Europe.

### *Freeman vs. Unfree (Serf or Bondsman)*
This is one of the main legal distinctions in Mythic Europe (between clergy and laity is the other), but *ministeriales* (unfree knights), being noble, have precedence over common freemen. Canon law requires that all clergy be free.

### *Adult vs. Child*
The inhabitants of Mythic Europe are normally considered adult once they reach the age of puberty but, as in any culture, an adolescent who continues to behave childishly will be treated accordingly.

### *Legitimate vs. Bastard*
This distinction is most important within rather than between families. Children born in wedlock have precedence over others. Among the poor and the unfree, who are unlikely to inherit anything of significance, legitimacy has little importance. Canon law requires that all candidates for holy orders be legitimate, but bastards can receive a dispensation from the Pope for a small fee. A bastard can be legitimized (for inheritance purposes only) with the consent of his father and his lord. The Pope acts as lord in this matter for royal children.

### *Male vs. Female*
Men have precedence over women of equivalent status. A woman normally acquires the status of her husband unless she holds higher status by birth. If women receive occasional minor courtesies (such as being seated closer to the fire or being served first at the table) it is out of graciousness on the part of their male "masters" and "protectors." Such courtesies are not theirs by right.

### *Married vs. Unmarried*
Married folk are considered full adults, while unmarried men and women are, in a sense, still considered children. Marriages that have been blessed by a priest are considered more prestigious than those that have not. Among married women, those who have borne children enjoy higher status than those who have not. By extension, pregnant women also outrank those who are childless.

### *Senior vs. Junior*
Finally, all other factors being equal, elders have precedence over their juniors. If there is any doubt as to an individual's actual age (a frequent occurrence in Mythic Europe), people tend to go by appearances.

ments and promotions. The royal chapel and its treasures (relics and other valuables, sometimes including the regalia) are in the chancellor's care, as is the royal seal used for official letters and correspondence. As master of the king's correspondence, the chancellor usually oversees the realm's foreign relations. The chancellor is also normally responsible for the revenues from vacant Church offices in the royal gift, and for the fees charged for issuing royal written instructions (writs) and charters.

## *The Treasurer*

The treasurer was originally the guardian of the king's strongbox. Over time he has become the royal official responsible for the administration of revenues drawn from most of the royal estates, and for funds normally collected in money such as fines, gifts, tolls, and bribes. (Yes! Kings sometimes accept bribes.) The treasurer is normally the chief financial officer of the realm.

## *The Chamberlain*

The chamberlain was originally the main servant in the king's bed chamber. He was responsible for the royal wardrobe, which was normally kept under lock and key because of the valuable furs and finery it contained. Given its security and relative accessibility, the wardrobe often also contained the king's petty cash, used for small emergency payments or spontaneous gifts. The chamberlain has thus become a minor financial official and, as manager of the royal household, is usually the highest ranking member of the court, if not necessarily the most powerful.

## *The Butler*

The butler was originally the king's wine waiter, and by extension has become responsible for all aspects of the royal table, including the silver and gold plate and cutlery. He is normally assisted by one or more royal officials charged with provisioning the royal household. These officials often have charge of the royal estates designated to furnish the king and his table with food and drink.

## *The Constable*

The constable (literally, "count of the stable") was originally in charge of the royal horses, and then of the king's mounted troops. With the increasing role played by knights in the royal army, the constable has become one of the chief military officials of the realm. In France, the constable (*connétable*) can even overrule the king on the battlefield, though it is often best not to push such privileges too far.

## *The Marshal*

The marshal was originally the king's groom, eventually the head of the king's bodyguard, and by extension has become one of the chief military officials of the realm. In some kingdoms, the marshal outranks the constable.

## *The Steward*

The steward or "seneschal" was originally the king's eldest adviser. He is now responsible for all aspects of the royal household not explicitly covered by other officials, such as ensuring a regular supply of firewood and building materials, seeing to the housing of soldiers and officials, and purchasing weapons and other military supplies.

# Lesser Officers

There are any number of lesser royal officials such as the royal cupbearer, valet, and champion, not to mention the officials of the queen's household, but none of them enjoy the same status as the great officers of the realm. The same great officers (albeit, with humbler responsibilities) can often be found in baronial courts. Thus, if a specific wealthy barony or lordship is held by the king directly, its chancellor, chamberlain, or constable may become a significant royal official in his own right, managing the lordship's estate, its fortifications, and its revenues for the king.

# Chapter 2
# Characters and Status

## Land and Wealth

Throughout most of Mythic Europe, the main legal division in society is between free and unfree. The serf or bondsman is subject to the arbitrary will of his lord. The lord's rights over him can even be bought or sold. The freeman, on the other hand, is subject to the common law of the realm and is directly answerable for his own actions. This distinction is less meaningful in many cases than might appear. A serf who is clothed and fed by his lord or who farms his own plot of land may be better off than a lordless and landless freeman. In Germany, some wealthy "serfs" (actually household dependents or servile manorial officials) have even been knighted and granted fiefs, becoming *ministeriales* or "unfree" knights. The most meaningful social division in Mythic Europe is between those who till the soil or provide domestic labor, whether free or unfree, and those who exercise lordship over land. Those who live from their craft fall awkwardly somewhere in between.

### Land Ownership

In most of Mythic Europe, the ancient Roman principle of absolute land ownership is no longer in force. A peasant toiling in his field can pause, look over his work, and say to himself with some satisfaction: "This is my land." At the same time, his lord can look out over the manor's various fields and make the same statement. His own overlord, in turn, can ride through the countryside looking as far as the eye can see, and again make the same claim, as can the count and possibly even the duke or king. In a sense they are all correct, since they each hold different rights over the land's use and revenues. There are essentially three forms of landholding: the tenement, the fief, and the allod.

#### *The Tenement*

The peasant who tills the soil — normally a serf, bondsman, or free tenant — enjoys most of the fruits of his labor. So long as he pays his lord the customary share and services, his possession is secure. Unless his assigned plot of land is very small, the size of his family (and thus the labor available to the household) is the main limiting factor on his prosperity. The labor services required under his lease are not typically very onerous, usually consisting of a few days a year, but they can be inconvenient since the lord will normally call on him for plowing, sowing, or reaping at just the time the peasant's own plot requires similar treatment. Nonetheless, each peasant household is only required to produce one laborer, rarely the strongest or most effective worker available, and this only for half the day. The lord often has to feed the peasant a large meal if his labor will be required for the whole day. The tenement is usually hereditary, one peasant being as good as another, though the lord may reclaim the property if the peasant absconds or commits a major offense.

#### *The Fief*

A fief is technically the grant of a source of income as remuneration for past or future services. It can consist of the rights to a mill, to a

local monopoly, to specific bridge or market tolls, to the revenues of a local parish (most medieval churches are private property), or to a share of the fines levied by a particular law court. It usually takes the form of lordship over an estate.

Direct lordship is the standard avenue to wealth in Mythic Europe. While the lord rarely enjoys rights to more than a third of an often modest harvest, his lordship normally extends over many households. The service he owes his own overlord is comparatively light. It normally involves occasional personal attendance at the overlord's court and the service of a fixed number of armed men for local defense for between 40 and 60 days each year. By the 13th century, military service has normally been commuted to a money-rent (scutage), and the overlord has to bargain directly with his vassals on the duration, fees, and conditions of service for actual armed assistance on a case by case basis. Overlordship brings prestige and political power, but does not necessarily bring great wealth. Most overlords, including the king, derive the bulk of their revenues from the often very extensive lordships they exercise directly, normally through bailiffs, who are non-hereditary feudal officials.

Individual fiefs are not technically divisible, though a lord with several fiefs could theoretically split them amongst his heirs. Prior to 1150 the inheritance of fiefs, while customary, was not normally enforceable in law. This gave the overlord some discretion in deciding whom, if anyone, from to the previous lord's family to accept as a new vassal. By the 13th century, however, fiefs are generally assumed to be hereditary unless explicitly granted for life only. The specific rules for who, if anyone, can inherit when a lord dies without male issue vary considerably from region to region, and even from fief to fief.

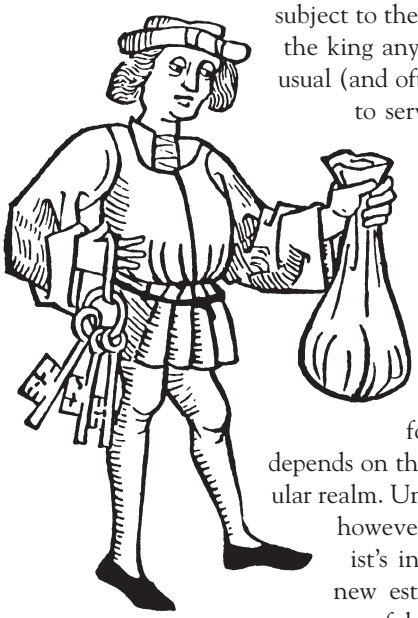
Except in newly conquered areas, granting a fief is extremely rare and normally only done for a close relative. There is often a supply of available heiresses, however, whose marriage is in the lord's gift. In the 13th century, such marriages are the normal means of rewarding faithful followers, as they cost the lord nothing.

## *The Manor*

The typical landed fief consists of one or more manors of highly variable size. A manor is essentially a large farm worked by a peasant population in varying degrees of subjection. Most of the property is parceled out to the various peasant households that farm it on their own account. A large section (the demesne) is kept by the lord and farmed by the peasants on his behalf. By the 13th century many demesnes have been parceled out further, either completely or in part, into new tenements, and the labor services formerly required to maintain the demesne have been commuted in exchange for a money-rent. While some manors can be very large, most are too small to maintain a landed knight and his household. Because of this, a landed knight will normally be the lord of several manors. Manors that extend over a whole village or hamlet are uncommon. Most consist of a patchwork of fields intermingled with those of other manors and even independent peasant allods.

## *The Allod*

Not all of Mythic Europe is parceled out into fiefs, and for some fiefs the chain of overlordship falls well short of the king. An estate which has no lord or overlord other than its owner is called an allod. The process of feudalization in Europe was a gradual one, and allods are holdovers from pre-feudal times. The owner of an allod is still subject to the law of the land, but does not owe the king any particular obedience beyond the usual (and often theoretical) legal requirement to serve in person, or provide a substitute, when the security of the realm is threatened.



Not all allods are ancient. A lord who carves himself a domain out of the omnipresent wilderness by clearing a forest or draining marshland, or one who conquers new land by force of arms, does not necessarily owe fealty for the new property. Much depends on the laws and customs of that particular realm. Unless royal authority is very strong, however, it might be in the new allodialist's interest to solidify his hold on the new estate by negotiating fealty with a more powerful neighbor.

# Buying and Selling Land

Ownership rights over land cannot normally be purchased without the consent of the owner's heirs, vassals, and lord. The specific legal requirements vary from region to region, but it is generally acknowledged throughout Mythic Europe that the holder of an estate cannot deprive his heirs of their rights without their consent. Thus, the owner can freely dispose of his chattels (moveable property), but not his real estate. Since the vagaries of fate can make heirs of even distant relatives, the purchaser must often buy out as many prospective heirs as can be identified. Otherwise, he risks having the sale annulled by a next-of-kin after the seller's death. The sums involved might not be large, especially for distant relatives, but hunting down all potential heirs can be troublesome, and failure very costly. It could also provide an excellent adventure seed, however.

In some regions, the principle of familial consent has been formalized into a right of first refusal. Once a purchase price has been agreed to by both the buyer and the seller, any of the owner's relatives can claim the property for the agreed price within a set period (usually 30 days). This permits the property to stay in the family even when the owner is forced to sell. If no one steps forward, it also provides the buyer with secure possession.

Unless the property is a freehold or allod, the consent of the lord is also necessary. Tenure of the property is usually conditional, after all, on an oath of fealty and on the ability to fulfill specified services, no matter how nominal they may have become over time. This consent must usually be paid for, normally at the cost of one full year's gross income from the estate. If the estate is to continue fulfilling its obligations to the overlord, the buyer may also be required to acquire lordship over the owner's free vassals. If this is the case, the new owner will have to pay for their consent as well. This normally involves the remission of one or more years' service. Otherwise the vassals are free to alienate their property and seek new lords elsewhere (usually the overlord or one of his other vassals).

Small-scale land purchases can be made through the abstracted character investment rules (page 29). There are circumstances, however, in which a covenant might wish to buy (or sell) a large piece of property. A normal purchase

price (excluding side payments to relatives, lords, or vassals) might amount to between 20 and 50 times the property's gross yearly income. The price actually negotiated could vary depending on local demand, the parties' Bargaining skills, and on the amount of financial pressure the seller is under. Storyguides need not worry too much about the estate's surface area or even the number of its tenants. Depending on the fertility of the soil, average yields can vary from two to ten times the seed crop. Thus, where the price of land is concerned, income is the only pertinent consideration, unless the property includes unusual fortifications or other special features. Urban properties are valued on the basis of the rents they generate.

# Coinage

## *The Medieval Standard*

The currency system of Mythic Europe in the 13th century is at once simple and complicated. As it did historically for most of this period, Western Europe has only one coin — the silver *denarius* (*denier*, *denaro*, penny, and *Pfennig* respectively in France, Italy, England, and Germany). This coin is the size of a US dime, only thinner.

The Latin and English terms are used interchangeably in *Ordo Nobilis*.

Other units of account exist, but are not minted. The *solidus* (*sou, soldo,* shilling, *or Schilling*) is worth twelve *denarii*. The *libra* (*livre, lira,* pound, or *Pfund*) is worth 20 *solidi* or 240 *denarii*. The mark is worth either ten or twelve *solidi* (144 *denarii*), or 160 *denarii* (two thirds of a pound).

A *libra* is meant to represent one pound of minted silver *denarii*. This standard was set under the Carolingians, and is loosely based on late Roman coinage. The prestige and extent of Charlemagne's empire ensured that it was adopted throughout Western Europe. In some parts of Mythic Europe, new coins called *gros deniers* (French for "large pennies") have appeared, worth 2, 4, or even 6 pennies. Because of a higher silver content, they are only slightly larger than regular pennies.

Now comes the hard part. There is, unfortunately, no agreement amongst the inhabitants of Mythic Europe on how much a pound weighs. In the various regions of France alone the pound can weigh anywhere from 380 to 550 grams (the modern United States pound weighs 455 grams). To make matters worse, pure silver must be alloyed with a baser metal to produce a durable coin, and there is no agreement in Mythic Europe on how pure a coin has to be. To compound (!) this difficulty, the lord owning the mint is often free to vary the silver content in each new issue as he sees fit. And if this is still too simple for you, medieval coins are also routinely subject to clipping and filing. This rather sharp practice stems from the efforts of enterprising souls to extract a little bit extra by melting down the shavings before passing on the adulterated coins to someone else. Since the only minted coin is normally a penny, people also sometimes cut pennies into halves or quarters in order to make small change.

This means that initially characters can have only the vaguest idea of what a given pile of monetary treasure is really worth, particularly if the hoard is old or contains gold coins. Thirty or so different coinages might circulate in a given trading center. In effect, only a skilled money changer, most often a gold or silversmith, is likely to be intimately familiar with all of them and be able to determine the precise value of a pile of assorted mixed pennies. He could hazard a quick (and almost certainly conservative) guess for the

## Coinage Comparisons

| Language/Region | Standard Coin | Standard Units of Account | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Latin | *denarius* | 12 *denarii* = 1 *solidus* | 20 *solidi* = 1 *libra* |
| English | penny | 12 pennies = 1 shilling | 20 shillings = 1 pound |
| German | *Pfennig* | 12 *Pfennige* = 1 *Schilling* | 20 *Schillinge* = 1 *Pfund* |
| French | *denier* | 12 *deniers* = 1 *sou* | 20 *sous* = 1 *livre* |
| Italian | *denaro* | 12 *denire* = 1 *soldo* | 20 *solde* = 1 *lira* |
| Abbreviations | *d* | 12 *d* = *s* | 20 *s* = £ |

characters' benefit, but if the coins are adulterated, foreign, or too old (and in some cases too new!), he might have to melt down the whole lot, pour out the silver, and weigh it before being able to tell for sure how much a hoard is worth.

For everyday use, however, this confusion is somewhat allayed by the fact that coins do not normally circulate too far afield. Most people have some idea of the value of the local coinage. Since the lord of the mint derives his profit from the minting fee, it is also to his advantage to keep the value of his coinage constant. If the value of his coins becomes too unpredictable, prospective customers will have their silver minted elsewhere.

There is one minor redeeming feature to this plethora of coinages. A contract for a loan can specify that the sum will be paid out in one given issue but be repaid in different coinages. This trick often serves to disguise an excessively high interest rate on the loan. Charging more than a minimal rate of interest is the sin of usury, but even the keenest Church moralist might be daunted by the prospect of calculating compound interest at two or more exchange rates using only Roman numerals.

## *The Mythic Penny*

To the relief of confused and befuddled players (not to mention storyguides), we offer a standardized unit of account — the Mythic penny. As its name implies, the Mythic penny (or Mythic *denarius*) is not actually minted. Instead, it is based on the value of one day's unskilled labor. The relative value of labor (geared to a subsistence wage) remained largely constant in Western Europe for much of the medieval period up to the Great Plague of 1348-50. This gives the Mythic penny a remarkably stable store of value and permits prices and wages to stay the same for sagas set in different medieval periods.

Once a character's treasure has been assayed (in some cases, quite literally) it can be valued in Mythic pennies, shillings, or pounds and recorded on the character sheet. Except where otherwise specified, pennies (*denarii*), shillings (*solidi*) and pounds (*librae*) in *Ordo Nobilis* refer to their Mythic equivalents.

Since the Mythic penny represents a universal standard of value equal to one day's unskilled labor, it can also be used as a simplifying tool for determining realistic prices for services as varied as teaching, harvesting, and mail delivery. Assume a skilled workman or journeyman earns two pence (*2d*) a day and a master craftsman five pence (*5d*). Not every day in Mythic Europe is a work day. Laborers normally work Monday through Saturday, but get Sundays and many saints' days off. A season of unskilled work is thus generally worth about 60 pence (*5s*), or one pound (*£1*) for a whole year — barely enough for a small family to live on.

Keep in mind though, that in Mythic Europe labor is cheap and raw materials are dear. The time a master armorer contributes to making a sword is worth only a fraction of the price of the steel he will use in forging it. An illuminated manuscript is expensive not because a monk has painstakingly copied and illustrated it over several weeks, but because of the lamb skins used for the vellum and the costly materials used in the colored inks.

Like the shilling, the mark, or the pound, the Mythic penny is only a unit of account and is not actually minted anywhere. It exists to make life easy for players, not for characters, in the same way players talk about spell levels rather than of spell magnitudes. For those who wish to convert and standardize period (mid-13th century) prices, assume a Mythic penny contains 2.5 grams of pure silver, and a Mythic pound, 600 grams. This yields about two English pennies, six *deniers parisis*, eight *deniers tournois*, or 30 Venetian *denire* to the Mythic penny.

## *Payments in Kind*

In spite of the relatively low cost of labor, a penny is still a substantial sum of money. Room and board in an inn might cost two pence a day, and a penny might buy you all the local brew you can drink in a night. It is not, however, a very convenient means of exchange. Food is relatively expensive, with two or three large loaves of bread or a dozen eggs normally costing a penny. Given the absence of refrigeration, you are unlikely to buy that many eggs unless you are giving a party or have a very large household. At the other end of the spectrum, a quartermaster responsible for paying and feeding an army in the field would have to have barrels of pennies on hand to finance an extended campaign.

In many cases, the use of currency is a last resort. The lord of the manor often prefers to have his rents paid in labor and produce because

they are his core needs. Peasants trade small surpluses and borrow extensively amongst themselves. Shopkeepers often keep running tabs for their best customers and can generally be convinced to accept payment in foodstuffs, firewood, building materials, or minor services. After a long stay with some friends abroad, your hostess might consider a monetary payment in compensation rather crass, but she would gladly accept a gift of equivalent value. Finally, uncertainty over the present and future value of money may make some commodities, like pepper, preferred substitutes in long-term contracts such as feudal land leases. Beggars normally go door to door, or hang around shops hoping to be given food or goods; they are hardly ever given pennies. All this is not to say that Mythic Europe does not have a cash economy. People do accept coins, but you can often get a very good price by offering something on the side.

## *Gold Coins*

For five hundred years the Byzantine gold *nomisma* was the most stable and dependable currency in the world, and was accepted throughout Mythic Europe. The equivalent of the western *solidus*, it was so famous its name became the origin of the word "numismatic." Starting in the second half of the 11th century it began to suffer a progressive series of devaluations. By the early 13th century it is worth only a quarter of its former value and no longer circulates in the West. Frederick II issues a gold coin, the *augustale*, for the kingdom of Sicily in 1228. In the later half of the 13th century, large-scale maritime trade creates a wider need for larger denominations than the humble penny, and the Italian cities of Venice, Genoa, and Florence begin to mint their own gold coins — the ducat, the *genovino*, and the florin, respectively.

These coins were originally intended to be nominally worth a shilling, but their actual value is variable. The main problem with using both a gold and a silver standard is that the relative values of the two metals change with supply and demand. A gold shilling might not be accepted at face value if its gold content is only worth eleven pence. Conversely, if the relative value of gold rises and a gold shilling is now worth 13 pence, it will probably be melted down and sold as bullion for the sake of the extra penny.

The Byzantine empire actually maintains a gold, silver, and bronze standard simultaneously. The gold *nomisma* (commonly referred to in the West as the *bezant*) is used primarily for the payment of taxes and for state expenditures. The silver *keration* (the equivalent of the western *denarius*) is used mainly for commercial transactions. The bronze *follis* is used for day to day shopping. Because the value of a medieval coin is meant to be the same as the value of the precious metal it contains, the relative value of the three units is periodically adjusted. As the gold content of the *nomisma* declined, its value fell from 24 to six *keratia*. The Muslim caliphate also mints gold coins in imitation of the *nomisma*, but it is confusingly called a *dinar* (based on the Latin *denarius*). The Saracens also mint a silver coin called the *dirhem* (named after the *drachma*, the silver coin of classical Greece).

For most characters in Mythic Europe, a gold coin will be an unusual novelty. Characters planning to spend one are best advised to dispose of it at the local goldsmith's shop first.

# Consumption and Savings

Mythic Europe is not a capitalist society. For almost all of its mundane inhabitants, the purpose of income is consumption. Conspicuous consumption is the material underpinning to personal social status and prestige. This can involve entertainment, good food, fine clothes, expensive housing, lots of retainers, gambling, and conspicuous charity. Most households have some savings as protection against the vagaries of life such as war, disease, and famine, but once an optimal level of savings is achieved, further accumulation is considered antisocial (netting you a bad Reputation). In fact, such behavior is condemned by the Church as the sin of avarice.

Nearly everyone in Mythic Europe tends to attempt to live beyond his means. This is certainly true for poor peasants striving to stay one step ahead of hunger and disease. It is also true for the nobility. Even the mightiest kings often struggle under a heavy burden of debt. Only when all savings and credit have been exhausted will a household reduce its established level of consumption.

It follows that most characters will have no recurring excess income. It all goes to sustaining the maximum level of consumption consistent with the prestige and standard of living associated with the character's occupation. If one does

not strive to live like a noble, he will not be treated as such by his "peers," and will not receive the deference and respect which are usually his due from social "inferiors."

# Optional Rules for Money

In a fully "realistic" **Ars Magica** saga, each player would keep careful track of all his character's personal earnings and expenses. While this might not prove too onerous for grogs and *consorti* who are clothed, housed, and fed by the covenant, detailed budgeting is not a viable (or particularly fun) option for noble companions or other characters with lives based in the mundane world. The following optional rules are aimed at simulating the social and game effects of income and consumption without forcing players and storyguides to count out the small change.

With the agreement of the troupe or storyguide, characters will no longer have specified incomes. Instead, a character's ability to spend and purchase items will be determined primarily by his Social Class Virtue and by the Virtues and Flaws Poor (–2), +1 Well-off (+1), Prosperous (+2), and Wealthy (+3).

A poor freeman (Freeman Social Class Virtue +0, Poor Flaw –2), for example, would not normally be able to purchase a war-horse or boat. He would probably have enough money, however, to overindulge at the local tavern. A wealthy merchant could probably buy an impressive piece of jewelry that catches his fancy, but is unlikely to be able to bribe the king into making him an earl. In all cases, common sense should prevail, with the storyguide having the final say. If he has just been the victim of a hold-up, even a wealthy knight might be temporarily indigent.

## *Treasure*

Treasure (money gained as the result of an adventure: loot, gift, or loan) is an exception to the assumptions discussed above. Such funds can freely be used to purchase items or services that a character would not normally be able to afford. Treasure should be recorded on the player's character sheet (to which players may wish to add a line reading "Treasure: _____ Mythic Pennies"), and adjusted as appropriate.

It is up to the storyguide to decide what does or does not count as treasure for these purposes. In general, all non-recurring income should probably qualify. If one or more characters are adventuring on behalf of the covenant, for example, they might be given or lent travel money at the magi's discretion. As these funds do not have to be accounted for or reimbursed, yet are not part of the characters' regular income, they could count as "treasure." Note that over-frequent disbursement of travel money will tend to affect the covenant's overall financial viability.

If a character sells an item he has acquired as a function of his wealth or Social Class Virtue, he does not get a corresponding increase in treasure, though the sale may provide him with ready cash. If these funds are expended, they are counted against treasure, which could then become negative. Treasure can also become negative if a character is saddled with an unpaid debt. It is up to the storyguide to determine the long-term social and economic consequences of having negative treasure. Be nasty!

Further, liquidation of assets related to a character's wealth and Social Class Virtues is rarely a viable option. It can take time, and the resistance posed by dependants, tenants, landlord, and business partners (all of whose livelihoods depend to some extent on the character continuing as a "going concern") would constitute an adventure in its own right. Medieval courts would look sympathetically on efforts by a character's family to have him declared mad and incompetent, were he to try anything so foolish.

# Credit

The urge to consume leads naturally to a need for credit. Sometimes a character will not have enough treasure on hand to pay for a necessary extraordinary expenditure, like a merchant ship, a ransom, or a crown. There are many providers of credit in Mythic Europe. Merchants, pawnbrokers, lords, religious communities, Jews, and professional bankers (normally Italians or "Lombard" bankers) often have temporary surpluses and might be willing to help you out — for a price.

Whatever the source, there are three forms of credit available to characters: the loan, the pawn, and the mortgage. Each character has a basic credit rating in pennies defined on the table on the next page. This is based on the value of the character's Social Class Virtue and may be modified by the Poor Flaw, or the Well-off,

Prosperous, or Wealthy Virtues. For example, a poor knight has no credit rating, while a wealthy priest has a credit rating of 700*d*.

## *Loans*

If a character successfully negotiates a loan, he acquires the –1 Expenses Flaw, whether or not he borrows up to his full credit rating. If he already has the Expenses Flaw, he is not eligible for a loan, though if he has the Flaw as a result of a partial loan he may always borrow up to the remainder of his credit rating at no additional cost. As the table shows, characters with the –2 Poor Flaw always have no credit rating and as such are never eligible to take out loans.

A storyguide may allow a character to bar-

### Credit Rating Table

| Social Class Virtue | Poor | Standard | Well-off | Prosperous | Wealthy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | — | 100*d* | 200*d* | 300*d* | 400*d* |
| + 1 | — | 200*d* | 300*d* | 400*d* | 500*d* |
| + 2 | — | 300*d* | 400*d* | 500*d* | 600*d* |
| + 3 | — | 400*d* | 500*d* | 600*d* | 700*d* |
| + 6* | — | 1,000*d* | 2,000*d* | 3,000*d* | 4,000*d* |
| + 7* | — | 2,000*d* | 3,000*d* | 4,000*d* | 5,000*d* |
| + 8* | — | 3,000*d* | 4,000*d* | 5,000*d* | 6,000*d* |
| + 9* | — | 4,000*d* | 5,000*d* | 6,000*d* | 7,000*d* |
| +10* | — | 5,000*d* | 6,000*d* | 7,000*d* | 8,000*d* |

* If using the optional Greater Lordship Virtue (see page 39).

gain for better terms from his creditor. The character makes a Presence-based Bargaining stress roll against a quality die plus the creditor's Bargaining Ability. The creditor's Bargaining ability depends on the size of the loan being negotiated as indicated in the table below, or may be set by the storyguide. For each point by which the borrower defeats the creditor, he can borrow an additional 10% of his credit rating at no additional cost. If he botches, he may only borrow up to half his credit rating until a sufficient period of time (determined by the storyguide) has passed and the loan has been repaid. Note that so long as any money has been borrowed, the borrower acquires the full –1 Expenses Flaw (see page 36) until the full amount of the principal and interest is repaid.

| Size of Loan | Lender's Bargain |
|---|---|
| 100d | 1 |
| 200d | 2 |
| 400d | 3 |
| 700d | 4 |
| 2,000d | 5 |
| 4,000d | 6 |
| 7,000d | 7 |
| 8,000d | 8 |

*Exempli Gratia: Norman's credit rating is 400d and he attempts to borrow the full amount. His Bargaining skill is 1 and his Presence is average. His main creditor is assumed to have a skill of 3 (as per the table) and rolls a 1, followed by a 6, for a net score of 15. Norman rolls a 0, but fortunately does not botch, for a net score of 1. Since he failed to beat the lender's score, Norman can only borrow his specified credit rating, in this case 400d. He now has the –1 Expenses Flaw until he has repaid the 400d in principal and any accumulated interest (40d per year or part thereof, as specified by his new Expenses Flaw). Later, after he has repaid the original loan, he takes out a new one. The new creditor rolls a 3 for a net 6. Norman rolls a 7 for a net 8, and so beat the lender by 2. This time Norman can borrow up to 120% of his credit rating, in this case a total of 500d. Even with the larger loan, however, Norman still only has to pay interest charges based on 10% of his credit rating, in other words 40d per year.*

Note that in most cases usury (the charging of excessive interest on loans) is illegal in Mythic Europe. To get around this difficulty, the lender sometimes offers to purchase a fictitious load of goods from the borrower, who then agrees to buy it back at a specified time at a higher price. This is the normal method of disguising interest charges in written contracts.

A character may, for whatever reason, forego a loan and pawn goods or mortgage his income instead. If he has goods pawned, however, he may not take out an unsecured loan.

## *Pawning*

A character with the –1 Expenses Flaw can secure further funds, up to his credit rating, by pawning goods in his possession. (Pawning other people's goods is normally frowned upon — it's called "fencing".) These could include jewelry, furniture, art work, expensive clothing, tools, cattle, horses, or even arms and armor — anything, a character hopes he won't need in the near future. It is up to the storyguide to determine whether the goods offered as security are sufficient, but their notional resale value should be at least twice the sum requested. Because of usury laws, the pawn broker must make most of his profit on goods that are not reclaimed. For simplification purposes, the normal term of a pawn is one year, but the broker might insist on less security (perhaps 1.5 times value) if the term is only a season. If the goods are not redeemed within the specified time, they are forfeit and may be sold.

The consequences of default are determined by the storyguide. The effects of the loss of a character's horse, weapons, and armor are obvious. The loss of his wife's dowry silverware might sour relations with her family (not to mention his spouse). The loss of an expensive gift from a lover or suitor might lead to her estrangement. If a character lose the tools of his trade, he might acquire the –2 Poor Flaw or lose the +1 Well-off, +2 Prosperous, or +3 Wealthy Virtue. A character who already has the –2 Poor Flaw is not normally in a position to pawn goods, but there are exceptions.

## *Mortgaging*

A character who no longer has anything valuable he is willing or able to pawn can still borrow up to his credit rating by mortgaging the source of his income. This can include his next

crop, the rents due from his tenants, the expected profits from his business ventures, or the sums due to him from bursaries, scholarships, pensions, or remittances. The net effect of mortgaging is the immediate loss of the +1 Well-off, +2 Prosperous, or +3 Wealthy Virtue (depending on how much income is being mortgaged) or the acquisition of the –2 Poor Flaw. These Virtue or Flaw changes are permanent unless repurchased through investment. A character may be able to defer the social consequences for a time, however, by sustaining his normal level of consumption from his treasure fund. A character with the –2 Poor Flaw is not eligible for a mortgage.

## *Overwhelming Debt*

Characters who begin with the –2 Poor Flaw or who acquire it by exhausting all forms of credit through repeated mortgaging of their property no longer have any recurring income, surplus or otherwise. They are essentially forced to live off their treasure funds or the charity of others. Such characters are frequently forced to move from place to place to escape being hounded by angry creditors or their agents.

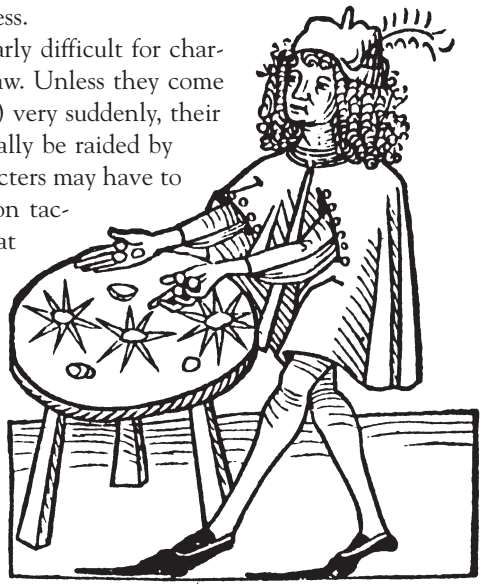
The specific consequences of poverty, however, vary by social class. An impoverished freeman probably spends much of his time loitering on the high street or outside shops in the hope of being given something to eat. Impoverished dukes, on the other hand, probably undertake face-saving "processionals," mooching off their increasingly impatient relatives, friends, nominal vassals, or overlords, lending their "good names" to questionable shady ventures in hopes of remaking their fortunes. More often than not these efforts fail. If they are lucky, these poor souls end their existence early on this earthly coil in indigent obscurity. If not, they linger on like bad pennies to the general embarrassment of their class.

Impoverished knights sometimes take to brigandage in hopes of recouping enough to reacquire arms, armor, and a combat-worthy horse. This path often leads to outlawry, severe injury, or even early death, and is largely responsible for the growing disrepute of chivalry amongst the common folk (for whatever that is worth). Often, such impoverished knights band together to minimize risk and expand the range of their depredations, though this sometimes leads to long, drawn-out armed conflicts with mobs of angry peasants led into battle against their oppressors by members of the local clergy.

# Investment

A character may acquire the +1 Well-off, +2 Prosperous, or +3 Wealthy Virtue, or buy off the –2 Poor Flaw, at any time when not actually on an adventure, by investing treasure. The cost of advancing from poor to standard, from standard to well-off, from well-off to prosperous, or from prosperous to wealthy is 20 times the new credit rating, with a minimum cost of 2,000 *denarii*. Note that a character advancing from average to wealthy will have to pay for all three of the +1 Well-off, +2 Prosperous, and the +3 Wealthy Virtues in succession. For example, an average knight wishing to purchase enough land to acquire the Wealthy Virtue would have to pay 8,000*d* for the Well-off Virtue (20 x the credit rating of a well-off knight), as well as 10,000*d* for the Prosperous Virtue, and 12,000*d* for the Wealthy Virtue, for a total of 30,000*d* or 125£ .

At the storyguide's discretion, investment also clears up any outstanding loans or pawns, though finding and buying back pawned items that have since been sold may involve an adventure. The specific nature of the investment should be discussed with the storyguide, and should be appropriate to the character's Social Class Virtue. A knight, gentleman, or peasant might purchase more land. A clerk might bribe his way into a better paying position. A freeman might buy himself a shop. A merchant might buy a share in a ship or a business.



Investment is particularly difficult for characters with the –2 Poor Flaw. Unless they come into 2,000 *denarii* (or more) very suddenly, their treasure funds will continually be raided by pesky creditors. Such characters may have to resort to time-tested evasion tactics like burying money at night or "giving" it away to trustworthy friends until they have accumulated enough to buy their way out of poverty.

Investment may not be used to shift from one Social Class Virtue to another, unless acceding to Greater Lordship (see page 39).

# New Optional Virtues and Flaws

## Optional Companion Social Class Virtues

The following are optional modifications to the system of Social Class Virtues outlined on pages 37-39 of **Ars Magica Fourth Edition**. They have been adapted to conform to the optional money and training rules contained in *Ordo Nobilis*. They have also been expanded for campaigns starting or extending earlier or later in the Middle Ages to reflect conditions during these periods. Unless otherwise indicated, these modified Social Class Virtues and Flaws are the ones consistently used in this sourcebook. The main aim of these modifications is to provide finer gradations within given social classes, using the –2 Poor Flaw and the +3 Wealthy Virtue, as well as the new +1 Well-Off and +2 Prosperous Virtues.

Companions and grogs who find employment with a covenant as specialists or covenfolk may not take the –2 Poor Flaw, or the +1 Well-Off, +2 Prosperous, or +3 Wealthy Virtues. While a covenant might not choose to take action against its copyist should he frequently absent himself, this will not stop its library from falling into decay. Similarly, an absent or distracted autocrat or turb captain cannot monitor and control the covenant's finances or maintain discipline. If grogs are frequently dragged off on adventures or forced to train until they drop, the laundry will not get done, no one will cook the food, the covenant's defenses will be neglected, and its horses will not be shoed or cared for. Thus, player characters with any of these Flaws or Virtues live at the covenant at their own expense and must draw their livelihood from elsewhere. Conversely, a player character who, by virtue of his position in life, has personal followers or attendants houses and maintains them on his tab rather than the covenant's.

Unless otherwise specified, all of the Social Class Virtues presented in this chapter are available to female characters. Widows, in particular, often assume the occupations of their husbands. Schools and universities occasionally have female students (often from wealthy or noble families), and female "Magister in Artibus" equivalents are rare, but not unheard-of. Such a character would be much talked about, and would probably be famous throughout the academic community in Mythic Europe. The three Virtues excluded to female characters are worthy of detailed comment.

Women cannot become knights (though they could conceivably disguise themselves as such for limited periods of time). Chivalry represents the elite military caste of Mythic Europe and is a highly public institution. While it might be possible for a particularly robust woman to receive some discreet martial training, inflexible social conventions preclude access to knight-

### Time Off: Adventuring, Studying, and Training

The standard **Ars Magica** character is assumed to have one season free each year in which to study, train, or adventure. The other three seasons are normally devoted to productive labor or other gainful employment. The rules provided here are analogous to the rules for interrupted study and lab work outlined on ArM 4, page 95.

Any break of more than ten days from a character's normal occupation (other than during the "free" season) poses a serious threat to his livelihood. To catch up for lost time and avoid the negative consequences of truancy, a character who has been absent from work for over ten days must roll a stress die, modified by Presence and his main work-related Ability, against an ease factor equal to the total number of days missed. Possible consequences of failure are outlined in the new Social Class Virtue profiles, but are ultimately up to the storyguide to decide. Botches should lead to particularly severe outcomes, such as a bad Reputation or even criminal proceedings on top of loss of employment.

Instead of having more money, characters with the +3 Wealthy or the new +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtues are assumed to have more leisure to absent themselves from their normal occupations. Their affairs are more resilient than those of standard characters and can often be sustained for a while by family or underlings in the character's absence. Well-off characters have two seasons free each year in which to train or adventure, and prosperous characters have three. Wealthy characters are free to use all their time as they see fit. Poor characters, on the other hand, have no free time during the year and must work at their occupations year round, even if this only involves begging.

hood for the fairer sex. Covenants, being somewhat isolated from the norms of surrounding mundane society, are a natural refuge for women imbued with warlike dispositions, and female warriors are likely to be welcome there. Covenants do not confer knighthoods, however, and even if they did (or pretended to), female knighthood would receive no public acknowledgment. Even Joan of Arc was never knighted. *Dura lex, sed lex* (a hard law, but still the law). This applies to mundane Mythic Europe, mind you, and anything might be possible in Arcadia.

The priesthood is also excluded to women. This is an absolute prohibition. A saga with female priests (at least purportedly Christian ones) might be interesting, but it would not be Mythic Europe. Female characters who feel a calling to preach the word of God need not despair, however. They are free to preach publicly (though not in church), and their activities will be tolerated by Church authorities — though probably with a degree of bemusement — so long as the strictest orthodoxy is adhered to. The Church also allows, in extreme circumstances, for the administration of some sacramental functions by the laity, including women. In the absence of a priest, women can baptize, bless a marriage, and administer the last rights (though not absolution) and even communion (though they may not consecrate the Eucharist).

The bar against female mendicants, on the other hand, is largely game-related. Mendicants are a relatively new phenomenon in Mythic Europe. St. Francis of Assisi and a very small company of brothers founded the first order of male mendicants in 1210 (Friar Tuck is a late medieval anachronism), and St. Francis sponsored the establishment of a female order by St. Clare in 1213. Unlike friars (male mendicants), poor claires or clarisses (female mendicants) are cloistered running hospitals for the sick and dying, and do not travel, preach, or adventure.

Despite these suggested restrictions, troupes are free to decide that their sagas will be run differently, with female clergy or armored knights romping around in the 9th century. To some this might appear surreal, to others that might be just the fun.

Mythic Europe is also populated by monks and nuns. There is no Social Class Virtue for them, however, because of cloistering and the absolute obedience they owe their abbots or abbesses. Monks and nuns do not normally travel unless sent on missions by their superiors. There are some exceptions, however. Abbots and abbesses are free to travel as much as their responsibilities allow but, like barons, bishops, and merchant princes, they should normally be beyond the scope of **Ars Magica** player characters. Of more relevance to those aspiring to run monastic characters, an abbot might assign an ordained monk to a covenant or wealthy noble as a chaplain. Whether the covenant's magi would be agreeable to such an arrangement is open to question, particularly as the monastery would expect a sizeable endowment in return. With the abbot or abbess' permission (revocable at any time), monks and nuns might also be free to roam around the immediate vicinity of their abbey. They could thus be suitable player characters for adventures that do not stir too far afield. The monastic authorities might be particularly disposed to cut some slack for characters of wealthy and/or noble birth in expectation of future patronage from their families. If the troupe and storyguide are willing to abide by such restrictions, male and female monastics could be run as companions with either the +1 Clerk or +2 Gentleman/woman Social Class Virtues.

## *+0 Virtues*

**Wanderer**: This is the default category. You are not tied to any liege or community, and have

### Disguised Characters

While sharp differentiation in gender roles is a characteristic feature of medieval life, tales abound of "forward hussies" who have cast away the distaff, donned male garb, and assumed male occupations in disguise. This route is available to female characters, just as any character, male or female, can attempt to disguise himself as belonging to a different social class.

Because of the risk of discovery, such characters should take the –1 Dark Secret Flaw and pay the cost for a "real," fall-back Social Class Virtue to which they will have to revert once exposed. On the other hand, disguised characters do not have to pay the cost of the Social Class Virtue they assume while in disguise. These mechanical modifications only apply to characters who adopt a disguise for a long period. Short-term disguises affected during play have no mechanical effects on those who assume them.

Until and unless they are found out, disguised characters enjoy all the benefits of their assumed social class. Disguises of this nature are very difficult to maintain, however, and characters should be wary of letting their guard down in times of stress.

standard equipment and a riding horse. Alternatively, you might live at the covenant doing odd jobs, in which case you count against the covenant's number of grogs or specialists.

If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw you do not have a mount, begin the game with only inexpensive arms and armor, and are probably little more than a beggar. You cannot afford to devote much time to training or adventuring unless subsidized by a patron (possibly the covenant or a wealthier character). If you have chosen the +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtue you might be a successful peddler or traveling journeyman. If you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue you might be a remittance man or woman out to see the world, with your own grog sidekick who lives at your own, rather than the covenant's, expense.

**Covenfolk**: You have lived at the covenant for a long time, likely since birth. The quality of your armaments depends on the covenant's resources. You may not pick the –2 Poor Flaw or the +1 Well-Off, +2 Prosperous, or +3 Wealthy Virtues.

**Freeman/woman**: You either practice a craft or are a free peasant. In either case you have at least the basic tools of your trade.

If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw, you live a hand-to-mouth existence and cannot afford to devote a season to study or adventuring unless subsidized by a patron (possibly the covenant or a wealthier character). If you have chosen the +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtue, you have journeymen or tenants working for you. If you are unable to spend the required time at your trade, for whatever reason, your business collapses, your tenants abscond with your chattels, or your landlord reclaims your property and you lose the relevant Virtue. It will take at least an adventure to regain it. If you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue, bailiffs or active partners manage your business or property for you and you may live full-time at the covenant with your own grog servant at your own expense.

## *+1 Virtues*

**Clerk:** You are a member of the literate class and are either a professional scribe, accountant, lawyer, student, or functionary. Due to your training, you have the +1 Educated Virtue for free. If you are male, you may be in minor orders (acolyte, exorcist, reader, or door-keeper), or may be a deacon or subdeacon, in which case you may marry and still benefit from being a member of the clergy and as such are subject to canon rather than secular law. For an additional +1 you may be an ordained priest if you are at least 30 years old, though you do not have a parish of your own.

If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw, you are saddled with a bad professional Reputation and have to work extra-hard to make ends meet unless subsidized by a patron (possibly the covenant or a wealthier character). If you have chosen the +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtue, you have accumulated a little capital on the side and lend out small sums as a pawn broker. If you are unable to spend the required time managing your affairs and pursuing your debtors, you may never see your money again. You may not take the +3 Wealthy Virtue.

**Failed Apprentice**: You were once apprenticed to a mage, but something kept you from completing your studies. Perhaps your Gift was incomplete or some grievous mishap robbed you of it altogether. You may still work for your former master or for the covenant in some other

capacity. Magi welcome you and have compassion for you — those who are given to such emotions, anyway. You may have Arcane and Formal Knowledges as beginning Abilities and you are familiar with the lives of magi. If your Gift was not completely destroyed, you may have some Exceptional Talents. You begin with whatever equipment your covenant is willing to provide you. As an employee of a covenant you may not pick the –2 Poor Flaw or the +1 Well-Off, +2 Prosperous, or +3 Wealthy Virtues.

**Mendicant Friar** (Male characters only, and probably available only after 1230): You are a follower of St. Francis or St. Dominic going among the rich and poor, spreading the word of God and giving comfort to the sick, homeless, hungry, or dying. You are sworn to serve the Church for the rest of your life, but your wandering habits are considered suspect by the local bishop and parish clergy, and you lack political influence within the organization. Like all clerics, however, you are only subject to canon law.

You must take the –2 Poor Flaw and may have only inexpensive armaments. Due to your training, you have the +1 Educated Virtue for free. For an additional +1 you are an ordained priest and may officiate at marriages, baptisms, funerals, and the mass, though the parish clergy may resent your interfering on their "turf." If a wealthy patron (possibly the covenant) is prepared to cover your needs, you can study or adventure freely. Otherwise, begging takes up all of your "free" time.

**Merchant:** You own a business and are involved in trade. The Church suspects you of price-gouging and usury, and worries about the state of your soul. Fortunately, your livelihood is sufficient to provide you with funds for conspicuous charity as well as creature comforts.

If you have chosen the +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtue, you may have junior partners or family working for you. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to spend the required time at your trade, your business collapses, your partners abscond with your goods, or your family freezes you out. It will take at least an adventure to regain the lost Virtue. If you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue, you have extensive business holdings in several towns which essentially run themselves. You may live full-time at the covenant at your own expense. In addition, you have two grog servants. You may not pick the –2 Poor Flaw.

**Wise One:** You belong to a broad class that includes mystics, seers, healers, and the like. You probably have magical capabilities, and will probably want to purchase a Virtue that gives you some sort of supernatural Ability. You are well regarded in the community, although your presence may cause fear as well as awe and respect. You may have standard armaments.

Your normal activities take up three seasons a year, leaving you with one free season in which to adventure. If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw, you lack such good standing and are most likely a hermit, wanderer, or outcast, and may only take inexpensive armaments. Your lifestyle normally precludes study, but you may adventure freely if a wealthy patron (possibly the covenant) is willing to cover your expenses. You may not pick the +2 Prosperous or +3 Wealthy Virtues.

## *+2 Virtues*

**Gentleman/woman:** You are a minor member (possibly illegitimate) of a noble family. You do not stand to inherit from your relatives, but are still treated as one of their own and may be addressed as "Lord" or "Lady." You probably reside near the covenant with your relatives. Although you do not want for anything, you have no vast wealth of your own. You may have standard equipment and may take the +1 Good Armaments Virtue for free or the +2 Training Virtue at a cost of +1. You may occasionally ask your family to buy expensive equipment for you, but you will need a convincing rationale. You are expected to wait on your relations much of the time or you will lose the benefits of family (though you will keep your social standing if you can otherwise maintain your normal lifestyle).

If you have chosen the +2 Prosperous Virtue, you have a personal attendant. In addition, if you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue, you have a household of your own subsidized by your family. You may not choose the –2 Poor Flaw.

**Knight** (Male characters only, generally only available after the year 1000): You are either a knight-errant wandering in search of adventure, honor, fame, and wealth, or you have sworn an oath of fealty to a lord and must attend him for much of the year to maintain your position at court. (The effects of the oath are the same as the –1 Oath Flaw, but you do not count this against your Flaw total.) In either case, you may be accompanied on adventures by a sergeant or squire. You begin play with the +2 Superior

Armaments Virtue at no cost, which also entitles you to a mount.

If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw, you must be a knight-errant and have lost your mount, arms, and armor as a result of some misfortune, and may only have standard arms and armor. If you have chosen the +2 Prosperous Virtue, you have nearby lands and tenants of your own. You have sworn an oath of fealty (as above), but need attend court less often, and are also accompanied by two grogs including your squire. If you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue, you have more extensive property and can afford to supply a substitute knight at court. You are accompanied by four retainers (generated as grogs), and in addition, for short-term and nearby adventures, you may raise up to a dozen more to serve under you. You may not choose to be a knight-errant if you pick the +2 Prosperous or the +3 Wealthy Virtue. Typical armaments for a mid–13th century knight are lance, sword, kite shield, a complete mail suit, and a warhorse. Plate armor becomes available in the West in the 14th century.

**Mercenary:** You lead a small company of mercenaries (5 to 10 grogs) for hire to the highest bidder. You are much like a knight-errant, only without the prestige. During your travels you have gained great wealth — and squandered it — several times over. You have the +1 Good Armaments Virtue for free. Your mercenaries have standard armaments.

You may not pick the –2 Poor Flaw — a less successful mercenary should be treated as a wanderer (above) — and you may not choose the +2 Prosperous or +3 Wealthy Virtues. Unless you can find an independent source of income or employment, you and your grogs are part of the covenant's turb. In either case, your work leaves you with only one free season each year to train or adventure. Otherwise, you may be unable to pay your men and they will desert.

## *+3 Virtues*

**Magister in Artibus:** You have incepted as Master of Arts and completed your two years' regency of compulsory teaching at one of the universities in Mythic Europe. In 1220 these include Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge, Montpelier, Arezzo, and Salamanca. In earlier periods you might have learned and taught at one of the great cathedral schools. You are entitled to be addressed as Magister, are subject only to canon law, and may teach anywhere in Europe. You have the following Abilities at no cost: Speak Latin 5, Scribe Latin 3, Artes Liberales 3, Disputatio 3, and Lectio 3. You may purchase further Academic Knowledges or Skills during character generation, and may take the +1 Further Education Virtue to spend more time in school. You are at least (25 – Int) years old and must spend most of the year (usually September to June) teaching to maintain yourself and your reputation as a dependable instructor at your usual school or college.

If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw, you come from unfree servile stock, have unusual difficulty finding students, and must teach year round to make up for your small classes. If you have chosen the +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtues, your family is a major patron of the school or college and your teaching load is correspondingly reduced. If you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue, you are an independent scholar free of any teaching obligations.

With the troupe's agreement, magi may take

this as a general Virtue and begin their magical training once incepted. Such magi have an additional 21 experience points to spend on Arcane Talents, Skills, and Knowledges, as they do not need to learn Latin as part of their apprenticeship. Such magi must start as at least (35 – Int) years old.

**Priest** (Male characters only): You are an ordained celebrant of an urban or rural parish. You are a member of the clergy with a specific position of authority in the religious hierarchy and thus come under the protection of canon law. You are accorded some respect, or at least fear, due to your position, but nobles still usually outrank you, as their wealth gives them a great deal of political power in the Church. You have the +1 Educated Virtue for free, allowing you to purchase Academic Knowledges. You also have Area Lore 3 (your parish) for free, thanks to the secrets of the confessional. You may tap parish funds in an emergency, but risk drawing the attention of the bishop if you do. Finally, you must be at least 30 years old. Parish responsibilities leave you with only one season a year in which to train or adventure.

If you chose the –2 Poor Flaw, you are an assistant to a senior priest in a destitute parish. Parish revenues are barely enough to support your superior and he will seize the opportunity of any prolonged absence to dispense with your services permanently. As such, you must work in the parish year-round, possibly tending a small garden on the side to keep hunger at bay. If you chose the +1 Well-Off or the +2 Prosperous Virtue, you may be the parish curate and a substitute (the vicar) performs most of the work for you. You need only spend one (if prosperous) or two (if well-off) seasons a year in the parish, but do not receive the Area Lore bonus. If you have chosen the +3 Wealthy Virtue, you are a pluralist with the cure of several parishes. Your time is your own and you are accompanied by two attendants or bodyguards. You are probably not popular with the local bishop, however, and reformist clergy tend to frown on your cavalier approach to your responsibilities.

# New and Modified General Virtues and Flaws

The following optional General Virtues and Flaws are either new, or have been modified to conform to the new money, training, and social class optional rules presented in *Ordo Nobilis*.

## *Modified +1 Virtues*

**Heir** (Companions): You have little power or wealth now, but stand to inherit land and possibly money. You need do nothing special to remain in your position, but others may occasionally attempt to remove you from the line of succession — one way or another. When you finally win your inheritance, you acquire the +2 Prosperous Virtue (at no further cost) or, for the cost of one additional Virtue point in the Heir Virtue, the +3 Wealthy Virtue. Note that as an heir you may not normally acquire these Virtues during character creation (though you may take the +1 Well-Off Virtue), but if you have the +2 Knight Social Class Virtue, the storyguide may allow you to pick both the +1 Heir and the +2 Prosperous or +3 Wealthy Virtues. The Heir Virtue may not be chosen in conjunction with a Social Class Flaw.

**Blessed Sword:** You own a knight's sword that has been blessed by a priest during a dubbing ceremony. The sword provides a +10 Magic Resistance to any knight wielding or wearing it while acting honorably.

**Well-Off** (Companions): You are modestly better-off than the average member of your class. This allows you to devote two seasons a year to training or adventuring instead of one, and may have other benefits depending on your Social Class Virtue. This Virtue may not be chosen in conjunction with a Social Class Flaw.

## *Modified +2 Virtues*

**Prosperous** (Companions): You are an unusually successful member of your class or occupation, and enjoy a particularly comfortable living. The specific benefits of this Virtue vary according to your chosen Social Class Virtue, but you generally come with a mount (though possibly only a donkey or a mule) and, if appropriate, good armaments. You can generally devote three seasons each year to training, study, or adventuring. This Virtue may not be chosen in conjunction with a Social Class Flaw.

## *Modified +3 Virtues*

**Wealthy** (Companions): You are a highly prominent member of your class or occupation, owning land or capital and other valuables. The specific benefits of this Virtue vary according to your chosen Social Class Virtue, but you generally start with an excellent mount (possibly a warhorse) and, if appropriate, superior armaments. This Virtue may not be chosen in conjunction with a Social Class Flaw.

## *Modified –1 Flaws*

**Expenses** (Companions): You must pay a significant portion of your wealth and income (10 *denarii* or 10% of your credit rating, whichever is higher) each year from your treasure funds to a person or organization, or devote it to expenses that bring you no personal gain. Failure to pay your dues brings unpleasant consequences, such as the loss of status and privileges or the ill will of an important person. Storyguides should be sensitive to the adventuring needs of characters saddled with this Flaw, particularly once they begin to accumulate negative treasure. With the storyguide's approval, this Flaw can be bought off, for example, by repaying a loan you have acquired during the saga.

## *Modified –2 Flaws*

**Poor** (Companions): You have almost no wealth. You may have some difficulty hanging onto the valuables you do gain, as creditors you thought you had shaken appear to collect their due. The specific disadvantages of this Flaw vary according to your chosen Social Class Virtue or Flaw. You normally have little time to adventure or train unless your expenses are taken in hand by the covenant or from a wealthier character's treasure funds. You normally begin the game with inexpensive arms and armor unless your Social Class Virtue description indicates otherwise.

## *New +2 Virtues*

**Student/Scholar:** You are one of the many students at a nearby university or cathedral school. While you are probably not in holy orders, you are nonetheless subject to canon rather than civil law. Your fellow students sometimes abuse this legal protection to indulge in petty thefts, bar-fights, or disputes that occasionally spill over into major riots and street fights with exasperated townsfolk. You automatically get the +1 Educated Virtue for free, and have access to three free seasons a year of training in Academic Skills and Knowledges for up to three

### Married Women

Women tend to have the same social status as their husbands, but this is only a general rule and common sense should apply. Women can have status of their own, for example, possibly superior to that of their spouses. The wife of a wealthy knight, if created as a player character, does not have to pay five Virtue points for the +2 Knight Social Class and the +3 Wealthy Virtues. She is not, after all, a knight and the lands are not hers, but her husband's. It would be more appropriate to assign her the +2 Gentlewoman Social Class Virtue and possibly the +2 Temporal Influence Virtue, depending on the precise nature of her relations with her husband. If, on the other hand, a female character holds lands in her own right, she might be assigned the +2 Prosperous or +3 Wealthy Virtue, while her husband settles for Temporal Influence.

years (not necessarily consecutive) or until you have reached the equivalent of Magister in Artibus (in which case you gain the appropriate Social Class Virtue). Your tuition and modest living expenses are paid for by a patron or your extended family, and you must dedicate at least three seasons each year to your studies or lose your academic standing. You may, however, abandon your studies at any time and become a simple clerk. You may not acquire experience points through exposure for the seasons spent studying.

If you have chosen the –2 Poor Flaw, you are the proverbial starving student and must provide formal or informal tutoring to less-advanced students for an additional season each year to make ends meet. If you have chosen the +1 Well-Off or +2 Prosperous Virtue, you are funding your own studies from your regular income, or the terms of your scholarship are particularly generous. You need only study at the school or university one season each year, and are not restricted to only three years of study. You may not choose the +3 Wealthy Virtue. Note that this is a General, not a Social Class, Virtue. Student characters are still required to pick a Social Class Virtue or Flaw which applies at least until the completion of their studies.

## *New –1 Flaws*

**Faerie Enmity:** Faeries dislike you and take every opportunity to pester you. Faerie forests are extremely dangerous, but even field faeries may spoil your food, plague your dreams, or otherwise torment you until you depart. Luckily, your life is not in danger — they prefer to let you live so they can continue to harass you. You, and all characters directly associated with you, are automatically at –6 on all social interaction rolls with the fay.

**Indiscreet:** You are unable to keep a secret. You must tell all to the first interested party you meet in an effort to be helpful or to demonstrate that you are in-the-know, unless you make a 9+ Intelligence-based stress roll. If you botch, you may have to be physically restrained by your companions from answering any questions put to you for the remainder of the encounter.

**Language Block** (Companions, Grogs): You have been completely unable to learn new languages since childhood, and may not acquire any experience points in languages other than your native tongue. This Flaw is incompatible with the +1 Well-Traveled Virtue. While you may have indeed journeyed throughout Mythic Europe, you didn't pick up much useful information.

**Miser:** You are given to the sin of avarice, and hate parting with money. You have a Miser +3 Personality Trait. You are convinced thieves covet your wealth, and are very secretive about money. Before you can make a payment from your treasure funds, you must make an Intelligence-based stress roll (subtracting your Miser Personality Trait) against an ease factor set by the storyguide in conformity with the objective necessity of the purchase. If you fail, you hold onto your money and will fight those attempting to take it from you. If you botch, you refuse to part with any of your hard-earned savings for the remainder of the adventure.

**Mistaken Identity:** Someone, who looks exactly like you and whom you and your companions will never meet, lives near you, and is responsible for an ongoing variety of violent, illegal, obscene, or embarrassing acts. You frequently get visits from the local authorities checking your alibis and may spend a significant proportion of your time in the stocks or lying low for offenses committed by your "evil twin."

**Motion Sickness:** Riding a horse, in a cart, or on sailing on a ship makes you violently ill. When not traveling on foot, you suffer double the fatigue loss on long journeys specified in the Travel Chart (ArM4, page 192), with a minimum loss of two Fatigue levels. Violent jostling over a period of a few hours could conceivably lead to unconsciousness.

**No Sense of Direction:** You are completely unable to follow directions. North, south, east, and west have no meaning to you, and you often confuse right and left. You frequently get lost while traveling unfamiliar paths by yourself, or with others following your lead, and often have to reason your way home or to your destination from first principles. This Flaw is incompatible with the +1 Well-Traveled Virtue.

**Nocturnal:** Your natural body rhythms try to keep you sleeping until noon. You are at –1 on all rolls made between dawn and midday. Conversely, you have little difficulty staying up at night. Though you enjoy no special benefits in the dark, your companions may decide to saddle you with night guard duty on a regular basis to use your attributes to best effect.

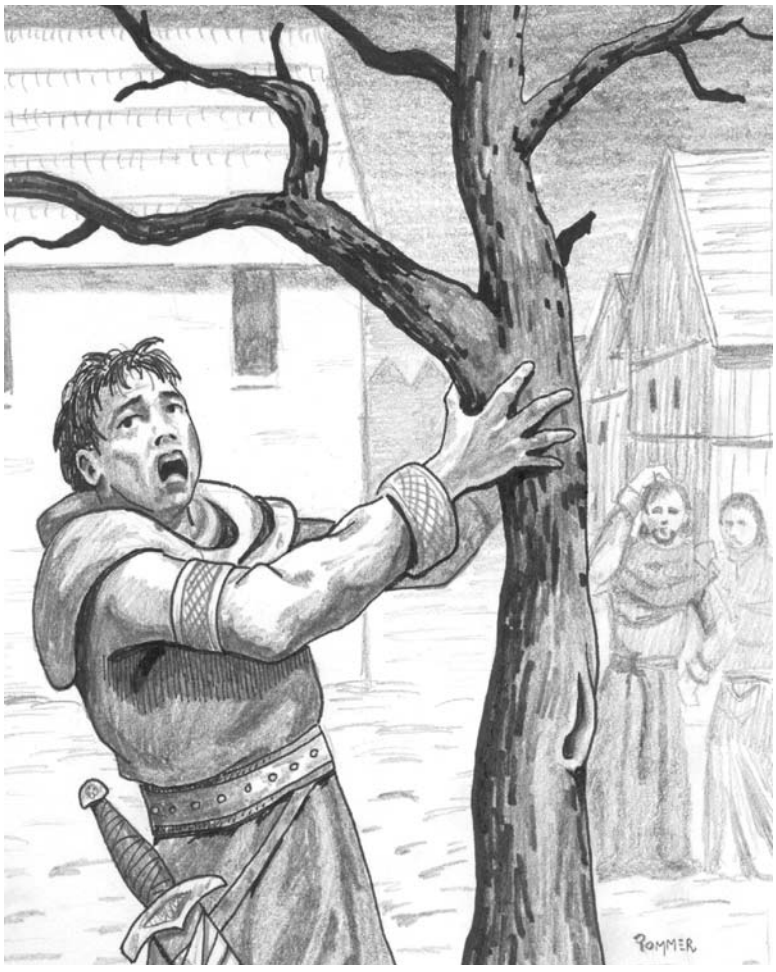
**Inept Underlings:** Your hired help is incompetent. No matter what you do, or who you fire

or hire, you've got an inept staff which can be trusted to do things badly or clumsily when not closely supervised. This Flaw may only be taken by characters whose Social Class Virtue allows them to have one or more grog attendants or followers.

**Unsavory Underlings:** Your hired help is prone to larcenous and thuggish behavior. You seem to attract, and are only able to keep, unsavory staff that tends to bully or put the squeeze on people in your absence. This Flaw may only be taken by characters whose Social Class Virtue allows them to have one or more grog attendants or followers.

**Overbearing Underlings:** Your hired help is pushy and is convinced it knows better than you do what is good for you. Your staff is intensely loyal and protective, but exercises unwarranted initiatives on your behalf despite any explicit instructions to the contrary. As your employees do not trust you to make "correct" decisions, they often do not inform you of problems that arise, preferring instead to deal with any difficulties themselves. This Flaw may only be taken by characters whose Social Class Virtue allows them to have one or more grog attendants or followers.

**Surly Underlings:** Without actually being disloyal, your hired help holds you in ill-disguised contempt. No matter what you do, or who you fire or hire, your staff consists invariably of surly, whiny, and argumentative underlings prone to rolling their eyes behind your back and making scenes in public. This Flaw may only be taken by characters whose Social Class Virtue allows them to have one or more grog attendants or followers.




## *New –2 Flaws*

**Jinxed:** All your companions automatically roll an additional botch die when they roll a 0 on a stress die in your presence. You are not directly affected (you do not add a botch die for your own rolls) and neither are your opponents or enemies. If you are a mage, your apprenticeship may have been unusually eventful, though your *parens* may have developed an unfortunate Reputation. If a prolonged string of bad luck is ever traced to your influence, you could easily acquire a bad Reputation of your own.

**Lunacy** (Companions, Grogs): According to an unknown, complex, yet regular natural cycle, (probably associated with the moon) you suffer from prolonged fits of madness in which you talk to yourself, behave strangely, and do not recognize those around you. You suffer these fits several times each year. The story guide should secretly roll a simple die – 1 at the beginning of each adventure in which you plan to participate. On a 0, you will go mad at some point during the scenario. The exact timing of your episode it up to the storyguide, who is free to choose whatever timing will most advance the story. Roll a stress die to determine the duration (in hours) of your fit. If you botch, roll again for the number of days. If you botch again, roll again for the number of weeks. If you botch yet again, your madness is permanent until temporarily "cured" by supernatural means. If you spend a season with an astrologer, he may be able to gain some insight into the cycle of your madness on a divination roll of 9+, in which case the player may witness the storyguide's roll for any future adventures occurring in the following year, and decide whether or not to have this particular character participate.

## *New –3 Flaws*

**Albino:** Your skin and body hair are as white as chalk, and your eyes are pink. You are immediately recognizable, and suffer a –3 on all social interaction rolls with those who do not know you well. In addition, you lose one Fatigue level during daylight hours, and must make one Stamina stress roll against an ease factor of 3+ per hour your torso or legs are exposed to direct harsh sunlight. If you fail your roll, you lose a Body level from severe sunburns — two or more if you botch. Neither of these effects apply if it is overcast, or if you have frequent access to cover or shade.

## *New –4 Flaws*

**Epilepsy:** You must make a Stamina-based stress roll of 9+ anytime you botch any roll, or suffer a grand mal seizure. If you simply fail your roll, a kind storyguide may decide to limit the effects of the botch to the seizure itself, unless you rolled a double botch or greater. If you also botch your epilepsy stress roll, you lose one Body level per severity of the botch (in other words, one for a single botch, two for a double, three for a triple, etc.) from injuries stemming from your fit. On the plus side, a fit will probably provoke Visions (at the storyguide's discretion) if you have that Exceptional Talent.

# Character Advancement

Mythic Europe is an essentially static society in which an individual's social standing is largely determined at birth. While there is some scope for advancement in the mundane realm for exceptional individuals (and what are player-characters if not exceptional?), only in service to a covenant is a companion likely to rise purely on the basis of hard work and objective merit. Because covenants exist apart from mundane society, however, status within the covenant rarely translates well into the mundane world.

While the purpose of *Ordo Nobilis* is to present a detailed picture of noble life in Mythic Europe, our working assumption is that the highest feudal rank an active player character can achieve is that of a wealthy landed knight. This may strike some players as unnecessarily restrictive, particularly as players can design wealthy knights as starting characters. What more is there to aspire to?

## Greater Lordship

Great Lord, an optional Social Class Virtue for companions, is described on page 26 of *A Medieval Tapestry*. There are three issues troupes may wish to consider carefully before allowing player characters to progress to Greater Lordship.

Despite its apparent chaotic nature (or perhaps because of it), Mythic Europe is a profoundly orderly society guided by a strong sense of what is, and what is not, fit and seemly. One of the fundamental tenets underlying the dominant value system is that, by divine right, high social standing is ascribed to only a few lineages and families. No matter how worthy in our eyes, the individual who rises too far or too fast above his station is a *parvenu*. "Undue" promotion generates an enormous amount of resistance and resentment, and kings have faced baronial rebellions, and been overthrown or killed for advancing their favorites beyond what genteel society could bear.

The second issue troupes should consider is game balance. Even a minor baron with his hundreds (if not thousands) of dependents is a match for the average mage. A saga with a player character baron may soon find itself gravitating around his concerns, with the other characters reduced to playing bit parts as spear carriers. This might seem less of a problem if the troupe has more than one Great Lord player character, but this leads to the third reason for caution. Allowing Greater Lordship could shift the focus of the game away from the magi and their covenant, in favor of their mundane companions.

For these three reasons it may be best for a character who has achieved the exalted status of baron, abbot, bishop, or even merchant prince to be retired as a player character. This is not to say that all contact between the character and the covenant should cease. The retired character might well maintain existing ties of friendship, and could serve as a powerful ally. Nevertheless, a Great Lord would normally cease to adventure, and his interactions with the covenant would be guided and determined not by the former player, but by the storyguide.

There is, nonetheless, a certain undeniable glory and high drama in having a lowly character struggle to overcome the accumulated weight of discrimination and prejudice. The ultimate decision on whether or not to accept Greater Lordship is yours, and for those who would navigate such dangerous waters we offer the following optional rules for greater character advancement.

## *Higher Nobility*

As described in *A Medieval Tapestry* (page 26), a starting character may purchase the Great Lord Virtue with the troupe or storyguide's explicit permission. Each rung in the feudal hierarchy has a specific cost: baron +6, viscount +7, count +8, marquis +9, and duke +10. Note that few countries have all of these ranks.

Characters who wish to ascend to greater lordship during play have slightly different requirements. The first requirement is monetary. The basic cost of moving from one rank to the next is determined by using the investment system (see page 29). Before advancing to the next rung, you must have purchased the Well-Off, Prosperous, and Wealthy Virtues for your existing rank. You are then eligible to become an average member of the nobility at the next rank, assuming such a rank exists.

For example, a wealthy knight wishing to become a baron would have to invest 20 times a baron's credit rating (20 x 1000*d*) before he could advance to this level of Greater Lordship. If he wished to bypass baronial rank and become a viscount, he would have to invest 20,000*d* for baronial status, 40,000*d* for becoming a well-off baron, 60,000*d* for becoming prosperous, 80,000*d* to become a wealthy baron, and 40,000*d* for the rank of an average viscount for a total of 240,000*d* (or 1,000£). For a wealthy knight to become a duke, an investment of almost 6,000£ would be required.

Unfortunately, one cannot just ride up to the king, empty a few cartloads of *denarii* at his feet, and walk off with a noble title. Would that life should be that simple! Rather, the investment is an indication of the financial costs involved in acquiring land and other rights, hiring large numbers of retainers, bribing officials, and generally maintaining a higher standard of living. In addition to the financial cost, promotion from one rank to the next requires (at least) a full adventure of expensive intrigue, marriage politics, foreclosures, legal battles, and quite possibly mass combat. You cannot just buy your way into social promotion.

If an appropriate rank or title does not exist in the player character's kingdom, he must either bypass the missing ranks (while still paying the cost), or acquire a foreign rank instead.

Whatever rank a character acquires beyond knightly status also comes with a bad Reputation as a parvenu with a level equal to the cost of the Virtue – 5. A Reputation as a parvenu acts as a negative modifier to all social interaction rolls with nobles who were not the character's vassals prior to his acquisition of the Reputation. A parvenu is also likely to lose all plausible legal suits decided by his peers, and is fair game on the tournament field. There is no dishonor in thirty knights challenging a parvenu in quick succession, and if he leaves the field on a stretcher, so much the better. Note that a character who, with the troupe's consent, starts the game with the Great Lord Virtue is not a parvenu.

There are very few things a character can do to overcome this Reputation. Actions that would reduce such a Reputation by one might include marrying someone of rank equal to your new status (marrying above your new status will merely confirm your standing as a parvenu), going on crusade or on a pilgrimage (very risky — your neighbors are likely to pounce on your lands while you are gone), winning a tournament (and living to tell about it!), or pointedly receiving a Papal blessing (expect to pay dearly for the privilege). In addition, if you keep your head down, toe the line set by your "peers," and avoid making waves, your Reputation as a parvenu might decline by one every ten years. On the plus side, if you die, your reputation dies with you and your heirs will be grudgingly accepted by higher soci-

### Avoiding a Reputation as a Parvenu

One way to avoid the dreaded parvenu Reputation is to start the game as a wealthy knight with the +1 Heir Virtue. This indicates that you are a minor scion of a baronial family. Though you might not actually inherit, no one would argue with your right to enter the higher nobility if fortune smiles on you. Another way is to carve out a domain for yourself from Saracen or pagan lands. This sort of social promotion will clearly have been blessed by God. Unfortunately, you cannot acquire such lands by investment. You have to do it the hard way, by raising an army and seizing and holding the territory by force.

ety. Nobles are fair-minded people and only take resentment so far.

# Character Experience

Leisure is a luxury in Mythic Europe, and few characters have the freedom to drop work or other social obligations at will for extended periods. Magi normally lose a season of study or research if they spend more than ten days traveling or adventuring, and the same applies to companions, grogs, and non-player characters. Simply put, time spent adventuring cuts into time available for training.

The optional rules for Social Class Virtue and character income outlined in this chapter provide the average character with the equivalent of one free season each year in which to train or adventure. Most characters will wish to take advantage of these free seasons to use and hone existing Abilities or acquire new ones.

In view of the increased emphasis placed on training time in this chapter, *Ordo Nobilis* offers the following refinements to the "Experience and Characters" section found on pages 185-188 of **Ars Magica Fourth Edition**.

## *Finding a Trainer*

Unless a character seeks training in one of the Academic Skills or Knowledges (in which case he should attend a cathedral school or university), finding a trainer in Mythic Europe is no easy task.

Training is normally acquired through apprenticeship. The apprentice does not pay for his training, but offers instead several years (normally seven) of low-skilled labor in exchange for the gradual acquisition of moderate proficiency. This route is available to adult characters, but is probably not what most of them will have in mind. Besides abandoning their chosen profession and status for the lowly pay and labor of a drudge, adult apprentices will probably have to put up with an enormous amount of ridicule, possibly acquiring a bad Reputation or the –1 Dark Secret Flaw. Apprentices normally acquire the equivalent of one season's of training per year of apprenticeship.

Trade schools, craft schools, and martial academies do not exist. It is possible — difficult, but possible — to find a trainer willing to set other business aside for one or more seasons while devoting himself full-time to training. Not only will the student have to compensate the trainer for lost income, but also for any long-term decline that might ensue from leaving his business unattended for several months. Further, because demand for formal non-academic training is low in Mythic Europe, player characters will rarely be able to benefit from a trainer's ability to teach multiple students at once. You will probably be the only student and, as such, will have to bear the full cost of the trainer's time.

## El Cid

The prototypical successful parvenu was Rodrigo Diaz "El Cid" de Vivar, the hero of the great Spanish medieval epic *The Poem of mio Cid*. He was a historical figure born in a wealthy knightly family in or about 1043. The poem starts with his exile from the court of Alfonso VI of Castile in disgrace as a result of the intrigues of the higher nobility. The nature of the accusations against him is not made clear, but it is apparent he had risen high in the king's favor.

El Cid's loyal vassals accompany him into exile, and he is joined by a number of knights attracted by his heroism and charisma. After a string of victories against the Frankish count of Barcelona and a bevy of Moorish potentates, he manages to conquer the city of Valencia where he maintains the independence of his new principality against repeated attempts by the Moors to retake it. Noting the riches El Cid has accumulated, two members of the old aristocracy, sons of the count of Carrion, offer to marry his beloved daughters who are his only heirs. Suspicious at first, El Cid is prevailed upon by his former lord, the king, who wishes to effect a reconciliation.

This union ends in tragedy when, unable to live in El Cid's heroic shadow, the haughty princelings return to Castile with their brides (and their dowries) only to rob, beat viciously, and abandon them for dead in the mountainous wilderness on the way. Ultimately, El Cid secures his revenge and receives reparations. The stain on his honor can never be fully expunged, but his daughters marry into royalty and he dies a relatively contented man, reconciled with his king (and with his Castilian estates!).

El Cid's is clearly an exception to the fate of the average parvenu, the hero rising to enormous riches and a modicum of respect. His life was one long struggle, but long after his death great nobles and even kings were proud to count him among their ancestors.

Covenant-dwellers can, of course, agree to train each other. Just remember that both the trainer and the trainee lose a season in the process. Also consider that a season spent training (or learning) is one less season spent cooking, mending clothes, cleaning, guarding the covenant, or minding the library. If covenfolk are regularly taken away from their duties, the covenant's characteristics should be amended accordingly.

Another option is to start the game with the +2 Training Virtue. The fact that you do not have to pay your trainer out of your treasure funds for one season of training each year makes this option very attractive.

Probably the best sources of training, however, are the non-player characters encountered on adventures. Storyguides should not be shy about introducing such individuals. Useful social contacts are a legitimate form of "treasure" or reward. Non-player characters, even if well-disposed toward the player characters, need not be cheap. They are subject, after all, to the same economic needs as anyone else. Nonetheless, once identified, they are at least easy to find, and are also a possible source of future adventure seeds with which to enrich the texture and realism of a saga.

## *Paying for Training*

The average work season in Mythic Europe is 60 days. The remaining thirty are devoted to essential rest and recuperation (people work very long hours, and illness is frequent), as well as family, community, and religious obligations. Pay for trainers is based on the income they could expect to earn practicing their trades, and a hefty premium to compensate for disruption of their businesses and the dissemination of "trade secrets." The basic rate of pay will depend on the general Ability level of the trainer and on the rarity of the Ability concerned. A journeyman is assumed to have the Ability at level 5+, a master at level 7+, and a master with some fame as a trainer at level 8+. Skills and Knowledges fall into four categories for training purposes.

**Arcane Abilities:** These must be taught by a mage, and magi do not normally teach for money.

**Obscure Abilities:** Rare languages (Arabic, Hebrew, possibly Greek) and foreign weapons.

**Specialized Abilities:** All Academic and Exceptional Knowledges and Skills, and expensive weapons.

**Common Abilities:** All other Skills and Knowledges.

The base cost for a season of training is indicated below. Note that the base rate for a master is lower than it might normally be because he is assumed to take the opportunity to train his apprentices and journeymen at the same time as he trains the character. Training costs for Academic Knowledges and Skills are based on private tutoring. Fees for instruction in a cathedral school or university are much lower (normally about one-fifth) due to the higher volume of students.

| **Quality of Trainer** | **Price** |
|---|---|
| Journeyman | 240*d* (1£) |
| Master | 360*d* (1£ 10*s*) |
| Famous Trainer | 480*d* (2£) |
| Obscure Ability | +240*d* (1£) |
| Specialized Ability | +120*d* (10*s*) |

Once the standard fee has been determined, the character and the trainer each make simple Intelligence-based Bargaining rolls. Depending on the difference between the two rolls, the winner can modify the standard rate as indicated at the top of the next page. The fee will remain unchanged if the training continues over successive seasons.

| Difference | Modification |
|---|---|
| 1 | 5% |
| 3 | 10% |
| 6 | 15% |
| 10 | 20% |
| 15 | 25% |
| 21 | 30% |

If a trainer met on an adventure considers himself indebted to the trainee, he might, at the storyguide's option, settle for as much as a 30% discount for a season. He would not be able to forego all the income, however. It is also possible that a trainer will accept payment in kind for his services.

## *Abstracted Trainers*

What if a character knows of no non-player character willing to train him in a desired Skill or Knowledge? The simple answer is that the interested character should go out and find one during an adventure. Unfortunately, this is not always practicable, as the storyguide may not be willing to run such an adventure for fear of slowing down the game for the other players. In such cases the storyguide may opt to use the following rules for abstracted trainers.

When looking for a trainer, the player rolls a simple die against an ease factor of 6, taking the modifiers below into account. Success indicates an appropriate and willing trainer is found. If the roll is 9+, the trainer has a positive Communication. On a failure, the character may try again or opt to practice instead. If the second roll is failed, the character has wasted a season in a fruitless search. An abstracted trainer is not a non-player character and exists only for purposes of the training (unless the storyguide wants to make an exception to introduce an adventure).

| Location of Training | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Rural | –4 |
| Town (2,000-10,000) | –2 |
| Major Town (10,000-40,000) | 0 |
| Great City (40,000+, Paris, Constantinople) | +1 |
| If a university is present | +1 |

| Level of Trainer Sought | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Journeyman | 0 |
| Master | –1 |
| Famous Trainer | –2 |

| Type of Training | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Common | 0 |
| Specialized | –1 |
| Obscure | –2 |
| Arcane | N/A |

| Other Factors | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Character has the Prosperous Virtue | +1 |
| Character has the Wealthy Virtue | +2 |
| Character has appropriate Social Contacts Virtue | +3 |
| For offering 20% above the standard rate | +1 |
| For offering 50% above the standard rate | +2 |
| For offering double the standard rate | +3 |

## *Disputatio and Lectio*

Disputatio and Lectio are the two formal means of instruction in Knowledges in Mythic Europe and are used in all cathedral schools and universities. Both are intended for wide audiences, though Disputatio is also an excellent method for one-on-one tutoring. Note that no teacher may instruct more than one student at a time in any of the magical Arts.

