

A MAZONS vs ALKYRIES



CAMPAIGN PRIMER

Fantasy Adventure in the Hellenistic Age

Bloodstone Press™



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Amazons vs Valkyries Campaign Primer. This document offers an overview of the AvV campaign setting using the 5th edition rules of the world's most popular roleplaying game.

Amazons vs Valkyries is a fantasy adventure setting based on the Hellenistic Age where the ancient feud between two warrior cults drags the world into chaos.

Epic wars, crumbling empires, and barbaric invasions reshape the map while new ideas disrupt old traditions. Chthonic beasts lurk in the ruins of Nineveh and giants hunt the Hercynian forests. Collectors from Alexandria scour the world for wisdom to fill their library's vaults. Carthaginian warships hunt formarian pirates. Mercenary gnolls swell Pyrrhus' ranks. Golems battle at Agrigentum. The abandoned cityscape of Babylon harbors savage creatures, ruthless bandits, and homicidal priests.

You already know the men of this era; Archimedes, Brennus, Diogenes, and Alexander. Now meet the women; Hypatia, Cynane, Aspasia, and Arsinoe II. These scientists, philosophers, and warriors need your help.

There are ruins to explore, artifacts to recover, and creatures to slay. Armies need to be defeated and malicious deities must be stopped.

Amazons vs Valkyries is historical fantasy roleplaying at its best. It offers breathtaking adventure and high verisimilitude in a war-torn world that is familiar and exotic, entertaining and terrifying. Customized D20 game rules and historical details enhance immersion. Monsters and magic bring a fantasy element to the setting.

Amazons vs Valkyries features:

- Adult themes
- Historical events, places, and people
- Squad-level combat missions
- Covert paramilitary operations
- Mercenary companies
- Battlefields, sieges, and naval warfare
- Climate change, famine, and migration
- Secret police, spies, and headhunters
- Wars among the gods
- Women's issues and matriarchy
- Disabled deities and characters
- Transgender deities and characters
- Adventures inspired by history, myth, and folklore
- Legendary beasts and monstrous humanoids
- New archetypes, domains, oaths, classes, and equipment
- Hundreds of factions, guilds, and sects
- Two powerful warrior cults battling for the fate of the world!

Which side will you choose?

WITHIN THIS FILE

This information is divided into four parts.

Part 1. Provides a broad overview of the setting, themes, and key elements.

Part 2. Explains the central conflict of the setting.

Part 3. Covers the Amazons and Valkyries in detail.

Part 4. Provides instructions on character creation and outlines differences between characters in this setting and a standard setting.

Part 5. Covers a wealth of information for running adventures in this setting.

WORK IN PROGRESS

This project is a work in progress. There are still many topics to cover, oaths to develop, and adventures to write. As development milestones are reached, this document will be updated.

Players interested in supporting this project can:

- [Purchase Amazons vs Valkyries game material on DriveThru.](#)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- [Join our patreon for exclusive content and previews.](#)

Writers, game designers, and artists who would like to help develop this setting are encouraged to contact us at submissions@bloodstone-press.com.

DATES

To help with immersion, all dates are based on the ancient Assyrian calendar, which started with the building of the temple of Assur in 2100 BC (0 TA). So, the year 250 BC corresponds with the year 1850 TA.

CONTENT WARNING

This document contains content that is not suitable for all audiences. Consumer discretion is advised.



PART 1: THE BIG IDEAS

The main elements and themes of the Amazons vs Valkyries setting are outline below.

Adults Only. If Amazons vs Valkyries were a movie, it would be rated 'R' for nudity, adult themes, violence, drugs, and gore. Obviously, if the players aren't comfortable with (or old enough for) that, the DM should tone it down. Some sections of the text offer two versions of content, a standard 'R' rated version, and a more palatable 'PG' version to help DMs tailor their games to their players.

Alternate History. This setting is based on the Hellenistic Age. Besides being familiar to players, this time period provides a highly detailed backdrop and plenty of opportunities for adventure.

Contrast. This setting is simultaneously familiar and exotic, exhilarating and terrifying.

Faith. Religion is closely interwoven with every aspect of life and is an important part of militarism. Paladins are extremely common in this setting. Most deities have holy warriors dedicated to them. Cult leaders are as powerful as military leaders. The conflicts of the gods are interrelated with the conflicts in Midgard, prompting deities to interfere with the affairs of mortals.

High Fantasy/Low Magic. Fantastic monsters and magical items are plentiful, but true sorcery is rare and can attract unwanted attention. Charlatans are more common than actual wizards. Most arcane casters cannot cast spells above 5th level. The highest level mortal wizard in Midgard is only 14th level. **Arcane Magic** is more about divination, necromancy, and conjuration-less about evocation. Alchemy is a developing science and a number of exotic devices and compounds can be obtained. There is also nascent steam and clockwork technology.

Relatable. Life in this setting is remarkably relatable and familiar. Much of this file's content is about immersion. Throughout this setting there are countless parallels with our own modern world.

Verisimilitude. Since this setting is loosely based on history, it involves real world topics including gender identity, disability, and slavery. Several NPCs and deities in this setting are disabled and adventuring may render PCs disabled. There are transgender deities and deities with intersex physiology. PCs may emulate these gods through magic or bloodier means. Slavery is widespread in every society.

Warriors. This setting is about wars and the people who fight them. Paladins, fighters, and rangers are the most common character classes. There are plenty of rogues and bards as well as **priestess** but relatively few arcane casters.

Women. Amazons vs Valkyries is all about women: heroines and matrons; mothers and princesses. Male characters are not prohibited, but they are usually in the background.



PART 2: THE CONFLICT

The feud between Amazons and Valkyries is rooted in territorial war and began with the goddess of love.

When Aphrodite filled the male Olympians with desire for mortal women, Ares became enamored with a nymph named Otrera. They had four daughters who would become the first Amazons (Hippolyta, Penthesilea, Antiope, and Melanippe).

After Otrera's relationship with Ares ended, she took her daughters into the wilderness east of the Tanais River where they cleared the land of beasts and men. They attracted warriors, huntresses, and craftswomen from nearby tribes and founded a nation. This brought them into conflict with a tribe called the Norse, followers of war gods known as the Aesir.

The Amazons defeated the Norse men, but a small group of Norse women equaled them in combat and cunning. Odin, king of the Aesir, had fathered three daughters with the Great Earth Mother, Gaia (called Jord). These women (Grid, Syn, and Reginleif) and their niece Tori (Thor's daughter) became the first Valkyries. They gathered an army of shield maidens and led them against the Amazons.

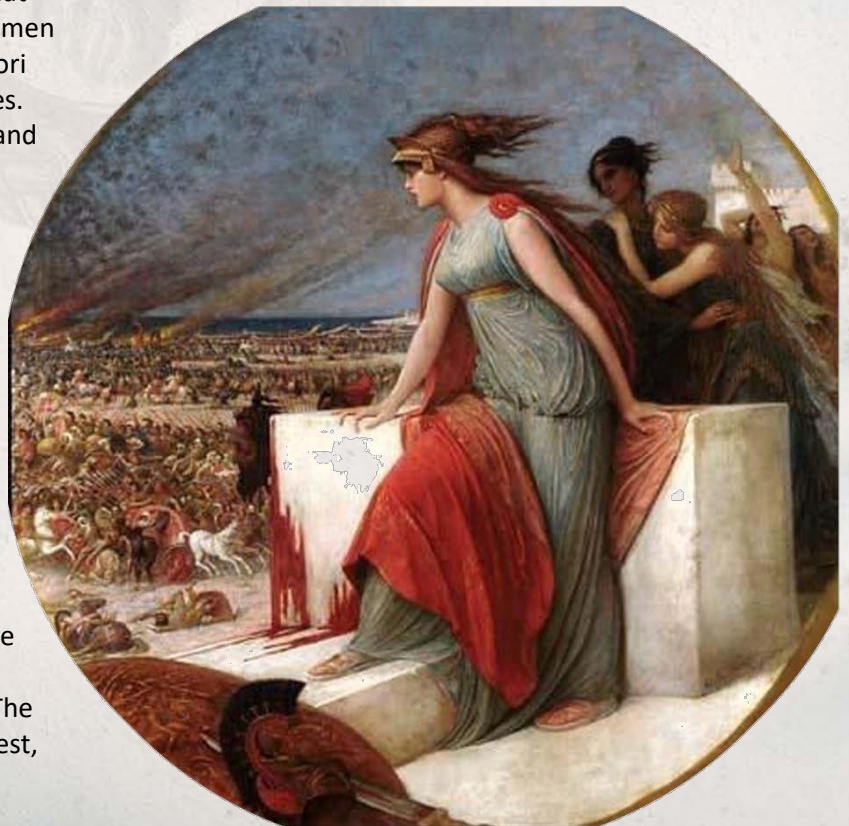
After a decade of war, the Amazons discovered the hidden entrance to the Aesir's home dimension, Asaland. With Ares, they invaded. This was before Mjolnir, Gullinbursti, and other artifacts of the Aesir had been forged and there was little hope of repelling the invasion. Rather than let Asaland fall to the Greeks, Odin destroyed the entire dimension.

With Asaland destroyed, the Aesir were routed and the Norse became refugees as the Amazons pushed them off their land. The Aesir and their followers migrated northwest, into Germania, and settled new lands.

Odin traveled far into Scandinavia to create a new home for himself and his court. He forged a new dimension called Asgard and hid the entrance in the sky over Lake Malaren. He then built a new hall and dubbed it Valhalla.

Over the following millennia, Amazons and Valkyries continued to fight. Revenge killings, vendettas, and war followed after each other in an endless cycle. In recent centuries, Greek colonies in the north and Germanic migrations south have brought the two ancient enemies into frequent contact, increasing the conflict tenfold.

Today both factions orchestrate vast, complex networks of influence across the known world. Through direct military action, political maneuvering, and clandestine operations, they strategize against each other in an epic battle for the fate of humanity.



PART 3: AMAZONS AND VALKYRIES

Amazons and Valkyries are large military cults dedicated to gods of War. Despite their differences, they have many similarities. They are also distantly related. The first Valkyries were daughters of the [Great Mother](#). The first Amazons were the Great Mother's granddaughters by her son Ares. Thus they are factions of an enormous and archaic family.

AMAZONS

The Amazons control enough territory to rival the Greeks, Scythians, and Sarmatians. They are highly respected and wield tremendous power in royal courts throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. They participate in all major battles and their actions are often decisive, swaying the course of history.

Although it is a warrior cult, many Amazons are not warriors. Some are scouts or spies. Others are witches or priestesses.

Special Agents. Amazons can be found in most Mediterranean lands. They serve the queens of Scythia, Persia, and Macedon as mercenaries, advisors, and special operations units.

Temples. The Amazons operate temples in many foreign cities. In Athens, for example, there is a tomb and temple complex housing the remains of the Amazon heroine Antiope. Amazon priestesses, temple guards, ambassadors, and recruiters staff the complex. Similar operations exist in other large cities throughout the Mediterranean including Chalcis, Alexandria, and Megara.