To simulate this, troupes may wish to consider increasing the number of students that can be taught at once. If using this optional rule, simply reduce each student's study total by one for each student above the normal limit. If a student is being taught by Disputatio, but would have gained more experience points through simple training with the same master under the same conditions, he receives the benefits of training instead.

## *Practice*

Because *Ordo Nobilis* assumes the average character will only have one free season each year to train or adventure, troupes may wish to

### Argumentation and Disputatio

Disputatio, which involves orderly and logical presentation, is also an excellent method of argumentation. One third of a character's Disputatio score (rounded up) can be used as a positive modifier, similar to an Affinity, to all efforts to convince a receptive person to follow a specified course of action. This makes it very useful as a tool for advising kings and other decision makers, as well as for arguing cases in law courts or tribunals.

## Exempli Gratia: Teaching Multiple Students with Disputatio

Deodatus of Seville is giving a course in anatomy at the medical school in Salerno. His course consists of a season of dissecting dogs and pigs, followed by examination of their remains. The Church frowns on the dissection of human corpses, but Deodatus postulates that animals that eat the same food as men should have essentially similar bodily organs. Cursory examinations of eviscerated convicts and battle casualties have convinced him that his hypothesis is largely correct. Six students with particularly strong stomachs sign up for the course.

Deodatus' score in Medicine is 6 and his Disputatio is 3. He has a Communication of +1, and an Intelligence of +2. His students have Intelligences respectively of +2, +1, +1, 0, 0, and –1. Using the optional rules provided above, they generate study totals of 8, 7, 7, 6, 6 and 5 (see ArM4, page 187). They would normally acquire 2 experience points in Medicine each, except for the last student, who would acquire only 1. Since Deodatus has a score of 6 in Medicine, however, he could have trained all six students without using Disputatio, and they would have acquired 3, 3, 3, 2, 2 and 2 experience points respectively, so they acquire these higher totals instead.

If Deodatus had taken a seventh student with, for example, an Intelligence of 0, he could not have used simple training, as the number of students would have exceeded his score in Medicine. In this case, the students would only have acquired 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, and 1 experience points respectively.

Even though his six students acquire experience points as if they had been trained without the use of Disputatio, Deodatus still benefits from having practiced both his skill in Disputatio and his knowledge in Medicine. He opts to roll a simple die against his Disputatio score and rolls a 7. Since this is higher than his score in Disputatio, he gains one experience point in this skill at the end of the course.

count all work experience as practice while reducing the number of experience points that can be gained from practice in a given season. Under this optional system, for each season spent using a Skill or Talent, either as practice or as part of a character's regular activities or employment, roll a simple die. If the roll is higher than the character's current level, he gains one experience point. No more than one Ability can be rolled for per season, and the storyguide has the final say on whether a given Ability has been used enough to merit a roll.

# Chapter 3
# Law

## Law and Lordship

*"He who judges, rules"*

— Ancient Croat Proverb

Adjudicating disputes and maintaining the peace between one's dependents is the essence of lordship, and is a lord's principal peacetime responsibility. Ideally, justice is both decisive and informal, swift yet sure, firm yet gentle, and personal yet objective, similar to the order maintained in a household by a loving *pater familias* (father of the family).

The quality of justice delivered is one of the three key factors determining a lord's reputation with his dependents (the others being his success as a warrior and the level of taxation). The responsibility need not be carried out in person by the lord and is often delegated, but all that is done is done in his name.

## Types of Law

There are four general types of law in Mythic Europe: Roman (Civil and Canon), tribal, feudal, and customary. Which law to apply in a given case is often in dispute, and may even become the principal issue at stake.

### Roman Civil and Canon Law

The law of the old Roman Empire, in its Civil and Canon forms, is the most elaborate and comprehensive system of law ever developed in Mythic Europe. Civil law deals with disputes between individuals, while Canon law deals with Church property, discipline, and the sacraments. While theoretically in force throughout the breadth and even beyond the historical limits of Roman rule (Canon law applies to the Christian Church everywhere), Roman law requires a cadre of trained and literate specialists in its application. The absence of such a class outside Church circles has, until recently, led to the effective supplanting of Roman law by tribal and local customary law. Only recently has Roman Civil law been making a comeback, principally thanks to a "revolution" in legal teaching.

Until the early 12th century, Roman Civil law was not taught as a discrete body, but instead was used as a tool for teaching two other classical knowledges: rhetoric and the *ars dictaminis* (the art of drawing up legal documents such as deeds and charters). By that time, however, northern Italy and Provence were seeing a rapid growth in urban development and trade, which in turn required a more sophisticated body of law than was provided by the hodgepodge of local customary laws and the often contradictory and debased versions of Civil law that were in use.

This need resulted in the establishment of schools of law. Early on, the most significant of those schools was Pavia, which initially taught "Lombard and Roman" law. The most famous school of law was undoubtedly Bologna, which produced the greatest legal minds of the period, Irnerius and Gratian, the *auctores* of Civil and Canon law, respectively.

Canon law was, in the beginning, a collection of rules governing the organization and operation of the Church and the conduct of the clergy. These rules were based on the Bible,

Church custom, and the legislation of various councils and Popes. When, under Constantine, the Christian Church became the official religion of the Roman Empire, these canons became enforceable rules and were increasingly treated as a system of laws. Over a period of centuries, the Church gained the right for its clergy to be prosecuted only under Canon law. This protection was eventually extended to lay members of the church, such as clerks and students.

Canon law is also applicable to certain classes of trials even when the involved parties are not themselves afforded clerical status. All trials dealing with matters of religion, such as heresy, are dealt with in the Canon courts. Trials involving oaths and marriage are also considered within the authority of the Church alone. Canon courts do not normally inflict capital, or usually even corporal, punishment. Instead, a party found guilty of a crime requiring such punishment might be defrocked for the offense and turned over to the secular authorities, who would then administer the appropriate penalties. Alternatively, the Church authorities might keep matters entirely in their own hands. A murderous cleric might look forward to confiscation of his cleric income and a lifelong "retreat from the world" in an "ascetic" monastic cell.

Dionysius Exiguus (the creator of the *Anno Domini* — AD, "year of our Lord" — system of calculating dates) compiled the first really complete collection of ecclesiastical legislation. His collection included apostolic canons, the canons of the various Church councils up to 420, and papal decrees up to the end of the 5th century. This collection remained the core of Canon law until superseded by Gratian's *Decretum*.

## Tribal Law

When the barbarians invaded the Western Roman Empire in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries, they brought with them their own system of justice by which they had ruled themselves. As conquerors, they were not about to submit to the laws of their Roman subjects. Nonetheless, they accepted the principle that everyone should be judged according to his own law. In this way, a rather debased form of Roman Civil law became a kind of "tribal" law for the local "Roman" populations.

With the help of the Christian clergy, the various barbarian kingdoms had their tribal laws set in writing. Similarly, the Brehon Code in Ireland was also written down. Most of the bar-

### The Justinian Code and the Siege of Amalfi

In 529, Justinian, the last Byzantine emperor to rule Spain, Italy, and North Africa, as well as the East, ordered the publication of the ten-book *Codex Constitutionem* (Code of Laws) by which all previous imperial enactments were repealed, synthesized, and reissued in definitive form. It was later updated and replaced by the twelve-book *Codex Repetitae Praelectionis* (Preferred Version). The vast body of legal commentary, spanning about 1000 years, was then harmonized and published as the fifty-book *Digesta* (Digest) in 533. In the same year, a systematic and elementary treatise summarizing the principles of Roman Civil law was published as the *Institutiones* (Instructions). Finally, in the later years of Justinian's reign, all his subsequent laws or constitutions (he was a prolific legislator) were published as the *Novellae Constitutiones Post Codicum* (New Laws since Publication of the Code). The whole became known as the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (The Body of Civil Law), commonly referred to as the Justinian Code. Though the Code was published in both Greek and Latin, the Latin edition was little copied or studied after the loss of Byzantine Spain, Italy, and North Africa. Eventually it disappeared from popular memory in the West.

Six hundred years after the publication of the Code, in 1135 AD, the city of Amalfi was taken from the Saracens after a siege by the Normans of southern Italy and their Pisan allies. Much of the loot from the city was carried back to Pisa, including one or more copies of the Code. It was examined and studied in the cathedral school, and its superiority to the existing versions of Roman Civil law available in Italy was noted. It was adopted locally, and much more importantly, it came to be used for study and copying in the legal schools of the time. Emperor Lothair III recognized the superiority of the Justinian Code over the debased compilations of Civil law that were then common, and ordered its adoption throughout the empire.

As students of Pisa and Bologna gained reputations for their skill in legal matters, they were actively recruited by universities and royal courts throughout Europe. In this way, according to legend, the Code of Justinian was disseminated throughout the West, leading to the 13th century renaissance of Roman law.

barian codes were fairly basic in nature, and it seemed only natural to fill in the gaps specific to a more sophisticated society with large chunks of ready-made Roman Civil law. These composite codes, such as the *Lex Romana Wisigothorum* (Roman-Visigoth Law) and the *Lex Burgundium* (Law of the Burgundians), in time became the main means of transmission of Roman Civil law in the West before the popularization of the Justinian Code in the 12th century.

Over time, as new waves of invaders swept over the former Roman empire and blood lines became confused, it became increasingly difficult to determine a person's tribal affiliation with any certainty. In Italy, the happy expedient of letting the defendant choose whether he should be tried under Roman, Gothic, Lombard, or Frankish law was adopted. In most of Mythic Europe, however, tribal law, like Roman Civil law before it, sank into relative obscurity. It was resorted to only rarely, and often out of context, to settle esoteric constitutional issues.

## Feudal Law

The advent of feudalism and the gradual decay of royal central authority under the Carolingians in the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries created a whole new set of legal problems none of the tribal codes could adequately address. New rules had to be developed to deal with the transformation of fiefs and public offices into hereditary holdings, and to regulate the complexities of vassalage and feudal rights and obligations. These emerged from precedents and various royal concessions as feudal law. As royal authority in France and Germany continued to decline, feudal law followed the same path as Roman Civil law and tribal law, and was gradually subsumed in a plethora of local and regional customs commonly referred to as customary law.

## Customary Law

When faced with an unfamiliar and difficult legal problem, an often illiterate lord was unlikely to try to make any sense of the obscure and often obsolete Latin used in the existing legal texts, assuming he even had a copy at hand. Instead, he would tend to rely on the memories of the oldest and wisest local inhabitants. Could any of them recall how a similar problem had been dealt with in the past? In the absence of any known precedent, the lord would opt for what seemed to be the best or fairest solution. If his decision met with general approval, it became the "customary" solution to the problem. In this way each locality adopted its own set of "customary" laws over time.

This is not to say that Roman, tribal, and

## The Decretum Gratiani

Canon law has become increasingly complex and contradictory over time as it has been updated and expanded by various edicts and papal bulls (rulings). By the 12th century, it was almost as incomprehensible as the various versions of Civil law. But in the middle of the 12th century Gratian established Canon law as an area of study at the university of Bologna (already famous for teaching Civil law). Using the techniques developed by Irnerius and the university's professors, he gathered together the various canons and systematized them, discarding the less valuable or contradictory judgments, and thus produced his masterwork, the *Decretum* (Decrees). This book became the classic authority for Canon law. From that point on, all further works on Canon law were considered additions to, and subordinate to the *Decretum Gratiani*. There are four such supplementary "decretals" in 1220, and Tancred of Bologna is working on a fifth.

## Irnerius and the Legal Method

The greatest school of law in Mythic Europe is the university of Bologna, and its greatest teacher was Irnerius. Indeed, it is likely that Irnerius' teaching established Bologna's primacy. During the first three decades of the 12th century, when Irnerius taught at Bologna, he evolved methods of teaching and practicing law that spread throughout medieval Europe.

Before Irnerius, people tended to study law as discrete *dicta* (rulings) with little or no consideration of how various *dicta* could be compared in resolving similar cases. Irnerius believed that law should be studied as a whole — that one should understand the underlying principles rather than learning purely by rote. This teaching of law as a philosophy allowed the eventual rationalization of various legal systems into a logical whole.

Irnerius' other great contribution was his method of teaching law. Irnerius developed the process of discussion between teacher and students into a more formal and structured debate, which allowed for better teaching of the subject. This system was taken into the courts by his students and is the basis of the disputational legal system. This style of teaching was carried by professors into other subjects, and is the basis of the Disputatio skill in **Ars Magica**. Irnerius' teaching style was superior to any other of the period, and so the lawyers of Bologna were in great demand. They, in turn, spread Irnerius' legal philosophy and teaching methods throughout Mythic Europe.

feudal law became irrelevant. Where and when the earlier laws could be remembered or consulted, and were found to still be useful, they were applied. Nonetheless, local precedent and interpretation became authoritative, and by the 13th century, even small villages were busily having their local customary law recorded to protect their recognized rights and exclude abusive "innovations." In most of Mythic Europe, Canon and customary law are the only law that matter.

## Medieval Justice

From a lord's perspective, jurisdiction in criminal matters is always welcome. Fines are a significant source of revenue and delivering justice in such cases is a simple proposition. The community identifies the guilty party for the lord, who merely has to impose the penalty and pocket any fines — so far, so good.

Civil suits between individuals over land, dowries, inheritances, and grazing rights, just to name a few examples, are an entirely different matter. Jurisdiction in such cases is normally to be avoided if at all possible. Not only is there no money to be made, each time a lord makes a decision and comes down on one side or the other, he makes one new enemy and one ungrateful wretch who will pester him endlessly to have the judgment enforced. Enforcement is often a long, tedious, and expensive proposition. This is particularly true if the case involves the lord's major vassals.

Then there is the vexing issue of appeals. In criminal matters there normally are no appeals. In civil suits, on the other hand, a dissatisfied losing party can usually appeal to the lord's own feudal superior. This could even entail the overlord summoning to his own court all those involved in the case, including the lord (or agent of the lord) who made the original judgment. All this requires expensive and time-consuming travel. It also gives the overlord an excuse to meddle in local matters that would normally be none of his business. Worse, if the overlord does interfere, he will probably not be as sensitive to the delicate nuances and local power relationships that tend to underlie such cases.

Clearly, in non-criminal matters it is best for the lord to avoid making rulings, instead bringing the contending parties to a mutually agreeable settlement and avoiding hard feelings, appeals, and expensive enforcement. It is important to keep these considerations in mind when facing a lord in court. Anyone refusing a reasonable face-saving compromise is likely to lose the court's favor very quickly.

Not every lord, of course, chooses to preside in his own law courts, though he does have this right. Normally, he only does so if the case is important or of personal interest to him. If he has a material interest in the outcome, however, it is best to let a designated judge, often a trusted vassal, preside in his place to avoid accusations of bias. Lords at the lower end of the feudal scale tend to preside in their own courts more frequently than those at the top. Kings, for example, rarely preside in person, leaving such matters to trained specialists in their employ.

## High and Low Justice

Because criminal cases are lucrative (at least for lords), there is intense competition for crimi-

### Extracts from the Law of the Salic Franks (circa 500)

**XVII. Wounds**

1. If anyone is convicted of trying to kill another, even though he fails, he shall pay 2,500*d*, which make 63*s* [actually 62-1/2*s*; there were 40 pennies to the Merovingian shilling].
2. If anyone is convicted of shooting a poisoned arrow at another, even though he misses him, he shall pay 2,500*d*, which make 63*s*.
3. If anyone wounds another in the head, so that the brain appears and the three bones which lie above the brain are uncovered, he shall pay 1,200*d*, which make 30*s*.
4. If anyone wounds another between the ribs or in the abdomen, so that the wound can be seen and extends to the vitals, he shall pay 1,200*d*, which make 30*s*, besides 5*s* for the healing.
5. If anyone wounds another so that the blood falls to the ground, he shall pay 600*d*, which make 15*s*.
6. If a freeman strikes another freeman with a club, so that the blood does not flow, he shall pay 120*d*, which make 3*s*, for each blow, up to three.
7. If the blood does flow, he shall pay as much for each blow as if he had wounded with a sword.
8. If anyone strikes another with the closed fist, he shall pay 360*d*, which make 9*s*; that is 3*s* for each blow up to three.
9. If anyone is convicted of trying to rob another on the highroad, even though he fails, he shall pay 2,500*d*, which make 63*s*.

nal jurisdiction. This jurisdiction comes in two forms. The first and most important is high justice, which covers cases that could involve the death penalty, mutilation, or the loss of free status. These include cases of murder, treason, manslaughter, rape, arson, nighttime robbery, armed violence, and counterfeiting. Low justice normally covers everything else. (Daytime robbery without violence is also often subject to the death penalty, but is normally considered a matter for low justice.) High justice was originally the prerogative of the royal courts, and this remains the case in England, Sicily, and the Iberian kingdoms. In France, however, rights over high justice are commonly seen as the defining feature differentiating barons from mere landed knights. Thus, in England, an earl does not have right of life or death over his tenants. In France, a count or baron normally does.

The approach to low justice tends to be casual, and the right to administer justice in such cases can even be bought and sold. In many parts of Mythic Europe it is quite common for one lord to have high justice but not low justice over a given area (or *vice versa*). A lord almost always exercises low justice over his unfree tenants, however. If a lord's serf or bondsman is required to appear before another lord in a case involving high justice, the serf's lord is required to produce him, though he normally receives a share in any fines imposed.

## Justice and Vassalage

As in most aspects of feudal relations, medieval justice involves reciprocal obligations between lord and vassal. Note that a vassal is not just any dependant, but one who holds a fief. If a lord's vassal is required to appear before another's court, his lord is expected to give him full backing and support. Conversely, vassals are expected to assist their lord in meting out justice by arresting suspects, providing judicial advice, and helping to enforce the judgments of his courts.

## Judgment by One's Peers

It is a basic principle of medieval customary law that one should not be tried by someone of lower social standing. As trial by one's own lord is also considered to be in some ways contrary to the obligations of mutual solidarity between lord and vassal, this leads to the practice of trial by one's peers. When judging one of his vassals, a lord will normally gather his other vassals and ask them to determine the accused's guilt or innocence. Note that trial by one's peers has no basis in Roman or tribal law, and does not exist in many parts of Mythic Europe, or exists only for some cases.

### *Juries*

For lowly freemen, trial by peers is not usually a problem, as serfs are rarely chosen as judges. This leaves open the possibility of trial by the lord, but customary law often provides for trial before a body of local freemen. The size, composition, and specific responsibilities of these juries — called "juries" because the members are sworn

## English Common Law

The Common Law is a system of customary law used throughout England. Unlike in France or Germany, high justice in England has remained the prerogative of the royal courts, except in the palatinate counties of Chester and Durham, where the earl and bishop, respectively, exercise full authority by virtue of their positions as marcher lords. A relatively small number of justices periodically ride circuits at the king's command, each one covering a group of counties (shires). The justices would then meet to review their decisions, and then set off again on different circuits. This regular sharing of experience helped prevent the development of purely local precedents. The fact that all legal decisions (at least before the Conquest in 1066) were recorded in the Saxon vernacular rather than Latin also made it easier to maintain a body of learned legal professionals.

The majority of the English are unfree, however, and in matters of low justice serfs and bondsmen are subject to the judicial authority of the lord of the manor. Even though a uniform system of customary law prevails in England, each manor and each feudal court still has its own customary rules covering petty disputes, obligations, rules of inheritance, and conditions of tenure and service. These matters may be less spectacular than those dealt with in the royal courts, but are much closer to the day-to-day concerns of the average Englishman.

### *New Optional Ability: Common Law*

Those who wish to study law in England may take the Casual Knowledge Common Law, which provides familiarity with English legal practice and traditions. Anyone with England Area Lore, however, has some legal knowledge, and can use it as a substitute for Common Law at a penalty of –3.

in (*jurer* means "to swear" in French) — vary enormously from one jurisdiction to another. In some places, membership is limited to as few as six; in others it might include virtually all the freemen present. Normally, the judge or his officials pick the jury, but in some places particular families or individuals have a hereditary right to a seat. Often the jury also includes the witnesses to the case, unless they are closely related to the accused. Juries can be used to try civil as well as criminal cases, and are normally restricted to deciding issues of fact and not issues of law. In some jurisdictions, standing juries are responsible for reporting all suspected criminal activity to the local authorities.

Juries are not necessarily expected to deliver unanimous rulings, though they are under considerable pressure to do so. Judges can impose fines on juries for being tardy in coming to a decision, and may even single out individual jurors for punishment. In the end, the wealthier, more socially prominent, and more respected jurors tend to carry the most weight.

## *Advocates*

Because of the complexity and portability of Canon law (it is the same throughout Mythic Europe, though there are mild variations in the East), disputants normally rely on professional advocates to pilot their cases through the arcane procedures of the Church courts. Advocates are less common in the secular courts, except where Roman law is dominant, because of the familiarity with local custom required. Canon law advocates who are familiar with local custom can still be of great assistance to a disputant, however, and most jurisdictions allow their participation in court proceedings. In England, because of the relative uniformity of the Common Law throughout the country, a body of secular advocates consisting mainly of former court clerks is beginning to emerge. These advocates, however, rarely have any formal training in Canon law.

## The Rules of Evidence

The preferred form of evidence in any trial, whether criminal or civil, is oral testimony.

### From the Constitution of Emperor Conrad II Concerning the Fiefs of Italy

1. We wish that all the faithful of the holy Church of God and our own, both present and to come, know that in order to reconcile the hearts of lords and vassals, so that they may serve us with loyalty and devotion, we order and firmly establish that no vassal of the bishops, abbots, abbesses, marquis, counts, or any lord, who now holds from our public lands or from the properties of the Church, that none of them, both from among our great *valvassores* [untitled nobles] or their vassals, should lose his fief without certain and proven guilt, unless in accordance with the law of our predecessors and the judgement of his peers.

2. If a dispute should arise between lords and vassals, even though the peers should judge that the vassal ought to lose his fief, if he should protest that this was done unjustly or out of hatred, he should retain his fief until such time that his lord and the accused, with his peers, come before us, and the case should be justly settled. If, however, the peers of the accused fail to support the lord's judgment, the accused should retain his fief, until he with his lord and his peers shall come before us. The lord or the accused, who has decided to appear before us, should notify him with whom he is disputing six weeks before he begins his journey. This procedure should also be followed in matters involving the great *valvassores*.

3. In regard to the petty vassals in the realm, their cases should be settled either before their lords or before our legate.

4. We also command that when a vassal, great or petty, should die, his son shall receive his fief. If he has no son, but is survived by a grandson born of male issue, the grandson should in equal manner have the fief, while respecting the customs of the great *valvassores* in giving horses and arms to their lords. If he does not have a grandson born from male issue and if he should have a legitimate brother from the side of his father, and if that brother, after offending the lord, is willing to make amends and become his vassal, he should have the fief which was his father's.

5. Moreover, we absolutely forbid that any lord should dare to exchange a fief held by his vassals, or give it in fief or lease it without their permission. No one should dare deprive them unjustly of those properties which they have held, whether by right of property or by order or by legal lease or through temporary grant.

Documentary evidence is viewed with suspicion because of a general inability to detect forgeries. Even royal charters, to which the great seal of the realm has been affixed, include lengthy lists of witnesses who might be consulted to verify the authenticity of the document. People often go to great lengths to have older documents reissued with fresh witnesses, lest the earlier batch die out. Even material evidence is normally deemed to lack context without supporting oral testimony. ("Do you swear that the knife currently sticking out of the deceased's back belongs to the accused?") Hearsay evidence is acceptable, though given less credence than eyewitness testimony.

Careful and meticulous examination of the material evidence, the exclusion of logical inconsistencies, and even re-enactments of the reported and alleged events could carry some weight, but such an approach unsupported by oral testimony would be considered novel and unconventional. A particularly impatient judge might dismiss such efforts out of hand as a transparent attempt to waste the court's time and confuse the jury with "irrelevant" facts.

It perhaps goes without saying that magical evidence is particularly suspect. Indeed, particular precaution is taken to ensure the presence of holy relics to exclude arcane and infernal tampering with witnesses or the evidence. It is conceivable, however, that information obtained magically by a mage who is both trusted and well-respected (if there is such an animal!) might be admitted as oral testimony. Exceptionally, information gleaned supernaturally by someone widely accepted as having Second Sight might also be admitted.

## The Ordeal

*The monomachia, called in the vulgar tongue the duel, we wish never again to be used among the people of our kingdom [of Sicily], with only a few exceptions. For the duel cannot be called a true proof; rather, it should be considered a kind of divination, which is contrary to nature, deviates from the common law, and is in discord with reason and equity.... From the benefit of these dispositions we exclude those who are accused of having murdered a person stealthily, by poison or any similar fashion. Also, in such cases, we do not allow the procedure to begin with trial by combat. We order that first the parties should proceed by ordinary proofs, whatever may be available. Finally, after the court has made careful investigation, if the crime cannot be fully proved through other proofs or through an inquest, then only, after all the above have been fulfilled, the case should be submitted to trial by combat. . . . This law we wish to be common among all, both Franks [primarily Normans] and Lombards, and in all cases.*

— From the Constitutions of Melfi issued by Frederick II in 1231

One feature drawn from tribal law which is often echoed in customary law is the practice of settling cases by ordeal. When all the oral testimony has been heard in either a civil or criminal case and some doubt remains on one or more issues, the judge can entertain or even offer the ordeal as a binding test. Note that no one can be forced to undergo an ordeal, as it normally involves a high risk of serious injury and even death.

The ordeal normally comes in one of two forms: a unilateral ordeal by water or fire, or a bilateral ordeal by battle (duel). In a judicial duel, the parties to a dispute (or their champions) fight until one yields, is knocked unconscious, or dies. The winner is assumed to have proven his case on the point in contention. In the unilateral ordeal the individual attempting to prove his claim, testimony, or innocence is invited to submit to some dangerous and life-threatening test. This can involve remaining underwater until unconsciousness ensues, drawing an iron bar from elbow-deep boiling water barehanded, or drawing a red-hot bar barehanded out of a fire. If the submerged individual recovers or the wounds and blisters heal cleanly, the subject is assumed to have proven his case. As in a duel, no one is required to suffer a unilateral ordeal in per-

### Divine Justice and the Ordeal

While the Church frowns on the ordeal, many people in Mythic Europe would find it difficult to believe that God would not favor the cause of the innocent and righteous. In cases of true travesties of justice in which a blameless party is maliciously oppressed by a blatant perjurer, the storyguide may wish to have God lend a helping hand. In an ordeal, for example, an angel may quietly enfold the aggrieved party (see *Pax Dei*, pages 58-59), freeing him from pain or lasting injury. In a duel, the one who is in the right may be allowed to roll a quality rather than a stress die in combat, or might have his store of lost Confidence points immediately replenished. Alternatively, a more overt miracle might occur, such as water refusing to boil no matter how long it is heated.

son if he can find a (presumably paid) substitute. Such a stand-in is called a proband, one who swears that his patron's statement or view of the situation is correct, and volunteers to submit to the ordeal in his stead.

The form of ordeal to be undergone is normally up to the judge. Nobles, of course, are never subjected to anything so personally degrading as the unilateral ordeal, and would use a proband instead. At any stage in the process, either party can back down or halt the proceedings by offering to compromise. Many duels in progress, for example, are interrupted once both sides are convinced of the other's seriousness and opt instead for a negotiated settlement. The ordeal does not preclude further appeals, however, as disagreements might subsequently emerge over the specifics of the issue in question. There is also some scope for rigging. Certain alchemical substances could make water appear to boil at very low temperatures, for example, or a proband might have access to special protective salves.

Popular myth has it that these tests represent the judgment of God, but in fact, the Church has recently (1215) explicitly forbidden clergy from officiating at ordeals as they involve an effort to "tempt" God. Frederick II's laws for his kingdom of Sicily quoted above reflect both the renewed influence of Roman law (which has no provision for the ordeal) and a growing dissatisfaction with a practice broadly condemned as arbitrary and barbaric.

Nevertheless, the ordeal serves a number of purposes which account for its continuing popularity in the 13th century. It gives closure to vexing cases and intractable disputes. It provides parties with the ability to heighten the stakes when they believe they are being abused, possibly forcing their opponents to compromise or back down. There are also serious cases, like those exempted from Frederick's decree, where strong suspicions exist but no actual proof is available. Someone standing to benefit from a secret murder might be more reluctant to carry it out if there were a significant chance he might be subjected to test by ordeal. Proponents of these "irra-

tional" tests argue that even if they lead to the suffering of some innocent people, they still have a valuable deterrent effect.

# Conducting a Trial

Ideally, court cases should be roleplayed. Player characters should be given the opportunity to present their cases in character, making passionate pleas, presenting evidence, and pressing home points of law. The motivations and unique abilities of each of the trial's players — judge, jury, witnesses, accusers, and accused — should be considered, with the outcome of the trial determined by the storyguide after taking all of this into account.

This ideal scenario is not always practical, though, so the following rules give storyguides the option to structure the proceedings using concrete rule mechanics and determine how the attributes of characters affect the outcome. Even if these mechanics are not strictly followed — it will be a rare case where all factors are relevant — the circumstances enumerated below will give the storyguide a template that will help him consider how to resolve the legal conflict.

## Trial Mechanics

When running a trial, storyguides should attempt to define clearly the issues at stake and divide them into distinct questions of "fact" and "law," either at the beginning of the trial or as they come up. Usually these can be reduced to two or three. Factual issues are normally resolved by the jury (if there is one), otherwise by the judge. Legal issues are normally resolved by the judge alone. A factual issue is one concerning the truth or falsehood of any witness statement (Did the defendant pay for the goods? Is Robert the legitimate son of Guillaume? Is this manor held of the countess or of the abbey of St. Riquiers?) A legal issue, on the other hand, includes such matters as which law to apply (Roman, tribal, feudal or customary), which court should hear the case, and what the law provides as penalty, solution, or remedy.

For each question to be resolved, the opposing parties make contest rolls according to the following formula. The higher total wins on the issue at stake. Once the storyguide has the answers to all the questions, he should decide the case accordingly.

### *Trial Formula*

*Stress Die + [Com + Pre] + [Relevant Ability] + [1/3 Disputatio (rounded up)] + [Reputation] + Credit Rating/100 + [Issue Modifier] + [Court Favor]*

**Com + Pre:** Always use the disputant's Presence and his advocate's Communication. If the disputant is arguing his own case, use his Communication instead.

**Relevant Ability:** On factual questions, this is the higher of the disputant's or his advocate's Local Area Lore (see page 77). It is up to the storyguide to determine whether more general Area Lores are of relevance to the question. In some cases a penalty could be applied. For example, if the facts of the case relate to the town of Barfleur in Normandy, Barfleur Area Lore would apply fully, while Normandy Area Lore might apply with a penalty of –1. Customary law in Normandy is relatively uniform, but the negative modifier would apply in this case because of the possibility that legal customs unique to Barfleur might come into play. On legal questions, "Relevant Ability" is Civil and Canon law if Roman, tribal, or feudal law is being used to try the case. If the case is being tried under customary law, use Local Area Lore as above, or English Common Law if appropriate. If the parties to the dispute cannot agree on which law to use, this in

## Supernatural Auras and Contest Rolls

Court cases are normally judged in the Dominion under oaths sworn over holy relics. At the storyguide's discretion, if the prevailing Temper of the Dominion is "Just" (see *Pax Dei*, pages 22-24) the raw modifiers should be used without die rolls. This represents the greater certainty characteristic of the Just Dominion. Exceptionally, trials might be held in a Faerie aura (at a Faerie court, for example), in which case the disputants should add a number of botch dice equal to the strength of the aura to represent the whimsical and arbitrary nature of Faerie. In very rare cases, either as a demonic jest or as a result of infernal perversion, a trial might be held in an Infernal aura. In such cases, add a number of botch dice equal to the strength of the aura to rolls enjoying a favorable Issue Modifier.

itself becomes a legal question for which they should make a legal contest rolls based on Local Area Lore. At no time should the Relevant Ability factor be less than 0.

**Disputatio:** Use the higher of a disputant's or his advocate's Disputatio score.

**Reputation:** Add the single most favorable and subtract the single most unfavorable relevant Reputation held by the disputant or his advocate. For example, a defendant accused of killing his sister-in-law has local Reputations Good Family Man 2, Skilled Farmer 1, and Wild Temper 1. His advocate has a Reputation of Unprincipled 2. Good Family Man 2 would count as a favorable relevant Reputation. Wild Temper 1 and Unprincipled 2 are both unfavorable, but only the most severe is considered. Skilled Farmer 1 is irrelevant to the issue. As both Good Family Man and Unprincipled have scores of 2, the net Reputation Modifier would in this case be 0.

**Credit Rating:** See page 26.

**Issue Modifier:** The storyguide should decide on the "objectively correct" answer to a given question, and assign an appropriate modifier (normally between + or – 3). If the storyguide is uncertain, he can assign a modifier of 0.

**Court Favor:** This is a catch-all category that represents the specific relationship between the disputant and the judge or jury. Actions the disputant may have recently taken, such as gathering witnesses or getting into fights, can have a significant influence (up to +3 or – 3), as can personal friendships or enmities with the judge or key jurors (also up to +3 or – 3). Other factors might include the Gift (–3), Flaws that affect social rolls other than through Reputation (such as Outsider, Blatant Gift, Magical Air, Evil Eye, Disfigured, Judged Unfairly, Social Handicap, and Sheltered or Feral Upbringing), linguistic handicaps (–1 per each point below 4 in the disputant's or his advocate's relevant Speak Language Score for the language in which the trial is taking place), or the results of any attempts to bribe or intimidate the judge or jury. Storyguides may wish to limit the overall effect of Court Favor to +6 or – 6.

Botches set the modified roll equal to 0 and could conceivably have other consequences depending on the severity of the botch and the specific situation.

The many variables in this formula represent all the factors which could influence the outcome of a trial. Storyguides should always consider themselves free to dismiss the significance of one, or even all, of these factors to simplify or accelerate play, or to prevent adventurers from loading court cases inordinately in their favor. Judges and juries often become recalcitrant when they feel they are being overtly manipulated and pressured.

## Bribes, Intimidation, and Other Dastardly Deeds

There are many activities characters can get involved in that can influence a court case. Many take place outside the courtroom, and some are quite illegal. The following is merely a sample of such activities.

### *Bribes*

Bribes can be used to influence the judge or members of the jury. A character can attempt to judge whether someone is likely to accept a bribe

by making Perception-based Folk Ken stress roll against a difficulty factor set by the storyguide according to character's familiarity with the subject. Intrigue rolls can be made to offer a bribe subtly in such a way as to avoid repercussions if the subject refuses to cooperate. A Communication-based Intrigue stress roll of 9+ is required in such cases. If this roll fails, the offer was blatant. To determine if the bribe is accepted, roll a stress die + the subject's Greed Personality Trait + a bonus for the bribe amount versus the subject's Honest Personality Trait + 9. The bonus for the bribe amount is +1 for one "inducement," +2 for three "inducements," +3 for six, and so on, in pyramidic fashion. An "inducement" is equivalent to the subject's Credit Rating/20. This formula only applies to court cases, and not to petty bribes for petty services. Other appropriate modifiers might include any bias the subject already has for or against the briber. If the bribe was blatant and is not accepted, the subject (temporarily) acts as the briber's enemy.

Like all "commercial" transactions, bribes do not have to be in the form of cash. Offers of employment, cancellation of debts, and the like are all appropriate. Some forms of bribery are even socially acceptable, such as promises of future services or donations to a church or monastery.

## *Intimidation*

Intimidation is best used against witnesses, either to force a reluctant witness to come forward or to convince a witness to stay home. ("Nice flock of sheep you've got there. Be a real pity if they fell off a cliff while you were away testifying.") Intimidation can also be used to get a witness to change a story, or to make up a statement in your favor. Roll a Presence-based Leadership stress die against a difficulty factor set by the storyguide.

## *Really Dastardly Deeds*

Kidnapping and murder can also be used to prevent witnesses from testifying, or to give false testimony. Holding a member of someone's family hostage would give him a strong incentive to lie. Whole juries might be intimidated in this manner.

# Punishments

Secular courts do not hand out prison sentences in Mythic Europe. Imprisonment only occurs prior to trial, or for captives awaiting ransoming. Punishments in criminal cases are limited to fines, exile, death (in any of a variety of gruesome methods), and (in the case of commoners) beatings and mutilations.

While fines are certainly heavy in Mythic Europe, in non-capital cases they rarely exceed a man's yearly income, and almost never exceed 5£ even for very wealthy defendants. Serious capital offences like high treason, however, might also involve the confiscation of all a man's property, leaving nothing to his heirs. Also, violations of feudal law can involve the confiscation whole fiefs, though this is not normally considered a fine *per se*.

# Chapter 4
# Leisure

## Food and Entertainment

As in any age, boredom is the silent plague of the leisured classes in Mythic Europe. Most of the time, nobles can find productive activities to keep themselves busy. However, not all nobles rule, and administering estates, checking the books, and riding around hearing grievances is hard work. Reading to while away one's time is not for everyone, and soon loses its appeal given that a collection of five or six books is a moderately impressive library in the middle ages. What folk dread most in Mythic Europe (in quantity, if not intensity) is loneliness. Hermits who can focus entirely on prayer and who can dispense with the need for human company are considered almost superhuman spiritual athletes. In some monasteries, the worst punishment that can be inflicted on a brother is to ostracize him by refusing to speak or eat with him.

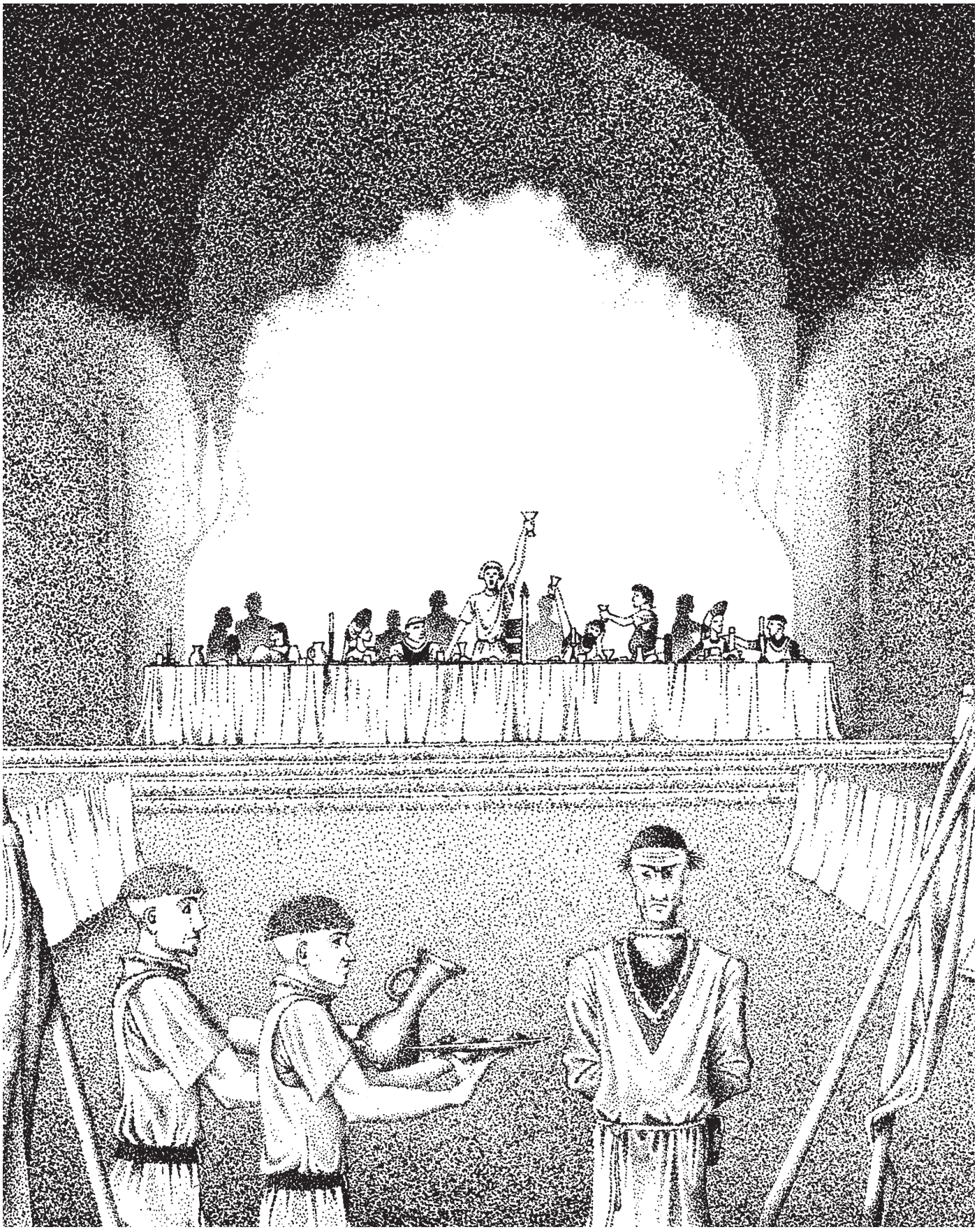
Leisure, then, is an intensely social "activity" in Mythic Europe. Nobles are always eager to entertain neighbors, even if they don't really like them. Social hunting is a major occupation that has the welcome side benefit of putting a variety of meat on the table. Dancing, various games, and other recreations fill up the otherwise empty periods of daily life.

## Feasts

By and large, nobles eat well. Knights and gentry count as "moderately wealthy" for aging purposes (see ArM4, page 181), while barons and above count as "very wealthy." Any excuse is good enough for a feast in a noble household. As such, they are almost daily occurrences, albeit often relatively modest ones. More elaborate feasts tend to occur when noble visitors come by, or for weddings, or prior to a tournament (see page 92).

Seating is strictly regulated by status. The lord and lady and their most important guests and retainers are seated at the high table. The seat of honor is generally reserved for an ecclesiastical dignitary. The most important lay guest will be seated in the second highest place, and so on. If ladies are present, seating normally alternates between men and women. The table is covered with cloth, and each setting generally has a steel knife, a silver spoon and cup, and a wooden bowl. Guests normally bring their own cloth napkins. Salt bowls for common use are set on the table. In front of each seat (often just a bench) or pair of seats is a "trencher," a thick slice of day-old bread. As the guests enter, they wash their hands in bowls provided for the task or, in the better households, servants come around with the bowls to the guests' places.

After grace, a procession of servants comes in carrying the food. The meal starts with the pantler bearing bread and butter. The butter is frequently spiced or mixed with honey. Then comes the butler with wine and beer. The wine is the best available, which is often of very poor quality, even at the royal table. Wine is always red (white wine is used to improve the mash of valued horses, not for human consumption except as vinegar). Beer or ale is drunk mainly, though not exclusively, by servants and can also be quite foul. A normal meal consists of two or three removes (courses) of several dishes, mainly



meats and vegetables, with the last remove being desserts, mostly fruit and pastries.

At a large feast the variety of meats can be staggering, and can easily include boars' heads, venison, swans, suckling pigs, cranes, plovers, larks, and even peacocks, as well as more pedestrian cuts of beef, mutton, and pork. On fasting days this variety will be replaced by fish such as eel, herring, cod, mullet, shad, sole, flounder, salmon, and trout. Sturgeon, whale, and porpoise are rare delicacies; lampreys are also a favorite. The most common vegetables are pulses (peas and beans) supplemented with onions and garlic. These form the bulk of vegetables consumed by noble and peasant alike. Apples, pears, plums, and peaches, either fresh or dried depending on the season, are available from local orchards, and are supplemented by wild fruits and nuts from nearby woods. In more Mediterranean climes, figs or oranges might be available. Imported luxuries such as sugar, rice, almonds, or pomegranates (to name a few) are available at fairs or often at the nearest town if it is of any size. Wheat flour is more expensive than barley or rye. This makes white bread and pastry high-status food, consumed largely in towns and by noble households.

Meat is prepared in a number of ways. Stews are the most common, as much of the meat is preserved in salt. Most roasted meats are covered with one of a variety of highly spiced sauces. Medieval cooks also prefer their dishes to present a visual treat. Starry-Gazey pie, a fish pie in which the heads of the fish protrude from the crust to gaze on the diner, is one example. Pheasants might be plucked, roasted and then the feathers re-attached to the roast bird (even with all the attendant problems of then eating the bird).

Desserts are often served in a side room so the tables in the main hall can be cleared and pulled back for dancing or other entertainment. If this is the case, the guests in French or Norman households are ushered to the dessert tables when the host cries "On dessert!" — French for "We are clearing the tables!"

## Table Manners

Etiquette is quite definite on table manners, and part of a young nobleman's training is learning how to serve his lord at meals. There is a correct way of doing everything from carving the meat to the order in which dishes should be served. Two people share a dish with the man helping the woman, the lesser helping the superior, or the younger helping the elder. Soups are eaten with a spoon, and the broth sipped when the solid part is finished. Meat is cut with the knife and then eaten with the fingers.

Etiquette books, which are slowly coming into fashion, are at pains to eliminate some of the major offences against good manners. Leaving the spoon in the dish, belching, stuffing one's mouth, wiping one's face with the tablecloth, and taking overly large helpings are all warned against. Stress is laid on keeping hands and nails scrupulously clean, wiping the knife and spoon after use, and not dipping meat into the common salt dish. Most of these rules are aimed at keeping things relatively clean given the practices of dish sharing and eating with one's fingers.

Failing to mind one's table manners in the 13th century is hardly going to cripple a noble's career, however. If he enjoys enough status, bad table manners will not have a great bearing on the situation. For aspiring supplicants, on the other hand, every little bit helps. Etiquette rolls should be made only for major occasions, against an ease factor only rarely exceeding 6+. Failure should have minor consequences; another guest might make a jest at a character's expense, for example. Even botches will normally do little more than provide a good story that will be frequently retold. In extreme circumstances, a character might gain a minor bad Reputation for Gaucherie or Clumsiness. ("Let *me* speak to the baron. *He* is just going to gargle his wine again").

## Drinking

Everyone in Mythic Europe drinks alcohol with meals or just to quench thirst. Only very young children drink milk, and water can often give a drinker the flux (diarrhea). As there are no provisions for the long-term preservation of wine, no wine is more than a year old. Most establishments in northern Mythic Europe, whether castle or inn, brew their own ale which varies greatly in quality. Ale is the most common drink in the north. There is no distilling (unless an alchemically-minded wizard has invented it), and the strongest alcohol (about 15%) is winter wine made by freezing wine and then throwing away the ice. People in northern Mythic Europe are more likely to drink to excess. Outright drunkenness is frowned upon in the south.

## Dancing

After dinner (usually served before noon) maidens and bachelors may dance for their own amusement or for the entertainment of others. In some cultures men and women dance separately. There are two main types of dances: *bransles* (pronounced "brawls" in English), which are circle dances, and *pavannes*, more stately pair dances. Young men are expected to be adept dancers and can gain good Reputations if they excel.

Treat familiarity with specific dances as a function of Etiquette and performance as a function of Athletics. Dancing can thus be a specialization of either Etiquette and Athletics (or both). An Ability level of 1 in either should suffice for simpler dances. A level of 5 (or 4 with a specialization in dancing) would allow a character to develop a Reputation as a fine dancer or knowledgeable authority.

## Entertainment

Meals are often accompanied by music. Many of the wealthier noble households maintain musicians or minstrels on staff. After the meal is over, a guest might sing for the pleasure of the company, and even great magnates sometimes compose and sing in the tradition of the *trouvères* ("troubadours" in southern France and "minnesingers" in Germany). Communication-based Sing rolls of 6+ should be good enough to avoid embarrassment, while a 9+ will win genuine applause. Occasionally jesters will be hired to entertain the assembled guests with broad slapstick and coarse jokes.

For more important and grander occasions, such as a tournament or a wedding, feasts are sometimes held outside. A troupe of acrobats might be hired, and several minstrels could be wandering about the grounds providing songs. This being Mythic Europe, a court wizard or itinerant magician could also provide entertainment. Of course, these would be mere hedge wizards. Nonetheless, impressive feats of magic (by non-Hermetic standards) are the order of the day. Trained animals are also a popular entertainment. Dancing bears are always a favorite, and dogs are trained to do a wide variety of tricks.

# The Hunt

Hunting is a passion for most of the medieval nobility. Hunting parties normally rise at dawn and set out to a pre-agreed stretch of forest. Hunts generally include a head huntsman (often a knight); various other huntsmen, beaters, and kennelers; and the hunters themselves (often including ladies). Breakfasting on meat, wine, and bread in a handy clearing, the party waits until the huntsman reports on finding a worthy quarry. Then the chase is on.

Realistically, however, the huntsman often fails to find any useful tracks of the desired prey. If nothing has been found by noon, the hunters often call it a day. While this is disappointing, the social aspects of the hunt are the most important, and even an unsuccessful outing is rarely considered a total loss. If this happens too often, however, the head huntsman's reputation could suffer. Storyguides should avoid treating forests as bounteous, never-exhausted sources of fresh venison. If forests were really that rich in wild game, everyone would live in the woods and leave the open fields to the weeds.

The various breeds of dogs used for hunting are profiled in the bestiary (Appendix I, page 207). Stags are usually hunted with three types of hounds. The lymer (or bloodhound) is used to find the deer's spoor. Once the decision to pursue is taken, the huntsman takes a pair to drive the deer toward the hunting party. Levriers (a larger muscular breed sometimes called a greyhound) or bratchets (a smaller hound) are then used to chase down the deer and bring it to bay. One of the hunters is given the honor of dispatching it with a spear thrust. Sometimes bows are used instead of spears. (More information on medieval hounds can be found in *A Medieval Tapestry*, pages 110-111.)

Hunting boar is usually done in winter. Boars are more dangerous than virtually any other type of prey, except for bears and the increasingly rare magical beasts. Even when it is caught in the open, a boar's tusks are fearful weapons and can fell a hunter with one stroke. The hound used for boar hunting is generally the alaunt, a powerful breed resembling a large wolf. After the boar is cornered by the hounds, the hunters attack using boar spears. These have a crossbar to prevent the wounded boar from climbing up the shaft and attacking the hunter.

Boars are wary creatures, and if they detect any approach, no amount of horn blowing or shouting can roust them from the dense thickets in which they like to hide.

However much the nobility likes hunting with hounds, it enjoys falconry even more. Every king, magnate, and manorial lord has falcons, and the falconers who train the birds are valued specialists. The birds themselves are usually groomed and petted with feathers, and are almost never touched barehanded so as not to ruin their plumage. Falconry is also very popular among the more worldly members of the clergy and indeed throughout society. Some rare falcons can be worth more than their weight in gold, and are highly prized as gifts or ransoms (notably by Muslim potentates). Falcons are normally used to hunt birds — birds as large as cranes are hunted using the larger hawks. Some hounds assist in retrieving the larger birds, and are trained to do so together with a falcon as partners in the hunt.

Two main types of birds are used in falconry. True falcons, or long-winged hawks, include the gerfalcon, the peregrine, the saker, and the merlin. Short-winged hawks include the goshawk and sparrow hawk. There are often local regulations as to who is allowed to own which sort of bird. In general, the long-winged hawks are restricted to the nobility, while anyone can use short-winged hawks. However, as with most laws which restrict who can own what, these rules are sometimes ignored or not enforced. Nonetheless, a common serf flaunting a gerfalcon is likely to have it confiscated. Strict local laws protect falcons, and punishments can be severe. Poaching a falcon from the wild can get you blinded, for example.

One of the most famous centers for medieval falconry is Valkenswaard in the Low Countries. Every year an auction is held to sell or trade captured and trained falcons, with spirited bidding among the noble families attending.

# Optional Rules for Hunting

## *Hunting Large Game*

Formal hunts almost always take place in a noble's hunting reserve, which is generally forested terrain. Hunts that are not roleplayed can be resolved as follows. The head hunter rolls a Perception-based Hunt stress die and consults the table below to determine how much game is caught. Each hunter rolls separately, however, for his personal overall performance. A 9+ on a Perception-based Hunt stress die with no other modifiers indicates personal "success." Anything less than a 6 and the hunter has performed poorly in the eyes of the other hunters. A roll of less than 3 indicates complete failure and possible scorn. The character may have spooked the quarry or interfered with a kill.

Botches while hunting are especially dangerous. There should almost always be at least two additional botch dice. A single botch might result in being lost, with worse botches indicating a broken or twisted ankle, a hunting accident, or running into a dangerous beast while alone. King William Rufus of England was killed in 1100 when an arrow glanced off the deer he was hunting (or at least this is the story to which the hunting party held).

| **Hunting Roll** | **Beasts Killed** |
|---|---|
| 9-11 | 1 |
| 12-14 | 2 |
| 15-17 | 3 |
| 18-20 | 4 |
| 21+ | 5 |

| **Condition** | **Modifier** |
|---|---|
| Game abundance | –3 to +3 |
| Beaters used | +2 |
| Per extra three hunters | +1 |
| Hunter alone | –3 |
| Bad weather | –1 to –6 |
| Difficult terrain | –1 to –6 |
| Home ground | +3 |
| Unfamiliar area | –3 |
| Pack of hounds used | +1 to +3 (depending on pack size) |
| Hunting deer | +1 |
| Hunting boar | –2 |
| Hunting bear | –4 |
| Magical or Faerie aura | –aura |
| Infernal aura | –2 x aura |

Hunting for large game can be done alone, though this is less effective and more dangerous as there is no one to come to your aid if things go wrong.

When a character encounters dangerous game during a hunt as a result of a botch, the combat should be fought out.

## *Foraging for Small Game*

Archery is the most common form of hunting for small game, but it can also consist of a noble out hawking or a peasant setting snares. Hunting is usually an all-day occupation that normally precludes traveling. Doing both is possible, but difficult. In addition to the negative modifiers, travel speed is reduced by half unless the hunting consists of setting snares overnight.

Procedures for assessing the success of the hunt are similar to those for hunting large game. If archery is used, use the lower of the lead hunter's Hunt and Archery skills. If using falconry, the bird's Hunt score is used instead of the hunter's. As in big game hunts, botches can be very dangerous, all the more so as small game hunting is often done alone. A double botch could result in the loss of the falcon, and more serious botches could involve running unexpectedly into large and dangerous animals. Note that snares, archery, and falconry are normally mutually exclusive. Archery risks killing or wounding the hawks, and active hunting will make small animals shy and less likely to be caught in snares.

| **Hunting Roll** | **People Fed** |
|---|---|
| 9-11 | 1 |
| 12-14 | 2 |
| 15-17 | 4 |
| 18-20 | 6 |
| 21+ | 8 |

| **Condition** | **Modifier** |
|---|---|
| Game abundance | –3 to +3 |
| Bad weather | –1 to –6 |
| Home ground | +1 |
| Unfamiliar terrain | –1 to –3 |
| Difficult terrain | –1 to –3 |
| Farmland | –3 |
| Using snares | –3 |
| Using falcons | +3 |
| On the move | –6 |
| Magic or Faerie aura | –aura |
| Infernal aura | –2 x aura |

## *Capturing Animals*

Small animals and birds are usually captured with nets or snares, while larger animals can be captured with pits. There is serious risk of injury to the prey with either method. Young can be captured if the den or nest can be found in the right season and they are sufficiently mature to survive human care. To capture a generic specimen of a given animal (for example, any wolf), the hunter rolls a Perception-based Hunt stress die – the animal's Cunning against an ease factor of 12+, once per day. A minor botch could lead to the death of the prey and increased wariness on the part of similar animals for the remainder of the season. If the characters want to capture a specific individual animal then the adventure should be roleplayed.

## *Tracking*

Tracking rolls are not usually used for hunting unless the hunt is roleplayed, in which case characters should be prepared to make Awareness and combat rolls as well. When searching for tracks of a specific (as opposed to general) quarry, a huntsman must make a Perception-based Hunting stress roll against the modified ease factor listed below. Searching for specific tracks takes an hour.

| **Trail Condition** | **Ease Factor** |
|---|---|
| Trail is less than 1 hour old | 9+ |
| Trail is a day old | 12+ |
| Trail is three days old | 15+ |
| Trail is a week old | 18+ |
| Trail is older than a week | 21+ |

| **Condition** | **Modifier** |
|---|---|
| Tracking in light rain | –3 |
| Tracking in heavy rain | –6 |
| Heavily used game trail | –1 to –3 |
| Size of quarry | + largest size |
| Trail hidden | – hider's Hunt score |

| **Number of Quarry** | **Modifier** |
|---|---|
| Three | +1 |
| Six | +2 |
| Nine | +3 |
| Each additional three past nine | +1 |

If a huntsman is instead searching for tracks of a generic quarry in appropriate terrain, such as a deer in woods, the storyguide should first roll an unmodified simple die to determine what tracks are available to be found according to the following table.

1-2 There are no tracks.
3-4 The most recent tracks are more than a week old.
5-6 The more recent tracks are several days old.
7-8 The most recent tracks are a day old.
9-0 The most recent tracks are less than an hour old.

Once the age of any tracks has been determined, the huntsman may begin to search for the trail as described for a specific quarry above.

A trail can be followed for one hour of daylight, after which another hunting roll must be made. If this roll is failed, a tracker may continue to make appropriate rolls once per hour to regain the trail. Note that intelligent quarries anticipating pursuit, such as escaped prisoners, cannot normally be caught by tracking. Unless they are severely encumbered (possibly as a result of hunger or fatigue) or injured, such quarries are likely to move much faster than they can be trailed.

### Animal Baiting

Animal baiting is a common medieval pastime. It includes bear baiting, cock fighting, dog fighting, and bull fighting. Most of these activities are for the entertainment of common folk rather than nobles. However, nobles have certainly attended such events from time to time, and some lords have been known to sponsor them.

# Competitive Pastimes

Nobles are fond of games of all sorts and tend to gamble freely and often, though normally only with money they have on hand. Popular board games include chess, nine-mans-morris, rithmomachia, and tablero. Many of these games are played with dice. Athletic competitions in wrestling, archery, sprinting, long-distance running, and horse racing are also common.

# Games

The most popular board games are chess and rithmomachia. Medieval chess is often played with dice as a gambling game. Rithmomachia is a strategy game for two players. It is called the philosopher's game and its name literally means "battle of numbers." It is played on a rectangular checkered board with the narrower ends facing the players. Numbered black and white pieces face each other as in chess. The object of the game is to arrange one's numbers in such a way as to form mathematical harmonies. Rithmomachia is not only considered an amusing game; it is also used as a teaching tool in schools and universities. Many Hermetic magi enjoy it, and masters use it to teach the basics of arithmetic to their apprentices.

Simpler board games also exist, and a favorite is nine-mans-morris. This is played on the interstice points of a small eight by eight squared board excluding the center and the outer edges. Each player has nine stones, and the object is to remove those of your opponent by forming lines of three stones, called a mill.

Many games use dice carved of wood, bone, or ivory. These are often rough and ready and can be wildly inaccurate in their probabilities (even without any intentional cheating). In the most basic game, called dicing or highroll, a pair of dice is used and whoever rolls highest wins. This is a simple and popular gambling game. More complex games also exist, and there are many variants requiring specific dice combinations or where rolling dice successfully allows you to cover off various numbers or claim various stakes.

Tablero is a drinking game played on a seven by seven checkered board. There are seven cups filled with the beverage of choice. Each player has a reserve of a certain amount of the drink. The dice are used to advance or retreat the cups along the files. When a player has lined up any number of the cups he may force his opponent to drink the contents, and then refill the cups from his reserve. The first person to run out of alcohol or pass out loses. This is one game many players enjoy losing as much as winning.

# Athletic Contests

Contests are often held at fairs and festivals. Some large fairs hold several athletic events, with the participants often roughly divided by age group. Races are normally run cross-country or through the city streets. Horse races generally resemble steeplechases. Impromptu horse races

## Chess

Rules for chess have minor regional variations. This version comes from 13th century Christian Iberia.

1. Pawns may move two squares on their first move, but only until a piece is captured.
2. The queen may move only one square at a time, and only diagonally. On her first move, however, she may move two squares by leaping on the rank, file, or diagonal, but she cannot capture a piece when doing so.
3. Pawns can only be promoted to queen, and only if the original queen is captured.
4. The new queen also has the right to make the special first move leap.
5. A pawn may advance to the last rank, but it must sit and wait if it cannot yet be promoted.
6. A bishop may only move by leaping diagonally two squares.
7. Castling is not allowed.
8. A forced stalemate counts as a win, as does reducing the opponent to a lone king. These are normally counted as inferior wins, however, worth only half the usual stakes.

## Dice Chess

Dice are often used when playing chess for money. Each number on a die is associated with a particular piece: 1 = pawn, 2 = rook, 3 = knight, 4 = bishop, 5 = queen, and 6 = king. A player rolls two dice to determine which piece can be moved. He may move the piece indicated by either die unless the total is less than seven, in which case he must move the piece indicated by the sum of the two dice. The king must be actually captured to win. If none of the indicated pieces can be moved, the player loses his turn. As in all forms of chess, specific rules for the use of dice vary from one region to another.

dangerous and are strictly forbidden inside towns. Unless they are quite young, nobles do not usually participate in athletic contests in public, other than archery and horse racing. They may hold such contests amongst themselves, however, for a lark or a wager.

Athletic contests are resolved using the relevant Ability/Characteristic combination (Brawling and [Strength + Size] for wrestling, Athletics and Quickness for running, Bow and Perception for archery, Ride and the horse's Quickness for horse-racing, and so on). When a character is competing against a large field, he should roll a die against an ease factor of 15+, subtracting one from the die roll for every ten opponents. Extended contests, like long-distance running and horse racing, can be broken up into a series of rolls at the storyguide's discretion. There is always a significant chance of injury in any athletic contest. A minimum of three botch dice should be used, more if the course is dangerous or the competition is less than friendly. A single botch represents an incapacitating tendon or muscle pull. A double botch results in a broken bone and a lost Body level. A triple botch indicates serious, possibly life-threatening, injury.

# Gentle Pursuits

Medieval society is unquestionably dominated by men and their concerns. Nonetheless, women too need leisure from the daily grind of managing a household. While not excluded from some of the coarser fun, women tend to pursue more refined interests than their brothers and husbands. Music, poetry, and embroidery are seen as more in keeping with the greater modesty and sensibility of the fairer sex. These gentler interests are not reserved to women alone, of course, but the women of the court or any noble household are the natural arbiters of manners and good taste. This heightened respect for the gentler pleasures and for the women that embody them is reinforced by the concept of "courtly love" — a comparatively recent import from southern France.

## Music and Poetry

Literacy, if not actual learning, is relatively common in 13th century noble society, both among men and women. Poems, epics, and romances are composed, written, read, and recited by lord and lady alike in the vernacular for common enjoyment. This tradition is most strongly associated with knightly poets called "trouvères" in northern France and England, "troubadours" in southern France, and "minnesingers" in Germany. Inspired by a renewed interest in classical literature, these songs are often set according to complex internal rhythms, rhymes, and alliterations. Performances are often accompanied by the harp, lute, or viele. Common themes include love, beauty, tragedy, and feats of heroic valor. One famous troubadour, Bertrand de Born, wrote quite lyrically about war and the joys of combat. Poetry and song have become commonplace features of a noble's social arsenal, and aptitude for original composition and for quoting "just the right verse" from a growing body of vernacular "classics" is widely admired.

## Embroidery

Embroidery provides ladies and noble maidens with a unique opportunity to combine artistic expression, productive labor, religious devotion, social intercourse, and musical appreciation. It is the standard method for embellishing clothes. Colorful embroidered trim is commonly sewn onto hems and sleeves, and around the neck. Indeed, whole garments can be embroidered from top to bottom with complex heraldic designs and patterns, though this kind of elaboration is rarely done, as fully embroidered clothing becomes highly susceptible to wear. Devotional items such as altar cloths, and priestly vestments such as albs, chasubles, stoles, and surplices, are often embroidered as an act of faith and prayer. Occasionally, great embroidered works — the Bayeux Tapestry is an example — can be commissioned as commemorative pieces.

Embroidery is normally done in a circle, with each woman working on a different piece. This facilitates the sharing of both colored thread and the latest household gossip. The reputations of many men are made, unknown to themselves, by women in an embroidering circle. Often one of the ladies will set aside her work for a while and play a musical instrument for the pleasure of the others. Even men can be captivated by this camaraderie. Putting your hand to a stitch is often the best way to court the ladies and enjoy their company.

## Courtly Love

Courtly love was first codified by Andreas Capellanus in his treatise *De Amore*. This work has had great influence on the nobility, and has played a major role in promoting the growth of a chivalric ideal of courtly mores and behavior. In essence, Capellanus argues that true love cannot be found in marriage, for lovers give everything freely under no compulsion, while married people are bound by duty. Since a married couple

cannot truly be in love, it follows that both partners should seek love outside of marriage. This love can never be consummated, of course, out of respect for the woman's virtue. A relationship of true love, no matter how intense, must remain platonic.

In practice, however, there is a definite double standard involved in adultery. While it is condemned in both sexes, male members of the nobility frequently keep mistresses, and bastard children are numerous. Adultery in women is a more serious matter, and women who have affairs are often disgraced and repudiated. Adultery with the wife of one's lord is considered treason.

# Storytelling

The most common form of entertainment in Mythic Europe is not feasting, hunting, or gaming, but the hearing and telling of stories and epic tales. Whether around a campfire or in the great hall of a castle, accounts of the adventures of the great heroes and kings of the past always draw a ready audience. Members of all social classes have a passion for tales of love, mystery, daring, and brilliant feats of arms. These can be in verse, recited, or sung by skilled musicians and storytellers, but are more often narrated in a storytelling circle with each person relating a prose favorite in turn.

The greatest storytellers are the minstrels, trouvères, troubadours and minnesingers. These poets and singers are often of noble blood, some of the most famous being Emperor Henry VI the Cruel (1165-1197), Duke William IX of Aquitaine (1071-1127), Count Theobald IV of Champagne (1201-1253, see pages 118 and 121), Viscount Bertran de Born (1140-1215, see page 124), and the Champenois baron, Gace Brûlé (late 12th century). Such great men are not professional performers, of course, though they may sing to entertain their friends. Instead, they compose poems, songs, and melodies that are normally taken up by others who might make a comfortable living as entertainers. These might include members of the knightly class, such as the Picard trouvère Blondel de Nesle, famous for having discovered Richard the Lionheart's place of imprisonment in Germany, and the German knight and minnesinger Walther von der Vogelweide (c.1170-1230). Others are clerics, the most famous of whom was the troubadour Folquet de Marseille (see *A Medieval Tapestry*, pages 44-46) who rose to be bishop of Toulouse and who played a major role in the Albigensian Crusade. Many performers are of more modest birth, but are sometimes great poets in their own right. While these lesser-known poets sing mainly of love and beauty, the transmission of the bulk of the tales and songs of Mythic Europe is due to their efforts.

Sometimes these tales are collected and recorded in Latin or vernacular versions, finding their way into monastic or covenant libraries. Under the right circumstances, such collections can become treasure troves of Legend Lore that can be mined by both curious adventurers and painstaking researchers. The vast majority of these tales, however, are never written down and are instead passed on from mouth to mouth. A skilled performer might have a repertoire of a hundred or more stories.

Storytelling is a multidimensional art that can involve a number of skills. Storytelling itself is used in the composition and narration of prose stories and tales, though Legend Lore provides much of the material for epics. A high Storytelling score would indicate a large stock of known stories, while a high score in Legend Lore would permit a character to see linkages between tales, and would indicate familiarity with tale variants. Scores of 6+ in Speak (appropriate) Language represents the ability to choose just the right word or elegant turn of phrase needed to charm listeners and hold their interest, and should provide bonuses to both composition and narration.

Verse, on the other hand, makes use of metaphors, meters, alliterations, and subtle kennings. Sing Ability is used to ensure proper diction and voice modulation. Verse tales and epics are inherently easier to remember than prose, and singers are less likely to get lost in their narrative. Verse is also more easily accompanied by music than is prose. Good poets can also extemporize verse if they have the Free Expression Virtue.

Tales can be sung or recited in any number of contexts. A lord and his retinue might be entertained by a vassal or member of his household while resting from a hunt or on the road. Long winter nights can be shortened by good storytelling, and the good cheer of feasts prolonged by a minstrel's songs. While not on watch, men can keep each other alert by reciting gripping tales, and warriors in battle can maintain courage, order,

and discipline by singing in union of the heroic deeds of their forefathers. As well as being the most common form of entertainment in Mythic Europe, storytelling is also the most versatile.

# The Epic Cycles

Formal history is the province of clerics and chroniclers. What really matters to most of the inhabitants of Mythic Europe is "epic" history. A number of tales featuring the exploits of heroic forebears accrue to any noble family with pretensions to antiquity, but these are usually of only local interest. Tales dealing with the kings of old and their trusty followers, on the other hand, are of far more universal appeal. Most of these center on events that occurred during the Heroic Age in the 5th and 6th centuries, shortly before and after the collapse of the Roman empire in the West. Some are more recent, however, and others harken back to ancient times before the birth of Christ. These tales normally take the form of epics and sagas, preserved in verse and passed down through the ages. Many of these epics deal with the same or interrelated people and events, and so are normally grouped into cycles.

All peoples of Mythic Europe have their own cycles, and are normally unfamiliar with those of other nations. Some scholars, however, such as the bishop of St. Asaph, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the Danish monk Saxo Grammaticus have striven to collect, reconstruct, and synthesize into Latin the epic history of the heroic ages of their respective peoples. This is helping to spread and popularize medieval Mythic history in the same way that the heroes of earlier eras were made famous by the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, and the Aeneid of Virgil.

Most epics, however, have not been synthesized and translated, or even recorded. They exist only in the popular vernacular form in which they were originally composed for purely oral transmission. It would be impossible to give a comprehensive outline of each and every epic, or even every cycle, but a few stand out as particularly famous examples.

## *The Arthurian Cycle*

After the Romans withdrew their legions and abandoned Britain, the Britons were forced to see to their own defense and attempt to repel waves of heathen Saxon invaders without outside assistance. A number of native chieftains played their part in this ultimately futile struggle, ruling over some or most of the island, but the most famous was Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon.

The various Arthurian tales describe Arthur's rise to power following Uther's poisoning; his victories over the Saxons; his defeat of a lecherous Iberian giant in single combat; and his conquests of Ireland, Norway, Denmark, and Gaul. Arthur would have marched into Rome itself had not his kinsman Mordred, whom he had left as governor in Britain, rebelled and taken Arthur's wife Guenevere as his own, forcing the rightful king's return. Mordred appealed to the Saxons for help, which led to a titanic struggle in which he lost his life and in which Arthur, though victorious, was mortally wounded.

Arthur's body and his sword Caliburn (some say Excalibur, though other tales describe that sword as belonging to Gawain) were carried away to the faerie isle of Avalon. According to some tales, Arthur yet lives in Faerie where he will be healed again to lead the Britons (Welsh, Cornish, and Breton) when they have most need of him. Others, however, claim he was buried in a magic regio, the size of his tomb varying according to the strength of the aura. The abbey of Glastonbury near Bristol claims to be his burial site.

The tales of the Arthurian cycle also tell of the exploits of Arthur's heroes. Tristan is said to have freed Cornwall from a humiliating and heartless tribute by slaying Morold, leaving a notch of his sword in the skull of the Irish giant. Tristan then fell in love with Morold's niece Isolde while bringing her back to wed his immediate lord King Mark, thus betraying him. Peredur (Perceval) was raised in isolation away from men by his widowed mother who feared he might follow in the warlike footsteps of his dead father and brothers. Peredur nonetheless followed his destiny and pursued and found the grail. Other tales describe the adventures of Arthur's kinsmen Kay and Gawain. Two other personages who are frequently encountered in the cycle are the great wizards Merlin and Morganna.

## *The Völsung Saga*

Völsung was a king of the Rhenish Franks who claimed descent from Odin. According to this cycle, once while Völsung was hosting a betrothal feast for his soon-to-be son-in-law King Siggeir of the Goths, Odin appeared and imbedded the wondrous sword Gram (or Balmung) into the bole of Branstock, the magical oak around which Völsung's hall was built. All the warriors present were challenged to try their strength and draw the sword, but only Völsung's son Sigmund was able to pull it free and win the prize. When Völsung and his kin were treacherously ambushed by Siggeir on a return visit, Sigmund survived, later avenging his father.

Many years later Sigmund died when Gram shattered in the midst of battle. His son Sigurd, the main hero of the cycle, was born posthumously and raised in exile at the Danish court by the faerie smith Regin. Regin reforged Gram and set Sigurd to slay the dragon Fafnir and steal the cursed treasure of the Nibelungs, a race of dark earth faeries led by the Dwarf Andvari (or Albrech, a generic name frequently given in many epics for the king of the Dwarfs). Amidst the treasure, Sigurd found the Helm of Awe (or the Tarnkappe) that makes the wearer invisible and gives him the strength of twelve men, and a golden suit of armor that makes the wearer invulnerable. (According to some tales, Sigurd's invulnerability came from having bathed in Fafnir's blood, except for a spot between his shoulder blades on which fell a giant linden leaf.) Finally, Sigurd acquired the ability to understand the language of birds after eating Fafnir's heart.

Sigurd then defeated the faerie Ice queen Brunnhild and married her to Gunther, king of the Burgundians, in exchange for the hand of his sister Gudrun (or Kriemhild), but was later treacherously murdered for the gold of the Nibelungs. Gudrun was married off to Attila, king of the Huns, who invited the Burgundians to a great feast at which he slew them for the treasure. Gudrun then avenged her kin by killing Attila in his sleep and was subsequently slain by his men when they found him dead the next day.

As in many cycles, the various epic tales are often at odds over who killed whom and why, and on the ultimate fate and location of the Nibelung treasure. Some claim it is buried beneath the Rhine — no one knows where — but that the key to the vault is still held, perhaps unwittingly, by the Burgundian descendants of the hero Hagen.

## *The Scandinavian Cycle*

The Norse epics and sagas form the most varied and far-ranging of the cycles, spanning from Iceland to the lands of the Rus, and from the 5th to the 11th century. These tales revolve around the Norse kings, and the most compelling deal with the Skjöldung kings of Denmark. The Danish ruling house takes its name from the great law-giving king, Skjöld. According to Saxo, Skjöld was succeeded by Gram and then by Hading and Frothi, though some sagas make Frothi Skjöld's son. Frothi had three sons, the

### Merlin Transforms Uther

Merlin was summoned immediately. When he appeared in the king's presence, he was ordered to suggest how the king could have his way with Ygerna. When Merlin saw the torment which the king was suffering because of this woman, he was amazed at the strength of his passion. "If you are to have your wish," he said "you must make use of methods which are quite new and until now unheard-of in your day. By my drugs I know how to give you the precise appearance of Gorlois, so that you will resemble him in every respect. If you do what I say, I will make you exactly like him, and Ulfin exactly like Gorlois' companion, Jordan of Tintagel. I will change my own appearance, too, and come with you. In this way, you will be able to go safely to Ygerna in her castle and be admitted."

— From Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*.

eldest of whom, Haldan, murdered his two brothers and initiated an infamous reign of tyranny punctuated by base atrocities and outrages. Nonetheless, he lived to die of old age. His two sons Roe (Hroar) and Helgi then ruled jointly, the elder as law-giver, the younger as war chief.

In one of his raids Helgi captured and raped Thora, a Saxon princess, who later gave birth to a daughter, Yrsa. On a subsequent raid Helgi encountered Yrsa and married her not realizing she was his daughter. Rolf Krake, the most famous of the early Danish kings, was the product of this incestuous union. Nonetheless, armed with his famous sword Skofnung, Rolf unified the Danes and brought them theretofore unparalleled years of peace and prosperity. His most daring exploit was a raid on the treasury of the Swedish king during which he avenged his father's death and eluded pursuit by sowing the Fyris Wold with captured Swedish gold, repeating a trick his great-grandfather Frothi played on the Britons.

In all his doings Rolf was supported by a group of heroic followers, each famous in his own right and the subject of his own epic cycle. These include the Norwegian werebear Biarki whose sword Lövi always slays with a single blow, the one-eyed Swede and noted berserker slayer Svipdag, and the hero Hialti who grew mighty from drinking the blood of a freshly-killed troll. Rolf and all his heroes were treacherously slain by their guests at a Yule feast, plunging Denmark back into chaos and bloodshed, but were avenged by the boyish skald Vöggi who gave his life for his former lord.

Also contemporary with Rolf is Beowulf, a mighty king of the Goths who in his youth freed Rolf's uncle Roe from the tyranny of the troll Grendel, and who later in life died slaying a dragon. In some tales, however, the dragon slayer was really Rolf's great-grandfather Frothi (sometimes also called Beowulf or Bjowulf) who survived the feat, but these may have been different dragons.

## *The Ameling Cycle*

The Amelings were the ancient kings of the part of the Gothic people that left Scandinavia and the shores of the Baltic around the time of Christ's birth. The eastern branch, or Ostrogoths, migrated first to the Black Sea where, according to Jordanes, a further split gave birth to the Amazons. From the Black Sea the Ostrogoths migrated to the Balkans, and a number of tales recount the adventures of the Ameling heroes Hugdietrich and Wolfdietrich as allies or foes of the East Roman emperors. Eventually the Ostrogoths settled in Italy.

The greatest king of the Ameling race was Dietrich von Bern (Theodoric of Verona), and tales of his exploits and those of his followers are particularly popular in south Germany. Dietrich was fostered by the noted Völsung hero Hildebrand, and his youth was marked by many adventures in which he slew a number of marauding Alpine giants with his Dwarfish blade Naglering. During this time he gathered around him a number of heroes including Heime and Wittich, wielders respectively of the magic swords Blutgang and Mimung, and Wildeber, whose enormous strength was due to an arm ring won from a mermaid.

Upon the death of his father Dietmar, Dietrich was forced from his lands by his kinsman Ermenrich (Odoaker), the ruler of Rome. He fled to the Hunnish court where he was welcomed by King Etzel (Attila) and had further adventures in his service. After 20 years, he returned at the head of numerous heroic companions to reclaim his birthright. Though victorious, Dietrich's troupe suffered such grievous casualties that he was again forced to withdraw. After ten more years he led another army into Italy, again accompanied by the old but faithful Hildebrand. In a particularly fierce engagement Hildebrand unwittingly confronted and slew his own son Hadubrand, whom he had not seen in thirty years. Some tales, however, insist that the two men recognized each other after a long fight, and were reconciled.

### Frothi Slays a Dragon

Frothi believed him and crossed over alone to the island with no more company to attack the monster than when champions fight a duel. The dragon was returning to its cave after quenching its thirst as Frothi's weapon struck, but its hard prickly exterior made light of it. His next attempt was foiled when he launched javelins, which only rebounded idly. When its back proved impenetrably hard he found on closer inspection that the softness of its stomach gave access to his sword. It tried to bite him in retaliation, but its sharp-pointed teeth only fastened on his shield, and with many quick little jabs of its tongue it gasped away its life and its poison at the same time.

— From Saxo Grammaticus' *History of the Danes*

Now master of all Italy, Dietrich was crowned in Rome and became the greatest of the Germanic kings until Charlemagne. According to one tale, Dietrich, grown old and embittered by his many trials, was carried off by a coal-black faerie steed he encountered while on a hunt. Some say that he has led the Wild Hunt ever since. Most tales, however, claim he died naturally of old age and point to his tomb at Verona as proof.

## *The Carolingian Cycle*

The Carolingians traced their descent and worldly power from Pepin of Heristal (himself a descendent of St. Arnulf, an early bishop of Metz), duke and prince of the Franks and *de facto* ruler of the Merovingian Frankish kingdom at the beginning of the 8th century. Pepin was succeeded by his illegitimate son Charles Martel (the Hammer) who decisively defeated the invading Moors at the battle of Tours, becoming the savior of Western Christendom. Charles' own illegitimate son Pepin the Short had himself proclaimed king with the Pope's approval, setting aside the last Merovingian, Childeric III, and founding the great Carolingian dynasty named after his father.

Charlemagne, the most famous of the kings of Mythic Europe, was Pepin's son by his wife Bertha Bigfoot. He is the principal subject of the Carolingian epic cycle, along with his famous paladins, the best known of whom are Oliver the Wise, Ogier the Dane, and Charlemagne's own beloved nephew Roland. Another famous companion of Charlemagne is the militant Archbishop Turpin of Reims. A fearless defender of the Christian Faith, the various tales describe Charlemagne's long struggle against the pagan Saxons, his victories against the Moors, his subsequent conquest of the Lombards, and his coronation as emperor of the revived West Roman empire at the invitation of the Pope.