Commanderies. The Amazons establish military posts in allied territories. Thousands of bannerettes are stationed in these forts. These soldiers provide combat support to their allies and project the Amazons' military power into foreign lands.



Appearance. Many Amazons are Scythian. Others are Greek, Arabic, Sarmatian, or Persian. They tend to be tall and athletic, with dark eyes and hair. Nearly all Amazons are human, though some are nymphs or giantkin. They usually wear hoplite armor (breastplate, helm, and greaves) and carry a wooden shield. They are armed with a spear and short sword.

Power and Influence. The Amazons' network of power extends throughout southern Europe, Asia, and North Africa. They infiltrate foreign governments and influence political decisions. They have consulates in several capital cities. Amazonian ambassadors work in many other cities and royal courts, attempting to influence politics and war. Some Amazons serve as military advisors to foreign leaders, assisting with strategy, tactics, and leadership. The Amazons use their commanderies and mercenary brigades to apply military pressure to enemies and allies. Through this network of power, the Amazons strategize against their ultimate adversaries: the Valkyries.

AMAZONIA

Amazonia is a land of majestic mountains, lush forests, and fertile plains that stretch along the coast of a sea rich in fishing and trade. The land is abundant with wildlife and dotted with small villages of farmers, fisherwomen, huntresses, and tradeswomen.

Colonies. The Amazons control two foreign colonies. The largest is the island of Lesbos. The Amazons of Lesbos are known as Lycastians. The smaller colony is a hidden oasis in the deserts of Libya where the Chadesian Amazons dwell. The Amazon conqueror, Myrina the Great established both colonies during her wars.

Isolationists. Amazons are hostile toward most outsiders, especially men. While they welcome any women who wish to join them permanently, they are suspicious of those who only want to stay for a short time.

Leadership. A council of twelve Matriarchs governs Amazonia. They convene for meetings and ceremonies in the marble citadel of Themiskyra. Their leader is a Grand Champion who is appointed for life and is in direct contact with Ares.

Duchesses (called meridarchs) rule the provinces of Amazonia and women occupy all major social and political positions.

Matriarchy. All Amazons are convinced of extreme matriarchy which influences every aspect of their culture.

Portals. Gates to Olympus and Arcadia are hidden in Amazonia.

RECRUITMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

Amazon initiates are called bannerettes. These young women must complete all training requirements, including slaying a man or a dangerous beast before being promoted to a true Amazon warrior.

Bannerettes often work as mercenaries to earn a living, gain combat experience, and establish a reputation.

On the battlefield, Amazons occupy every combat role including mounted air cavalry. Airborne units usually ride giant eagles.

Names. When a bannerette becomes an Amazon Warrior, she often takes a new name with an appropriate meaning.

Amazon Names

Name	Meaning
Ainia	Swift
Alala	War Cry
Alexis	Defender
Alkaia	Mighty
Amynata	Defender
Andromeda	Ruler of Men
Appollonia	The Destroyer
Barkida	Grievous Wrath
Bremusa	Raging Woman
Elektra	Bright, Shining
Eurybe	Great Strength
Hypatia	Supreme
Kassandra	Entangles Men
Kyme	Wave
Lykopolis	She-Wolf
Melantha	Dark Flower
Molpadia	Death Song
Nike	Victory
Olympia	Of Olympus
Penthesilea	Makes Men Mourn
Persephone	Slayer of Men
Sara	Princess
Tanis	Serpent Woman
Thermodosa	Heated; Fiery

VALKYRIES

The Valkyries control enough territory to rival the kings of Sweden, Norway, and Finland. They are highly respected throughout the northlands and beyond, wielding tremendous influence in the halls of chieftains and warlords. Their presence is required at all major battles and they often determine the outcome, swaying the course of history.

Although it is a warrior cult, many Valkyries are not warriors. Some are scouts or spies while others are witches or priestesses.

Special Agents. Valkyries can be found throughout Europe. They serve the queens of Gaul, Germania, and Gothiscandza as mercenaries, advisors, and special operations units.

Shrines. The Valkyries have established shrines in many northern towns. In Odinsve, for example, there is a shrine and the burial mound of the Valkyrie heroine, Brunhild. Valkyries protect this site and act as priestesses, sacred guardians, and recruiters. Similar sites exist throughout northern Europe including at Uppsala, Tisso, and Ranheim.

Garrisons. Valkyrie garrisons occupy military posts in allied territories. Thousands of shield maidens are stationed in these forts. These soldiers provide combat support for their allies and project the Valkyries' military power into foreign lands.



Appearance. Valkyries are fair haired and light skinned. They tend to be of Scandinavian or Germanic heritage, though they are also found among the Gauls and Celts. Most Valkyries are unusually tall. Many are human, but a few are giantkin or elves. Valkyries are typically armed with a spear and longsword and carry large wooden shields. They prefer chainmail, though they also wear scale or piece mail armor.

Power and Influence. The Valkyries' network of power extends throughout northern Europe, Gaul, and into Galatia. They infiltrate foreign governments and influence political decisions. They have consulates in several capital cities. Valkyrie ambassadors work in many other cities and royal courts, attempting to influence politics and war. Some Valkyries serve as military advisors to foreign leaders, assisting with strategy, tactics, and leadership. The Valkyries use their foreign garrisons and mercenary brigades to apply military pressure to enemies and allies. Through this network of power, the Valkyries strategize against their sworn enemies: the Amazons.

KVENLAND

Kvenland is a region of endless pine forests, pristine lakes, and fertile meadows that stretch along the banks of a sea rich in fish and foreign trade. The land is abundant with wildlife and dotted with small villages of farmers, fisherwomen, huntresses, and tradeswomen.

Colonies. The Valkyries control two foreign colonies. The largest is on the Isle of Skye, where they have a training facility known as Skugga Faste (The Fortress of Shadows). A smaller colony protects a hidden treasury on the island of Thule.

Isolationists. The Valkyries discourage outsiders from visiting and take measures to prevent explorers from stumbling upon their homeland. If travelers reach Kvenland, the Valkyries welcome any women who wish to join their society and they turn all other visitors away.

Leadership. A council of twelve Dames governs Kvenland. They convene for meetings and ceremonies in the granite citadel of Aska Faste (the Fortress of Thunder). Their leader is a Grand Champion who is appointed for life and is in direct contact with Odin.

Duchesses (called jarls) rule the provinces of Kvenland and women occupy all major social and political positions.

Matriarchy. All Valkyries embrace strict matriarchy that influences every aspect of their culture.

Portals. Gates to Valhalla and Alfheim are hidden in Kvenland.

INITIATION AND ADVANCEMENT

Valkyrie initiates are known as Shield Maidens. These young women must prove themselves by slaying an enemy warrior or a dangerous beast before being admitted to the ranks of the Valkyrie.

Shield Maidens often work as mercenaries to earn a living, gain combat experience, and establish a reputation.

In battle, Valkyries serve in all combat roles, including air cavalry. Airborne units usually ride giant eagles.

Names. When a Shield Maiden becomes a Valkyrie, she often takes a new name with an appropriate meaning. A list of suggested names and their meanings is provided below.

Valkyrie Names

Name	Meaning
Asta	Divine Beauty
Brenna	Sword
Brynhilda	Armor of Battle
Erika	Ruling Forever
Gunna	Battle
Helga	Divine Woman
Herja	Devastator
Hertha	Powerful Woman
Hilda	Battle
Hjorprimul	Swordswoman
Kara	The Stormy One
Magnhild	Great in Battle
Misti	Mist
Rota	Sleet Storm
Runa	Secret, Rune
Sanngrid	Extremely Violent
Sigrdrifa	Victory Bringer
Sigrun	Victory Rune
Siri	Marvelous Victory
Sylvi	Strength
Thyra	Like Thunder
Tori	Power
Trima	Fight
Ylva	She-Wolf

PART 4: CHARACTER CREATION

This section provides a quick overview of the character creation process.

RACE

Six unique races are available, detailed below. Other appropriate races for this setting from the core rules include all subraces of dwarves, elves, gnomes, and humans. Halflings and half elves are extremely rare. Half-orcs, dragonborn, or tieflings are not found in this setting.

Gray Dwarves. Mischievous and grotesque artisans with an aversion to sunlight.

Fauns. Hedonistic and playful fairies who roam the wilderness and protect it from harm.

Giant Kin. Mighty giants from a primeval world.

Light Elves. Angelic sorceresses and servants of the Vanir.

Nymphs. Ageless maidens with supernatural powers and an affinity with the gods.

Reptilians. Prehistoric humanoids that have a hidden city deep within the earth.

RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

On Table 3, below, the Height Modifier indicates the character's additional number of inches in height. That result multiplied by the dice roll indicated in the Weight Modifier column indicates the character's additional weight above their base weight.

Table 3: Random Height and Weight

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Faun	4'10"	+2d10	80 lbs	X (2d4) lb.
Giant Kin	6'6"	+2d10	280 lbs	X (2d6) lb.
Gray Dwarf	2'8"	+2d6	40 lbs	X (1d4) lb.
Light Elf	4'0"	+2d6	60 lbs	X (1d4) lb.
Nymph	4'4"	+2d6	55 lbs	X (1d4) lb.
Reptilian	5'0"	+2d12	120 lbs	X (2d6) lb.

Table 1: Races at a Glance

Race	Home World	Type	Size	Alignment Tendency
Faun	Arcadia	Fey	Medium	Chaotic
Gray Dwarves	Nidavellir	Humanoid (Dwarf)	Small	Chaotic
Giant Kin	Jotunheim	Humanoid (Giant)	Medium	Chaotic
Light Elves	Alfheim	Humanoid (Elf)	Medium	Lawful
Nymph	Arcadia	Fey	Medium	Neutral
Reptilian	Prime material	Humanoid (Reptilian)	Medium	Neutral

RACIAL ABILITY SCORE MODIFIERS

Table 2 below, summarizes the ability score modifiers for all the races in this file.

Table 2: Racial Ability Score Modifiers

Race	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Faun	-	+2	-	-	-	+1
Gray Dwarf	+1	-	+2	-	-	-
Giant Kin	+2	-	+1	-	-	-
Light Elf	-	+1	-	-	+2	-
Nymph	-	-	-	-	+1	+2
Reptilian	+1	-	-	+2	-	-

Get the [Races](#) supplement today!
Just 99 cents!



HEROIC BLOODLINES

Players may use table 4 Random Bloodlines to help flesh out their character's origin.

Alternatively, Players may also simply choose one, with DM's approval.

Only about 2% of the total population carries a heroic bloodline. Among adventuring characters, the rate is 25%. Game masters should have players make a bloodline check at 25% upon creation. If the check succeeds, the character carries a heroic bloodline and may roll on Table 1:1 Random Bloodlines (or simply choose from the table). If the check fails, the character has no particular heroic bloodline. Alternatively, game masters may choose to run a campaign where all the characters carry a bloodline. In that case, go directly to Table 1:1 Random Bloodlines.

Each bloodline has specific feats associated with it. Some feats are exclusive to particular bloodlines. For example, descendants of a powerful spellcaster or a warrior known for resisting magic may have the Spell Endurance feat.

SPELL ENDURANCE

Prerequisite(s): Achaemenes, Aeneas, Perseus, Skjold, Theseus, Yngvi, or Zal bloodline

You are especially resistant to magic.

- You may add your proficiency bonus as a bonus on all saves against magic.
- Once per short rest you can gain advantage on one saving throw against magic. You may not use this ability again until you've completed a short rest.

Table 4 Random Bloodlines

D100	Bloodline
01-03	Achaemenes
04-07	Achilles
08-14	Aeneas
15-17	Anteus
18-19	Asclepius
20-21	Atalanta
22-25	Autolycus
26-27	Boreades
28-29	Dioskouri
30-35	Halfdan
36-44	Hercules
45-47	Hippolyta
48-51	Myrmidon
52	Orpheus
53-59	Perseus
60-64	Saeming
65-69	Skjold
70-77	Tantalus
78-83	Theseus
84-90	Volsung
91	Wayland
92-98	Yngvi
99-100	Zal

The family history of 23 heroic (and villainous) bloodlines are discussed in the [Bloodline Feats](#) supplement including Atalanta, Hippolyta, Myrmidon, Perseus, Tantalus, Volsung, and Yngvi. This PDF also features 92 feats that can be inherited from these heroic ancestors like Spell endurance, Iron Skin, and Warped Mind.

Get the [Bloodline Feats](#) today!

Just 2.99!



HOMELAND AND LANGUAGE

Players can choose a homeland from the Table 6: Homeland and Starting Language or roll randomly. Then roll for one language from the starting languages associated with your homeland.

Elves may choose Alfhiem as a homeland. Dwarves may choose Nidavellir. Giant Kin may choose Jotunheim while Nymphs and fauns may choose Arcadia as a homeland. Starting languages for non-human races are covered in the [Races](#) supplement.

Common. While no Common language exists, there are two trade languages: Germanic and Koine Greek. Gaulish is also a very widely known language.

Complications. These language rules complicate military campaigns where mercenaries of different backgrounds must communicate. To facilitate communication, mercenaries are grouped by language, and their leaders are bilingual.

Exceptions. Obviously, people migrate and travel. It is certainly possible for someone with Celtic heritage to be born in Greece, Carthage, or Rome, for example. A child born into this circumstance has two starting languages; one learned from her family, and one learned from her homeland.

Language Families. Characters can communicate with people who use a language that is within their same language family. Simple communication is easy, but communicating complex ideas or specific details takes twice as long. See Table 5 for a summary of language families.

Other languages. Extinct languages, prestige languages, secret languages, and code languages are available in this setting. See the [Languages supplement](#) for an exhaustive discussion.

Table 5: Language Families

Family	Languages
Afro-Asiatic	Arabian, Chadic, Cushitic, Egyptian, Libyan, Meroitic, Punic*, South Arabian
Anatolian	Lycian, Lydian, Mysian
Balto-Slav	Baltic, Slavonic
Celtiberian	Celtiberian, Tartessian
Celtic	Brythonic, Galatian, Gaulish, Hibernian, Lepontic, Ligurian, Pritenic, Venetic
Germanic	Germanic
Hellenic	Doric Greek, Koine Greek, Phrygian*
Indo-Iranain	Avestan, Bactrian, Pali, Parthian, Persian, Scythian
Italic	Aequian, Latin, Messapien, Oscan, Umbrian, Vestinian
Nord-West	Belgican, Lusitanian
Semetic	Aramaic, Hebrew, Liburnian*, Phrygian*, Punic*
Thraco-Dacian	Dacian, Illyrian, Liburnian*, Thracian
Tyrsenian	Camunic, Etruscan, Nuragic, Raetic
Uralic	Finnic, Sami, Samoyedic
Vasconic	Aquitanian, Iberian

*These languages are hybrids and belong to more than one family.



Table 6: Homeland and Starting Language

D100	Homeland	D100	Language Family	Starting Language (or Dialect)
01%	Amazonia	01-80%	Hellenic	Attic Greek or Koine Greek
		81-00%	Indo-Iranian	Scythian
2-4%	Arabia		Afro-Asiatic	Arabian (Hijazi or Nabataean)
5-6%	Aria	01-10%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		11-00%	Indo-Iranian	Avestan or Bactrian
7-12%	Babylonia	01-30%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		31-80%	Indo-Iranian	Persian
		81-00%	Semetic	Vernacular Aramaic
13-14%	Britannia		Celtic	Brythonic (Brytisċ, Brythoneg, Brythonek, or Predeneg)
15%	Caledonia		Celtic	Pritenic
16-19%	Carthage	01-50%	Afro-Asiatic	Libyan
		51-70%	Celtiberian	Tartessian
		71-00%	Semetic/Afro-asiatic	Punic
20-21%	Cyrene	01-40%	Afro-asiatic	Libyan or Demotic Egyptian
		41-70%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		71-00%	Semetic/Afro-asiatic	Punic
22-23%	Dacia		Thraco-Dacian	Dacian
24-29%	Egypt	01-70%	Afro-Asiatic	Libyan or Demotic Egyptian
		71-90%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		91-00%	Semetic	Aramaic or Phrygian
30-33%	Gaul		Celtic	Gaulish, Ligurian, or Lepontic
34-36%	Germania		Germanic	Nordic
37-40%	Gothiscandza	01-80%	Germanic	Nordic
		81-90%	Uralic	Finnic
		91-00%	Balto-Slav	Slavonic
41-46%	Greece		Hellenic	Koine Greek
47%	Hibernia		Celtic	Hibernian
48-49%	Iberia	01-70%	Celtiberian	Celtiberian, or Tartessian
		71-00%	Vasconic	Aquitanian or Iberian
50-51%	Illyria	01-30%	Celtic	Gaulish
		31-00%	Thraco-Dacian	Illyrian or Liburnian
52%	India		Indo-Iranian	Pali
53-54%	Kush		Afro-Asiatic	Cushitic or Meroitic
55%	Kvenland	01-80%	Germanic	Nordic
		81-00%	Uralic	Finnic, Sami
56%	Libya		Afro-Asiatic	Libyan or Chadic
57-60%	Lysichia	01-40%	Anatolian	Lycian, Lydian, or Mysian
		41-70%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		71-00%	Semetic	Aramaic or Phrygian
61-64%	Macedon		Hellenic	Macedonian or Koine Greek
65-67%	Mauretania	01-90%	Afro-Asiatic	Libyan
		91-00%	Semetic/Afro-asiatic	Punic
68-69%	Media		Indo-Iranian	Persian
70%	Meroe		Afro-Asiatic	Meroitic or Cushitic
71%	Noria		Celtic	Gaulish
72%	Numidia		Afro-Asiatic	Numidian
73%	Outer Scythia		Uralic	Samoyedic
74-75%	Parthia		Indo-Iranian	Parthian
76-81%	Persia	01-20%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		21-90%	Indo-Iranian	Persian
		91-00%	Semetic	Vernacular Aramaic
82-87%	Phoenicia	01-20%	Afro-Asiatic	Demotic Egyptian
		21-40%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		41-70%	Indo-Iranian	Persian
		70-00%	Semetic	Phoenician or Vernacular Aramaic
88-91%	Rome	01-20%	Celtic	Camunic, Gaulish, Lepontic, Ligurian, or Raetic
		21-30%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		31-90%	Italic	Latin, Messapian, Oscan, Umbrian, or Vestinian
92-93%	Sardinia	01-20%	Semetic/Afro-asiatic	Punic
		21-00%	Tyrsenian	Nuragic
94-95%	Scandza		Germanic	Nordic
96-97%	Scythia		Indo-Iranian	Scythian
98%	South Arabia		South Arabian	Sabaeen, Minaeic, Qatabanic, or Hadramitic
99-00%	Thrace	01-30%	Hellenic	Koine Greek
		31-00%	Thraco-Dacian	Thracian

CLERICS AND PRIESTESSES

Clerics. Heavily armored holy warriors who smite their enemies with divine power certainly exist in this setting, but the term “cleric” implies medieval clergy. Indeed, the first known use of the word was in 1621 AD. Therefore, in this setting, clerics are termed “war priestesses” and typically serve deities of war, storms, death, chaos, and victory. They are otherwise unchanged from the core rules.

However, many religious orders, such as the Vestals in Rome or the followers of Isis or Thoth in Egypt, could never take up arms and fight like a warrior. In fact, the spiritual leaders in most societies are not warriors. They tend to be educated people not trained in the use of weapons and armor.

Priestesses. As with all previous editions of the d20 system, there isn’t a class that accurately represents the religious leaders of ancient (and medieval) times who didn’t wear armor or use weapons. Consequently, we developed a class to represent the priestesses, seers, oracles, mantises, volvas, and prophetesses of the ancient world who, like wizards, dress in robes and rely upon magic and knowledge.

The 5e priestess gives up some combat ability, but gains in spell casting and special abilities as follows:

- Priestesses have d6 HD, they are not proficient with armor and are skilled with only the simplest weapons.
- Priestesses gain a preaching ability similar to the bard’s inspiration.
- Priestesses may channel divinity more frequently than a cleric.
- Priestesses can destroy undead of higher HD than clerics can.
- The priestess spell list includes all cleric spells plus some utility spells from other classes. Priestesses also gain a few new combat spells to balance their lack of weapons and armor.



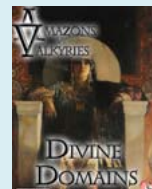
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FIGHTERS

All the fighter archetypes from the core rules are available here, but they are not particularly common. Heroic warriors are more likely to be [Guards, Mercenaries, or Raiders](#).

The Guard. Guards, or more precisely, Honor Guards, are professionally trained, highly skilled, and duty bound warrior who fights for a noble cause. They are disciplined and well-practiced at defending others in battle.

The Mercenary. The mercenary is a roaming sell-sword and opportunist with few loyalties beyond gold. Mercenaries are well-traveled and speak multiple languages. They pick up a wide range of skills in their various combat roles.

The Raider. Trained in ambush, assassination, and sabotage, these soldiers sneak behind enemy lines, rescue prisoners, attack camps, and destroy infrastructure. The mere mention of their names strikes terror in the enemy.

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PALADINS

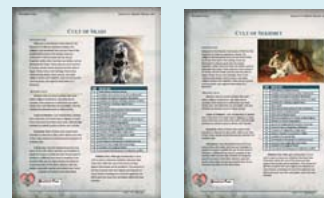
Paladins abound in this setting. The prevalence of religious warrior cults creates at least two dozen different paladin Oaths available to players. A few are outlined below and detailed in the associated supplements.

Cult of the Great Mother. The Cult of the Great Mother is the largest and most powerful religious organization in the setting. It controls several governments and a vast network of secret agents.