The single most popular epic tale in all of Mythic Europe is the Song of Roland, which describes Charlemagne's invasion of Muslim Iberia. After initial victories, the Franks decided to send an ambassador to impose terms, but couldn't agree on whom to confer so dangerous a mission. Roland, whose courage and heroism were not in doubt, nominated Ganelon who was both his stepfather and Charlemagne's son-in-law. The indignant Ganelon was forced to accept, but instead of genuinely negotiating for tribute and hostages, he plotted his nephew's destruction. The ambush of the Frankish rear guard was agreed. On his return, Ganelon treacherously nominated Roland as the rear guard commander, thus sealing his nephew's fate.

Roland, Oliver, the warrior Archbishop Turpin, and the other paladins were duly ambushed and cut down in the narrow defile of Roncesvalles ("Roncevaux" in French, meaning "Valley of Thorns"). Out of pride Roland waited until it was too late before summoning the main Frankish army by blowing the Olifant, his famous ivory horn that can be heard from thirty leagues around. In his dying gestures, Roland attempted to break his peerless sword Durendal against the rocks to prevent it from falling into profane hands. Despite his great strength, he was unable to dent the blade. Eventually Charlemagne and the Franks arrived, picked up the bodies of the slain, and extracted a horrific vengeance against the Moors who had been reinforced from throughout the Muslim world. Saragossa was captured and its inhabitants given the choice between death and baptism. Ganelon's guilt was proven in a judicial duel. He and fifty of his kinsmen who acted as co-swearers were hung as traitors, but this did little to ease Charlemagne's weary sorrow.

### Durendal

Count Roland smites upon the marble stone;
I cannot tell you how he hewed it and smote;
Yet the blade breaks not nor splinters, though it groans;
Upward to heaven it rebounds from the blow.
When the Count sees it never will be broke,
Then to himself right softly he makes moan;
"Ah Durendal, fair, hallowed and devote,
What store of relics lie in thy hilt of gold!
At Peter's tooth, St. Basil's blood, it holds,
Hair of my lord St. Denis, there enclosed,
Likewise a piece of Blessed Mary's robe;
To Paynim hands 'twere sin to let you go;
You should be served by Christian men alone,
Ne'er may you fall to any coward soul!
Many wide lands I conquered by your strokes
For Charles to keep whose beard is white as snow,
Whereby right rich and mighty is his throne."

— From the *Song of Roland*

## *The Cycle of Reynard the Fox*

Epic tales in Mythic Europe are not limited to the deeds of mundane heroes. Somewhere on the wild margins of Mythic Europe, some say in Arcadia, Emperor Noble the Lion rules over a realm inhabited by anthropomorphic animal faeries. As the animal kingdom somehow borders at once on a great number of mundane lands, tales of its inhabitants have spread far and wide. The most famous denizen of this land is Baron Reynard the Fox of Maupertuis. A cunning, ruthless, but also brave and charismatic confidence artist, Reynard preys on the foolish, the greedy, and the gullible, or merely on those weaker than himself. Most of the tales in the cycle pertain to Reynard's many adventures and close calls with his archfoe and favorite victim Baron Ysengrin the Wolf, a doughty fighter for sure, but none too quick on the uptake. Others deal with Reynard's encounters with his sometime prey Baron Chanteclair the Coq, lord of the henhouse, and with his wary relationship with his nominal vassal, Sir Tibert the Cat.

Reynard and his ilk are archetypes of the animals they represent, but are nonetheless true faeries. They usually maintain their animal form, but even in this shape they can speak, tie knots, and (in Faerie) ride horses and wield weapons. If they choose, however, they can adopt human form. They are easily recognized by those with Faerie or Second Sight, however, as they must always maintain an obvious unchanging trait such as an animal head or a visible tail, but they are exceptionally adept at deluding poor mortals into believing that animal-headed strangers are no more remarkable than traveling peddlers.

While unquestionably noble in their own eyes, the lords of the animal realm are poor and must eke out a perilous existence always foraging for their next meal; all except Noble the Lion, of course, who waxes fat on the "free" offerings of his subjects. More often than not this precarious livelihood is filched at the expense of the hapless peasants and rural clerics of neighboring villages and farmsteads. Their larders, henhouses, and

flocks often make easy pickings for hungry and intrepid faerie adventurers, none more so than Reynard himself. Reynard will gladly drown a villein, rob a church, betray a friend, or even make a meal of a weaker unwary traveling companion if the end result will keep the pangs of hunger at bay for yet another day.

The animal realm is obviously of great antiquity, as learned scholars can testify from the writing of the Phrygian slave Aesop (6th century BC) and the Thracian slave Phaedrus (1st century AD). That the original chroniclers of Reynard and his "friends" should be of such humble origin is hardly surprising, as the weak and poor have always figured amongst the choice victims of these hungry fay. Reynard may claim noble blood and be unnaturally strong, swift, and resourceful when cornered or in a fight, but he is no match for an armored knight and must flee before the stalwart pack hounds of the mighty.

As always, Faerie tends to imitate surrounding mundane society, but reflects, as through a glass darkly, distorted images of mundane customs and institutions. Though poor themselves, the faerie animals identify with the "better" mundane sort. As Noble the Lion disdainfully remarks in one of the tales: "I would as soon lay my hands on a filthy chamber-pot as on a villein." The fairies have also adopted exaggerated, though often inappropriate, courtesy from their mundane "peers." They are as likely to shed crocodile tears and affected solicitude for the misery of those whom they despoil as shower them with refined mockery. Even the One True Faith is not spared their presumptuous familiarity and all the animal faeries affect a rather conspicuous piety, though their deficient understanding of holy forms and principles leads to much mummery and an often disturbingly ingenuous cynicism. While their antics may appear amusing or even endearing to those whom they have not directly tormented or fleeced, it is always best to tread warily and stay on one's guard when in their company for fear of joining their long list of unfortunate victims.

## Reynard Discourses on Dietary Matters

"By God, you have really put one over on that villein. Now tell me frankly if he injured you."

"Not at all, I swear," says Primaut. "You may be sure of that; and I promise you I did him a good deal of harm: I have got a piece of his buttocks that I have brought here for you." He then threw it into his lap, saying: "Eat up, now, Reynard! Villein meat is a real titbit and worth more than I could tell."

"Primaut," says Reynard, "by my skin and the faith I owe Malebranche [Reynard's son], villein meat, whether white or black, is never in season. May I never see tomorrow dawn if that is eaten where I am!"

## *Other Epic Cycles*

The cycles already described are merely the best known and the most widely diffused in Mythic Europe. Other epic cycles are those dealing with the Rurikid princes of the Rus lands, including the tales composed by the bard Banyan; the tales of 5th century king Wakhtang Gurgaslani of Georgia; and those surrounding St. Vladimir, grand prince of Kiev, and his heroes Ilia Muromets, Aliosha Popovich, and Dobrynia Nikitish. The Magyars have the Arpád cycle, including the tales of the Turul Hawk and the White Stallion, which describe the Magyar migration to Hungary from the Steppes under the leadership of Almos and his son Arpád. The Irish have the Ulster cycle which describes the great war between Queen Maeb of Connaught and King Chonchobar of Ulster in which Cu Chulain distinguished himself, as well as the tales of St. Patrick's 5th century conversion of the island. The Iberians sing of the exploits of El Cid (see page 41) and describe the battle of Roncesvalles differently in the tale of Bernardo del Carpio. The Lombard cycle details that people's destruction of the Gepids and the 6th century invasion of northern Italy under the evil Lombard king Alboin. When Alboin compelled his ravished bride, the fair Rosamund, granddaughter of the last Gepid king, Thurisind, to drink from a vessel made from her father's skull (see page 146) she prevailed upon the giant Perideus to slay him.

# Adventuring

The leisure pastime closest to the heart of most **Ars Magica** player characters is, of course, adventuring. Nobles in search of diversion can partake in a wide range of such activities, either

as principals or as supporting companions. Three detailed adventures have been included in chapters 7, 8, and 9, loosely anchored respectively around a tournament, a property dispute, and a hunt. They do not come close to exhausting these themes, and there are many situations in which noble characters can play out their roles as warriors, rulers, and members of the social and political elite of Mythic Europe. The following sections discuss general areas of adventure suitable for noble characters, and each includes a more concrete scenario idea.

## Law Enforcement

In most of Mythic Europe, maintaining law and order is both a public and private responsibility. Brigandage and lawlessness abound, and noble characters who have the means to do so have a legal duty to apprehend evil-doers and bring them to trial. Failure to live up to this responsibility can have severe consequences as (demonically spawned?) chaos frequently lurks on the margins of medieval society, awaiting any opportunity to rend and tear the delicate social fabric.

### *The Brigands*

An imposing band of well-armed and seasoned mercenaries move into the local area. They are the flotsam of a recently defeated army, and intend to gather enough loot to refill their empty purses and enough horses and supplies to make their way back to their distant homeland. The local villagers are eager enough to give the warriors what they want, if only to speed them on their way.

Language barriers and a succession of violent "misunderstandings" poison already tense relations, however. The angry warriors seem reluctant to take their leave, their hearts hardened to the suffering their depredations are causing for the common folk. Many disaffected elements join the foreigners, providing them with invaluable intelligence on hiding places, good campsites, and vulnerable targets. A number of local manor houses and monasteries are sacked, their male inhabitants cruelly murdered and their womenfolk violated.

Nearby barons attempt to muster a defense, but the bandits' hit-and-run tactics baffle all attempts to bring them to ground. These daring successes attract more and more recruits from the now desperate peasantry for whom joining in the pillage is the only alternative to starvation. This leads to violently punitive reprisals from the panicky gentry. If the characters do not intervene successfully, the whole area surrounding the covenant could be swept up in a vicious paroxysm of inter-class warfare that could destroy both friends and loved ones.

## Prince Roman, Khan Otrok, and the Wormwood

Great Prince Roman, the unforgettable ruler of all Russia, died. He was the one who conquered all the heathen nations and with wisdom fulfilled all the divine commandments. He would strike against the infidels [Cumans] like a lion. He could be as full of wrath with them as is the lynx. He annihilated them like a crocodile. Many were the times he crossed their lands like an eagle. He was as courageous as an aurochs. He continued the deeds of his grandfather, Prince Vladimir Monomakh, who destroyed the infidel sons of Ishmael, who are usually called Cumans. He drove Khan Otrok from the steppes to beyond the Iron Gates [of the Caucasus] into Abkhasia. Only the horde of Khan Syrchan remained on the river Don, and he had only fish for food. It was that time when Prince Vladimir Monomakh drank water from the river Don with his golden helmet. He conquered the entire Cuman land and drove away these accursed sons of Hagar.

After the death of Prince Vladimir Monomakh, Khan Syrchgan sent his bard, Oria, to his brother, Khan Otrok, who was still in the land of Abkhasia. And Syrchgan told Oria to tell his brother: "Vladimir is dead. Come back, brother; return to your native land." And he added to Oria: "Tell these words I have spoken to my brother and sing him our Cuman songs. But, if he does not want to return, let him smell the fragrance of our prairie grass that is called wormwood."

When Khan Otrok wanted neither to return nor to listen to the songs of his brother's bard, the bard presented him a bouquet of wormwood from the prairie.

And when Khan Otrok inhaled the fragrance of the prairie wormwood, he began to weep, and said: "It is still better to die in one's native land than to win glory in a foreign one." And thus Khan Otrok decided to return to his native land.

— From the *Galician and Volynian Chronicle*

# Journeys

Travel is a recurring theme of many adventures as it permits the characters to quit their habitual haunts, explore new areas, and make new contacts.

## *The Pilgrimage*

As penance for some serious sin, the local bishop instructs a noble player character to accompany and protect a group of ten monks on a pilgrimage. The monks are intent on visiting a distant shrine endowed with a holy icon that exudes a fragrant oil gifted with supernatural healing properties. They propose to gently wipe the holy image with a shroud and then return to anoint their ailing abbot. Despite this solemn purpose — and much to the character's surprise — the monks turn out to be an amiable, fun-loving bunch, much given to playing pranks and easily tempted by petty sins. The mood of the pilgrimage turns somber, however, when the monks start dying or disappearing one by one. Frightened, they begin to turn on one another and on their protector. What will the bishop think if none of them returns alive?

# Intrigue

Hobnobbing with the rich and powerful can be advantageous, but often embroils characters in disputes and rivalries not of their own making.

## *The Hostage*

The lord of one of the characters purchases a high-born hostage from a neighboring baron who finds himself hard-up for cash. The hostage is a young adolescent who is both willful and arrogant. Exasperated by the young man's tantrums, the lord entrusts the player character vassal with his care, remitting any feudal obligations until such time as the youth's father can ransom him. The character finds that his new hostage is very fond of hunting, and the occasional outing seems to help keep his temper in check. Just when the character thinks a bond is developing between the two of them, the hostage slips away during a moment of inattention. As the character gallops after him, he spots him in the distance at the edge of a wood where he meets (or is confronted by) two armed riders. This is the last the character sees of him. Has he fled? Was he kidnapped? Who were the mysterious riders? What is the lord going to say when he finds out?

# Investigation

Life is full of mysteries, particularly in Mythic Europe where natural and supernatural exist side by side. Mysteries are often a source of profit and reward, but sometimes it is best to leave them undisturbed lest one be drawn in too closely. A number of such places of mystery are described in the sourcebooks *Mythic Places* and *More Mythic Places*.

## *The Ruins*

Rumors spread that lights can be seen at night among the ruins of a secluded, dilapidated Roman villa. No one pays much attention, however, until the livestock starts to die off, packs of wolves and wild dogs begin to prowl the byways, and local graves are found mysteriously desecrated. The baron sends a party to investigate the ruins, but they find no sign of recent occupation. Two men are left to guard the ruins overnight as a precaution, but unexpectedly disappear. Embarrassed, baffled, and reluctant to lose more men, the baron summons the characters as "well-known solvers of mysteries," and discretely offers them a substantial reward if they can make the problem go away.

# Quests

These are the most varied of adventures, often involving searches for mythical beasts, precious items, treasures, or holy relics of great power and antiquity. Quests can be undertaken on a noble character's own behalf, as a favor to a friend or patron, or at the behest of one whom it is best to humor or obey. Locating — or even identifying — the object of the search can sometimes involve long and painstaking research, and could even form the major theme to a saga.

# Hitting the Books

Characters are sometimes faced with the problem of trying to solve a puzzle by identifying and discovering missing pieces. In many cases, the answers can be found by checking against the relevant Casual Knowledge, usually Legend Lore or Area Lore. The simplest approach is to roll a stress die against an ease factor set by the storyguide.

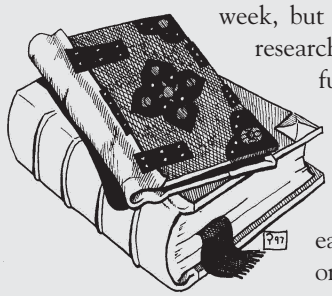
If the characters fail this roll, however, it is entirely reasonable to allow characters to attempt to research the answer by consulting available experts or books on the relevant Knowledge. The following optional rules will be useful in this case.

If a number of characters are researching a problem together, they must designate a lead researcher. All except the lead researcher must have a score of at least one in the relevant Knowledge, and the number of assistants cannot exceed the lead researcher's Leadership score.

The storyguide then determines a Research Bonus based on the resources available to the characters. Each different *summa* (on the relevant Knowledge) consulted contributes its level in research points. Each *tractatus* or *liber quaestionum* contributes one point. Authorities are unsuited to this form of research and so do not contribute anything. If experts are consulted in person, the most knowledgeable one contributes his score, while additional experts contribute one point each. Experts actively attempting to mislead the researchers can subtract their full Storytelling Ability instead. Note that because of the need to crosscheck and compare results, all the resources must be within a day's travel from each other.

The resulting research total is treated as a sum of experience points yielding a Research Bonus equivalent to the corresponding Ability level. (For example, 3 research points would yield a Bonus of +2; 6 points would yield a Bonus of +3; 10 points would yield a Bonus of +4, etc.) Storyguides may wish to cap the Research Bonus at the level of the lead researcher's Scribe Latin (in the case of books) or Speak Language (if storytellers are consulted).

The lead researcher then indicates how much time will be devoted to the effort and then rolls a stress die + Int + Research Bonus + Lead Researcher's Knowledge + Number of Assistants.



The base time required to research a problem is one week, but this can be reduced if the research roll is particularly successful. If the lead researcher's modified roll beats the ease factor by three, the solution can be found in only three days. If the ease factor is beaten by six, only one day is lost; if by nine the research only takes half a day; if by twelve only an hour; if by fifteen the answer is found right away.

Conversely, if none of the researchers are familiar with the libraries consulted, the amount of time required is doubled unless the lead researcher has Mythic Intelligence. Familiarity with a library can be achieved by studying in it for a season (any subject of study will do). Characters are assumed to be familiar with their own covenant library. If the characters have failed to allocate the required time to the investigation, they fail automatically but must still check for a botch.

The specific nature of a research botch is determined by the storyguide. It can range from a fatally inaccurate answer (the characters try to keep the enemy faerie lord at bay with a sprig of asparagus instead of a sprig of rowan) to an unfortunate accident (ink is spilled on a priceless manuscript) to a major disaster (you fall asleep at your lectern in the library, knocking over a lit candle and...).

If, having failed once, the researchers decide to widen their search and consult new sources, they may do so, but only the new sources count for determining the new Research Bonus, and the ease factor increases by three for each failed attempt.

*Exempli Gratia: Anna is alerted to the discovery of a mysterious decomposed body in a nearby cave by one of the tenants. She decides to investigate in person accompanied by a guard and a maid. Searching the remnants of the corpse's clothing, she finds a sheet of parchment that has been ripped from a book hidden in the lining of the cloak. She has the body given a Christian burial (Anna does not approve of questioning the dead!) and examines the parchment at leisure for a few days, eventually cracking its code. Anna soon realizes that she has only part of a secret message. Two names on the parchment are unfamiliar to her, but should provide a clue as to what tale, or at least what cycle, they come from.*

*Wishing to keep her investigation private, Anna decides to research the problem alone using her own summa on legendary tales (level 3); the resources available at the nearby covenant library (two summae of levels 2 and 4); and some books from the scriptorium of St. Mary's priory, a nearby Benedictine convent where her aunt is a nun (one short summa of level 1 and a tractatus that uses examples from classical myth to elucidate points of Christian morality).*

*All these works together provide her with 11 research points (3 + 2 + 4 + 1 + 1 = 11) for a Research Bonus of 4. As Anna is unusually well-read, she has a Scribe Latin score of 4 and is able to assimilate all the available information. Anna has Intelligence +3 and a Legend Lore score of 3. The storyguide sets the ease factor for identifying the source tale at 12, and Anna decides to spend no more than a week researching the matter so she doesn't get too far behind in her embroidery.*

## *The Puzzle*

One of the character's tenants informs him that he has found a decomposed body in a nearby cave. After carefully examining the remains, the character finds a torn piece of parchment hidden in the lining of a cloak. It appears to be an illuminated page from a Latin rendition of an unknown epic. A nonsense rhyme has been scrawled across the top and a number of words in the text have been circled as if randomly. Together they read: "If you wish to retrieve them they hide in brother . . . ." What does all of this mean?

# Conflicting Loyalties

Nobles in Mythic Europe must balance a complex array of competing principles. Loyalties to one's Church, lord, king, family, and honor (not to mention one's self-interest) must be carefully weighed before making any major decision. Often these loyalties conflict, with tragic consequences. Among the most common conflicts are those between one's feudal obligations and one's conscience. A kind and caring lord never asks more of his vassals than they can bear. Such lords are to be prized all the more as they are very rare indeed. Most lords prefer to hide their perfidy and make their vassals do their dirty work.

## *The Dubious Instructions*

Your lord holds a particularly tense and unpleasant parley at his castle with his younger brother, with whom he is disputing an inheritance. You are a witness in the case on your lord's behalf, and his brother takes violent exception to your testimony, insulting and even threatening you. Your lord observes the exchange, but says nothing. The meeting breaks up on this sour note without any agreement. As your lord's brother and his men prepare to leave, eyeing you malevolently all the while, your lord publicly asks two of his knights (including yourself) to ride out with their men and escort his brother to the boundary between the two estates to ensure "that nothing untoward happens." The two parties ride out side by side in tense silence. It is clear your lord's brother and his men still hold ill feelings towards you.

After a while, your fellow knight draws you aside and purports to tell you your "true" instructions. Your lord has decided to resolve the dispute by capturing and imprisoning his brother. To this end, some of his brother's men have been suborned and lie in wait in ambush near the boundary stone. You do not entirely trust your fellow knight, as he is your rival at your lord's court. In fact, you loathe each other. Could these really be your lord's instructions, or is this a trap? Could your rival be acting on his own behalf to ingratiate himself with your lord? Could he be in league with your lord's brother against you? Should you denounce the plot, play your assigned role, or just hang back? As you ponder what to do, your lord's brother glowers back at you over his shoulder, and then breaks into a cruel smile.

# Warfare

While war in Mythic Europe is less frequent than many warrior nobles might like, it is common enough to keep several thousand professional mercenaries busy. Royal succession is often contested, and few kings are always able to keep their more troublesome and bellicose nobles in check. Many disputes fester and sporadic violence

between noble landholders is endemic. Most such "wars" are little more than raids and counter-raids, devastating though they may be for the common people. An effort is occasionally made to storm or besiege a castle, usually unsuccessfully. Very infrequently small battles occur, though these normally take the form of ambushes.

## *The Raid*

A nearby lord has decided to settle accounts with a long-time enemy. Because of a recent equine epidemic, the lord is particularly short on horses. He proposes to kill two birds with one stone by first raiding his neighbor's stud farm. To maintain the element of surprise (and perhaps an element of "deniability" if things go wrong) he hires one of the noble player characters to arrange for the dirty deed and offers to pay a tidy sum for any horses recovered, plus a bonus if the stables are destroyed. He also insists that his newly-knighted adolescent son be taken along on the raid as a reliable witness. Unfortunately for the characters, the youth seems to think that he is charge of the venture, and is more intent on flashy heroics than on speedy execution and prompt withdrawal.

# Area Lore

Area Lore is one of the most useful Abilities available to characters in adventures where interaction with mundane society plays as a major role. Area Lore covers information that, while not necessarily commonly known, is not actually secret — the kind of information that would be freely offered by a well-disposed knowledgeable person. Along with the four specializations suggested in the main rules (geography, history, politics, and personalities), Area Lore also includes law because of the critical role played by local custom in Mythic Europe.

A score in Area Lore is always specific to a particular region which can be as small as a village or as wide as all of Mythic Europe. The nature and type of information available through Area Lore varies according to the size of the region: the wider the region, the more general the information. The summaries below provide a guide for what kind of information can be garnered from Area Lore. The information is broken out into the areas of geography, history, politics, personalities, and law for convenience, not because you must specialize in that area to know the relevant information. As usual, a specialization indicates a greater scope of knowledge in one sub-category, not abandonment of knowledge in the other sub-categories.

It is perfectly acceptable to take Area Lore twice or more (for different regions, of course) during character generation, rather than take it just once for a broader region.

## *(Village) Lore*

**Geography:** hiding, hunting, or fishing places
**History:** local myths and legends; origin of early settlers and later newcomers
**Politics:** local feuds, friendships, and marriage connections
**Personalities:** names, attributes, moral character, and relative prosperity of the main landholders, tradesmen, clergy, and "wise folk"
**Law:** village or manorial customs; local precedents

## *(Barony or Town) Lore*

**Geography:** location of main churches, monasteries, shops, noble residences, as well as local fords, bridges, and "places of mystery"
**History:** formal history of the locality including foundation, recent wars, and the role played by prominent families
**Politics:** alliances, rivalries, and marriage links among the local gentry
**Personalities:** names, "addresses," and Reputations of nobles and major officials, clergy, and shopkeepers, and any inhabitant with five or more points of True Faith
**Law:** familiarity with local customary law, regulations, or charter rights

## *(County) Lore*

**Geography:** location of castles, key roads, and mountain passes
**History:** origin of the local population, the role played by various barons in recent conflicts, and the formal history of past counts and bishops
**Politics:** alliances, rivalries, and marriage links

among the local baronial families
**Personalities:** names, Reputations, and principal residences of local barons, abbots, archdeacons, and wealthy merchants
**Law:** local practices surrounding the use of high justice

## *(Region, Principality, or Small Kingdom) Lore*

**Geography:** location of towns, pilgrimage sites, major castles, roads, rivers, and forests
**History:** major wars and invasions; formal history of the ruling house
**Politics:** alliances, rivalries, and marriage links among the local titled nobility
**Personalities:** names, Reputations, and principal residences of the bishops, major abbots, and the titled nobility
**Law:** general principles of local tribal law or of the common law of the region

## *(Major Kingdom, or Group of Small Kingdoms) Lore*

**Geography:** location of significant towns, pilgrimage sites, famous castles, Roman roads, navigable rivers, and impassable forests
**History:** major royal wars; formal history of the royal house(s)
**Politics:** alliances, rivalries, and marriage links between local and foreign royal houses
**Personalities:** names, Reputations, and principal residences of major royal officials and high profile members of the royal family (or families)
**Law:** general principles of royal legislation concerning towns and royal fiefs

## *Mythic Europe Lore*

**Geography:** location and names of major towns, mountain ranges, pilgrimage sites, and navigable rivers
**History:** origins of the various kingdoms; significant historical events of general interest; names of ancient conquerors and heroes of the past
**Politics:** alliances, rivalries, and marriage links among the various royal families
**Personalities:** names, Reputations, and principal residences of kings, ruling princes, and archbishops
**Law:** Not applicable. (This falls under the Civil and Canon Law Ability.)

# Area Lore Ease Factors

The more obscure and abstruse the information sought, the higher the ease factor for the Area Lore roll. Here are a few examples:

**Very Easy** (+3): The Reputation of the village reeve
**Average** (+6): The name of the oldest church in town
**Difficult** (+9): A list of all the holders of high justice in a county
**Very Difficult** (+12): The degrees of consanguinity between all the titled nobles of a small kingdom
**Extremely Difficult** (+15): The name of Alexander the Great's mother

# Chapter 5
# Chivalric Combat

## The Battle of Bouvines

The battle of Bouvines will be referred to frequently in chapters 5 and 6 of *Ordo Nobilis*, and is in many ways the archetype for chivalric combat in Mythic Europe. Not only did Bouvines correspond closely to the knightly ideal of what combat "should" be like, it also set the tone of European politics for the remainder of the 13th century. Most of the new optional combat rules presented in this chapter draw heavily, though not exclusively, on the historical experience surrounding this particular battle. To understand why, we offer the following description.

The battle occurred on Sunday, July 27th, 1214. On a hot summer day, the French army, led by King Philip II Augustus, met a mixed force of German, Flemish, and English troops. Philips's strategic objective was to punish and bring back to their regular obedience his nominal vassals, the counts of Flanders and Boulogne, whose disloyalty and "felonious" conduct had forced him to abort a planned invasion of England.

Much of the northern French nobility was either off fighting in the Albigensian crusade or was with Prince Louis (the future Louis VIII) facing King John of England on the Loire. Nonetheless, Philip was able to muster about 1,300 knights, roughly the same number of mounted sergeants, and almost 6,000 footmen drawn mainly from the royalist communes in the northwest of France. At Philip's side were the duke of Burgundy; the counts of Dreux, Auxerre, Soissons, Saint-Pol, Guînes, and Bar; Bishop Philip of Beauvais who, according to French chroniclers, just happened to come onto the scene armed with a mace and a company of knights; and Guérin, the bishop-elect (a knight Templar, not yet consecrated) of Senlis. All these lords led their forces in person. A contingent of knights from Champagne were also present, though without Count Theobald, who was only twelve years old at the time.

The foe was a conglomeration of troops fielded by Philip's enemies and led by the Welf emperor Otto of Brunswick (see page 133). Otto had been persuaded by his uncle, King John of England, to back the count of Flanders, Ferdinand of Portugal, in return for future financial assistance against his German enemies. John was thus the paymaster for the coalition. He was represented on the battlefield by his bastard brother William Longsword, earl of Salisbury, and by Hugh de Boves, a Picard mercenary captain who had fled Philip's justice after killing one of the royal provosts. The count of Flanders was also present as was his ally, the count of Boulogne. Further, the force included a number of German magnates from Saxony and Lorraine: the dukes of Brabant and Limburg, and the counts of Holland, Dortmund, Tecklemburg, Ostemale, and Ramrode. All told, the allied army had about the same number of knights and sergeants as the French, but a considerable advantage in the number of footmen.

Despite the allied numerical advantage, pious Christians could be forgiven for believing that God — or the right, at any rate — was on the side of the French. Otto and his backer John had both been excommunicated by Pope Innocent III in separate disputes over ecclesiastical appointments (though John had since submitted). Innocent had, furthermore, deposed

Otto as emperor and was backing the Hohenstauffen claimant to the German throne, Frederick II, son of the previous Hohenstauffen emperor, Conrad III. Philip thus faced an army led by an excommunicate, a rebel, a murderer, and a bastard. From a moral standpoint, the battle should never have been in doubt, particularly as it was forced on the French king on a Sunday despite the "Truce of God."

Philip's army had been marching through Flanders, opportunistically seizing castles and plundering the countryside, and had camped for the night near Tournai when the presence of the much larger allied army was reported nearby. A sound, if not particularly brilliant, military commander, Philip decided to withdraw the next day to stronger defensive positions nearer Lille. The French army was crossing the Marcq at Bouvines when a scouting party led by the bishop-elect of Senlis and the viscount of Mélun reported the allied army approaching from the south at speed and in battle array.

Otto and his army had camped the previous night near the castle of Montaigne, and having located the French host, were attempting to close and cut off its tail before it could cross the bridge. German scouts had spotted the Oriflamme — the battle-standard of the French king — on the far side, and so reported Philip to be with the bulk of the French forces that had already crossed. In fact, Philip had been overcome by the heat and was resting without his arms and armor under a tree on the near side of the bridge. Philip summoned his council and they resolved to continue the withdrawal. The allies could only ford the nearby Elnon at one point, and the French leaders believed this would give them enough time to execute their retreat.

The Germans made surprisingly good time, however, and were able to form up and advance on the French forces, which were strung out along the road leading to the bridge. The viscount of Mélun's force, which attempted to screen the retreat, was assaulted by the Germans, and being pressed hard, he sent word to Philip warning that his line would soon be overrun. Philip, realizing his army was caught, sent word for the troops on the far side to return, and formed up the forces nearest him south and east of the bridge. The main force of the allied line then hit Philip's positions, driving back and scattering the foot soldiers from the communes of Corbie, Amiens, Arras, Beauvais, and Compiège, and running into Philip's household troops holding the center.

Much to the dismay of the French leaders, the Brabantine footmen were armed with lances and iron hooks specifically designed to drag the heavily armored knights off their horses. Indeed, Philip himself was unhorsed and beset by some twenty sergeants until Peter Tristan, a French knight, leapt off his horse and cleared a way to the king, permitting him to remount. At this point the Oriflamme was escorted across the

## The Truce of God

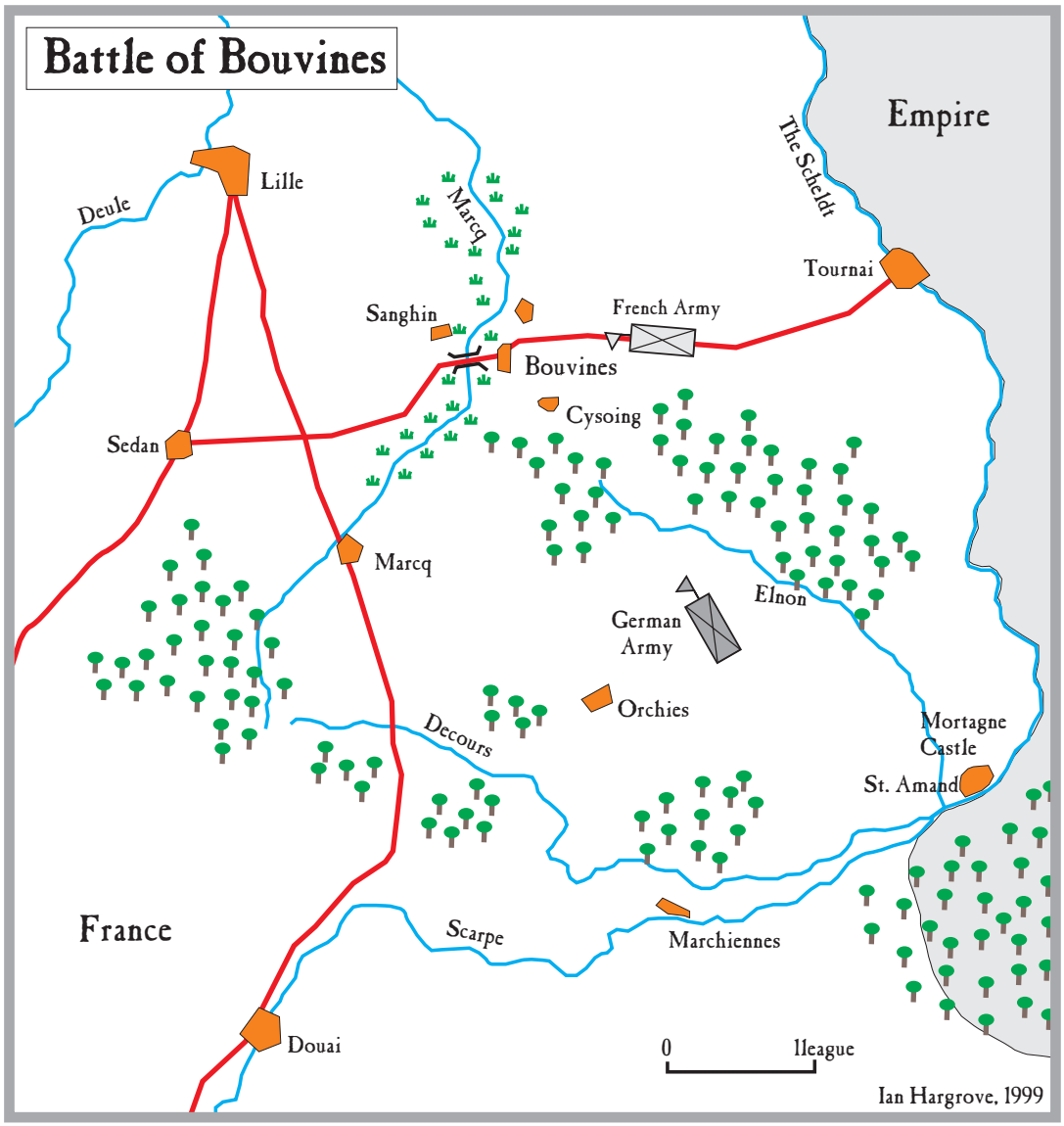
In the 11th century, royal authority in the south of France was minimal. In an effort to address widespread brigandage and endemic local warfare, a synod of local bishops gathered at Elne in 1027 and decreed a formal Truce of God (*Treuga Dei* or *Treva Dei*). The Truce specifically forbade the initiation of any hostilities from Saturday night until dawn on the following Monday. It was later adopted at the synod of Nice in 1041, and extended from Wednesday evening to Monday morning, to the whole periods of Lent and Advent, and to about twenty saints' days. Under the prompting of the Papacy and with royal encouragement, local synods throughout France decreed the Truce in their respective provinces. Flanders adopted it at the synod of Thérouanne in 1063. After some resistance from the German kings, it was extended throughout the Western Empire at the synod of Mainz in 1085, and then to the kingdom of Sicily in 1089. At the Council of Clermont in 1095, the Truce was made binding on all of Western Christendom. Because royal authority in England was usually sufficient to suppress the kind of disorder the Truce was meant to address, it was never explicitly enacted there.

The Truce also forbade the arbitrary killing of non-combatants such as clerics, serfs, merchants, and women. Violators were declared outlaws, and were subject to excommunication and confiscation of their property and fiefs. All law-abiding freemen were to take a regular oath to respect the Truce and to band together against any and all violators. As in the case of much medieval legislation, respect for the Truce is directly proportional to the willingness and ability of the civil and religious authorities to enforce it. The applicability of the Truce in cases of war between kingdoms is questionable. While Otto's "perfidy" may have increased the moral satisfaction the French derived from their victory, it would probably not have become an issue had the allies won the battle.

bridge by Thomas de St. Valéry along with fifty knights and perhaps 2,000 footmen. The French army, seeing their king unharmed and inspired by the Oriflamme, took heart and rallied, driving back the allies and knocking down and smashing the imperial standard — a tall pole surmounted by a golden eagle on a dragon.

Otto's horse was severely wounded in the melee and it turned and ran, carrying the emperor with it before crumbling to its death. Otto was soon re-horsed, but the mishap demoralized his troops. He saw that the battle was lost and so fled, leaving most of his household troops behind. Bit by bit, more of the Germans and their allies ran, leaving only 700 Brabantine footmen to hold out. They formed a tight phalanx and were able to fend off the French knights until de St. Valéry and the 2,000 fresh infantrymen finally overwhelmed them. The French pursuit was called off shortly by Philip because of the onset of dusk, so most of the allied forces were able to escape. About 300 German, Flemish, and English knights were captured, however, as were five counts including the treasonous counts of Flanders and Boulogne, and John's brother William Longsword. On both sides, perhaps a few thousand footmen died, and several thousand more were wounded. But in the entire battle, only two knights are recorded as having been killed, one on each side!

It will perhaps be instructive to see precisely how these two unfortunates lost their lives. When the allies first crashed against the royal line, one of the Flemish knights, Eustace de Malenghin, began to yell in the thick of battle "Death! Death to the French!" thus attracting perhaps too much



attention to himself. He was soon surrounded by a group of French knights, but was only killed when one of his assailants managed to catch his head in an arm lock and pull off his helm. A second knight then plunged a dagger into Eustace's breast through the exposed neck. Later in the battle, a French knight, Stephen de Longchamp, was killed by a dagger stroke that slipped through the eye-slit of his helm. This was the sum total of documented knightly casualties in an intense battle that lasted from noon to dusk, including one hour of pursuit.

# Optional Melee Rules

The standard **Ars Magica** combat rules simulate quick and decisive individual combat based on the Traits and Abilities of the characters while requiring very few die-rolls. It works best when the combatants are well-balanced and the scene can be easily visualized by the players. The following optional rules attempt to build on these principles. They focus on chivalric combat, but can also be used to resolve more traditional encounters without loss of flavor or playability. Troupes are free to pick and choose those options they wish to use, or adopt them wholesale. The new rules do not require significant redesign or adaptation of existing characters. All the characters and combat descriptions in *Ordo Nobilis* have been designed according to these new rules.

## Armor

The most expensive and vital part of a knight's equipment is his armor. By the 13th century, knights are expected to wear as much of the highest quality mail they can afford. The effectiveness and cost of the latest equipment has been rising steadily, though, and many knights' sons, unable to reuse their fathers' obsolete mail,

### Armor Components Chart

| **Head** | **Prot** | **Load** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leather Cap | +1 | –0.5 | Inex | Reinforced or hardened leather covering the crown. |
| Steel Helmet | +2 | –1 | Std | Metal cap covering the crown, possibly with a nasal. |
| Improved Helmet | +3 | –1 | Exp | As above with lower head and cheek protection, –1 Perception. |
| Great Helm | +4 | –1.5 | Exp | Full head coverage including camail to protect neck, –3 Perception. |
| Mail Coif* | +1 | –0.5 | Exp | Hood of interlinked rings, covering all but the face, –1 Perception. |
| **Body** | **Prot** | **Load** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Light Leather | +1 | –1 | Inex | Also includes quilt or fur armor. |
| Heavy Leather | +2 | –1.5 | Inex | Also includes "cuirboulli" (hardened leather) armor. |
| Reinforced Leather | +3 | –1.5 | Std | Leather armor reinforced with bone, horn, or metal rings. |
| Steel Scale | +4 | –2 | Std | Overlapping small metal plates attached to leather backing. |
| Mail | +4 | –1.5 | Exp | Coat of linked, riveted steel rings worn over padded cloth. |
| **Limbs** | **Prot** | **Load** | **Cost** | **Notes** |
| Light Leather | +1 | –1 | Inex | Also includes quilt or fur protection. |
| Heavy Leather | +2 | –1.5 | Inex | Also includes "cuirboulli" protection. |
| Reinforced Leather | +3 | –1.5 | Std | Leather armor reinforced with bone, horn, or metal rings. |
| Steel Scale | +4 | –2 | Std | Overlapping small metal plates attached to leather backing. |
| Mail | +4 | –1.5 | Exp | Sleeves and leggings of steel rings over padded cloth. |
| Steel Cops** | +1 | –0.5 | Exp | Metal joint protection. |
| Mittens** | +1 | –0.5 | Exp | Mail-covered leather gloves, –3 Dexterity for fine manipulation. |

*A mail coif may be worn in addition to any other head protection.
**Steel cops and mittens may be worn over other armor.

find themselves unable to bear the new expense. This is becoming a major problem for lords, who are always anxious to have a regular supply of armored knights on which to call. Previously, they were often able to gift aspiring knights with the necessary kit, but this is becoming increasingly difficult due to the expense of the new armor. After armoring his own sons with the most up-to-date mail, a lord rarely has enough resources to help out his poorer vassals. As a result, a new class of noble warrior is emerging called "squires" (knights in training) to differentiate them from common sergeants. Hitherto they would have been dubbed, but they are now unable to take the final step to knighthood for lack of adequate armor.

Despite its expense, the new reinforced mail is well worth having. Encased in a suit benefitting from the most recent armoring advances and topped with a solid steel helm, a knight is virtually immune to mundane weapons unless somehow tackled and unhorsed. Even when knocked down and rolling on the ground, 13th century knights can be subjected to a heavy barrage of sword and pike thrusts and still manage to get up, fend off their attackers, and remount. Medieval accounts abound of judicial duels which lasted for hours as the knights flailed away at each other, fracturing bones and smashing shields but rarely penetrating their opponents' armor before delivering the final blow.

While undeniably riveting to contemporary observers, such a protracted spectacle would prove a serious drag on most **Ars Magica** adventures. The following options are aimed at highlighting the knight's role as the premier fighting machine of Mythic Europe without unduly prolonging game combat.

## *Head, Body, and Limb Protection*

The modifications in the Armor Components Chart increase the relative protection values of standard as opposed to inexpensive armor, and expensive as opposed to standard armor. They also allow characters to pick and choose between various levels of protection for the head, body, and limbs. The indicated Protection and Load values are added to come up with combined totals.

Existing armor can be improved by layering or using thicker material. In such cases, each +1 to Protection adds –1 to Load. The +4 Quality

## Armor Conversion Chart

The following chart provides a guide for converting armor as described in the **Ars Magica Fourth Edition** (page 171) into its *Ordo Nobilis* equivalents. Note that in *Ordo Nobilis* the Load penalties of armor and weaponry are divided by 3 (rounding down) for combat roll purposes (as described under "Combat Encumbrance," page 84).

| **Fourth Edition Armor Type** | ***Ordo Nobilis* Equivalent** | **New Prot** | **New Load** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quilted/Fur Hauberk | Light Leather Body | +1 | –1 |
| Quilted/Fur, Half | Light Leather Body + Cap | +2 | –1.5 |
| Quilted/Fur, Full | Light Leather Body + Limbs + Cap | +3 | –2.5 |
| Heavy Leather Hauberk | Heavy Leather Body | +2 | –1.5 |
| Heavy Leather, Half | Heavy Leather Body + Cap | +3 | –2 |
| Heavy Leather, Full | Heavy Leather Body + Limbs + Cap | +5 | –3.5 |
| Reinforced Leather Hauberk | Reinforced Leather Body | +3 | –1.5 |
| Reinforced Leather, Half | Reinforced Leather Body + Cap | +4 | –2 |
| Reinforced Leather, Full | Reinforced Leather Body + Limbs + Cap | +7 | –3.5 |
| Leather Scale Hauberk | Reinforced Leather Body + Cap | +4 | –2 |
| Leather Scale, Half | Reinforced Leather Body + Helm | +5 | –2.5 |
| Leather Scale, Full | Reinforced Leather Body + Limbs + Helm | +8 | –4 |
| Steel Scale Mail Hauberk | Steel Scale Body + Helm | +6 | –3 |
| Steel Scale Mail, Half | Steel Scale Body + Improved Helm | +7 | –3 |
| Steel Scale Mail, Full | Steel Scale Body + Limbs + Improved Helm | +11 | –5 |
| Chain Mail Hauberk | Mail Body + Helm | +6 | –2.5 |
| Chain Mail, Half | Mail Body + Improved Helm + Coif | +8 | –3 |
| Chain Mail, Full | Mail Body + Limbs + Great Helm + Coif | +13 | –5 |

Armaments Virtue increases the Protection of each armor component (head, body, and limbs) by +1, for a total of +3 for a full suit (instead of +2). Such quality armor components can be worn separately or together, and can be purchased individually or acquired as treasure.

## *Combat Encumbrance*

Divide any cumulative encumbrance penalties by three for attack or defense purposes — this is a character's Combat Encumbrance. In *all* other cases (jumping, running, spell casting, or checking for fatigue loss, for example, even when those activities take place during a melee) the encumbrance penalties remain unchanged.

## Fatigue

Instead of rolling for fatigue every round, characters make Stamina-based Athletics stress rolls against an ease factor of 9+ each time they roll a natural 0 for attack or defense. (Note that this may be in addition to a normal botch result). If the Athletics roll fails, the character automatically loses a Fatigue level. If the roll fails by more than 3, another Fatigue level is lost; if by more than 6, yet another, and so on. If the Athletics roll is also botched, subtract an additional Fatigue level per severity of the botch.

*Exempli Gratia: Philip de Mérançon is holding a narrow staircase against besieging men-at-arms who have broken into his guard tower. His heavy armor protects him, and the upward clockwise twist of the staircase gives him a distinct advantage over his foes. Nonetheless, there are too many of them for him to clear the landing and attempt to re-barricade the door. He has sent for help, and in the meanwhile must fend off the attackers alone.*

*After a dozen rounds, he rolls a 0 for combat. The storyguide rules that Philip must roll two botch dice because of the tricky staircase.*

## Exempli Gratia: Armoring a Knight

In an effort to make good the embarrassing debacle of the Fifth Crusade, King Andrew of Hungary is again offering new estates and privileges to those members of the nobility willing to assume knightly status. Few Magyar nobles can afford the heavy armor worn by Western knights, but Thomas, a wealthy *ispán* who has so far kept aloof of the new emphasis on heavy cavalry, is sufficiently tempted by these inducements to equip his son Stephen in the latest French style.

Though only nineteen and a bit shorter than average, Stephen shows every sign of becoming a natural athlete, and rides as if born to the saddle. A French-speaking Italian armorer called in by his father fits Stephen out with a mail hauberk which hangs down just below the knees and has a short split in the back (Protection +4). The suit is heavy, but the weight is finely distributed on Stephen's impressively broad shoulders (Load –1.5). His arms and legs are carefully measured, and mail sleeves and leggings are attached with a few adjustments (Protection +4, Load –1.5). Steel cops are added to his knees and elbows (Protection +1, Load –0.5). A pair of mail-covered leather gauntlets completes his lower body armor (Protection +1, Load –0.5).

The armorer then pulls a mail hood over Stephen's head (Protection +1, Load –0.5). Stephen finds the coif uncomfortable, but the armorer assures him he will get used to it, though he may suffer some fine hearing loss while wearing it. Next the armorer places a great helm over the coif (Protection +4, Load –1.5) and straps it firmly under Stephen's chin. The helm is solid except for two eye-slits and a few air holes. Stephen finds that he now has very little peripheral vision. The armorer's voice sounds oddly muffled, though it is still understandable. (Stephen has been taking French lessons from one of his mother's handmaidens).

The armorer has Stephen turn around and walk a few paces, then offers the young man a sword and kite shield, holds out a shield of his own, and invites Stephen to take a few practice swings. Stephen finds the armor heavy but manageable. It provides a total Protection of +15 with a Load of –6. The Load rises to –7.5 with the sword (–0.5) and kite shield (–1). Given Stephen's Strength of +2, this gives him an Encumbrance of 5 (rounded down) for most activities. The armor, shield, and weapons only count as an Encumbrance of 2 (7.5 divided by 3, rounded down) for combat rolls, however, and for these purposes Stephen is effectively unencumbered thanks to his +2 Strength.

Noticing that the fittings are rather ragged, Stephen asks the armorer if they can be trimmed. The armorer laughs. The suit Stephen is wearing, while quite serviceable, is only for fitting, he says. Stephen's father has ordered the best for an *ispán*'s son, and the real suit will consist of triple linked mail with a ribbed helm (Quality Armaments with +1 each to head, body, and limbs for total Protection of +18!). It will still take a few more weeks to finish.

*Neither of these produces a botch, but Philip must still roll for Fatigue loss. Philip has a Stamina of +1 and an Athletics skill of 2, but an Encumbrance of 4, for a net modifier of –1. He rolls an 8 for a total of 7, and so loses only one Fatigue level.*

*Nine rounds later, though still unwounded, Philip rolls another 0 on his combat roll. Again he escapes without a botch and rolls a 1 for Fatigue loss. As this is a stress roll, Philip rolls again. He rolls a 4, which doubled is 8, for another modified total of 7. He loses another Fatigue level, and is now at –1 on future rolls because of accumulated fatigue. Philip fights on, sweat drenching his padding and running into his eyes. After five more rounds, he yet again rolls a 0 for combat. Again he is fortunate enough not to botch, but his Fatigue roll comes up 0. Because of accumulated fatigue, Philip's modified roll is now –2. He has thus failed his Fatigue roll by 11 for a theoretical loss of loss of four Fatigue levels. Exhausted, Philip slips into unconsciousness, but not before he finally hears his men charging down the staircase to relieve him.*

# Wounds

The following damage rules accelerate combat while increasing the variety of outcomes.

## *Soak*

Troupes wishing to accelerate combat even more may consider applying damage as soon as it exceeds Soak, instead of after it exceeds Soak by five. This modification should *only* be used for melee combat, and works best when heavily armored opponents are facing off against one another. It is especially deadly to unarmored fighters.

Damage from spells or from falling, for example, or against non-defending targets such as doors, should never use this rule, and should be applied normally. Also note that this option will greatly increase the number of Grievous Wounds (described on the next page) inflicted in a given combat.

## *Grievous Wounds*

A human or animal target losing half (rounded down) of its initial complement of Body levels as a result of a single blow suffers a Grievous Wound. So, for example, a Size 0 or +1 character losing three Body levels would suffer a Grievous Wound, while a Size –1 character would only need to lose two Body levels to suffer a Grievous Wound.

The effects of a Grievous Wound vary according to the location of the wound. Determine the location by rolling a simple die, then apply the relevant effects as described.

| Die | Wound Location |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | Left leg |
| 3-4 | Right leg |
| 5-6 | Body |
| 7 | Sword arm |
| 8 | Off arm (if off arm shielded, sword arm) |
| 9-10 | Head |

**Limb:** Any Grievous Wound inflicted to a limb maims it. If one Body level more than the number required to inflict a Grievous Wound is dealt (so, for example, four Body levels for a victim of Size 0), the limb is permanently maimed. If two Body levels more than the number required to inflict a Grievous Wound are dealt, the limb is destroyed — severed, completely mangled, or what have you. On the positive side (!), characters sustaining Grievous Wounds to their limbs only actually lose two Body levels. However, they also lose one Fatigue level (or, if there are none left, one Body level) per round until stabilized. A limb that is maimed (but not permanently maimed or destroyed) recovers its full mobility when the character is fully healed — by whatever method — of all lost Body levels.

**Body:** Grievous Wounds inflicted to a character's body simply give the victim a –1 modifier to rolls on the Wound Recovery Table.

**Head:** Any character who sustains a Grievous Wound to the head is at –3 to rolls for consciousness until fully healed. Additionally, if one Body level more than the number required to inflict a Grievous Wound is dealt (so, for example, four Body levels for a victim of Size 0), the victim also gains the –1 Disfigured Flaw.

Finally, any character suffering a Grievous Wound, regardless of its location, must make a Stamina-based simple roll, modified by any Fatigue or Body penalties (and the –3 penalty if the Grievous Wound is to the head) against an ease factor of 3+, or fall disabled. Even if still conscious (storyguide's discretion), a disabled character can only speak or pray, and is unable to shout or take any other action until the end of the combat.

Some players will notice that combatants can suffer Grievous Wounds to locations that are unprotected by armor, but still have gained the benefits of their armor's Protection. Simply put, this "bug" exists because otherwise the location of each hit would have to be determined before Soak could be applied, and because a separate Soak would have to be figured for each possible body location. This would bog combat down with extra rolls and statistics that — in the majority of cases — would wind up being irrelevant. For most players, the inconsistency can simply be ignored and (if it makes any difference) explained away by considering that armor in other locations affects the overall fighting tactics of both combatants.

## Magical Armor

Helms, body armor, and armored sleeves or leggings can each be enchanted separately to provide additional overall magical Soak protection, however, characters wearing more than one such item only benefit for the highest single magical Soak enhancement of a piece of armor they are wearing. Secondary pieces of magical armor (excluding very small pieces, like mittens and cops) can still be effective, though, in protecting against the effects of Grievous Wounds. Each point of magical Soak protection for an affected area increases the number of Body levels that must be lost before a character suffers a Grievous Wound in that location, and correspondingly reduces the effects of Grievous Wounds to the head or limbs.

*Exempli Gratia: Sir Edward has a magical helm that provides him with an additional Protection of +2, and magical leggings that provide an additional Protection of +1. Only the +2 provided by the helm is added to his total Soak.*

*During a fight, Sir Edward receives a serious blow causing nineteen points of damage even after Soak, for four Body levels. The storyguide rolls a 4 for location, indicating a Grievous Wound to the right leg. Sir Edward still suffers the Grievous Wound (his magical Protection of +1 only increases the number of Body levels that would cause a Grievous Wound from three to four, and he has sustained four).*

*The storyguide applies the effects of a Grievous Wound, and this is where his magical leggings come in handy. Since the number of Body levels required to give Edward a Grievous Wound is four rather than three, his leg is simply maimed, rather than permanently maimed.*

*Sir Edward falls to the ground, but should be able to recover the use of his leg, assuming he survives the engagement.*

# Toppling Attacks

Knights and other heavily armored characters are largely immune to conventional sword blows, but can still be killed by even "ignoble" weapons such as knives and daggers if unhorsed, tripped, or otherwise knocked down and immobilized. In fact, knocking an opponent down is a standard tactic in a duel. Some battlefield polearms are even specifically designed with this objective in mind.

The following rule options provide mechanics for the strategy of toppling armored opponents, and for fighting very large creatures that can tumble even the most skilled and well-armored fighters with a single blow.

## *Unarmed Toppling Attacks*

Unarmed characters attacking armored foes use the normal rules for doing so (see ArM4, page 169), using the Throw and Tackle brawling maneuvers to knock their opponents down. The Combat Encumbrance of an armored target, however, reduces the sum he uses to "Soak" these attacks. That is, his Combat Encumbrance is subtracted from the Soak Replacement formula found on the Brawling Maneuvers Table (ArM4, page 169).

*Exempli Gratia: Lucien, a wiry knight caught without his armor, faces off against Charles, an armored thug who has interrupted Lucien's stroll about his manor. Knowing the small knife he normally carries is about as likely to kill Charles as a lightning strike, Lucien elects to attempt to knock Charles down in order to flee the scene in search of help. He is successful in closing to Touch range during the Initiative segment of combat, and declares that he will forego his knife and attempt a Throw Brawling Maneuver rather than a regular attack.*

*Lucien's attack score is 3 (his Dex) + 5 (his Brawling skill) + 0 (the Attack Bonus for fist/kick) + 0 (his Encumbrance) = 8*

*Charles's defense score is 0 (his Qik) + 8 (his Defense Bonus for the longsword/kite shield combination he is wielding) – 0 (his Size) – 2 (his Combat Encumbrance; his Protection is 12 and his Strength is +2) = 6*

*Lucien rolls a seven, for an Attack Total of 15. Charles rolls a two, for a Defense Total of 8. The difference is 7. Charles's Replacement Soak against a Throw is –3 [–1 (Dex) + 0 (Size) – 2 (Combat Encumbrance)]. This means Lucien's damage total is 10 [7 (difference between Attack Total and Defense Total) – (–3) (Replacement Soak)], enough to inflict the two Body levels he needs to make his Throw successful. Charles topples to the ground.*

## *Armed Toppling Attacks*

Using this option, an armed character may use the Throw and Tackle Brawling Maneuvers (see ArM4, page 169) just as an unarmed character may. When doing so, he determines his Attack Total (with his weaponry) and compares it to his opponent's Defense Total as normal.

Rather than opposing this difference with his regular Soak, the defender must use the Replacement Soak from the Brawling Maneuvers Table (ArM4, page 169). Furthermore, this Replacement Soak is penalized by the defender's Combat Encumbrance (as described above under "Unarmed Toppling Attacks").

As with the unarmed versions of the Throw and Tackle maneuvers, the first one (for a Tackle) or two (for a Throw) Body levels inflicted in the attack generate the Damage Replacement effect rather than causing any actual Body levels of damage. Any additional Wound levels are less effective than they would otherwise be. These levels are applied alternatively to Fatigue and Body until none are left.

*Exempli Gratia: Lucien flees, but because he has Pathetic Perception (the –5 Flaw), the storyguide rules that Lucien trips over a piece of fallen wood that lays in his path, allowing Charles to catch up. Lucien regains his feet, electing to heft the irritating log as a makeshift weapon, just as Charles closes with him once more.*

*Lucien declares that he will attack with the cudgel, but attempt an armed Throw maneuver rather than simply trying to do damage. The combatants engage one another at Reach range by mutual agreement.*

*Lucien's attack score is 3 (his Dex) + 5 (his Single Weapon skill) + 1 (the attack bonus the storyguide assigns for his makeshift weapon) + 0 (his Encumbrance) = 9.*

*Charles's defense score is still 6 (see above).*

*Lucien rolls a 1 followed by an 8 (a roll of 16), for an Attack Total of 25. Charles rolls a 4, for a Defense Total of 10. The difference is 15. Charles's Replacement Soak against a Throw is still –3 (see above), so Lucien scores 18 points. The first 10 points cause Charles to be toppled. The remaining 8 points alternately cause Fatigue and Body loss per five points, in this case, the loss of one Fatigue level for Charles.*

*Lucien flees once more.*

## *Mounted Foes*

A defender using a high-cantled saddle, which is typical combat riding gear for knights, may add three to his Soak Replacement against any attempt to unhorse him by means of the Throws and Tackles (armed or unarmed) described above.

A character who is unhorsed must make a Stamina-based Riding stress roll against an ease factor of 6+ to avoid sustaining a Body level of damage from the fall. A character who botches this roll may have caught a foot in the stirrups and may suffer additional damage from being dragged by the horse.

## *Toppled Foes*

Attacking a character who is laying on the ground gets the attacker a +3 bonus for high ground, at the very least. Storyguides may want to increase this bonus, depending on the circumstances. Getting up from the ground is normally an automatic maneuver, but someone who is getting up may not attack, may not engage in an all out defense, and may only defend himself at –6.

## *Chinks in Armor*

Heavily-armored figures are killed more often by thrusts that pierce their armor though its chinks than by repeated pummeling. This is generally the point of knocking an armored foe to the ground — to make it more easy to push a dagger or sword through an eye slit or other weak point.

A character attacking a knocked-down or otherwise immobilized foe may attempt to strike specifically for chinks in his opponent's armor. After comparing his Attack Total to his opponent's Defense Total, but before applying his opponent's Soak to the difference, the chink-seeking attacker may make a Dexterity-based Weapon stress roll against an ease factor of his opponent's Protection + 3. If successful, the defender receives no benefit from his armor's Protection against that attack.

## *Monstrous Bashes*

Oversized types — including horses, monsters, and even exceptionally large people — are often able to overbear their opponents in addition to causing regular damage in combat because of their size advantage. Any combatant whose Size is two or more points greater than his opponent may choose to inflict an Armed Throw (see "Armed Toppling Attacks," above) simultaneously with a standard attack where it would make sense. (A giant's club or horse's kick would make sense; a giant serpent's poison spew would probably not.)

To do this, simply use the difference between the attacker's Attack Total and the Defender's Defense Total twice. The first time, determine damage normally. The second time, determine damage as for an Armed Toppling Attack. Note that this may result in extra Fatigue and Body damage over and above the damage inflicted by the first comparison. Such is the advantage of greater size.

At the storyguide's option, characters with Mythic Strength and similar supernatural powers (mighty faerie dwarves, for example) may also use this rule regardless of the Size difference between attacker and defender.

# Group Initiative

Forces that are trained together and are well-led tend to perform better than groups of individual fighters who are left to fend for themselves. Competent leadership can permit the execution of more effective tactics, and can ensure that pressure on a line is met appropriately and that individual fighters do not become cut off and isolated from their comrades. Group Initiative is aimed at simulating these factors.

Members of a predefined team of fighters may opt to roll for Initiative as a group rather than as individuals. A team consists of a group of fighters with an agreed-upon leader who have previously trained together. When rolling for Initiative as a team, all members have an Initiative score equal to the leader's die roll + the leader's Leadership + the lowest Initiative modifier of any of the team members. If the Initiative roll is botched, the team loses cohesion and must be reconstituted during the battle (see below).

Individuals may freely detach themselves from a team, and those not within Reach of a comrade are assumed to have done so. A leader who is not personally involved in hand-to-hand fighting may attempt to reconstitute a team or reincorporate any willing "free floaters" once per round by making a Presence-based Leadership stress roll of 9+. A botch indicates a permanent failure which lasts until the end of the combat.

# Weapon Skills

Fighting from horseback is not as simple as fighting on foot, and requires specialized training. Conversely, while fighting with a "single weapon" is different from fighting with "shield and weapon," the two are not normally taught separately in the 13th century. Finally, using two weapons in combat is rare and exceptional in Mythic Europe, and is normally only resorted to when one of the two weapons can be thrown, or when the fighter has no shield with which to defend himself. The following optional rules simulate these factors and simplify the Weapon Statistics table (ArM4, pages 172-3).

## *Fighting from Horseback*

Using this optional rule, characters fighting from horseback use the lower of their Riding or Weapon Skill when calculating Attack Scores and Defense Scores.

## *Single Weapon and Shield*

The Skills "Single Weapon" and "Shield and Weapon" should, under this optional rule, be combined into a single new Skill, "Single Weapon and Shield." Single Weapon and Shield may be used in the place of either of the Skills it replaces. For existing characters, add the experience totals for both Skills to determine the new Skill level.

## *Two Weapons Skill*

Using this optional rule, the Two Weapons Skill operates differently depending on whether or not the character has the +1 Ambidextrous Virtue. Instead of using the Two Weapons section of the Weapons Statistics table, a character first decides, for a given attack, which of the two weapons will be used for offense and which will be used for defense. His weapon statistics are then as follows:

**Normal Characters**

Initiative: The best Initiative score of the two weapons being used.

Attack Bonus: The Attack Bonus of the offensive weapon + 1.

Defense Bonus: The Defense score of the defensive weapon.

Damage Bonus: The Damage Bonus of the offensive weapon.

**Ambidextrous Characters**

Initiative: The best Initiative score of the two weapons being used.

Attack Bonus: The best Attack Bonus of the two weapons + 2.

Defense Bonus: The best Defense Bonus of the two weapons.

Damage Bonus: The best Damage Bonus of the two weapons.

If, when adopting an all out attack (ArM4, page 170) while using two weapons, a character's Attack Total exceeds his opponent's Defense Total by three or more, the second weapon's Damage Bonus is also added to total damage. Characters using all out defense add +6 to their Defense Scores and may not attack, as per the standard rules.

# Horses

There are four general types of horses in Mythic Europe based on their training, strength, demeanor, and function. These are the destrier, the palfrey, the roncin, and the sommier. A wealthy knight usually travels with a string of horses including his destrier for fighting, two or more palfreys for riding, and a number of sommiers to carry baggage.

The most expensive type of horse is the destrier, or warhorse. Destriers are normally only ridden in battle, in training, in exercise, or on ceremonial occasions. Instead, they are usually led by the knight's valet or squire at his master's right hand. A destrier is normally a male horse (though it may be gelded), and thus tends to be of larger size (+1 to Strength) and fiery disposition. It tends to be loyal and obedient to its usual handlers, but may shy from or attack strangers. In battle it often kicks or bites nearby footmen or rival horses, causing its rider to make riding checks against an ease factor of 3+.

The palfrey is the usual riding horse of the medieval nobility. While not as valuable as destriers, palfreys are still expensive due to careful training and breeding. They have calmer dispositions and are trained as pacers to provide a smooth and comfortable ride. The roncin (or rouncey) is the common riding horse. A reliable mount, it is often ridden by common folk and has neither the breeding nor the fine appearance of a destrier or palfrey. Older roncins, or those that have not taken well to riding, are used as pack horses and are called sommiers. Mules and donkeys can also be used in this role.

Horses, including destriers, are relatively fragile and their mortality rate in battle is high. Not only does this represent a major expense for a knight, but the loss of his horse can leave him isolated and exposed on the battle field. In the 13th century, destriers are often fitted with head and chest protection, and with padded and leather barding to protect them from harassing missile fire.

Statistics for each of the four types of horses can be found in Appendix I.

## Equine Characteristics

Because horses are bred to certain characteristics, unknown horses can be assumed to conform to the standard for their breed. In some cases, such as when a character is shopping for a fine horse or when he has stolen a random one from a stable and is being pursued, it may be appropriate to determine the specific characteristics of particular horse. This can be done by rolling an unmodified stress die for each characteristic (Cunning, Perception, Strength, Stamina, Dexterity, and Quickness). If the roll is a 9, increase the relevant characteristic by one above the standard for that type of horse. If the roll is 10+, add two. If the roll is only a 3 or less, subtract one. If a 0 is rolled, subtract an additional point (for a total of –2) and roll three botch dice. If a single botch is rolled, subtract yet another characteristic point, if a double botch subtract two, if a triple botch subtract three.

While a good tryout, using the Ride Skill, or a careful examination, using Animal Handling or Animal Ken, will normally reveal the characteristics of a horse without need for a roll, a quick general assessment can be made based on the horse's appearance. An Intelligence-based Ride, Animal Handling, or Animal Ken stress roll of 9+ is sufficient for a character to accurately determine a horse's characteristics based on a quick look.

# Breeds

Horses, like all domesticated animals, are bred to bring out desirable qualities and traits. In game terms, members of a given breed have characteristic ratings slightly different from the "average" horse. Every part of Mythic Europe has its own preferred breeds with distinctive colorings, features, and tempers, but some breeds particularly stand out.

The most famous is the Arabian, bred largely in Spain and North Africa for its speed and

stamina. It is slightly smaller than the average horse and so is typically less strong (subtract one from Strength). This is well compensated for, however, by gains in stamina, agility, and speed (add one to Stamina, Dexterity, and Quickness). Closely related to the Arabian is the Castilian and the Gascon. Castilains are particularly robust and dexterous (add one to Stamina and Dexterity). The Gascon, on the other hand, is bred for size and strength (add one to Strength and Stamina). Similar, if less famous, breeds exist elsewhere in Mythic Europe.

One rather unusual breed is the Steppe horse, sometimes derisively called a "Steppe pony." While smaller than most breeds (subtract one from Strength), it is nonetheless a true horse, and the preferred mount of Cumans and other Steppe nomads because of its stamina and ability to survive cold weather and poor forage (add one to Stamina). When traveling in Winter or desert conditions, steppe horses count the terrain as one step less difficult than usual (see ArM4, page 192). For example, travel through a "Hard" winter landscape counts as "Medium" travel for these horses.

## *Horse Armor*

By the early 13th century, horse armor is available, though not universally used, and is considered expensive equipment. The following table lists typical types of horse armor.

| **Type of Armor** | **Protection** | **Load** |
|---|---|---|
| Half Leather | 3 | –4 |
| Full Leather | 5 | –7 |
| Half Chain or Lamellar | 6 | –8 |
| Full Chain or Lamellar | 9 | –14 |
| Felt Full Armor | 4 | –5 |
| Chamfron* | 2 | –3 |

*Chamfron can be worn with other types of armor.

Lamellar, which consists of small plates laced together, was used by Byzantine heavy cavalry until about the end of the 11th century. Felt armor is used by Steppe peoples like the Cumans, or by Steppe auxiliaries to Byzantine armies (generically referred to as Turcopoles). Chamfron consists of plates fastened to the horse's face, throat, and chest to protect it from spears and lances.

It is possible to layer armor for horses, and this is commonly done. Chain or lamellar can be worn over leather or felt. When armor is layered, simply add the Load values to determine total Load. Soak for layered armor is equal to the combined Soak values –2. A chamfron may always be added to other forms of armor without layering penalties. When encumbering their horses with loads of armor, characters should keep in mind the amount of time involved in armoring a horse, and the fatigue penalties suffered by heavily loaded horses in long-distance travel.

## *Effects of Encumbrance*

Like people, horses can only carry so much, and the more they carry, the slower they travel. The Encumbrance score for a horse is its Strength + Size + (Load / 4). (Round "Load / 4" down.) Load is calculated as it is for humans, based on equipment carried, plus the weight of the rider and his equipment.

## *Maximum Load*

There is a limit to how much a creature can carry for any length of time. If overloaded, a horse will stagger and eventually collapse, possibly breaking a leg in the process. The maximum load a horse can bear is (Str + 3) x (Str + 3) x 1.5, rounded up. As an optional rule, this formula can also be applied to characters and other creatures, representing how much can be carried over a distance, as opposed to lifted or held for a short time.

### Horse Loads

| **Encumbering Condition** | **Load** |
|---|---|
| Rider of Size –2 | –7 |
| Rider of Size –1 | –10 |
| Rider of Size 0 | –15 |
| Rider of Size +1 | –25 |
| Rider of Size +2 | –40 |
| Standard riding gear | –2 |
| Knightly riding gear* | –4 |
| Full saddle bags (each) | –2 |

*Including a high-backed saddle, but not weapons and armor.

## *Traveling on Horseback*

When travelling, a heavily encumbered horse will have a more difficult time than an unencumbered one. When using the travel rules (ArM4, page 192), count the day's travel as one step more difficult (from Light to Medium, for example) for each 10% of Maximum Load, or part thereof, a horse is carrying over 50%.

# Tournaments

In the 13th century, tournaments are much like real warfare. Jousts, while not unheard of, are rather uncommon, and are still normally considered a form of practice. Most tournaments consist essentially of a melee — a clash between dozens or, at major events, even hundreds of knights and retainers. Tournaments are as popular with spectators as participants, and many are planned months in advance.

The adoption of closed helms has made the identification of armored knights more difficult. Many knights have taken to wearing colored and patterned surcoats, and emblazoning fanciful designs and pictures on their shields so they can be recognized more easily. All this adds to the pageantry of the event.

## William Marshal

William Marshal, father of the current (1220) earl of Pembroke, was, in his younger years, probably the most famous and successful tournament knight in Mythic Europe. Starting from a relatively humble beginning as the younger son of a landed knight, he eventually rose to become Lord Marshal of England and ultimately, at the start of Henry III's minority, regent.

Shortly after being knighted, William threw himself into a desperate battle. Though he performed heroically, he lost his destrier and tore his chain mail. Fortunately, he recouped his losses almost immediately thereafter, at his first tournament at Le Mans in 1167. Borrowing a horse that no one wanted from his sponsor, he managed to win four horses for himself that day, along with several more for his squire and baggage, and several sets of arms and armor. This sudden windfall, and the later successes he enjoyed as head of the *mesnie* (household) of Prince Henry of England, convinced him to take to the tournament circuit when he temporarily lost Henry's favor. In one ten-month period, he and a companion defeated 103 knights, taking their arms, armor, and mounts.

Tournaments may be popular with young knights, but the loss of life, resulting feuds, and incidental property damage associated with tourneys have led to generalized condemnations by the Church. Some bishops deny Christian burials to those killed on the tournament field. Kings and other great magnates, while more tolerant of the practice, often reserve the right to licence tournaments, specifying beforehand both the date and location at which they are to be held. Such restrictions are partly to maintain order and minimize risk to life and property, but also reflect the concern that armed gatherings at a tournament field can provide cover for baronial rebellions or conspiracies.

## Tourney Fields

Despite efforts to restrict them, tournaments still occur spontaneously or with little notice in any convenient place such as a town square or at a bridge. Many such tournaments have no clearly specified boundaries, and might be vaguely defined as taking place anywhere between two neighboring towns, with knights fighting wherever they can find their opponents. Even in such tourneys, however, "refuges" are normally agreed upon and defined. These are safe areas to which knights can retire to recuperate and store their "captured" opponents.

In response to the increasing popularity of the tourney as a spectator sport, and in order to minimize complaints from landholders and peasants (who are rarely pleased to see dozens of riders trampling their fields), planned events usually take place within better-defined boundaries. Typically, a large field or similar open area is selected, or a town square enclosed, and the combatants required to remain within the specified bounds. Usually two "lists" are marked out as refuges at opposite ends of the field. These lists are often cluttered with the tents and pavilions of the participants, and with booths set up by food and drink vendors, as well as smiths and armorers. Many of the great summer fairs attract tournaments, both of the planned and unplanned variety.

## Organization and Rules of the Tournament

Usually the knights split into two teams, often on the basis of friendship, language, or nationality. There is no requirement for this, however, as the emphasis is placed on individual rather than team performance. Though some effort is usually made to balance the teams, it is not unusual for one side to be greatly outnumbered. Often a number of knights form independent groupings or teams within teams, fighting as they see fit and even changing sides in mid-battle. Far from being considered unfair, such tactics are often applauded as shrewd, and add an element of uncertainty and excitement to the proceedings. As the melee ends when one side is cleared from the field, switching sides is often an acceptable way of prolonging the fun.

Though the use of specialized blunted weapons is increasing, most tournaments are still fought with regular weapons. Injuries and even fatalities are common. Many melees degenerate into all-too-serious affairs, particularly when bitter personal rivalries or old disputes are at play. In principle, a knight who is disarmed or knocked to the ground is given the option of surrendering, but in the confusion of the melee there are many opportunities for skulduggery and low blows. The marshals who police the proceedings are unlikely to intervene unless such acts become blatant, or the fight threatens to spill out into the lists or among the spectators. The main objective, however, is not to maim or kill one's opponents, but to subdue and capture as many of them as possible.

### Blunted Weapons

Most tourneys are fought using normal weapons, but it is becoming increasingly frequent to insist on the use of blunted weapons, or even weapons specifically designed for practice and tourneys. This reduces the chance of inflicting mortal wounds. Lances might have their steel tips removed or even be fitted with a "crown" of three stubby points. Wooden or whalebone weapons might also be used, as might forged swords that have never been given an edge. When damage in excess of the target's Soak is suffered from such weapons, the wound levels are deducted alternatingly first from Fatigue and then from Body, unless the target's combat roll is a botch, in which case all wound levels are applied to Body alone.

Once an opponent has surrendered, the victorious knight, along with his companions or retainers, must drag the prisoner to the victor's list. While a prisoner is not normally allowed to fight his way free, there is no requirement that he cooperate with his captors. Knights are commonly rescued by their allies before they can be taken to their opponents' refuge.

The tourney field is not restricted to knights. Retainers are free to enter the field to assist their masters to refuge if wounded or winded, to bring fresh mounts, to drag prisoners back to the lists, or even to rescue their lords if they have been captured. Anyone found on the field is fair game, however, and retainers normally try to stay clear of active enemy knights. Nonetheless, battles between bands of retainers attempting to drag prisoners to the lists and those attempting to rescue them are common and often a source of comic relief to the spectators.

## Rewards

Prizes are often awarded to those who particularly distinguish themselves on the tournament field. These are provided by the host or organizer of the tourney, and typically consist of jeweled weapons, armor, riding gear, jewelry, fine horses, falcons, and the like. The winners are normally chosen directly by the host, or by judges selected by him, or sometimes even by acclamation. Remarkable feats of prowess or chivalry are likely to be noted, often yielding or reinforcing favorable (or, in the case of dastardly deeds, unfavorable) Reputations.

The main incentive for participating in tourneys, however, is the opportunity to win the mount, armor, and gear of defeated opponents. While there is no limit to how much these can be ransomed for (other than the ultimate resale value of the items), generous knights normally ask their prisoners to name their own ransoms. Poor knights may name low figures, while wealthy knights may inflate their value and prestige by naming high ransoms, sometimes even exceeding the actual value of the goods. In either case, the decision of whether to accept the named sum rests with the victor, as he is free to sell the captured goods for the highest price he can get to whomever will buy them. In the more organized tourneys, professional armorers are normally on hand to convert captured items into ready cash. Note that only mounts and equip-

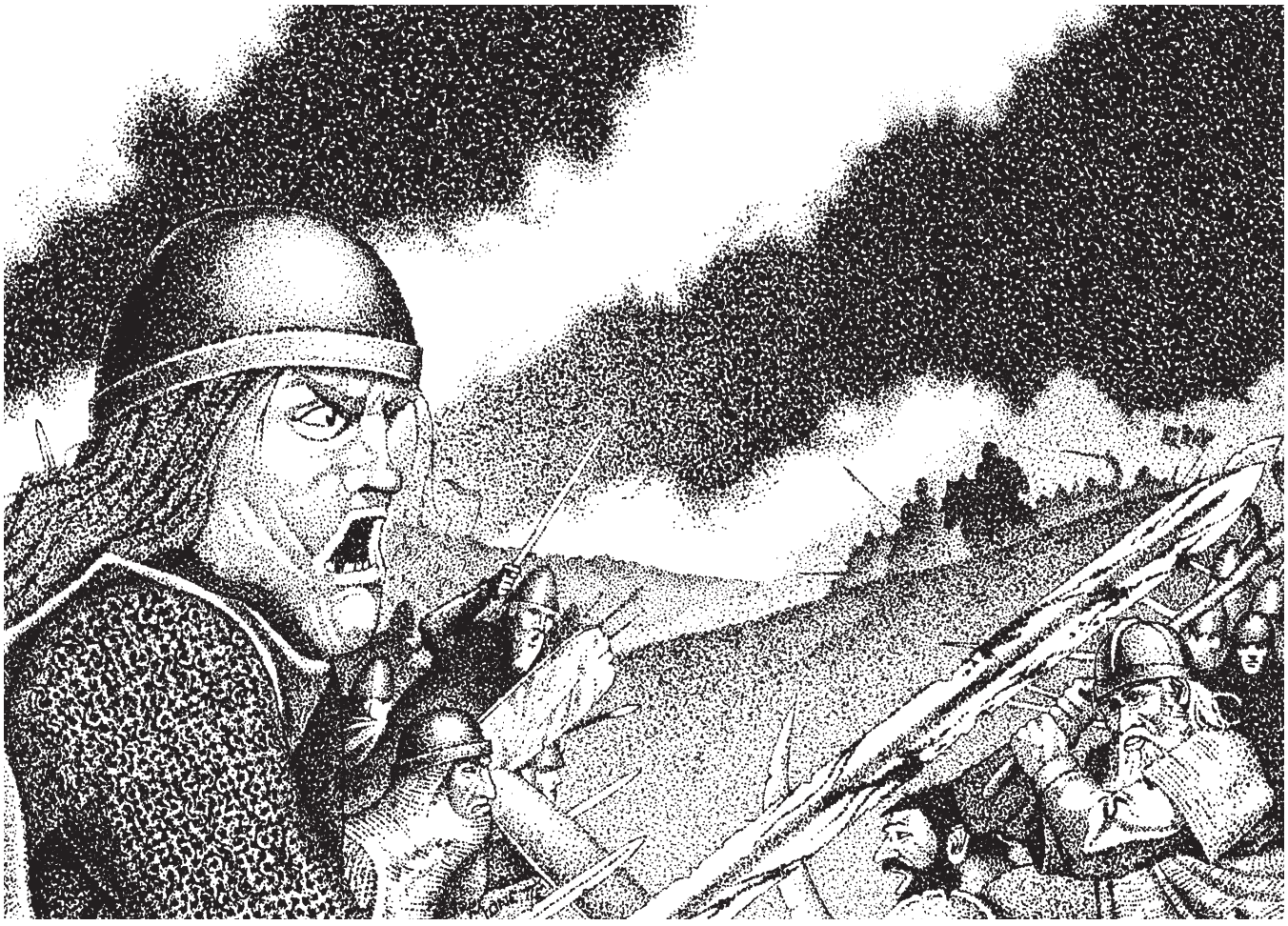
ment actually used in the melee can be claimed from a prisoner. It is also poor manners to pointedly ask a prisoner to pay less than the ransomed goods are worth, as this could be interpreted as a deliberate and insulting slight.

If using the optional money rules described in Chapter 2, any ransoms collected by player characters are added to their treasure totals. Characters unable to pay their own ransoms from treasure will have to negotiate loans or lose their property. Exceptionally, a player character knight with the +3 Wealthy Virtue who does not adventure for a couple of years can probably make good the loss without going into debt, but magical weapons, quality armaments, and exceptional horses cannot be regained in this way. Any knight found to have been using magical weapons in a melee is not likely to be able to ransom his property for anything less than its full worth. Such weapons are designed to kill, after all, and their wielders can expect no generosity.