Cult of Sekhmet. Sekhmet is Egypt's ferocious leonine war goddess, known for her insatiable bloodlust.

Cult of Skadi. Born a frost giantess, Skadi is a cold goddess, a winter goddess who knows how to survive in the mountains at their coldest.

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EQUIPMENT

The equipment available in the Hellenistic Age differs from that of a typical D20 campaign.

The full list of appropriate equipment for this setting is available in the [Arms and Armor](#) guide. A few items from that file are presented below.

CHANGES TO THE CORE RULES

Many weapons and armors presented here are new to the OGL game system. Others are slightly altered from the way they appear in the core rules. The changes to the items from the core rules are as follows.

- Greatswords are very rare and must be custom made. Prices must be negotiated.
- Longswords are rare and most are found in Germania, Scandinavia, Britannia, Gallia, Sarmatia, and Hibernia. They are also slightly more expensive.
- Some weapons are exotic and only characters with certain backgrounds or training may use them.
- Long spears may be thrown.

- Shields may be made of wicker or leather.
- Shields may get damaged or broken in combat.
- Chainmail, splint mail, and scale mail are all slightly more expensive.
- The threshold for making exhaustion checks in hot weather is 90 degrees Fahrenheit, rather than 100, as stated in the core rules.

Heat exposure and rules for breaking objects (shields) are both used more frequently than in a standard OGL campaign and may affect a character's choice of weapons and armor.

Get the [Arms and Armor](#) guide today!
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Melee Weapons	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>				
Falcata	18 gp	1d8 Slashing	3 lbs	Exotic, special
Falx, small	6 gp	1d4 Slashing	2 lbs	Light, simple
Harpe	20 gp	1d6 Piercing	2 lbs	Exotic, disarm, finesse, light
Kopis	12 gp	1d6 Slashing	2 lbs	Simple, light
Khopesh	20 gp	1d8 Slashing	5 lbs	Exotic
Makhaira	8 gp	1d6 Slashing	2 lbs	Finesse, light, martial
Longsword	25 gp	1d8 Slashing	4 lbs	Exotic, special, versatile (1d10)
Pata	14 gp	1d6 Piercing	2 lbs	Exotic, finesse, special
Scizore	20 gp	1d8 Slashing	2 lbs	Exotic, finesse, special
Short sword	10 gp	1d6 Piercing	2 lbs	Finesse, light, martial
Shotel	30 gp	1d8 Slashing	3 lbs	Exotic, finesse
<i>Two handed Melee Weapons</i>				
Falx	25 gp	1d8 Slashing	6 lbs	Exotic, special, two-handed
Falx, great	30 gp	1d10 Slashing	8 lbs	Exotic, heavy, two-handed, reach, special
Great Spear	10 gp	1d10/1d6 Piercing	15 lbs	X2 reach, exotic, brace, heavy, two-handed, special
Greatsword	N/A	2d6 Slashing	6 lbs	Exotic, heavy, two-handed, special
Rhomphaia	15 gp	2d4 Slashing	8 lbs	Brace, martial, reach, two-handed
Sarissa	15 gp	1d10 Piercing	20 lbs	X3 reach, exotic, brace, heavy, two-handed

OTHER ROLES

Some players will be interested in playing something other than an Amazon or a Valkyrie. Fortunately, the conflict is a central theme and touches all nations, cultures, and genders. Aside from warrior women, players may enjoy being a Roman legionnaire, Spartan warrior, Persian Immortal, Gallic gladiator, Scandinavia berserker, Egyptian ranger, or a Berber scout. Although this setting is mostly about warriors, players are not limited to fighter types. Druids, skalds, shamans, healers, pirates, bards, and other non-warriors are plentiful. Arcane casters are rare and most are alchemists or mystics. Wizards, witches, and sorceresses are very rare.

FAMILY, CLAN, TRIBE

Your character's identity is usually more than just her first name. While some people do not have a family or know which clan they are from, most people self-identify as part of a larger family, clan, and tribe. Even in lands like Greece and Rome, a person's clan or tribe is still an important part of their identity.

Your family, clan, and tribe are factions that you automatically belong to upon birth. If you have wronged them, or they think you have wronged them, they may cast you out.

When developing your character, consider your extended family. What sort of work do they do? Where do they live? How do your close relatives regard other groups within the clan?



PART 5: RUNNING A GAME

This section outlines the key elements of an Amazons vs Valkyries campaign. DMs should keep these things in mind when running a game.

Most of these topics are about immersion and daily life such as crime, work, travel, and communication. Magic is an important topic that will be addressed in more detail in a future release. For now, the overview presented here provides a simple approach to making magic more authentic to the setting. Other topics in this section include slavery, religion, and war. Characters will regularly deal with all of these things. Some suggested adventure scenarios are included to help inspire your next Amazons vs Valkyries campaign.



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ANIMALS

Animals, both wild and domestic, are ubiquitous. Tame lions roam freely in Sekhmet's temples. Non-venomous snakes can be found slithering in temples to Asclapius. Aristocrats have hippos, rhinos, and tigers in private zoos and attending their royal court. Oxen, mules, horses, and donkeys are everywhere. Camels are frequently used in Africa and Asia. In colder climates, livestock is kept inside the home for added warmth.

Exotic pets such as monkeys and snakes can be easily purchased. Caged song birds are kept in many homes, shops, and public buildings. Cats are common in homes, temples, warehouses, and ships. Dogs are extremely prevalent and used for a multitude of specialized purposes including hunting, guarding, herding, friendship, law enforcement, and war.

Egypt, Carthage, Persia, Kush, and other nations use elephants in warfare. Homing pigeons have been delivering the results of the Olympic Games, personal communications, and coded secrets for over one thousand years. Police in Egypt use baboons and monkeys to help apprehend criminals.

Epic Scale. This is a primeval world where immense flocks of birds blacken the entire sky, vast herds of water buffalo shake the earth, and endless crawling masses of insects devour everything in their path.

Monstrous Beasts. Prehistoric mega fauna and fantastic creatures lurk in the remote corners of the world. Aside from the classic Norse, Greek, Egyptian, Celtic, and Persian monsters that one would expect in this setting, there are also African monsters.



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Characters will likely have trouble with the law. Brawling in a Greek tavern can get them into quite a bit of trouble, while fighting in a Roman tavern is usually ignored. However, non-citizens wearing a toga in Rome can be fined, beaten, enslaved, or killed. Carrying weapons or wearing armor in most cities is forbidden. Certain schools of magic are outlawed in Greece and Rome. The punishment for theft is usually severe. It is always illegal to enter a tomb, and in Greece it is illegal to even visit the crypt of a family other than your own (except for the funeral).

Automatic Guilt. In Egypt, Rome, and many other societies, defendants are guilty until proven innocent. This concept is premised on the idea that if a person accuses you of something, you probably did it. Otherwise, why would they accuse you?

Bearing False Witness. Obviously, this creates a lot of opportunity for harassment and extortion, so harsh consequences are mandated for falsely accusing someone. If a person accuses you of a crime and you prove your innocence that means the person accusing you was bearing false witness, and they will be severely punished. In Rome, persons guilty of bearing false witness (and other serious crimes) are hurled from an 80-foot cliff known as the Tarpeian Rock.

Torturing Witnesses. Witnesses in Egypt (and sometimes in Rome and Greece) are beaten to ensure the veracity of their testimony. These blows with a light rod to the bottoms the feet and palms of the hands inflict great pain, but little actual injury.

Police. All large cities except Rome have some sort of police force. In Egypt and Persia, policing is an advanced profession with officers dedicated to various types of crime. In the gangland of Rome, the only legal authority is the lictors who work for the magistrates. Greek cities use foreign slaves to enforce the law. These are often Scythian archers.

Plainclothes officers spy on the civilian population. They may sit next to someone at a sporting event and strike up a conversation that goads the citizen into saying something against the king or the gods. They eavesdrop, read mail, infiltrate social groups, and follow-up on rumors to track down treachery and plots against the government.

Rewards. In Greece, a person who reports a crime is paid half the fine assessed on the criminal.

Theft. Petty theft is problematic in bathhouses and marketplaces. However, punishment is severe. Offenders may have their fingers or hand removed. They may be branded, scarred, tattooed, disfigured, or otherwise marked as a thief. In Rome, some thieves can legally be killed if caught in the act. In the northlands, cattle and horses are often stolen. Victims of theft may call upon the gods to punish the thief.

Punishment. Imprisonment for crimes other than debt is rare. Persons guilty of minor infractions are usually fined or subjected to temporary servitude. They might be tied to a stake or put in stocks where their neighbors ridicule and abuse them.



Flogging is standard punishment for more serious crimes. These are typically 100 to 200 blows, but in Persia they range for 500 to 1000 and can be up to 10,000. In Greek lands, even serious crimes are punished only with fines, which vary depending on the victim's status as a slave or free person. The fines for crimes against free people are 6 times higher than fines for the same crimes against slaves. Rome has some similar laws with the fine being roughly 4 times higher for crimes against a citizen than against a slave.

Exile. In Greece, murderers are exiled. In Rome, citizens sentenced with execution can choose exile instead. In Egypt, disrespecting your family can get you exiled. All exiled citizens forfeit their property and can be legally killed if they return.

Execution. Forms of execution include everything imaginable: poisoning, being rolled down a hill inside a spiked barrel, being tied in a sack of poisonous snakes, or being crushed. Having your limbs broken and crammed around the spokes of a wagon wheel is excruciating. Rebels, traitors, and other criminals may be crucified, burned alive, impaled, or pulled apart by horses (or trees). Deserters and kidnappers may be sawn in half, disemboweled, or fed to carnivorous animals (crocodiles, dogs, or lions). Drowning, hanging, and beheading may be used when the executioner is merciful. These events are almost always public spectacles. Citizens may be forced to attend.

Aristocrats are usually exiled rather than executed; however, aristocrats may be assassinated or forced to commit suicide for their crimes. Occasionally, they are imprisoned for life.

Judgment by Oracle. When the facts of a case are difficult to interpret or a judgment is hard to reach, Greek courts turn to an oracle. She appeals to the gods for guidance and determines the guilt and punishment.

Trial by Combat. Trial by combat is not as common as the playwrights would like us to believe. It is used as entertainment during festivals where the odds are stacked against the criminal to ensure justice is served. The criminal may be given dull weapons, or be poisoned or injured before the fight.

More information about laws and law enforcement can be found in the upcoming Crime and Punishment supplement. Besides covering the legal aspects of Gothiscandza, Greece, Egypt, Persia, and Rome, this file also contains a new Law Enforcement background, a Justice domain, and an Investigator archetype.

Get the [Crime and Punishment](#) PDF as soon as it is available!



DISABILITY

Every pantheon has at least one disabled deity. These are usually gods of metalwork and crafting. In Greece it is Hephaestus who was hurled from Mount Olympus and suffered permanent injury to his spine. He later built a magical chair as a mobility device for himself. In Norse mythology, it is Wayland the smith. King Nidung captured Wayland and cut his hamstrings so he couldn't escape. Wayland later crafted a flying machine and escaped with Nidung's daughter.