As a rough guideline, a destrier is worth about 30£, a palfrey 15£, a roncin 5£, and a sommier 3£. A knight's expensive armor and gear is generally worth about 30£. Captured mounts and equipment can normally be resold for about two thirds of their value.

# Mass Combat

Most wars are internal rather than between kingdoms, and tend to center around disputed inheritances and elections. Few kings are sufficiently powerful to prevent their greater vassals from feuding, and conflicts over feudal rights and obligations are frequent. But set field battles in the 13th century are uncommon. Most knights will never participate in one, and knights who have participated in two or more are considered veterans. Nonetheless, while most medieval military activity consists of raids, ambushes, and sieges, the field battle is considered the highest form of warfare. The stakes are high and the



results are usually decisive, as a defeated army normally breaks up into stragglers and its component parts. Even if the losing commanders can escape death or capture, the war is effectively lost if they cannot raise a fresh force.

When war breaks out, the two parties must first decide whether to take the field or remain in their fortifications. If neither side takes the offensive, a truce lasting a specified number of months or years is often successfully negotiated. This allows both sides to stand down and return to normal peace-time activities without loss of face, or risk to life and limb. The dispute may be submitted to mediation or arbitration, or may simply be allowed to lapse.

Normally, however, the stronger or more aggrieved party takes the fight to the enemy, looting, pillaging, and attacking his castles. The defender may elect to stay walled up in his fortifications, aiming to raise a comparable army from his friends and allies, or hoping the attacker will run out of food or money. The latter is a rather frequent occurrence since pillage rarely pays for itself from the attacking commander's perspective, and feudal tours of duty in excess of forty days are usually at the lord's, rather than his vassals', expense. It does happen, however, that the defender becomes sufficiently irked by the invader's depredations, confident enough of his own forces, or concerned at the possible loss of key fortifications, to take the field and meet the attacker head-on.

Because of poor roads, lack of maps, and incompetent scouting, it is often difficult for two armies to find each other and come to grips. Often a site for battle is arranged by informal negotiation. Once contact has been made, however, combat is virtually inevitable because a retreating army risks losing cohesion and is subject to mass flight, giving the enemy a decisive victory without having to land a blow.

## Field Battles

The **Ars Magica** melee combat system is designed to deal with small-scale engagements. Only a madman would use it to represent larger battles involving thousands (or even dozens) of fighters. The following rules for mass combat are aimed at addressing this problem, while leaving opportunities for player characters to influence the outcome.

Most army leaders have only a rough idea of the quality and number of footmen under their command, and accord them little value except as

## Designing Non-Standard Units

Non-standard medieval troops can be easily quantified as lance equivalents. The value of an individual fighting man is determined by multiplying the values for armor, weaponry, and training from the tables below and doubling the result in the case of cavalry. The only exception is that fighting men of any sort always have a minimum value of 3, a value of 1 being reserved for members of unarmed mobs.

| **Armor** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| Inexpensive | 1 |
| Standard | 3 |
| Expensive | 6 |

| **Weaponry** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| Inexpensive | 1 |
| Standard | 2 |
| Expensive | 4 |

| **Level of Training** | **Value** |
|---|---|
| Raw (Skill level 0-2) | 1 |
| Average (Skill level 3-4) | 2 |
| Veteran (Skill level 5+) | 4 |

*Exempli Gratia: A feudal levy with inexpensive armor, inexpensive weaponry, and marginal training has a value of one (1 x 1 x 1), which is raised to the minimum of three. A man-at-arms with standard armor, standard weaponry, and average training has a value of twelve (3 x 2 x 2). A sergeant (effectively a man-at-arms on horseback) has a value of 24 (3 x 2 x 2, doubled), and a squire with expensive weaponry has a value of 48 (3 x 4 x 2, doubled). Finally, an experienced knight on horseback with expensive armor and weapons has a value of 192 (6 x 4 x 4, doubled).*

*An average chivalric lance, consisting of a knight, a squire, and two sergeants, has a total value of 288. Non-standard fighters of a similar type are grouped into lance equivalents totaling approximately 300 points. A group of six veteran crossbow men wearing standard armor, for example, would form one lance equivalent [(3 x 4 x 4) x 6 = 288]. Similarly, six light Steppe cavalrymen with standard armor, composite bows, and average training would also count as a lance [(3 x 4 x 2, doubled) x 6 = 288].*

foragers and incendiaries, or during sieges. They focus instead on the number of heavily armored cavalrymen (especially knights) they have with them. The unit of men most commonly referred to is the lance, which consists of a knight, a squire (a less experienced and less well-armored fighter), and two sergeants (normally non-noble fighters trained to fight from horseback with standard weapons and armor). For purposes of simplicity, other feudal troops can be described as men-at-arms (trained footmen with standard weapons and armor) and feudal levies (untrained fighters with inexpensive weapons and minimal armor). These can be divided into lance equivalents consisting of 25 men-at-arms or 100 levies. An army's effective fighting strength is determined by its total number of lance equivalents.

## *Adjudicating Field Battles: The Simple Method*

The results of a field battle can be determined in one of two ways. The simple method is for the commander of each army to make an Intelligence-based Strategy stress roll, adding in the modifiers described below. (Strategy is a new Casual Knowledge; see the insert below.)

**Larger Force**: The larger force's commander adds a bonus based on the extent to which he commands more lance equivelants than his opponent does. Determine the ratio of the outnumbering force's lance equivalents to the outnumbered force's lance equivelants. Round towards 1:1. For example, the commander of a 60-lance force faces off against the commander of a 40-lance force. The ratio is 3:2. The former commander receives a +5 bonus. The Larger Force modifier, obviously, only applies to the stronger force. Note that at no point are the *size in persons* of the opposing forces compared — only the *number of lance equivalents* are used.

| Ratio | Bonus |
|---|---|
| 1:1 | +1 |
| 5:4 | +3 |
| 3:2 | +5 |
| 2:1 | +7 |
| 3:1 | +9 |
| 4:1 | +11 |

**Terrain:** Each commander adds the terrain bonuses that apply to his force. Use common sense.

| Terrain | Bonus |
|---|---|
| Defending a ford | +1 |
| Defending a bridge | +3 |
| Defending high ground | +1 |
| Defending a pass | +5 |
| Anchored flank* | +1 |

*An anchored flank is one that cannot be turned (in a tactical sense) because of impassible terrain such as a thick forest, a river, or an impenetrable swamp.

**Army Morale:** Each commander adds the bonuses that apply to his force, using common sense.

| Condition | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Fatigued | –1 |
| Previously victorious | +1 |
| Previously defeated | –1 |
| Home ground | +1 |
| Well-fed and rested | +1 |
| Just cause* | +1 |

*Just cause is enjoyed by crusaders, or those fighting excommunicates or opportunistic invaders.

At the storyguide's discretion, additional modifiers can be applied stemming from the commanders' Virtues and Flaws, such as Inspirational, the Gift, Evil Eye, Hunchback, Judged Unfairly, Tainted with Evil, or Blatant Gift.

A botch indicates a major unforeseeable disaster such as the commander being grievously wounded by a stray arrow, a critical sub-commander defecting to the other side, or an unsuspected enemy force appearing unanticipated (by either side) on an exposed flank. Such disasters normally lead to complete routs.

Each side suffers battle casualties, in terms of a percentage of its own force, equal to twice the unmodified roll of its opponent. In addition, the victor of the battle inflicts ten times the difference between the modified rolls, as a percentage of the larger force, as rout casualties against the loser. If the contest is a tie, night falls before the battle can be decided. If neither side withdraws under cover of darkness, battle may be rejoined the next day.

## *Adjudicating Field Battles: The Complex Method*

If one of the characters is a key sub-commander, or if the storyguide wishes to play out the battle a bit more, a more complex method of adjudication involves dividing each of the two armies into three battles: a right wing, a center, and a left wing. Each commander decides secretly on a division of his force into the three battles, with the proviso that one battle may not be more than twice the size (in lance equivalents) of any other. The field battle is then resolved as three separate contests with each sub-commander (the commander-in-chief acting as sub-commander for the center) making a Presence-based Leadership stress roll, with the same modifiers as above, but also adding 1/3 of the overall commander's Strategy score (rounded up).

Whichever side wins two of the three contests holds the field. Battlefield casualties are determined as per the simple method on the previous page. The loser suffers rout casualties equal to ten times the combined die-roll differentials from the three contests as a percentage of the larger total force. If the combined differentials favor the loser (for example through winning one of the contests decisively, but losing the other two marginally), there are no rout casualties.

## Vegetius

Vegetius was a late 4th century Roman writer whose treatise on the art of war (alternatively called *Epitoma de Re Militari*, or *Institutorum Rei Militaris*) is considered *the* authority on military matters in the West. (The Emperor Maurice's *Strategikon* enjoys similar status in the Greek-speaking Byzantine East.) Vegetius' work is about 40,000 words long in Latin — its first translation in the French vernacular will occur in 1284 — and consists of five books divided into 134 chapters including prologues and epilogues. Book I deals with recruitment and training, Book II with military units and formations, Book III with the management of armies in the field, Book IV with fortifications, and Book V with naval warfare.

Vegetius never claimed, however, to have done more than extract and illustrate key principles drawn from earlier writers, whom he quotes freely. His work, though very popular with the medieval nobility, is not an Authority in the **Ars Magica** sense. It can be treated, however, as a *summa* on Strategy with a level and quality of 7. Each of Vegetius' five books represents a different specialty in raising troops, maneuvers, logistics, sieges, or naval combat.

## Strategy

**Strategy:** A new Casual Knowledge representing the ability to lead an army in battle, making the most of one's own force's strengths while exploiting terrain and the weaknesses of the enemy army. *Specialties: raising troops, maneuvers, logistics, sieges, naval combat.* (Intelligence)

## *Casualties*

Once the results of a battle have been determined, each side allocates casualties amongst its lance equivalents. In principle, these casualties should be allocated proportionally, but commanders may wish to favor their elite troops at the expense of their levies. A commander may thus choose to suffer fewer casualties from one unit type, at the cost of twice that number from another unit type.

Sometimes it is important to know exactly what happens to those troops who are considered casualties of battle. Are they captured? Killed outright? Maimed? Do they successfully flee the scene? Battle casualties are always considered slain on the field of battle. Although not all are actually killed, those who are maimed or otherwise injured might as well be dead for all the good they'll do as soldiers. Rout casualties, on the other hand, are assigned whatever status the victorious commander chooses: captured, slain, or allowed to escape. Captured forces must be fed, which can present difficulty, but simply slaying a defeated army is an atrocity sure to attract the attention of demons and to imperil one's soul. Those forces that escape are of no use to the other side during the current campaign, though it will be possible for the loser to re-recruit them for future military undertakings.

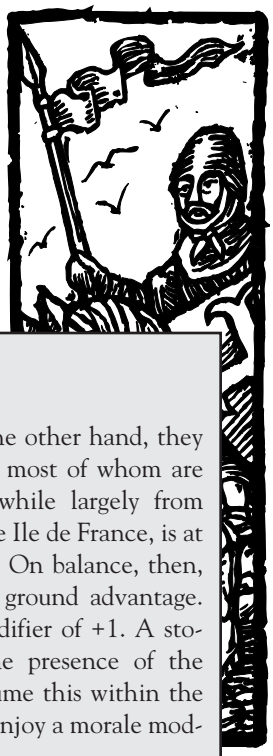
Nightfall after a battle can be particularly gruesome, as camp followers comb through the dead, despatching the wounded or incapacitated, and despoiling the bodies. Demons, lured by the horror and blood letting, often roam amongst them to ensure that as many souls die unshriven as possible. Any battlefield where the dead have been left to rot or have their bones picked by ravens will usually acquire an Infernal aura.

## *Characters on the Battlefield*

Except insofar as they contribute directly to the strength of their armies (possibly by as much

as a lance or two), or influence contest die rolls through magic, assassination, or other intrigue (which should normally be the subject of roleplaying), characters will usually have no impact on the outcome of a field battle. Instead, the storyguide should ask the player characters if they intend to be cowardly, brave, or heroic.

If the characters choose to avoid any serious fighting they succeed in doing so, but their cowardice is noted by friend and foe alike. Cowards acquire or strengthen appropriate Reputations and may be faced with disciplinary proceedings once the battle is over. If the characters choose to be brave, the storyguide should confront them with a group of foes of roughly comparable strength and roleplay a melee. The object is not to slay all the enemies but to perform admirably. It is up to the storyguide to decide whether a



## Exempli Gratia: Mass Combat

The battle of Bouvines can be used to demonstrate how the mass combat resolution system works. Philip is an experienced, sound, and cautious military commander. He is also thoughtful and deliberate, making few mistakes, and exploiting those of his enemies to the fullest. Otto, on the other hand, is impulsive and easily swayed. French chroniclers describe him as "stupid," which may be a bit harsh, but he certainly pales in comparison to his polymath rival and successor, Frederick II. We will assign Philip Intelligence +1 and Strategy 3. Otto has Intelligence 0 and Strategy 1.

Though the allies may appear to have an important numerical advantage over the French at first glance, this is not born out once the forces have been converted into lance equivalents. Both sides have an estimated 2,600 knights and sergeants, or 650 lances. The imbalance in infantry matters little. Two thousand of the French footmen can probably be counted as men-at-arms, leaving 4,000 feudal levies. This produces 80 lance equivalents in men-at-arms, and 40 in levies for a total of 770 lance equivalents (650 + 80 + 40). A larger proportion of the allied footmen are trained mercenaries, so we will assume that 4,000 are men-at-arms and 5,000 are feudal levies. The allies thus have a total force of 860 lance equivalents (650 + 160 + 50). The allies can only muster a simple majority of less than 5:4, and so must settle for a Larger Force modifier of +1.

Philip's original intention had been to withdraw across the Marcq and wait for the allied army to attack. Philip would then have benefitted from defending a bridge (+3) and from having both his flanks anchored by swampy river banks (+1 and +1) for a total modifier of +5. It is highly unlikely Otto would have risked such unfavorable odds, however, and the allied army would probably have avoided battle and moved south to threaten Philip's holdings in Picardy. As it happened, Philip was unable to cross the bridge successfully, and the battle was fought on the near side with neither army enjoying a terrain modifier.

As the battle started around noon with neither side having marched far from camp or made previous contact, both sides count as rested and well-fed (+1). Determination of who is operating on "home ground" is more complicated. Strictly speaking, this can only be applied to the Flemings, who are all in the imperial camp. On the other hand, they form only a portion of the allied force, most of whom are clearly foreigners. The French army, while largely from Picardy, Champagne, Normandy, and the Ile de France, is at least operating within its own kingdom. On balance, then, neither side enjoys a significant home ground advantage. The French can claim a Just Cause modifier of +1. A storyguide might also grant a +1 for the presence of the Oriflamme, but decides instead to subsume this within the Just Cause advantage. Thus the French enjoy a morale modifier of +2 and the allies +1.

This produces a total French modifier of +6 [1 (Intelligence) + 3 (Strategy) + 2 (morale)] and a total allied modifier of +3 [0 (Intelligence) + 1 (Strategy) + 1 (larger force) +1 (morale)]. Both sides roll a 3 on their respective stress dice. This produces a modified French roll of 9 [6 (the total French modifier) + 3 (the French roll)] versus a modified allied roll of 6 [3 (the total allied modifier) + 3 (the allied roll)]. First, each side inflicts 6% [3 (the unmodified rolls) x 2] battle casualties on each other. Then, as the modified French roll (9) is greater than the modified allied roll (6), The French force holds the field and inflicts an additional 30% [10 x (the difference between the modified rolls)] in rout casualties on the fleeing allies.

This would normally lead to French losses of 21 chivalric lances, 5 men-at-arms lance equivalents, and 2 levy lance equivalents, but the French prefer to keep their more mobile elite troops (fewer mouths to feed!) and opt to lose an additional 42 (2 x 21) infantry lance equivalents to avoid the chivalric losses. Since there are only 38 more levy lance equivalents, 4 more men-at-arms lance equivalents are lost for a total of 9 men-at-arms and 40 levy lance equivalent casualties.

The allies make similar calculations. They would normally have lost 216 chivalric lances, 58 men-at-arms and 18 levy lance equivalents, but also opt to save their elite troops. Unfortunately the remaining 102 men-at-arms and 32 levy lance equivalents can only soak up 67 chivalric lance casualties, leaving 149. Ignoring the sergeants and counting squires as knights, this corresponds quite closely to the 300 allied knights (2 per lance) captured at Bouvines.

player character's performance is worthy of favorable or unfavorable notice. If the player characters choose to be heroic, they find themselves deep in the midst of the enemy or bearing the brunt of an all-out attack against a vulnerable point in their line. The storyguide should confront them with a force approximately twice their strength, possibly even surrounding them and cutting off their retreat. Whatever the outcome, the characters' heroics will be noticed, albeit possibly posthumously.

Non-player characters wounded in battlefield melees must make bravery rolls, withdrawing if they fail or surrendering if flight is impossible. Player characters may withdraw from the melee if they have had enough and can successfully rout. A fleeing or surrendering character on either side is always replaced by a fresh non-player combatant. Thus, a melee will not end until all the player characters have withdrawn or have been killed, incapacitated, or captured. There is no dishonor in a tactical withdrawal, as retreating characters are assumed to be resting or engaging in another part of the battle. The melee merely represents a snapshot of the battle as a whole, in which the characters can be exposed to danger, take valuable prisoners, or be captured themselves.

## Adjudicating Small Battles

Characters will sometimes be involved in engagements that involve fewer than three lances on each side. Battles on this scale are too small for the mass combat rules and yet too cumbersome to resolve through conventional melee combat. One option would be to compute the strength of the two forces directly rather than as lance equivalents, using the table for non-standard units and keeping in mind that the minimum value for an armed fighter (as opposed to an angry villager or a member of a disorganized mob) is 3. The enemy force should be divided into three equal "battles." The friendly force, on the other hand, should be divided into two equal "battles" with a third one consisting exclusively of the player characters and their immediate companions. If the characters hold their ground and win their part of the engagement using the melee combat rules, their force is assumed to have won one of the three battles, the other two being resolved through the mass combat rules. If both the other battles are lost, and the characters have only suffered light casualties, they may choose to stand heroically and fight again against a full strength enemy battle. If the characters win this second engagement,

## Ransoms

It has been a growing practice since the 12th century to ransom noble prisoners taken in battle. Unlike tournament ransoms, there is no limit on how much a captor can demand from a prisoner of war. The sums involved normally amount to ten or more years' income. The effects can be ruinous, not just for the knight concerned, but also for his direct vassals, as they can be legally tallied for one year's income to pay their lord's ransom (though not those of his sons or brothers).

Under customary law, a ransom is a legally binding contract. Once a prisoner has agreed to pay the sum demanded, he may be released to gather the necessary funds, though he might be required to offer up hostages (often his wife or children) as proof of his good faith. If a prisoner proves recalcitrant he can be chained, fettered, and thrown into a dungeon, though not actually tortured. Prisoners and hostages are maintained at their own expense, as their captors are not required to provide more than the necessities of life. Most prisoners come to terms reasonably quickly.

According to customary law, not everyone can charge a ransom. Only knights and above can demand ransoms of captured knights, and only titled nobles of other titled nobles. Thus a knight capturing a count will normally surrender his prisoner to his lord or overlord, receiving a pension or other reward in compensation. Mere commoners cannot charge ransoms, and are themselves not worth ransoming. This adds a bitter touch of class-war to any fight involving the two, as neither has any incentive to capture the other as a prisoner.

In the event a paroled prisoner is unable or unwilling to pay a ransom debt, his former captor can resort to the rather extreme measure of "dishonoring" him. This consists of hanging the defaulter upside down in effigy from local town gates or from the doors of churches, preferably as close to his home castle or manor as possible. Ideally, the effigy should be nailed to the defaulter's own door. The results can be devastating. A "dishonored" knight is effectively cut off from any credit, and his existing creditors press that much harder. (Who would want to lend money to a knight who cannot afford his own ransom?) He also acquires a bad Reputation as a "Dishonorable Debtor." The strength and extent of this Reputation depends on how persistently and how widely his effigy is posted.

the battle is still lost, but they have successfully covered the retreat of their comrades, who are then spared rout casualties.

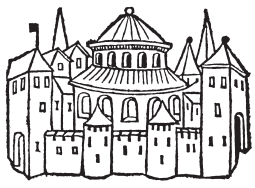
## Battlefield Magic

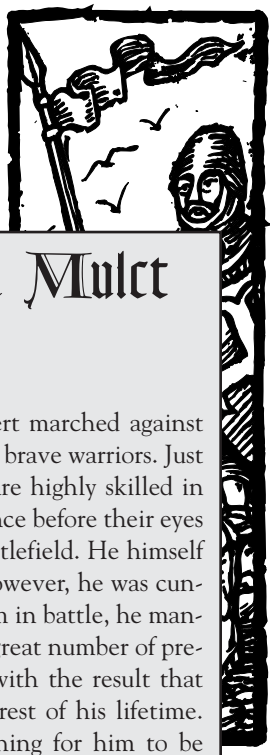
Magic on the battlefield can pose unsuspected risks to death-dealing magi. Second Sight is probably the most common supernatural Virtue in Mythic Europe, so some of the enemy may be able to spot magi even when invisible. Magi should also be wary of those with True Faith or bearing holy relics, as they may prove to be immune to spells. Some powerful devices, such as the Oriflamme (see page119) can affect or negate magic, sending a flying magus hurtling to an early demise. Even subtle forms of magic, such as Mentem spells, can prove of little use once a fight is engaged, as even commanders frequently lose precise control of their troops. How these factors might affect a mage's efforts is up to the storyguide to decide. Spell casting during a battle should be roleplayed, and magi should be particularly wary of botches, as these can often prove fatal given the swirling chaos found on the medieval battlefield.

# Castles

Castles are an integral feature of Mythic Europe, and medieval Christendom would be a very different place without them. Unlike a walled medieval town or purely military Byzantine garrison, a castle is normally part fortress and part residence — the seat of a baron's power where his granaries, arsenal, and treasury are kept. The castle is where the baron holds court, dispenses justice, and entertains his guests.

Household knights and men-at-arms provide basic defense and are housed either within the castle or in the village that almost inevitably develops in the shadow of the castle walls. Besides the permanent garrison, a baron's vassals serve in turn or offer substitutes. This habit is swiftly giving way, however, to the payment of scutage ("shield" money). In times of peace, the payments go to fattening the baron's treasury. In less settled times, the funds are used to pay for mercenaries, many of whom turn out to be the baron's own scutage-paying vassals.





## The Huns Defeat and Mulct the Franks

Once again the Huns tried to invade Gaul. Sigibert marched against them with his army, taking with him a large force of brave warriors. Just as they were about to join battle, the Huns, who are highly skilled in necromancy, made a number of phantom figures dance before their eyes and so beat them easily. Sigibert's army fled the battlefield. He himself was surrounded by the Huns and made prisoner. However, he was cunning and astute, and, though he could not beat them in battle, he managed to suborn them later on by bribery. He gave a great number of presents to their King and made a treaty with him, with the result that there was peace between the two peoples for the rest of his lifetime. This was greatly to his credit, rather than something for him to be ashamed of. The King of the Huns was called the Khan. All the rulers of the Huns are given this title.

— From Gregory of Tours' *History of the Franks*

## A Warning from the Primus of House Flambeau

Influencing a battle with magic is simple, and it is both impossible and needless to list the permutations for you, newly-gauntleted and thus full members of our house.

But magic on the battlefield poses its own risks. *Ball of Abysmal Flame*, *Incantation of Lighting*, *Earth Shock*, *The Earth Split Asunder,* and similar mighty enchantments terrorize friendly as well as hostile forces, often leading to unpredictable results. Overt use of magic on the battlefield can also draw the ire of the Dominion, and heightens mundane hostility towards all whom they suspect of being magi or their associates. These things provoke inconvenient quaesitorial investigations leading to renunciation and dishonor. Field battles, by their very nature, attract the attention of the Higher (or Lower) powers, and even the most powerful archmage may find himself laid low by divine wrath, or dragged gleefully to the infernal pits by the powerful and bloodthirsty demons who are known to frequent scenes of carnage.

If I would leave you with but one reminder, it is this: Too often we have forgotten that our goal must be to destroy our foes rather than increase their number. To the powers of destruction and consumption you have mastered, add the art of subtlety, lest your exuberance consume yourselves and your sodales to the detriment of both your Order and your house.

# Types of Castles

While each castle is unique, castle designs can be grouped by theme. With each type, a balance must be maintained between the strength of the fortifications and the incorporation of living and storage facilities. Extensive walls and battlements must be manned to protect against assault, but large garrisons consume more supplies than small ones and are thus more vulnerable to sieges.

## *The Motte and Bailey*

The simplest and most primitive form of castle is the motte and bailey. It consists of a hillock (motte) surmounted by a wooden palisade enclosing an open space (bailey) containing the lord's great hall and other buildings. If the bailey is unusually large or the nearby village very small, all the castle's dependents and livestock might live or be penned within. A moat is usually dug around the base of the hill and the earth used to steepen or strengthen the hillsides. The moat is sometimes dry, but may be filled with water from a nearby slow-moving stream (fast flowing water tends to erode the base of the motte).

## *The Keep*

A keep — essentially a large stone tower — represents the next step up from the motte and bailey. Older keeps tend to be squat and rectangular, while more recent ones are of increasing height, usually round, though sometimes polygonal in design (particularly in Greece and southern Italy). While the rectangular shape is simpler and more efficient for the layout of rooms and storage, right-angled walls are more vulnerable to mining and siege weaponry.

Many of the storage and housing facilities otherwise found scattered around a bailey are included within the keep. The ground floor often has neither doors nor windows, and is devoted entirely to storage. The great hall, entered by way of an external staircase, then occupies the floor above. In smaller keeps, floors are connected by retractable ladders. In some of the larger keeps, internal staircases are often circular, linking the lower floors with the living quarters above, and winding clockwise from the bottom to facilitate defense of the upper levels. Because of their enormous weight, keeps are normally built on smoothed and paved bedrock.

## *The Shell Keep*

The shell keep can in some ways be seen as the opposite of a keep. It consists of a circular or oval stone wall surrounding living quarters and storage areas which are most often made of wood. These interior buildings, which often include kitchens, stables, kennels, hen houses, dovecotes, mews, and sometimes even a forge, are normally built against the inside of the wall, leaving an open bailey. The bailey courtyard is often used for weapons practice, but may also include herb gardens and livestock pens.

The gates in the wall are normally flanked by guard towers, and additional towers may also be built along the wall to provide rallying and strengthened defense points. The stronger and more elaborate the wall and wall towers, the more likely they are to be built on bedrock. In a sense, a fortified town can be considered a giant shell keep, or a walled castle if it contains a keep.

# Manor Houses

The manor house is the lord's residence and the focal point of the manorial demesne. Normally, however, it is not inhabited by the lord himself. Lords often hold several estates and have a wide choice of where to live. A given manor house is usually occupied by the lord's bailiff, often called a reeve or a steward, who is actually responsible for the management of the estate. The bailiff is sometimes a knight, more often a squire or sergeant, or sometimes only a privileged serf. If the lord, his guests, or members of his immediate family visit the manor, the bailiff and his family are expected to vacate the best quarters and find lodgings elsewhere, sometimes in the presbytery if there is one. Because of these occasional visits, the bailiff is also responsible for ensuring that decent bedding and tableware are always on hand.

Because manor houses serve essentially administrative and residential rather than military purposes, they are not normally fortified, though they may have reinforced doors and defendable windows to discourage assaults by common brigands. Manor houses are almost invariably built of wood, and can range in opulence from a well-maintained hut to a palatial royal hunting lodge, depending on the wealth of the estate, the prosperity of the lord, or the frequency of his visits. Few manors can resist determined assault by as many as thirty men-at-arms, and any combat involving characters attacking or defending a manor house should be played out normally.

## *The Walled Castle*

The walled castle is usually a combination of keep and shell keep, with more of the buildings in the bailey being built of stone. Often the keep is built sheer against the inner wall, reinforcing it against possible attack. The inner walls of some of the greater castles are sometimes raised to great heights and surrounded by one or more concentric curtain walls, each with its own gates and towers. These outer walls are built so they can be dominated by the next most inner wall, preventing a captured outer wall from being used against the defenders. The spaces between walls — outer baileys — may also contain living quarters and storage areas. In some cases the extra protection provided by the curtain walls makes the inner keep unnecessary, and it is torn down and cannibalized to make more efficient use of space. Most castles, in fact, are not static but continually undergo a process of mutation and strengthening in response to the changing needs and means of their owners.

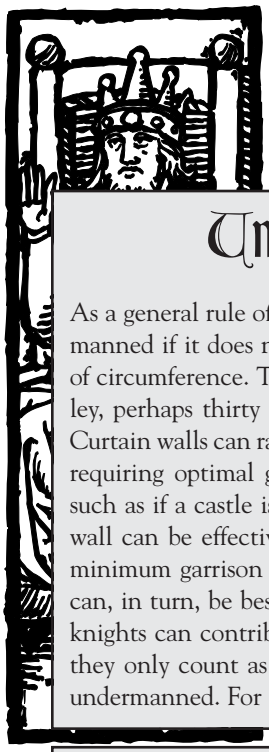
# Taking Castles

Castles are normally taken in one of four ways: subterfuge, negotiation, famine, or by storm.

Subterfuge includes surprise, trickery, and treachery. Attempts at subterfuge should be role-played, with the storyguide acting as arbiter of what will and will not work, depending on what he knows of the circumstances.

Negotiation can be initiated by either side, and is normally conducted in public before the defenders and attackers. As with attempts at subterfuge, when player characters are involved negotiation should be an opportunity for role-playing rather than die rolling. Terms might include guarantees for the life, liberty, and property of the defenders and their families; a truce; or even monetary compensation. Needless to say, it is easier to secure a castle's surrender if it is undermanned, short of food, under bombardment, or its lord is absent. In the latter case, the lord's reputation and the defending commander's loyalty may become critical factors. Sometimes the defenders will agree to surrender if they are not relieved within a set period of time. They may even be allowed to send a messenger to an absent lord to seek permission or instructions. Fraternization between besieged and besieger is not uncommon. It is also a recognized means of intelligence-gathering, though it increases the risk of subterfuge.

Reducing a fortress through famine is extremely expensive as the besieging army must be fed and paid, and is always at risk of attack from a relieving force. While the besiegers may, for a while, be able to forage in the surrounding countryside, the peasants are likely to soon flee with whatever they can carry. A besieging army is also subject to epidemics stemming from unsanitary conditions and improvised shelter. Plagues besetting beseigers are normally viewed as a judgement from God against them. A well-stocked and defended castle can hold out for months — even a year or more — in far more comfortable and sanitary conditions, though there is always a chance its grain supplies will spoil before the siege is lifted. The exact length a beseiged garrison can hold out is determined by the storyguide — who should not, of course, tell the beseigers in advance — depending on the stores and conditions inside the fortress.



Few besieging armies have the leisure and resources to wait for hunger to do its work, and the besiegers often make one or more attempts to storm the fortifications to test the defenders. The game mechanics for taking a fortification are similar to those for a field battle, but with several important differences. The lance equivalent strength of the defenders is tripled for purposes of determining the Larger Force ratio unless the castle is undermanned, in which case it is doubled instead. As horses are not a factor in siege combat, knights and sergeants no longer count as mounted warriors, and their combat effectiveness is thus halved. Also, the defenders benefit from the fortification modifiers described below instead of the terrain modifiers. Finally, to successfully storm a fortification, the attacker's modified die roll must exceed that of the defender by six or more. If, on the other hand, the attacker loses the contest by six or more, the besieging army loses heart and no further attempts to storm the fortifications can be made. If the contest is being resolved according to the alternative "three battles" method of adjudication, the attacking army must win all three engagements (though not by six or more), and is demoralized if it loses all three.

## Undermanned Castles

As a general rule of thumb, a wall or tower should be considered undermanned if it does not have at least seven defenders for every ten paces of circumference. This would mean about fifty men for a motte and bailey, perhaps thirty men for a small keep, or sixty men for a large one. Curtain walls can range from seventy paces in length to over a thousand, requiring optimal garrisons of fifty to 700 men. In exceptional cases, such as if a castle is built on a steep spur, only a very narrow stretch of wall can be effectively stormed. Storyguides should feel free to reduce minimum garrison sizes accordingly, keeping in mind that such castles can, in turn, be besieged by very small forces. Note that while armored knights can contribute heavily to the Lance Ratio of a besieged castle, they only count as individual men for determining whether a castle is undermanned. For this one purpose, any armed combatant will do.

## Storming a Castle

Taking a castle by assault is no easy task. Moats have to be filled in or crossed while the attackers are exposed to enemy archery. Gates have to be beaten in. Walls have to be mined or scaled, and battlements taken and cleared. And the whole process must be repeated if the defenders can retreat to an inner ring of fortifications.

A number of techniques and devices exist to facilitate these tasks. The most common method is to build large scaling ladders that three men can climb abreast. If these can be placed along a stretch of wall, the defenders can be overcome by sheer numbers. Mobile wooden towers can also be rolled against the battlements. Mounds of earth can be built against the walls under cover of darkness. Heavy stones and incendiary loads can be tossed into the bailey by heavy trebuchets, destroying supplies and living quarters, and otherwise making the garrison's life miserable. Gates can be forced in by the slow, rhythmic battering of a heavy steel-headed rams. If these methods don't work, the very rock on which the walls stand can be mined in the hope creating a breach that can then be stormed.

For each method of attack, however, there is also a corresponding defense. Siege engines are fragile and usually combustible, and they can sometimes be lassoed by metal chains and torn down once they get near the battlements. The loss of one or more siege engines could be the outcome of a botched assault, or of a partly successful sortie on the part of the defenders. Scaling ladders are usually too heavy to be pushed off the battlements by hand, but can be shaken by levers, attacked with axes, or crushed under the massive weight of heavy stones. Finally, mining efforts can be obstructed by counter-mining, leading to terrifying melees in pitch darkness, or efforts to flood or smoke out enemy miners.

| Tactic or Condition | Modifier |
|---|---|
| Defending a motte and bailey | +1 |
| Defending a keep | +3 |
| Defending a curtain wall* | +2 |
| Attacking with siege engines | +3 |
| Attacker mines the defenses | +2 |

*Add an additional cumulative +1 each if the wall is strengthened by towers, surrounded by a moat, or the moat is filled with water.

One effort to storm a wall or keep can be made each day, but each failure counts as a defeat for the attacker and a victory for the defender. Successive failures may wear down the defenders, but may also lead to prohibitive morale modifiers for the attackers. When attempting to take a castle by storm, each layer of defense (curtain wall or keep) must be taken successively, though the attacker can always pause for negotiations between attempts. Defenders who have lost the castle walls and are reduced to the keep are far more likely to come to terms. There are no pursuit casualties involved in taking a castle, though all the defenders are at the mercy of the attackers if they lose their last refuge.

As a final consideration, any use of magic or effort by the defenders to sortie should be roleplayed.

## *Castles and Magic*

Taking a castle by magical means is definately within the scope of Hermetic techniques, and with a minimal amount of subtlety, can count as subterfuge. The Order takes a very dim view, on the other hand, of magi pulling down castles, this being considered among the most flagrant and crass violations of the prohibition against interference with the affairs of mundanes. Castles do occasionally fall down on their own, but not very often. Suspicious cases are investigated promptly by the quaesitors, and action against the culprit(s) usually follows in short order.

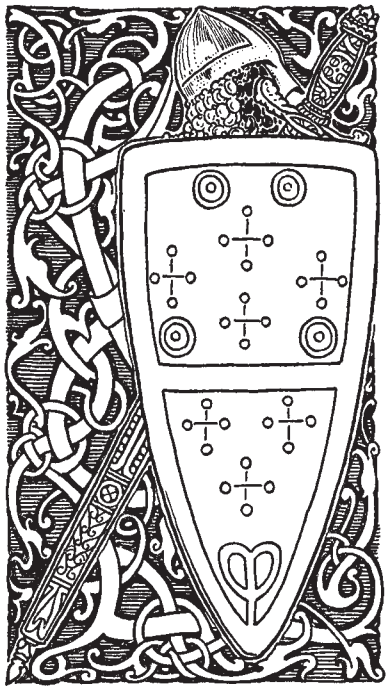
Even without the Order's constant vigilance, tearing down a castle by magical (or, for that matter, mundane) means is not precisely an easy task. Stone castles are usually built on bedrock and thus are resistant to spells like *Crest of the Earth Wave* and *The Earth Split Asunder*. Even against a motte and bailey, the storyguide may rule that both these spells dissipate once they encounter a moat or deep trench. More direct attacks against stone walls are also fraught with difficulties. As magi cannot normally affect what they cannot see, only the outermost layer of stonework can be pulverized by *Stone to Falling Dust*. *Obliteration of the Metallic Barrier* will be of little use against walls several paces thick. Tunneling with Muto or Perdo takes time, and the resulting noise and shaking of the battlements would tend to alert the garrison into taking appropriate defensive action.

In Christian lands, most mundane castles contain a chapel which provides a strong Dominion aura to the whole edifice. This makes spellcasting more difficult and increases the severity of botches. In addition, 13th century Canon law requires that holy relics be incorporated in any building in which mass is to be celebrated. At the storyguide's discretion, such relics might protect the physical integrity of castles against hostile magic (see ArM4, page 244).

As hedge magic is a relatively common feature of Mythic Europe, savvy barons who are sensitive to the possibilities of magical assault often take appropriate precautions to protect their investments with anything from powerful hedge charms and curses, to bound elementals who resist destructive spells with their Might. This last strategy is particularly common in Al-Andalus (Islamic Iberia). Hermetic defenses and defenders are presumably ruled out by the Code, but many baronial households have hedge practitioners on staff. Even if these are outclassed by Hermetic magi, these court wizards are often at least forewarned through Visions or Second Sight.

Finally, many castles are built (sometimes unwittingly) in locations of mystical significance, or according to ill-understood masonic rituals of natural magic. The mortar used to build the Tower of London, for example, was reportedly mixed with animal blood. Such features might provide castles with magical defenses or incorporate powerful Spirits of Place (*Shamans*, pages 113-114) or Artifice (*Hedge Magic*, pages 79-80) who can resist spells threatening the physical integrity of their homes with their Might.

These options barely scratch the surface of possible castle defenses against magical destruction. The number, extent, strength, and nature of such defenses available to a given castle are always at the storyguide's discretion. If these arcane defenses prove particularly formidable and the destruction of the castle is imperative, the player characters may have to devote time and effort to researching both the nature of a castle's magical protection and the best way to overcome it.



# Chapter 6
# The Realms of Mythic Europe

## The Kingdoms

A village in Mythic Europe can have several lords, each with different rights, but it can only have one king. The royal demesne and the holdings of the various territorial princes constantly change in response to the vagaries of inheritance, marriage, conquest, confiscation, or purchase, but the boundaries of medieval kingdoms tend to remain unchanged for centuries. Crusader states and kingdoms on the margins of Mythic Europe are notable exceptions.

In principle, all kings are of equal dignity, answering only to God for their actions. In practice, a small number are not fully sovereign. The king of Bohemia, for example, is subject to the king of the Germans (or Holy Roman emperor). The king of England has historically claimed a similar sovereignty over the kingdom of Scotland, with varying degrees of success. A large number of kings owe fealty to the Pope. These include the kings of England and Sicily, as well as the crusader kings of Iberia, the Balkans, and the Holy Land (Outremer). Papal overlordship is not very onerous, however, and amounts mainly to enhanced papal authority in local Church affairs and some say in the settlement of succession disputes.

While in theory equal, some royal titles carry more prestige than others. Seniority, size, and wealth are all factors. Broadly speaking, however, the kingdoms of Mythic Europe can be said to fall into four categories: great realms, national monarchies, crusader kingdoms, and schismatics (kingdoms not in full and consistent communion with the Church of Rome). The following list (page 107) and map (page 108) are comprehensive for the year 1220. Muslim and pagan monarchies are excluded as they are not, strictly speaking, part of Mythic Europe. Except for the great realms, the kingdoms within each category are not necessarily listed in any particular order, though those listed first generally enjoy more prestige than those at the bottom. Next to each kingdom is an estimated population for 1220, giving a rough idea of relative power and importance.

Some parts of Mythic Europe have not been integrated into kingdoms, notably the Russian and Welsh principalities, with estimated combined populations of 7 million and 200,000 respectively. The Patrimony of St. Peter (1 million), ruled by the Pope but not strictly speaking a kingdom, has also been excluded from this list.

At other time periods the list and map would look somewhat different. Prior to the mid-11th century, for example, the Byzantine empire topped the list of great realms (with the emperor then having a Divine Might of 40), and there were no crusader or schismatic states except possibly in the Anatolian mountains. In the 12th century the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem enjoyed far greater prestige than it does in the 13th, lifting it into the category of national monarchies.

## *A Comprehensive List*

**The Great Realms**

1. The Holy Roman empire (The king of the Germans becomes emperor after having been crowned in Rome by the Pope. The new emperor then automatically also becomes king of Italy and king of Burgundy.)
2. The kingdom of France (10 million)
3. The kingdom of the Germans (5 million; confusingly also called "kingdom of the Romans")
4. The kingdom of England (2.5 million)

**The National Monarchies**

5. The kingdom of Italy (5 million; part of the Holy Roman empire)
6. The kingdom of Sicily (1.5 million; held by the Holy Roman emperor in 1220)
7. The kingdom of Hungary (1.5 million)
8. The kingdom of Burgundy (2 million; part of the Holy Roman empire)
9. The kingdom of Denmark (1 million)
10. The kingdom of Castile (1 million)
11. The kingdom of Aragon (0.5 million)
12. The kingdom of Sweden (0.6 million)
13. The kingdom of Norway (0.4 million)
14. The kingdom of Asturias-Leon (0.5 million)
15. The kingdom of Portugal (0.5 million)
16. The kingdom of Poland (2 million)
17. The kingdom of Scotland (0.5 million)
18. The kingdom of Bulgaria (2 million)
19. The kingdom of Bohemia (1 million; subject to the king of the Germans)
20. The kingdom of Croatia (0.5 million; held by the king of Hungary)
21. The kingdom of Navarre (0.2 million)
22. The kingdom of Ireland (1 million; held by the king of England)

**The Crusader Kingdoms**

23. The Latin empire of Byzantium (2 million)
24. The kingdom of Jerusalem (0.1 million)
25. The kingdom of Cyprus (0.2 million; held by the king of Jerusalem)
26. The kingdom of Thessalonika (0.5 million; subject to the Latin emperor)

**The Schismatics**

27. The empire of Nicaea (2 million)
28. The empire of Trebizond (0.5 million)
29. The kingdom of Armenia minor (1 million)
30. The kingdom of Serbia (1 million)
31. The kingdom of Georgia (1 million)

# A Profile of the Territorial Principalities

The following sections provide some detailed information about the various realms of Mythic Europe in 1220. Where possible we have included all major landholders with the rank of count or higher. In a few cases, we have not been able to determine the actual names of some counts and viscounts and have listed them only by their titles.

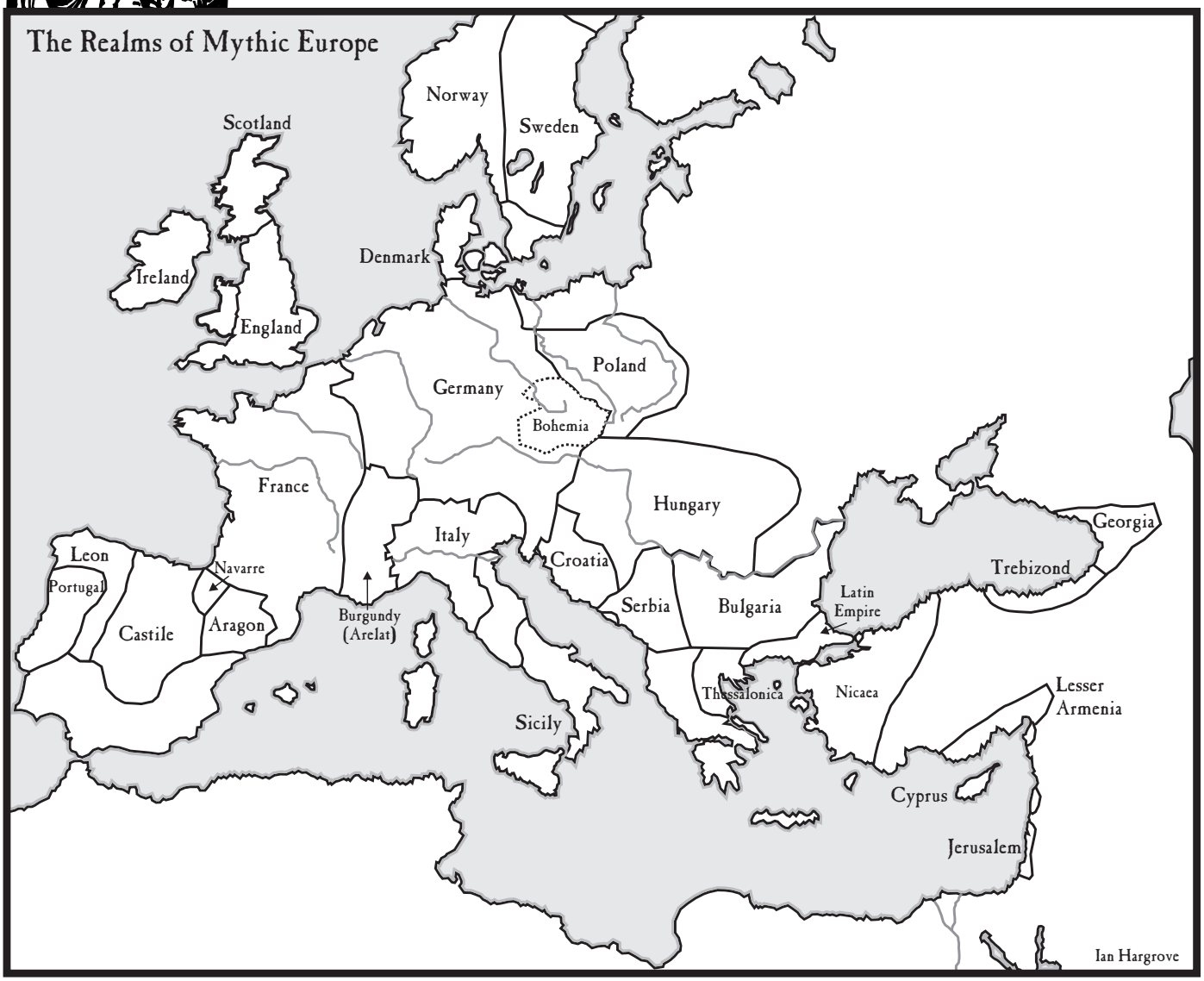
The lifespans of magi being what they are, many sagas will outlive this shapshot of Mythic European nobility. Within a span of fifty years virtually all the people described here will have passed on. Some political issues will have been resolved and new ones will have emerged. Nonetheless, this information should still be useful in choosing the political setting for a saga, and provides a picture of what dynastic Mythic Europe can look like. In any case, the average saga will only rarely involve contact with more than a small number of the great nobles listed here, unless hobnobbing with the highest ranks of European aristocracy is a regular theme. The local barons and gentry should usually prove ample as friends and rivals.

There is no hard and fast rule determining the number of baronies in a county or the number of knights in a barony. As a general guideline, however, we offer the "rule of ten." There are, very roughly, about ten knightly families in an average barony. At any given point in time, some of these families will have a number of adult males with knightly status while others will have none. Varying this average from about five to twenty would cover about 95% of the baronies in Mythic Europe. Similarly, there are about ten baronies in an average county. Viscounties in France and Italy can be considered large baronies for these purposes. (No county will have more than four vicounties, and usually, if a county has any viscounties, it has only one or two.) The rule of ten also holds for the territorial principalities, which tend to consist of about ten counties each. Large ones, such as England, might have more than twenty; very small ones, like Anjou, might

have as few as four.

For the sake of simplicity and consistency, most of the personal names are given here in their English versions. Actual pronunciation and spelling varies considerably from region to region, but the same names are encountered over and over again in different forms. All the names are in principle derived from those of Christian saints. As such, Raoul, Ranulf, Randolf, Ralph, Rudolf, and Rodolphe are all recognized as being the same (and are written the same in Latin) just like James, Jacques, Jacob, Iago, and Jiacomo; Peter, Pedro, Piers, Pierre, Per and Petr; and Roman, Ramon, Raimon, and Raymond. All of these forms are used interchangeably as people travel from one region to another, or depending on the language of the speaker.

Though they barely prick the surface, the following sections contain a lot of detailed history — perhaps too much to absorb at one go. All the regions of Mythic Europe have interesting political settings, so sagas that have so far shied away from courtly and noble intrigue will find a complex web of family ties and relationships surrounding them. One approach is for the characters to step out of their hermetic (!) introspection




*This map indicates the boundaries of the various kingdoms. Muslim and pagan areas are left blank. Note that some kings hold additional lands as vassals of their neighbors. Part of southwestern France, for example, is held by the king of England as duke of Aquitaine. Lordship over the southernmost counties of France across the Pyrenees is held by the king of Aragon as count of Barcelona. The king of France himself is overlord of the counties of Forez and Lyon in the neighboring kingdom of Burgundy.*

and explore the mundane noble world around them: "Who are those strange people who live in that castle in the next valley we have been avoiding all these years?" Another is to have the outside world impinge on the characters' cherished isolation and solitude: "Magister, I am sorry to bother you, but there is a large party of heavily armored men at the gate. They say the viscount is with them and has taken ill. They want to stable their horses in the refectory. What should we do?"

On the other hand, players planning a new saga involving enhanced interaction with the mundane world can just scan the regional descriptions and see if any particular setting suits their fancy. Alternatively, the situations described can provide inspiration for the creation of totally fictional saga settings. Enjoy!

## The Mundane Nobility and the Order of Hermes

Most members of the Order of Hermes do not consider themselves bound by mundane laws or subject to mundane rulers. Indeed, the Order formally treats mundane kingdoms no differently than it does Faerie realms. The Hermetic Code's strict prohibition against interference in mundane affairs is normally read by quaesitors as precluding conventional oaths of fealty and thus integration in the feudal power structure. Complete independence from the mundane world is often not a viable option, however. Magi need covenfolk to attend to many of their security needs and creature comforts, and they must generally be recruited from surrounding society, with which they will normally continue to interact. Even covenants founded in what were once distant and inaccessible places sometimes find themselves hemmed in on all sides by mundane colonists and new lordships.

Some magi, notably those of House Jerbiton, willingly embrace mundane society. Many members of that house are of noble birth and prefer to maintain such status when among mundanes. Many quaesitors seek inspiration in the diversity of customary and Roman law, and spend considerable time observing and monitoring the administration of mundane justice. A number of Flambeau magi and covenants live cheek by jowl with Iberian border lords, plotting raids against their common Islamic foes in what are considered by some to be overly-close relationships. This is tolerated (barely) by the quaesitors because it helps keep the mysterious Order of Suleiman at bay. Some members of House Bonisagus, particularly followers of Trianoma who are given to such thoughts, prefer to see the Order of Hermes as a secret society operating within wider human society. They see magi as co-rulers of the commonality alongside the Church and the nobility, a notion to which quite a few Tremere subscribe as well.

Nonetheless, the Code's restrictions are not dismissed lightly, and different covenants have adopted a number of strategies for blending in with surrounding feudal society. The allod (see page 22) represents a useful way of exercising lordship over the surrounding peasantry without having to provide service to a feudal superior. Other covenants masquerade as hill clans free of feudal obligations, others as monastic foundations exempt from episcopal visitations, and others (notably in England) as tiny royal boroughs that, while off the beaten path, give no trouble and pay with commendable regularity the aids and charter fees requested of them by the king.

While the Code effectively forbids magi from participating in the quarrels of mundane lords, the inverse is not quite so clearly established. The Hermetic Oath states that "I will not endanger the Order through my actions. Nor will I interfere with the affairs of mundanes and thereby bring ruin upon my sodalis." Some argue, however, that since the provisions against harming one's fellow magi are effectively suspended in the case of wizard's war, recruiting mundanes in disputes between magi is allowable. Indeed, this seems to have been done on a large scale during the Schism War. Iberian Flambeau hunted down Díedne magi with the perhaps unwitting assistance of mundane Christian lords, and may have prompted a temporary union of Iberian and southern French lords under King Sancho the Great of Navarre to this end. Similar efforts to implicate mundanes were attempted with some success by both sides in the Normandy Tribunal. Rumor has it that the successful invasion of England by King Svein was prompted by Hermetic machinations aimed at rooting out Díedne refugees who had fled to the Stonehenge Tribunal. If this is the case, this last effort misfired badly, as Svein did not land on English shores until 1013, a year after the end of the Schism War.

As a final note, astute geographers will notice that the various tribunal boundaries are largely similar to those of the great kingdoms and principalities. This is largely for administrative convenience, however, and does not indicate allegiance or loyalty to secular princes, nor does it mean that covenants may not hold or control mundane and arcane resources (such as vis sources) outside their home tribunals. In principle, members of the Order give the great princes of Mythic Europe a wide berth, preferring the security of anonymity, striving wherever possible to avoid provoking an alliance of sword and crosier against them, a combination that could well bring about the end of the Order.

# Britain and Ireland

## England

The English are descended from the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, closely related Germanic tribes that crossed the Channel in the late 6th century, defeating the native British and pushing them into Wales and Cornwall (see pages 112-113). Originally divided into separate kingdoms (Kent for the Jutes; Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia for the Angles; and Wessex, Essex, and Sussex for the Saxons), they gradually united under the rule of the West Saxon kings in the 9th century under pressure from Norse invaders. In 1066, the ruling house died out in the main line and William of Normandy claimed the English crown, defeating at Hastings his rival, the powerful Earl Harold of Wessex, who had proclaimed himself king. As a result of a series of failed uprisings, William was able to dispossess the local Anglo-Saxon nobility, granting their lands to his Norman followers.

When Henry II, count of Anjou and duke of Aquitaine, inherited the throne in 1154, England became the crown jewel in a vast complex of Angevin holdings. Henry's son John proved unable to hold these estates together and lost Normandy, Anjou, and most of his Aquitanian possessions to his arch-nemesis King Philip II Augustus of France. John also quarreled unsuccessfully with the Church and his barons. As a result, he was forced to recognize the Pope as his overlord for England, and had to sign the Great Charter (*Magna Carta*) in 1215. In it he agreed to limitations on royal power. When John attempted to repudiate the charter, the barons rebelled and called in Philip's son Prince Louis the Lion of France, who landed in 1216 at the head of a large army.

John vigorously defended himself, but while fording the Welland he was caught by the incoming North Sea tide, losing his baggage train including most of the regalia. Among the items lost was the famous sword of Tristan (see page 68) which had been brought to England in 1125 by John's grandmother, Queen Maud, widow of Emperor Henry V. John died of dysentery shortly after this disaster, leaving his young son Henry III as king. John's death took the wind out the rebellion, and Prince Louis was forced to withdraw after the defeat of the French fleet the following year in 1217.

England is now ruled by an uneasy alliance of magnates who had stood by John, supported by the papal legate Pandulf, bishop-elect of Norwich, who acts as regent. The most prominant are Falkes (or Fulk) de Bréauté, one of John's former mercenary captains; the Justiciar Hubert de Burgh; and the Vice-Chancellor Ralph Neville, bishop of Chichester. Also influential are the king's tutor Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester; and Ranulf de Blundeville, the great earl of Chester and Lincoln who is currently on crusade. Watching warily from the sidelines is John's long time foe Stephen Langton, Cardinal-archbishop of Canterbury, who is conspiring to have the legate recalled. Because London had been in Louis' hands in 1216, Henry was then only crowned provisionally in Gloucester. Recently the Pope instructed Cardinal Langton to crown Henry again so his legitimacy would no longer be questioned. This has been done in 1220. More information on English history and society, and on the Stonehenge tribunal, is presented in *Heirs to Merlin*.

### *The English Magnates*

Unlike their counterparts on the Continent, English barons rarely have their land holdings in compact blocks. Instead, their manors are often spread out over several counties (shires). The greatest of the barons are the earls. Their title does not give them any particular authority, but does give them the right to a third of the fines collected in their counties by the royal courts. Most of their lands often lie outside the counties they hold as earls. Two notable exceptions are the count palatine of Chester and the bishop of Durham, whose concentrated estates act as buffers against Welsh and Scottish raids.

In 1220 **King Henry III** is by far the largest landholder, owning between a fifth and a fourth of all the manors in England, though actual control lies with the various members of the regency council. The other major magnates are:

**Roger le Bigod**, earl of Norfolk with extensive holdings in East Anglia;

**Humphrey de Bohun**, earl of Hereford and

hereditary Constable of England, with holdings in Essex;

**William de Warenne**, earl of Surrey with lands in Surrey, Sussex, and Yorkshire;

**William d'Aubigny**, earl of Sussex;

**Gilbert de Clare**, earl of Gloucester and Hertford with immense estates in Gloucester, Dorset, Devon, Kent, and Wiltshire;

**Robert de Vere**, earl of Oxford and hereditary Chamberlain, with lands in Essex;

**William de Ferrers**, earl of Derby;

**Henry de Beaumont**, earl of Warwick;

**Baldwin de Redvers**, two-year-old earl of Devon and lord of the Isle of Wight (Baldwin is a ward of his stepfather Falkes de Bréauté);

**Ranulf de Blundeville**, the powerful earl of Chester and Lincoln, with additional lands in Nottingham and Yorkshire;

**Roger de Quency**, earl of Winchester by right of his mother Margaret;

**William Longespée**, earl of Salisbury by right of his wife Isabel, and illegitimate brother of King John (William led the English contingent at the battle of Bouvines);

**William de Mandeville**, earl of Essex;

**Peter de Dreux**, "duke" of Brittany, who is also earl of Richmond and holds extensive estates in Cambridge, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire (and whose lands are held hostage, alternatively sequestered or restored depending on his "good behavior"); and

**Alexander II**, king of Scotland, who holds the earldoms of Cambridge, Northampton, and Huntingdon (which have been granted in sub-infeudation to his cousin John), and who also holds lands in Cumberland and the franchise of Tyndale, and claims, so far unsuccessfully, the earldoms of Cumberland and Northumberland.

On par with the earls as landholders are the archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the bishops of Durham, Winchester, Ely, and Lincoln. There are also a number of powerful untitled barons such as the Courtenays, Faucombergs, Nevilles, Mowbrays, and Beauchamps.

## *English Law*

All free laymen, nobles and commoners alike, are subject to the Common law, a blend of Saxon, Danish, and Norman customary law enforced throughout England by justices who travel in circuits throughout the shires hearing cases. The justices are assisted by local juries tasked with determining matters of fact rather than guilt or innocence. Unfree villains, who form the majority of the population, are also subject to the Common law for all cases involving penalties of death or mutilation (high justice), but otherwise answer to their lord and the "customs of the manor" for lesser offences (low justice). Clerics are only subject to Canon law as administered by the bishops and the Pope, but can, on rare and exceptional occasions, be defrocked and handed to the king's courts for serious offences, though this is exceptional. The royal forests are subject to special laws providing for heavy fines for poaching and wood-cutting. The forest laws are by far the most unpopular with the peasantry. The chief royal official in each county is the sheriff, who is responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and for the collection of fines and royal rents.

Fiefs in England are inherited by the oldest son or are divided equally among the surviving daughters. If the fief holder dies without issue, his lands pass on to his eldest brother or are divided among his sisters. Half-siblings only inherit if there are no full brothers or sisters. An heir can only be bypassed without his or her consent if outlawed or excommunicated. There are no allods in England, and all land is ultimately held of the king.

### The Earldom of Leicester

The earldom of Leicester and the associated hereditary office of High Steward of England are currently vacant. The main claimant is Amaury de Monfort, son of the crusader and erstwhile count of Toulouse. Because of the precariousness of his remaining holdings in the south of France and his loyalty to King Philip Augustus of France, Amaury has not seen fit to claim his English inheritance. There is speculation that he plans to surrender the maternal holdings to his younger brother Simon, who would then be unencumbered by dual allegiances to the French and English kings. In 1220, Simon de Monfort is twelve years old.

# Wales

The Welsh are descended from romanized Celts pushed into the western hills of Wales by invading Angles and Saxons in the 6th and 7th centuries. Following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, powerful border baronies were set up to contain Welsh raiders along the river Wye and Offa's Dyke, a berm built in the 8th century by the Mercian king. In the 150 years since the conquest, the Welsh have been the victims of opportunistic Norman encroachment, particularly in the southwest where the native population has in part been expelled in favor of English, French, and Flemish colonists. Welsh resistance has ebbed and flowed, hampered by incessant feuding and dynastic disputes amongst the various princes. Welsh society is very hierarchical with an abundance of proud lordlings, but most of the peasantry must eke out a servile existence from an ungrateful soil, harassed by feuding masters and greedy English neighbors.

In Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, the Welsh have finally found a leader capable of cowing the English marcher lords. Llywelyn has established clear dominance over the lesser Welsh princes,

and has developed an impressive network of alliances through aggressive marriage politics. His wife Joan is an illegitimate daughter of King John and thus sister of Henry III. She has proven a loyal partner and ally, using her influence at the English court on her husband's behalf. Two of their daughters have married into the de Braoses, a powerful marcher family.

Llywelyn is well on his way to establishing a small but solid Welsh kingdom, though he has few qualms about swearing fealty to the English king. He styles himself "Prince of North Wales" so as not to offend the English court. Llywelyn's main worry is to pass on his legacy intact to David, his designated heir. Traditional Welsh inheritance laws provide for equal division rather than primogeniture, and succession disputes have foiled all previous efforts to unite Wales under a single leader. In choosing David, his legitimate son by Joan, Llywelyn is taking a risk by sidelining his older illegitimate sons. Though David should normally be able to count on the support of his young uncle King Henry, trouble could brew once Llywelyn passes on. More information on Wales is presented in *Heirs to Merlin*.

The major landholders in Wales in 1220 are:

**Llywelyn ab Iorwerth**, Welsh prince (of status roughly equivalent to an earl or duke) of Gwyneth, and overlord of the Welsh princelings (who have the status roughly equivalent to barons) in Powys and Dehurbarth;

**Madoc ab Griffith**, Welsh prince of Powys Fadog;

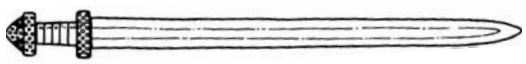
**Griffith ab Gwenwynwyn**, Welsh prince of Powys Wenwynwyn, and a minor under Llywelyn's guardianship;

**William II**, earl of Pembroke and hereditary Marshal of England;

**Reynold de Braose**, lord of Abergavenny, Brecon, and Radnor, and married to Gladys Du (a daughter of Llywelyn and Joan);

**Hugh de Mortimer**, lord of Wigmore; and

**Gilbert de Clare**, lord of Glamorgan and English earl of Gloucester. (Glamorgan was held in trust for Gilbert's aunt Isabel by the English Justicier Hubert de Burgh until her death in 1217. The new earl is having understandable difficulty prying his lands free from the grasping hands of the over-powerful Justiciar.)



# Ireland

The kingdom of Ireland is, in part, a legal fiction created by the Plantagenet kings of England. Prior to the 9th century, Ireland was divided into a number of principalities vying for dominance of the island. Each of these principalities was headed by an "over-king" whose lordship extended over a number of lesser kings or clan chiefs. By the end of the 9th century, Norse invaders had established strongholds in Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Limerick, but had otherwise left the traditional political structure of Ireland intact. In 1179 Anglo-Norman adventurers, led by Earl Gilbert "Strongbow" of Pembroke, were called in to intervene in Ireland's incessant internal disputes, opening the way for a partial conquest of the island.

In 1200 the English King Henry II imposed his youngest son John as lord of Ireland (*rex Hiberniae*), and over the last twenty years royal authority has ebbed and flowed in tandem with the success and needs of the Anglo-Norman lords. In theory, the remaining Irish princes also owe fealty to the English king, but they do largely as they please, feuding amongst themselves and with their new Anglo-Norman neighbors. The most powerful of these princes, though they style themselves as "kings," are the equivalent of earls or counts. Clan chiefs, or lesser "kings," are roughly analogous to barons. *The Fallen Angel*, an **Ars Magica** adventure, contains more information on 13th century Irish society.

In 1220, royal holdings are concentrated in and near the old Norse settlement of Dublin. Anglo-Norman baronial holdings are sprinkled throughout the ancient provinces of Meath and Leinster, and in northern and eastern Connacht. All the old Norse settlements are now in English hands. The Anglo-Norman earldom of Ulster, consisting of the east coast of the province, has been confiscated from Hugh de Lacy and is currently held by the crown, though it will be returned to him in 1227. The rest of Ireland is held by native princes. The main landholders are:

**Walter de Lacy**, Anglo-Norman earl of Meath;

**William**, Anglo-Norman lord of Leinster, also earl of Pembroke (Wales) and hereditary Marshal of England;

**Domnall Mór O'Donnell**, Irish "king" of Tyrconnell;

**Aed Méith O'Neill**, Irish "king" of Tyrone;
**Donnchad Cairprech O'Brien**, Irish "king" of Thormond;
**Cormac Oc Liathánach MacCarthy**, Irish "king" of Desmond;
**Cathal Crobderg O'Connor**, Irish "king" of Connacht;
**Ualgarg O'Rourke**, Irish "king" of Bréifne;
**Cathal O'Reilly**, Irish "king" of East Bréifne; and
**Muirchertach O'Connor**; Irish "king" of Offaly.

## Scotland

The ethnic history and composition of Scotland is complex, but the Scots are conventionally viewed as a union of four peoples (Picts, Irish, Britons, and Angles) with the added tincture of a fifth (Norse). The Picts were the original inhabitants but had to make room for newcomers from the 5th century onwards. Irish clans from the kingdom of Dalriada conquered and settled in Argyll and the Hebrides. Romanized Britons, fleeing barbarian invaders, settled in lowland Strathclyde and Cumbria, separating the northern Picts from their co-ethnics in Galloway. Northumbria and Lothian in southeast Scotland mark the northernmost expansion of Angle settlement. In the 9th century, Viking settlers and raiders intermixed with the local populations in the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Hebrides; in Galloway; and in the sparsely populated Highlands. By 1220, Pictish has died out (save among a couple dozen gruagachs — see *Lion of the North*) and been replaced by Gaelic, an Irish dialect. Scots, an English dialect, predominates in the southern Lowlands.

### The Order and the Anglo-Normans

The invasion of the island by Anglo-Normans has split the magi of this area into three groups: those who want to aid the newcomers, whom they see as more "civilized" than the natives; those who want to aid the Irish, whose native auras are more congenial to magic; and those who think they should stay out of the fray. So far none of these three groups has managed to prevail, leaving the island's Hermetic and mundane politics about equally chaotic.

In the mid-9th century Kenneth MacAlpin, king of Dalriada, successfully claimed the high kingship of the Picts by right of his mother, a Pictish princess. In time his progeny extended its rule over Strathclyde and Galloway and over the Angles of Northumbria. The process of feudalization in Scotland began under King David (1124-1153). The mormaers, traditional princes of Pictland, became earls, and Anglo-Norman knights were encouraged to acquire lands in southern Scotland by grant or marriage in exchange for knight service.

After a century of this "noble" migration, the Scottish Lowlands are now dominated by an anglicized aristocracy. The Highlands are ruled along more traditional lines by about two dozen clan chiefs. It is not clear where the clan chiefs fit on the feudal ladder, but the more prominent might be considered the equivalent of Lowland barons. Chiefdomship is hereditary within the chief's family, and beside each clan chief stands his designated adult heir, the *tanist*. Knighthood in the Highlands is rare but not non-existent. More information on Scottish history and society, and on the Loch Leglean tribunal, is presented in *Lion of the North*.

In 1220, **King Alexander II** is by far the main landholder in the Lowlands, with direct lordship over perhaps as much land as all the Scottish earls combined (though not as much as the earls and barons together). The other major landholders in Scotland are:

**William Comyn**, earl of Buchan by right of his wife Marjory, and hereditary Justiciar;
**Malcolm**, earl of Angus;
**Thomas of Galloway**, earl of Atholl by right of his wife Isabel;
**Malcolm**, earl of Fife;
**Gilbert**, earl of Strathearn;
**Maurice II**, earl of Mentieth;
**Alwyn**, earl of Lennox;
**Patrick**, earl of Dunbar;
**Duncan**, earl of Carrick;
**John**, earl of Garioch and King Alexander's cousin, holding from him the earldom of Huntingdon in England; and
**John (Jan) Haraldson**, earl of Caithness and Norse jarl of the Orkneys.

The lands of the earldom of Moray remain in crown hands. King Alexander has yet to choose between two claimants to the earldom of Mar, while the earldom of Ross remains in chaos following decades of fighting and mutual pillage with the Norwegians. Two great lords who do not

hold the title of earl but rule their lands as semi-autonomous princes are:

**Alan**, lord of Galloway, elder brother of the earl of Atholl and hereditary Constable of Scotland; and

**Donald**, lord of the Isles, nominal vassal of "king" Reginald of the Isle of Man and, by extension, of King Hakon IV of Norway. Donald, who rules the Inner Hebrides but refuses to acknowledge King Alexander as his sovereign, is of mixed Gaelic and Norse descent, and is effectively the most powerful of the Highland chiefs.

# Iberia

*In the beginning Al-Andalus [Muslim Iberia] belonged to the Christians, until they were defeated by the Arabs who drove them back to Galicia, the region least blessed by nature. But now that it is possible, they want to recover that which was taken from them by force and, in order to gain a decisive result, it is necessary to wear you down and weaken you. When you have no money and no soldiers left, we will take over the country without the least difficulty.*

*— Count Sisnando Davídez of Coimbra, quoted in the memoirs of Abdhallah, late 11th century Muslim ruler of Granada.*

Profiting from the growing wealth, decadence, and disunity in Al-Andalus, the early Christian kings of Iberia were in many ways brigand chiefs, interested primarily in pillaging the wealthier and more civilized south and in extorting protection money (*parias*) from the Moors. Conquest was largely a means of securing forward bases for bolder and farther-ranging raids. From 1086 onwards, however, they had to contend with a new foe. The Almoravid rulers of Morocco were called in by the exhausted petty rulers of Al-Andalus, and their Berber armies swept across the straight of Gibraltar, establishing themselves as the dominant Muslim force on the peninsula and rolling back a hundred years of Christian conquests.

The nature of the conflict evolved from mutual raiding into a holy war characterized by hardening religious intolerance and massive migration as Mozarabs (arabized Christians) and Jews moved north and Moslems moved south. Just as the Christian rulers finally seemed to regain the upper hand, the pattern repeated itself as the Almohades, the new rulers of Morocco, crossed over to Al-Andalus in 1146 and mopped up the remaining Almoravid holdings in southern Iberia. In 1195 Alphonse VIII of Castile suffered a decisive defeat at Alarcos at the hands of the resurgent Moors, and the whole Reconquista was again threatened. Fearing ultimate defeat and spurred on by papal injunctions to set aside their frequent quarrels, the Christian kings rallied and united their efforts. In 1212, the forces of the combined Iberian kingdoms achieved a crushing victory at Las Navas de Tolosa against the dreaded Almohades. Christendom is now confident that final victory is near, if not quite as soon as Count Sisnando Davídez had expected.

While the Reconquista has helped give a sense of purpose to Christian Iberia, it has brought about no lasting union. Iberia remains the land of the five kingdoms (Castile, Leon, Portugal, Navarre, and Aragon), each with its own history and national character. At times, through marriage or conquest, they have been pulled together under the leadership of one or the other of these monarchies, but these temporary unions have invariably fallen prey to the Iberian practice of equal division between heirs.

Feudalism in Christian Iberia has developed along original lines, except in the great county of Barcelona, which, as part of France, follows the normal Carolingian pattern. All the Iberian kings have in theory kept high justice (see pages 48-49) in their hands and generally maintain direct lordship over their baronial vassals. Some of the more prominent of these hold the honorific title "count," though it confers no special authority. The title is hereditary within a small number of families, but the kings reserve the right to determine just when the title will be conferred. Most of the great Iberian nobles hold their lands as allods free of feudal service, but draw much of their wealth from life grants of royal property called *tenencias*. These estates are administered for the crown in exchange for a half interest in their income and ninety days service for a varying number of knights.

The constant need for new settlers to repeople and defend the lands of the Reconquista has led to an increasing reliance on the issuance of *fueros*. These are charters negotiated between lords and tenants specifying rents, terms of service, obligations, liberties, and tax exemptions enjoyed by specific communities. These communities can be towns, valleys, or even villages.

Sometimes they are even issued to local groups of non-Christian inhabitants, such as Jews or Moslems, or to Mozarabs who wish to follow their particular legal and religious customs.

Another peculiarity of Iberian customary law is the right of equal division between male and female heirs of the same degree. While this is slowly giving way to primogeniture, it remains the norm, with brothers and sisters dividing their parents' lands equally. As a consequence, dowries are correspondingly much smaller than in France or Germany.

Naming conventions are also different from those across the Pyrenees. Family names based on estates are rare, and normally reserved for the highest nobility. Most Iberian nobles (and commoners) use a patronymic. The sons and daughters of Ramiro, for example, might be Gonzalo Ramirez, Pedro Ramirez, and Sancha Ramirez. Gonzalo's offspring would then be called Alphonso Gonzalez or Berenguela Gonzalez.

## Leon

In 711 a Moorish army from North Africa invaded Iberia and overwhelmed the Visigoth kingdom that had ruled the peninsula for almost two and a half centuries. Seven years later the refugee Visigoth lords, hiding out in the nearly inaccessible fastnesses of the Cantabrian mountains, elected one of their number as King Pelagius (Pelayo), founding the new kingdom of the Asturias (later Leon). In 722 the small band sallied forth and scored its first victory against the Moors at the battle of Covadonga. The Reconquista had begun. Christian forces have since been slowly rolling back the tide of Muslim conquest, though not without serious setbacks. Leon is thus the oldest Christian kingdom in Iberia. Those of its rulers who have held sway over neighboring kingdoms have sometimes claimed the title of emperor, though this has never been recognized outside the peninsula.

Leon is probably most famous for the shrine of St. James the Elder (Santiago) at Compostela. The apostle's shrine (where his relics are reportedly buried) is one of the four great pilgrimage sites of Western Christendom. (The others are the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome, and the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury.)

In an effort to put an end to incessant quarrels, the current king of Leon, Alphonso IX, married Berenguela, the daughter of his cousin Alphonso VIII of Castile. Though the marriage was annulled in 1204 by Pope Innocent III on grounds of consanguinity, it produced a son who became King Ferdinand III of Castile in 1217 following the deaths of his maternal grandfather and his uncle Henry. When Alphonso IX of Leon dies, Ferdinand will once again unite the crowns of Castile and Leon.

The nobility of Leon is relatively poor, except for the great Traba family, whose extensive holdings in Galicia (western Leon) rival those of the king in that isolated and mountainous part of the peninsula.

### The Reconquista and House Flambeau

In 722 a glowing rider on a white horse was seen panicking the Moorish forces at the battle of Covadonga. People at the time were not too sure what to think, but Christian Iberia drew the natural conclusions when St. James' tomb was found at Compostela in the year 800. In 844 St. James reportedly appeared again, this time to reassure King Ramiro that victory against the Moors would be his on the morrow. The next day St. James was seen to lead the Christian forces to victory at the battle of Clarijo. Popular fervor has drowned out the voices of those expressing skepticism that a martyred saint would manifest himself in such martial guise. But if it was not St. James, who might it have been? For information on the Hermetic politics and conflicts in the peninsula, and the role House Flambeau has played in the Reconquista, see *The Tribunals of Hermes: Iberia*.

## Castile

Castile is literally "the land of castles." Effectively an independent county since 960, and later raised to a kingdom following the death of Sancho III the Great of Navarre in 1035, Castile has nonetheless been reunited with Leon for much of its history and at war with it for much of the rest. Because the ruling families of both kingdoms are so closely interrelated, their kings are normally numbered conjointly. Thus the late king Alphonso of Castile was Alphonso VIII while his junior cousin is Alphonso IX of Leon. Thanks to its extensive and open border with Al-Andalus (hence the number of castles) Castile has profited most from the Reconquista and is now clearly the largest and strongest of the five Christian Iberian kingdoms. Alphonso VIII was

the prime mover in organizing the coalition that crushingly defeated the Moors in 1212 at Las Navas de Tolosa.

The current King Ferdinand III is the son of Alphonso IX of Leon. He inherited the kingdom of Castile following the death of his maternal uncle Henry. Ferdinand stands to inherit the Leonese throne when his father dies, though his two half-sisters may contest his claim, based on the annulment of his parents' marriage in 1204 by the Pope. Ultimately the choice will rest with the Leonese nobility, though a decision against Ferdinand will certainly lead to war. Castile has a numerous and powerful nobility which includes the great Lara, Haro, Minerva and Cabrera (both of Catalan origin), Marañón, and Castro families.

## Portugal

Portugal is the newest of the five Iberian kingdoms. Originally granted as a county in 1097 by Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile to his son-in-law Henry of Burgundy, it has been recognized as an independent kingdom since 1143. In 1220, King Alphonso II the Fat of Portugal is the largest single landholder in his realm, but his lands are dwarfed by the combined holdings of the Church. In the north, the archbishop of Braga holds extensive estates, as do the bishops of Porto and Coimbra. South of the Mondego, most of the land is held by the great religious military orders of the Temple, Santiago, Calatrava, and the Hospitaliers. Nonetheless, the king holds all the major southern towns including Lisbon, Santarém, Alcácer, Evora, and Leiria as demesne land. Squeezed in between the royal and Church lands are perhaps 100 baronial families. King Alfonso has initiated a campaign to limit Church holdings by banning ecclesiastical land purchases and preventing the Church from accepting legacies. The bishops are not amused and Alfonso now labors under a ban of excommunication issued by the archbishop of Braga in 1219. Because of his obesity (a congenital condition), Alphonso has never been able to lead his troops in battle. Nonetheless, his knights participated in the great battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, ensuring that Portugal enjoyed its share of glory in the victory over the Almohades.

## Navarre

While the origins of the kingdom of Navarre are obscure, it is known that King Pelagius of the Asturias freed Pamplona from the Moors during his reign in the 8th century. By the middle of the 10th century, the town had become the capital of a Basque kingdom. Though never very large, Navarre did not start much smaller than the neighboring Christian and Muslim principalities. Indeed, King Sancho III the Great (1004-1035) was able to extend his authority over the whole of Christian Iberia (including Barcelona) as well as the French duchy of Gascony (Aquitaine south of the Garonne). As usually happened in such cases, Sancho III's realm was divided after his death. Cut off from any further hopes of expansion at Muslim expense by the growing kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, Navarre has lost ground compared to its expansionist neighbors and is now the smallest of the Iberian kingdoms.

The language of the Basques has been described rather harshly by some monastic chroniclers as akin to "the barking of dogs." Though their language sets them apart from their neighbors, the Basques have little apparent sense of ethnic solidarity. They are rugged individualists, just as likely to pick feuds with their fellow Basques in the next valley as with the predominantly Castilian-speaking inhabitants of Pamplona. While most of the population of Navarre speaks Basque, most Basques do not live

### The Military Orders

Given that the Reconquista has repeatedly received papal sanction as a crusade, it is only natural that the Templars and Hospitaliers be expected to play their part in Iberia as well as in Outremer. To this end kings and nobles have granted estates to the two military orders. The recipients of these grants were slow to take up the challenge, however, not making a significant impact on the peninsula until the mid-12th century. This spawned an interest in the formation of local military orders that could devote their undivided attention to the struggle in Iberia, and led to the foundations of the orders of Calatrava (1158), Santiago (1170), Avis, and Alcantara (1176). The Templars and Hospitaliers have since become more active and been rewarded accordingly, but the new orders are more responsive to royal wishes and are always in the forefront of battle against the Moors. As a reward (and to ensure their continuing interest), the orders are normally given first crack at founding estates in the contested border regions, making them amongst the wealthiest landowners in Iberia.

in Navarre. Basque speakers can be found throughout the western Pyrenees on both sides of the mountains.

There is little sense of class privilege in Navarre. Wealth and power naturally secure respect, and tenants are often subjected to harsh exploitation, but nobility *per se* does not grant any special privileges.

King Sancho VII the Strong is the last of the long line of Basque kings who have ruled the kingdom since its foundation. A bit of a restless swashbuckler, Sancho is quite friendly with the Moors, a fact which scandalizes the Pope. Sancho even fought as a mercenary in North Africa on behalf of the Almohades from 1198-1200. He remains childless despite several marriages and his direct line will probably come to an end when his French nephew Count Theobald IV of Champagne inherits the throne. The Basques are not losing much sleep over the issue, one king being as good as another so long as he respects their *fueros*.