Several prominent NPCs are disabled including King Philip III, Antigonus Cyclopes, and the rogue Harpalus. Many NPCs are disabled from work, war, or disease. Perhaps 40% of the total population has some significant disability.

Children born with disabilities are usually treated with scorn and may be killed, though this is changing in Rome. Political pressure is growing to change the laws. Some Roman citizens believe parents should be prevented from killing disabled children.

Some disabled people are mistreated or abused while others are valued and revered. Some disabilities are seen as a mark of divine blessing or power. Soldiers disabled in war are treated with respect. Slaves disabled for entertainment are treated with cruelty and awe.

PC Disability. DMs should roll on the Lingerin Injuries table whenever a PC takes a critical hit, drops to 0 hit points, or fails a death saving throw by 5 or more.



DRUGS

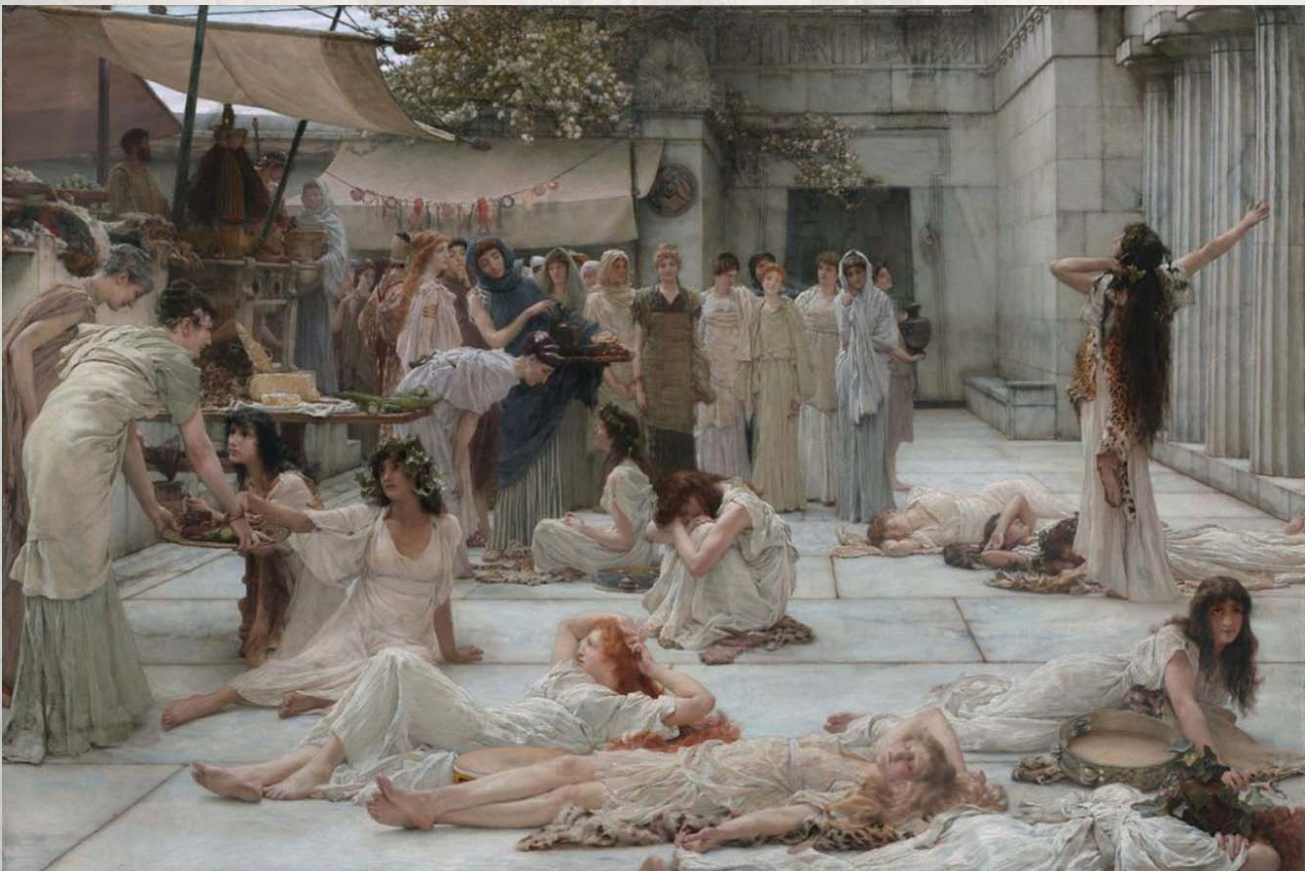
There are few laws restricting drug use. Instead, producing and distributing intoxicants is huge business for most governments.

Large cities have wineries, brewers, and opium factories. In Elba, for example, adjacent to the palace is a large kitchen with eight hearths and caldrons capable of holding 70 liters each. This facility has dozens of laborers and buys wagonloads of poppy plants. It processes and distributes the opium to temples, healers, apothecaries, and smoke houses.

The poppy plant is one of the most common agricultural products in Egypt and Persia. Opiates are used for religious, medicinal, and recreational purposes, as are hashish and marijuana.

Other drugs frequently used include Lotus flowers mad honey (made from rhododendrons), dream fish, hen bane, and nightshade.

Prohibition and Regulation. Occasionally, rulers will attempt to control the use of certain intoxicants. Regardless of how severe the punishments are, this always leads to a black market and smuggling.



FACTIONS, CULTS, AND GUILDS

Organizations are very important in this setting and most characters will belong to at least one. Some heroines will belong to multiple organizations that may have conflicting objectives. Amazons and Valkyries are the two most likely factions for PCs to join. Others are outlined below.

POLITICAL FACTIONS

Associating with the wrong political faction can get you killed. Fortunately, changing political allegiance is easy and opportunistic people associate with whichever political faction is most advantageous at the moment. Some even change their mind in the midst of battle.

GUILDS

Trade federations and multinational consortiums control large armies and vast resources. Their power rivals small nations, and they are ferociously competitive. They hire thousands of mercenaries to protect their interests and sometimes employ unscrupulous actors. These people often take tremendous risks and sometimes losing everything only to strike it rich again on their next endeavor. Among the more powerful guilds are the shipwrights, masons, mercenaries, and mercantilists.

RELIGIOUS CULTS

Religious cults wield immense influence and rule some nations. Where they don't rule, they control public opinion and have exclusive access to the ruler. Most characters will belong to one or more religious cults, even if it is just a nominal membership of the first degree.

WARRIOR CULTS

Warrior cults are not as popular as religious cults among the general population, but among adventurers, they are quite common. 60 are outlined in the [Warrior Cults](#) supplement.

Get the [Warrior Cults](#) guide today!



FLASHPOINTS

Amazons and Valkyries frequently cross paths several places in the world.

Anatolia. After the Celtic invasion in 1821 TA, tens of thousands of northerners live in central Anatolia. They constantly fight with their Greek, Phrygian, and Persian neighbors. They also fight against invading Egyptians during the first Syrian War.

Major Battlefields. Most major battlefields will have Germanic and Greek mercenaries on both sides. In fact, it's possible for some Amazons and Valkyries to be fighting together on one side of a battle and other Amazons and Valkyries fighting together on the other side. Such a situation would be rare, but the nature of political alliances and mercenary loyalty can create unusual circumstances.

Carthage. Because Carthage constantly hunts for mercenaries to hire, it is likely that Amazons and Valkyries would both end up fighting in the Carthaginian army. However, Carthage always keeps its mercenaries segregated by nationality for [language](#) reasons. So, the Germanic warriors are kept together and the Greek warriors are kept together, creating opportunities for inter-group conflict.

Dacia. The lands of Dacia are contested ground between Amazons and Valkyries. Invading Celts from the west, Germanics from the north, Greeks from the south, and Scythians from the east all vie for control of this region.

Egypt. The Ptolemaic army employs many Greek, Germanic, and Celtic mercenaries, since Egyptian citizens are not allowed in the army. It is quite possible that Amazons and Valkyries would find themselves working alongside each other here.

Scythian Border. Queen Maxima of Gothiscandza has a wing of Valkyrie air cavalry protecting the border with Scythia. Stationed in the hill forts along the border, these Valkyries ride giant eagles on long patrols over the plains. They sometimes encounter Amazon air cavalry who have allied with Scythians, leading to ferocious dogfights.

Illyria. The migration of northerners into Illyria and the instability in Macedonia creates opportunities for Amazons and Valkyries to battle for dominance in this region. Both see it as a critical front in their war.

Odessa. This city of 50,000 is a melting pot of diverse cultures. Greeks and Germanics frequently interact here along with Scythians, Thracians, and Celts.

Sicily. Valkyrie mercenaries working for Carthage are likely to encounter Amazon mercenaries working for Rome or a Greek city like Naxos or Syracuse. Valkyries might instead be hired to fight for Rome against Carthage, which employees any mercenary company they can find, including Amazons.

Alpine Wars. Celtic and Germanic tribes unite to attack Rome. They raid settlements in northern Italy and Rome retaliates. Valkyries aid the northerners while Amazons help the Romans.

Siege of Sparta. Pyrrhus hires thousands of Celtic and Germanic mercenaries (including some Valkyries) and attacks Sparta. The Spartan Army is away in Crete, but a small band of Amazons is in the city and helps the Spartan citizens defend it.

Urban Centers. Amazons and Valkyries are likely to cross paths in any cosmopolitan city from Tartessos to Samarkand. Besides travelers, both factions may have recruitment centers, diplomatic offices, or temples in the same city.

FORCED RELOCATION

Forcing certain populations to pack up and move to a new location happens frequently. Some examples are outlined below.

Babylon. Severe depopulation and crushing taxes pushed the city into steep decline. To cut his losses and bolster his new city, the Persian emperor mandated all citizens of Babylon relocate to Selucia, some 20 miles away. Not everyone relocated, however. Undesirables and criminals were deliberately left behind. There were also citizens who refused to leave, including the cult of Marduk.

Bactria. When Darius the Great conquered Egypt, he relocated all the citizens of the Greek city of Barca to the distant reaches of Bactria, more than 3,000 miles away. Many perished along the arduous journey. For 200 years, Persians have deported captured Greeks to Bactria. Xerxes sent many Greeks to Bactria, including the priestesses of Didyma. When Alexander later conquered Bactria, he established two cities and strongly encouraged more Greeks to move to the region.

Athens. After the Lamian War, Antipater dissolved Athens' democracy and installed an oligarchy of wealthy rulers. To prevent a democratic revolt, he exiled 60% of the citizens, targeting those without wealth or land. Many of these displaced citizens relocated to Thrace.

Ephesus. As the old harbor silted up, it became a salt marsh and reservoir for malaria. Illness ravaged the city. King Lysimachus decided to move the city 2 miles away, but many citizens resisted. Lysimachus eventually sent adventurers to block the sewers and flood the city, forcing the residents to leave. The king named the new city Arsinoea after his wife, Arsinoe II. He later destroyed the nearby cities of Lebedos and Colophon and forced those residents to relocate to Arsinoea.