## Aragon

Originally an offshoot of Navarre granted as a county by Sancho III to his bastard son Ramiro I in 1035, Aragon was recognized as an independent kingdom in 1076. When the great crusader King Alfonso I died heirless in 1134, his will provided for the three-way division of his realm between the Templars, the Hospitaliers, and the canons of the Holy Sepulcher. This did not suit the powerful Aragonese nobility, who set Alfonso's will aside and dragged his illegitimate brother Ramiro II out of a monastery and forced him to marry. The result proved somewhat disappointing. After fathering a daughter, Ramiro retired back to the seclusion of monastic life. In the face of an imminent invasion from Castile, the nobles betrothed their new princess, Petronilla, while still in the cradle, to the 25 year-old Count Raymond Berenguer of Barcelona. He then assumed the regency of the kingdom. The two were finally married thirteen years later, leading to a lasting union between the two principalities. The military orders did not lose too much out of the deal. They were compensated by promises of new lands to be conquered from the Moors, and are now the main landholders south of the Ebro.

In few of the realms of Mythic Europe does a resident king enjoy as little authority as in Aragon. The kingdom is run essentially by its parliament, the Cortes, which is dominated by the great families of Azagra, Luna, Alagon, Coronel, and Urrea. The great barons hold almost all of their land north of the Ebro as allodial property, free of service to the king who, were it not for his holdings in the county of Barcelona (see page 126), would be little more than a war chief.

In 1220 King James is a precocious but essentially powerless boy of twelve. Countless intrigues and shifting aristocratic factions swirl around him as the papally-appointed regent, Peter de Benevento, attempts to maintain order with the meager royal resources available and with the support of the bishops and military orders. Behind most of the dangerous conspiracies lie the royal "uncles," Abbot Fernando of Montearagon and Count Nunyo-Sanche of Roussillon and Cerdagna, each of whom is eager to claim the throne for himself. Both would dearly love to see the boy-king dead. (See also the county of Barcelona, page 126).

## France

Through most of the 10th century, the French branch of the Carolingians flickered, alternatively protected and sidelined by the powerful dukes of Neustria. When Louis V, the last French Carolingian, died heirless in 987, the magnates elected Duke Hugh Capet of Neustria as the new king. His descendants have since reigned in France in remarkably unbroken and regular succession from father to son down to the thirteenth century. This remarkable dynastic regularity is a sure sign of divine favor, and the Capetian royal house is now the oldest in Mythic Europe.

Nonetheless, Hugh Capet's election initially came at a serious cost to royal authority. Rival northern magnates had to be rewarded for their support, while the southern lords remained aloof and were loath to recognize his election. When the king attempted to call Archibald of Périgord to order by asking him "Who made you count?" the impertinent lord responded with "Who made you king?" Nonetheless, the Capetians have since made the best of a bad lot, slowly attempting to rebuild royal power one painful step at a time.

The conquest of England in 1066 by the king's greatest vassal, Duke William of Normandy, presented the Capetians with their greatest challenge, made worse when William's great grandson Henry Plantagenet, count of Anjou and duke (in his wife's name) of Aquitaine, inherited the Anglo-Norman domains. When Henry's son Geoffrey married the heiress of Brittany, the Plantagenets controlled both England and four of the eight great principalities of France, dwarfing their nominal Capetian overlord.

If the kings of France have finally been able to escape this stranglehold and reassert their rightful dominance within their own realm, it has been thanks to the good fortune and ruthless energy of the current and greatest of the Capetians, **King Philip II Augustus**. By skillfully exploiting the contested succession of Richard the Lionhearted to the crown of England, and by winning the great victory of Bouvines in 1214 (see page 79), Philip has been able to annex Normandy, Anjou, and Poitiers (more than doubling royal revenues), and bring Flanders, Champagne, and Brittany under royal tutelage. By unleashing his vassals to lead the Albigensian crusade, he has also managed to shatter the great independent lordship of the counts of Toulouse, and thus extended his authority all the way to the Mediterranean.

# The Languedoil

The rich and fertile lands north of the Loire River, in what was formerly called the duchy of Neustria (or West Francia), are the birthplace of medieval chivalry and form the core of France proper. The people here speak a variety of dialects of *langue d'oïl*, the language of northern France. Not too long ago the domains of the Capetian kings were hemmed in on all sides by those of powerful vassals like the dukes of Normandy and Burgundy, and the counts of Anjou and Champagne. But these times have now passed under the watchful and august gaze of France's powerful King Philip II.

## *The Ile de France*

The Ile de France is the original heartland of the Capetian domains. Its small size is deceptive, as it holds the richest agricultural land in Mythic Europe. It is populated by wealthy royal abbeys including St. Denis and St. Germain, and by a numerous petty baronage whose independent spirit was the bane of the early Capetians. Now these lords are loyal servants of the king and their forces form the backbone of the royal army. It is from these petty barons that the king tends to choose his personal advisors, often leaving the more exalted great offices of state vacant for long periods of time. It is also normally from these men that the king selects his provosts (tax farmers) and bailiffs (salaried officials) who manage the royal estates in the Ile de France and the rest of the kingdom. They are the omnipresent eyes and ears of the king, a plague to great lords and commoners alike who chafe at the rigor with which they enforce the king's rights. The main landholders in the Ile de France are:

## The Oriflamme

The Oriflamme is the royal banner of France and is only deployed when the king is present on the battlefield. When not in use, the banner is deposited in the abbey of St. Denis in the county of Vexin. It is probably the most famous secular "relic" in Mythic Europe. Given its political sensitivity, direct Hermetic investigation of the Oriflamme is strictly forbidden. Requests for exemptions from would-be investigators have been repeatedly refused by several Grand Tribunals. Nonetheless, thanks to an exhaustive examination of the various Hermetic and mundane archival records undertaken by Doissetep, it has now been confirmed that the Oriflamme is a powerful Mercurian artifact. Indeed, part of the original ritual enchantments have been tentatively reconstructed (though critical elements remain obscure) and there is widespread agreement on two of the probable properties of the device.

*Blanket of the Supressed Magicks* (ReVi 80; R: Sight, D: Sun, T: Sight): Supresses until sunrise or sunset all non-Instant/Permanent magical effects of eighth magnitude or less, within Sight range, that are not produced by the Oriflamme itself. Spells that would normally have expired within this time are permanently extinguished.

*Wind of Righteous Anger* (ReCo 50; R: Sight, D: Sun, T: Sight): Permits the target to ignore the negative modifiers caused by any one lost Body level and/or one lost Fatigue level, but does not postpone unconsciousness or incapacitation.

The precise origins of the Oriflamme are a mystery to most mundanes, but it is commonly known to have been used by Charlemagne. Hermetic research suggests that it may have been completed in 485 for Syagrius, the "last of the Romans," in a desperate attempt to hold back the invading Franks. Significantly, the *Wind of Righteous Anger* only appears to affect targets speaking dialects closely related to the 5th century vernacular of Syagrius' north Gaulish "kingdom" — essentially all *langue d'oïl* dialects. The precise mechanism for this discrimination is unknown.

**Philip II Augustus**, king of France, holding the counties of Paris, Orléans, Gatinais, Vexin, Mélun, Bourges, Senlis, Sens, and Corbeil;

**Matthew II**, count of Beaumont and hereditary Grand Valet (*Chambrier*) of France;

**Gauthier d'Avesnes**, count of Blois by right of his wife Margaret, and vassal of Count Theobald of Champagne;

**Sulpices d'Amboise**, count of Chartres by right of his wife Isabel, and vassal of Theobald of Champagne;

**William de Chauvigny**, count of Déols; and

**Geoffrey V**, viscount of Chateaudun, and also a vassal of Count Theobald.

## *Picardy*

To the northwest of the Ile de France lie the rolling hills of Picardy. A land of rich bishoprics (the archbishop of Reims and the bishops of Noyon, Amiens, Beauvais, and Laon each hold

their respective counties) and abbeys (St. Riquier, St. Valery, and Corbie), it never developed into a great principality. There was a time in the 10th century when the knights of Reims were one of the most potent fighting forces in France, but most of the archbishop's nominal vassals have since gained their independence and now owe him only nominal fealty. The king's influence predominates, partly through his patronage of the abbeys and bishoprics, but most recently through his acquisition of the counties of Artois, Amiens, Vermandois, Crépy, and Valois.

The last century has seen a major influx of Flemings fleeing industrial strife and competition in their homeland. Thanks to their example, draperies have been established in the border towns of Abbéville, Arras, Amiens, St. Omer, and Péronne. The resulting prosperity has inspired a rebellious communal movement, however, that the king and the bishops have had to contain, often with considerable brutality. Other than the king, the major landholders are:

**William III de Montgommery-Alençon**, count of Ponthieu;

**Ranulf de Nesle**, count of Soissons;

**Reinold de Dammartin**, count of Boulogne;

**Gauche de Chatillon**, count of St. Pol;

**Arnold**, count of Guines; and

**Engerrand III,** sieur of Coucy.

## *Burgundy*

The duchy of Burgundy consists of the northwestern part of the old Burgundian kingdom that fell within the share of Charles the Bald at the treaty of Verdun in 843. In 1032, King Henry I granted these lands as a duchy to his ambitious brother Robert, who thus founded a junior branch of the Capetian house. In spite of the early rivalry, the Capetian dukes have proven to be loyal allies of their senior cousins, the French kings. They have also provided famous crusaders in both Outremer and Iberia where they have established strong ties with the royal houses of Castile and Portugal. The current **Duke Hugh IV** is only eight years old in 1220. The duchy is ably administered by his mother Alice de Vergy, a firm ally of King Philip. Burgundy is also the home of some of the most famous abbeys in Mythic Europe, including Cluny, Clairveaux, Citeaux, Molesme, Saint-Seine, and St. Benigne. The bishop of Langres holds his county. Other major Burgundian landholders are:

**Hugh IV**, duke of Burgundy, who holds the counties of Autun, Mâcon, and Dijon;

**Harvey de Donzy**, count of Nevers as a vassal of the king, but also count of Tonnerre by right of his wife Maud, and so a vassal of the duke as well;

**Peter de Courtenay,** count of Auxerre and a vassal of Theobald of Champagne; and

**Archibald,** sieur of Bourbon, who holds his lands directly of the king.

## *Champagne*

Astride both Picardy and Burgundy are the lands of the great count of Champagne. Besides his two main counties of Meaux and Troyes, **Theobald IV** holds the counties of Sancerre, Brie, Joigny, and Provins, as well as a number of baronies in his own right. He is also the overlord of many more, including the counties of Blois and Chartres in the Ile de France (separated from Champagne proper by the royal demesne), and of Auxerre in the duchy of Burgundy. All in all, some 2,000 lordships owe him fealty.

As the posthumous son of Theobald III, Theobald IV has been count since his birth in 1201. His mother, Blanche de Navarre, is regent and has ruled Champagne ably under the watchful protection of King Philip. In time, Theobald, who already shows signs of becoming a great poet, will inherit the kingdom of Navarre from his mother's brother Sancho VII. Though Theobald is currently nineteen, the king is still reluctant to end the count's minority, relying instead on Blanche's proven loyalty. The prosperity of the counts of Champagne is not due only to their vast holdings, but also to a number of fairs at which the woollens of Flanders are traded for the spices and luxuries of the Orient. The six main fairs are held at the towns of Lagny, Bar-sur-Aube, Provins, and Troyes, the latter two towns holding two fairs each. Other than Theobald, the main landholders in Champagne are:

**Henry**, count of Bar-sur-Aube; and

**Hugh II**, count of Rethel.

## *Normandy*

In 911, King Charles the Simple of France reached an agreement with Rollo, a Norse pirate chief who had established himself at the mouth

of the Seine. Rollo's possession of the lower Seine basin was officially recognized. In exchange, he swore fealty and assumed responsibility for blocking the river entrance against other Norse raiders. The resulting duchy of Normandy was thus carved out of the old duchy of Neustria and colonized by Norse settlers from Norway and Denmark. The newcomers have since been assimilated and speak Norman, a *langue d'oïl* dialect. Little trace of their Norse origin survives other than place names and some peculiarities of Norman law. Serfdom is virtually unknown in Normandy, as is usually the case in lands of free settlement.

In 1066, William the Conqueror, a descendent of Rollo, became king of England, posing a major threat to the French crown. King Philip II of France finally succeeded in confiscating the duchy in 1204, taking advantage of a succession dispute and unrest among King John of England's Norman vassals. Since Philip's annexation, Norman nobles have been forced to abandon either their Norman or English estates in order to put an end to possible conflicting loyalties. Many families have opted to split their estates between older and younger sons.

Viscounts in Normandy do not hold hereditary titles, but are ducal (now royal) officials similar to English sheriffs. The counties of the old Normandy nearest the coast (Cottentin, Livieux, Caux, and Roumois) have never been granted out by the Norman dukes as whole fiefs. The barons in these areas have thus remained direct vassals of the duke (and now the king). Later conquests and acquisitions along the southern and eastern border of the duchy do follow the traditional pattern of autonomous counties found elsewhere in France, but some of these, specifically the counties of Evreux, Mortain, and Alençon, are now held directly by King Philip. The county of Perche, held by the bishop of Châlons in his own right, is one notable exception. Other major Norman magnates include:

**Rudolf de Lusignan**, count of Eu by right of his wife Alice;

**Robert III**, count of Dreux; and

**Peter de Dreux**, Robert's younger brother, who is "duke" of Brittany and count of Avranches.

## *Anjou*

In 909, King Charles the Simple promoted Viscount Fulk I the Red of Anjou to the title of count. From this elevation Fulk was able to found what was to become one of the most famous dynasties in Mythic Europe. Under the long rule

### Mélisande and the Counts of Anjou

Sometime before 950, Count Fulk II of Anjou married a beautiful unknown woman he had met while hunting in the forest of Milly. Over the years, four children were born to the couple. Despite their happy marriage, the count slowly began to worry that despite regular attendance at mass, his wife never seemed to participate in communion. When he confronted her with this, she denied any desire to avoid the Eucharist. She claimed instead that deep prayer always seemed to remind her of some urgent task that required her immediate attention.

The following Easter, the count decided to put the matter to the test. He secretly ordered four of his knights to attend the countess during the mass, and surreptitiously stand on the hem of her cloak to prevent her from leaving when the priest presented the Eucharist. As expected, just before the blessing of the bread and the wine, the countess made as if to leave, becoming increasingly frantic as she discovered the trap. When the priest raised the Body of Christ, she shrieked and turned into a winged fiend. Seizing two of her four children in her talons, she flew out an open window, never to be seen again.

The incident caused quite a scandal and led to an investigation by the quaesitors. They began by visiting Mélisande, the Faerie queen, for this was the name by which the countess had let herself be known. Mélisande was both gracious and intrigued by the tale, but denied any involvement. Eventually the quaesitors were able to pinpoint the fake "Mélisande" as a *filia* of House Tytalus, uncovering in the process evidence of serious infernal infestation. A Wizards' March was sanctioned by the extraordinary tribunal of 961, leading to a thorough purge of all those involved (see *Houses of Hermes*, pages 110-111).

As far as popular rumor is concerned, however, the former Countess "Mélisande" was no less than Satan's daughter. Ever since, the counts of Anjou, ancestors of the Plantagenet kings of England, have been suspected of being the Devil's offspring. Meanwhile, the real faerie Mélisande was so taken by what she saw as a charming and original tale that she decided to leave behind the great castle of Lusignan (which she built in one day). A trace of faerie blood remains in the line of her noble husband, the ancestor of the current counts of Marche and Eu and the king of Cyprus and Jerusalem.

of Fulk's great-grandson, Fulk III the Black (987-1040), the house of Anjou was able to annex the neighboring counties of Maine, Tours, and Vendôme, establishing itself as the main landholder in western France. In 1128, Henry I of England married his daughter Maud to Geoffrey Plantagenet of Anjou, laying the groundwork for the union of the Angevin and Norman lines. When their son Henry II became king of England in 1154, he was already duke of Normandy and, by right of his wife Eleanor, duke of Aquitaine, and so he became the most powerful monarch in Mythic Europe. The ultimate beneficiary, however, has been King Philip of France, who confiscated Normandy and the ancestral Angevin lands after declaring Henry's son, King John of England, a rebellious vassal. The lush lands of Anjou, including the counties of Anjou, Maine, and Tours, have since been firmly in royal hands. Other than the king, the main landholder is **John de Montour**, count of Vendôme.

## Brittany

An ancient and turbulent land of standing stones and frequent civil wars, the great county of Brittany is inhabited by Breton speakers in the west and along the coasts, and by *langue d'oïl* speakers in the Breton march, which consists of the counties of Nantes and Rennes. There is also a significant Jewish colony in the city of Rennes itself. In 846, the Breton prince Nomenoë seized the marcher counties that had ironically been established to contain him. The rulers of this united and enlarged Brittany have since styled themselves "dukes," though the title is still not recognized by the French king. When King Richard the Lionhearted of England died in 1199, the Angevin inheritance was claimed by both his brother John and by his nephew, the young Arthur of Brittany. After Arthur's death in one of John's prisons, King Philip married Arthur's half-sister and heiress, Alice, in 1212 to Peter de Dreux, a distant member of the Capetian house. Peter ruled Brittany in his wife's name until her death in 1219 and now rules as regent for his infant son. While the new duke has been able to impose some order on the fractious Bretons, he is in frequent conflict with his bishops, whose lordship over their respective towns he sees as a major limitation on his authority. The major landholders in Brittany are:

**Peter de Dreux**, "duke" of Brittany, who holds the counties of Rennes, Nantes, Cournouaille, and Penthièvre;

**Henry d'Auvaugour**, count of Goëlo, who is a minor and a ward of Conan of Léon;

**Conan,** viscount of Léon;

**Geoffrey**, viscount of Rohan;

**Odo III**, viscount of Porhoët; and

The viscount of Faou, a key opponent of Peter de Dreux's centralizing policies.

## Flanders

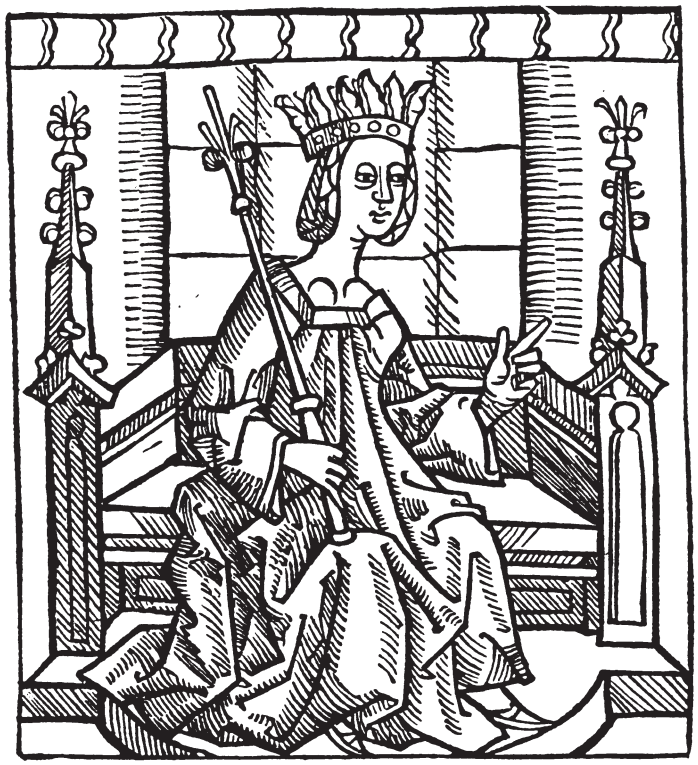
In 866, King Charles the Bald invested his son-in-law Baldwin I Iron Arm with the newly created Flemish march. As count of Flanders (centered on Bruges), Baldwin assumed responsibility for protecting the north of France against Viking raiders, and was given overlordship over the neighboring counties. Since 1205, this rich principality has been held by **Joan of Hainault**. Her father Baldwin IX joined the Fourth Crusade and was elected the first Latin emperor of Constantinople in 1204, only to be captured and die in Bulgarian captivity the following year. Joan is married to **Ferdinand** (a younger son of the king of Portugal), who joined the losing side at the battle of Bouvines (see page 79) because of unrelenting pressure applied by royal officials on Joan's holdings in Picardy. He has spent the last six years in a Parisian prison since Joan, who never wanted to marry him in the first place, still refuses to pay the 10,000£ ransom demanded by the king. Instead, Joan is attempting to run the county on her own. Philip (who is her uncle, after all) indulges her in this, but the county no longer enjoys its former independence. Nonetheless, Joan's holdings are still impressive. They include the French counties of Bruges, Mempisc, Ostrevent, Lillois, Tournai, Waes, and Ghent, as well as the German march of Eenham, and the counties of Hainault and Quatre Metiers. Most of the people of Flanders speak Flemish, a dialect of Low German.

Flanders is the only primarily industrial region of Mythic Europe. Its dense population is unable to produce enough food to be self-reliant, and counts instead on the production and sale of the finest woolen cloth found anywhere in the world. Virtually every town in Flanders is a textile center, but the most important are Tournai, Ypres, Ghent, and Bruges. The towns are ruled by powerful merchant guilds which have taken

advantage of princely succession disputes to extort a local monopoly on political power from the counts. These urban patricians now hold the town magistracies by hereditary right, and use this authority to impose their peace on both the towns and all aspects of the wool trade. In an effort to get around these limitations on their rule, the counts of Flanders have traditionally allied themselves with the craft guilds of master weavers, dyers, and spinners, who have been systematically excluded from municipal authority by the great merchants. The patricians, in turn, tend to look to the king to keep the count in check. Beneath this tense and uneasy rivalry brews the simmering discontent of the masses of poorly-paid workers whose anger threatens to tear down both master and noble alike. Because of the pull of the towns, serfdom is swiftly disappearing in Flanders.

## The Languedoc

South of the Loire lies a different, more ancient France as attested by an abundance of Roman ruins, as well as the survival of Roman law, civic institutions, and classical culture. The land is poorer than in the north, but is famous for its wine and vineyards. The process of feudalization is also not as advanced as in the north. The Languedoc is thus home to numerous allodial properties (see page 22), some of great extent, owing fealty to no one, not even the king. The lords of the south are known for their love of luxuries and fine clothes. As indicated by its name, the south speaks a different language, the *langue d'oc* or *Occitan* (from the Latin: *lingua occitana*), in its various Poitevin, Gascon, Provençal, and Catalan dialects.



Jealous of their independence, the lords of the Midi (as the South is often called) are proud, fickle, and battle-hardened. They are also prickly, quick to take offense, and just as quick to seek revenge. Nevertheless, the fearsome reach of King Philip II now extends deep into the Languedoc, whose lords have been forced to take sides for or against encroaching royal authority. With a fine sense for the shifting winds of power, many of the southern lords have made their peace with the king, perhaps waiting for a better day to throw off the yoke and return to their willful feuding of old. In the words of one southern seigneur, the famous troubadour Bertrand de Born, "Barons, mortgage your castles, towns and cities sooner than not wage war among yourselves."

Another peculiarity of this area is the modified form of primogeniture. Greater provision is made for younger sons, particularly if there are multiple fiefs that can be shared out. Otherwise, the tendency is for collective or joint fief-holding under the presidency of the eldest son. Because of this, the South has not seen the same degree of territorial consolidation as in the north, and the number of autonomous counts and viscounts is correspondingly much greater.

## *Aquitaine*

Conquered in 507 from the Visigoths by Clovis, the first Frankish king, Aquitaine is the most ancient, and certainly the largest, duchy in France. It stretches from the Loire to the Pyrenees and from the Atlantic to the mountains of Auvergne, excluding the great county of Toulouse in the southeast. The ducal title has long been associated with the county of Poitiers, but it has only been since the houses of Poitou and Gascony were united in 1038 that the dukes have held sway over most of the duchy. In 1152, Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry Plantagenet, count of Anjou and future king of England and duke of Normandy, creating a vast

conglomerate of holdings that would, for a time, dwarf those of their nominal overlord, the French king. The tables have since been turned, and even the ancestral county of Poitou (along with the viscounties of Bridiers and Rochechouart) is now in King Philip's unshakable grip. Other than the bishop of Cahors, who holds his county, and the bishop of Aire, who holds the viscounty of Turson, the other major landholders in Aquitaine are now:

**Henry III**, king of England and duke of Aquitaine, whose holdings are reduced to the county of Saintonge and the viscounties of Bordeaux and Dax;

**Archibald II**, count of Périgord;

**Boso de Mastar**, count of Bigorre by right of his wife Petronilla, and viscount of Marsan;

**Centullo**, count of Astarac;

**Hugh de Lusignan,** count of Marche and viscount of Aubusson and, by right of his wife Isabel, who is the widow of King John of England and mother of Henry III, also count of Angoulême;

**William XI**, count of Auvergne;

**Bernard V**, count of Armagnac, Fézansac, and Comminges;

**Roger**, viscount of Fézansaguet, and brother of Count Bernard;

**Raymond**, viscount of Turenne;

**Gaston VII**, viscount of Béarn, Gabardan, and Brulhois;

**Aimery VII**, viscount of Thouars; and

**Amanieu d'Albret**, viscount of Tartas by right of his wife Assaride.

## *Toulouse*

In 918, the powerful Count Raymond II of Toulouse acquired the Mediterranean march of Gothia (later known as the duchy of Narbonne or Languedoc), granting him overlordship of France between the Rhone and the Pyrenees. His descendant **Raymond VI** is the last of the great lords of France still resisting submission to the king.

The people of Toulouse speak Provençal, a dialect of *langue d'oc*. There are several ancient Jewish colonies in many of the southern towns, most notably in Narbonne where Jewish law predominates in a whole enclosed *quartier* under the lordship of the archbishop. The counties of Mende, Le Puys, Melgueil, and Cahors; the viscounties of Lodève and Agde; and the town of Albi all belong to their respective bishops. Until recently, most of the bishoprics in the count's lands had been in his gift rather than the king's. As such, they were treated as the count's private property, and the great Gregorian reform movement that brought rigor and discipline to the clergy throughout most of Europe touched the lands of Toulouse very lightly. There were relatively few monasteries, and the bishops appeared more interested in collecting their rents and tithes than in teaching the faithful. As a result, the southeast of France has become a hotbed of heresy and anti-clerical sentiment. While the counts themselves remained orthodox (indeed, the fourth and fifth Raymonds were active crusaders) they were lax in stamping out the spread of Catharism amongst their tenants and vassals.

In frustration, Pope Innocent III established an inquisition to root out the ill. He lost all patience, however, when his legate Peter de Castelnau was murdered by one of the vassals of Raymond VI in 1208. Innocent declared a crusade against both the Albigensian heretics and their protectors. With King Philip's permission, knights from the north joined the crusade under the leadership of Simon de Monfort. After a long and ruthless campaign, Simon defeated Raymond and his allies, crushing them at the battle of Muret in 1213. Simon swore fealty to the king for the county (which the Ramonid counts had never done), but was successfully overthrown by Raymond VI in 1217. When Simon was killed the following year while attempting to retake the city of Toulouse, the crusade collapsed. Raymond VI now rules, but the former power of his family has been broken. Before the Albigensian crusade the counts of Toulouse also held the counties of Agenais, Vivarais, Quercy, and Albi, and the viscounties of Nimes and Gévaudan, and were overlords of the neighboring counts and viscounts. Despite Raymond's return, some of the southern lordships are still held by crusaders, and there are rumors that King Philip is negotiating with the Pope for subsidies to finance a renewed crusade. Other than Raymond, the great magnates of Toulouse are:

**Amaury de Monfort**, son of Simon, who holds the viscounties of Carcassone and Béziers against their former lord Raymond II Trancavel;

**Hugh IV**, son of the royalist Count Henry III of Rodez and viscount of Carlat, who holds these lands for his father who is currently crusading in Outremer;

**Raymond Roger**, count of Foix and viscount of Razès, and vassal of Count Raymond;

**James**, king of Aragon, who holds the viscountcy of Millau and other lordships such as Montpelier; and

the viscount of Narbonne.

## *The County of Barcelona (Catalonia)*

Though King James may draw his royal title from the kingdom of Aragon, most of his wealth lies in the old Frankish march of Barcelona. Technically still part of France, Barcelona ceased to be counted amongst the French principalities, for all intents and purposes, after its union with Aragon. There was, in any case, no record of a count of Barcelona having sworn fealty to a French king since 987. The Albigensian crusade, if successfully resumed, could change all this, as Barcelona's connections to southern France are still strong. Raymond VI of Toulouse is King James' uncle and overlord for a number of his French lordships. Though unquestionably orthodox, James' father, King Peter II, died fighting the crusaders by Raymond's side at the battle of Muret.

The people of Barcelona speak Catalan, a dialect of *langue d'oc*. They have maintained the same feudal structure as the rest of the old Carolingian empire, and are the main channel for the dissemination of French chivalric culture to the peninsula. Barcelona itself is one of the largest cities in Mythic Europe with a population of about 40,000, and is a major center of Jewish learning.

Through several strokes of good fortune, the 12th century counts were able to acquire most of the vassal counties in the march by marriage, inheritance, or escheat. Nonetheless, the king-count and his major vassals have little authority outside the lands they hold personally. Besides the archbishop of Tarragona and the bishops of Elne and Urgel (who hold their respective towns), and the bishops of Barcelona and Gerona (who hold extensive allodial properties) the major landholders in the march are:

**James**, king of Aragon, count of Barcelona, Gerona, Vich, Besalú, Pallors-Jussa, and Vallespir;

**Nunyo-Sanche**, count of Rousillion and Cerdagna, who is a cousin and rival of the Aragonese king;

**Raymond Roger**, French count of Foix, who holds the viscounty of Fenouillet from Nunyo-Sanche;

**Roger II**, French viscount of Couserans, and count of Pallors-Sobira by right of his wife Willema;

**Berenger**, count of Peralada;

**Raymond Fulk**, viscount of Cardona;

**Aurembaix**, countess of Urgel, who is held prisoner by her cousin and vassal Guerau;

**Guerau**, viscount of Cabrera and Ager, who claims the county of Urgel as his;

**Arnold**, viscount of Castelbon, another vassal of Countess Aurembaix;

**Hugh III**, count of Ampurias; and his vassals

**Dalmacio VI**, viscount of Rocaberti; and

**William de Cervera**, viscount of Bas.

# The Kingdom of Burgundy (Arelat)

The Burgundians, a Germanic tribe, were settled in the upper Saone and Rhone valleys by the Romans in 443 to protect the Alpine passes. With the gradual disintegration of the Western Empire, the Burgundians spread south and west until they controlled a region stretching from the Rhone to the Alps, and from the upper Rhine to the Mediterranean. In the 13th century, the Burgundian lords dominate all the western passes into and out of Italy. The people speak the Provençal dialect of *langue d'oc*, but shade into *langue d'oïl* in the north. The monastery of Grande Chartreuse, mother house of all the Charterhouses in Mythic Europe, is located here.

In 534 the Burgundian kingdom was conquered by Clovis and incorporated into the Frankish kingdom as a duchy. Following the end of the Carolingians, the nobles and bishops of the region elected local kings until 1033 when, following the death of Rudolf III, the kingdom reverted to Emperor Conrad II. The Burgundian kingdom of Arles (or Arelat) has since been joined to the German crown. There is no central authority in Burgundy, however, and the emperor can be safely ignored unless present with a large army. The counts and bishops are effective-

ly supreme in their own lands. The bishops of Tarrentaise, Basel, and Sion hold their respective counties, and the archbishops of Lyon, Vienne, and Besançon, and the bishops of Maurienne, Belley, Lausanne, Geneva, Grenoble, Valence, Die, Gap, and Embrun all rule in their respective towns. From north to south, the major Burgundian magnates are:

**Otto II**, German duke of Merania and count palatine of Burgundy by right of his wife Beatrice;

**Richard II de Montfaucon**, count of Montbéliard and vassal of Duke Otto;

**Stephen**, count of Auxonne in his own right, and of Chalon by right of his wife Beatrice (both the counts palatine and the neighboring French dukes of Burgundy claim overlordship over Auxonne, leaving Count Stephen with considerable latitude);

The three counts of Gruyères, Neuchâtel, and Hapsburg;

The German count of Urach, who holds the town of Fribourg since the extinction of the ducal house of Zäringen in 1218;

**Thomas**, count of Savoy (see *A Medieval Tapestry*, page 24), Belley, Maurienne, Aoste, and Chablais, as well as marquis of Susa in Italy;

**William,** count of Geneva;

**Guy IV,** count of Forez, a vassal of the French king;

**Andrew**, dauphin (count) of Vienne and count of Grenoble, Gap, Albon, Briançon, and Embrun;

**Raymond VI of Toulouse**, count of Venaissin and, as marquis of Provence, overlord of the counts of Die (Venaissin and the marquisate were surrendered to the Pope by the crusader Simon de Monfort, but have since been retaken by Raymond);

**William V de Sabran**, count of Forcalquier;

**Aimar II de Poitiers**, count of Valence, and vassal of Raymond (as marquis of Provence); and

**Raymond-Bérenger IV**, count of Provence and cousin of King James of Aragon.

# Italy

The Italian peninsula is divided into four broad jurisdictions. The kingdom of Italy covers the Po valley, Tuscany, Liguria, and the Alpine foothills. The Papal States to the south consist of the Patrimony of St. Peter (the duchy of Rome), the former exarchate of Ravenna, the march of Ancona, and the duchy of Spoleto. Further south is the kingdom of Sicily. Finally, the republic of Venice at the head of the Adriatic sea is nominally under the sovereignty of the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, but is an independent power in all but name. For information on the Hermetic history and politics of the peninsula, see *The Tribunals of Hermes: Rome*.

The recent mundane history of Italy has been dominated by the struggle between the Popes and the emperors. In theory, the two senior lay and clerical monarchs of Mythic Europe should work hand in hand, bringing about the peace and order conducive and necessary to salvation. The emperor's coronation by the Pope is seen as symbolic of this partnership. Despite this theoretical harmony, the two inevitably seem to end up at loggerheads over the appointment of imperial bishops. At times the Popes have had the upper hand, excommunicating and deposing recalcitrant emperors. Some emperors, however, have managed to temporarily impose their will by sweeping into Italy with large armies and deposing obstreperous Popes. As often as not these depositions merely lead to further confusion as kings and anti-kings, backed by their respective Popes and anti-Popes, fight it out.

The contest for supremacy between the Pope and emperor is not the mismatch one might initially assume. The Pope can generally count on the Italian communes, the king of Sicily, and the ever-rebellious German princes to back him in a fight. Time and again, however, Papal victories have turned to ashes as their preferred candidates for the imperial throne, humble and obsequious before their coronation, turn into unprincipled oppressors of the Church once crowned and annointed.

In a desperate effort to bring down the "perfidious" Welf Emperor Otto IV (originally a Papal nominee for the throne), Pope Innocent III turned with some trepidation to his ward Frederick II, heir to the dreaded Hohenstaufen line, longtime enemies of the Papacy. Victorious in Germany, Frederick has just been crowned emperor in 1220 by Honorius III. Though Honorius has again extracted all the usual assurances, oaths, and promises of good behavior, Frederick is in an unusually strong position. Not only is he now emperor, as well as king of Germany, Italy, and Burgundy, but he adds these titles to that of king of Sicily, which he inherited from his mother Constance. Only time will tell

whether he uses all this power for good or ill. Honorius and Frederick eye each other warily, and the Pope is keeping his fingers crossed.

## The Kingdom of Italy

In 568, the Germanic Lombards invaded northern Italy, overturning the Byzantine reconquest of the peninsula and giving their name to their new home (Lombardy). When they attempted to extend their conquests to Rome, the Pope, abandoned by the empire, turned instead to the Frankish kings. King Pepin the Short defeated the Lombards in 756 and confirmed the Pope's hold over the former Byzantine territories of central Italy. When the Lombards resumed their invasion of the Papal States a generation later, Pope Hadrian again turned to the Franks. This time Pepin's son and successor Charlemagne swept across the Alps and definitively annexed the kingdom of Italy in 774. In 800, he was crowned emperor by a grateful Leo III, reviving the imperial dignity in the West (which had been vacant since 476). The imperial title has since been associated with the kingdom of Italy. When the German King Otto I the Great succeeded in imposing himself both as king of Italy and as emperor, he established a permanent link between the three titles.

Like the rest of the former Carolingian empire, Italy has been nominally divided into counties consisting of individual towns and their surrounding countryside. By the 10th century, marches had been established in Friuli, Tuscany, Verona, Piedmont, and Liguria to ensure military cohesion in the face of Viking, Saracen, and Magyar raiders. As the pressure of Magyar raiders declined and the great noble families died out, the German emperors, who were rarely able to spend much time in Italy, chose not to replace them. Instead, they granted the vacant counties to their respective bishops, men whose appointments they controlled and on whose loyalty they felt they could depend.

Two factors have combined to undermine and bring down this system of indirect ecclesiastical rule. The investiture dispute between the Pope and the emperor over episcopal appointments tended to weaken the dependability of bishops as imperial agents. Also, the rise of the Italian communes tended to undercut episcopal authority from below first in the towns and then in the surrounding countryside. By the 13th century, virtually every Italian town of any consequence (and a great many inconsequential ones) is ruled by a commune, a sworn association of merchants and nobles that has either usurped, or been granted, legal authority. These town councils make and enforce laws, negotiate alliances, and even wage war with little reference to, or even against, their nominal sovereign, the emperor.

The growing power of the towns has not displaced the lesser Italian nobility — far from it. Nobles have kept their lands and many of their fortifications in the countryside, though they tend to live in fortified urban residences. There they participate in trade and in municipal government as captains and judges, though rarely as consuls (chief executive officials). Communal politics are far from harmonious, and communes are often riven by factions based on class interests or local antagonisms. Guilds compete for control with local magnates, and are frequently at loggerheads amongst themselves with merchant guilds competing for power with their craft counterparts. The Pope and emperor alternatively play on or are sucked into this factional strife, leading the competing parties to identify themselves as "Welf" (anti-imperial) or "Ghibelline" (pro-imperial), after the chief German castles of the Welf and Hohenstaufen houses that have traditionally competed for the imperial crown.

In an effort to overcome this factionalism, many towns have experimented with a new office called the *podestá*. This official is usually a noble outsider appointed jointly by both factions to act as an impartial war leader and guardian of the peace. He serves either for life or for a fixed term. Many *podeste* have proven unable to keep free of local political entanglements, or have attempted to turn themselves into lords rather than servants. As such, several towns have had to switch back and forth from having a *podestá* to an elected consular rule. In some cases, however, the *podestá* has come close to becoming a hereditary office. Only time will tell whether the *podestá* will develop into a new form of aristocratic lordship.

Very few of the old marquisal and episcopal principalities remain in 1220. Some of the formerly great noble families that have survived have been brought low through divided inheritances. The "progeny of Marquis Boniface del Vasto of Liguria," for example, has become a byword for impoverished Italian nobility. He divided his lands between seven sons, and of his

decendents only **Marquis Manfred III del Vasto of Saluzzo** still carries much weight. The other major Italian magnates in 1220 are **William VI Aleramici of Monferrat** and the irrepressible (and to his neighbors, quite dangerous) Burgundian magnate **Count Thomas of Savoy**, who holds the march of Susa in Italy (see page 127). Of the bishops, the wealthiest are the patriarch of Aquilea (effectively the archbishop of Venice), who holds much of the old march of Friuli; the bishops of Parma, Mantua, and Bobbio; and the bishop of Turin, who has made common cause with his city's commune against Thomas of Savoy's continuing encroachments.

## The Papal States

The Papal States claim to derive their origin from the Donation of Constantine. Upon founding his new capital in the east (Constantinople), the Roman emperor purportedly left the rule of the West and its surrounding islands to the Pope. While the authenticity of the Donation has been questioned, it has been used both by Popes to legitimize their claim to supreme overlordship over Western Christendom, and by the emperors who infer from it that what one emperor can give, another can take away.

Where central Italy is concerned, however, the Popes have more substantive and historical grounds for claiming sovereignty. By abdicating their responsibility to protect Rome against the Lombards, the Byzantines effectively surrendered their central Italian possessions to whatever public authority could maintain order, specifically the bishops, and most notably the Pope and the archbishop of Ravenna. When the Frankish King Pepin the Short intervened against the Lombards on the Pope's behalf in 756, he explicitly recognized the Pope's rights. This "Donation of Pepin" was subsequently confirmed by his son and successor Charlemagne after he annexed the Lombard kingdom in 774, though his subsequent coronation as emperor of the West muddied the sovereignty issue. Nonetheless, recent Popes

have managed to extract further confirmations from various claimants to the imperial title, accumulating an impressive collection of charters and documents all recognizing their sovereign right to central Italy.

While the Popes may hold clear title, the exercise of effective control has often eluded them. In their frequent quarrels with the papacy, some emperors have seen fit to appoint their own officials and even grant away parts of the Patrimony of St. Peter to their own followers, albeit with varying degrees of success. To compound the indignity, the Popes have also had to put up with the archbishop of Ravenna's pretensions to hold his own lands independently, and with the disloyalty and rebelliousness of the local noble families, not to mention their incessant meddling in papal elections. Most recently, the Popes have also had to put up with the rise of communes in the Papal States, not least in the city of Rome itself.

Despite these difficulties, like many of their more secular fellow monarchs, the Popes have attempted to painfully reconstruct a patchwork quilt of lordships, local alliances, feudal rights, and sovereign jurisdiction over the various parts of their domain. They have done this through patient and persistent diplomacy, ruthless exploitation of legacies, gradual extension of judicial rights, careful manipulation of feudal grants and tenures, occasional conquests, and sometimes through the outright purchase of contested castles and estates. In essence, the Pope presides over a shaky confederation of demesne lands, autonomous baronies and bishoprics, and free communes, often at war with themselves and with their sovereign.

Other than **Pope Honorius III** himself, the most important magnates in the Papal States in 1220 are the archbishop of Ravenna, **Marquis Ezzo VII d'Este** of Ancona (also *podestá* of Ferrara), and **Count John of Ceccano**. Other major landholders include a number of aristocratic clans such as the Colonna counts of Tusculum and Palestrina, the Conti counts of Segni, the Ottaviani counts of Sabina, the Frangipani counts of Terracina, and the Savelli counts of Ariccia (Honorius' own family).

## The Kingdom of Sicily

From 999 onwards, a steady trickle of impoverished Norman nobles sought employment as mercenaries in the endless quarrels between the various Lombard princes and Byzantine governors (exarchs) of southern Italy. In time, the Normans were able to displace the local rulers and even reconquer the island of Sicily, which had been in Arab hands since 827. By 1085, Roger de Hauteville-le-Guichard had established himself as sole ruler of Sicily and southern Italy, and in 1130 his son Roger II was crowned by the Pope as king of Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia. Roger, in turn, accepted the Pope as his overlord. This alliance between the Papacy and the Norman kings of Sicily proved decisive on several occasions in defeating the ambitions of the German emperors to rule all the peninsula.

In 1194, however, the Hohenstaufen Emperor Henry VI successfully claimed the Sicilian crown by right of his wife Constance. Fortunately for Pope Innocent III, Henry died three years later leaving his three-year-old son Frederick as a papal ward. While the Papacy experimented unsuccessfully with non-Hohenstaufen emperors, Frederick came of age in 1210, reclaimed Sicily, and spent the next ten years in Germany securing his claim to the German and thus imperial throne. In 1220 he has finally been crowned Emperor Frederick II by Pope Honorius III. After 23 years of neglect, the kingdom of Sicily is in chaos, and Frederick's first task is to bring order to his maternal inheritance. The Pope, meanwhile, still fearful of encirclement, can only wait to see whether Frederick abdicates the Sicilian throne to his infant son as promised.

Despite the small size of their kingdom, the kings of Sicily are traditionally among the wealthiest monarchs in Mythic Europe. This is mainly due to a punitively high level of taxation — always a sore point for the Sicilian nobility. Whereas knight service in most of Europe is for forty days, Sicilian nobles are expected to serve (or preferably pay) for ninety instead. The nobility is continually on the verge of bankruptcy, and in times of perceived weakness, rebellions tend to break out against the king's rule and exorbitant demands.

Several dozen nobles hold the title of count in the kingdom, though they are little more than glorified barons. Similarly, Sicilian barons would normally be considered landed knights in northern France. Sicilian counts and barons do not exercise high justice over their tenants (see page 48), this being reserved to the royal courts, nor do they control any of the major towns on the mainland, virtually all of which belong to the royal demesne. As a result, the kings are hostile to the Italian communal movement and stamp down hard whenever it shows its head in Sicily. Major ecclesiastical landholders include the archbishops of Palermo and Monréale, the bishop of Catana, and the arch-abbot of Montecassino, which is mother house of all the Benedictine monasteries in Mythic Europe. Two of Frederick II's more interesting vassals include the most famous pirates in Mythic Europe: **William Porco**, count of Syracuse and admiral of Sicily, who preys on Pisan shipping, and **Henry "Pescatore,"** count of Malta, who prefers to "fish" for Venetian ships instead. Both are also citizens of Genoa, sometimes leading to conflicting loyalties.

# Germany

When Charlemagne's grandsons divided the empire of their father Louis the Pious at the treaty of Verdun in 843, the eastern third was given to Louis the German. Ever since, this East Frankish kingdom has suffered from something of an identity crisis. To begin with, each of the kingdom's component peoples — the Franks, Saxons, Bavarians, Swabians, Thuringians, and Frisians — had their own code of tribal law. The kingdom's fragile identity was then partially submerged within the empire when Otto I the Great successfully claimed the imperial crown in 962. Finally, expansion and colonization of the Slavic lands to the east led to the integration of alien peoples including the Slavic kingdom of Bohemia — now a kingdom within a kingdom. This confusion is even reflected in uncertainty over what Louis the German's heritage should be called. "East Francia" is misleading as most of the inhabitants of the kingdom are not Franks. "Germania," a name with a long and honorable classical pedigree, is inadequate because it would exclude the trans-Rhenish parts of Lorraine (including the coronation site at Aachen), which, in Roman times, would have been part of Gaul. "Kingdom of the Germanics" (*Deutchland*) would in turn exclude Bohemia, while "Kingdom of the Romans" fails to distinguish between the royal and imperial crowns. Perhaps the most misleading name of all is the one most commonly used by the 13th century royal chancery: "Alemannia." Strictly speaking, only the Swabians are Alamanni, but at least this designation has the virtue of pointing to the two Swabian houses, the Welfs and Hohenstaufens, whose rivalry for the crown has so marked the kingdom's recent history.

As befits a kingdom of such uncertain identity and whose monarch has only a scattered territorial base, Germany has no fixed capital. Royal coronations occur at Aachen (imperial coronotions take place in Rome), but Aachen is far from being Germany's largest or most important town. The royal court perambulates from place to place while the king is in Germany, and scatters to various royal estates and palaces when he is abroad.

Until the early 12th cenutry, the German kings relied primarily on the great tribal dukes of Saxony, Bavaria, and Swabia to keep order in their respective provinces and to call up the mass levy of freemen that formed the bulk of the royal armies. The dukes were normally drawn from either the royal family or from the great landholders in each province. Their authority was not feudal in that most of the counts were royal rather than ducal vassals. The ducal office itself, however, was considered quasi-hereditary and the dukes usually had numerous vassals of their own. Other than leading the tribal levy, the duke's main role was to preside at assemblies of the great men of the province to arbitrate their disputes and, when necessary, bring them to the attention of the king. A duke who was opposed by the bishops and counts of his province was thus largely powerless outside his own domains.

In the last century two factors have conspired to undermine the traditional power of the dukes. The Investiture Dispute divided the great men of the realm, primarily along dynastic and ideological rather than regional lines, fatally undermining the local consensus of magnates which was central to the effective exercise of ducal authority. Perhaps of greater long-term significance has been the relative decline in the importance of the mass levy in light of the increasing emphasis on heavily armored horsemen. The constant external and civil wars have worn down the free German peasantry, and by the 13th century nine-tenths of the population of the kingdom had become unfree and thus exempt from the mass levy. Only the magnates can afford to equip the professional knightly forces that have dominated the field for the past hundred years. As a result, the kings have increasingly bypassed the dukes to negotiate directly with the counts and bishops for knightly contingents, offering new rights and grants in return. By 1220, the ducal title, while still prestigious, has become largely empty. Ducal authority has been parceled out, and the number of great lords claiming the title has swollen to almost two dozen.

## Conflict with the Papacy

In the mid-11th century a historic partnership between the Pope and the emperor came to a sudden end with the deaths in 1054 and 1056 of its main protagonists. Pope Leo IX and Emperor Henry III had worked hand in hand to bring about a general reform of the Church aimed at raising the standards of piety, learning, and morality of the clergy. Though Henry had been conscientious in his choice of bishops, many of the reformers saw in "lay investiture" (the appointment of bishops and abbots by laymen) the root of simony and other forms of clerical corruption. Henry IV was only six when his father died, and the reformist cardinals took advantage of his long minority to elect a sequence of popes without any reference to the traditional nomination rights of the royal court.

The next step involved the explicit condemnation of lay investiture by a number of synods presided over by these reformist popes. As Henry was unwilling to surrender control over episcopal appointments, he ignored these new prohibitions and continued to invest bishops in Germany and Italy. Matters came to head in 1070 in a dispute over the vacant archbishopric of Milan. Henry and Pope Gregory VII backed rival candidates in the first of a series of clashes over episcopal appointments. By 1076 Gregory had excommunicated a number of the king's key advisors, and Henry had had enough. He summoned a synod of German bishops and declared Gregory deposed. Gregory responded by excommunicating the king and, in an unprecedented move of breathtaking audacity, declared Henry deposed and freed his vassals of their oaths of fealty. This proved too much for the German princes, already chaffing under Henry's arrogant and arbitrary rule. They deserted the king *en masse* and Henry was forced to submit to the Pope at Canossa the following year.

Henry's surrender was only temporary, however, and the succeeding years saw the election of anti-popes and anti-kings as both Henry and Gregory fought for the loyalty of the German princes and bishops, and the support of the Italian communes. The dispute outlasted both Henry and Gregory, and a shaky compromise was not reached until 1122 at the Concordat of Worms. Papal elections were to be free of royal interference. German bishops and abbots were to be elected freely, but in the king's presence. Only then would the new incumbents swear fealty for their lands.

While this settled the dispute over investitures, it did not resolve the underlying conflict. In order to maintain their hard-won independence, the popes have striven to undermine royal authority in northern Italy by supporting the communal movement. The German kings, in turn, have attempted to dominate and overawe the papacy to minimize its interference in their affairs. Despite this rivalry, the two leading monarchs of Christendom are inextricably linked through the process of imperial coronation. The king can only receive his imperial anointment at the hands of the Pope, but the coronation also forms the basis for the Pope's claim to judge the suitability of the king.

In 1125 the ruling Salian line died out, leaving two great families, the Welfs and the Hohensaufens, to compete for the German throne. In 1152 a compromise was reached with the election of the Hohenstaufen duke of Swabia, Frederick I Barberossa (red beard), whose mother had been a Welf. Frederic made peace with his Welf cousin, Henry the Lion, confirming him as duke of Saxony and Bavaria, and was able to secure an imperial coronation from

Pope Hadrian IV in exchange for suppressing a rebellion by the Roman commune. But Frederick's efforts to reestablish control of the rich Lombard cities led to a direct conflict with the papacy. In 1159 Frederick was able to exploit a disputed papal election to secure the compliant support of the anti-pope Victor IV. Most of Europe backed his rival, Pope Alexander III, and the resulting schism divided Western Christendom for nineteen years

German ambitions in Italy were finally achieved when Frederick's son, Henry VI, successfully claimed the kingdom of Sicily in his wife's name in 1194. Henry's triumph was short-lived, however, as he died suddenly of typhus in 1197, leaving a two year-old son, the future Frederick II. In the disputed royal election that followed, both the Welf Otto IV and Henry's younger brother Henry claimed the throne, leading to a prolonged civil war. Meanwhile, the cardinals elected a great and subtle lawyer and diplomat, Innocent III, as the new Pope. Innocent assumed the guardianship of Frederick, engineered the expulsion of German troops from his ward's Sicilian kingdom, and succeeded in reestablishing papal independence. When Philip was assassinated in 1208, Innocent accepted Otto's claim to the throne and crowned him emperor in 1209. Despite Otto's sworn assurances, the new emperor proceeded to invade southern Italy in an effort to reunite the Sicilian and imperial crowns. Innocent responded by launching the sixteen-year-old Frederick's ultimately successful bid for the German throne with financial support from Philip II Augustus of France. After Otto's defeat at the battle of Bouvines (see page 79) his position became untenable, and Frederick was crowned at Aachen the following year. Otto died three years later. In 1220, Frederick has been crowned emperor by Innocent's successor, Honorius III.

The extent of Frederick's realms as king of the Germans, Burgundy, Italy, and Sicily dwarf those of any other monarch in Mythic Europe, but this is deceptive. Except in Sicily, Frederick's power is highly diffuse. His authority is nominal in Burgundy and can only be enforced at sword-point in Italy. In Germany itself it rests primarily on extensive though scattered family and royal holdings. Altogether, Frederick's imperial and Sicilian holdings generate about the same revenues as the more compact possessions of his more prestigious and powerful sometime-ally, King Philip of France.

# Peculiarities of German Feudalism

German feudalism has a number of features that, while not unique, are more pronounced in Germany than elsewhere.

## *Prince-Bishops*

The most prominent peculiarity of German feudalism is the role played by bishops as major landed vassals of the king. Suspicious of the loyalty of the increasingly-hereditary feudal aristocracy, 10th and 11th century kings tended to rely instead on the support of their bishops, men whose appointment had traditionally been within the royal prerogative. To this end, the kings endowed many bishoprics with vast holdings, in some cases covering several counties, secure and confident in the knowledge that the incumbents would always back their royal patrons. The Investiture Dispute changed all this. Kings can no longer count on enforcing their nominations to episcopal sees, and the bishops have simply become another type of territorial magnate of uncertain loyalty whose support has to be sought on a case by case basis.

## *Church Advocates*

The administration of high justice is specifically the responsibility of those holding comital authority, but in Germany the application of the death penalty and the shedding of blood is largely seen as incompatible with clerical status. For these reasons bishops and abbots have had to delegate high justice and the leadership of their troops to lay substitutes called advocates (not to

## A Mysterious Prophecy

Shortly after the death of Henry VI, several people in the lands of the archbishop of Trier claimed to have seen a ghostly rider on a black horse. According to a chronicler, "They shrank back, but he rode boldly up to them and said that they should not fear for themselves." He said he was the old king Dietrich of Bern (see page 69), and had come to announce that the whole Roman empire would soon suffer misery and catastrophes of many kinds.

be confused with court advocates). In many cases such positions have become akin to hereditary fiefs, and many advocates have abused their authority, either usurping lordship or merging their advocacies with other fiefs, effectively taking them out of Church hands. Conflicts between bishops and their advocates, some of whom are also among the great lords of the realm, are frequent.

## *Immunities*

The administration of justice and the collection of public revenues from royal estates have normally been exempted from the jurisdictions of the counts. Such estates are called "immunities." At the request of several churchmen, immune status was sometimes granted by the kings to Church lands in order to protect them from the exactions and encroachments of local counts. Over time many of these estates have since been re-granted to others but have kept their immune status. No royal official other than the holder of the immune estate (the "immunist") can exercise public authority within the immunity. In theory, the king could exercise this authority in person if he were present, but as such an occurrence is usually only a remote possibility, immunities have largely become indistinguishable from allods.

## *Counts Palatine*

In some provinces, the kings attempted to keep a check on ducal power by appointing a justiciar called a "count palatine." These officials administered royal estates and each acted as supreme judge and royal representative in the province. Over time, however, this position has also become hereditary and has formed the basis of great territorial lordships in its own right. In the small province of Thuringia, most of the counties are held by such officials, who hold the title of landgrave. A landgrave or count palatine enjoys the same status as a margrave, the German equivalent of a marquis.

## *Inheritance Laws*

Inheritance laws in Germany also have certain peculiarities. Fiefs are normally only hereditary in the direct male line. In other words, the claimant must be able to prove direct male descent from a previous holder of the fief. Because of this restriction, fiefs revert back to their overlords more frequently than in France, for example, where female or collateral inheritance is recognized, though in principle they must be re-granted to a new vassal (often the overlord's son or brother) within a year.

Primogeniture is not a widely accepted practice in Germany and all male heirs of equal degree have an equal claim to an inheritance. As fiefs cannot be divided without the overlord's consent, this often results in a complex shuffling of allodial estates, fiefs, advocacies, and immunities upon a lord's death to ensure an equitable partition of the family holdings. Since women cannot inherit fiefs, they are usually provided with extensive dowries, usually consisting of allodial estates. Fortunately, the number of allodial holdings in Germany is quite large. Some of these are as extensive as whole counties, having been carved out through the colonization and clearance of forests and the drainage of swamps and wetlands.

## *Ministeriales*

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of German feudalism is the prevalence of unfree knights (*ministeriales*). A *Dienestman*, as he is called in High German, is a knight who, like a serf, is subject to the arbitrary authority of his lord. He can be bought and sold and has no claim to any justice beyond that of his lord. His descendants are equally unfree. Most *ministeriales* not born to this status were originally freemen who surrendered their free status in exchange for the arms and armor of a knight. A small number were originally prominent and trusted household serfs raised to knighthood by their lords. The institution is particularly popular in Germany, where most knights are *ministeriales*, because it permits lords to keep an unusually tight hold over their vassals. *Ministeriales* are true nobles, however, albeit of lower status than free knights. A number of royal *ministeriales* hold extensive hereditary fiefs of their own. The institution is less popular outside of Germany, particularly since the treacherous murder during mass of Count Charles the Good of Flanders in 1127 by an overproud *ministerialis* whose estates the count had decided to confiscate.

# Saxony

The Saxons were conquered and converted to Christianity by Charlemagne following a series of bloody campaigns undertaken from 722 to 804. Towards the end of the 9th century, the Liudofings emerged as the leading family and were recognized as Saxony's first dukes. Saxon dukes have twice been elected as rulers of the East Frankish kingdom. In 918 Henry I was elected and founded the Ottonian dynasty, which ruled Germany and the empire until 1024. Later, when the succeeding royal Salian dynasty died out in 1125, Duke Lothar III was elected as the new king. Shortly before his own death without male heirs in 1137, Lothar granted the duchy to his Welf son-in-law Duke Henry the Proud of Bavaria.

Henry's son, Henry the Lion, was the last great duke of Saxony. He married the daughter of Henry II of England, creating an enduring tie

between the Welfs and the Plantagenets. In 1180, however, the Saxon counts and bishops rebelled and complained of Henry's oppressive rule to Emperor Frederick I Barberossa. When Henry failed to appear when summoned, judgement was delivered against him and he was dispossessed of all his imperial fiefs. Ducal authority in Saxony was split up, with the archbishop of Cologne acting as duke in Westphalia and Count Bernard of Anhalt acting as duke in the eastern part of Saxony. Even with the loss of the ducal title, Henry was able to hold on to his very extensive allodial estates in central Saxony, leaving the Welfs as still one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in the kingdom.

The Saxons speak a dialect of Low German and have played a pivotal role in the conversion and colonization of the lands of the Slavic Abodrites across the Elbe. The Saxons have also fought many wars against their Danish neighbors to the North. In the 1160s, in an effort to put an end to cross-border raids, the Danes rebuilt and reinforced the Danewerk. This ancient earth and brick berm was originally built in Carolingian times and is seven paces high and a league long across the most exposed southern stretch of the Jutland peninsula. The recent disorders in Germany have given the Danes the upper hand, however, and King Valdemar II the Conqueror now holds all Saxony north of the Elbe.

## Upper and Lower Lorraine (Lotharingia)

When Louis the Pious' empire was divided by his sons in 843, his eldest son Lothar I was recognized as emperor by his brothers and received as his share Italy, Burgundy, and the western part of the old province of Austrasia, consisting largely of the lower Rhine basin. When Lothar died in 855, his second son Lothar II inherited these Rhenish lands, which were thus named Lorraine (Lotharingia) after him. In time, Lothar's kingdom fell to the East Frankish kings and become a constituent part of Germany. Originally incorporated as a duchy, it was found to be too unwieldy a charge and was first divided into Upper and Lower Lorraine by Otto I the Great in 959, the division becoming permanent after 1024. The duchy of Upper Lorraine is still nominally held in 1220 by the counts of Bar, though this distinction is contested by the counts of Luxembourg. In the more populous Lower Lorraine, ducal authority of varying extent is claimed by the duke of Brabant, duke of Limburg, archbishop of Cologne, and bishop of Liège.

While Lorraine is their ancestral home, the Franks have spread out thinly over their extensive conquests, between the Loire in Gaul and the Thuringian forest, and have been assimilated by their subject peoples. Frankish was already dying out as a language in Charlemagne's day, and the inhabitants of Lorraine north of the coronation site of Aachen speak various Low German dialects. Those in the environs of Aachen itself and to the southeast speak High German, while those to the southwest speak Picard and other *langue d'oïl* dialects. Along the northern coast east of the Wadden sea live the Frisians, a fishing and trading people. The Frisians have so far violently resisted — with considerable success — efforts by the counts of Holland and the bishop of Utrecht to bring them under feudal rule. They prefer to live instead under their own tribal law (*Lex Frisionum*) as free subjects of the German kings. The other inhabitants of Lorraine live under various local customary versions of Frankish Law (*Lex Salica* and *Lex Ribvaria*).

## Franconia and Thuringia

Franconia consists largely of the middle basin of the Rhine and its tributary the Main, and takes its name from the Franks who first settled in the region in the 6th century after defeating the Alamanni and the Thuringians. It has not had a duke since 939. Instead, because of its central location and the concentration of crown estates that are combined with the king's personal holdings when he is elected, it now serves as a

### The Silver Mines of Goslar

The greatest single source of wealth for the German kings were the famous silver mines in the Harz mountains near Goslar, particularly the great Rammelsberg, once the richest lode in Mythic Europe. First discovered in the mid-10th century, the mines gradually became flooded in the 12th century, and are no longer as productive. Some claim a clan of local mountain faeries have diverted an underground river into the mines in order to drive off the greedy mundane minors. Whatever the truth, the emperor would be very interested in any scheme that would return the mines to their fabled productivity.

kind of royal duchy. As the wealthy sees of Mainz, Würzburg, and Bamberg, as well as the great abbeys of Fulda and Hersfeld, hold much of the rest of the province, royal influence tends to predominate. Wedged to the northeast between Saxony and Franconia lies the small province of Thuringia. Definitively conquered and Christianized by the Franks in 740, the Thuringians had originally been a union of three peoples (the Hermunduri, the Warni, and the Angli) formed towards the end of the 4th century. Like all the constituent peoples of the East Frankish kingdom, the Thuringians have their own code of tribal law. The largest landholder in Thuringia in 1220 is Landgrave Louis the Pious.

## Swabia

The duchy of Swabia is named after the Suevi, the largest component of a 3rd century tribal confederation called the Alamanni ("all men"). Another branch of the Suevi settled in Iberia and for a while contested the Visigoth domination of the peninsula. Subjected by the Franks in 506, the Alamanni remained largely pagan for another century and were the last of the original Germanic invaders of the Roman empire to adopt Christianity. In 730, their autonomy was suppressed by the Frankish King Pepin II, and while the Alamanni preserved their traditional system of tribal law, the duchy became in time an integral part of the East Frankish kingdom.

The recent history of Swabia has been characterized by the rivalry for local dominance between three competing "ducal" families. The Zähringens held extensive lands in the west, the Welf dukes of Bavaria and Saxony held major estates in the east, and the Hohenstaufen dukes of Savabia and later kings of Germany had much of the land in between. From this struggle the Hohenstaufens have emerged supreme. The deposition of the Welf Duke Henry the Lion in 1180 meant the loss of all his Swabian fiefs, while the death of the last Zähringen duke without male heirs in 1218 has led to a reversion of many of his fiefs to the crown. Swabia now provides the core of Frederick II's German territorial power base. The bishops of Constance, Augsburg, and Chur are nominally also major landholders in the province, as are the abbots of St. Gallen, Richenau, and Murbach, though much of this land is actually controlled by powerful advocates from amongst the surrounding lay nobility.

## Bavaria

Conquered by Charlemagne in 788, Bavaria became the home base of his grandson Louis the German, the first king of East Francia. The duchy was normally held by a member of the royal family, and as a result there are fewer royal estates here than anywhere else in Germany. In the second half of the 11th century, however, the duchy was granted to the Welfs, a wealthy Swabian family who held it almost continually until Emperor Frederick I Barberossa confiscated it from Henry the Lion in 1180 and granted it to the Wittelsbachs. The current dukes have maintained a long-running feud with the other great landholders in the duchy, the archbishops of Salzburg. Like Saxony, Bavaria has played a critical role in the German colonization and missionary movement to the east, spawning a number of marches, most of which have become duchies in their own right.

## Bohemia and Moravia

The Czechs, a Slavic people, first migrated to the upper Elbe basin some time in the 5th century, settling in the plains nestled between the Brass Mountains (*Erz Gebirger*) and the great

### How Premysl Gained the Throne

Towards the end of the 8th century, Bohemia was ruled by a prince named Krok. Though Krok had no sons, he was blessed with three daughters of whom the wisest and gentlest was the youngest, Libusa, known for her prophetic visions. When Krok died, the Czechs chose Libusa as their ruler, but when the son of a chief called Klen refused to accept her arbitration in a dispute with his brother over their father's inheritance, she abdicated and asked the Czechs whom they wanted to rule them instead. The chiefs could not agree on a single candidate so they posed the question back to Libuöa, promising to accept as their ruler whomever she chose as her husband. Instead of picking from amongst them, however, Libuöa prophesied that "Behind these hills is a small river called Belina, and at its bank a farm called Stadic. Near that farm is a field, and in that field your future king is plowing with two oxen marked with various spots. His name is Premysl and his descendants will reign over you forever." And so it came to pass.

— Adapted from Cosmas of Prague's 12th century *Pragensis Chronica Bohemorun*

Bohemian Forest. They formed a united principality in the mid-7th century. Christianity was introduced in 874 at the hands of St. Methodius, the Apostle to the Slavs, but had to compete with paganism for many years. In 929 the young Duke Wenceslaus (of Christmas carol fame) was murdered on his way to mass in a conspiracy organized by his pagan brother Boleslav, and was subsequently canonized as Bohemia's patron saint. Long a tributary of the German crown, Bohemia was formally integrated into the East Frankish kingdom as a duchy in 1114. In recognition of its unique Slavic character, Emperor Frederick Barberossa raised the duchy to the status of a subject kingdom in 1198, and the then newly crowned King Otakar is still ruling in 1220. Bohemia also has its own eastern march of Moravia, and the title of margrave is usually granted to the king's son or brother.

The Premyslid dynasty has ruled since the 8th century, though it has been frequently beset by internal disputes and conflicts with the various tribal or clan chiefs. While part of the greater German kingdom, Bohemia is only now becoming feudalized, and plays only a peripheral role in German politics.

## The Eastern Marches

North and south of Bohemia lie the various marches which are the easternmost extension of German colonization in Mythic Europe. Acquired by gradual conquest or by marriage into the families of local Slavic chiefs, this expansion has been encouraged by the emperors and the Saxon and Bavarian dukes aided by great mission bishoprics such as Merseberg, Magdeburg, and Salzburg. The southeastern marches are the most developed with the higher proportion of German colonists and have since been detached from Bavaria and promoted to duchies. They are Austria and Styria, ruled by Duke Leopold VI the Glorious; Carinthia, held in 1220 by the Sponheims of Lanvantthal; and Meran, held by Duke Otto II, whose main estates, however, lie in Andechs and Tyrol in Bavaria. The northern marches are less developed and have fewer German colonists. This is not for lack of trying, however, and warfare with the Slavs remains endemic. The marches of Lusatia and Meissen are held by the Wettin Margrave Dietrich the Oppressed, while Brandenburg is held jointly by the co-margraves John and Otto II.

# The Norse Lands

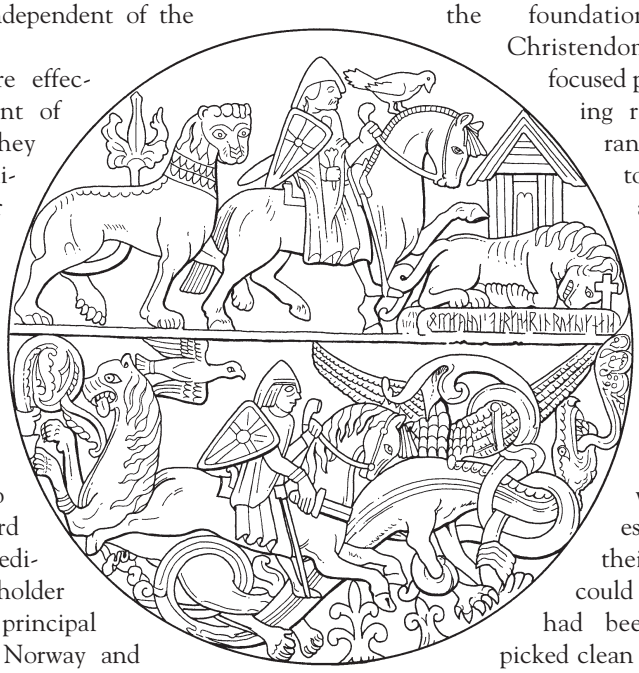
The Norse are a Germanic people speaking some thirty related dialects. All of these are mutually comprehensible and together form one language. For conventional purposes, these dialects can be grouped into Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian, but this does little justice to their linguistic diversity. One Norse peculiarity is the survival of various runic scripts. These have been in general decline since the adoption of Christianity some 200 years ago, but are still occasionally used for casual messages, and can be read on some of the older funerary inscriptions. To the north and east live hunter-gatherers, called Sammi or Lapps, and their closely related cousins, the Finns. These mysterious peoples have their own language and have largely remained heathen. The Norwegian kings extract tribute from these northern neighbors in the form of furs, while the Swedes have been attempting to colonize and convert Finland, though with little success.

The Norse live primarily in isolated rural districts of varying size and population (there are very few towns). These districts consist of islands, the coasts of fjords, and patches of exploitable agricultural land separated by lakes, thick woods, and impassable mountains. The difficulty of land-based travel and communication has fostered a strong sense of local identity, reinforced by dialectical differences. There are three such districts in Denmark (Jutland, Sealand, and Scania), five in Norway, and sixteen in Sweden.

Each district holds regular gatherings of the *thing* (or *ting*), a public assembly of freemen at which local laws are passed and criminal and legal cases are tried. The king is responsible for implementing any decisions and receives a share of any fines imposed. By the 13th century, the *thing* is losing much of its legislative authority to the Church, and also to the king, who is normally able to impose his will. Nonetheless, each district maintains its own laws and legal peculiarities.

While the vast majority of the Norse are free, not all are landowners. Many must work the land of others as sharecroppers or tenants. In Norway, the more prominent landowners in a district are called *hersir* (there are equivalents in the other Norse kingdoms), and form a kind of peasant aristocracy. Some of the wealthier of

these men, called *lendermaend,* have been granted life interests in the management of royal farms and estates in their districts in exchange for military service and a share of the produce. Not all royal estates have been granted out in this way, however, and some are managed by appointed officials, often of low social rank. There is often considerable tension between these officials, who tend to be loyalists, and the *lendermaend,* who tend to be more independent of the king.



*Lendermaend* are effectively the equivalent of barons. Though they enjoy no formal judicial authority, their views tend to predominate at the local *thing*. Castles are rare in the Norse lands, and are usually held by the king. The closest thing to a count is the *jarl* (related to the English word "earl"). This is a hereditary title, and the holder acts as the king's principal military official in Norway and Sweden, and as viceroy in the Norwegian dependencies in the Orkneys, Shetlands, Hebrides, and the Isle of Man.

In local terms, the Norse monarchs are extremely wealthy men. This wealth is due primarily to the extensive land holdings traditionally confiscated from their opponents. As dynastic disputes are frequent, each change of monarch is often accompanied by civil war, followed by large-scale confiscations. The flip side of this practice is that it creates a large pool of disaffected exiles always eager to support any new pretender who might promise the return of lost estates.

Except possibly in Denmark, taxation remains fairly primitive as money is scarce, even in the 13th century. While the kings of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway normally reside in their principal towns of Roskilde, Uppsala, and Bergen, respectively, they frequently travel with their court and permanent bodyguard (*hyrd*) from one royal estate to another, consuming the local produce as they go. The estate managers and barons are responsible for collecting the guest-tax from the surrounding countryside when the court visits, and this is the principal form of royal taxation.

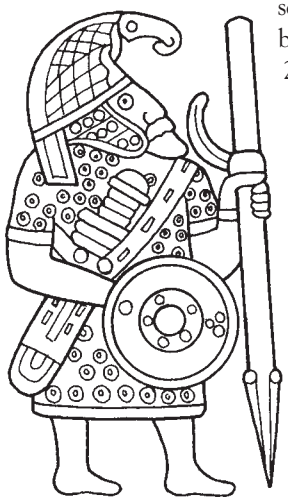
The Norse made their first and most decisive impact on Mythic Europe as pirates and conquerors. The sack of the great monastery of Lindisfarne in 793 on the Northumbrian coast initiated two centuries of Viking raids that shook the foundations of western Christendom. These raids focused primarily on plundering rich abbeys and on ransoming helpless towns along the coasts and rivers of France and the British Isles. What made these raids possible was a revolution in shipbuilding, permitting the Vikings to attack unexpectedly, overwhelm local defenses, and withdraw with their booty before help could arrive. Once an area had been devastated and picked clean over several decades of raids, the pirates could settle it and use it as a wintering base from which to extend their depredations farther.

Various strategies were used to defend against these raids, the most effective being the walling of towns, the erection of castles, and the building of stone bridges across rivers. These new fortifications hindered plundering and blocked off access and retreat routes. Eventually the old Viking wintering bases turned into permanent settlements and were integrated into the developing network of feudal dependencies. Other factors also made piracy less attractive. The spread of Christianity and the growth of unified monarchies back home denied Vikings a safe refuge and sucked surplus manpower into domestic strife and religious observance. By about the year 1000, the Viking raids had essentially ceased and Norway, Sweden, and Denmark entered the community of Christian kingdoms as full members. More information on the Norse lands can be found in the sourcebook *Ultima Thule: Mythic Scandinavia*.

# Denmark

According to the great Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus, the kings of the legendary Skjoldung dynasty ruled over what is now Denmark from the 6th century until they were defeated at the battle of Braavalla by a Swedish-led grand coalition in the mid-8th century. The Danish kingdom subsequently broke up into feuding chiefdoms, frequently at war among themselves and, as Vikings, with much of northern Europe. The country was definitively reunited by Harold Bluetooth in 950. Harold was eager to secure the recognition of his royal neighbors, and accepted baptism at the hands of German missionaries led by Poppo in 966. By the time of Harold's death in 985, Denmark had foresworn paganism and had fully entered the Christian commonwealth.

In 1013 Harold's son, Sven Forkbeard, massed a great fleet drawn from throughout the Norse lands and invaded England. King Ethelred fled to the court of his father-in-law, Duke Richard of Normandy, but returned to England in 1014 when Sven died within a month of his victory. Sven was succeeded in Denmark by his elder son Harold II, but his younger son Canute (then only fifteen) took command of the Danish forces in England. When Ethelred and his son Edmund Ironside both died in 1016, Canute claimed the English crown as his own, marrying Ethelred's widow, Emma of Normandy, in 1017. In 1018 Harold died, and Canute succeeded to the Danish throne as well. He was able to place his son Sven on the Norwegian throne in 1031, thus completing his conquests. While this virtual empire collapsed after the death of Canute's son Hardacanute in 1042, it is still remembered in Denmark with awe and pride almost 200 years later.



Geographically the smallest of the Norse kingdoms, Denmark is by far the most populous. The western coast of Jutland is sandy, wind-swept, and poor, but Sealand and Scania have rich soils and a prosperous fishing and agricultural base. Each of these three regions has its own *thing*, defining local law and settling legal disputes. Denmark is also the most feudalized of the Nordic kingdoms, with mounted knights increasingly playing a major role in the wars of King Valdemar II the Victorious in Germany and along the Baltic sea. Denmark even includes a duchy, Sønderjylland, centered on Schleswig, though it is currently held directly by Valdemar, who has been king since 1202.

While not quite on the scale of those of Canute, Valdemar's realm and conquests are still impressive. As duke he seized the German county of Holstein and occupied the town of Lubeck in 1201, securing recognition of these conquests from Otto IV, then the Welf claimant to the German throne in desperate need of support against the Hohenstaufens. In 1213, Philip II Augustus released from semi-captivity his estranged second wife Ingeborg of Denmark, Valdemar's sister, and acknowledged her again as his queen. The renewed alliance between France and Denmark proved profitable to both parties. Valdemar switched sides in his German politics, backing the claims of Frederick II against Otto and defeating the Welf forces in 1214, the same year in which Philip defeated Otto at Bouvines. As a reward, Frederick has acknowledged Valdemar's control of the Wendish lands between the Elbe and the Elde, territory the north German magnates had long claimed as rightly theirs. In 1216 Valdemar rounded off his German conquests by occupying the city of Hamburg.

Valdemar has also been an active crusader in the Baltic since 1206. Most recently, he landed in Estonia in 1219 and conquered the area with the support of Bishop Albert of Riga and the Knights of the Sword, a Baltic military order. While his relations with his Baltic allies are becoming increasingly strained, Valdemar is at the height of his power and is searching for new lands to conquer.

# Norway

Norway was first united around the year 900 by Harold I Fairhair, whose father had been a minor king of Vestfold and a member of the famous Yngling family of Sweden. While this first united Norwegian kingdom did not last, one of Harold's descendants, Olav I Tryggvason, was able to proclaim himself king of a reunited Norway in 995. Olav was not Norway's first Christian king, however, as that distinction belonged to Harold's son Haakon I the Good. But whereas Haakon was unable to impose his faith on his subjects, Olaf succeeded in doing so in five short years. The task was completed by another of Harold's descendants, St. Olav II,

whose martyrdom at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030 gave Norway its first saint.

While only the descendants of Harold Fairhair have been able to claim the Norwegian throne, there has never been a fully accepted rule for determining the order of succession. The Church and successive kings have attempted to impose something akin to primogeniture, but each local *thing* has traditionally reserved the right to acclaim one or another contender for the throne. Pretenders have often found ready support among the disaffected, exploiting local rivalries and the growing antagonism between tenants and wealthy landlords.

Most recently these divisions have led to the formation of two factions: the Birchlegs (so named because their poorer supporters were so destitute they had to patch their trousers with bark) and the Bagler (named for the Norse word for a bishop's crozier, representing the Church and the established nobility). The Birchlegs have had the better of the contest since 1180 and have now become a respectable party (though the label has stuck), but most of the Bagler have only recently submitted and accepted the nominal rule of **King Haakon IV Haakonson,** who is now sixteen. The real ruler of Norway, however, is his cousin **Jarl Skule Baardson**, half brother of the previous King Inge II. Besides Jarl Skule, the other major vassals of King Haakon are **John Haroldson**, jarl of the Orkneys and Shetlands, and lord of the Scottish earldom of Caithness; and **Reginald**, "king" of Man and the Isles (Hebrides).

## Sweden

The Swedes also had a Viking tradition, but unlike the Danes and Norwegians, their efforts were mainly focused on the east, resulting in the establishment of Norse-Slav principalities in Novgorod and Kievan Rus. The origins of the Swedish kingdom are obscure. Reportedly a personal union resulted from the acceptance by the Goths (living in the south around lakes Vener and Vetter) of the king of the Svear (living to the northeast around Uppsala) as their ruler. Whether this occurred under Olaf Tax-king (990-1022) or under his father Eric the Victorious is unclear.

Olaf, at any rate, was certainly the first Christian king of Sweden. The Goths had abandoned paganism at least a generation earlier, but the Svear had held fast to their heathen beliefs and practices under the influence of the powerful pagan temple at Uppsala. Olaf was unable to overcome this resistance, but in 1060 the ancient Yngling dynasty died out, and Stenkil, a Christian Gothic noble, was elected as king. This heralded a shift in the balance of power between Goths and Svears, and by the end of the 11th century, the pagan shrine at Uppsala had been torn down and Christianity had won the day.

Since 1156 two families, the Sverkers and the related Erics, have competed for the throne, with kings from one line or the other alternating in bloody succession. The current king since 1216 is John Sverkersson (of the Sverker family), but the real ruler of Sweden is the head of the powerful Folkung family. Closely related to both royal clans, the Folkungar have been able to emerge stronger from each succeeding reign and now monopolize the office of *jarl*. In 1220, Jarl Carl Doefve has died while on an expedition to Estonia, but his son Jarl Ulf Fasi has neatly stepped into his shoes, and intends to remain on top whoever occupies the throne.

## The North Slavs

The southern and eastern coasts of the Baltic sea are inhabited by a number of Baltic and minor Slavic peoples. Farther inland and to the south, the upper Vistula, Oder, and Warta valleys were settled in the 5th and 6th centuries by the Slavic Poles. Farther to the east, the forested lands of the middle Dnieper and upper Volga basins were inhabited by a different group of Slavic tribes. These were united in the 9th century by the Varangian Nordic invaders from whom they took the name "Rus." To the southeast this region borders on the great Steppe lands that stretch eastwards over great distances all the way to fabled Cathay. The Steppes were then, as now, inhabited by nomadic Khazars, Bulgars, and especially Pechenegs and Cumans (also called Polotsvi). While there is often friction between Slavic farmers and nomadic pastoralists, the two normally maintain a relationship of mutually beneficial trade.

Both the Poles and the Rus, like all Slavic peoples, were originally divided into clans consisting of free subsistence farmers claiming a common descent. The members of each clan

held in common a distinct patch of cleared land. The various clans are now normally grouped into tribal confederacies, each presided over by a duke or prince (*knez* or *knyez*) who acts as supreme judge and war leader. To this day, much of the Slavic lands are uninhabited and so belong to the ruling duke or prince to dispose of as he sees fit. As a rule, Slavic "knights" are not as well-trained or wealthy as their western counterparts, and usually have to settle for less expensive forms of armor. As such, they are at best the effective equivalents of sergeants in combat.

## Poland

Starting in 960, Duke Mieszko of the Polonians united the various Polish clans under his rule, and founded a dynasty named after his ancestor Piast who had ruled the Polonians a hundred years earlier. Since that time, all the rulers of Poland have been Mieszko's descendents. The major threat to Mieszko's rule were the German emperors, who considered any consolidation of Slavic power outside their sphere of control an intolerable threat. In order to minimize excuses for German meddling, and to solidify a dynastic alliance with neighboring Christian Bohemia, Mieszko converted to Christianity in 966, imposing the new faith on his subjects

Since the death of Boleslav III Wrymouth in 1139, Poland has been divided into a number of competing and effectively independent duchies. All the duchies are ruled by members of the Piast dynasty, with the grand duke based in Little Poland maintaining only a nominal sovereignty outside his own domains.

There is no feudal hierarchy *per se* in Poland. All the unsettled lands belong to the dukes, who are free to grant them to churches, monasteries, and faithful servants. All free Poles are subject to military service, with knights serving on horseback being exempt from taxation. Each major concentration of ducal villages is associated with a castle, normally a wooden motte and bailey. The chief local ducal official for each castle is the count, appointed to administer justice, oversee ducal estates, and lead the local contingent of the duke's army. The chief official in each duchy is the count palatine, who acts as justiciar and overall military leader. In 1220, the four Piast dukes of Poland are:

**Leszek the White**, grand duke and ruler of Little Poland and Sandomierz;

**Henry the Bearded**, duke of Silesia;

**Vladislav Spindleshanks**, duke of Great Poland; and

**Conrad**, duke of Mazovia and brother of Leszek.

In addition, **Swietopelk,** a native Pomeranian prince, has seized power amongst his people and thrown off the Polish yoke.

## Kievan Rus

Whereas the Norwegian and Danish Vikings tended to raid the areas bordering the North Sea, from about the mid-9th century, the Swedes (called Varangians or Rus by the Slavs) focused on the Baltic and the lakes and rivers that flowed into its eastern shore. In time, various Varangian bands established themselves as rulers over the Slavs and incidentally changed the balance of power with the Steppe nomads by destroying the Khazar khanate and reducing the Bulgars to tributary status. The most famous and successful of these Varangian princes was Rurik, who succeeded in imposing members of his family (the Rurikids) and his followers as rulers throughout the Rus lands. The Rurikids have ruled in Rus ever since.

Rurik's great grandson Vladimir chose Kiev as his capital and established Christianity as the official religion in 988, assisted by an archbishop chosen by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Vladimir appointed his sons as governors and princes of the various Rus towns, assigning to each a missionary bishop to teach the new faith. When Vladimir died, his lands were partitioned amongst his sons. The grand principality of Kiev itself has since devolved laterally to the senior member of the Rurikids, from brother to brother rather than from son to son. Kievan Rus is not so much a kingdom as a set of related, but fully independent, principalities (the equivalent of duchies) ruled by Vladimir's descendants. By 1220 the main branch of the Rurikids has long since died out, and competition between the remaining minor branches — the Mstislavichi, Yurevichi, Rostislavichi, and Olgovichi — for the control of Kiev is now intense.

One peculiarity is the principality of Novgorod, where the *veche* (the assembly of freemen liable to military service) has maintained the right to elect its mayor (*posadnik*) and to veto the selection of its prince, or even depose him when necessary. The prince of Novgorod is

not allowed to hold property in the principality and is essentially a war chief nominated by either the grand prince of Kiev or the grand prince of Suzdalia. He serves at the pleasure of the *veche*. In 1220, the office is contested and so is effectively vacant. Other than the princes, the main lay landholders in the Rus lands are the *boyars*, roughly the equivalent of western barons. Unlike their western counterparts, however, they normally live in the towns, leaving their estates to be run by stewards. These estates are largely given over to livestock rearing rather than cultivation. The bishops and great monasteries also hold such estates, but most of their income comes in the form of tithes. In 1220 the great princes of the Rus lands are:

**Mstislav** (of the Rostislavichi), grand prince of Kiev and prince of Smolensk;

**Yuri** (of the Yurevichi), grand prince of Suzdalia;

**Mstislav** (of the Olgovichi), prince of Chernigov;

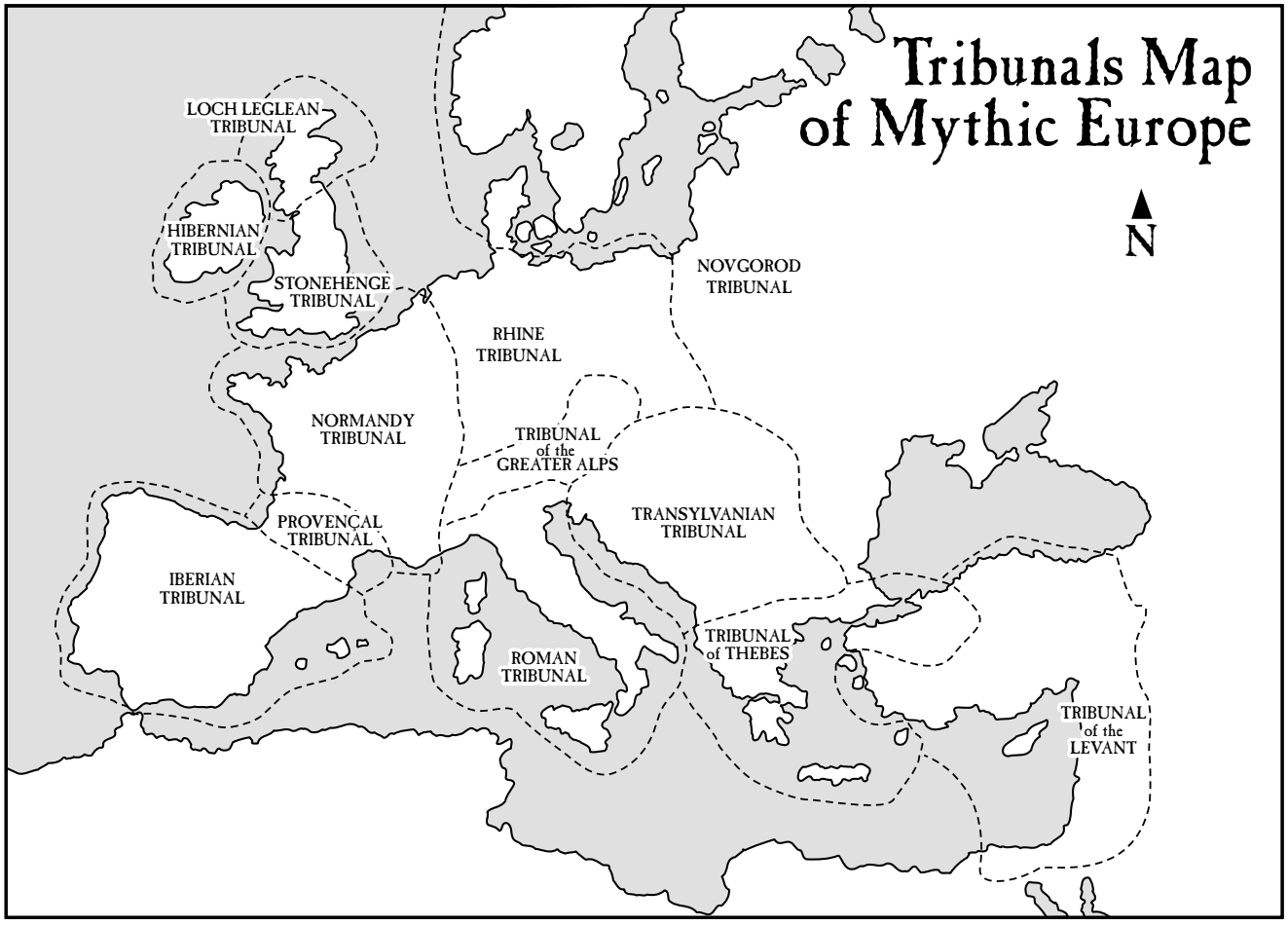
**Daniel** (of the Mstislavichi), prince of Volynia; and

**Vladimir** (of the Rostislavichi), prince of Pereiaslavl.

In addition, there are a number of lesser principalities, such as Polotsk, Ryazan, Pinsk-Turov, Novgorod-Severski, and Galicia, which are nominally dependent on one or another of the five great princes. Galicia has only recently broken free from Hungarian influence, and the boyars have yet to settle on a new prince.

# The Balkans

The ethnic composition of the Balkans is the most complex in Mythic Europe. Various barbarian tribes have swept through the peninsula over the centuries, displacing or merging with the native inhabitants or earlier invaders. The most significant migrations occurred around the year 700, when Slavic speaking peoples began to cross the Danube and the Carpathians in ever-increasing numbers. Some of the Slavs invaded



under the leadership of less numerous but more warlike Steppe peoples like the Croats and Bulgars, ultimately assimilating and assuming the ethnic identity of their overlords. Towards the end of the 9th century, the Magyars, a new wave of invaders, settled in the Danube basin, separating the southern Slavs from their northern and eastern brethren. More recently, Turkic Cumans have settled the lower Danube and are beginning to make themselves felt in Hungary.

On the margins of the settled newcomers live various strata of the old Latinized Roman population. While these do not form one distinct people, they are commonly referred to by their neighbors as Vlachs. Pushed off the better agricultural land by the invading Slavs, they tend to live a semi-transient existence as shepherds in the hills and mountains, forming their own, often warlike, clans. Others have taken itinerant trades as peddlers and tinkers, and yet others have begun to cluster in the small towns of the peninsula as merchants, money-changers, and traders. On the Adriatic shore, most of the towns have maintained a strong Latin flavor.

Here and there odd villages' inhabitants betray, by their odd customs and physical features (blond Goths, asiatic Avars), their origins as the flotsam of earlier invaders. Finally, small urban or transient colonies of Greeks, Jews, Armenians, and even Muslims dot the ethnic landscape, sometimes enjoying special legal privileges. These peoples tend to fill critical economic niches as merchants, skilled tradesmen, and traders.

## Hungary

The Magyars were originally a tribal confederacy of Steppe nomads consisting of seven related peoples: the Nyék, the Megyer (who gave their name to the group), the Kürtgyarmat, the Tarján, the Jenö, the Kér, and the Keszi. Towards the end of the 9th century they were driven out of the Lower Volga basin by the Turkic Pechenegs (later absorbed by the Cumans). In 896 the Magyars crossed the Vericke pass in the Carpathians under the leadership of Arpád, the ancestor of the later kings of Hungary, and settled the Danubian plain. Two years later, they invaded Italy at the invitation of the German King Arnulf, destroying the army of his rival, King Berenger, and inaugurating a period of devastation, looting, and pillage. Whereas the Norse raided primarily northern France and the British Isles, the Magyars focused their energies on Germany, Burgundy, southern France, and northern Italy with daring hit-and-run cavalry raids, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. In 955, however, the Magyars were finally cornered and crushingly defeated at the Lechfeld near Augsburg by Emperor Otto I. They have since adopted a more sedentary existence, but they remain the strongest force between the Black Sea and the Adriatic.

Duke Géza, who ruled from 970-97, experimented with Western Christianity, but his son, St. Stephen (997-1038), was Hungary's first unquestionably Christian ruler. Stephen was crowned by the archbishop of Esztergom on Christmas day of the year 1000 on the instruction of Pope Sylvester II (of arcane fame, see *The Tribunals of Hermes: Rome*, pages 19-20) as a reward for imposing Christianity on all his subjects who were neither Muslims nor Jews. Every Hungarian monarch has since been crowned at St. Stephen's shrine at Székesférvár, which also serves as the burial place for the Magyar kings. In 1046, Stephen's nephew and successor Peter Orseolo the Venetian was killed in a pagan uprising. His exiled cousins Andrew and Béla, however, were able to reimpose Christianity with the help of their Polish and Rus relatives. The early kings of Hungary had followed a systematic policy of breaking down clan loyalties and establishing direct links between Hungarian freemen and the monarchy. The uprising by dissident clan chiefs was probably as much a reaction to this threat to their authority as to the introduction of the new Faith.

By the 13th century, the clans have lost much of their prior significance. The populated areas of the kingdom have been divided into some 75 counties each headed by an appointed count (*ispán*). The counts administer justice in the king's name, normally from a wooden fort, and collect royal taxes, keeping a third and remitting the remainder to the crown. All uninhabited land belongs to the king, who may reward it to his followers as he sees fit.

Despite these extensive royal resources, from a military standpoint Hungary has been falling behind the more civilized monarchies of the West because of its continued reliance on light cavalry. Recent Hungarian kings, including Andrew II (king since 1205), have been attempting to redress this imbalance by creating a wealthy chivalric class through grants of royal estates and revenues to various noble families. So

far the results have been at best mixed. Andrew's efforts to impose his son Coloman as ruler of the Rus principality of Galicia have not been successful, and his dismal performance in the Fifth Crusade of 1217 proved to be an expensive failure. Not only have these ventures not been crowned with success, but they have greatly depleted the royal treasury, leaving the barons, led by Andrew's son and heir, Duke Béla of Croatia, very restive.

The chief royal official in Hungary is the count palatine, who acts as justiciar and war chief, and who is normally a member of the extended royal family. In 1102, the king of Hungary became king of Croatia as well, and the heir presumptive to the throne (either the king's brother or an adult son) is sometimes named duke or regent of Croatia. The duke administers the sister realm in the king's name with the help of a governor (*ban*) drawn from the local nobility. In 1124 Hungary annexed part of Bosnia as well, and the king normally appoints one of the more loyal local counts (*zupani*) as his governor, though this official's real authority is often nominal outside his own holdings.

## Croatia

The original Croats were probably Steppe nomads who conquered and ultimately merged with more numerous Slavic elements. They moved to the east shore of the Adriatic sea from north of the Carpathians some time in the early 7th century. The Croats had probably been converted to Arian (heretical) Christianity at an early date, but have been essentially orthodox since the mid-7th century. There are two Churches in Croatia. The Latin Church uses the Latin Bible and Latin language for its services, as is done elsewhere in Western Christendom. The Glagothic Church, on the other hand, uses a Slavic Bible written in Glagothic script and holds its services in the Croatian vernacular. The Popes have continuously pushed for adoption of the Latin rite but have met with steady passive resistance, though both Croatian Churches claim loyalty to the Holy See. An uneasy truce exists between the two Churches, but the controversy continues to divide them and their respective partisans.

Croatia became a fully independent principality after throwing off Frankish domination at the end of the 9th century, and was subsequently ruled by dukes of the native Trpimirovici dynasty. Croatia's first king was Tomislav, who ruled from 910-928. The kingdom is divided into counties (*zupe*), each headed by a count (*zupan*) selected from one of the twelve main Croat clans. These are divided into senior (Kacic, Svacic, Kukara, Tudomiric, Mogorovic, and Subic) and junior clans (Cudomirici, Lacncici, Polesici, Gusici, Jamometici, and Karinjani-Lapcani), each of which is associated with its own county. Other significant, if less prestigious, landholding clans include the Buñani and the Muhlici. The main royal officer in Croatia is the *ban*, or governor, selected from one of the senior clans. Land is tightly held by the respective clans, and very little is owned by the king or his representative, the duke.

Since 1102, following the extinction of the Trpimirovici, Croatia and Hungary have had the same king, though Croatia remains a separate kingdom. The Hungarian king holds no land south of the river Save, and the counts and bans continue to be chosen in the traditional manner. The king's heir presumptive is normally appointed duke of Croatia and acts as the king's representative. King Andrew's son, Duke Béla, has just been so appointed in 1220. Along the Dalmatian coast are a number of old self-ruling Roman trading towns, such as Nin, Zara, Split, and Ragusa, that usually provide the king with a third of their port revenues. Venice and Croatia have traditionally vied for control of the Dalmatian coast and its offshore islands. This enmity continues under King Andrew, who is still smarting from the seizure of Zara in 1202 by Venice and the soldiers of the Fourth Crusade.

### St. Stephen's Crown

The most famous holy relic in Hungary is the crown of its first king, St. Stephen. It is imbued with three Faith Points and has the virtue of granting the king, for one day each year, the ability to administer True Justice to anyone seeking it. On a preset day every year the king sits in judgement accepting any and all cases brought before him, and through the assistance of St. Stephen and the Holy Spirit, the truth and right in any dispute becomes clear to him. If at any time during this day the king fails to give justice despite this divine inspiration, he immediately loses the crown's power of discernment until the following year. Furthermore, all those in attendance know that a false judgement has been delivered.

## Serbia

One of the many Slavic peoples to migrate to the Balkans, the Serbs crossed the Danube towards the end of the 7th century, settling shortly thereafter in the lands between the Morava and Drina rivers. Like most Slavs, the Serbs were originally divided into a number of independent clans headed by *zupani* (counts). Occasionally, one zupan would achieve a temporary dominance over some of his fellows and be recognized as grand zupan or *knez* (prince or duke). While two main principalities, Rashka and Zeta, emerged relatively early, these unions were rarely lasting, frequently collapsing under the weight of disputed successions and inter-clan rivalries and feuds. For most of their history the Serbs have been tributaries of their more powerful Bulgarian and Byzantine neighbors.

While a number of zupans experimented with Christianity spread at an early date by Byzantine missionaries, the official conversion of the Serbs occurred under Prince Mutemir (850-891), who established the True Faith throughout the Serb lands. In many ways, however, this conversion has been largely superficial. Pagan practices and beliefs are still common pending a more serious effort at evangelization. On the other hand, brutal repression has kept Serbia free of the scourge of the Bogomil heresy.

The founder of the current Serbian dynasty was Grand Zupan Stephen Nemanya of Rashka, who ruled from 1168 until his retirement to a monastery. He died in 1196. Frequently defeated by the Byzantines and forced into humiliating submissions, such as marching in the emperor's train during Manuel I Comnenus' victory triumph in 1173, Stephen was nonetheless able to convince the hard-pressed East Roman emperor that only he could protect Byzantine interests in the Serb lands. Parlaying his defeats into a privileged subservience, he was able to extend his authority over Zeta before definitively breaking free of Byzantine overlordship following Manuel's death in 1180.

Stephen Nemanya was succeeded by his son (also called Stephen), who, in 1217, was able to secure a crown and recognition of his royal status from Pope Honorius III in exchange for a pledge of loyalty to the Holy See. Not to be outdone, the exiled Eastern emperor and patriarch recognized the new Serb kingdom in 1219, and granted the status of independent metropolitan (archbishop) to Sava, Stephen's younger brother. As a result, the Serbian royal family has abandoned its submission to the Church of Rome. Nonetheless, both Eastern and Western Churches continue to maintain their separate hierarchies in Serbia, and the Pope still has hopes that Stephen and Sava will eventually see the error of their ways.

### Krum's Cup

Krum was the last great pagan khan of Bulgaria. Following an ancient ritual, when he defeated the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus in 811, he had a gold-lined drinking cup made of the skull of his slain foe. Krum then held a great feast to which he invited all the Slavic chiefs subject to him, and forced them to drink from the infernal cup.

The skull is imbued with two points of False Faith, and anyone compelled to drink from it becomes cursed with an unnatural dread of his host. From then on a cursed drinker must make a Bravery stress roll of 9+ before knowingly taking any action against his former host, or else suffer from paralyzing despair. The roll must be made each time such action is contemplated, and if botched leads to permanent despondency, preventing any further attempts.

The Bulgars were converted to Christianity in the years following Krum's death, and the whereabouts of the cup, if it still exists, are unknown. Several imitations have been found and, though their effectiveness is uncertain, they are all unquestionably evil.

## The Kingdom (Empire) of Bulgaria

*Write to the Latins to keep away from my empire, and, if they do, my empire will not harm them; but let them not set it at little worth. If they make an attempt against my empire and set it at little worth, and some of them get killed, do not your holiness suspect my empire because it will not be my fault.*

*— King John of Bulgaria to Pope Innocent III*

King John's warning to the crusaders was not heeded, and Bulgaria has proven to be the most dangerous enemy of the newly founded Latin Empire of Constantinople, capturing and killing its first emperor, Baldwin, in 1205.

The Bulgars were originally a Turkic-speaking Steppe people. Part of this people migrated to the eastern Balkan peninsula in the late 7th century, conquering the Slavs who had preceded them by more than a century, and eventually being assimilated by them. Under Khan Boris' 36-year rule (852-888), Bulgaria adopted

Christianity as its official religion. At the end of his reign, Boris abdicated in favor of his son Vladimir and retired to a monastery. But when Vladimir sought to return the kingdom to paganism four years later, Boris emerged from his cell, deposed and blinded Vladimir, and placed his own younger son Simeon on the throne. Boris died in 907 and was canonized as the first of Bulgaria's national saints. Despite his Christianity, Simeon initiated a long and bitter struggle with the Eastern empire which lasted until the decisive victory of Emperor Basil II Bulgar-slayer in 1014. After the battle, 14,000 Bulgar prisoners were blinded and sent home, and Bulgaria was annexed to the empire in 1019.

In 1185 some Vlach and Bulgar shepherd and cattle-raising clans rebelled under the leadership of two brothers, Peter and Ansen, against Emperor Isaac Angelus in response to exorbitant taxation of their flocks and herds. Initially defeated, the rebels linked up with Cuman allies from across the Danube and succeeded in

## The Cumans

"This is a people which is not stationary, and does not stay in one place, or know how to settle down, and therefore it has no institutions. It moves all over the earth and rests nowhere, and is constantly wandering. These are flying men, and hard to catch therefore, and have no cities, and know no villages, but bestiality follows in their path. Not even the vultures, that carrion-eating and loathed tribe, can be compared to these people. Rather are they to be likened to griffins, whom kindly nature has placed in uninhabited places, as she has done with the Scyths [Cumans]. Only habits like those of wolves could have produced such men: bold and greedy, the wolf knows well how to flee whenever something terrifying appears. So too it is with the Scyths: if they meet with brave resistance they wheel about and take to their heels. A Scyth is near, and at the same time out of reach. He plunders, but before he has filled his hands he grasps his bridle, and strikes his horse with his heel and with his whip, and gives himself to the winds in flight, and he boasts that he flies more quickly than the hawk. He barely comes into view before he disappears again. This is the sort of people that the wandering nomads, the Scyths, are, with no houses: wild beasts among mankind, or, though it would be a bold man who would venture to call them so, men among the wild beasts."

— Bishop Eustatius of Thessalonika,
to Emperor Isaac II Angelus

"Now Cummania is a land bordering upon Vlachia [Bulgaria], and I will tell you what kind of people the Cumans are. They are a savage people, who neither plow nor sow, and they have neither huts nor houses, but they have heavy tents made of felt in which they shelter themselves, and they live on milk and cheese and flesh. In the summer there are so many flies and gnats that they scarcely dare come out of their tents and sally forth from their country when they want to make a raid. Now we will tell you what they do. Each has at least ten or twelve horses, and they have them so well-trained that they follow them wherever they want to take them, and they mount first one and then another. When they are on a raid, each horse has a bag hung on his nose, in which his fodder is put, and he feeds as he follows his master, and they do not stop going by night or by day. And they ride so hard that they cover in one day and one night fully six days' journey or seven or eight. And while they are on the way they will not seize plunder and make captives and take anything they can get. Nor do they go armed except that they wear a garment of sheepskin and carry bows and arrows. They do not worship anything except the first animal encountered in the morning, and the one who encounters it worships it all day, whatever animal it may be. Now John the Vlach had these Cumans in his service, and he used to come every year to raid the emperor's lands even up to Constantinople, and the emperor was not strong enough to defend himself against him."

— Robert de Clari

Despite these unflattering — though accurate — eyewitness portrayals, all the sources agree that the Cumans (the Rus call them Polotsvi or Kipchaks) are a strikingly handsome people with blond hair and blue eyes. They speak a Turkic language, and in the early 13th century are the prototypical Steppe nomads, grazing their horses from the Urals to the Danube. Still pagan, they are grouped into various clans ruled by patriarchal chiefs. At times, one or another chief may achieve a local predominance over his fellows and be recognized as *khan*, but these unions are often fleeting and unstable. Content to remain nomads, they often form alliances with more sedentary peoples in order to plunder richer neighbors. By virtue of their mobility, they are hardly ever defeated on the battlefield, but they need the help of their Rus, Hungarian, or Bulgarian "brothers" to take any of the fortified towns that contain the sought-for treasures of civilized nations. The Cumans keep the loot and their allies keep the conquered cities — an eminently sensible and satisfactory arrangement all round.

reestablishing a new Bulgar kingdom. A third brother, the King John quoted above, brought Bulgaria into communion with the Church of Rome and was crowned by a papal legate in 1204, the same year Constantinople fell to the crusaders. Despite John's plea for papal intervention, war with the overconfident crusaders soon broke out. In their arrogance, the crusaders claimed for themselves all the land that had at any time belonged to the Eastern empire, even though it continued its shadowy existence across the Bosphorus. While the crusaders themselves now realize they were guilty of gross foolishness in spurning John's offer of alliance, only time will tell if this mistake will prove fatal to their hopes of defeating their rivals in Nicaea. Much to the relief of the crusaders, John died in 1207, leaving the Bulgarian kingdom prey to dynastic disputes and quarrels between orthodox Christians and heretic Bogomils. By 1218, John's nephew, John Asen, emerged victorious from the feuding. He has since married Mary, the daughter of King Andrew of Hungary, and seems disposed to be on better terms with his Latin neighbors.

# The Eastern Empire and the Christian Kingdoms of the Levant

## The Latin Empire of Constantinople

The Fourth Crusade was supposed to land in Egypt, but due to lack of funds, was diverted from its goal by the Venetians to attack the Hungarian-held port of Zara. From there the crusaders were convinced to help restore the deposed Eastern Emperor Alexius III Angelus in exchange for financial and military assistance for the invasion of Egypt. When the promised assistance was not forthcoming, the crusaders took Constantinople and elected Count Baldwin of Flanders as the first Latin emperor. One quarter of the new empire was assigned to Baldwin with the rest split evenly between the Venetian and non-Venetian crusaders.

In 1206, following Baldwin's capture and subsequent death in Bulgarian captivity, the crusaders elected his brother Henry, who helped correct some of the early diplomatic blunders and put the empire on more stable footing. Though greatly outnumbered by his foes, Henry was gradually able to secure temporary truces or alliances with the Byzantine successor "empires" of Nicaea and Trebizond, and gain a breathing space following the death of John of Bulgaria. He was also an effective military commander and was able to make his small numbers count. For example, at the battle of Philippopolis in 1208, Henry, with only 2000 men, defeated a Bulgar army of 33,000. In another example, on the shore of Asia Minor in 1211, Henry and 260 knights were able to defeat — without a single loss — a 10,000 strong Byzantine force that included 160 Latins of its own.

In 1216, however, Henry died. His brother-in-law, Count Peter de Courtenay of Nevers and Auxerre, was elected. But Peter was captured with his 6,000 reinforcements by Greek rebels while trying to march to his new capital from the Adriatic coast. He died in captivity in 1219. His eldest son, Philip de Namur, has declined the throne in favor of his younger brother Robert de Courtenay, who is expected to arrive via Hungary in early 1221. In the meantime, the noted *trouvère*, Conan de Béthune, is acting as bailiff (*sebastocrator*) for the empire.

The Latin emperor is elected by and is responsible to a joint council composed by halves of Venetian and non-Venetian nobles. While the crusader knights enjoy a strong qualitative edge over their native opponents, this is negated by the financial weakness of the emperor, who cannot pay for his forces. Ironically, the financial position of the Byzantine successors "empires" is not nearly so desperate, and the core of their forces consists of Western mercenaries, much to the distress of the Pope. Efforts to bring about a reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches have failed, the vast majority of the Byzantine bishops having chosen exile. The population shows no signs of adopting new religious loyalties. Nonetheless, the Latin takeover of Constantinople was initially widely welcomed outside the capital by a Greek peasantry crushed by heavy Byzantine taxation. Though Henry's

just and wise rule is still praised by the common folk, they have still seen no relief in the tax burden and are increasingly looking to the emperor in Nicaea to reestablish the old Byzantine regime.

## Thessalonika

When the crusaders elected Baldwin of Flanders as Latin Emperor, they bypassed the most obvious candidate, the Italian Marquis Boniface of Monferrat. In compensation, Boniface was granted the newly created kingdom of Thessalonika as a sovereign fief within the Latin empire. In 1207 Boniface died in a skirmish with the Bulgarians and was succeeded in 1209 by his infant son Demetrius, under the tutelage of the Latin emperor.

The kingdom is deeply riven by two noble factions. The first is headed by the exiled Oberto di Biandrate, who served briefly as regent following Boniface's death. This "Lombard" faction favors Boniface's eldest son, Marquis William of Monferrat, as king of Thessalonika and ultimately as emperor. The second faction was most recently led by King Demetrius' mother, Queen Margaret. Until recently, Margaret enjoyed the confidence of the Latin emperor. In 1217, however, the new Emperor, Peter de Courtenay, invested William with executive authority, hoping to elicit desperately needed reinforcements. This has left King Demetrius with an empty title and prompted Margaret to retire to her native Hungary. Without either faction's leader actually present, the kingdom of Thessalonika has been drifting without clear leadership and may soon succumb to its Greek and Bulgarian enemies.

## Jerusalem

When the leader of the First Crusade, Godfrey de Bouillon, died in 1100 a year after the conquest of the Holy City, the crusaders elected his younger brother, Baldwin, as the first king of Jerusalem. The kingdom reached its apogee in 1167 with the capture of Cairo and Alexandria, which augured a possible conquest of Egypt. These gains were rolled back in 1169, however, culminating in the disastrous battle of Hattin and the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187. Though led by the German emperor and the kings of France and England, the Third Crusade (1188-1192) failed to do more than stabilize the situation. In 1220, the much-attenuated kingdom consists only of narrow coastal strips in Syria and Palestine, inhabited primarily by Syrian Christians. It has theoretical overlordship over the crusader principality of Antioch.

Queen Isabella II is a minor and the kingdom is ruled by her father, John de Brienne, as regent, pending her marriage to some hoped-for champion who will be able to re-energize the crusading movement. While the kingdom's political structures remain essentially feudal, most of the crown's income is derived from port and trade revenues. The defense of the kingdom is largely in the hands of the mutually-antagonistic Hospitaliers and Templars, who fund their military operations through donations from throughout Western Christendom. The remaining crusader lords, notably the Ibelin family, continue to exert a strong influence on the internal affairs of the kingdom, and exercise high justice within their own dominions.

## Cyprus

The kingdom of Cyprus has become a major trading center in support of the other crusading states and is famous for its sweet, syrupy wine. It draws its origin from a quarrel between King Richard the Lionhearted of England and the local Byzantine despot, Issac Comnenos. Richard conquered the island on his way to the Third Crusade in 1191, in retribution for the maltreatment of some of his men. He sold it the following year to Guy de Lusignan, the disgraced king of Jerusalem. Guy died the same year, and his brother Aimery had himself proclaimed king of Cyprus in 1196. His crown was officially recog-

### The Relics of St. Demetrius

Few Byzantine cities have been subjected to as many sieges as Thessalonika, attacked at various times by Bulgars, Vlachs, Cumans, Serbs, Latins, Turks and, most frequently, Greeks rebels. Almost all these sieges have failed ignominiously. The people of Thessalonika ascribe this good fortune to the intervention of their patron, St. Demetrius. At every siege, his relics are paraded on the walls. Belief in their efficacy is by now near-absolute, even among Thessalonika's enemies. While there is nothing to suggest that the relics would protect any other city, those intending to take Thessalonika would be well advised to remove the saint's earthly remains first.

nized by the crusading Emperor Henry VI in 1197. In order to repay Richard, Guy resold as fiefs the estates of the leading Greek landed families of the island, who had either fled or been dispossessed, thus settling some 300 knights on the island. Nonetheless, the Cypriot kings have kept the right of justice in their own hands, as well as control the three main castles in the kingdom, St. Hilarion, Buffavento, and Kantara. A small fort is held by the Hospitaliers at Kolossi, but the other members of the aristocracy own crenellated watch towers at best. As many of the crusaders who have settled in Cyprus are refugees from the much-reduced kingdom of Jerusalem, they have held on to their former titles, giving Cyprus an unusually high number of "counts." There are no Cypriot counties *per se*, however. In 1220, King Henry is a minor, and the regency is held by Philip d'Ibelin.

## The Empire of Nicaea

Linear — if not blood — heirs of a long and ancient line of East Roman emperors stretching back to Constantine, the rulers of Nicaea see the Byzantine empire reduced to its lowest ebb. Though thoroughly Greek in language (one 12th century emperor even referred to Latin derisively as a "Scythian tongue") and culture, with their arms in general disrepute, the Byzantines nonetheless hold to their claim that theirs is the only Roman emperor, and theirs the only orthodox Church. Dismayed at the loss of their eternal capital, they have withdrawn to Asia Minor under the leadership of Theodore Lascaris, son-in-law of Alexius III. In 1208, Theodore had himself crowned emperor and made Nicaea his "temporary" capital. Since then, he has doggedly pursued a war of attrition against his Latin enemies, though this has been punctuated by occasional truces. His current wife, Mary, is the sister of the Latin emperor. Unfortunately for Theodore, his native troops are almost worthless, and he must rely primarily on Latin mercenaries, who fight for pay despite papal fulminations.

Emperor Theodore also makes heavy use of the *pronoia* system developed in the previous century under the Comnenus dynasty. A *pronoia* is the Byzantine equivalent of a fief, which assigns specific royal revenues drawn from an estate or tax to an individual (often a Latin) in exchange for specified military service. A *pronoia* is not hereditary, nor, theoretically, does it grant the holder any judicial authority over the inhabitants of the estate, or over the administration of the tax or revenue source. In practice, however, extensive estates are so held by members of the Lascaris, Comnenus, Ducas, and Angelus, as well as other great noble families, and are essentially ruled as quasi-independent principalities. In some cases, local tyrants have secured recognition of their usurpations through such grants, the most prominent being the emperor's sometime ally, vassal, rival, and enemy, the Byzantine despot of Epirus, also called Theodore.

## The Empire of Trebizond

Almost simultaneously with the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204, Alexis and David Comnenus, grandsons of Byzantine Emperor Andronicus (1182-1185), rebelled with the assistance of their aunt, Queen Tamara of Georgia, and staged their own attempted takeover of the empire at the Black Sea port of Trebizond. So far, Andronic, the current Comneni emperor, has not been able to progress much further towards the goal of reclaiming his ancestral heritage. He has instead limited himself to playing off the Latin and Nicaean empires against one another. He allies first with one then with the other, keeping wary eyes on the Turkish principalities to his south. Unlike the Nicaean empire, with its extensive agricultural and peasant base, Trebizond is more a commercial city-state. It has a mixed merchant population of Greeks and Armenians, and barely maintains control of the Adzharian hill clans that separate it from Georgia.

## Georgia

The political structure of the Georgian and Armenian princes consists principally of the rulerships over martial hill clans and the lordships of walled towns. In many ways this is analogous to Western feudalism, except insofar as the Oriental feudal structure is built by one lordship achieving dominance over its neighbors, whereas the Western model is more that of a king granting estates to his loyal followers. Georgia is the most powerful Oriental Christian kingdom, a tight poly-ethnic federation of Georgian, Ossetian, Armenian, and even Kipchack (Cuman) lordships assembled under the leader-

ship of the Georgian kings of Abkhazia.

King George IV the Brilliant, like most of the native Christian princes of the Orient, is a scion of the Bagrationi. The Bargationi, or the Bagratuni as they are called in Armenian, are originally an Armenian clan that, over the past 200 years, has managed to appropriate lordship of most of the Christian principalities through luck, guile, conquest, and judicious marriages. This has not stopped them from warring amongst themselves, however, and the various Georgian Bagrationi are now completely assimilated and have essentially lost their Armenian identity and religion. Unlike the Armenians, the Georgians have consistently remained orthodox and in communion with the Byzantine Church.

In 1220, King George leads a rather dissolute life very unlike the stern and puritan rule of his glorious mother, the famous Queen Tamara, who ruled from 1184 to 1212. The bishops and the nobility are doing their best to reform him, but have had only mitigated success. So far, the Georgians have held the upper hand against the various Turkish principalities that press on their eastern and southern borders, but this year they have heard mildly disturbing reports of a new wave of nomadic invaders entering neighboring Persia. They speak an unknown tongue and call themselves Mongols.

## Armenia Minor

*No nation came more generously to the aid of crusaders than the Armenians who gave them food, men, horses and arms.*

*— Pope Gregory VIII as quoted by Matthew of Edessa*

The Armenian kingdom of Cilicia (Lesser Armenia) draws its origin from the migration of Armenian settlers fleeing the depredations of both Byzantines and Turks in their traditional homeland surrounding lake Van. The refugees, under the leadership of Prince Ruben the Great (1080-1095), settled the gorges of the Taurus mountains, merging with earlier Armenian principalities that had preceded them. Ancient Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its official religion, early in the 4th century. Like most of the native Christian princes of Asia, Ruben was descended from the Bagratuni. His son Constantine came to the throne just in time to welcome and support the soldiers of the First Crusade. In doing so, he created an alliance which, despite religious differences and the usual incidences of rivalry and betrayal, has proven remarkably lasting.

In 1198, the grateful Archbishop of Mainz, a papal legate and representative of Emperor Henry VI of Germany, presented Constantine's great-grandson, Leo II the Great, with a royal crown. Leo was dutifully anointed by the Armenian catholicos (patriarch) of Sis, Gregory VII. Not to be outdone, Emperor Alexius II Angelus of Constantinople sent an additional crown of his own. The feudalism of the crusaders has proven congenial to the traditional clan and fortress-based system of Armenian rule, and the kingdom has adopted many of the trappings and feudal offices more normally found in the West. Leo even adopted the Assizes of Antioch as the feudal law for his kingdom. Intermarriage between crusaders and Armenians are frequent, and the kingdom's overseas trade has been granted to the merchants of Genoa, who live under their own viscount. In 1220, the nominal ruler of Armenia is Leo's five-year-old daughter Isabelle, under the regency of the kingdom's principal baron, Constantine of the Hetumids. A marriage with the ruling house of the crusader principality of Antioch is planned, though it will be several years before it can be consummated.

### The Armenian Heresy

As most Armenians reject the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, the Western and Eastern Churches agree in considering them heretics. The crusaders, however, do not have the same history of persecution towards the Armenians as their Byzantine counterparts, and relations between the Armenian and Western Churches are correspondingly good. The Popes have been pushing for the Armenians to accept the ecumenical definitions of the two natures of Christ (human and divine), and it appears that the kings and bishops are not unwilling to consider the matter. Unfortunately, most Armenians are still wedded to their heretical formulation of Christ having only one nature (human and divine), and so their spiritual and temporal rulers remain leery of taking the necessary steps. The Popes have not given up hope, however. Patient papal diplomacy has already led the Maronites of Mount Lebanon back into the fold. If the Armenians can be brought in, there are reasonable hopes that, when the crusaders have conquered Syria and Egypt, the Jacobite and Coptic Christians who share the Armenian heresy will be induced to follow them into communion with Rome.

# Chapter 7
# A Bad Knight's Work

A Bad Knight's Work is set at one of the two annual summer fairs held at Troyes in the county of Champagne during the 1220s. This particular fair will be a momentous event because the French king is attending to witness a marriage between two minor members of the houses of Flanders and Champagne. Villainous acts ensue when the honor of nobles is at stake.

This scenario is particularly easy to work into a saga, as the fair at Troyes should be interesting and important to covenants quite aside from the events of this adventure. There may very well be saga-specific events and personalities to be woven in and around these going-on — storyguides are only limited by what has gone before in their sagas.

## Storyguide's Notes

### Suitable Characters

This is an adventure for grogs and companions, playable in a single session. The climax comes on the tournament field, so at least a couple of the player characters should be knights. Non-noble characters can still play a major part, however. Every tournament knight needs retainers to guard his property, run errands, and assist him on and off the field. If none of the other player companions are suited to this role, the storyguide can pad the party with grogs, possibly on leave to enjoy the sights and sounds of the fair. Other companions with Social and Rogue Skills would also be an asset, as these may prove as valuable as martial attributes. Finally, performers can find ready work with the tournament organizers, and may even attract the attention of the royal court.

Magi should not come along on this adventure. There are two reasons. First, a magical ability to read minds and physically influence events will take much of the intrigue and challenge out of the adventure. Second, any member of the Order found casting spells within hailing distance of the king of France, the most powerful secular monarch in Mythic Europe, is likely to bring down the full furor of his sodales.

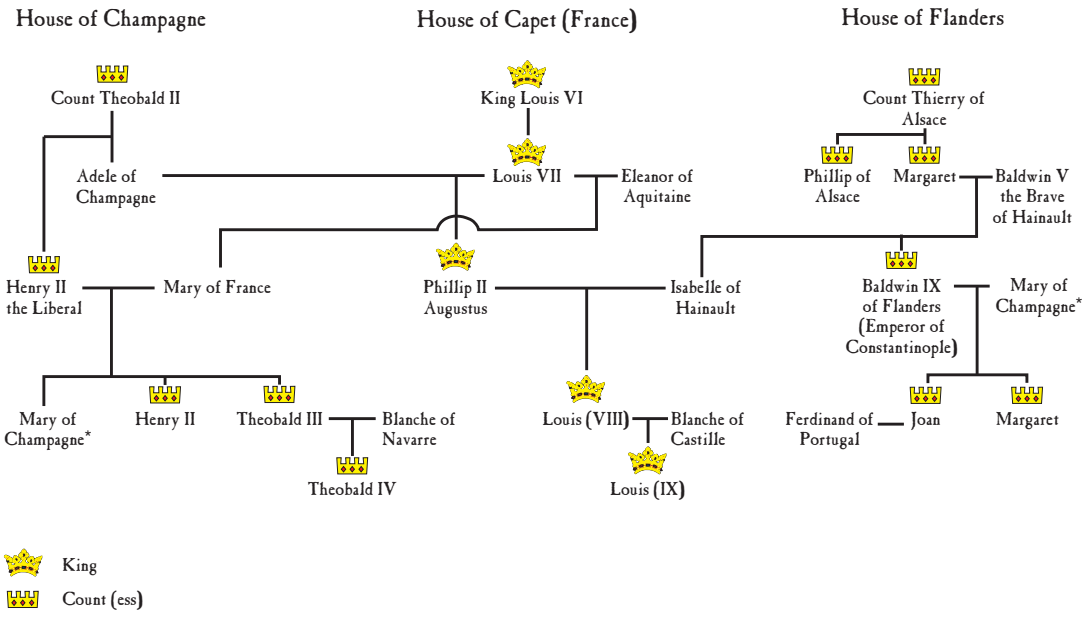
Whatever the mix of characters, the key is not simply to foil a vile plot, but to do so with tact and finesse, making as many friends and as few enemies as possible amongst the great and powerful. Pompous and pushy characters should beware; they are likely to find themselves in bad straits — perhaps even thrown in jail. If this happens, the storyguide should let the characters escape, bribe, or talk their way out without too much difficulty unless they have actually been caught committing a crime.

### Overview

While attending the fair for their own various reasons, one or more player characters witness a cutting remark made by Henri de La Rochenoire at the expense of Michel de Bourdaigne. Both are minor members of the royal family. This sets in motion a plot which, unless the player characters intervene, will culminate in Henri's assassination on the tournament field.

The characters catch wind that something is afoot, but have little proof to go on. As both the principals to the dispute are royals, incautious

### The Family Connections




and public accusations are very dangerous. The player characters will have to decide whether to intervene, and if so, how.

There are no actual heroes in this adventure, save perhaps the adventurers. Most of the characters have their dark sides, even the brave and charismatic Henri, whose callousness and petty cruelty may make him less than appealing to the players.

## Background

Marie de Blois, a cousin of Count Thibaud (Theobald) IV of Champagne, is marrying Gustave de Hainault, a cousin of Countess Jeanne of Flanders. The marriage will place at Troyes (five to six days travel northeast of Paris) two weeks into one of that city's two great annual trade fairs. A tournament, which will run for three days in a field outside Troyes following the marriage, is being held in honor of the betrothed couple. The marriage itself is a significant political event, and will be attended by much of the nobility of northern France, along with German lords from Lorraine.

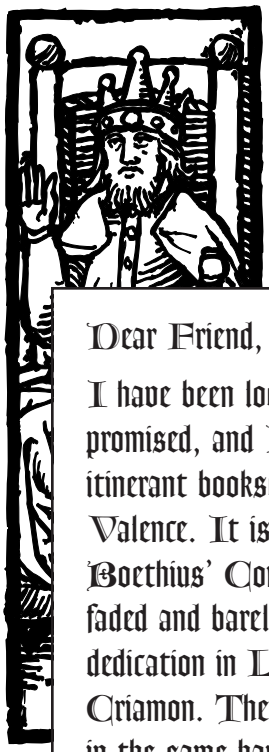
The two annual fairs at Troyes are held several weeks apart, and the adventure could occur at either of them. At the storyguide's discretion and according to the needs of the saga, the player characters could be drawn into a number of minor adventures if they arrive early for the fair (as would be the case if they were sent to gather supplies for their covenant).

## Setting the Stage

There are several ways the player characters can be lured to the fair. Most knights who hear of the planned tournament will be eager to attend.

### The Fair

The two annual fairs at Troyes are among the six annual summer fairs of Champagne which are Europe's main markets of exchange for north-south trade. Every year hundreds, if not thousands, of merchants gather in Champagne, traveling from fair to fair, buying and selling goods from all over the known world and beyond. English wool shipped to Flanders has been turned into cloth and clothing, and passes through the fairs on its way to Italy, Byzantium, and the Levant. South-bound salted and smoked cod and herring; amber from the Baltic; furs and pitch from Norway; furs, honey and beeswax from Russia; silver and tin from Cornwall; and silver and dies from Germany are traded for north-bound wines from Burgundy, Provence, and Italy; glass from Venice and Byzantium; spices and quicksilver from the Levant and Far East; figs and citrus fruit from Spain; silk from China; and even papyrus, gold, ivory and exotic animals from darkest Africa.



The fair is likely to be lucrative for any characters with notable entertainment or performance skills. It will also provide an opportunity to restock the covenant with parchment, colored inks, specialized glassware, and other useful materials.

If the appropriate mix of characters seems reluctant, one of the magi (presumably one deeply involved in some research project from which he cannot detach himself) receives the letter from the insert on this page. (You may photocopy the letter for personal use.)

Guillermo de Valence might or might not make an appearance at the fair, at the storyguide's option. If he does, he may or may not still have the book. If he does still have it, the significance of Bonisagus' marginal notes will be up to the storyguide. At the very least, the book would be a valuable Hermetic curiosity.

Dear Friend,

I have been looking out for interesting books for you as promised, and I believe I found one in the stock of an itinerant bookseller by the name of Guillermo de Valence. It is an ancient but well bound copy of Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy. The script is faded and barely legible, but what caught my eye was the dedication in Latin by one Bonisagus to a fellow named Criamon. There are a number of marginal notes in Latin in the same hand throughout the tome, but though I could read the words they made no sense to me and I dismissed the tome as useless. On my way home, however, it occurred to me that Bonisagus and Criamon were two of the names you asked me to watch out for. I rushed back, but the bookseller was nowhere to be found. I heard say he was heading to the fair at Troyes. You may be able to catch up with him there. Hopefully he will not have sold it by then.

## Boethius and the Consolations of Philosophy

Boethius was a late Roman scholar and statesman born in 480. He was executed by the Gothic king Theodoric as a result of a court intrigue in 524. While in jail awaiting execution, he wrote his most famous work, the Consolations of Philosophy. It was written in alternating prose and verse, and is divided into five books. It expounds a neoplatonist approach to philosophy, relying heavily on earlier authors, but ends with an original discussion of free will and the meaning of life. The work counts as a level 3 summa on Philosophiae. Boethius' prose style is clear and simple, and the work should normally have a quality of 11, but the copy described in this adventure is barely legible, reducing its quality to 3.

# At the Fair

The fair at Troyes is so great it cannot possibly be held inside the town itself, and in fact, most normal trade is shut down within the walls, by law, for the duration. Rather, the fair itself is held in a large, permanent clearing about a half mile southwest of Troyes, where there is room for hundreds of merchants' tents and stalls. The field is bordered to the south by a further tent city erected by other travelers.

Unless the characters arrive at the very start of the fair, they find all the inns full or reserved by the rich and powerful. The great nobles and their entourage, of course, are housed with the count and local bishop.

After dark the fairgrounds are off limits to those who have not paid for stalls, although there are only minimal barricades to keep people out. The count of Champagne and the guilds of Troyes have paid for armed guards to patrol the fairgrounds, keep peace, and ensure thievery is kept to a minimum. Besides this, every merchant with goods of any value has a few armed assistants, and most sleep within their stalls to keep an eye on their property. Characters caught wandering in this area after dark and who cannot prove they have a stall or are working for someone who does will likely be searched (possibly resulting in the confiscation of valuables and money) and tossed out. Of course, if any robberies, muggings, or murders take place, they become obvious suspects.

To the south of the fairgrounds is a tent city where travelers who have not secured other accommodations can stay. Between the two is an area where temporary brothels and merchants selling wine, ale, and food have set up. While the fairground is quiet at night, this area is active and

noisy until quite late as revelers and drunks stagger from stall to stall or try to find their own tents in the dark. Any character or group of characters traveling around the tent city after dark must roll a stress die when heading off to a new destination. On a 0 they have some sort of encounter with guards, drunks, bravos, or ladies of negotiable virtue. On a botch they are mugged, and on a double or greater botch they are the victims of an attempted rape or murder.

## A New Friend

At some point while the characters are checking out the stalls, the storyguide should contrive to get them into a spot of trouble. Some ideas follow. Whatever the cause of the commotion, the characters become the center of a loud and increasingly ugly dispute.

- The victim of a theft inaccurately identifies one of the characters as the culprit.
- One of the characters notices his purse has been cut and incorrectly accuses someone who just happens to have several friends nearby.
- One of the characters accidentally knocks over a food stand, pouring hot oil or cinders on passersby.
- A significant creditor recognizes one of the characters, whose loan payments are overdue.
- One of the characters is confronted by a personal enemy (an excellent opportunity for the storyguide to bring the Enemies Flaw into play).

Before serious violence erupts, however, the crowd is parted by a mounted party consisting of two knights, four sergeants, a noblewoman, and a couple of pages on foot leading packhorses. The hubbub dies down immediately, with the knights cuffing any who fail to adopt a respectful silence, for the noblewoman is Adeline, one of the queen's favorite ladies in waiting.

Adeline asks for an explanation for this breach of the peace and, barring disaster or exceptional stupidity, ends up taking a fancy to the characters. Adeline has a friendly temperament and attempts to bring about a settlement between the characters and their opponents, paying off any damages from her own purse if necessary. Once the dispute has been satisfactorily dealt with, she politely questions the characters about their names, occupations, and reasons for visiting the fair. Where appropriate, she offers useful advice and words of encouragement before resuming her errands. If the characters wish to keep her company for a short spell, she graciously consents. The characters should leave the encounter feeling they have made a powerful and useful friend.

# The Pre-Wedding Feast

Prior to the wedding, a great feast is be prepared at the expense of count Thibaud for all the inhabitants of Troyes (several thousands) and all the visitors to the fair (several more thousands). Tables are set up in a fenced-off area for the three princely families and their guests. This area is within sight (barely) of the multitude. Knights and other prominent individuals are seated at lesser tables outside the enclosure. The mob must eat standing up, or seated on the ground.

Access to the enclosure is forbidden to all but the entertainers who have secured employment with the provosts of the feast. Access to the lesser tables can be secured by bribing the guards with a couple of pennies. Knights and prominent citizens of Troyes are seated there free of charge, of course. Those with the princes enjoy a truly royal feast (literally). Those outside settle for sausages, cheese, bread, wine, ale, and sweets.

During the feast, a minor argument ensues inside the enclosure. One of the guests describes a humorous argument over the price of shoeing a horse that occurred earlier in the day between Michel de Bourdaigne, who is a minor member of the royal family, and a blacksmith. One of the narrator's table mates, Henri de La Rochenoire, who is another minor royal, exclaims in jest "But how were you ever able to tell the two apart?" in obvious reference to his cousin's stocky build. Everyone hearing the remark explodes in laughter, much to the discomfiture of the glowering Michel. Michel stands up and accuses Henri of being an immature fop unable to tell the difference between a sword and a hoe. Henri, who is brave and carefree though not particularly skilled in arms, takes up the challenge and announces that he will compete in the tourney, to general cheers. Michel resumes his seat and scowls for the remainder of the feast.

Only characters within the enclosure actually witness the exchange. Servants enter and leave all the time, however, and word spreads like wildfire of Henri's wit at Michel's expense, and of Henri's declared intention to compete in the tourney. The player characters hear of little else until nightfall.

## Merchants of Esoterica

One of the booths the characters visit is run by an elderly man wearing a red bonnet. His stock is downright bizarre and esoteric — it probably includes just the sorts of things character from a covenant are looking for — and he appears to have only a trickle of customers. If the characters have had contacts with the inhabitants of other covenants, they encounter some here, and draw their own conclusions.

On sale at another booth are a variety of exotic animals, most of whom appear listless and in sorry condition. Two in particular catch the characters' eyes. One is a pigmy chimpanzee which would make an excellent familiar. The other, the booth keeper claims, is a genuine roc chick, standing taller than a man. It has long powerful legs, a round black-feathered body, and a long featherless neck. If the storyguide decides the bird really is a roc chick, its growth has been arrested since its removal from its home magical aura. Whether it would resume growth if brought back to the covenant (which presumably also has a magical aura) is also up to the storyguide.

# Strange Happenings

Later that night, one or more of the player characters witness the following two scenes.

## Adeline Spurned

Late that night the moon is bright and the occasional torch or oil lamp sheds isolated circles of light outside the entryways of various inns and taverns on the (nearly) deserted streets of Troyes. One or more player characters (preferably including a noble or scholar) comes across an argument between a handsome knight on horseback (Henri de La Rochenoire, if the character has occasion to recognize him) and a young woman on foot (Adeline, whom some of the characters have met), desperately holding onto his leg.

*"Henri," Adeline cries, "how can you just dismiss me like this after all your protestations of love?"*

*"Love is only a game," he laughs. "It can only be freely given and freely received, not compelled. We have had our fun. It is now time for us both to move on to fresher quarry."*

*"But Henri, I have given myself to you."*

*"Be serious, Adeline," he concludes, gently pushing her away with his foot before riding off.*

Adeline, distraught, runs crying towards one of the guard towers a few streets away. If the characters follow, they see her push past a startled guard and rush up the stairs towards the battlements. If they pursue, the guard also lets them by, rolling his eyes and muttering about the folly of love.

Adeline stands atop one of the merlons, looking down into the abyss. Unless a character intervenes, she jumps to her death. If an effort is made to persuade her to climb down, she acquiesces, sobbing at Henri's betrayal. She has a romantic disposition and unburdens herself to her rescuers: Adeline is one of the many ladies of the court who has fallen victim the handsome Henri's illicit entanglements. If one of her rescuers is male, noble, and honorable, she may transfer her affections to him. Female rescuers may find themselves Adeline's fast friends and confidants. In either case, the player characters have gained an important contact at court.

If no one follows Adeline in her flight, her body is found the next morning, casting a pall over the wedding festivities.

## Vile Plottings

Well past midnight in the tent city, a player knight (summoned to attend a late-night pre-tournament strategy session with some new-found allies), scholar (woken to draft a legal settlement to an intractable succession dispute), priest (called to administer last rites), or menial (paid to carry a letter arranging for an amorous tryst) finds himself walking past the rear of a knight's pavilion. He overhears a heavily-accented conversation from inside:

*Voice One, in Provençal Lilt: "…and a further 100 pounds if La Rochenoire gets it on the tourney field." This is followed by silence, interrupted by the gentle tinlking of full coin purses.*

*Voice One, in heavily broken Low German, a little impatient: "One hundred pounds! One hundred pounds if La Rochenoire never gets up."*

*Voice Two, in pidgin, German-accented, Langue d'Oïl: "Yes, I understand first time. Agree. Money good."*

The storyguide may require a Perception-based Speak Langue d'Oïl (French) roll of 9+ to identify each accent.

The conversation done, the character hears the tent's front flap rise. If he peeks around the corner, he sees a pock-faced man set out into the moonlight, mount up, and ride towards the town. No further sounds come from the tent unless the player character provokes them.

Any determined investigation reveals that the pockmarked man is Bernard le Savoyard, the principal attendant of Michel de Bourdaigne, and that tent belongs to Ignatz, a German knight of no particular distinction.

Barging into the tent proffering wild accusations is a very bad idea. Ignatz' tent is surrounded by those of many other foreign knights, and attempting an on-the-spot arrest without a shred of proof would be the medieval equivalent of staging a hold-up at a National Rifle Association convention. If the characters do get into this kind of trouble, the storyguide should probably take pity on them and have the count's marshals arrive on the scene to throw them into jail for causing a disturbance.

# The Wedding

The wedding is held the next day. While it is unlikely that any of the player characters will be invited (this does not preclude the fact, if any of them are of appropriate stature), they are free to hang around the church with the other oglers and watch the marriage procession — including the royals — enter and leave. If any of the characters have never seen Henri or Michel, a neighboring onlooker points them out. The pock-faced man from Ignatz's tent — Bernard le Savoyard — rides next to Michel.

# The Tournament

## Preparations

The player characters are free to spend the day of the wedding — or the following days, for that matter — dealing with the developing situation as they see fit. They may wish to investigate any of the non-player characters they've met or heard about, prepare for the tournamnet, or try to contact the count or any of the royals.

Contacting the count or royals will be a difficult proposition, even for knights. Generous bribes and successful social rolls will definitely be required. Wild, unproven allegations will probably result in beatings (for commoners) or imprisonment (for nobles). If the player characters do reach Henri, he listens coldly and has them shown out. Outwardly he is unfazed. Inwardly he is concerned, and avoids crossing paths with his cousin.

## The Tournament Events

The three days after the wedding are devoted to the tournament.

The first day is reserved for commoners. Races, animal baiting, and wrestling matches are held in the morning. The afternoon is devoted to a mock melee where interested parties can flail away at each other with heavily padded clubs. This is considered mainly a comic exercise, though some bones are bound to get broken.

The second and third day are each divided into two melees (for a total of four), as there are far too many young knights interested in participating for them to all be on the field at once. A knight can attempt to register with the heralds for as many of the four as he wishes. The famous and high born will be duly registered for whichever slots they desire. The remaining oversubscribed slots will be assigned by "fate" (in other words, by bribing the heralds). All the participating knights are required to present blunted weapons for inspection, though their kits are not searched. The player characters can rent such weapons if necessary.

For a few pennies, a player character can find out that Henri is the only registered royal, and that he is only registered for the last melee. (Michel is an experienced warrior and has nothing to prove). They can also discover, for a few pennies more, that an unusually large number of German knights (including Ignatz) have paid heavily to participate in the final event. How much the player characters have to pay to enter the final melee is up to the storyguide. It should be expensive, but still affordable.

When the critical final melee begins, about one hundred knights take the field. Henri flails away with the best of them, but five German knights (two senior and three junior knights, see Appendix I for statistics) ignore other challengers and use their superior horsemanship and weapons skills to force him into an isolated part of the field. They occasionally trade blows amongst themselves to avoid being too obvious. If they succeed in corralling Henri, they cut him down and kill him using edged swords. Given the confusion of the melee, even Henri may not realize what is happening until it is too late.

For the player characters to rescue Henri they will have to intervene, preferably with other knights from their team (note that Henri and the player knights may well be on different teams). Without forewarning of possible foul play, recruiting such allies once the melee has started will be very difficult as each knight will be intent on his own fights and efforts to win prizes. Loud and repeated shouts of "Foul!" may attract the attention of the marshals and stop the proceedings, but only after ten rounds or so.

If Henri is killed and the player characters did not intervene, the German knights successfully trade in their edged for blunted weapons. Even blows from edged swords rarely penetrate armor, so an autopsy only reveals that Henri was

killed from broken bones and blood loss through internal bleeding — common enough on the tourney field. Suspicions linger, however, and the player characters acquire the –1 Dark Secret Flaw. If it should ever come out that Henri was murdered and the characters had forewarning, they could face death.

# Judgement

If Henri is knocked unconscious or killed and the player characters do not lodge an accusation on his behalf, the German knights make a discreet exit and are paid their 100£ by Bernard to keep quiet. If, on the other hand, either Henri or the player characters accuse the knights, arrests follow and a curtain of silence descends on the scandal as the royal and princely houses close ranks to keep the prying eyes of lesser mortals out of their affairs.

Royal investigators thoroughly scour for clues and interview witnesses, some of them under torture. Large numbers are arrested, perhaps including the player characters, only to be released gradually as certainty of their innocence is established. Criminal types associated with Troyes and known to the player characters drop out of sight — they're lying low.

Much now depends on how the characters acted earlier in the adventure, to whom they spoke, and what they said.

Any character who followed Adeline but failed to rescue her is formally charged with her murder, the tower guard being the principal witness.

Ignatz, put to the question, confesses everything and implicates Bernard. If the character who overheard the plot took no action, he is also implicated by a surprise witness, having been spotted lurking around Ignatz' tent when the deal was struck.

If the player characters attempted to take action, minor figures they may have warned deny

everything for fear of implicating themselves. Major figures warned by the player characters claim to have dismissed the "rumors" as vile canards. If Adeline was warned, she claims that she, in turn, warned Henri, who refused to believe her. Henri confirms this (if he is still alive).

If it looks like the player characters will become important witnesses, they are brought before the king (or if Blanche is regent, the queen) to tell their story. If they attempted to give warning and were instrumental in rescuing Henri, they stand to benefit handsomely. Knights are given 100£ each, and lesser characters 20£. In addition, any losses stemming from the tournament and the subsequent investigation are made good. Finally, the characters enjoy the (modest and reasonable) favor of the court so long as they remain discreet and do not go about noising what they know to all and sundry.

In the end, Ignatz, having been put to the question and confessed, is hung for treason. The other German knights are made of sterner stuff, and admit to no more than having been paid to administer Henri a lesson. They are exiled, as killing them would only attract more attention to the scandal.

Bernard admits to his role, but claims to have acted under Michel's instructions, and insists there was never any question of killing Henri. Michel, as befits a member of the royal family, is heard *in camera*, and his testimony is never made known to the player characters. (For the storyguide: Michel tells the king he was concerned the other melee participants would hold their blows when fighting Henri because of his status, and he merely wanted to ensure a "fair" test.)

Michel enters into disfavor and is no longer welcomed at court. He accepts his fate stoically. Bernard is exiled, but continues in Michel's employ in various capacities abroad. Whether this is out of genuine friendship or to keep Bernard quiet remains unclear. If the characters limited themselves to telling the truth, without making accusations beyond what the evidence can plainly bear, Bernard holds no grudges against them. He may, in fact, reenter the saga as an acquaintance at a later date.

In the end, life is full of ambiguities. Did Bernard exceed his instructions deliberately? Was there a linguistic misunderstanding between Bernard and Ignatz? Did Bernard intentionally make his instructions vague? Though the player characters may become convinced that Michel really did want to see his cousin dead, the facts of the matter are left deliberately ambiguous.

### *Henri de La Rochenoire*

A minor and distant member of the royal family.

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per 0, Pre +3, Com +2, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik –1
**Age:** 22
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Wealthy Knight +5, Temporal Influence +2, Carefree +1, Venus's Blessing +1, Overconfident –2, Enemy (Michel) –2, Compulsive Philanderer –1
**Personality Traits:** Callous +3, Carefree +3, Brave +1
**Reputations:** Wit 2 (court), Royal Favor 1 (court), Heartbreaker 1 (ladies at court)

| Weapon / Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling / Fist | –2 | –2 | –2 | 0 | –1 |
| Longsword and kite shield | +3 | +4 | +9 | +4 | +3 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Longsword and kite shield | +9 | +6 | +11 | +4 | +5 |
| Lance and kite shield | +11 | +11 | +8 | +8 | +5 |

**Soak:** 16
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 1 (horses), Area Lore 1 (France), Athletics 3 (dancing), Awareness 1 (women), Brawling 1 (dodging), Carousing 1 (drinking), Charm 3 (women), Etiquette 1 (nobles), Folk Ken 1 (nobles), Hunting 1 (falconry), Leadership 1 (courtiers), Longshaft Weapon 3 (lance), Ride 4 (hunting), Scribe Langue d'Oïl 1 (reading), Shield and Weapon 3 (longsword), Speak Langue d'Oïl 5 (French)
**Equipment:** Fine clothes; improved helm with mail coif; mail hauberk with mail sleeves, leggings, and mittens; longsword; kite shield; destrier
**Encumbrance:** –6 on foot (–2 on combat rolls), 0 when mounted

# Dramatis Personae

## Royal Character Profiles

Because this adventure can be fitted into an ongoing saga, the actual identity of the royals who are the final judges in this story can vary depending on the saga's current date. Character

profiles for three members of the French royalty who might preside over the final investigation follow.

## *1220-1223*

Philippe II "Auguste" (born 1165) has been king of France since 1180. He may be accompanied to Troyes by his estranged wife Isambour (or Ingeborg) of Denmark, daughter of King Valdemar I. Philippe is by this time in his late 50s, and historically dies in 1223. The groom, Gustave, could well be the nephew of Philippe's first wife Isabelle of Hainault (died 1190), and the marriage an attempt to strengthen the ties established years before by this earlier union.

Philippe's reign was long, and he was the most successful of any medieval king of France. His reign sees the consolidation of power for the Capetians and the seizure of most of the Angevin lands in France. He makes France the most powerful nation in western Europe. While not considered a great leader in battle, despite his famous victory at Bouvines, he is nonetheless tenacious and a great strategist and diplomat. Described as prematurely aged, he is by this time bald and blind in one eye since a dangerous crossing of the Alps at the age of 25 on his return from the Third Crusade.

## *1223-1226*

Louis VIII "The Lion" (born 1187) is king, and his wife is Blanche of Castile. King Louis is in his late thirties at this time, and dies only three years after being crowned, leaving Blanche and a twelve-year-old son behind. Louis VIII is a renowned warrior, participating in numerous battles, an almost successful invasion of England, and the Albigensian crusade while crown prince.

## *1226-1230*

After Louis VIII's death, Queen Blanche (born 1188, dies 1252) is left regent, a position in which she demonstrates considerable political skill and strength of character. Her slight accent marks her as a foreigner, and her position initially is quite shaky as various great nobles consider an inexperienced Spanish woman an unsuitable ruler of France. In 1226 , a rebellion led by Count Thibaud IV of Champagne threatens to wrest control of the regency from her, but Thibaud defects to the royal side in 1227 and is her staunch supporter thereafter.

Blanche has a reputation for piety, though rumors of illicit affairs abound during the early years of her regency. These may be fabrications spread by her many political opponents. Blanche manages to remain regent for sixteen years, and even once her son becomes king continues to exercise considerable influence over him and the court for the rest of her life.

If the adventure takes place during this period, St. Louis IX "the Pious" (born 1214, dies 1270) is present, but maintains a low profile, deferring to his mother in all matters of policy.

### *Michel de Bourdaigne*

A minor and distant member of the royal family.

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +2, Com +2, Str +2, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik –1
**Age:** 28
**Size:** +1
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Wealthy Knight +5, Temporal Influence +2, Veteran +1, Common Fear (being alone) –2, Oversensitive (insults) –1
**Personality Traits:** Insecure +2, Jealous +1
**Reputations:** Respected warrior 2 (royal knights), Touchy 2 (court)

| **Weapon / Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling / Fist | 0 | +1 | –2 | +3 | +1 |
| Longsword and kite shield | +5 | +7 | +10 | +7 | +5 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Longsword and kite shield | +13 | +9 | +12 | +7 | +7 |
| Lance and kite shield | +15 | +14 | +9 | +11 | +7 |

**Soak:** 17
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 1 (horses), Area Lore 1 (France), Athletics 1 (dancing), Awareness 1 (insults), Brawling 1 (fists), Carousing 1 (drinking), Charm 1 (royalty), Court Lore 1 (officials), Etiquette 1 (court), Folk Ken 1 (nobles), Hunting 1 (deer), Leadership 1 (knights), Longshaft Weapon 5 (lance), Ride 5 (battle), Scribe Langue d'Oïl 1 (reading), Shield and Weapon 5 (longsword), Speak Langue d'Oïl 5 (French)
**Equipment:** Fine clothes, improved helm with mail coif, mail hauberk with mail sleeves, leggings, and mittens, longsword, kite shield, destrier
**Encumbrance:** –4 on foot (0 for combat rolls), 0 when mounted

# Other Personages of Note

## *Count Thibaud IV of Champagne*

Born posthumously in Troyes 1201, he becomes one of France's greatest 13th century lyric poets, and a generous supporter of troubadours and minstrels. Certainly the wealthiest and most powerful count in France, he is also heir through his mother to the kingdom of Navarre, which he inherits in 1234.

## *Michel de Bourdaigne*

Michel is handsome and strong, although somewhat stocky in build. He has fought in several battles for the king, and has established his reputation as a warrior. He has long been a favorite of the court, but has recently been eclipsed by Henri. Despite his good looks, he is insecure, and very sensitive to insults, real or perceived. He has taken several minor jests by Henri to heart, and this has reinforced his personal insecurities. Michel is deeply resentful of his new competitor for popular favor. He has nursed this smoldering grudge for some time.

## *Bernard le Savoyard*

Michel's right hand man, Bernard is rumored to be the bastard son of a previous count of Savoy. He would be handsome, but suffered scaring from the pox earlier in life. He can be quite charming and convincing, and his social skills and knacks should make him a match for the most socially adept player characters. One peculiarity in his manner is that he never makes direct eye contact during conversations except when he trying to determine if someone is lying.

Bernard has spent time in Italy working as a mercenary for various communes, but eventually discovered that his true forte lies in espionage and intrigue. He hopes to build up a reputation as an "odd jobs" man, and perhaps eventually end up working for the king (or regent, as the case may be).

## *Ignatz and the other German Knights*

There are five German knights (including Ignatz) who commit the assassination attempt. They are knights errant, mercenaries, and occasionally even bandits by profession. Obviously, they have few qualms about committing a murder for pay — it is no more than they have done before. They can be named as desired, but suitable names include Adolf, Barnard, Klaus, Rudolf, Heinz, and Gerhard

### *Bernard le Savoyard*

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +1, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +2, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qui 0
**Age:** 32
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Gentleman +2, Knack with Guile +2, Well-Travelled +1, Veteran +1, Disfigured (poxed) –1, Driving Goal (power) –1
**Personality Traits:** Ruthless +2, Ambitious +2
**Reputations:** Intriguer 2 (mercenaries)

| **Weapon / Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling / Fist | +5 | +5 | +4 | +2 | +5 |
| Brawling / Dagger | +7 | +7 | +7 | +5 | +6 |
| Longsword and kite shield | +7 | +8 | +13 | +6 | +6 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Longsword and kite shield | +8 | +6 | +11 | +6 | +4 |
| Lance and kite shield | +10 | +6 | +8 | +10 | +4 |

**Soak:** 8
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Awareness 3 (ambushes), Brawling 4 (dagger), Charm 3 (employers), Etiquette 1 (mercenaries), Folk Ken 1 (lies), Guile 3 (Knack +2) (lying to authority), Intrigue 2 (plotting), Longshaft weapon 3 (lance), Ride 3 (speed), Scribe Langue d'Oc 1 (reading), Shield and Weapon 4 (longsword), Speak Langue d'Oc 5 (Provençal), Speak Langue d'Oïl 3 (French), Speak Low German 1 (Flemish), Speak High German 1 (Svabian)
**Equipment:** Good clothes, improved helm, mail coat, longsword, kite shield, dagger, palfrey
**Encumbrance:** –2 on foot (0 for combat rolls), 0 on horseback

# Chapter 8
# By the Law of the Land

## Introduction

*Per legem terrae.*
*(By the law of the land.)*

— *Magna Carta,* 1215

"By the Law of the Land" is a scenario that revolves around a covenant's interaction with mundane society. The story is one of intrigue and investigation, and there is no combat involved unless the characters unwisely choose to initiate it. Nonetheless, the rewards for success are considerable. The adventure is optimal for one or two magi and a number of grogs and companions.

This scenario is best set in a region in which counts are hereditary and exercise judicial functions. France and Germany are good choices. Alternatively, the count in this story may have come into vast wealth in old age, and acquired comital status by bribing the local king. Preferably, the events described here occur a few days travel from the players' covenant, in a county perhaps a week away from a rival and more powerful enemy covenant.

Money plays an important part in the adventure, and the storyguide should keep careful track of how much the characters spend in bargaining, bribes, gifts, and (most importantly) legal fees. Medieval justice is an expensive proposition. As in all problem-solving adventures, "By the Law of the Land" works best if the characters pause occasionally to sift through the clues and weigh the implications of past and future actions. The choices the characters make during the adventure will have a significant impact on any settlement they might reach at the end.

## Overview

Albert, a relative of one of the covenant's grogs, visits the covenant and proposes a lucrative partnership with the magi in exchange for a very large loan. Albert wants to exercise his right of first refusal (see page 22) over some land that a relative of his, Olivier, is selling. The land includes a blessed healing well, likely of interest to the magi.

When the characters arrive at the site of the land-sale, they meet up with a number of incognito and highly-secretive magi, all with their own goals. They also get a chance to investigate the pool and meet Father Bernard, a local priest, and Olivier, the owner of the pool. They discover they will have to fight a court battle in order to secure Albert's right of first refusal. The trial holds a number of intresting surprises.

In the end, the characters must travel to the castle of the count who is lord of the area. He travels to the well in order to determine whether it is truly holy, and a miracle occurs.

## The Lure

The adventure begins when a grog approaches one of the magi. He asks for an audience for his cousin Albert, who has come from a neighboring county to ask for a boon. If they agree to speak to him, Albert outlines his problem. Olivier, a distant paternal cousin, has decided to sell his property to a complete stranger. The 16£ price is a reasonable one, and Albert would like to exercise his right of first refusal to keep

the property in the family. Unfortunately, Albert claims he can raise only one tenth of the purchase price by surrendering the lease on his small holding. He asks the magi if he can negotiate a loan for the difference. If the magi hesitate, their grog chimes in with the fact that the property has a healing pool on it. As his masters seem to be interested in all manner of marvels, surely they can help out his cousin.

The estate is a small allod (see page 22). It includes a prosperous farm, and three tenant households jointly paying a rent of 13*s* 6*d* at Michaelmas and two gross of eggs (288), worth about 30*d*, by each Easter. It is free of any feudal dues, and is burdened only by a customary right to pray at the pool for healing.

Albert asks for a loan of 14£ 5*s*. He offers to grant the covenant the eggs he receives for Easter ("or the equivalent") and free access to the pool until the loan is paid off. He does not want to appear to pay interest on the loan, and so refuses to part with any of the money rent owed at Michaelmas. In fact, Albert can probably raise as much as 4£ from his relatives. As such, he is prepared to bargain the size of the loan down to 11£. If the magi are still not interested, he is disappointed, but suggests they at least visit the estate before refusing his terms. He has twenty more days in which to make good his claim, or the original sale goes through.

If the magi accept Albert's offer, they cannot just give him the money: 14£ is a large sum and he could be robbed on the way home. They will

## Albert

Albert is a kind and cheerful man, but not too bright. He hopes to better his position in life by buying Olivier's estate. Though poor, Albert's maternal relatives are numerous and, to the extent that they can, back his attempts to become a free landowner. Unfortunately, Albert still needs a lot of money. Albert has a (home county) Lore score of 3.

## Raspallion

A senior retired Redcap, Raspallion dislikes the characters' covenant because of an incident which occurred a few months ago. While upbraiding a younger Redcap (the one usually responsible for the characters' covenant) for tardiness, he was stung by the latter's defense that he, at least, was discreet. Frowning, Raspallion asked what he should infer from this remark, only to be told that he had acquired a reputation as a blabbermouth. When pressed further, the younger Redcap evasively suggested he might have heard this mentioned at the characters' covenant.

Raspallion now holds a grudge against the characters. If they are ever able to clear up this matter (Raspallion will never bring it up without prompting) they find him a repentant and useful ally. As a senior retired Redcap, Raspallion supervises and coordinates the movements of most of the younger members of House Mercere in the tribunal. He would be in an excellent position to warn the characters of impending Hermetic dangers or opportunities.

have to set off with him to ensure he gets back safely. Even if they refuse to deal, they might still be intrigued by the healing pool and decide to investigate.

## Raspallion

Before the player characters set out, the covenant is visited by Raspallion, a grizzled old redcap called out of retirement to cover for a sick colleague. He delivers a letter from a nearby rival covenant, but seems to take an instant dislike to his hosts. He then departs without accepting offers of hospitality. If the characters insist, he replies huffily that "spying and gossiping" are not normally considered to be among his official duties. To emphasize his displeasure, he shakes his sandals outside after leaving the covenant. This is an implicit insult, as it suggests that the covenant is dirtier than the dusty courtyard (an Etiquette roll of 6+ reveals the significance of the gesture if it is not obvious to the players).

If your saga already has a Redcap who would be appropriate to fill Raspallion's role, feel free to substitute that character instead.

## The Letter

A careful reading of the letter reveals that it is a circular addressed to all the covenants of the tribunal. From reading it, the characters should realize that a vis source is at stake, which will fall into the clutches of a hostile covenant unless they take action. Feel free to photocopy the letter for use during play. If you do, make sure to fill in the name of the rival covnant (and the current year of your saga) in the last paragraph.

# Traveling

As they cross into the neighboring county, the characters notice a marked increase in the number of disheveled road-side beggars. If they question Albert or any fellow travelers, the characters learn that it has been a bad year for the crops. To make matters worse, the count is making good his own lost income by squeezing additional aids from his tenants and vassals.

## St. Matthew's Plow

Before they reach their destination, the characters stop to spend the night at St. Matthew's Plow, a charming little road-side inn. A large number of beggars are camped nearby. Make sure the party is given every opportunity to give generously. Prices at the inn are very reasonable, as the owner is deeply concerned at the drop in business. He is behind on loan repayments and on the latest aid requested by the count, and is desperate to raise the necessary funds.

### *Octave the Advocate*

In the common room the characters meet Octave, a traveling advocate and the inn's only other patron. Octave politely invites the characters to join him for a drink. They may be reticent in revealing the purpose of their trip, but Albert has no such inhibitions. He talks happily about redeeming his family property until Octave asks him if he is referring to the Olivier estate. Octave informs the party that Olivier has entered a

To our sodales throughout this Tribunal of Hermes, we offer greetings.

We have the honor of informing you of our acquisition by purchase of all rights to the vis source commonly referred to as St. Pons' Pool from its previous owner, Olivier.

We would like to seize this opportunity to assure our brothers in Hermes of our continuing utmost respect and consideration.

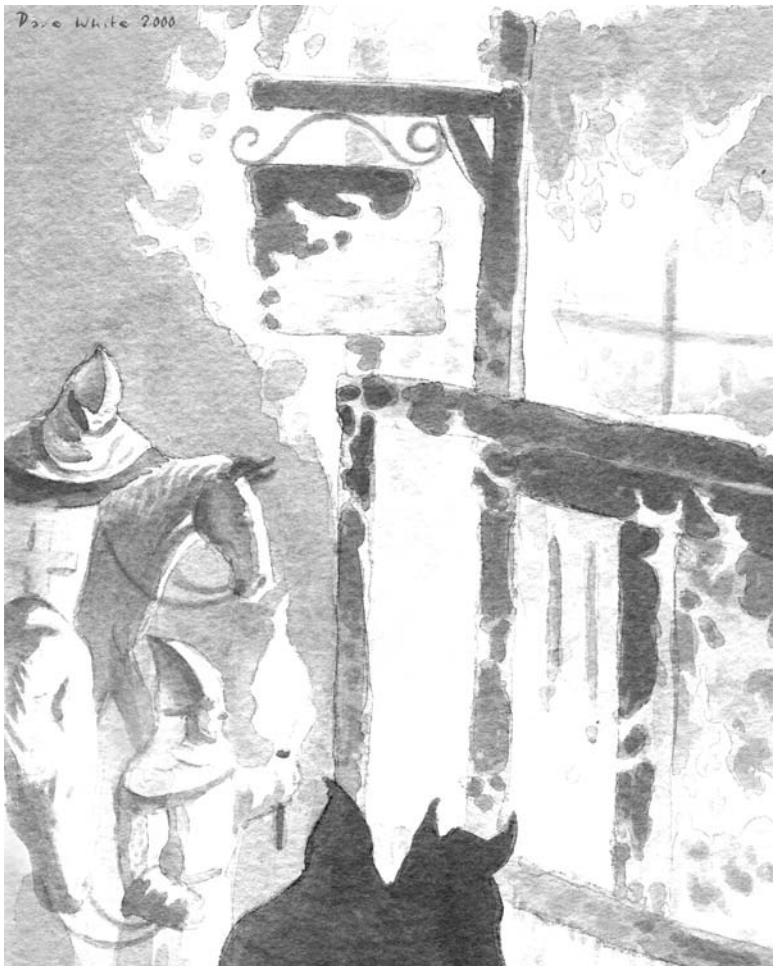
By order of the members of in Council, on this,
the 4th day of Sagittarius, th year of our Order.