Temple of Artemis. The Great Temple of Artemis at Ephesus is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It is built on sacred ground and houses artifacts and a vast library. When Lysimachus forced the population of Ephesus to move, he allowed the priestesses of Artemis to remain in their grand temple.

To reach the temple today, one must travel through a marsh and an abandoned city. Both are infested with monsters, bandits, and diseases. The temple priestesses have little trouble navigating this area due to their spells and retinue of guards. Most other people find the journey too dangerous to attempt.

THE GREAT MOTHER

The Great Mother, known as Cybele or Dindymene to the Phrygians, Rhea or Gaia to the Greeks, Jord to Germanic people, Hepat to the ancient Hurrians, and Terra or Tellus to the Romans, is a prehistoric goddess of creation, life, and earth. She is also the most important deity in the setting, being the ancestor of both Amazons and Valkyries. Her titles include "Mother of Gods," "Mother of the Mountain," "All Mother," "Giver of Gifts," and "The Dread Goddess." She is the progenitor of many deities and legendary beings.

With Uranus, she gave birth to the titans, the Cyclopes, the furies, and all races of giants. With Chronos she conceived Demeter, Hestia, Hera, Poseidon, Hades, and Zeus. With Odin she gave birth to Thor and the first Valkyries. She is also secretly the mother of Freyja and Freyr.

She is sometimes represented by a mountain. More often she is depicted as a robust adult woman seated upon her throne accompanied by children and lions. She is also seen riding a golden, bejeweled chariot drawn by lions. Her crown resembles fortified walls.

Patron Deity. More towns and cities look to the Great Mother for guidance and protection than any other deity. She is the patron deity of all of Phrygia and the island of Crete. Dozens of municipalities from Greece to Gaul have chosen her as their guardian and they make regular offerings to her.

Queen of Phrygia. For nearly three thousand years, Cybele's high priestesses have married the kings of Phrygia. Regardless of the king, Cybele's high priestess is always the queen. When the queen/high priestess dies, the temple leadership chooses a replacement. As the high priestess of Cybele's temple, a ranking member of the Great Mother's mystery cult, and Queen of Phrygia, the woman in this position wields tremendous power.



Get the [Cult of the Great Mother](#) today!
Just \$2.99!



LONG DISTANCE COMMUNICATION

Communicating over long distances is achieved through several means.

Pigeons. Homing pigeons deliver important messages and major news events including results of Olympic Games and outcomes of battles.

Signal Fires. Every few miles, hill forts are found in Anatolia and along the border between Scythia and Gothiscandza. A signal fire in one can be seen from the neighboring forts. In this way, simple messages can be transmitted over long distances in very short time.

Mail Carriers. Dedicated messengers haul packages and bags full of letters. Some ride feverishly along the [Royal Road](#), switching out their mounts at rest stops and pressing on, much like the Pony Express in modern history.

Noise Makers. Horns, bullroars, and drums are used to communicate messages over short to medium ranges, such as on a battlefield, among hunting parties, or between local communities.

Magic. *Message, clairvoyance, scrying, and dream* spells are used if an appropriate spell caster is available.



MAGIC

Arcane magic is less common and more difficult to use than in a typical DnD campaign setting. Divine magic, however, is commonplace and discussed under [Religion](#).

Low Magic. 20th level Alchemists and mystics cannot cast arcane spells above 5th spell level. Only sorceresses, witches, and wizards can cast arcane spells above 5th level (AKA ‘High Magic’) and they are a small fraction of the population.

Low-Key FX. Adding to the confusion of [superstition](#), many spells have no obvious effect when they are cast. *Mage armor* creates invisible armor that can’t be felt or perceived, but does offer protection from attacks. Conjuring spells do not cause creatures to just magically appear. Rather, summoned beings arrive from around a nearby corner or from behind a bush, where they may have been hiding the whole time. Even pulling a summoned animal from the caster’s hat or bag is more setting-appropriate than the creature simply appearing. Spells with an obvious effect may seem to be a coincidence or natural phenomenon. You won’t see a flash of light when an *ironwood* spell is cast, but the wood does become hard as iron. Science and alchemy also play a role in magic, which makes it less mystical. When a wizard casts *fire bolt*, there is a spark and a smell of sulfur. Keen observers may wonder if magic is actually involved at all.

Laws and Acceptance. While seers, oracles, and prophets are viewed positively, other spell casters such as witches, sorceresses, and mages are regarded with suspicion and fear. Conjurers and necromancers are considered evil and their magic is outlawed in Greece and Rome. In desperate times, people may seek the aid of magicians or blame them for misfortune. Proving your innocence after being accused of witchcraft or necromancy is very difficult. Escape and living in exile may be the best option for the accused.

Curse Tablets. A curse tablet can be purchased in any urban marketplace. The tablet features a blank space wherein the customer writes the name or description of their intended target. These are typically used to curse thieves, “I curse whoever took my sandals!” Most of these tablets are ineffectual superstition, but sometimes actual spellcasters will create such things.

Demographics. Only 250,000 people in the setting can cast arcane magic and half of them are 1st level. Only 10% of them are wizards, 5% are witches, and 2% are sorceresses. The rest are alchemists and mystics who cannot cast spells above 5th spell level. Just 50 wizards above 9th level exist in the whole setting; only one of 14th level. Any PC wizard of 15th level or higher is the highest level wizard in Midgard, with the exception of Ostanes, an immortal wizard who is rarely seen. More powerful mortal wizards dwell in Alfheim, Vanaheim, Arcadia, and other worlds.

Languages of Magic. The OGL core rules say all arcane spells are written in the same language, but that is not the case in this setting. *Amazons vs Valkyries* has magical languages, which spells must be written in. Found spells are often written in archaic versions of these languages.

Research. Researching spells means discovering lost manuscripts and piecing together fragments of old spells to uncover ancient magic. Writing and crafting completely new spells from scratch isn’t something most mortal wizards can do.

Three bygone cultures were at the forefront of developing arcane magic: the Egyptians, the Minoans, and the Mitanni. They each specialized in different schools of magic, as shown on Table 5: Favored Arcane Schools by Culture.

Table 5: Favored Arcane Schools by Culture

Egyptian	Mitanni	Minoan
Abjuration	Conjuration	Conjuration
Conjuration	Divination	Enchantment
Necromancy	Transmutation	Illusion

When modern characters find arcane spells, they are often written in the languages of these ancient peoples.

The languages of these peoples have been extinct for hundreds of years and are difficult to research. Fortunately, each of the magical languages has a descendant that is easier to research.

Wizards have sometimes translated lower level spells into these descendant languages. High level spells (above 5th level, AKA High Magic) are rarely translated because once mages reach that level of proficiency, they don't see any value in translating powerful spells into languages that are easier for others to understand. Today, very few wizards understand High Magic due to the difficult research.

Thus, low level spells that characters discover may be written in a modern language they know, while any high level spells they find will usually be written in an ancient language (see Table 6 Spell Language by Level and School).

Table 6: Spell Language by Level and School

Spell Level	Abjuration, Conjunction, Divination, Transmutation		Evocation, Illusion		Necromancy	
1-3	01-00%	Any Language	01-20%	Egyptian	01-60%	Egyptian
			21-00%	Persian	61-00%	Persian
4-6	01-30%	Egyptian	01-10%	Hurrian ²	01-20%	Egyptian
	31-50%	Greek	11-30%	Minoan ²	21-70%	Mid. Egyptian ¹
	51-80%	Persian	31-40%	Mid. Egyptian ¹	71-90%	Old Persian ¹
	81-90%	Mid. Egyptian ¹	41-90%	Persian	91-00%	Persian
	91-00%	Old Persian ¹	91-00%	Old Persian ¹		
7-9	01-10%	Akkadian ²	01-20%	Eteocretan ²	01-90%	Archaic Egyptian ²
	11-25%	Eteocretan ²	21-35%	Hurrian ²	91-00%	Sanskrit ²
	26-35%	Hurrian ²	36-50%	Minoan ²		
	46-65%	Minoan ²	51-55%	Old Persian ¹		
	66-70%	Sanskrit ²	56-60%	Sanskrit ²		
	71-80%	Sumerian ¹	61-75%	Sumerian ¹		
	81-00%	Uratanian ²	76-00%	Uratanian ²		

¹ Prestige languages are nearly extinct, but still used by academics or priestesses. They can be learned by joining a cult, studying at a library, or taking a class.

² Extinct languages are no longer used and translation books cannot be easily obtained. Learning an extinct language takes much more time and effort.



MATRIARCHY

Hundreds of matriarchal societies exist across this setting. Most of them are small, rural communities in Africa, Arabia, and Europe where the woman are the heads of households and leaders of government. These are often also gerontocracies, with the eldest woman holding the most power. These women may be priestesses, sorceresses, or druids.

In many patriarchal societies, the men officially rule, but their wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters advise and guide them. A few of the largest matriarchal societies are outlined below.

Aegina. 98% of all Myrmidons are female, due to their origins as ants. The few male myrmidons are kept for breeding in special rooms in the palace. When they are no longer useful, they are cast out.

Amazonia. The Amazon's homeland is gender segregated into two zones. The outer regions of Amazonia are mixed with nearly equal numbers of men and women, though the women dominate. Men in Amazonia have no political power and few legal rights. They perform manual labor and are rarely educated beyond basic reading and math skills.

The inner zone of Amazonia consists of the capital city of Themescyra and the lands immediately around it. Men are only granted access here for special purposes. The population here is 90% women.

Brittany. The political situation in this peninsula in northwestern Gaul is an example of men ruling in a feudal system but being guided by women. In this case, a circle of druidesses advise the kings.

Caria. This satrapy in western Anatolia is ruled by Greeks but often considered part of the Persian Empire. It consists of Halicarnassus, Kos, and other kingdoms. The Greeks have adopted many local traditions, including Phrygian matriarchy. It is largely egalitarian with women having slightly more power and influence in government, business, and household affairs.

Carthage. Carthaginian women have considerable influence as religious leaders, socialites, advisors, and ambassadors.

Kvenland. The Valkyries' remote homeland is more like a hidden sanctuary than a city. The outer region is dotted with farms where women and their husbands work the land and hunt the forests together. The society and the households are matriarchal but cooperative.

Men are prohibited from venturing into the vicinity of the Valkyries' fortress sanctuary, Aska Faste. They are only allowed here under special circumstance. The population of Aska Faste is 90% women.

Skye. A Valkyrie jarl rules the sparsely populated Isle of Skye from the fortress and training facility at Skugga Faste (The Fortress of Shadows). It is a mixed, egalitarian society with women holding the top positions in family and government.

Lesbos. These Phrygian people have long been followers of the [Great Mother](#). They became subjects of the Amazons under Penthesilea. Their matriarchal society persisted until 1554 TA when it had been caught up in the conflicts between Persia and Greece and was conquered by Cyrus the Great. Even after being subsumed into the Persian Empire, Lesbos continued many of its matriarchal ways, even into the modern era.

MEDICINE AND HEALING

Pharmacists. Every town and urban neighborhood has at least one apothecary or pharmacist. These drugstores provide a litany of ointments, potions, creams, salves, and lozenges that can alleviate pain, help you sleep, help you lose weight, give you more energy, cure your headache, relieve foot pain, and so on. Most of these medicines are made to order.

The Greek healing goddess Panacea specializes in medicine and curing disease with potions, elixirs, and pills. Her temples are both pharmacies and hospitals.

Doctors. Most medical professionals are associated with a temple. While Asclepius and Amhotep are well-known for healing men, most women prefer to visit a doctor that specializes in women's care, so they visit temples of Eileithyia.

Demons. Most diseases are actually caused by demons lurking on the ethereal plane. They can be driven off with magic, or even killed. See [fiends](#) below for more.

MEN

Much like the male characters in *Super Girl* and *Jessica Jones*, men in this setting are basic male archetypes– the awkward geek, the comedian, the fool, the chauvinist, the creepy guy, the fatherly guy, and the strong attractive guy. Just as women have been portrayed in media of the past, men in this setting are objects, tools, window dressing, and eye candy. Their literary purpose is to help tell the story about the women. They may be obvious plot devices or rewards for the female lead characters.

Players are welcome to play male characters, but anyone doing so may wish they had chosen otherwise. Castration is a common practice for criminal punishment, prisoners of war, and slaves. It is a requirement for many high ranking government positions in Persia, Egypt, Phrygia, and other kingdoms. Young boys are often castrated to preserve their singing voices. Self-castration is required in several religious cults including the Great Mother and Artemis. Male characters in this setting have a significant chance of becoming eunuchs.

When cities fall to an enemy army, the male citizens are usually executed to prevent revolt. If not executed, they may be made lame, castrated, or dismembered (usually removing the right hand). If they are lucky, they are enslaved and sent to hard labor in mines, mills, quarries, and fields.



MERCENARY WORK

The abundance of war supports a thriving industry for mercenaries. In fact, mercenary work is so popular in northern Europe that entire communities will pack up and venture south as a mercenary company, fighting for a season and returning home with enough provisions to survive the winter. All citizens of the community that are capable of battle serve as warriors and the non-combatants serve as support. Even more common are the hundreds of thousands of freelance mercenaries looking for work.

Finding Work. Mercenary companies are countless. 60 of them are outlined in the [Warrior Cults](#) supplement. They have recruitment centers in all large cities. Carthage is a major employer and is always hiring. They have recruiters aboard their trade ships and naval vessels that ply the seas from Brittany to Sidon.

Besides governments and ambitious generals, mercantile corporations also hire mercenaries. They need warriors to protect ships and wagons along dangerous trade routes.

Taenarum. The city of Taenarum in southern Greece is the largest mercenary employment center in the world. Any mercenary company of moderate size has a recruiter stationed there. And any sellsword looking for work can find countless employers in the city. The supply and demand ebbs and flows with the times. As wars approach, the city becomes vacant. Every mercenary looking for work is hired on the spot. As a season of war ends, the city becomes packed with unemployed mercenaries.



Opportunism. Not all mercenaries can be trusted – many have gone rogue. The Sons of Mars is one example. Another is the Roman legion under Decius that was sent to protect the city of Rhegium but instead seized it for themselves. When the Carthaginians refused to pay their mercenaries after the first Punic War, the mercenaries rebelled starting a new war that lasted 2 years.

Get the [Warrior Cults](#) guide today!



MONSTERS

The Hydra, the Minotaur, the Nemean Lion, Medusa, and the Kraken have long since been slain; nonetheless, quite a few monstrous creatures continue roaming the Earth.

Aberrations. Alien horrors are rare in this setting, though they do exist.

Beasts. Perhaps the most common type of monster is this category of animals and animal-like creatures.

Celestials. Although divine beings have a lot of influence on this setting, they and their ilk are rarely encountered.

Constructs. Golems of stone and bronze are the most common constructs. There is an increasing number of clockwork, alchemical, and steam golems. Iron golems are very rare. Most iron golems are found in Anatolia and are remnants of the ancient Hittites and Medes.

Dragons. Dragons exist more in legends than in reality. A few still slumber in the remotest parts of the world, but they are a dying species.

Elementals. Creatures tied to the fundamental elements are fairly common.

Fey. Fairies and their kin are among the most common types of monsters that PCs may encounter. They live almost everywhere that humans do not.

Fiends. Demons are extremely common but not in the way most players are familiar. Demons hide on the ethereal plane and infect mortals. When a person is sick or cursed, it is because a demon on the ethereal plane has fused itself with the person, infesting them with its presence. When a plague strikes a city in Midgard, on the ethereal plane thousands of demons run amok in homes and streets. When characters cast *bestow curse*, they are

summoning one of these creatures and compelling it to afflict the target of their spell. Likewise, *remove curse* ends the compulsion and expels the summoned demon. *Lesser restoration* and *greater restoration* are effective in driving off ethereal demons. However, some disease-causing fiends are particularly persistent. These must be physically slain. Heroines can either bring the demon to the prime material plane (with a *magic circle* spell) or travel to the ethereal plane and confront it (with an *etherealness* or *plane shift* spell).

Giants. Entire kingdoms of hill giants were once commonplace. Today, giants rule only a few small areas. Most hill giants today live among human communities. Large kingdoms of fire and frost giants lie at the far reaches of the known world. Clans of cyclopes exist both in Sicily and in northern Scythia.

Humanoids. The five most common humanoids are ogres, troglodytes, gnolls, sahuagin, and formarians. These are described more on the following page. Other types of humanoids, including goblins and kobolds are less common.

Monstrosities. Genetic experiments and unique creatures that are not a natural part of the ecosystem are rare and typically associated with dark magic.

Oozes. Dangerous slimes and puddings are only slightly less common in this setting than average.

Plants. Dangerous, intelligent vegetation is rare except in the deepest reaches of uninhabited wilderness. These creatures are more common in Alfhiem, Arcadia, and Vannahiem.

Undead. Zombies, skeletons, ghouls, and wights are fairly common, especially around the carnage of battlefields. More powerful undead, such as vampires and lichs, are unlikely to be encountered.

MONSTROUS HUMANOID RACES

The monstrous humanoids outlined below have built civilizations and frequently conducted warfare against humans.

Anthorpophagians. Several large tribes of ogres dwell near the Borders of Night, far to the north of Scythia. These dreadful giants prefer to feast upon human flesh and launch raiding parties into Scythia. Occasionally, individuals will stray from their clan and venture south, finding work as mercenaries, gladiators, or bodyguards.



Canocephite. A tribe of more than five hundred thousand [dog-headed people](#) lives in the remote hinterlands of Outer Scythia, between India and China. A smaller tribe lives in southern Europe and some have immigrated to Egypt, where they live in enclaves near temples to Anubis. The eastern canocephites are warlike and frequently attack humans in northern India, southern Scythia, and western China. They sometimes eat human victims, but just as often prefer cattle or horses.

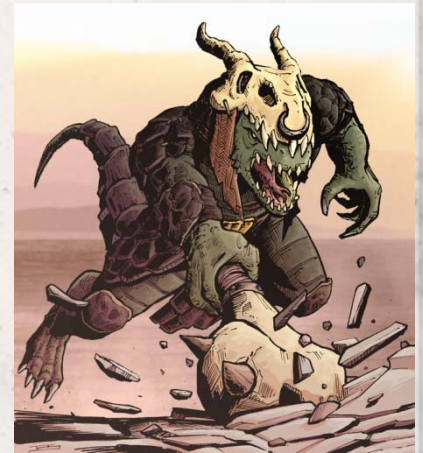


Formarians. When the Tuatha de Danann drove the formarians from Hibernia, the giants built a fleet of massive ships and took to the seas, becoming raiders and pirates. They established a settlement on a small island north of Britannia, but seaborne raiding continues to be their primary mode of subsistence.



Katoikoi. Also known as Sea People, [katoikoi](#) have two large sub-aquatic settlements. One city lies in the Red Sea near the Egyptian coast, and the other in the Mediterranean near the western coast of Anatolia. Thousands of smaller settlements are scattered throughout the seas. Katakoi are hostile to most surface dwellers, but also work as mercenaries on the surface.

Troglodytes. Troglodytes are among the most numerous of monstrous humanoids. They control a large kingdom in the rocky wastelands along the coast between Egypt and Kush. They frequently make war with both nations. They have been especially angered at the new Egyptian trading port, Berniaca.



OTHER CONFLICTS

In addition to the titular conflict, this setting also features several other major conflicts that compel the heroines to take sides, as outlined below.

Autocracy vs Democracy. Some very educated people make strong arguments against democracy, suggesting that it fosters societal degradation and decline. These people believe strong, authoritarian rule keeps a society on the proper path. Many autocrats simply fear democracy because it threatens their power. Supporters of democracy are concentrated in Greece and Rome but can be found elsewhere. Nowhere in the world is this conflict sharper than in the Greek city-states who struggle to maintain democracy against autocratic threats from foreigners as well as within their own ranks.

Abolition vs Slavery. Some people believe slavery is a violation of human rights and should be ended. They are severely outnumbered and face great difficulty convincing others. They are most likely to find success the same way Cyrus the Great did- obtain political power then use that power to officially end slavery.

Army vs Temple. Many conflicts involve the two most powerful groups in society fighting for control. Religious leaders and military leaders are often in opposition but forced to cooperate.

Colonists vs Indigenous. Greeks, Carthaginians, Persians, Egyptians, and other powerful cultures establish colonies and subjugate foreign peoples, creating stratified societies with divisions along cultural (not racial) lines. Sometimes these same places also become victims of foreign domination themselves. Egypt, for example, has controlled regions of Phoenicia and Cyprus for years but now is the subject of Macedonian imperialism.

Feast vs Famine. While the lands of the Mediterranean enjoy a cornucopia of abundance, the northlands face the consequences of worsening winters. They turn their attentions southwards where they can find new homelands.

Merchants vs Lords. The rise of the merchant class is nearly as profound as what later happens in the Renaissance Era. A growing middle class of merchants, particularly in Greece, Persia, Egypt, Carthage, Phoenicia, and Rome, wields increasing power, threatening society's traditional structure. Some businesses have grown into multinational consortiums with horizontal and vertical integration. They have private security forces that outnumber small armies, and they strike pacts and trade agreements with foreign nations. Business leaders rival the aristocrats in power, creating tension and fear.

Philosophers vs Convention. The philosophers' penchant for questioning authority, thinking "outside the box," breaking social norms, and "flipping the script," puts them at odds with the status quo. Philosophers may barge into classrooms and heckle the instructor. They might perform obscene acts in public just to see what reaction they get. They may insult aristocrats and refuse to follow etiquette. Some even challenge the gods and destroy holy monuments. This pits them against religious and political leaders.