## Octave

Octave is a traveling advocate, moving from town to town, accepting what cases he can. In time, he hopes to acquire enough of a reputation to gain a position in one of the comital or Church courts. While he may appear mercenary, he always does his best for his clients. It is not his role to determine the law, but simply to present his client's case in the best possible light. Medieval law being fraught with uncertainties and ambiguities, he sees no difficulty in taking one position on behalf of a client one day, and taking a completely contrary position for another client the next. Octave has Intelligence +1, Communication of +2, Disputatio 4, and Civil and Canon Law 5.

counter plea with the magistrate contesting Albert's right to first refusal.

Since it seems that the characters may have a court case on their hands, Octave offers his services. He charges 6*d* a day plus 2*s* if they win the case. If the characters demur, he slyly suggests that Olivier might need an advocate instead. If the characters do not get the hint he finishes his drink, excuses himself politely, pays his bill with the inn keeper, and leaves, intending to ride through the night to get to the town before the party. On the other hand, if the party accepts Octave's terms, he suggests the characters spend the next day gathering as many witnesses as possible to confirm Albert's blood relationship to Olivier.




### *The Plow in Flames*

Before the party can turn in for the night, ten of the count's knights and men-at-arms enter the inn. An argument with the innkeeper ensues. It appears the innkeeper owes the count 5£ and cannot pay. Unless the characters intervene, the knights order everyone to gather their possessions and get out. They proceed to make an example of the innkeeper by tossing burning brands onto the thatch roof. The knights do not appear to take any pleasure in this task. If questioned, they claim to be "just following orders." If Octave is still present and is consulted as to the legality of the knights' actions, he shrugs his shoulders. There is nothing he can do. If the characters make a credible show of force, the count's men back off intending to return another day. Otherwise they leave once they are convinced the fire cannot be put out.

Attacking the count's men is not a good idea. Even if the characters win, the innkeeper is held responsible, and they have no hope of prevailing in their legal case for the pool. The best move is to wait for the knights to leave and then assist in putting out the fire (though they will not succeed by purely mundane means). Any tact, courage, and generosity shown here by the characters will have a significant impact on the upcoming trial.

# In Town

Once the characters arrive in town, they have the opportunity to begin gathering information. The following sections list characters they may meet and information they may seek.

Note: The town remains nameless throughout the scenario so you can insert a name appropriate to the region in which your saga is set.

# Non-Player Characters

A number of different non-player characters have plots and schemes regarding the pool and each other. The following sections detail each of the major players in town.

## *Father Bernard*

Father Bernard is probably the only true villain of this scenario. Instead of acting as the protector of his parish and its holy pool, he has hatched a sordid scheme aimed at his own enrichment. Over the years, he has noticed that the pool's power can be subtly influenced by the faithful. The pool has never healed more than one person per month, and no bather has ever been healed when a significant number of worshipers believed someone else would have been more worthy.

Bernard's plan is to build a shrine in the adjacent meadow, and grant access to the waters only to the supplicant making the largest donation. If any parishioners object, Bernard plans on insisting that the money go to supporting good works. After a time, he will claim that the charitable expenditures are being paid for from donations to the shrine, while in fact paying for them out of general parish revenues and keeping the donations for himself.

In order to secure Olivier's backing as owner of the pool, he initially offered to split the shrine's donations with him. The plan had to be temporarily abandoned, though, when the conspirators ran out of money due to Margentius' invervention (see "Margentius," page 168). Olivier was forced to sell the property to pay his debts.

Bernard has not given up, however. His agenda is to seize sole control of the pool, first by bribing the magistrate, and then by attempting to bribe the count.

Bernard knows that Olivier is planning to sell his estate to cover his debts. Given his own involvement in Olivier's failed venture, Bernard is not forthcoming on this or any other issue concerning the pool other than its associated legend (which the characters can get from anyone).

Bernard considers the "hermit" (actually Margentius) to be an inconsequential nuisance, and is not concerned by his presence.

## *Olivier*

The characters may ultimately feel sorry for Olivier. He borrowed heavily to pay for his share of the construction of the shrine, and now has to sell everything. When Albert first told his relative that he might be able to raise enough money to keep the property in the family, Olivier was pleased, as he would probably be able to retain the farm as Albert's tenant.

Olivier changed his mind, however, when a mysterious buyer (Myralys, the rival covenent's representative, in disguise — see page 170) offered to raise the purchase price, under the table, to 20£. As this would permit Olivier to more than recoup his loss, he has decided to contest Albert's right to first refusal, but will certainly entertain a bidding war if given the opportunity.

# Vis Sources and Hermetic Law

Competition for vis is one of the main political undercurrents within the Order of Hermes. The strongest possible claim to exclusive access to a particular vis source is one where a single group of magi:

- Has clear title to the vis source,
- Has been exploiting the vis source since time immemorial, and
- Has been explicitly recognized as the owners of the vis source by a Hermetic tribunal.

Few claims to new vis sources can be so secure, however, and covenants resort to a variety of strategies to reinforce their claims and exclude potential competitors. Often, covenants seek to establish mundane ownership of the source or, where this is not possible (in wilderness areas, for example), evidence of ancient and uncontested exploitation. To this end, covenants and even individual magi tend to maintain very detailed written records of their travels and discoveries (a practice strongly encouraged by the quaesitors).

Bullying with certámen or wielding superior political might and influence at a tribunal are not usually successful methods of gaining access to vis sources unless the competing claims are finely balanced or there is widespread fear in the tribunal that one of the claimants is threatening to achieve too much power. This is not to say certámen has no role. Both parties could agree to resolve a dispute in this way, either permanently or until a tribunal can rule on the matter.

In this scenario, the rival covenant plans to rest a relatively secure claim on the basis of mundane ownership.

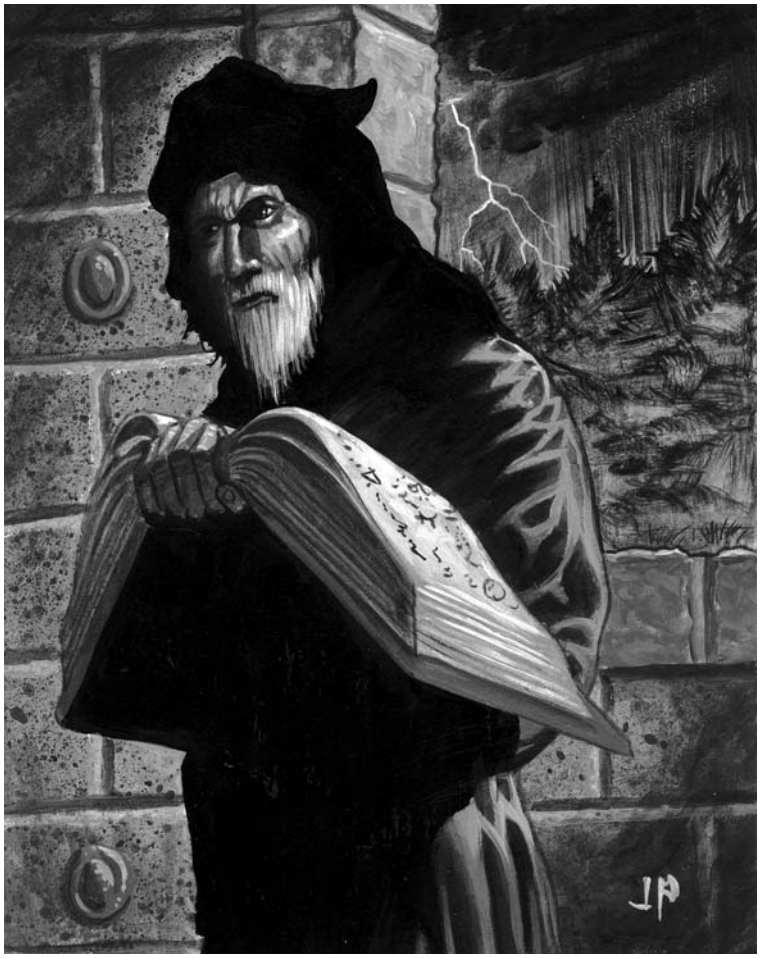
Olivier understands that the mysterious buyer's purchase offer includes the rights to the pool as well as to the rest of the estate. He doesn't know why the pool would be so important, but assumes it may have value as a status symbol. As it permits him to charge a very high premium for the estate, he has not spent much time worrying about it.

Olivier is not proud of his failed scheme to exploit the pool financially, and will not willingly discuss it with the characters.

Olivier has a local Area Lore score of 4

## *Margentius*

As the characters may eventually realize, the "holy hermit" of St. Pons' Pool is none other than Margentius, a member of House Criamon. Many years ago, when he was a young mage, Margentius was holed up in an inn disguised as a priest, waiting for the end of a prolonged thunderstorm. A knight accompanied by his retinue and his pregnant wife were also taking refuge there. Before the storm ended, the woman went into premature labor, giving birth to a sickly infant with tiny withered legs. Learning there was a priest in the inn, and worried that his newborn son would die before being baptized, the knight sent for Margentius and asked him to perform the christening on the spot. Margentius had difficulty taking the request seriously but mouthed a few nonsense Latin phrases for the sake of his disguise. The storm shortly abated and Margentius promptly forgot the whole episode.



Many years later, while meditating on the Enigma, he remembered this incident and his conscience began to bother him. There was nothing he could do about it, however, as he had not even asked for the knight's name. After many more years, while pondering both this problem and the Enigma in his favorite spot beneath an old cypress tree, he fell asleep and was struck by insight through a dream. The full enormity of his casual parody of the baptismal ritual sank in. He had unwittingly condemned a poor child to damnation. Struck with remorse, Margentius swore to rededicate his life, sought out a priest, and accepted baptism. After much aimless wandering, he finally came upon St. Pons' Pool. Here he found a modicum of peace, building a nearby hut and living off the alms of pilgrims while meditating on the Divine meaning and studying the magical and holy properties of the site.

A few months ago, he noticed from a distance Bernard and Olivier measuring out and pacing St. Pons' Meadow. Intrigued, he cast *The Whispering Winds* and eavesdropped on their conversation. Much to his dismay, he learned of their plot to exploit the healing properties of the pool for financial gain. He decided to put a stop to it. Each night after the workmen had gathered building materials he cast a *Call to Slumber* and magicked the stones and lumber away. Bernard and Olivier, unable to find the thief, soon ran out of money and were forced to abandon their plan.

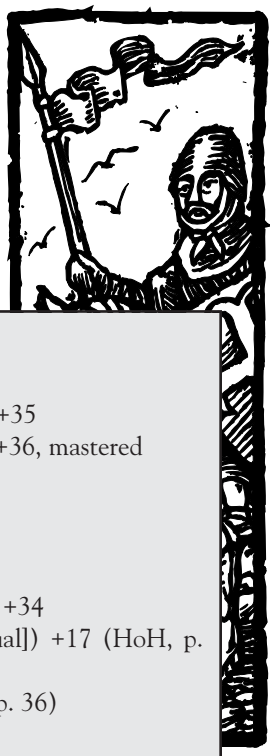
## *Hectorus*

Hectorus is a quaesitor sent to investigate rumors that Margentius has forsaken the Order and become a pious magus (see *Pax Dei*, pages 83-88). As Margentius refuses to renew his oath (why should he?) or deny the accusations (why dignify a spurious accusation with a response?), the investigation has turned into a prolonged

contest of wills between the two magi, with Hectorus attempting to spy Margentius out using mundane means and non-Hermetic magic.

As a quaesitor, Hectorus is discreet to a fault. He never discusses his intentions, knowledge, or observations with anyone other than the principals until he has an iron-clad case to take to a tribunal. If he must say something privately while in public he uses *Cantrip of the Silent Monologue* to ensure that no one else can hear.

Even though he has the Blatant Gift, Hectorus manages to function in society by virtue of his persona as a pompous madman. He keeps dogs away with *Determent of the Dog's Bark* and *Repulsion of the Pesky Vermin*. If he has one flaw, it is his hatred of prevaricators and oath



## Margentius

**Characteristics:** Int +3, Per +1, Str 0, Stm +1, Pre 0, Com 0, Dex –2, Qik 0
**Age:** 81 (apparent age 44)
**Confidence:** 3
**Faith Points:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** True Faith +3, Gentle Gift +1, Dark Secret –1
**Personality Traits:** Devout +3, Proud +2
**Reputation:** Holy Hermit (villagers) +1

| **Weapon/Attack**: | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist)* | –2 | –5 | –3 | 0 |
| Quarterstaff | +9 | +5 | +9 | +3 |

*Three extra botch dice
**Soak:** +1
**Abilities:** Awareness 2 (eavesdropping), Certamen 4 (Mentem), Concentration 2 (spell casting), Disguise 1 (clergy), Disputatio 3 (teaching), Enigmatic Wisdom 5 (Twilight), Finesse 2 (Terram), Great Weapon 2 (quarterstaff), Hermes Lore 2 (House Criamon), Magic Theory 6 (inventing spells), Parma Magica 4 (Mentem), Philosophiae 3 (metaphysics), Scribe Latin 3 (reading), Speak Latin 5 (cryptic poetry), Speak Local Language 4 (local dialect)
**Arts:**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cr 8 | In 11 | Mu 15 | Pe 8 | Re 18 |
| An 10 | Aq 5 | Au 5 | Co 10 | He 5 |
| Ig 5 | Im 8 | Me 17 | Te 8 | Vi 15 |

**Twilight Points:** 14
**Twilight Effects:** None
**Sigil Effects:** A light film of moisture condenses on the target for a round after a spell is cast.
**Spells Known:**
*Whispering Winds* (InAu15) +17
*Whispers Through the Dark Gate* (InCo[Me]15) +22
*Hunt for the Wild Herb* (InHe15) +17
*Eyes of the Past* (InIm20 [ritual]) +20
*Gift of Reason* (CrMe25) +26
*Posing the Silent Question* (InMe20) +29
*Thoughts Within Babble* (InMe25) +29
*Call to Slumber* (ReMe10) +36, mastered
*Incantation of Summoning the Dead* (ReMe25) +36
*Coerce the Spirits of the Night* (ReMe30) +35
*Enslave the Mortal Mind* (ReMe40) +36, mastered
*The Unseen Porter* (ReTe10) +27
*The Invisible Eye Revealed* (InVi25) +27
*Wizard's Communion* (MuVi30) +24
*Demon's Eternal Oblivion* (PeVi30) +24
*Circular Ward Against Demons* (ReVi25) +34
*The Waking Dream* (InMe[Cr,Im]15[ritual]) +17 (HoH, p. 36)
*The Enigma's Gift* (CrVi30) +24 (HoH, p. 36)

**New Spells Known:**
*Restoration of the Blighted Limb* (CrCo30) 19+
R: Touch/Near, D: Sun/Instant, T: Ind
Spell Focus: A Crutch (+1)
Heals most damage done to a limb, short of outright destruction or amputation. This includes the effects of poison, disease, malignant spells, premature aging, or congenital conditions. In cases of simple injury from fire, cold, weapons, or accidents, the spell heals one Body level and, if duration Instant, adds +3 to subsequent recovery rolls.

*The Silent Caravan* (ReTe30) +27, mastered
R: Near/Sight, D: Conc, T: Ind
Spell Focus: A Whip (+3)
A variation of *The Unseen Porter* (ReTe10). If the caster targets one element of a stack, pile, or row of similar objects (stones, logs, or corpses, for example) and directs it to be carried to some other spot, a chain of up to eight similar objects, each one pace apart, will proceed from the pile to the designated destination. If this spell is multicast, several chains of eight can be appended to each other. A "caravan" can follow a moving caster so long as the lead element is not distanced and concentration is maintained, and will deposit its cargo at any point within Near/Sight of where the caster stops. If the objects were neatly stacked to begin with, they can be similarly stacked at the destination with a Finesse roll of 6+. A Casting Requisite appropriate to the target may be required.

breakers. He is quite strict and fines even minor, unwitting violators of the Code ten pawns of vis on the spot. Characters who dare to probe his parma magica with a spell can expect a hostile summons to the next tribunal.

Hectorus' magical nature should be evident to the characters, but since he won't state his name or business until absolutely necessary, the characters will probably assume he is acting on behalf of the rival covenant. Storyguides should encourage this misdirection until Myralys begins to show her hand. To this end, assume that the characters have never heard of Hectorus, even if they make their Hermes Lore rolls.

## *Myralys*

Myralys is a member of House Jerbiton and will be the characters' major opponent in this adventure. She is interested in joining the rival covenant. As an inducement, she has offered information about St. Pons' Pool, which she knows to be a vis source. As soon as she closes the deal on Olivier's estate and discovers how to extract the vis, she will become a full member. The rival covenant has provided her with 30£ with which to cover the purchase and her expenses.

She knows Albert has claimed a right of first refusal to the estate, and is prepared to discreetly

### Hectorus

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per 0, Str –1, Stm 0, Pre –2, Com 0, Dex 0, Qik –1
**Age:** 45
**Confidence:** 4
**Virtues and Flaws:** Intuition +2, Clear Thinker +1, Quaesitor +1, Strong Willed +1, Blatant Gift –1, Driving Goal –1 (bring all Hermetic traitors to book), Duty Bound –1 (upholding the Code), Oversensitive –1 (liars), Oversensitive –1 (oath breakers)
**Personality Traits:** Humorless +3, Irritable +2, Dogged +1
**Reputation:** Abrasive 3 (Order of Hermes)

| **Weapon/Attack:** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist)* | –3 | –3 | –4 | –1 |

*Three extra botch dice
**Soak:** 0
**Abilities:** Awareness 1 (of spell casting), Civil and Canon Law 1 (precedents), Disputatio 1 (law), Finesse 1 (targeting), Folk Ken 1 (magi), Hermetic Law 7 (mundane relations), Hermes 6 Lore 2 (history), Magic Theory 4 (inventing spells), Occult Lore 1 (demons), Parma Magica (Mentem), Scribe Latin 3 (original composition), Speak Latin 5 (scolding), Speak Local Language 4 (local dialect)
**Arts:**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cr 5 | In 12 | Mu 5 | Pe 9 | Re 5 |
| An 5 | Aq 0 | Au 5 | Co 0 | He 0 |
| Ig 0 | Im 12 | Me 7 | Te 0 | Vi 9 |

**Twilight Points:** 3
**Twilight Effects:** none
**Sigil Effects:** Targets affected by Hectorus' spells tend to stand out clearly.
**Spells Known:**
*Weaver's Trap of Webs* (CrAn20) +10
*Eyes of the Cat* (InAu[An]5) +17
*Circling Winds of Protection* (ReAu10) +10
*Wings of the Soaring Wind* (ReAu20) +10
*Eyes of the Past* (InIm20[ritual]) +24
*Discern Images of Truth and Falsehood* (InIm35) +24
*Frosty Breath of the Spoken Lie* (InMe20) +19
*Thoughts Within Babble* (InMe25) +19
*Peering into the Mortal Mind* (InMe30) +19
*Sense the Lingering Magic* (InVi30) +21
*Wizard's Communion* (MuVi20) +14
*Demon's Eternal Oblivion* (PeVi30) +18
*Circular Ward Against Demons* (ReVi20) +14
*View the Distant Scene* (InIm10) +24 (WGRE, p. 166)
*Betraying Whispers* (InMe25) +19 (WGRE, p. 169)

**New Spells Known:**
*Determent of the Dog's Bark* (ReAn15) +10
R: Per/Touch, D: Sun, T: Group
Spell Focus: Tail of an Escaped Weasel (+4)
A Sun Duration version of the spell by the same name. (See *The Wizard's Grimoire, Revised Edition*, page 154.)

*Repulsion of the Pesky Vermin* (MuIm[Au,An]5) +10
R: Per, D: Sun, T: Ind
Spell Focus: A Dab of Perfume (+1)
Creates a painful odor which repels all canines, and that only they can smell.

*Cantrip of the Silent Monologue* (PeIm[Re]4) +17
R: Per, D: Conc, T: Ind
Spell Focus: A Gold Coin (+1)
Ensures that only someone making eye contact with the target (in this case the caster) can hear him. When using the Spell Focus, the caster holds the coin in front of his face to attract the subject's attention.

spend up to 25£ to secure the property either from Olivier or Albert, as the case may be. The fact that Albert's backers have turned out to be magi (she recognizes any player character magi thanks to her Sense the Gift Virtue) poses an additional challenge. She nonetheless remains confident in her ability to prevail, and so does not seek additional help from the rival covenant until it is too late. With any luck, she figures, she will catch the characters interfering with her purchase either by magic or fraud, thus invalidating their claim before a tribunal.

Myralys is a mistress of bluff and deceit. She rarely wears her parma magica unless in the frequent presence of magi, preferring to appear as mundane as possible. She relies instead on her wits and guile for protection. She is, of course, wary of casting spells directly at other magi and instead focuses on the grogs and companions. She uses *Veil of Invisibility* to follow them and *Ear for the Distant Voice* to eavesdrop. If necessary, she uses *Disguise of the Transformed Image* and *Purloined Voice*, or even *Wizard's Act of Hypocrisy,* to disguise herself in her dealings. For more conventional interaction with mundanes she uses *Aura of Ennobled Presence* and *Aura of Rightful Authority*.

Myralys has disguised herself as "Petrona," claiming to be the widow of a prosperous merchant, put out of her home by his children from a previous marriage. With her "dower" funds, she has rented a small two-story house in town where she lives with Alice, a none-too-bright maid. Alice knows nothing of her mistress' secret identity as a maga. Myralys keeps her money in a locked chest under her bed. Each morning after Alice has cleaned up the room and made the bed, Myralys casts *Veil of Invisibility* on the chest and *Wail of the Banshee* on the room, locks the door, and heads out on her rounds.

## Myralys (alias Petrona)

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +2, Str 0, Stm 0, Pre +1, Com +2, Dex –1, Qik –1
**Age:** 35
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Knack with Guile +3, Quiet Magic +2, Gentle Gift +1, Carefree +1, Free Expression +1, Sense the Gift +1, Noncombatant –2, Overconfident –2, Soft Hearted –1
**Personality Traits:** Overconfident +3, Calculating +1, Manipulative +1, Helpful –3
**Reputation:** Eager 1 (rival covenant)

| **Weapon/Attack:** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist)* | –3 | –4 | –4 | 0 |

*Three extra botch dice
**Soak:** 0
**Abilities:** Artes Liberales 1 (music), Awareness 2 (of magi), Bargaining 2 (striking deals), Charm 1 (grogs), Disguise 1 (noble women), Etiquette 1 (merchants), Folk Ken 2 (mundanes), Guile 5 with +3 for Knack (fast talk), Hermes Lore 2 (House Jerbiton), Magic Theory 4 (learning spells), Parma Magica 4 (Ignem), Scribe Latin 4 (reading), Speak Latin 5 (idle chatter), Speak Local Language 5 (local dialect), Stealth 1 (moving quietly), Storytelling 1 (amusing lies)
**Arts:**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cr 6 | In 9 | Mu 6 | Pe 6 | Re 6 |
| An 0 | Aq 7 | Au 7 | Co 3 | He 0 |
| Ig 0 | Im 5 | Me 5 | Te 7 | Vi 0 |

**Twilight Points:** 0
**Twilight Effects:** none
**Sigil Effects:** Extremities of the target become cold to the touch.
**Spells Known:**
*Ear for the Distant Voice* (InIm20) +14
*Aura of Ennobled Presence* (MuIm10) +11
*Disguise of the Transformed Image* (MuIm15) +11
*Veil of Invisibility* (PeIm10) +11
*Scent of Peaceful Slumber* (ReMe15) +11
*Aura of Rightful Authority* (ReMe20) +11
*Hands of the Grasping Earth* (ReTe[Mu]15) +13
*Invisible Hand of the Thief* (ReTe15) +13
*Tracks of the Faerie Glow* (InTe25) +16
*Voice of the Lake* (InAq25) +16
*Eyes of the Bat* (InAu25) +16
*Wail of the Banshee* (CrIm[In]15) +11 (WGRE, p. 166)
*Sealed Lips of the Written Secrets* (MuIm4) +11 (WGRE, p. 167)
*Wizard's Act of Hypocrisy* (ReIm20) +11 (WGRE, pp. 167-8)

**New Spell Known:**
*The Purloined Voice* (MuIm5) +11
R: Near, D: Sun, T: Ind
Spell Focus: A Serpent's Tongue (+1)
Permits the caster to mimic the target's voice perfectly. A target not physically touched by the caster must be actually speaking when the spell is cast.

If confronted in a lie, Myralys attempts good-naturedly to bluff her way out. Conceding the point, she comes up with a convincing explanation for her "white lie" ("sworn to secrecy," "attempting to shield someone else," "a victim of blackmail," *etc.*), using information the characters know is correct. Mundanes are easily taken in by her prevarications. Magi, particularly Hectorus, are more of a problem, and she is especially careful not to lie in Hectorus' presence.

# Encounters in Town

## *Hectorus and Myralys*

The characters notice a bearded man yelling silently, rolling his eyes, and gesticulating angrily at an uncomfortable-looking woman. She fidgets, embarrassed, saying nothing but nodding occasionally. A short distance away a pack of dogs snarls at the pair, though some of the curs whimper, covering their snouts with their paws.

Characters making a Perception-based Read Lips roll of 9+ and making a Speak Latin roll of 6+ determine the woman is being upbraided for some unspecified reckless behavior. After a while, the two separate, the pack following the man at a distance.

The man, Hectorus, recently caught the woman, Myralys, spying on Margentius and the pool while under a *Veil of Invisibility*. His tirade consists of his warning to her about the dire consequences of such actions. He can't be heard because he is using *Cantrip of the Silent Monologue*.

This scene should serve to alert the characters to the presence of Hectorus and Myralys in town. Whether they choose to make themselves known to either or both of them is up to the characters. Any interactions should be role-played, keeping in mind the personalities and motivations of each.

## *Pressing Albert's Claim*

When the characters attempt to make good Albert's claim, they learn that Octave has spoken truthfully. Olivier has contested Albert's claim before the magistrate, who has scheduled a hearing for the next day at noon. The magistrate warns the party that the loser will have to pay 3*s* in court costs. The characters have the rest of this day and the next morning to hunt down witnesses, plan their strategy, and perhaps investigate the pool.

## *St. Pons' Pool*

Pontius Senerius was born into a provincial senatorial family in Roman times. Though raised a Christian, his youth was anything but devout. He and his high-born friends would carouse every night and terrorize the townsfolk with their antics. Once, after Pontius and his companions had drunkenly parodied one of St. Honorius' religious processions, the saintly bishop upbraided him publicly for his buffoonery. Pontius would suffer for his mockery, the bishop predicted, and his suffering would be the seed for many conversions.

Pontius dismissed the prophecy at the time, but sobered up as he grew older. Eventually, he turned to God and even became a priest. As he was skilled in oratory, his sermons were always well-attended. He was stung, however, by a passing remark that he only preached to the converted. He vowed then and there to leave his home country and remain bare-foot until he had brought a hundred lost souls to Christ.

He set off with a small group of followers, but try as he might, he could not convert a single pagan soul. They laughed and jeered at his exposition of the divine mysteries, yet he persisted in his travels till his callouses cracked and his blood ran on the hard flagstones. In time his wanderings took him to a pool in which he gratefully soaked his wounded feet. He cried, not for the pain, though it was great, but for his failure in preaching the Word. As his blood continued to flow into the still waters, the pool began to turn red. Nearby pagan washer-women cursed him at first, but when they noticed that their clothes ran clean as soon as they were dipped in the bloody water, they ran to get their families and soon gathered a large crowd.

When Pontius ceased crying and lifted his legs from the water, all could see that his feet had fully healed. Inspired by this miracle, he preached to the multitude, and they accepted baptism at his hands. Ever since that day the pool and the meadow where the multitude stood have been dedicated to him. Any believer who immerses an ill or wounded foot in the pool and prays to the saint's memory may thus find healing.

In game terms, the pool is part magical and

part miraculous. During the day it has a divine aura of 4. At night, when the Dominion recedes, a magical aura of 3 cancels the divine aura. On nights of the full moon, the magical aura rises to 4 and predominates. Once a month, a random pilgrim has an injury healed. Also once a month, on the night of the full moon, the moon's reflection can be collected with a silver sieve, unless it is windy or overcast, or the pool is dry or frozen. The reflection has the physical properties of quicksilver and yields nine pawns of Creo vis. If it is collected, however, no healing occurs at the pool for the following month. Magically modifying conditions will not make the reflection harvestable, though it can make collecting it difficult or impossible. For vis-poor sagas, storyguides might consider adjusting the prevailing weather conditions to make the extraction of vis from the healing pool more difficult.

Not far from the pool is a small hut inhabited by a holy hermit (Margentius).

# Hanging in the Balance

At noon of the day following the characters' arrival in town, the court gathers to hear the case of Olivier vs. Albert. It attracts a large crowd including the widow Petrona (Myralys), the madman (Hectorus — quaesitors tend to be compulsive trial groupies), and Father Bernard.

As indicated in Chapter 3, under customary and feudal law matters of fact are normally determined by a jury consisting of all the sworn witnesses. Matters of law are settled by the judge, in this case the magistrate. Refer to Chapter 3 (specifically, pages 53-54) for information on how to resolve legal trials.

Unless forewarned by Octave, Olivier is not expecting that Albert will have high-powered legal help, and will speak for himself. Anyone acting as Albert's advocate (be he Octave or a player character) can benefit from Albert's Area Lore score of 3.

Olivier successively presents a series of arguments. If the characters lose any of the contests, they will lose the case. Conversely, if they win on all points, the magistrate rules in their favor.

Base modifiers for likely arguments are given below. If the characters come up with unexpected arguments, the storyguide will have to determine the appropriate base modifiers for these new issues.

- Olivier argues that Albert is not a paternal relative (–3 factual issue).
- Olivier argues that the original deal has been superseded by a better offer (–3 legal issue).
- Olivier argues that his half-brother Guillaume (who is present) has a stronger right of first refusal (+3 legal issue)
- Albert (or his advocate) can claim that Guillaume's parents never married, which is objectively true (+3 factual issue).
- Albert (or his advocate) can claim that his claim is stronger, if Guillaume is proven a bastard (+3 legal issue).

Once all of the arguments have been presented but before the magistrate can make a final ruling on the case, Father Bernard steps forward and asks to be recognized. He argues that whatever the outcome, St. Pons' Pool should be surrendered to the Church as a miracle-working site. Olivier angrily contests the miraculous nature of the pool and argues that even if it were, the fact would not infringe his allodial right to sell it.

The magistrate asks the jury to confirm that miracles have occurred at the pool. They do so against any arguments, as the reputation of their village is at stake. He then rules in favor of either

## Additional Modifiers

If the characters gave generously to the beggars outside the inn, add +1 to their factual contest rolls.

If the characters faced off the count's men successfully, add +1 to their factual contest rolls and –1 to their legal contest rolls.

If the characters helped in trying to put out the fire, add +1 to factual rolls. If they succeeded in putting it out or if they otherwise resolved the innkeeper's problems peacefully (by lending him the money to pay the aid, for example) add +3.

If the characters gathered additional witnesses in regards to a specific factual point on which they enjoy a favorable base modifier, add +2 to their factual roll. Note that this involves either anticipating the argument (with Octave's help), or requesting a recess. A recess lasts one or two days as the court does not sit on Sundays and saint's days. Each recess costs 1s. This fine is paid by the requesting party, regardless of who wins the case.

Albert or Olivier on the purchase of the estate, but awards rights to the pool to Bernard in his capacity as representative of the Church. Characters making Perception-based Folk-Ken, Civil and Canon Law, or Intrigue rolls of 9+ realize that something is very wrong here. The magistrate appears impervious to legal arguments and does not seem to have been surprised by Bernard's intervention. It should become clear that he was bribed.

If Albert wins he is quite cheerful until he realizes the characters will not stump up with the loan unless they get the rights to the pool. (Unless the characters do hand over the money anyway, which is certainly their right.) Olivier, on the other hand, is incensed whatever the outcome and seeks leave to appeal directly to the count. The magistrate informs him somberly that losers in an appeal have to pay a 10*s* fine, but Olivier is adamant, and the magistrate reluctantly enters the appeal. It will be heard at the count's castle in one week's time. Albert and the characters can either contest the case further themselves, or bow out, perhaps attempting to strike a deal with Father Bernard.

Otherwise, the characters could urge Albert to enter his own appeal over the magistrate's right to dispose of the pool, or even contest the pool's miraculous nature (though the latter will lose them any popular goodwill they might have gained). If Albert lost his right of first refusal, this would certainly be the central issue in any appeal.

If Olivier has won the substance of his case, Myralys assumes that everything is under control, as she is confident she can see Father Bernard off. On the other hand, if Albert has won, Myralys realizes she is in too deep and calls for help.

## Myralys' Call for Help

If Olivier loses his case before the magistrate, Myralys writes back to the rival covenant for help. It is no more than a few days' travel away, and once the rival covenant receives her warning, two or more powerful magi (quite probably known to the characters) appear in very short order. If the characters have dragged out the appeal before the count by so much as a single day, or failed to intercept Myralys' message, these senior magi arrive on the scene with more than enough money to ensure any decision goes their way.

### *Intercepting Her Letter*

Myralys hires a local young man to carry her letter to the rival covenant. If the storyguide wishes, a group of characters who are resting or considering their next step at an inn notice him happily rushing in.

The young man orders a drink and starts chatting with the innkeeper. The widow "Petrona" has given him 2*s* to carry a letter. Overhearing this, the characters can recognize the destination as the location of the rival covenant. The innkeeper sounds impressed and the two speculate (wildly and inaccurately) on what the letter might contain. After the young man finishes his drink (which is on the house because of the interesting gossip) the messenger excuses himself to hurry off and find a horse.

What the characters do is up to them. If they waylay the messenger, they can open the letter and read its contents. This is technically a violation of the Code if it can be proven that the characters used magic in full knowledge that Myralys is a mage.

The contents of the letter are remarkably unimpressive at first glance. The letter is written phonetically in the local dialect and talks about minor inconsequential matters. The characters may end up wasting a lot of time trying to crack the code. In fact, there is none. Myralys has merely cast the *Sealed Lips of the Written Secrets* over the letter's real contents, which briefly describe the characters' intervention (in Latin) and call for additional support and assistance.

As *Sealed Lips of the Written Secrets* is only a first magnitude spell, it is very hard to detect with Intéllego Vim. Nonetheless, Myralys' sigil has left its mark, and the edges of the cloth-paper are cool to the touch. Magi or characters with the Arcane Knowledge Virtue will recognize this right away, but mundane characters will have to make an Intelligence-based Awareness roll of 9+, or a Perception-based Magic Sensitivity roll of 6+, to notice the sigil's significance.

Once its magical nature has been determined, the letter can be read with *Discern the Images of Truth and Falsehood* or a spontaneous equivalent, though this might run the risk of leaving traces of a character's own sigil on the document (a significant consideration for paranoid magi). In fact, reading the letter should not be necessary once its magical nature has been discovered, as this fact alone should expose Myralys as a maga acting in collusion with the rival covenant.

# He Washes Away the Sins of the World

The count's residence overlooks a large village, with its own church and hostelry, only a few hours away from the town. The count, however, will not hear the case for another week. If Octave is still with the party (at 6*d* a day!), he suggests the characters continue investigating to see what further information they can gather. Suitable subjects might include Father Bernard, Olivier's mysterious backers, and St. Pons' Pool. It might also be a good idea to find out all they can about the count.

## Investigating the Count

Characters who speak the local language can use a variety of Abilities (Charm, Carouse, and Intrigue are only three examples) to collect information by asking around. Roleplay these investigations, improvising local non-player characters as necessary. Characters may be able to increase their chances of success by spending additional money on bribes and inducements (about +1 per shilling spent).

In general, the following levels of success reveal the pieces of information listed below. At the storyguide's option, a given level of success may impart all of the information listed for that level, or only one piece. The higher levels of success may also impart some of the information from lower levels, again at the storyguide's option.

3+ a) The count is crippled in the legs. b) The count is avaricious. c) The count does not entertain.

6+ a) The count is sick and is being attended by Doctor Mark. b) The count usually presides personally at trials, but is assisted by his justiciar.

9+ The count spends much of his time playing chess with Doctor Mark.

12+ Doctor Mark is rumored to be a great wizard with a raven familiar.

## If the Characters Need More Money

At some point during the adventure the characters may find that they are running short on funds. Octave or Albert might suggest they visit a local pawnbroker. Pawning a warhorse and a suit of armor might get the characters as much as 5£, but their needs might be much greater. As the player characters are not locals, they will not be able to negotiate loans based on their credit rating unless they somehow hint at the possibility of providing magical services. If they do, the pawnbroker indicates he might help them out if they can find a pair of sapphire and gold earrings that have gone missing. They were meant as his daughter's dowry, and her betrothal may now be in jeopardy.

The truth of the matter is that the earrings were stolen by his daughter's fiancé, a member of the local gentry. The young woman, deeply in love with the dashing youth, has pressed her father hard to secure the match. Unsure of the young man's affections even after the betrothal, she lured him into her window at night and let herself be seduced. When he asked to see the earrings, she eagerly showed them to him, having pestered her father to let her keep them for just one night. Later while she slept, the young man stole out the window with the earrings, but when he got home he realized that he had dropped one along the way. Knowing he would have difficulty selling a single earring, he hid it behind a loose stone at the local well, and is guiltily awaiting developments.

None of this is known to the pawnbroker, as his daughter simply reported the earrings missing without implicating the young man. She does not actually know that he stole them, and still hopes he will marry her in the end. Besides, though her father dotes on her, she is not anxious to explain why she let a young man (even her fiancé) into her room at night. The only other person in the know is her former maid, who made herself scarce that night so the two lovers could be alone. The maid has since been dismissed from service as a suspect in the theft, but receives occasional sums from the daughter to keep quiet.

Searching the courtyard outside the young woman's room using *The Miner's Keen Eye* or a spontaneous equivalent reveals that the earing has fallen into a small crack. Alternatively, a character with the Dousing Exceptional Ability could find the earring by wrapping around his dousing rod the strip of silk cloth in which the earrings had been kept. Once the first earring has been found, it can be used as an arcane connection to its mate. How much further the characters wish to take the investigation is up to them.

Storyguides should try to spread the rumors and facts amongst the investigators so everyone feels involved.

If an investigator botches a Charm role, he or she ends up in a brawl with a jealous knight or housewife (depending on the investigator's sex). A character botching a Carousing roll is thrown out of the inn for being drunk and disorderly, and has to sleep it off outside. He also acquires a bad Reputation, Drunkard +1 (covenant's grogs) when he returns home — word gets around. A character botching an Intrigue roll is locked up as a suspected spy (assume the character was surprised or overwhelmed).

## *The Count's Castle*

If a character attempts to enter the count's castle itself, he is stopped by the guards. A character with a plausible reason for entering can speak with the seneschal. A character with a "financial proposition" will be refered to the count's treasurer. One who wants to discuss the appeal will be sent to the justiciar. The count does not normally see visitors, but may be willing to see a "physician" or a "chess player."

Characters in the castle are escorted at all times, and not allowed to roam on their own. If the characters have nothing of interest to offer, they are shown out. The characters can attempt to gain unescorted entry by guile or arcane means, of course, and the storyguide should not place unreasonable obstacles in their way. If they wander about the hallways invisibly, they eventually bump (literally) into Myralys doing the same thing.

There are only two places of interest inside the castle: the count's bedroom and Doctor Mark's chamber.

The count's bedroom is heavily guarded, and he spends much of his time in bed playing chess with his physician. As Doctor Mark does not gamble, they play without dice.

Doctor Mark's chamber is unlocked and unguarded. It has a bed, three comfortable chairs,

and a desk. In a corner is a perch on which a somewhat bedraggled raven usually appears to be sleeping. On one wall a series of shelves contain assorted pharmacological paraphernalia (scales and weights, mortar and pestle, *etc.*) and a variety of small clay pots, herb bundles, and glass vials, none of which are labeled. One stoppered glass bottle containing a greenish, sweet-smelling viscous liquid is almost empty (see "Doctor Mark," below). On the desk are a variety of writing implements, a well-thumbed copyist's miniature exemplar of Averroes' *Colliget* (a summa on Medicine, Level 7, Quality 5), and a satchel containing correspondence. Most are letters of introduction and praise for Mark's work, but one (in Latin) may prove more interesting to the characters (see the insert "Mark's Letter"). It is addressed to Mark from a local parish rector and has been folded and unfolded many times.

## *The Count*

Against all expectations, the small crippled baby "baptized" by Margentius survived (see page 168), though his legs have never been able to support him. Because his baptism was invalid, he has not been able to partake fully in the moral benefits of communion and has been denied the assurance of God's grace. Unable to marry due to his physical disability, he has grown increasingly sour, avaricious, and withdrawn. His family's frequent trips to St. Pons' Pool proved fruitless, and this merely reinforced his growing cynicism and scepticism. By an unusual twist of fortune, he came to inherit the position of count a year ago at the age of 70. His worse personality traits have now come to the fore, free of prior constraints, and he has turned into a heartless tyrant. Thanks to Doctor Mark's "ministrations," the count has become possessed by a Spirit of Tuberculosis that, in time, will kill him. It is normally invisible, but may appear to those with Second Sight or Magic Sensitivity as a sickly pink aura filled with tiny red sparkles. The count has the Small Size Flaw; the Personality Traits Sceptic +3, Avaricious +3, Cynical +3, and Recluse +2; and the Ability Play Chess 4 (gambling).

## *Doctor Mark*

Though of common birth, Mark's mother was a lady-in-waiting to a landed knight's wife. When her mistress died in childbirth, she became the wet nurse for the baby, Hugh. Mark was barely a year old at the time. Mark and Hugh were thus brought up together and became inseparable friends. When Mark showed unusual aptitude for studies, Sir Hugh senior (Hugh's father) offered to pay for the young man's studies at the prestigious medical school in Salerno where Mark spent the last eight years.

Upon learning the circumstances of his friend's death (see the insert "Mark's Letter"), Mark decided to take revenge by poisoning the count. Before leaving Salerno, he purchased a non-Hermetic magical potion which summons a

### *Spirit of Tuberculosis*

**Magic Might:** 15
**Effects:** The victim becomes short of breath and loses one Fatigue level upon infection. One additional Fatigue level is lost each month unless the victim recovers. After all the Fatigue levels are lost, Body levels are lost until the victim dies.
**Recovery:** Bed rest and attention from a skilled healer are required for recovery. Every month of attention allows a recovery roll: a Stamina stress roll of 12+ is required. The victim can gain a +3 to recovery rolls if he moves to a hot, dry climate.

### *Doctor Mark*

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per –1, Str 0, Stm +1, Pre 0, Com –1, Dex +1, Qik 0
**Age:** 28
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Magister in Artibus +3, Further Education (x 3) +3, Latent Magical Ability +2, Alchemy +1, Animal Companion +1, Plagued by Demon –4, Sense of Doom –3, Lost True Friend –1, Soft-Hearted –1, Weakness (injured animals) –1
**Personality Traits:** Loyal (to Sir Hugh's memory) +3, Loner +1, Melancholic +1
**Reputation:** Excellent Student 1 (Salerno)

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist) | +4 | +4 | +4 | 0 |

**Soak:** +1
**Abilities:** Alchemy 1 (healing), Animal Handling 1 (birds), Artes Liberales 3 (logic), Athletics 1 (running), Awareness 5 (illnesses), Brawling 3 (dodging), Concentration 3 (reading), Disputatio 1 (teaching), Etiquette 2 (nobles), Lectio 3 (medical texts), Medicine 7 (diseases), Play Chess 3 (end games), Ride 1 (speed), Scribe Latin 3 (reading), Speak Latin 5 (medical jargon), Speak Italian 4 (Neapolitan dialect), Speak Local Language 5 (local dialect), Swim 1 (speed)

Spirit of Tuberculosis. The target is meant to imbibe the potion in daily doses for a month. Mark subsequently sought and obtained a position as physician to the count, and has been administering the potion for three weeks. Because of the count's decrepit and enfeebled condition, however, the spirit has already taken hold. Mark continues to administer the daily doses anyway, just in case.

Unbeknownst to anyone, especially himself, Mark's actions are being prompted by a demon which has possessed his pet raven, Felix. Also unknown is the fact that Mark has the Gift as a latent magical ability. If he ever receives Hermetic training, even at this late date, he could become a powerful mage with an Affinity in Corpus.

## *Felix and the Demon*

Before Felix learned to fly, a passing demon possessed him and made him caw aggressively at a group of small boys playing beneath a tree. As the demon had hoped, the boys were provoked to mischief and threw rocks at the poor bird, knocking him out of his nest. He was rescued by Mark (then completing his studies at Salerno), who subsequently adopted and named him. Felix broke a wing in his fall and it has never healed properly, a fact for which Mark blames himself.

Unfortunately for both Mark and Felix, the demon has decided to progress to greater incitements than petty sins. Through the helpless raven, it intends to corrupt first Doctor Mark and then others, hopefully gaining infernal promotion in the process. The features given in the insert are for a composite of Felix and the demon.

Doctor Mark's letter has provided the perfect opportunity for the demon's subtle plans. By carefully manipulating the raven's primitive capacity for vocalization, it has gradually reinforced Doctor Mark's sense of grievance against the count. Mark has half-convinced himself that the bird is intelligent and that it talks to him. In fact, this is very close to the truth. The occasional glimpse of the demon's thoughts has quickened Felix's own understanding of the world around him, and this has been reinforced by the attention Mark lavishes on the bird, his only remaining close friend. Felix can already recognize written characters and scratch them out with his beak. He cannot scribe full words, however, not that anyone is likely to notice in any case. Whenever the demon senses an opportunity provided by one of Mark's somber moods, he compels Felix to utter a cry, such as "khrroo" (Hugh), "khrreh-er" (letter), or "khrrahsas" (justice), that subliminally reminds the doctor of the count's responsibility for his close friend Sir Hugh's death.

In time, once Mark has crossed his critical moral threshold by killing the count, the demon shifts its efforts and lures him into euthanizing patients who are in pain, but whom he cannot heal. While Mark rationalizes that he is merely relieving his patients of their suffering, in the end he kills quite a number who would have otherwise recovered on their own. Eventually, he risks exposure, at which point the demon reveals itself and offers Mark escape in exchange for his soul (damned in any case because of a string of murders).

At least this is how matters unfold if the characters do not intervene. The demon's presence can only be detected directly with Sense Holiness and Unholiness, though characters making an Intelligence-based Awareness roll and a Perception-based Speak Local Language roll of 12+ begin to suspect that Felix's utterings are real speech.

If they bring up the matter with Doctor Mark, it only reinforces his suspicions that his pet is somehow extraordinarily blessed. If the characters suspect Mark of wanting to kill the count, they can easily dissuade him. But the count is old and will soon die from lack of proper medical care if nothing else. As Doctor Mark

### *Felix*

**Infernal Might:** 15
**Characteristics:** Cun +1 (Int +2), Pre n/a, Com –5, Str –3, Stm 0, Dex +3, Qik –2
**Size:** –3
**Personality Traits:** Curious +1, Despondent +1, Fearful +1
**Reputation:** Very Intelligent Bird 1 (Mark), Magical Familiar 1 (count's castle)

| **Weapon/Attack:** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | –1 | +4 | –4 | +2 |

**Soak:** 0
**Fatigue:** 0
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, –3, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, –3, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Charm 1 (Mark), Speak Local Language 1 (to Mark), Scribe Latin 1 (reading)
***Psychomachia*:** Vengefulness +1, Callousness +1
**Possession:** +0

will (with some satisfaction) feel responsible for this neglect, this serves the demon's purposes just as well.

It is highly unlikely that Mark would allow the characters to perform an exorcism on Felix. Any attempt to harm the helpless bird (remember, it cannot fly) earns his undying enmity. Keep in mind that no one is going to believe accusations that Mark intends to kill the count. It is inherently implausible, and there is no evidence that would stand up in court. A protracted campaign of petty harassment against the demon (periodically spraying the bird with holy water, subjecting it to lengthy scriptural readings, having it regularly and frequently blessed by a priest) could, after a season or so, convince the demon that its presence has somehow been detected, and convince it to try its luck elsewhere. Alternatively, Felix could be fitted with a collar or leg band containing a holy relic or a ReVi effect.

If Felix and Mark are saved and the characters' arcane identity revealed, Mark is intrigued and eager to join the covenant as a specialist. If given an opportunity, he willingly becomes an apprentice. Anyone who permanently heals Felix's injured wing will find Mark a close and loyal friend. In that event, Felix's Quickness rises to +1 and he learns to fly after about a season of practice. Should he live long enough, Felix may indeed become Mark's familiar.

## The Appeal

When the court convenes to hear the appeal, the party learns that the count has taken a strong interest in the case and will preside despite his illness. He is carried into the hall, bundled in warm blankets, and two small braziers are lit on either side of his chair. If characters

(Dated Six Months Ago)

Dear Master Mark,

I hope life has been treating you well, for I fear this letter contains very bad news I know will affect you dearly. Our good friend Sir Hugh has passed away in most unfortunate circumstances. I should perhaps begin by informing you that Sir Hugh's financial position had grown increasingly desperate since his father's death last year. Knowing that we corresponded occasionally, he specifically asked me to tell you nothing of this for fear of disturbing your studies. Even though Sir Hugh was experiencing the utmost difficulties in gathering the necessary relief funds to enter into his inheritance, his instructions were that your stipend should continue to be sent to you as usual. In the event, Sir Hugh's efforts came to naught and he was turned out by the count's bailiffs. Unable to accept this, it seems that he lost all reason and took to brigandage. I have just learned that he died yesterday in a fight with the count's men. I know how much this will pain you as I have never met two friends as fond of each other as the two of you were. As boys, you were inseparable from the moment your mother became Hugh's wet nurse. As the late Sir Hugh never remarried, your mother to all intents and purposes became our friend's alma mater as well, and the two of you were like brothers. Attached you will find the usual draft for 2£. May God bless you, my son, and may he have mercy on our friend's soul.

Father Hippolitus

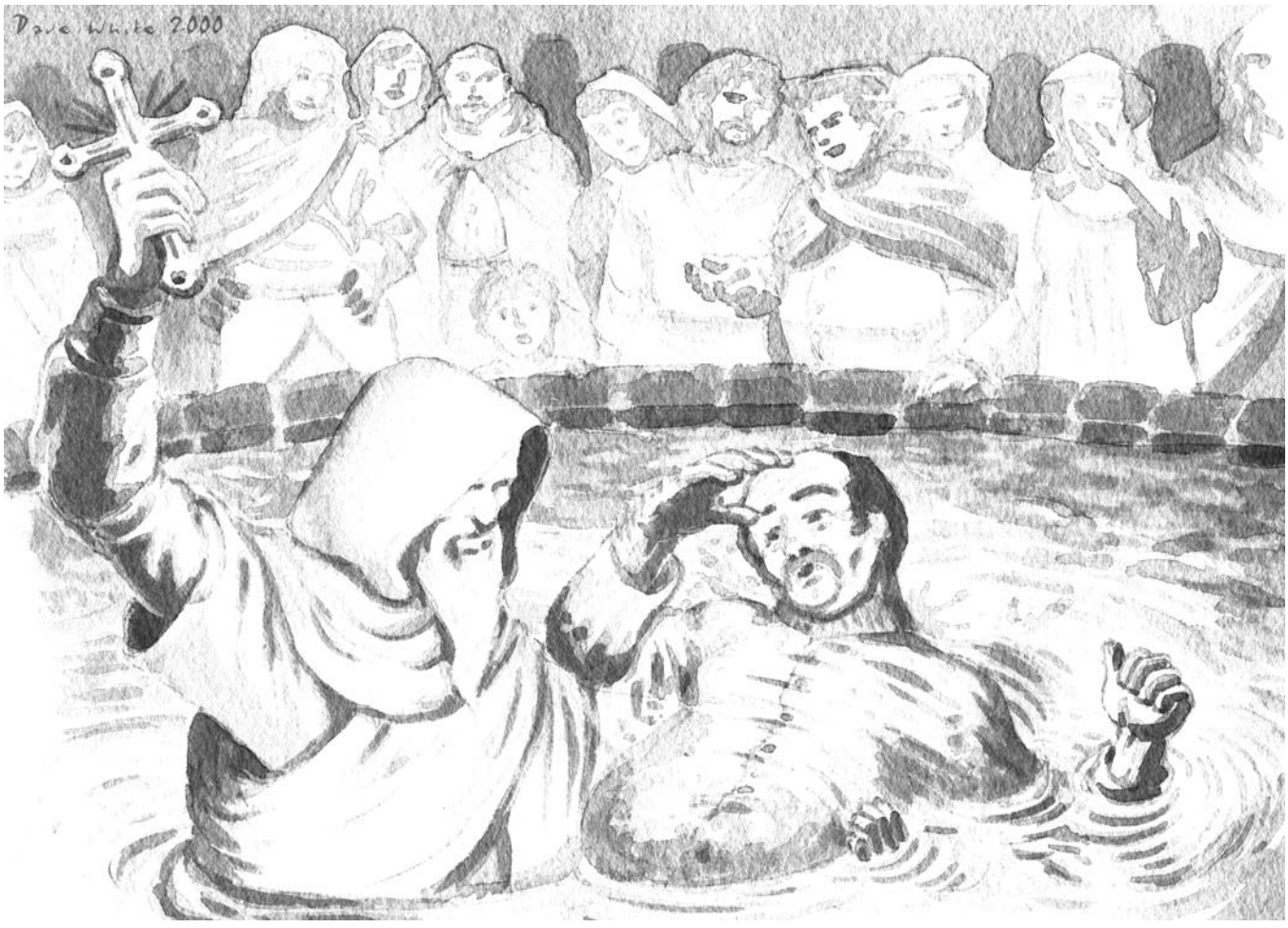
with Second Sight or Magic Sensitivity can get close enough, they may notice the sickly pink aura that surrounds him. The count's voice is feeble and rasping, and frequently interrupted by coughing fits. Doctor Mark is present and attends to the count during these fits.

The issues at stake are those specified in the appeal. If either party wishes to withdraw at this point, he may do so by paying the 10*s* fine. If either party wishes to amend the particulars of his appeal, he will have to stump up an additional 10*s* on the spot. Calls for postponement will be entertained at 10*s* per day.

The count has been well-briefed and cuts to the heart of the matter. The jury's decisions on issues of fact concerning Albert's rights, parentage, and so forth stand unless Albert can produce new evidence or numerous witnesses of unquestionable credibility. Olivier has no new evidence or witnesses to offer. Issues of law, on the other hand, will be reviewed again from scratch. If the characters aggressively confronted the count's men at the inn, modify their legal contest rolls by –3 (or –6 if the issue came to a fight).

Once the issue of Albert's rights has been resolved, the count turns to the question of the pool. He dismisses the villagers' claims about its sacred nature out of hand, basing his decision on "repeated personal experience." This causes an uproar, and the count backs down to the extent of putting the matter to one final test. In spite of many visits, the pool has never healed his withered legs. Now that he is old, sick, and approaching death, he has little to lose by trying one last time if it will put an end to a popular superstition he finds ridiculous and offensive. If it is God's will that he should be healed in the twilight of his life, then he will accept both the miraculous nature of the pool and the Church's right to it. The court is dismissed, and will reconvene at St. Pons' Pool the next day.

Unless the characters have become mere spectators in the case, Octave suggests they camp out at the pool to avoid the rush. The pool is several hours distant, but even if the characters arrive at dawn they find the place teeming with



a crowd of gawkers to the extent that it may be difficult to get a good view of the proceedings.

In any case, Olivier and Bernard are there, making a point of ignoring each other. At about noon the count's train arrives and his horse is led to the edge of the pool. A groom makes to lift the count down, but the hermit — Margentius — breaks from the crowd shouting "Let me!" The count consents, waiving the groom aside.

Margentius approaches the count and takes him in his arms. He then miraculously recognizes, with growing amazement, the baby he falsely christened decades ago. He steps into the pool, but instead of simply bathing the crippled legs, he fully immerses the sputtering count three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This time the baptism is valid. The count's warped legs straighten and he appears to shed ten years. Those who can sense such things notice the sickly pink aura of the Spirit of Tuberculosis detach itself and settle instead on Father Bernard, who immediately has a short but intense coughing fit.

The count, physically and morally healed, recognizes the pool's miraculous nature. Nonetheless, he is reluctant to interfere with the allodial rights of the owner. As such, he grants it to the Church with the proviso that the actual owner of the estate act as patron, maintaining the right to designate the pool's guardian on the condition that the free customary right to pray for healing also be maintained. Thanks to Father Bernard's attempts to bribe him, the count is aware of the priest's dubious intentions and refuses to grant him this status himself. Finally, the count expresses remorse for the suffering he has inflicted on his vassals and tenants. In compensation, he announces the forgiveness of all debts due him, and the remission of all remaining rents and aids due before the end of the year. The crowd cheers, though the count's officials wince inwardly at the financial implications of this sudden and unexpected generosity.

# Conclusion

Once all is said and done, do not forget to assess any court fees due Octave.

If Albert wins the case and the characters have shown proper respect for the pool and the wishes of the local population (were they generous to the beggars?), Margentius reveals himself to them. He has determined that the characters are more to be trusted than Myralys and the rival covenant. He is prepared to reveal the secret of the vis source if they name him as the pool's guardian and promise to send a magus to perform a "miraculous" healing at no cost to the recipient during each month in which they draw the pool's vis. To facilitate the deal, he is prepared to teach the *Restoration of the Blighted Limb* or provide the characters with a copy. The characters will have to expend some of the vis to make the healings permanent. Nevertheless, they should be able to derive a handsome net benefit. Margentius also asks that the covenant protect the pool and maintain the arrangement after he has gone. If the characters agree, Margentius asks Hectorus to witness the agreement. In exchange, he agrees to the quaesitor's request that he renew his oath to the Order. Margentius then stays by the pool for a year or so to ensure that the characters abide by the terms of the agreement. He then leaves to follow other holy pursuits, visiting the pool only periodically for a few more years. If all goes well, he eventually disappears, never to be seen again.

On the other hand, if Myralys and the rival covenant have been able to purchase Olivier's estate they strike a deal with Father Bernard, who lets them do whatever they want in exchange for a comfortable pension. After a few seasons of investigation they discover how to extract the vis, though they have to put up with Margentius' magical harassment. If Albert wins the case but the characters do not cut a deal with Margentius, he harasses them in the same way.

## Lay Baptism

Common misconception holds that only a member of the clergy can administer a valid baptism. However, baptism is central to the work of salvation, and the Church has always taught that it can be administered by anyone (male or female) in Christ's name.

Invalid "baptism" does not usually leave any physical signs, nor are the pool's healing properties limited to baptized Christians. In this scenario, however, the storyguide should assume that God has heretofore denied the count healing as a test of faith and a sign of his state of spiritual distress. Instead of turning to God and acquiring baptism through faith, the count hardened in his bitterness and scepticism. By performing a valid baptism by water, Margentius washes away the count's accumulated burden of sin and brings to the fore the glimmer of faith still resident in the count's soul. God's grace flows in and does the rest.

# Chapter 9
# On the Respective Merits of Twilight and Gloaming

In "On the Respective Merits of Twilight and Gloaming," characters from the covenant are invited to a boar hunt by a local baron. During the hunt, they get lost in a fog and are led into a faerie regio by a giant white hart. They find themselves trapped there and sucked into a complex contest being waged by two faerie groups, as both faction leaders see recruitment of the mundane intruders as the key to decisive victory in an age-old conflict.

This adventure is meant to highlight the darker side of the feudal nobility. The bitterly divided faerie court presents a parody of the aristocratic lifestyle. Their stark caricature of the medieval nobility with its cult of violence, arbitrariness, frivolous self-absorption, and contempt for the lower orders of society should strike home, particularly to non-noble player characters.

## Storyguide's Background

### Sir Yough's Realm

The lion's share of this scenario takes place in a faerie regio, the realm of Sir Yough. According to the complex faerie rules of the realm, no party of mundanes that enters the realm is allowed to leave until one of their number sacrifices his head to the faeries.

Some time ago, a mundane noble named Joaquim and his companions found themselves in this regio. In an attempt to escape without giving up a head, Joaquim attacked and beheaded Sir Yough, the realm's faerie "ruler." This was not sufficient to ensure escape, however, which was only made possible in the end when Blasi, Joaquim's valet, offered up his own head.

Although Sir Yough's head survived (there are many talking heads in Sir Yough's regio — all the heads severed in this realm retain "life" if appropriately "harvested"), he was no longer a fit arbiter of the subtle questions of faerie protocol that arose from time to time. Two camps — the factions of Twilight and Gloaming — formed around the faeries Sir Golain and Sir Igraine, each of whom would like to succeed Sir Yough.

For the time being, the two camps have agreed that the sleeping giant faerie champion Sir Boronovilimocopor will take Sir Yough's place as the faerie prince. He was chosen entirely because he will not wake until someone addresses him and speaks his name, and thus the other faeries will be free to continue their contest, as each faction attempts to defeat the other once and for all. Once either Twilight or Gloaming prevails, either Golain or Igraine will assume the mantle of faerie prince.

Unfortunately, the two factions are deadlocked and require mortal intervention to effect true change in their balance of power. It is for this reason that the White Hart — the realm's guardian — leads the player characters into these lands.

## Running the Adventure

The faeries in this scenario are definitely of a darker variety. Though there are several amusing twists and episodes, and while player charac-

ter interaction may provide opportunities for comic relief, the general mood is grim, cold, and uncertain. Non-noble characters in particular may feel considerable frustration at being contemptuously ignored by the faeries. Storyguides should take pains to play up this issue whenever possible. In short, there is nothing appealing about the faeries of Sir Yough's court beyond a superficial and austere beauty. Storyguides should absolutely avoid portraying them as happy, playful elves and hobgoblins. This is not meant to be "that type" of faerie adventure.

This adventure is very rich in detail, and some storyguides may consider shortening it by dropping some of the minor episodes, such as those involving Lady Sessily or the feasts at the faerie caverns. These features are not essential, though they do help give the adventure a more round, less linear feel.

Storyguides should give careful attention to the "talking heads." As mentioned above, those mortals who are beheaded in this faerie realm maintain some semblance of life, and these "characters" are important sources of information in this scenario. Storyguides should not be shy about using the heads to move the adventure forward or clarify misunderstandings the characters pick up along the way.

"Encroaching darkness" is another important consideration in this adventure (see page189). Encroaching darkness is intended as a pacing feature, to let the characters know when they have done significant things (for good or ill), and to let them know how close they are coming to the end. Encroaching darkness and the complete absence of warmth (except possibly from Lady Sessily) and humor on the part of the faeries are useful tools in preventing the adventure from degenerating into silliness.

A final problem some troupes may encounter is the difficulty of escaping the faerie regio. Unless the characters successfully win the contest and help resolve the difficulties that are dividing the faeries, one or more characters will have to be consciously sacrificed (though non-player characters are available to soften the blow). The moral agonizing inherent in that decision will be lost if the storyguide simply allows the members of the party to roll handfuls of dice to make good their escape. The adventure is designed so that the characters have to make stark and unpleasant choices. Note that a die-rolling option has been presented for troupes that find such railroading of player characters annoying (See "Escaping from Faerie," page 204), but it is not recommended.

# The Feast

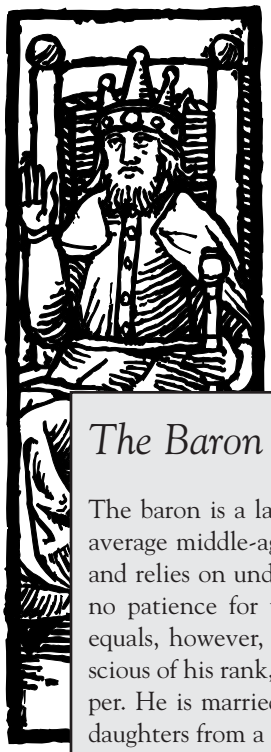
The story begins in the munane realm, where one of the covenant's noble companions is informed of an upcoming hunt being staged by a local baron. This information might come via one of the character's noble acquaintances, through a traveling crier, or even in a direct invitation from the baron himself, depending on the player character's status and his or her contacts with the local nobility. The hunt will be preceded by a large feast that will provide, among other benefits, an excellent venue for the practice and display of entertainment skills. The object of the hunt is a giant marauding boar which has been trampling fields and killing livestock. Most recently, a young shepherdess was gored to death by the angry beast.

Noble characters who wish to participate may bring whatever men-at-arms and retainers they choose, but are limited to one leashed dog each, so as not to disturb the baron's pack. The feast is scheduled for three days hence. Coincidentally, this will be the eve of the fall equinox. This occurs to any given character on a modified Intelligence or Perception simple roll (Artes Liberales, Divination, or Magic Theory of 6+; Legend Lore, Faerie Lore, or Occult Lore of 9+).

The trip to the baron's castle is uneventful. The barony's heart is a lush and prosperous valley through which a gentle river meanders. The valley is girded on either side by heavily-forested massifs, whose tops are often shrouded in low-lying clouds. A rich harvest is being gathered by peasants, whose rhythmic work songs echo from hillside to hillside.

Some thirty knights have answered the baron's invitation. Some have come alone. Others have come with squires and men-at-arms. A small number have come with entertainers (singers, jugglers, musicians, and court magicians). As this is a working hunt, few of the guests are women. Female characters may find themselves the object of unusual and possibly unwanted attentions.

The feast is held "under the stars," and begins in the early afternoon. The company is

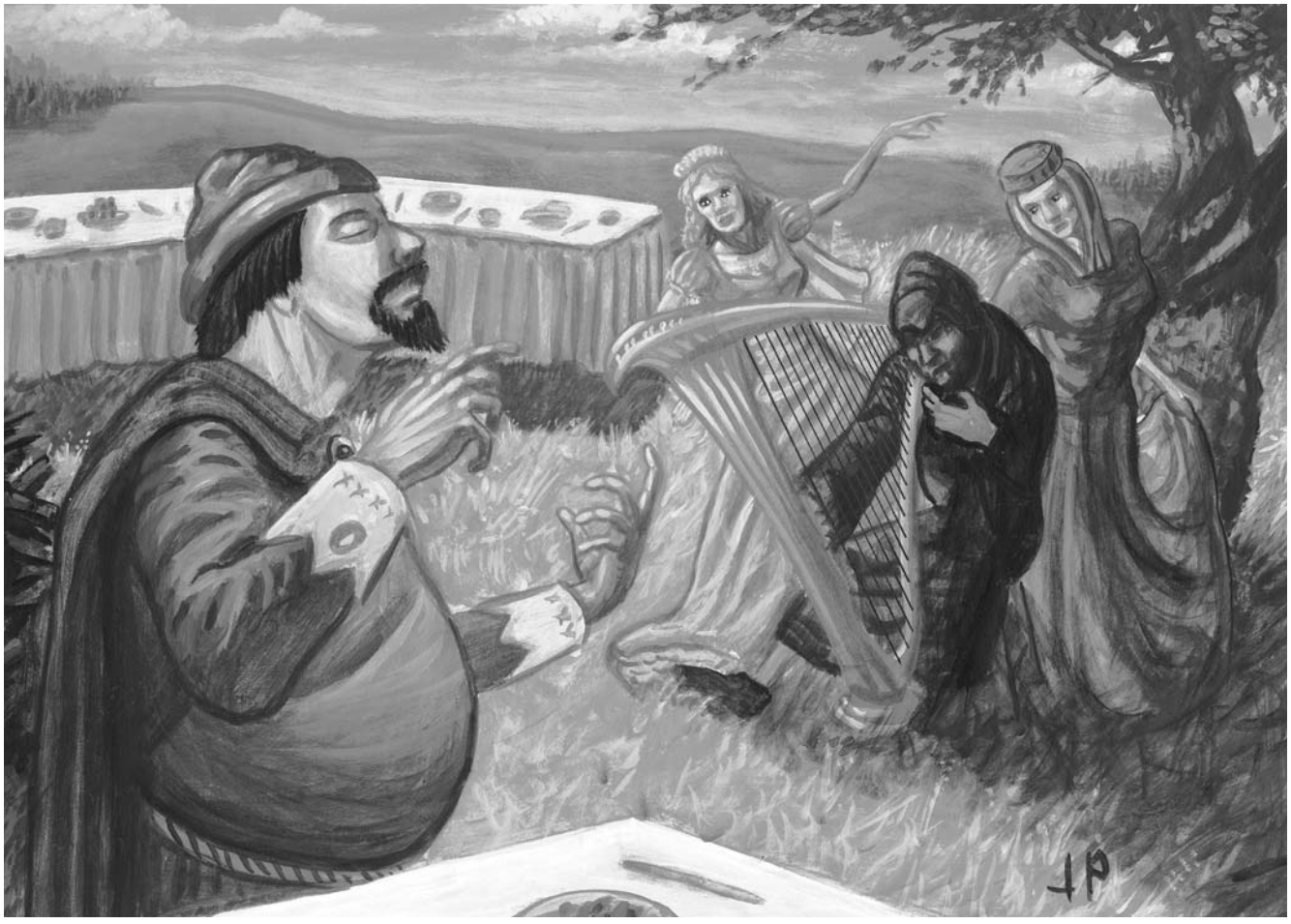


seated along the outside of eight long, narrow tables set in an open circle. During the feast, servants gradually build up a large unlit pyre in the center of the circle. The baron spends time in turn at each table, engaging each of his guests in conversation, however briefly, and pointing out the more famous visitors to whomever asks. Amongst these is Forovo, a blind harpist of considerable repute. Forovo is old and is attended by two of his pretty adult granddaughters, who spend about as much time fending off unwanted advances as eating.

As the meal ends at sunset, the baron rises to announce the autumn equinox. He again welcomes his guests, bids them good fortune for the morrow's hunt, and then lights the enormous bonfire. A mighty cheer goes up, and echoing bonfires appear on the hillsides up and down the valley according to local custom. The serious entertainment begins with the various performers vying for a large purse worth 10s supplied by the baron. Forovo acts as honorary judge, judiciously (as he cannot see) awarding the prize to the performance obtaining the loudest cheers. The level of competition is high, and any player character performers will have to make a stress roll of 15+ to win. As heavy consumption of wine has dulled the audience's finer faculties, entertainers may add appropriate Reputations to their scores. At the end of each performance the audience rewards each entertainer by tossing a number of pennies equal to the performance score. Botches are "rewarded" with boos and whistles, while multiple botches could result in ejection from the feast and even a bad

## *The Baron*

The baron is a largely unremarkable figure with the attributes of an average middle-aged knight. He has little time for peasant concerns and relies on underlings for relations with the common folk. He has no patience for whiny complaints. In his dealings with his social equals, however, he is both attentive and just. Though highly conscious of his rank, he is courteous at all times and rarely loses his temper. He is married to the niece of a neighboring baron and has two daughters from a previous marriage.



Reputation. Preferred magical entertainment should be light and not too flashy or believable. Any mage without the Gentle Gift is likely to appear more disturbing than entertaining.

Once a winner has been determined, the baron offers a shilling to each of the losing competitors who did not embarrass themselves or their audience. The crowd is hushed, and Forovo is invited into the circle. He deliberately and firmly plucks a short but haunting tune from his harp. The audience realizes the song will be sad and tragic, and some are already moved to silent tears. Forovo now sets his harp aside and recites, *a cappella*, the Song of Joaquim of the White Mists (see the insert on the next page).

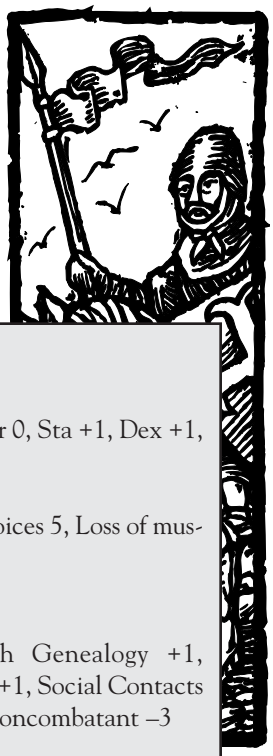
Once the tale is over, the baron, tears in his eyes, praises Forovo's singing and bids the attendance to bed, for the hunt starts the next day before dawn. Though the hour is late, Forovo willingly converses with any admirers who come up to him. He swears to the truth of every word of Joaquim's tale, adding that Joaquim was the baron's great-grandfather. If the characters have made any friends amongst the other guests, they may learn that the tale is widely believed to be apocryphal — invented to justify inheritance by the baron's grandfather, who was probably born of Bea's second marriage.

Unless they have brought their own tent, or enjoy the baron's particular favor, the characters spend the night uncomfortably in the main hall with most of the other guests.

# The Hunt

The next morning, unless they are already up, the characters are roused by the baron's men before dawn. The hunting party gathers at the site of the previous night's feast. The baron announces that the boar's den is probably in some thickly wooded foothills that the hunters should be able to reach before midmorning. Once the party reaches the site, the men will breakfast and enter the forest on foot at various points in an effort to flush out the beast. The baron and his men (about half the company) will take the main path into the woods, while the guests will beat the flanks. As this is a boar hunt, the participants are admonished to leave other game alone so as not to confuse the dogs and their fellow hunters. The baron designates two of his men, Bern and Maurice, to accompany the characters as guides. The player characters recognize Bern as one of the musicians who performed creditably at the feast.

Light but warm clothing is normally worn on a hunt, but as the boar is a particularly dangerous beast, many of the hunters wear body and limb armor. Wearing headgear that would restrict a character's Perception tends to draw unfavor-



## *Forovo*

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +4, Str 0, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik –3
**Age:** 61
**Afflictions:** Loss of sight 6, Difficulty recognizing voices 5, Loss of muscle tone 3, Limp 1
**Size:** 0
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Carefree +1, Knack with Genealogy +1, Inspirational +1, Busybody +1, Close Family Ties +1, Social Contacts (local nobility) +1, Well Known +1, Blind –5, Noncombatant –3
**Personality Traits:** Cheerful +2, Tactful +2
**Reputations:** Great Poet +2 (local region)
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Awareness 2 (listening), Charm 2 (quick wit), Concentration 1 (ignoring loud distractions), Etiquette 2 (nobility), Folk Ken 1 (nobles), Legend Lore 3 (heroes), Local Area Lore 5 (lineages), Play Flute 2 (dancing tunes), Play Harp 5 (accompaniment), Play Lute 3 (accompaniment), Sing 8 (*a capella*), Speak Local Language 7 (poetry)
**Decrepitude:** 7

His fame extending over several counties, Forovo is the premier poet in the local dialect. Any social gathering is honored by his presence. Though grown blind with age, he remains of cheerful and easy-going disposition. He knows the lineage and history of all the prominent families in the area, and is often consulted on issues of consanguinity (the Church forbids marriages between third degree relatives). He has set the exploits of the local gentry's forebears to verse, and is known for his tact and discretion. He is eager to pass on his skills and charges only nominal fees to train indigent aspiring poets and musicians. He does not waste his time with just anyone, however, insisting on a combined Communication + (Sing, Play, or Storytelling) score of five before accepting prospective students. He makes exceptions, of course, for those of noble birth or greater means.

A stroke has impaired Fovoro's ability to recognize voices, and the people who know him well always begin by introducing themselves. He tries to hide this disability conversationally by inquiring into the well-being of an unidentified speaker's family and asking for news. In this way he can eventually recognize those familiar to him with minimal embarrassment.

able comment, however. On the other hand, no one objects if the characters carry helms in their packs or strapped to their saddles.

As the party sets out, the sky is overcast with low-lying clouds shrouding both flanks of the valley. After crossing the river at the foot of a small waterfall, the hunters soon leave the beaten footpath and climb into the hills, trampling unharvested fields of grain. The peasants give the company a wide berth, most keeping to the safety of their well-kept huts from which they watch the armed intruders through the cracks of their shuttered windows. A few curs harry the hunters, their shrill barking answered by the baying of the baron's leashed hounds.

When the party reaches the edge of the wood, the baron and the other riders dismount, leaving their horses to grooms. The characters may do so as well. The forest is far too rough to ride in except on a few paths. As the hunters eat a hurried meal, the baron designates the various points of entry. If any group becomes lost, it should blow a horn once (Bern and Maurice have a horn each). Answering groups should blow twice. If the boar is encountered, its finders should blow three times. The baron then wishes the company a good hunt and enters the forest with his men.

Before the morning is up, the characters find some suspiciously large boar droppings. Maurice makes to blow his horn but Bern argues the signal should only be given once the boar is actually sighted. Unless the player characters intervene, Maurice blows his horn three times despite Bern's objections, and the baron and his men arrive about an hour later. Careful examination of the scat (Perception + Hunting of 12+) suggests it is at least three days old (the cool dampness has kept it fresh-looking). If the baron arrives, this is quickly determined and he departs

# The Song of Joaquim of the White Mists

The song begins when Joaquim hears that Bea, his young wife, has entered labor. He rides with his company through a forest to arrive in time for the birth. After many hours, however, they become lost in a dense fog, only to emerge in a strange land where they are captured by Sir Yough, an evil faerie prince.

Sir Yough assures Joaquim that he will never be permitted to leave until he has offered up a mortal head to add to the faerie prince's extensive collection. Until Joaquim has decided which of his followers will be sacrificed, the mortals and faeries will play a series of games. Each time the faeries win, the loser forfeits his head. Each time the mortals win, they are told a great faerie secret.

Thanks to his sharp wits, Joaquim wins the first three contests, learning of Sir Golain's Sickle which ensures bountiful harvests, Sir Igraine's Spear which pierces armor like cheese, and Sir Yough's Boots which can lead the wearer to any place he has never been.

When Joaquim is told that the next game will be a fight to the death between himself and the giant faerie champion Sir Boronovilimocopor, he resolves to escape. He offers mundane wine to the faeries (putting the court to sleep), chops off Sir Yough's head, and flees. Joaquim and his men, pursued by the angry faeries, make for the white mists, only to see the fog recede as they approach — precisely as predicted by Sir Yough. Joaquim and his men prepare to make a last stand against the faeries, who are by now hemming them in on all sides, when Blasi, Joaquim's young valet, steps forward, offering his own head to his master. In despair, Joaquim chops off the boy's head and tosses it to the vengeful fay. Immediately the mists surround Joaquim and his companions, and they find themselves on a wooded hilltop overlooking his home manor.

Joaquim expects to greet his wife and newborn child, but learns that he has been gone for seven years. Bea remarried and moved away to live with her new husband. Mortified by their misfortune and overcome by the enormity of their sin in killing the innocent Blasi, Joaquim and his companions leave and are never seen nor heard from again. When Bea learns of Joaquim's return and departure, she is overcome by shame and despair, and wastes away.

## *Using the Song*

Much of the information contained in the song (except the end) is known to the talking heads of Sir Yough's realm, especially Blasi. Storyguides who wish to make this adventure more challenging can have Forovo sing a different song altogether. This will force the player characters to blunder about in Faerie, gathering the necessary clues through painstaking investigation and interaction with the talking heads. This will also make it less likely that the characters will be able to steal all the treasures described in the song. On the other hand, offering the song to the players keeps the adventure shorter while producing a strong (and probably misleading) sense of foreshadowing and *déja vu*. It will also give the adventure a more classic fairytale feel.

with his men, displeased and with a low opinion of the player characters' hunting skills.

## The Hart and the Regio

As the characters advance deeper into the hills, they encounter the occasional patch of mist but no further sign of the boar. Maurice suggests they climb to a crest and try to survey the surrounding countryside. As they continue to climb, the various game paths peter out and the characters find themselves in a dense bank of fog. Struggling higher with some difficulty, they finally reach a bald hilltop from which they can look down at the clouds below. All around them are other ranges of hills also shrouded in mist.

As they scan a hillside opposite, the characters are startled by a thundering troat. An enormous white form detaches itself from the mists and lumbers up the opposite slope a few paces before turning towards the party. It is a gigantic white deer with a silvery mane and a rack of antlers as long as the branch of a large tree. After peering at the stunned characters for an instant, it powers up the hill and disappears over the crest.

"The White Hart!" exclaims Maurice, charging down the hill after it. If the characters fail to follow, he urges them on from inside the fog bank below. Characters who make a simple Intelligence + Legend Lore roll of 6+ know the

### *Maurice*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per –1, Pre –1, Com +1, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik 0
**Age:** 32
**Size:** 0
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Reckless +1, Bad Reputation –1
**Personality Traits:** Vain +2, Meddler +2, Lazy +1
**Reputations:** Whiner +2 (baron's men), Shirker +1 (fellow hunters)

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spear | +11 | +13 | +7 | +7 | +7 |
| Brawling (fist) | +5 | +5 | +4 | +1 | +5 |
| Brawling (knife) | +6 | +6 | +6 | +3 | +6 |

**Soak:** +1
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Awareness 3 (searching), Brawling 4 (knife), Carouse 2 (games of chance), Climb 3 (trees), Guile 3 (lying to authority), Hunt 5 (tracking), Longshaft weapons 5 (spear), Speak Local Language 4 (arguing), Survival 2 (woods)
**Equipment:** food wallet, large wineskin, knife, spear, short bow, quiver and arrows, light leather hauberk, cloak.
**Encumbrance:** –0.5

Maurice is a vain and often obnoxious troublemaker. He continually offers bad but convincing advice, loudly picks sides in other people's quarrels, and complains constantly in an unpleasant manner. Though he can perform competently when he wants to, Maurice is also a shirker. He treats every human interaction as a game or contest. He cannot resist bragging or showing a self-satisfied smile whenever he feels he has gotten the better of someone.

### *Bern*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre –1, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +2, Qik –1
**Age:** 25
**Size:** 0
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Jack-of-all-trades +2, Obligation (to the baron) –1
**Personality Traits:** Disciplined +1
**Reputations:** Competent +1 (baron's men)

| Weapon/Attack* | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spear | +8 | +12 | +3 | +6 | +4 |
| Short Bow | +1 | +3 | n/a | +4 | +2 |
| Brawling (fist) | +2 | +4 | +1 | 0 | +2 |

*Scores do not include Encumbrance
**Soak:** +1
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Awareness 3 (searching), Bow 1 (short bow), Brawling 1 (fist), Carouse 1 (staying sober), Hunt 3 (tracking), Longshaft weapons 3 (spear), Play Lute 4 (accompaniment), Sing 4 (love songs), Speak Local Language 5 (storytelling), Storytelling 3 (romances).
**Equipment:** food wallet, large wineskin, knife, spear, short bow, quiver and arrows, light leather hauberk, cloak.
**Encumbrance:** –1.5

Bern is a skilled lute player and collector of ancient songs. As he has not yet achieved a reputation as a performer, he continues to work as one of the baron's huntsmen. Bern's was one of the better performances at the feast. He is quiet-spoken, obedient, introspective, and competent. He does whatever needs doing quietly and with little fuss. He keeps his head down, and player characters may even forget he is around until his skills are needed.

White Hart is associated with great and dangerous adventures. Those rolling 9+ know that anyone who sees the White Hart is marked by fate. Those rolling 12+ know the White Heart is a supernatural creature that cannot be successfully hunted or tracked by mundane means if it does not wish to be followed.

It does not matter much whether the characters follow the Hart or not, because although the characters are not aware of it (unless they are specifically on the lookout for it or have appropriate supernatural abilities), they have arrived at the lowest level (aura 2) of the faerie regio. Because of the equinox, entry into the higher levels is relatively easy at this time. Because of the resistance provided by the regio's inhabitants, however, departure is essentially impossible (see "Escaping from Faerie," page 204). Advice from Maurice can also be used by the storyguide to distract or confuse the characters, and thus ensure that they do not leave.

If they do follow the White Hart, they tumble down the slope after Maurice and eventually find themselves on a foggy rolling plain, deeper in the regio (aura 4). Continuing the hunt, they come to a large but not otherwise remarkable oak tree which marks the boundary to the highest level of the regio (aura 7).

If the characters decline to follow the White

## *The White Hart*

**Characteristics:** Cun +1 (Int +3), Per +2 (Hearing +7), Str +3, Sta +8, Dex +3, Qik +3
**Faerie Might:** 43 (+20 for magic resistance)
**Size:** +3
**Personality Traits:** Brave +5 (for letting itself be seen)

| **Weapon/Attack*** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Antlers | +8 | +7 | +1 | +24 |
| Hooves | +8 | +5 | +1 | +12 |

*The White Hart uses its antlers against frontal opponents, and kicks enemies in the rear. It can only use one of these attacks at one time.
**Soak:** +13
**Fatigue:** +8
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5, Unc.
**Body levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5, Inc.
**Powers:**
*Move without Tracks* PeIm15, 0: The White Hart can move without sound or scent, and leaves no markings that can be followed.
*Thundering Troat* ReMe20, 1: All those within range Near who hear the troat must make a Stamina stress roll of 6+ or remain stunned for a round. On a botch, a character drops whatever he is holding and runs away.
*Tireless Charge* CrAn20, 0: The Hart never has to make fatigue rolls when running, even if ridden.

The White Hart is essentially the guardian of the regio. Its primary concern is to maintain the internal harmony of the mysterious tribe of dark faeries that inhabit this faerie counterpart to the baron's valley. The Hart can communicate intelligently with the characters through their dreams, but its behavior is largely instinctual rather than thought-out. It senses that the balance within the regio has been disturbed, and has drawn in the characters to restore it. Once the characters have performed this task, the Hart will have no further need for them and will let them leave.

Hart, Maurice rejoins the party in disgust. The characters soon discover, however, that they have no idea where they are. The sun is visible from the hilltop, but is not where they would have expected, and does not prove to be a trustworthy guide in any case. If they blow a horn, the blast echoes eerily but draws no response. Eventually, armed with perhaps a bit more caution and information, the characters should be resigned to leaving the hilltop and entering the fog below. In time they find them themselves on the rolling plain, and then, in front of the oak tree.

# Lost in Faerie

As the characters stumble out of the mist, they find themselves on a gently rising slope covered with soft, sweet-smelling green grasses. The sound of many songbirds fills the air, though no birds are seen. At the top of the slope is a large, lone oak tree.

## The Oak Tree

The undersides of the oak tree's leaves are tinged with silver (the color, not the metal), and the tree is laden with huge acorns the size of apples. On a simple Intelligence + Awareness roll of 6+ characters notice that, strangely, there are no acorns or leaves on the ground beneath the oak.

Characters who examine the oak closely or make a Perception + Awareness simple roll of 6+ notice the head of a beardless youth hanging by its hair from one of the lower branches. It peers at the characters with sad eyes. This is the head of Blasi, Joaquim's former valet. It is the first of several "talking heads" the party will encounter during the adventure (see "The Talking Heads," page 191). The characters may confer with Blasi as long and as frequently as they wish. If the characters offer to cut him down, he simply asks that they take him with them when they leave and bury him in consecrated ground so he can go to his eternal rest. Cutting Blasi down provides the characters with a continuing store of information for the remainder of their stay in Faerie, but will result in one additional level of encroaching darkness (see insert).

### *The Magic Acorns*

There are 120 acorns on the oak tree, in all, and one in five contains one pawn of Herbam vis. Twenty on the lowest-hanging branches can be knocked down with poles, staves, or spears. If the characters wish to amuse themselves, they can try to dislodge acorns by throwing objects into the tree. Knocking an acorn down in this way requires a Dexterity + Thrown Weapon stress roll of 12+. For each acorn knocked down in this way, the ease factor increases by +1. A botch indicates that the thrown object has hit Blasi, who then refuses to answer any of the characters' questions.

The acorns can be harvested more effectively by climbing the tree. Those on the lower branches (60 – the number that have been knocked down) can be reached by making a Strength-based Climb stress roll of 9+. A climbing character failing this roll can knock down

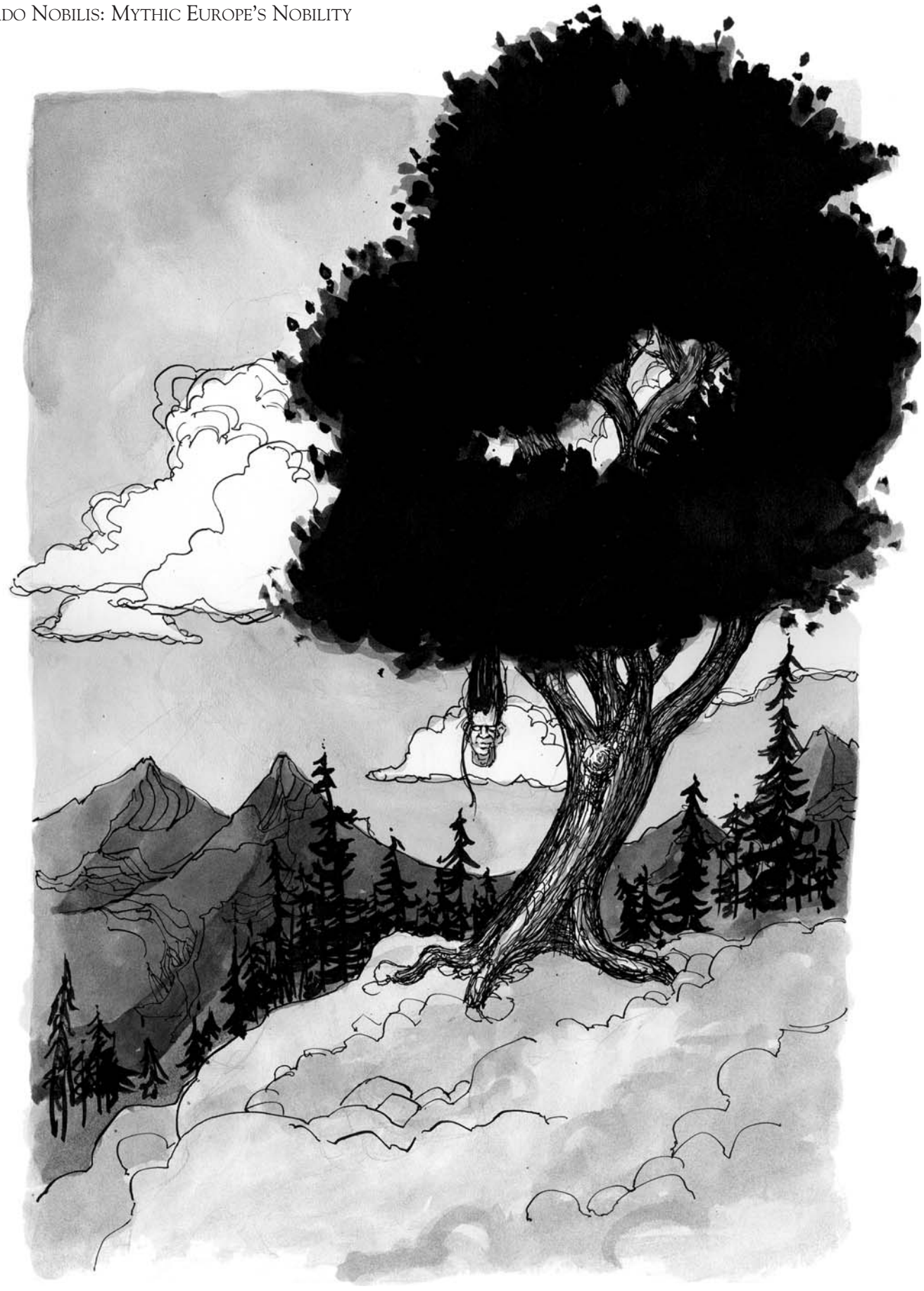
## Encroaching Darkness

When the characters enter the highest level of the regio at the oak tree they find it reasonably bright and well lit. Various actions they can take subtly change this. As the characters take steps strongly disapproved of by the faeries, the ambient light dims perceptibly, gradually regressing to an ominous gloom and possibly even pitch darkness. For every two cumulative levels of encroaching darkness, all subsequent rolls requiring sight suffer a –1 penalty, up to a maximum of –6.

One level of encroaching darkness is produced by each of the following actions:

- Freeing a talking head from the oak or one of the caves (one level per head freed, maximum of four levels total).
- Picking one or more of the magic acorns (one level).
- Harming Lady Sessily and/or stealing her slippers (one level).
- Stealing one of the faerie treasures (one level per treasure stolen, maximum three levels).
- Winning one of the faerie contests, unless won on behalf of one of the two faerie factions (one level per contest won, maximum three levels).

Any increase in encroaching darkness is readily noticeable and should be brought to the players' attention. If twelve levels are achieved, the characters will be groping blindly in the dark. This effect can be negated in part by magic light, burning torches, and so on, but should still be disturbing and, in extreme cases, crippling. The faeries are unaffected by this phenomenon.



three simple dice worth, but can then can climb no further. If a botch is rolled, the character falls out of the tree. The acorns on the middle branches (40) can be reached on a further 12+, knocking down two dice worth on failure (assuming no botch), while those on the uppermost branches (20) can be picked by making a Climb roll of 15+, with one die worth of acorns harvested in case of failure. All of this effort can be avoided, of course, if magic is used. Harvesting any of the acorns leads to one level of encroaching darkness.

A character gains one level of Encumbrance for every twelve acorns carried in a pack. The acorns can be researched during a season with an investigation total of Int + (Faerie Lore or Faerie Magic) + Magic Aura + Lab quality modifiers + a stress die. If a 12+ is rolled, the researcher learns that a mature oak grown from one of the acorns will generate a faerie aura if planted beyond the sound of church bells (in other words, outside the Dominion). If the researcher fails, another attempt may be made in another season each time the researcher's base investigation total (before the die roll) improves. If a botch is rolled, no further research is possible. Experimentation, lab assistance, or Inventive Genius have no effect on the researcher's chances. The aura produced by a mature oak will extend as far as the tree's noonday shade, and has a strength of 1 beneath a 20-year-old oak, 2 beneath a 100-year-old tree, and an extra +1 for every additional hundred years (up to level 5). Magic acorns cannot be grown from these new oaks, however. The aura produced is a function of time passing and not actual growth or size, so magically accelerating the growth of the oak saplings has no effect on the strength of the aura, but may expand its range as a function of its larger shadow.

## Lady Sessily

As the characters leave the oak, they descend into a sparsely wooded hollow. In its center is a small clearing from which they hear a plaintive call: "Oh please! Rub my back. I'm so

## The Talking Heads

Sir Yough collects the heads of mortals for his own amusement and that of his court. This traps the souls of the decapitated, who are forced to remain in Faerie as "embodied" ghosts. A given head can normally only speak once asked a direct question. They are usually willing to share their knowledge, however, and can continue speaking until told to keep quiet. While faeries can command the heads to speak, the faeries themselves cannot hear conversations between heads and mortals. As such, the characters can converse freely with the heads in front of faeries without fear of being overheard. All the heads know this and can explain this fact to the characters. Carrying the heads around can be rather troublesome, as each one costs a level of Encumbrance. Heads do not enjoy being dropped, and are likely to become uncooperative if not treated respectfully.

Each head has its own desires and motivations. Some, like Blasi, are described in detail. The storyguide should feel free to invent personalities for the others. Most Christian heads want release and burial, though some may want news of friends and relatives in the mundane realm. Others may want the characters, should they escape, to take messages back to the land of the living. None of the heads understand how long they have been in Faerie, and will be dismayed to learn their friends and loved ones are long-dead.

As the faeries have been hunting the heads of intruders for centuries if not millennia, many of the heads are pagan. Some speak only dead or archaic languages, so are of no use to the characters without magical assistance. Some believe they are in the Elysian Fields (or another pagan paradise) and do not wish to be moved or disturbed. Others have learned of Christianity from their fellow heads and wish to be baptized by the characters. Whether baptism is efficacious is a fine theological problem that is probably beyond the characters' ability to solve.

One head is unique. This is the head of Sir Yough, who was decapitated by the fleeing Joaquim. Unsure of what to do with the head of their fallen leader, the faeries have woven it into the beard of the sleeping Sir Boronovilimocopor. Sir Yough's head is not entirely pleased with this situation, but is not in a position to do much about it. Note that the talking heads are definitely dead and cannot be brought back to normal life by any means known to Hermetic or faerie magic, short of a (literal) miracle.

As one final suggestion, if the characters' covenant is beset by problems or mysteries, the storyguide can use the talking heads as a source of otherwise unobtainable or difficult-to-find information. This can help tie the adventure to the broader saga and may help convince the players that the loss of one or more characters has not been totally in vain.

sore. Please rub my back."

The pleas come from Lady Sessily, a beautiful nymph who is found reclining on an enormous powder-blue petal, prone and naked but for a pair of glossy red slippers. Her skin, somewhere between pink and peach, is lightly tanned, highlighting her firm curvaceousness.

If any of the characters accede to her request, she purrs and moans contentedly as her back and shoulders are massaged. If none of the characters rise to the occasion, she attempts to entrance the most susceptible target as determined by low Stamina; Personality Traits such as Lustful, Playful, or Helpful; or Flaws such as Weak-Willed or Curse of Venus. Lady Sessily rolls a simple die + 10, while the character rolls a Stamina-based stress die modified by appropriate Virtues, Flaws, or Personality Traits. Unless physically restrained by his companions, anyone failing a contest of wills with Lady Sessily is compelled to ceaselessly rub her back. In no case can the character free himself of his own will. While rubbing Sessily's back, a character suffers no fatigue, hunger, or thirst. An entranced character botching the test of wills becomes completely besotted with Lady Sessily and, if rescued, frequently slips away from the party to rejoin her. If and when the party manages to leave the faerie regio, the besotted character acquires the Lost Love Flaw. Characters who voluntarily rub her back are similarly affected, though no roll is involved, so the botch result is impossible.

If Lady Sessily's red slippers are removed (each contains three pawns of Corpus vis), she

## *Blasi*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre –1, Com +1, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a, Qik n/a
**Apparent Age:** 16
**Personality Traits:** Humble +1, Self-sacrificing +1, Pious +1
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 2 (horses), Animal Ken 2 (horses), Faerie Lore 1 (Sir Yough's court), Local Area Lore 2 (notables), Sing 3 (folk songs), Speak Latin 1 (hymns), Speak Local Language* 3 (animal terms).
*The local language has evolved over the last century, and Blasi's speech and understanding is slightly archaic.

Blasi, a pious Christian who longs for release, has young, almost angelic features. He answers any question put to him to the best of his abilities, though he grows silent if he disapproves of the characters' actions. He knows of Sir Yough's death, and how it came to pass. He knows about the three faerie treasures (which he can identify on sight), and knows that they were left behind when Joaquim and his companions escaped. He does not know that Sir Boronovilimocopor now wears Sir Yough's boots, or that he has been chosen as the new faerie prince. Blasi also warns the characters against thanking the faeries for anything, as they take this as a deadly insult. Finally, if prompted to do so, he can add +3 to the cumulative total when singing hymns to distract the faeries (see "Flight," under "Escaping from Faerie," on page 204).

Bern in particular may develop a strong interest in Blasi, asking Blasi to teach him old songs and tell him about prominent people who lived in Blasi's time. Bern hopes to offer these tidbits to Forovo in exchange for private tutoring.

## *Lady Sessily*

**Characteristics:** Int –2, Per –2, Pre +3, Com +1, Str –2, Sta –2, Dex –2, Qik –5
**Faerie Might:** 25
**Size:** 0
**Personality Traits:** Sensual +3, Self-centered +3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Noncombatant –3
**Soak:** –2
**Fatigue:** –2
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Powers:**
*Disappear* MuCo30, 3: Lady Sessily can turn into a cloud of pollen and later reconstitute herself from any of the spores.
*Entrancement* ReMe 25, 1: Compels the subject to rub Lady Sessily's back ceaselessly.
*Touch of Ease* CrCo25, 0: Anyone concentrating on rubbing Lady Sessily's back does not sustain Fatigue levels from lack of food, drink, or sleep.
*Lilac's Caress* MuIm25, 0: Anyone who has rubbed Lady Sessily's back is gifted with the Venus' Blessing Virtue.
**Vis:** 6 pawns of Corpus vis in her red slippers (three in each).

Lady Sessily is a rarely-encountered flower nymph. She is purely self-centered and sensual, though without malice. The characters she entrances share in her sensuality and suffer no real harm (unless they botch). Lady Sessily exists only to be admired, and cannot be brought to talk about anything other than her needs or concerns. Her feelings are easily hurt, and verbal abuse makes her wilt. If a majority of the player characters are female, the storyguide may wish to make Sessily male and boyish (though nubile) instead.

pleads for them and will even release the entranced character if they are returned. If Lady Sessily is attacked, she utters a cry of surprise and pain, and disappears in a puff of pollen. Attacking Lady Sessily and/or keeping her slippers increases the level of encroaching darkness by one level.

Characters who come into "friendly" physical contact with Lady Sessily find that their affected body parts are covered in fine pollen dust which smells of lilacs. This can be washed away, but returns after a few days. Such characters acquire the Venus' Blessing Virtue once they leave the regio, superseding the Curse of Venus if they have this Flaw.

## The Faeries Appear

Beyond Lady Sessily's hollow, the characters come to a wooded crest from which they can survey a broad valley that reminds them of the baron's lands. The hills are covered with orderly fields, terraces, gardens, and orchards. Fruit trees with regular spherical foliage grow in preternaturally symmetrical rows, and bear both blooms and fruit simultaneously. A familiar river meanders its way within well-defined banks before splitting into a myriad of streamlets just as it enters a large but sparse wood. The storyguide should stress the underlying similarity to the baron's valley.

If they exist, the "peasants" of the regio are never seen, the beautifully-tended fields and orchards notwithstanding. Typically, the farm work in Faerie is done "magically," as it were, by unseen hands. Food appears at the court as if from nowhere, and lordless common folk who venture into Sir Yough's realm are hunted down for sport.

Characters making Intelligence-based simple rolls of 6+ find the air unusually clear. Even distant objects appearing sharp and in focus. Near or Farsighted individuals see without the usual impairment, and this experience may haunt their dreams if and when they are able to leave the regio. Those making Intelligence-based Craft (Farming) simple rolls of 6+ notice a puzzling absence of vines.

As the party climbs down from the crest, a large group of perhaps a hundred riders breaks out from a nearby wood in the plain below. They swirl chaotically, attempting to strike an irregular round ball with large padded mallets. A mighty blow sends the ball hurtling through the air toward the characters, and it lands rolling at their feet. The "ball" is actually a head that the characters recognize as belonging to one of the baron's hunters. Its face is wracked with pain and fear as it pleads with the characters for help. Just as the characters make this gruesome discovery, the riders come up in two distinct companies led respectively by Sir Golain and Sir Igraine (the latter of whom, despite her honorific, is clearly female — see below).

The faeries (for this is what they are) appear as tall, wiry men and women with sharp, angular features; high cheekbones; and regular, white teeth with rather prominent canines. They wear elegant riding clothes in shades of black and gray, elaborately embroidered with gold and silver thread. Their beautiful, long-legged steeds are uniform shades of white and gray and have rich manes. All the faeries of Sir Yough's realm see themselves as knights and ladies. The members of the court who follow martial pursuits are all knights and address each other as "Sir" regardless of their apparent sex. Correspondingly, those

associated with more pacific and gentle pursuits are addressed as "Lady," again, regardless of apparent gender. Noble player characters are addressed accordingly, whether they like it or not.

Sir Golain looks down at each character in turn and demands to know his name and station. If, when challenged, none of the characters claim noble status, they are invited to run, "so the sport can begin."

If the characters seem determined to make a stand, the faeries retreat a way and shoot at them with bows until at least one of the characters breaks and runs (or until all the intruders are dead). The arrows do normal damage, but any character hit (regardless of whether the damage has been soaked) must resist the faeries' Elf-fright effect (see their insert on the next page) or flee in terror.

If one or more of the characters flee, the faeries ignore those who have not. They thunder after those in flight, attempting to separate them from each other. Once separated from "the herd," a fleeing character is chased until he has lost three Fatigue levels, at which point the exhausted quarry is cornered, surrounded, or run to ground. One of the faeries dismounts to deliver the *coup de grace*. A character killed in this way is beheaded, becoming a talking head. If, instead, the character is able to dispatch his faerie tormentor, another steps up to take its place. If a character kills three faerie hunters in succession, the remaining faeries recognize the victim's "underlying nobility," and Sir Golain or Sir Igraine offers to dub him on the spot. If the character refuses the honor, the *pas d'armes* continues until the victim is killed or accepts knighthood, the offer being renewed after each faerie death. This entire process continues until all the intruders have been killed or one "acquires" noble status.

A magus who protects the party magically (by casting *Circling Winds of Protection*, for example) is immediately acknowledged as noble, regardless of protestations to the contrary. Each use of offensive magic, however, (such as *Arc of Fiery Ribbons*) is met by a devastating faerie curse. The storyguide should choose between inflicting a minor magical deficiency in the relevant Form, the Incompatible Arts Flaw for the relevant Form and Technique combination, or the Susceptibility to Faerie Flaw. These effects are permanent and require at least a minor adventure to be reversed.

Having faerie blood is not an advantage to characters. The faeries of Sir Yough's realm have no doubt as to their own nobility, but foreign faeries are suspect at best. Unless they can unquestionably establish their noble status, faerie player characters or characters with faerie blood are likely to be treated by the other faeries as menials. ("So you claim to be descended from one of the noble Sidhe, do you? Perhaps you would recite your lineage for our edification.")

Once one of the characters is acknowledged as noble, he is formally welcomed. The commoners in the party are then assumed to be servants or followers and are largely ignored. This does not mean that non-noble characters become invisible to the faeries. Commoners have their place as servants and entertainers, after all.

## *Faerie Horses*

**Characteristics:** Cun –2, Per +3, Pre n/a, Com n/a, Str +5, Sta +7, Dex +2, Qik +2
**Faerie Might:** 14
**Size:** +2
**Personality Traits:** Spirited +5, Jealous +5 (of mundane horses), Skittish +3

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hooves | +6 | +6 | +2 | +9 |

**Soak:** +10
**Fatigue:** +7
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Powers:**
*Treading the Watery Path* MuAq20, 0: Faerie horses can ride underwater at normal traveling speed, and faeries or mortals who ride them cannot drown while mounted or touching the horse.

Fine and high-strung, faerie horses are rumored to be the progenitors of all ridable horses, having crossbred with mundane ponies. They are loyal and docile to faerie riders, but humans are at –3 for all Ride rolls. Faerie steeds are otherwise unaffected by the Gift. These horses can never be held or restrained by mundane means, and gradually fade away and die if kept captive by magic. Nonetheless, they stay where they are groomed and fed, though they are easily spooked and prone to flight (–3 on all Animal Handling rolls).

If kept in an enclosure or stable, faerie stallions kill their mundane rivals, and faerie mares kill any of their mundane counterparts entering into heat. Cross-breeding is a tricky business as the foals always come in pairs. Mundane mares only nurse foals they think are their own, and never more than one at a time. Faerie mares refuse to nurse half-mundane offspring at all. If these survive (presumably through magical or other exceptional assistance) the foals become exemplars of their breed (as *The Immaculate Beast*, ArM4, page 109), but otherwise remain mundane.

Faeries simply do not answer any of their questions or pay any attention to their views. If for some reason it becomes essential that one of the faeries converse with a "non-noble" character, he adopts the sort of slow, loud voice reserved for unruly children and adults of deficient understanding.

Once welcomed, Sir Golain invites the party members to join his faction and help defeat the forces of Sir Igraine in "the contest." Sir Igraine counters by insisting that the characters join her faction instead. If the characters hesitate or demand more information about the nature or purpose of the contest (entirely likely), Sir Igraine suggests they enjoy the hospitality of each faction before deciding which to join. Sir Golain agrees to this fair proposal and suggests the characters first feast with him in the caves of Twilight and then take their repose with Sir Igraine in the caves of Gloaming. The characters will then be free to indicate which faction they will support at the faerie court.

If the characters demur and choose to visit neither cave, Sir Golain warns them severely that, in any case, they will never be allowed to leave without offering up one of their comrades as a talking head, for this is the law in Faerie. Even if the characters will not join either faction, they can still attend the faerie court where the river enters the wood, and witness the outcome of the contest.

Whatever the characters then chose to do, Sir Golain instructs some of his followers to "dress the game" and promises Sir Igraine that she will "receive the hides, as is customary." The faeries then lead the characters either upstream to the Caves of Twilight and Gloaming, or downstream to the faerie prince's court.

# The Faerie Treasures

Every faerie in the regio carries a special "treasure." In most cases, the treasure is insignificant and of sentimental value only to the faerie concerned. One example is Lady Sessily's red slippers, though most "treasures" contain no vis. In other cases, the treasure may have some limited magical value — the boar's tusks (see page 203), for example. Each of the three most important faeries, however, bears an ancient magical treasure of great potency. In no case will a faerie willingly part with his treasure, though, as described, the boar may lend its tusks to save its life if their return is promised.

## *Sir Golain's Sickle*

Sir Golain wears a golden sickle strapped to his waist at all times. When buried under a large fieldstone, the sickle quadruples the barley yields of all the fields a tall man (Size +1) could normally see while standing barefoot on the stone. There are some restrictions, however. Rocks have to be cleared from the fields each spring, the soil has to be hoed and not plowed, and if iron tools are ever used in the fields for hoeing or harvesting, the crops fail. (CrHe35)

One of the rocks cleared each spring has a faint faerie aura. If used as a cornerstone for a house built beyond the sound of church bells, it attracts a brownie who serves until thanked or rewarded with clothing, in which case the house collapses on its inhabitants. If four such cornerstones are laid before the house is built, not only will it attract four (loudly quarreling) brownies, but a secret passage opens up in either the attic or cellar leading to a faerie trod, leading in turn to mysterious appearances and disappearances. This feature of the sickle can be discovered only after a researcher has spent a season studying the sickle or its magical properties, by making an

## *The Faerie Hunters*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Faerie Might:** 20
**Size:** 0
**Personality Traits:** Sectarian +3, Vain +2, Haughty +2

| **Weapon/Attack*** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Short bow | +7 | +7 | n/a | +4 | +7 |
| Axe and buckler | +9 | +10 | +11 | +6 | +7 |
| Brawling (fist) | +4 | +3 | +3 | +0 | +3 |

*Scores do not include Encumbrance, as they are usually mounted.
**Soak:** +1
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Powers:**
*Elf-fright* CrMe15, 3: Compels a target failing a Stamina-based stress roll of 9+ to flee in terror. Can be magically resisted as normal, though the effect has a +7 Penetration bonus due to the strong faerie aura.
**Equipment:** short bow, quiver and arrows, axe and buckler, light leather hauberk, cloak.
**Encumbrance:** 1.5

Intelligence-based Faerie Magic or Faerie Lore simple roll of 9+. If a summa on Faerie Magic or Faerie Lore is consulted, its level can be substituted for the researcher's score in the Ability.

If the fieldstone is ever dislodged, the sickle returns to Faerie and the fields cease to produce either faerie stones or harvests.

## *Sir Igraine's Spear*

Sir Igraine bears a bronze spearhead tied to a (human) leather thong around her neck at all times. The spearhead can be fastened to a spear, a javelin, or a lance. Iron or steel armor provides only half normal Protection against the spearhead, and loses two points of Protection each time it is penetrated. This damage can be repaired by an armorer with time and effort. If the armor is magically protected against rust, the spearhead must first overcome the enchantment to cause this effect.

If the spearhead is put in contact with iron for any length of time, the iron begins to rust. One day is normally enough to jam a lock; two days will make the lock brittle, and three days will turn it to dust. The spearhead returns to Faerie if it is ever used to strike bronze. (PeTe35)

## *Sir Yough's Boots*

As the new prince of faerie, Sir Boronovilimocopor now wears Sir Yough's fine leather boots, Sir Yough having no further use for them. The boots magically fit any feet or, for that matter, the hind limbs of any beast.

The boots lead the wearer by the shortest mundane footpath to any place the wearer can name but to which he has never been. If the destination is overseas, in a regio, or in a different Realm entirely, the boots lead the wearer to the closest point in the mundane world. In the case of the supernatural realms, this might simply be the closest point with an appropriate aura of 9. The boots are of no help in entering or leaving a regio. The boots do not ensure the wearer's safety or comfort, nor do they protect against hunger, thirst, or fatigue. The wearer is only generally aware of the path immediately ahead, which can take surprising twists and turns. The path may cross fords and bridges, but will otherwise bypass rivers and streams. (InIm35)

The boots disappear and return to Faerie if the wearer purposefully decides, while wearing them, to return to a place where he has already been.

# The Caves

If the characters have agreed to visit the caves, the party eventually arrives at a cascading waterfall reminiscent of the one they saw on their way to the boar hunt. At its base, on either side, are two large cave openings. The one on the far side leads to the caves of Twilight, while that on the near leads to the caves of Gloaming. Sir Igraine excuses herself and reminds the characters to visit her once they "have seen through Sir

### *Sir Golain and Sir Igraine*

**Characteristics:** Int +1, Per +1, Pre +2, Com +2, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex +1, Qik 0
**Faerie Might:** 30
**Size:** 0
**Personality Traits:** Vain +3, Vengeful +2, Restrained +2, Impulsive –1

| **Weapon/Attack*** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Short bow | +7 | +8 | n/a | +4 | +7 |
| Axe and buckler | +9 | +11 | +11 | +6 | +7 |
| Brawling (fist) | +4 | +4 | +3 | +0 | +3 |

*Scores not including Encumbrance, as they are usually mounted.
**Soak:** +1
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Powers:**
*Elf-fright* CrMe15, 3: Compels a target failing a +9 Stamina-based stress roll to flee in terror.
*Sign of Folly* MuCo15, 1 per target affected: Adds minor animal body parts to displeasing targets within Sight range.
**Equipment:** short bow, quiver and arrows, axe and buckler, light leather hauberk, cloak.
**Encumbrance:** 1.5

The two faerie chiefs, though respectively male and female, are mirror images of each other. The differences in the aesthetic viewpoints they represent are genuine and consistent, but too arcane for mortals to understand without intensive study (Faerie Lore 5). Sir Golain and Sir Igraine always let their followers bear the brunt of the disputations (both verbal and martial), preferring to lead from the sidelines. They defend themselves quite competently if attacked verbally or physically, however.

Because the two factions are so finely balanced, Sir Golain and Sir Igraine are always on the lookout for new recruits to their respective causes. Neither chief was able to succeed Sir Yough, so they settled instead on the compromise choice of Sir Boronovilimocopor.

Golain's deceptions and empty promises." Sir Golain ignores her jibe and leads the characters behind the waterfall to the far bank.

## *The Caves of Twilight*

The caves of Twilight are lit by thousands of shining, fist-sized gemstones imbedded in the cave walls. If the characters show any interest in them, Sir Golain offers to let them have as many as they wish. The gems can be pried out with some difficulty, but turn into lumps of coal in the characters' hands. Sir Golain does not appear to notice the transformation and continues to praise their beauty and brilliance.

A dozen or so talking heads hang from the walls. Sir Golain introduces Abelain (see insert) to his guests, and asks Abelain what words he has for them. Abelain's advice is that the characters should ask their own questions. Sir Golain then leaves the characters to amuse themselves while he sees to the feast. As Abelain is now free to speak, the storyguide should encourage the party to question him about the situation. If the players do not get the hint, Blasi (if he is present) engages Abelain or the others in conversation.

The feast is soon served and consists of ripe fresh fruit, rich barley bread, and carefully braised strips of meat. If any of the characters move to taste the meat, the fairies grow silent and observe with interest. Once the characters have partaken or declined, the feast resumes without incident. Characters making a Perception-based Premonitions simple rolls of 6+ feel uneasy when the meat is served. Those making an Intelligence-based Visions rolls of 6+ have flashbacks to the faeries' hillside ball-game. Characters who consume the meat acquire the Tainted with Evil Flaw once they leave the regio.

Sir Golain attempts to convince the characters to join his side by offering to tell them how they can obtain Sir Igraine's Spear. Maurice strongly suggests the party show its appreciation by backing Sir Golain. If the characters agree, their host tells them they should offer Sir Igraine wine to drink at the faerie court, and then take the spear while she sleeps. If the characters offer mundane wine to Sir Golain, he smiles wryly and tells them that gifts from outsiders can only be accepted at the prince's court. If the characters as a group temporize, indicate a preference for Sir Igraine or Gloaming, or thank Sir Golain for his hospitality at any time during the feast (in which case he assumes that they have opted to support Sir Igraine), he coldly has them shown out. Characters (other than Maurice) who fail magic resistance rolls find they have acquired kid's horns growing out of the top of their foreheads (as per the faeries' *Sign of Folly* power).

## *The Caves of Gloaming*

Sir Igraine awaits the characters outside to lead them into the caves of Gloaming. The walls are crisscrossed with brilliant veins of gold and

### Twilight and Gloaming

The terms "twilight" and "gloaming" are not meant to represent opposites in this scenario. While "gloaming" is normally associated with sunset, "twilight" can apply to either sunset or morning. As there is neither sunrise nor sunset in the regio, there is no clear distinction between the two terms. Instead they represent subtle shadings — shadings far too subtle for mortals to fully grasp — in the faerie perspective of what is good and proper.

### *Abelain*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per –2, Pre +1, Com +1, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a, Qik n/a
**Apparent Age:** 42
**Personality Traits:** Remorseful +1, Preachy +1, Pious +1
**Reputations:** Wise +1 (faeries), Boring +1 (faeries), Devout +1 (other heads)
**Abilities:** Charm 3 (preaching), Concentration 2 (prayer), Disputatio 5 (preaching), Empathy 3 (consciences), Folk Ken 2 (sinners), Organization Lore — The Church 3 (monks), Scribe Latin 3, Sing 6 (hymns), Speak Latin 3 (the mass), Speak Local Language* 3 (preaching).
*The local language has evolved over the last few centuries, and Abelain's speech and understanding are archaic.

Abelain was a missionary monk who sought fame as an apostle to faeries. He was beheaded for his presumption. He has succeeded in converting several of the pagan talking heads to the true faith, however, though he has been unable to baptize any of them since his demise. He and they now believe they are trapped in Purgatory and are patiently awaiting their liberation and entry into Paradise once their sins have been expiated. Abelain knows nothing of faerie treasures or politics but, if queried, warns the characters against eating Sir Golain's tainted meat. He also knows the faeries can be distracted by the singing of hymns (see "Flight," under "Escaping from Faerie," page 204), and can contribute his Sing score (including specialization) to this end if asked.

silver that shed an ambient light over the proceedings (regardless of any encroaching darkness). If the characters express interest in the precious metal, Sir Igraine graciously invites them to help themselves. The filigree can be pulled out of the wall but turns to lead in the characters' hands. Sir Igraine does not appear to notice this transformation. Another dozen heads hang from the walls, and Sir Igraine introduces her "good friend Mara" (see insert) to her guests. Asked what advice she has for the characters, Mara responds that they must follow their own way. Sir Igraine bows gracefully and leaves the characters to their own devices while she sees to the refreshments. The characters are free to converse with Mara or the other heads.

As the characters have already eaten, Sir Igraine offers them sweet, lightly fermented liqueurs. Each sip is strangely different, harkening of varying and changeable blends of fruits and berries (though not grapes). This drink is heady stuff, and any latent magical abilities the characters have may manifest themselves at the storyguide's discretion. After the first few rounds, a milky-white beverage is served from a leather skin. The skin has two nozzles that look, upon close examination, remarkably like human nipples. One nozzle dispenses hot liquid, the other cold liquid. If any of the characters makes to sip the strange brew (which tastes of milk and smells vaguely of almonds) the faeries pause in mid-speech and observe intently, before returning to their amusements. Anyone consuming the liquid acquires the Social Handicap Flaw once they leave the regio, due to fetid breath. This Flaw, which never manifests in a Faerie aura, produces an overpowering stench whenever a character speaks, eats, or otherwise opens his mouth. Perdo Auram spells can suppress the effect momentarily, but the smell can only be masked by a more potent, and so more noticeable (though presumably more bearable) odor.

Sir Igraine tries to lure the characters into joining her side by offering to tell them how they can acquire Sir Golain's Sickle. If the characters agree, she suggests they offer wine to Sir Golain at the court and take the sickle while he sleeps. If the characters offer her mundane wine, she politely declines, indicating that gifts are welcome but can only be accepted at the prince's court. Unless the characters have already committed themselves to Sir Golain, Maurice forcefully offers plausible arguments for backing Sir Igraine. If the characters as a group indicate a preference for Sir Golain or Twilight, or thank Sir Igraine at any time for her hospitality (in which case she assumes they plan to side with her enemies), she has them shown out. Characters (other than Maurice) who fail magic resistance rolls find they have grown goat's tails at the base of their spines (as per the faeries' *Sign of Folly* power).

### *Mara*

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per –1, Pre +0, Com +1, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a, Qik n/a
**Apparent Age:** 19
**Personality Traits:** Skeptical +2, Resentful +1
**Reputations:** Wise +1 (faeries)
**Abilities:** Animal Ken 1 (birds), Faerie Lore 2 (faerie magic), Herbalism 2 (hallucinogens), Magic Theory 3 (potions), Philosophiae 1 (natural), Hermetic Lore 2 (House Diedne), Scribe Latin 1, Sing 2 (chanting), Speak Latin 3 (Hermetic), Speak Local Language* 3 (storytelling), Storytelling 2 (allegories).
*The local language has evolved since the Schism War, and Mara's speech and understanding are archaic, though her Latin is conventional

Mara is the former apprentice of a Díedne maga. They fled together to this regio to avoid the Schism War. Mara knows little of the politics that precipitated the conflict with the rest of the Order, though she is aware her house was suspected of diabolical leanings. She originally tended to dismiss these allegations as slander, but is now less sure. During their flight, her mistress revealed disturbing and unsuspected powers, and subsequently proved all too willing to sacrifice her apprentice to secure her own departure from the regio. Mara no longer has any magical powers but retains a basic understanding of Magic Theory from a Díedne perspective. She knows of Sir Igraine's Spear and its attributes through direct observation and references contained in mnemonic verse she learned as part of her Hermetic training.

## Proceeding to the Faerie Court

Once the courtesies have been respected, the faeries of both factions leave their respective caves to attend the faerie court. Characters who have joined one side or the other are expected to follow suit. Otherwise, they are free to do as they please. They can even loot the empty caves, though they find nothing of interest other than the talking heads. They are free to take these down if they wish, though this brings further levels of encroaching darkness.

# The Faerie Court

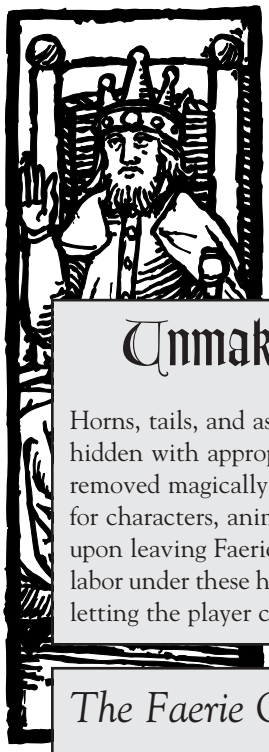
The faerie court is not hard to find — one need only follow the river downstream until it splits into streamlets and enters the forest. There, the woods open into a large glade where an impressive number of elegantly-dressed faerie knights and courtiers argue in small groups over the respective merits of Twilight and Gloaming. Food and drink are laid out at the far end of the clearing. Sir Igraine and Sir Golain hold court there on opposite sides of an enormous sleeping faerie giant, Sir Boronovilimocopor.

The details of the discussions appear to revolve around arcane (in the mundane sense) minutiae relating to fashion and custom. The discussions are earnest and intense, with cutting insults and an undercurrent of violence barely held in check. "Noble" characters wishing to join one of the arguments can make Intelligence-based Etiquette or Faerie Lore stress rolls against an ease factor of 9+. If successful, the faeries listen with strained politeness and then resume their arguments as if nothing had happened. Otherwise the disputants sneer at the characters' presumption, openly question the quality of their breeding, and inflict them with asses' ears before resuming their debate. If the characters botch, they offend their allies (if they have any) and are pointedly invited to join the other faction.

If any "noble" characters ask after Sir Yough they are pointed to the large, snoring giant laying in the middle of the faerie court. In fact, this is rather misleading, as the giant is really Sir Boronovilimocopor (see the insert on page 201), the former champion who is now the prince of the realm.

As the characters gradually make their presence known, the faeries break up into their two rival camps. Sir Golain and Sir Igraine ask the visitors to state publicly whether they will support "Twilight, or Gloaming, or…" (that is, other options are alluded to, but not made explicit). The characters' other, unstated option, is to enter the contest as their own, third faction.

The characters may question any of the talking heads present on what to do without, as usual, the faeries noticing.



## Faeries and the Fruit of the Vine

Grapes do not grow in Sir Yough's realm, and its inhabitants are particularly susceptible to the effects of mundane wine. Instead of becoming drunk, however, the faeries fall into a deep and rarely-experienced sleep. (There is no night in the regio, and never any fatigue loss from lack of sleep — even for mundanes.) Sleeping faeries only awaken when called by name. All of the faeries are aware of the consequences of imbibing, but find the experience so pleasurable they will always accept a sip at the faerie court if offered, albeit with some trepidation. Once awakened they remain dazed and disoriented for several rounds. If Sir Golain and Sir Igraine are offered the wine first, the remaining faeries find themselves leaderless and uncertain as to whether they should rouse their faction chiefs. The wine-induced sleep is highly pleasurable, and their leaders might resent being awakened.

If the player characters thoughtlessly joined the hunt without any wine, Bern and Maurice have enough to put most of the faerie court to sleep. On the other hand, even if the characters entered Faerie with cartloads of wine, they cannot put *all* the faeries to sleep. The faeries only drink at court, and many are absent attending to their own affairs. Enough faeries will always remain awake to attack the characters should they try and fail to leave the regio, though putting large numbers of them to sleep should give the characters time to search for a way out before pursuit begins in earnest.

### Unmaking an Ass of Oneself

Horns, tails, and asses' ears acquired in Sir Yough's realm can be easily hidden with appropriate clothing or headgear. They can also be easily removed magically or surgically, though the latter leaves scars. Luckily for characters, animal characteristics acquired in Faerie fade with time upon leaving Faerie. An unkind storyguide may force the characters to labor under these handicaps for one or two additional adventures before letting the player characters return to normal.

### *The Faerie Courtiers*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre +1, Com +1, Str 0, Sta 0, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Faerie Might:** 20
**Size:** 0
**Personality Traits:** Sectarian +3, Vain +2, Haughty +2
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Powers:**
*Sign of Folly* MuCo15, 1 per target affected: Adds minor animal body parts to displeasing targets within sight range.

### *Sir Yough's Head*

**Characteristics:** Int +2, Per +3, Pre +1, Com +2, Str n/a, Sta n/a, Dex n/a, Qik n/a
**Apparent Age:** 25
**Personality Traits:** Cruel +3, Resentful +2
**Reputations:** Dead +6 (faeries)
**Abilities:** Guile 7 (elaborate lies), Faerie Lore 7 (his former realm)

When the characters meet him, Sir Yough pretends to be just another mortal head until such time as he thinks the characters will try to make their escape. Sir Yough is under no compulsion to be truthful or helpful to questioners. He eagerly reinforces misunderstanding that the sleeping Sir Boronovilimocopor is the real Sir Yough. He is, of course, intimately familiar with all aspects of the realm and its inhabitants, and can use this knowledge to appear more helpful than he really is. His only interest, however, is in increasing the number of mundane talking heads.

Finally, note that only wine from real grapes has this effect on faeries. Wine resulting from CrAq or MuAq spells does not induce sleep, as it is not the alcohol but the natural fermentation process (a form of decay alien to faeries) that is the key to the intoxicating effect. At the storyguide's discretion, however, grapes could be created with CrHe using vis, and then fermented into wine with MuHe(Aq). This will produce drinkable wine with a Finesse roll of 9+, possibly using Herbalism or Alchemy as modifiers.

# The Contest Begins

Once this issue of which faction (if either) the characters will support has been settled, Sir Igraine and Sir Golain agree on the stakes. In order to demonstrate once and for all the ascendence of Twilight over Gloaming, or *vice versa*, the course of the river, which "runs between the two schools of manners and taste," will be adjusted to suit the interests of the winning party. If Sir Golain wins, the river will be diverted into the caves of Twilight. If Sir Igraine wins, the river will flow instead into the caves of Gloaming. If the player characters have formed their own faction and prevail, they may dispose of the river as they see fit.

The contest has three trials: entertainment, hunting, and single combat. Characters who have joined a faerie faction find that they are expected to assume the lead role as protagonists in the trials of the contest.

## The Trial of Entertainment

In the first trial each participating faction fields a team of two. One of the two sings a song about animals (with or without instrumental accompaniment) while the other dances, attempting to mime the narrative. The teams are judged in part on the quality of the singing and dancing, but mainly on the originality of the performances. The longer and more elaborate the show, the better. As an aside, characters making Intelligence-based Awareness simple rolls of 9+ realize that no animals other than the faerie horses — not even insects — have been encountered in the regio so far.

The opposing faerie team(s) perform(s) first. Each time the singer names a new animal, the faerie dancer assumes the appropriate shape. The singing and music are of superb quality and the characters will be hard put to match the transformations. Nevertheless, the faeries have seen this show many times, and are eager for something new, so the characters stand to gain on originality.

If none of the player characters is a musician, they can always rely on Bern's proven abilities as a singer. He has many animal stories in his reper-

### *Sir Boronovilimocopor*

**Characteristics:** Int –3, Per –3, Pre +2, Com 0, Str +10, Sta +9, Dex +2, Qik –3
**Faerie Might:** 30
**Size:** +4
**Personality Traits:** Indecisive +3, Irritable +3

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Axe | +10 | +20 | +1 | +26 |
| Brawl (fist) | +9 | +10 | 0 | +16 |

**Soak:** +14
**Fatigue:** +7
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5 / –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5 / –5, Incapacitated

Six talking heads, including that of Sir Yough, are woven into Sir Boronovilimocopor's ample beard, which is the size of a tablecloth. As Sir Boronovilimocopor is still sleeping off the effects of Joaquim's wine (and no one has seen fit to rouse him, see "Faeries and the Fruit of the Vine" on the previous), he may or may not be aware of his election as Sir Yough's successor. This suits the two competing faerie factions, as they consider his manners and taste too unrefined to settle the vital aesthetic issues at stake between them. (Sir Yough, being dead, is no longer considered an authoritative judge — much to his annoyance.) Only if someone calls to him by name will he rouse himself to preside at the faerie court.

Sir Boronovilimocopor may be stupid, but he is also an awesome warrior. In combat, Sir Boronovilimocopor disdains defense and always chooses full attack, adding +6 to his Attack score and making full use of his size advantage to cause monstrous bashes (see page 88).

When faced with conflicting advice, Sir Boronovilimocopor either picks one of the proposed courses of action at random or vacillates indecisively. Rational arguments have no hold on him, so his court, were he to awaken, would resemble a confused fish market with competing courtiers shouting their conflicting advice to him at the top of their lungs in an effort to drown each other out.

If the characters should happen to slay Sir Boronovilimocopor, their faerie ally, if they have declared a preference, becomes the next prince. Neither Sir Golain nor Sir Igraine, however, have treasonable or revolutionary thoughts — this is simply not in their nature — and so neither suggests or entertains such a course of action.

toire. The dancing, however, presents a problem of a different order. Should the characters have a lycanthrope, skinchanger, or shape-changing magus among them, the choice may appear obvious. Alternatively, a mage might surreptitiously change a dancer's image from the sidelines, though this could be construed as cheating since it is the dancer who is supposed to effect the transformation. The faeries, however, regardless of any magical effects used, tend to see through illusions and judge on the basis of the dancer's underlying ability to mime the named animal. Whatever strategy the characters adopt, they are bound to be surprised by how things turn out.

Once the characters begin, the storyguide should encourage the designated musician to describe the plot of the animal song, though role-playing the actual singing may be forgone as a mercy to the other players. The first time the dancer attempts to mime an animal without actually changing his shape by some magical means, he must make a Stamina-based Disguise, Hunt, or Mimicry simple roll against a difficulty factor of 3+. If the roll succeeds, the character adopts the form of the named animal through the (unexpected!) magic of the faerie realm. For each subsequent "unintended" transformation, the ease factor rises by one. This continues until the singer ends the story or the character fails a transformation roll. In the former case, the faeries prompt the singer to continue (presumably with improvisation) by asking "And then what happened?" In the latter case, the dancer may continue to mime the remaining animals while trapped in the last form to which he was successfully transformed. Whatever the outcome of the contest, the affected character remains in the adopted form until he leaves the regio or is magically transformed back by any means at the players' disposal. That character will thereafter always re-assume the animal shape upon entering a faerie aura, and lose it upon leaving one.

By virtue of originality, any creditable performance by the characters leads to victory in the first trial, though this causes an increase in encroaching darkness.

## The Trial of Hunting

The trial of entertainment done, the contest moves on to the second event: the hunt for a giant rampaging boar which haunts some wooded hills not far from the faerie court and has eluded all efforts to bring it down. Astute players should, of course, draw a parallel with the baron's hunt.

One hunter from each team will stalk the beast. Given its enormous size, presentation of the boar's tusks will be deemed to be sufficient proof of success. Because of its magical tusks, the boar is, in fact, the only thing the faeries fear. They rationalize their fear and hatred with vague references to its ferocious nature and depredations, signs of which are objectively hard to find. In fact, the boar is an essentially peaceful creature that minds its own business and threatens no one who leaves it alone.

The faerie hunter for the first team boldly steps forward and announces his intention to march off in the opposite direction so as to catch the beast unawares. The faerie hunter for the second team (assuming the characters are uninvolved or competing on their own behalf) then steps forward and claims she will slay the boar by ambushing it. She proceeds to build a hide in the top of a tall tree well clear of any known boar sightings. The faeries look expectantly at the characters to see whom they will offer forward (if they are involved). As the frightened faeries have obviously concocted hunting plans in order to avoid confronting the boar, if the designated hunter for the characters does not deal with the menace, no one will. A player character announcing an intention to confront the boar directly is bound to elicit gasps from the astonished faeries.

The boar is easy to find in the hills where the faeries know it to live, peacefully rooting away in the underbrush. Once it senses a character, it makes eye contact, snorts steam from its snout, and fiercely shakes its head in order to show its tusks to best advantage. If this martial display fails to impress the character (it always works against faeries!), the boar turns and runs for its den.

Given the animal's huge size, it can be easily tracked to the large opening of a deep unlit cave. Efforts to smoke or otherwise drive out the boar are unsuccessful. There is no alternative but to give up, go in after it, or negotiate with it (should the character guess that it can speak).

Inside, the cave narrows noticeably to the point where the hunter is forced to wonder how such a large animal could negotiate such a tight passage. Nevertheless, the boar can be heard snuffling ahead on a Perception + Awareness simple roll of 6+. Eventually the cave walls

become so confining that the hunter can only advance on hands and knees. Smaller passages appear at random on either side, but only a child could crawl along them.

Just as the character passes one such opening, the boar, much reduced in size (by virtue of his Change Size power) charges from the flank. Remember to add the charge bonus to his attack. Only brawling weapons can be used in such a confined space, though if the character does not have a knife or dagger, rocks are readily at hand (treat as fist/kick with +2 Damage). If the character holds his ground, the boar runs away (though since the character cannot pursue, he does not get a free blow) and charges again. If the character attempts to retreat to gain more room, the boar pursues its advantage, growing to fill the available space. If the boar is wounded it retreats, shrinking as necessary.

If faced with death (or if the hunter talks to the boar and explains his purpose) the boar offers a deal. He will surrender his tusks in exchange for a promise to return them later. If this promise is made but the tusks are not later returned, the culprit is saddled with a unique curse. Once the offending character has left the regio he acquires the Terrors Flaw, fleeing and voiding his bowels at the mere sight of a pig, large or small, living or dead.

If the boar's tusks are taken while it is incapacitated and not slain, it later appears to the characters, wounded and bloodied, pleading for their return. If denied, the spurned boar squeals in agonized dismay, shedding copious tears.

If the hunter returns with the tusks, the faeries acknowledge his victory (which increases encroaching darkness), but give him a wide berth because of their fear of the magic tusks. If the character hunter is killed, the party members can recover the body of their slain comrade without encountering the boar. The faeries commiserate with the characters' failure to harvest their companion's head "while it was still fresh." If the character gives up the hunt, he has fared no worse (short of any wounds and damaged pride) than his faerie competitors.

In short, the characters cannot lose this particular trial, though they may not win.

## The Trial of Single Combat

The last trial is a straightforward duel to the death between the champions of the competing factions. Even if the characters have won the two previous trials, the faeries insist that the issue is still in doubt until all three trials have been completed. (After all, why should they forego the chance of an extra talking head?) Reluctance by the characters is dismissed and pooh-poohed as rank cowardice.

The faerie champions are large club-wielding ogres. The character champion is free to use his own weapons. Fights exclusively between faerie opponents always result in a draw, but mundane participation promises to make the contest more interesting by adding an element of chance and uncertainty, and by making the results decisive.

If there are three factions at play and the

### *The Boar*

**Characteristics:** Int –2, Per –1, Pre –3, Com –3, Str +7, Sta +5, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Faerie Might:** 20
**Size:** +2
**Personality Traits:** Glutton +2, Stubborn +3

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dam | Def |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite* | +5 | +6 | +9 | –3 |
| Tusks | +8 | +13 | +24 | 0 |

*If tusks have been lost or removed.
**Soak:** +18
**Fatigue:** +5
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5 / –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5 / –5, Incapacitated
**Powers:**
*Change Size* MuAn20, 1 point per level of size lost or gained: The boar can change in size from +2 to –2. For each point of size lost, the boar loses one Fatigue and Body level (first one of the two –5s, then one of the two –3s, and so on), –2 to Damage, and gains +1 to Initiative and Defense. Wound penalties remain the same when changing size.
*Speech* CrIm10, 0: The boar can respond verbally with some difficulty once spoken to.
*Faerie Bane* InMe40, 0: Faeries must make a magic resistance roll each round when confronted by the magic tusks. If their resistance fails, they retreat warily; if they fail by 10+, they flee in terror.
**Vis:** 6 pawns of Mentem vis in each tusk.

Other than the faerie horses, the boar is the only animal the characters will encounter in Sir Yough's realm. Unlike the horses, however, the boar can speak, though only once spoken to. If the boar is incapacitated or slain, its tusks can be removed with surprisingly little difficulty. They contain 6 pawns of Mentem vis apiece, and resume gigantic size once removed. Also, the tusks can be worn (though not necessarily on the snout) to frighten faeries. Because of their size, however, the tusks count together as –1 against a character's Encumbrance total.

mundane combatant is armed with the tusks, the two ogres keep their distance and fight each other by preference. The one left standing then reluctantly faces his player character opponent. If the tusks are not worn or are not available, a messy and chaotic three-way duel ensues.

The attendant faeries shout encouragement to their respective champions and revile their opponents. Note that faerie insults always strike home, and even a character's darkest secrets are grist for the mill and risk being exposed.

A losing player character combatant is promptly beheaded. As with the other trials, if the characters win this trial on their own behalf the level of encroaching darkness increases.

## To the Victor Go the Spoils

Once the duel is over, the faction which has won the largest number of trials may alter or fix the course of the river as they wish, according to the wager. The winning faction must also set the aesthetic standards for Sir Yough's realm, adjudicating such controversial issues as "whether light or dark is the best shade of time," and "whether lavender or juniper is best attuned to sorrow." Changing the laws of Faerie or modifying deeply established consensual customs (like the suitability of head collection as a faerie pastime, for example) is not on, however. The long-term ramifications on Faerie or the mundane realm of rulings on such abstruse points are largely unpredictable and are up to the storyguide to decide.

### *The Faerie Ogres*

**Characteristics:** Int –2, Per –1, Pre +1, Com –2, Str +8, Sta +7, Dex 0, Qik –1
**Faerie Might:** 25
**Size:** +3
**Personality Traits:** Angry +2, Methodical +2

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Club | +12 | +12 | +4 | +22 |
| Brawl | +11 | +8 | +3 | +13 |

**Soak:** +11
**Fatigue:** +5
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0 / 0, –1 / –1, –3 / –3, –5, Incapacitated

Once it has chosen a target, an ogre tends to beat it to a pulp before proceeding to the next victim.

Such decisions will not, however, have any immediate impact on the characters.

# Escaping from Faerie

There are three ways the characters can escape the faerie regio: offering one of their number in sacrifice, resolving the faerie stalemate, or making a go of it on their own.

## Sacrifice

If the characters offer the head of a party-member to Sir Golain or Sir Igraine, the sacrifice is duly beheaded and the White Hart appears to lead the characters out of the regio. It knows that they have failed, but leads them out so that a fresh group of adventurers can be recruited at some point in the future. Note that a charcter who is beheaded while attempting to flee doesn't "count" toward securing the party's amnesty from faerie — the head must be surrendured by the party with that purpose in mind (though the sacrifice's willingness isn't necessarily a prerequisite if the rest of the party agrees on the behalf of an otherwise unwilling victim).

## Restoring Harmony

If the characters win the contests and achieve the Hart's purpose in restoring harmony among the faeries of the regio, they need only follow the Hart's troat into the white mists and back into the mundane realm.

## Flight

If the characters attempt to flee the regio on their own, the storyguide has two options. The first (which is recommend) is to simply rule the attempt a failure. By fleeing the regio, the characters are side-stepping the meat of the scenario, and what fun is that? Some troupes may object to such railroading of characters, though, and so

storyguides may elect to use the normal rules for moving between levels of a regio, as described in ArM4, page 245. Storyguides should recall that the highest level of the regio (the caves and the faerie court) has aura 7, the middle level (the fog-bound plain) has aura 4, and the lowest level (the fog-shrouded hilltop) has aura 2.

If rolls are allowed, the resistance of the faeries increases the ease factor of seeing into lower levels of the regio by ten, and automatically foils the attempts of magi to see into lower levels using Hermetic spells. It is possible for the characters to reduce this overwhelming modifier in a few different ways. The easiest is to put the faerie court to sleep (see "Faeries and the Fruit of the Vine," page 200). Another option is to strike a deal with the boar, most likely by returning his tusks. If his tusks are returned, the boar is willing to frighten the faeries into leaving the characters alone. Either of these tactics eliminates the entire ten-point penalty. Also, the singing of hymns reduces faerie harassment by the cumulative Ability levels of the singers (at best eliminating the entire ten-point penalty — Ability levels past ten have no further effect). Finally, possession of the boar's tusks reduces faerie harassment by five. Unfortunately for the characters, each level of encroaching darkness also increases the ease factor by one, and this modifier cannot be reduced by any actions the characters can take.

In any case, the storyguide should only allow one roll per individual, whether made by the individual himself or on his behalf as part of a group attempting to escape. The storyguide may wish to remind players that this would be a good time to use Confidence.

If the characters attempt to escape on their own and fail, they are hunted by the faeries (see "The Faeries Appear," page 193). This time all the characters who tried to escape are hunted, regardless of noble status, until they agree to offer up one of their own.

If none of the characters have the Second Sight, Faerie Sight, or Magic Sensitivity (the Abilities normally required to see between regio levels) the storyguide may, at his option, allow the use of Visions, Hunting, Concentration, Faerie Lore, Faerie Magic, Legend Lore, or Direction Sense. The storyguide may also use Personality Traits to modify the roll. For example, Focused or Disciplined might add to the roll, while Lazy or Curious would subtract from it. Finally, Virtues like Student of Faerie, Faerie Blood, Faerie Upbringing, or True Love might adjust the roll depending on the circumstances and the character in question.

If Sir Yough's head becomes aware of any attempt by the characters to leave the regio on their own, he rouses Sir Boronovilimocopor. As Sir Boronovilimocopor is slow and befuddled at the best of times, the time it takes Sir Yough to explain to Sir Boronovilimocopor about his election and the need for action against the characters should give the party enough of a head start to attempt their escape before being caught and hunted down.

## The Fate of the Talking Heads

No matter how the characters leave the regio, they may bring a number of talking heads with them. At level 4 of the regio (the fog-bound plain) the talking heads carried by the characters grow silent. At level 2 (the fog-shrouded hilltop) they appear dead. Once in the mundane realm, the heads become desiccated skulls, difficult even to recognize.

# Aftermath

Though the characters may feel they have spent only a day in Faerie, a year has gone by. The characters have not aged, but they have lost the last four seasons. They have to collect any horses they have left with the baron's men and explain their absence to their families and employers.

The odds are good that some player characters have been transformed through the acquisition of new Flaws. This sort of radical character mutation, while consistent with medieval concepts of myth and Faerie, may not be suitable for every saga. Storyguides should use their discretion in deciding whether the Flaws gained in faerie are permanent or transient, and, if transient, what is required (if anything) to make them go away.

If the river was diverted into either of the two faerie caves, the baron's lands have been blighted by a severe and unrelenting drought. This is in sharp contrast to the rich harvest the

characters witnessed upon their arrival. Famine is likely, and the baron faces utter ruin.

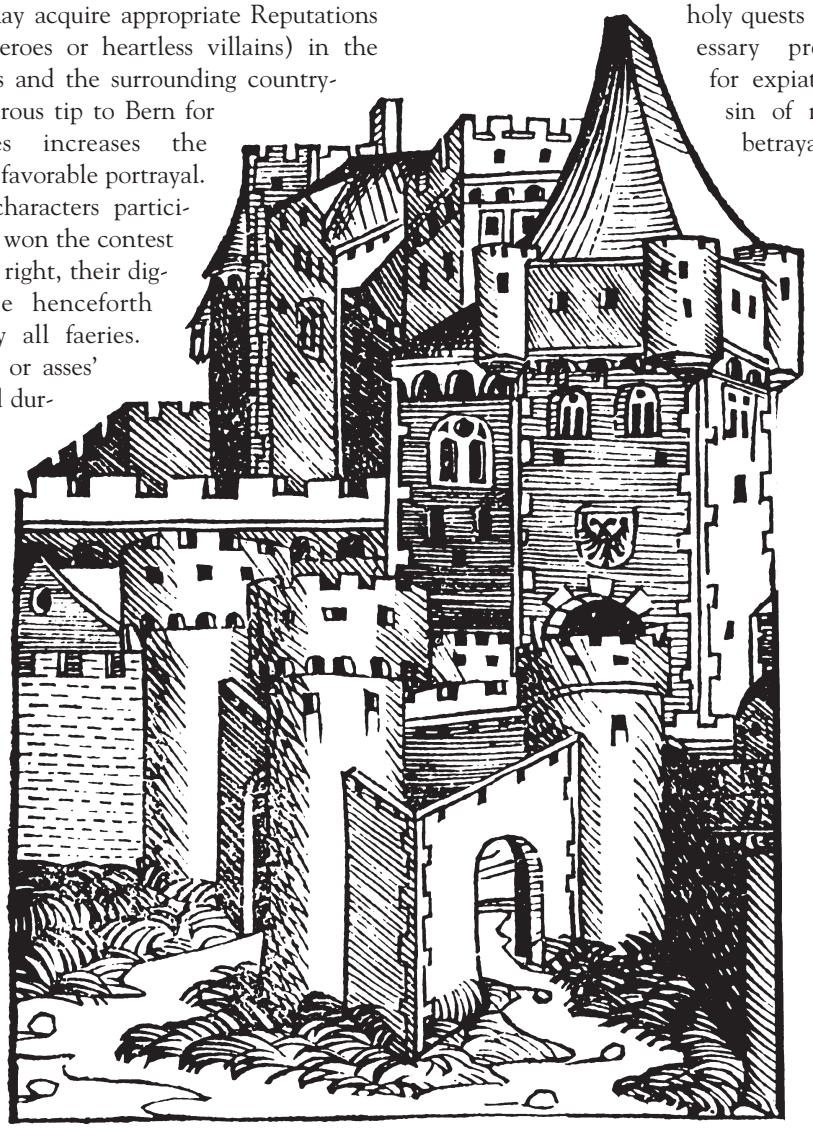
The characters may have to account for the loss of Bern or Maurice. If either of the baron's men was sacrificed to the faeries, the survivor accuses the characters of the murder. If both were killed, the characters have to come up with a plausible story, explaining why they have left the bodily remains behind (if they did). This should not be a trivial matter; tales of bandits, wild beasts, or bottomless ravines lead to demands that the characters guide the baron's men to the scene of the tragedy. If the characters tell the truth, the reaction depends on how well they tell it and what their Reputations are.

If he survives, Bern composes an epic — with Forovo's help — about the characters' exploits or failures in Faerie. As a result, the characters may acquire appropriate Reputations (either as heroes or heartless villains) in the baron's lands and the surrounding countryside. A generous tip to Bern for his services increases the chances of a favorable portrayal.

If the characters participated in and won the contest in their own right, their dignity will be henceforth respected by all faeries. Horns, tails, or asses' ears acquired during the adventure immediately disappear upon leaving the regio. In addition, the characters will never again be subjected to minor faerie pranks. This newfound faerie respect does not protect characters from being wounded or killed by faeries in a fight.

If the characters fixed the river's course in its current bed and were able to leave Faerie without sacrificing any of their companions (including Maurice and Bern) they acquire a renewed sense of purpose and achievement (add one to current Confidence levels).

A character who killed or offered up one of his fellows in sacrifice will have to live the rest of his days with the –3 Sense of Doom Flaw, and is cursed with the loss of friends and social contacts. Onerous pilgrimages, crippling vows, and the fulfillment of arduous holy quests will be necessary preconditions for expiation of this sin of murder and betrayal.



# Appendix I
# Bestiary

## Warriors

### *Senior Knight*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1
**Age:** 35
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Knight +2, Veteran +2, Oath of Fealty –1
**Personality Traits:** Brave +3, Cautious +1

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling (fist) | +1 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 0 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +3 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +1 |
| Longsword/kite shield | +8 | +8 | +14 | +5 | +6 |
| Lance | +11 | +12 | +7 | +7 | +6 |
| Shortbow | +2 | –1 | 0 | +4 | 0 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Longsword/kite shield | +17 | +10 | +16 | +5 | +8 |
| Lance/kite shield | +19 | +15 | +13 | +9 | +8 |

**Soak:** +16
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 2 (horses), Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 2 (ambushes), Area Lore 1 (county), Bow 2 (shortbow), Brawling 1 (dagger), Carousing 1 (drinking), Chirurgy 1 (binding wounds), Etiquette 1 (knights), Folk Ken 1 (knights), Hunting 2 (large game), Leadership 2 (warriors), Longshaft Weapon 6 (lance), Ride 6 (battle), Shield and Weapon 6 (longsword), Scribe Own Language 2 (reading), Speak Own Language 5 (local dialect), Speak *Langue d'Oïl* 1 (French)
**Equipment:** Improved helm with mail coif; mail hauberk with mail sleeves, leggings, and mittens
**Encumbrance:** –2, 0 when mounted

### *Junior Knight*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre 0, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1
**Age:** 20
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Knight +2, Veteran +1, Overconfident –2, Oath of Fealty –1
**Personality Traits:** Brave +2, Hotheaded +1

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling (fist) | +1 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 0 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +3 | +2 | +3 | +4 | +1 |
| Longsword/kite shield | +6 | +6 | +12 | +5 | +4 |
| Lance | +9 | +10 | +5 | +7 | +4 |
| Shortbow | +1 | –2 | 0 | +4 | –1 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Longsword/kite shield | +13 | +8 | +14 | +5 | +6 |
| Lance/kite shield | +15 | +13 | +11 | +9 | +6 |

**Soak:** +16
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 2 (horses), Athletics 2 (running), Awareness 1 (ambushes), Area Lore 1 (county), Bow 1 (shortbow), Brawling 1 (dagger), Carousing 1 (drinking), Chirurgy 1 (binding wounds), Etiquette 1 (knights), Hunting 2 (large game), Leadership 1 (warriors), Longshaft Weapon 4 (lance), Ride 4 (battle), Shield and Weapon 4 (longsword), Speak Own Language 5 (local dialect)
**Equipment:** Improved helm with mail coif; mail hauberk with mail sleeves, leggings, and mittens
**Encumbrance:** –2, 0 when mounted

## *Sergeant*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik 0
**Age:** 25
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Freeman +0, Veteran +2, Oath of Fealty –1
**Personality Traits:** Cynical +2, Brave +1

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling (fist) | +2 | +2 | +1 | +1 | +2 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +5 | +3 | +5 | +4 | +3 |
| Longsword/kite shield | +6 | +7 | +12 | +5 | +4 |
| Lance | +8 | +10 | +4 | +7 | +4 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Longsword/kite shield | +12 | +8 | +13 | +5 | +6 |
| Lance/kite shield | +14 | +13 | +10 | +9 | +6 |

**Soak:** +11
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 2 (horses), Armoring 1 (repair), Athletics 1 (running), Awareness 3 (ambushes), Area Lore 1 (county), Brawling 3 (dagger), Carousing 2 (drinking), Etiquette 1 (knights), Folk Ken 1 (men-at-arms), Guile 1 (knights), Hunting 1 (snares), Longshaft Weapon 4 (lance), Ride 4 (battle), Shield and Weapon 5 (longsword), Speak Own Language 4 (local dialect), Storytelling 1 (tall tales), Survival 2 (foraging)
**Equipment:** Steel helm; scale body armor with scale sleeves and leggings
**Encumbrance:** –2, 0 when mounted

## *Man-at-Arms (Mounted Infantry)*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Age:** 25
**Confidence:** 2
**Virtues and Flaws:** Freeman +0, Veteran +1
**Personality Traits:** Brave +1, Greedy +1

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist) | +3 | +2 | +2 | +1 | +3 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +3 | +3 | +3 | +4 | +2 |
| Longsword/round shield | +6 | +6 | +11 | +5 | +5 |
| Spear | +8 | +9 | +4 | +7 | +4 |

**Soak:** +9
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 1 (horses), Athletics 1 (running), Awareness 3 (guarding), Area Lore 3 (county), Brawling 2 (fist), Carousing 1 (drinking), Chirurgy 1 (Bind Wounds), Craft 2 (farming), Folk Ken 1 (men-at-arms), Hunting 1 (snares), Legend Lore 1 (local), Longshaft Weapon 4 (spear), Ride 3 (endurance), Shield and Weapon 5 (longsword), Speak Own Language 4 (local dialect), Storytelling 1 (tall tales)
**Equipment:** Steel helm, reinforced leather body and limb armor, round shield
**Encumbrance:** –1

## *Foot Soldier*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Age:** 25
**Confidence:** 2
**Virtues and Flaws:** Freeman +0, Veteran +1
**Personality Traits:** Brave +1, Opportunistic +1

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist) | +2 | +1 | +1 | +1 | +2 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +4 | +4 | +4 | +4 | +3 |
| Shortsword/round shield | +7 | +7 | +10 | +4 | +4 |
| Spear | +9 | +10 | +5 | +7 | +5 |

**Soak:** +9
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 1 (horses), Athletics 1 (running), Awareness 3 (guarding), Area Lore 3 (county), Brawling 2 (dagger), Carousing 2 (drinking), Chirurgy 1 (Bind Wounds), Craft 2 (farming), Folk Ken 1 (foot soldiers), Hunting 1 (snares), Legend Lore 1 (local), Longshaft Weapon 5 (spear), Ride 1 (speed), Shield and Weapon 4 (shortsword), Speak Own Language 4 (local dialect), Storytelling 1 (tall tales), Wagoneering 2 (rough terrain)
**Equipment:** Steel helm, reinforced leather body and limb armor, round shield
**Encumbrance:** –1

## *Feudal Levy*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per 0, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Age:** 25
**Confidence:** 2
**Virtues and Flaws:** Freeman +0
**Personality Traits:** Brave –1, Stolid +1

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brawling (fist) | +3 | +2 | +2 | +1 | +3 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +3 | +3 | +3 | +4 | +2 |
| Spear | +7 | +8 | +3 | +7 | +3 |

**Soak:** +6

**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 3, Awareness 1, Area Lore 3 (local), Brawling 2 (fist), Carousing 1 (drinking), Craft 3 (carpentry), Craft 5 (farming), Folk Ken 1 (peasants), Hunting 2 (snares), Legend Lore 1 (local), Longshaft Weapon 3 (spear), Speak Own Language 4 (local dialect), Storytelling 1, Wagoneering 2 (repair)
**Equipment:** Leather cap, heavy leather body and limb armor
**Encumbrance:** –1

## *Cuman Warrior*

**Characteristics:** Int 0, Per +1, Pre +1, Com 0, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1
**Age:** 25
**Confidence:** 3
**Virtues and Flaws:** Freeman +0, Veteran +1, Outsider (pagan) +1, Light Sleeper +1
**Personality Traits:** Brave +1, Greedy +1, Obedient (to superiors) +1, Ruthless +1

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *On Foot:* | | | | | |
| Brawling (fist) | +4 | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 |
| Brawling (dagger) | +4 | +3 | +4 | +4 | +2 |
| Shortsword/round shield | +6 | +5 | +9 | +5 | +3 |
| Lance | +9 | +9 | +5 | +7 | +5 |
| Composite bow | +5 | +7 | n/a | +10 | +6 |
| *Mounted:* | | | | | |
| Shortsword/round shield | +7 | +6 | +10 | +5 | +4 |
| Lance | +10 | +10 | +6 | +9 | +6 |
| Composite bow | +6 | +8 | n/a | +10 | +7 |

**Soak:** +9
**Fatigue levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** OK, 0, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated
**Abilities:** Animal Handling 3 (horses), Athletics 2 (jumping), Awareness 3 (ambushes), Area Lore 1 (the Steppes), Bow 5 (composite bow), Brawling 2 (fist), Carousing 1 (drinking), Chirurgy 1 (removing arrows), Folk Ken 1 (nomads), Hunting 1 (with a bow), Leadership 1 (intimidation), Longshaft Weapon 3 (lance), Ride 5 (horse archery), Shield and Weapon 2 (shortsword), Speak Own Language 4 (local dialect), Storytelling 1 (epics), Survival 1 (foraging)
**Equipment:** Steel helm, reinforced leather body and limb armor, round shield
**Encumbrance:** –1, 0 when mounted

# Horses

## *Destrier*

**Characteristics:** Cun –1, Per 0, Pre n/a, Com n/a, Str +5, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Size:** +2
**Personality Traits:** Spirited +3, Vicious +2, Loyal +2
**Ferocity:** 2 (when ridden in battle)

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hooves | +4 | +7 | 0 | +9 | +4 |

**Soak:** +18
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1,–3, –5, Unc.
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1, –3, –5, Inc.
**Equipment:** Full chain and chamfron

## *Palfrey*

**Characteristics:** Cun –1, Per 0, Pre n/a, Com n/a, Str +3, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik +1
**Size:** +2
**Personality Traits:** Spirited +2, Calm +2

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hooves | +5 | +4 | +1 | +6 | +4 |

**Soak:** +7
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1,–3, –5, Unc.
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1, –3, –5, Inc.

## *Roncin*

**Characteristics:** Cun –1, Per 0, Pre n/a, Com n/a, Str +3, Sta +4, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Size:** +2
**Personality Traits:** Spirited +2, Calm +1

| **Weapon/Attack** | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hooves | +4 | +4 | 0 | +6 | +4 |

**Soak:** +7
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1,–3, –5, Unc.
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1, –3, –5, Inc.

## Ferocity

Ferocity is an Ability unique to animals. It provides a bonus to combat rolls in much the same way Weapon Skill does for humans, but only under specific conditions. Some animals can be trained into higher levels of Ferocity, or into applying Ferocity in different situations. This will be discussed in greater detail in *The Medieval Bestiary, Revised Edition*, which is due for release in late 2000 or early 2001.

### *Sommier*

**Characteristics:** Cun –1, Per 0, Pre n/a, Com n/a, Str +3, Sta +3, Dex 0, Qik –1
**Size:** +2
**Personality Traits:** Spirited +2, Calm +1

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam | Fat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hooves | +3 | +4 | –1 | +6 | +4 |

**Soak:** +6
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1,–3, –5, Unc.
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, 0, –1, –1, –3, –5, Inc.

# Hounds

### *Lymer*

**Characteristics:** Cun 0, Per +6, Str 0, Sta +2, Dex 0, Qik 0
**Size:** –2
**Personality Traits:** Loyal +6, Persistent +3
**Abilities:** Hunt 4 (Tracking)

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | +4 | +4 | +3 | +3 |

**Soak :** 0
**Fatigue:** +2
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, –1, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, –1, –5, Incapacitated

### *Levrier*

**Characteristics:** Cun 0, Per +4, Str +1, Sta +1, Dex +1, Qik +1
**Size:** –1
**Personality Traits:** Loyal +6
**Ferocity:** 1 (when prey is at bay)
**Abilities:** Hunt 4 (Deer)

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | +6 | +5 | +3 | +5 |

**Soak:** 0
**Fatigue:** +1
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body levels:** Ok, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated

### *Alaunt*

**Characteristics:** Cun 0, Per +4, Str +1, Sta +2, Dex +2, Qik +2
**Size:** –1
**Personality Traits:** Loyal +6
**Ferocity:** 2 (when hunting boars)
**Abilities:** Hunt 4 (Boar)

| Weapon/Attack | Init | Atk | Dfn | Dam |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bite | +7 | +6 | +5 | +5 |

**Soak:** +1
**Fatigue:** +2
**Fatigue Levels:** OK, –1, –3, –5, Unconscious
**Body Levels:** OK, –1, –3, –5, Incapacitated

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