True philosophers value wisdom and often live in poverty. However, their popularity has created a cottage industry of imposters and amateurs eager to make money off the trend. These sophists take expensive teaching positions and charge high speaking fees when they go on tour promoting their latest book.

Peace vs War. Followers of stoicism and other pacifist philosophies oppose war. They attempt to stop war with public speeches, music, protests, and sabotage.

POPULATION

The total population of the central regions of this setting (Europe, Asia Minor, and North Africa) is about 100 million.

30 million people live north of the Alps, between the Pyrenees and the Caucasus. This includes 5 million in Germania and Gothiscandza, 5 million in Britannia and Hibernia, and 20 million in Gaul. Celtic and Germanic tribes number anywhere from 20,000 to 250,000 members.

- 8 million live in Iberia.
- 4 million live in Macedonia
- 10 million live within Magna Graecia
- 10 million live within Persia empire
- 7 million live within Egypt and its colonies
- 4 million live within the Carthaginian Empire
- 3 million live within the Roman Republic
- 25% of people live in cities of 10,000 people or more.

The largest cities in central and northern Europe are defensive fortifications called Oppidum, some with populations of 30,000. Most people, however, live in towns of less than 1,000 residents.



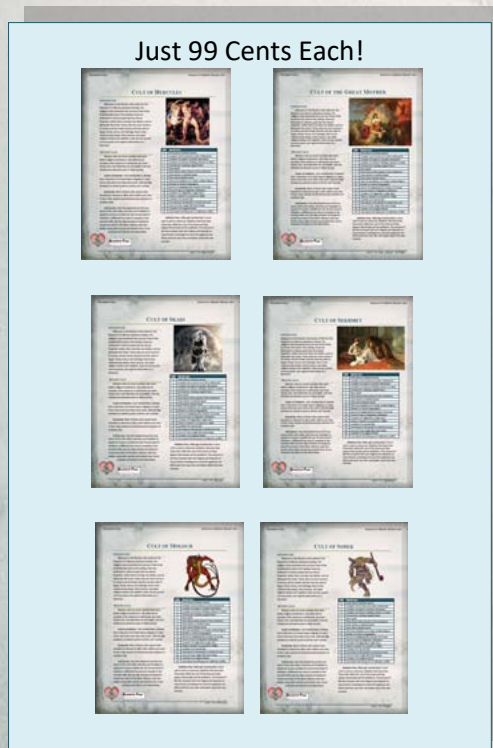
City	Pop.	Patron Deity
Alexandria	200,000	Sarapis
Alesia	30,000	--
Assur	250,000	Assur
Athens	300,000	Athena, Cybele
Aventicum	10,000	--
Bibracte	30,000	Caturix
Camulodunon	10,000	Calamus
Carthage	250,000	Tanit
Corinth	150,000	Poseidon
Dyokova	5,000	--
Glauberg	20,000	Catruix
Gordion	200,000	Cybele
Hedeby	5,000	--
Heidengraben	12,000	--
Hoogeloon	20,000	--
Leptis Magna	80,000	Shadaphra, Melqart
Marakanda	100,000	Ahura Mazda
Mensogada	12,000	--
Noreia	20,000	Belenus
Panjikent	80,000	Nana
Pella	150,000	Aphrodite
Pessinus	200,000	Cybele
Pergamum	200,000	Athena
Petra	20,000	Dushara
Rome	330,000	Several
Shalat	50,000	Dagon
Sciciansi	20,000	--
Seleucia	600,000	Apollo
Sidon	80,000	Astarte, Eshmun
Sinope	50,000	Sin
Sparta	150,000	Ares, Artemis
Starówka	30,000	--
Syracuse	250,000	Athena
Susa	200,000	Inshushinak
Tartessos	150,000	--
Thebes	50,000	Apollo, Dionysus
Themiscrya	100,000	Artemis
Tyre	250,000	Melqart
Valshara	100,000	--
Waset	60,000	Amun
Wawel	30,000	--

RELIGION

The only phenomenon of comparable scope and importance with war is religion. Every pantheon has several war deities and other gods associated with battle or protection. War is religiously sanctioned and religion is militarily fortified, thus creating a symbiotic yet competitive relationship.

Religion plays a major role in most people's lives. Much like arcane magic, the line between superstition and divine magic is blurred. Few spells have any physical manifestation or clear evidence of their effect. The common pantheons are outlined in the [Priestess](#) supplement.

Atheism. Some people, particularly Greek philosophers and their followers, are skeptical about the gods. Some even openly deny them – a crime punishable by execution. Characters who are devout atheists have resistance to spell damage caused by divine magic and advantage on all saving throws against divine spells. However, they cannot be targeted or helped by beneficial divine magic such as *bleed*, *cure wounds*, *remove curse*, or *lesser restoration*. Atheists also draw a tremendous amount of ire from religious leaders.



Political Power. Religious leaders wield great political power. Their influence may be limited to advising the ruler, or it may be direct, theocratic control of a country. Regardless of their reach, temples control the lands immediately around them much like an aristocrat would rule the territory. They have private security forces, business operations (mines, vineyards, scribes, etc.), and their own laws and taxes.

Violations. People who violate sacred sites, loot temples or tombs, or destroy artifacts face severe consequences. Temples and tombs are protected with magic and curses. Curses take effect within 1d4 days of the violation. A few of the more popular curses are outlined below.

- The violators begin attacking each other in a fit uncontrolled bloodlust.
- The violators are struck by a natural disaster, such as a storm at sea or an eruption that kills most of them.
- The violators become the target of a supernatural assassin.
- The violators suffer tragic misfortune until their deed is atoned.

Northlands. Relatively few priestesses reside in the north, but paladins abound. Many jarls and chieftains, who may be paladins of Odin, Thor, Frya, or Skadi, are their community's religious leader. Most large communities have at least one seer, healer, gydja, or other priestly figure. Small communities may have none at all.

In Celtic lands, druids or sorceresses guide communities.

Paladins. Most deities have holy warriors dedicated to them. A few of the Paladin oaths that are available for players are presented in the sidebar. More are in development.

ROYAL COURTS

Royal courts are the nexus of power of every society. The most powerful and influential people attend. Courtiers, the official members of the royal court, are a diverse group from all over the sovereign's domain and beyond. A ruler's direct vassals are expected to spend several months every year at court. Foreign dignitaries, ambassadors, and spies also attend court. Aristocrats, guild masters, bureaucrats, entertainers, advisors, intellectuals, religious leaders, adventurers, celebrities, friends, family, and slaves all mingle with one another in a complex social group steeped in wealth, power, and ambition.

Wealthy Courtiers. Financial assistance from wealthy individuals is critical to aristocrats. People with millions of talents of gold can command royalty and buy favor in the same way modern lobbyists and special interest groups work.

Adventurers. Royal courts attract, or may request the presence of, any interesting or exciting person who may be in their dominion. Explorers, athletes, and heroines are frequently invited to share their exploits with the powerful and influential.

Oligarchs. Democratic government power still coalesces around the most influential people. Similar to an autocrat holding court, these senators, archons, and viziers host symposiums and invite the most powerful citizens of their districts.

The Heroines. As the PCs advance in level, they will inevitably find themselves attending these royal courts, symposiums, feasts, festivals, and sporting events.



SLAVERY

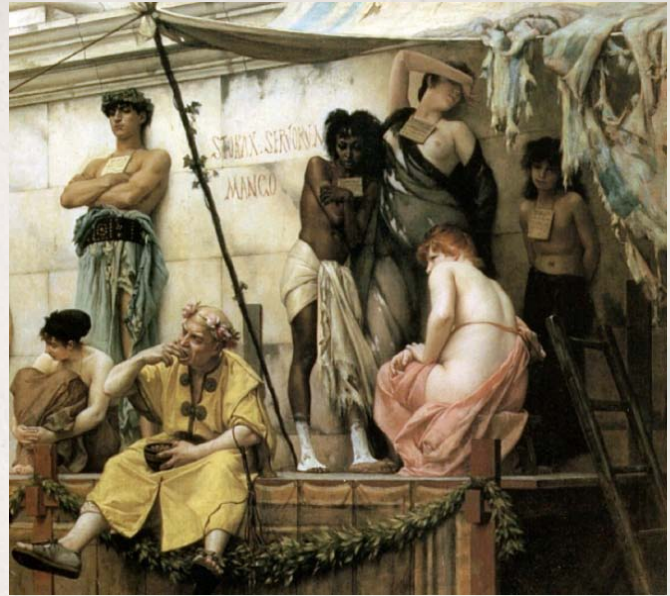
Slavery is a common aspect of daily life. In Magna Graecia, 30% of the population lives in some form of servitude. PCs will encounter slaves on a regular basis and may be enslaved themselves. Slavery is also a very broad term that includes relationships similar to modern contract work and apprenticeship. A few important points about slavery are outlined below.

Abolition. Although slavery is widely regarded as a natural state of the world, a small group of intellectuals in Greece believe slavery is a violation of human rights.

Anyone May be Enslaved. Slavery can happen to anyone, including aristocrats. Parents may sell one or more children into slavery to pay their debts and reduce their cost of living. Individuals may sell themselves into slavery to pay debts or escape poverty. People may be abducted and forced into slavery. Pirates frequently sell their victims in the markets of Delos. They sometimes raid coastal communities, abducting entire villages. (This happened to Diogenes.) Every year, conquering armies capture their enemies and sell them into slavery. Tens of thousands of people become slaves through this method every year.

Cost of a Slave. A domestic slave sold on the open market may cost anywhere from 200 gp to 1000 gp, depending on age, health, gender, and skills. Unique or highly skilled slaves cost even more. Servants and some slaves (but not chattel slaves) are entitled to regular wages equal to what a free person would receive for the same work as well as food and lodging.

Earning Freedom. Most slaves can purchase their freedom with the wages they receive. Slaves can also be granted freedom after performing a courageous deed or serving for a specified amount of time.



Exotic Slaves. Any person who seems to be exotic or unusual is worth more money. Disabled people can be found serving and entertaining in royal houses across the known world. Due to the high value and scarcity of exotic slaves, commonplace slaves are sometimes disfigured or maimed to make them into exotic slaves.

Gladiators. Roughly 50% of all gladiators are slaves. Many are foreign soldiers captured in war.

Sex Slaves. Slavery for sexual purposes is very common in Magna Graecia, Roime, and Phoenicia. Temples to Dionysius, Ishtar, and similar deities own dozens of male and female slaves for this purpose and charge visitors a nominal fee (2 sp).

Slave Armies. Sometimes desperate generals and warlords buy a bunch of slaves, arm them, and offer them freedom if they fight and survive the coming battle or war.

Revolt. Slave rebellions occasionally happen. Abuse, worsening conditions, or changing terms of servitude can provoke a rebellion. Being forced into military service may cause slaves to turn their weapons against their enslavers. Military and political leaders also attempt to turn their opposition's slaves against them.

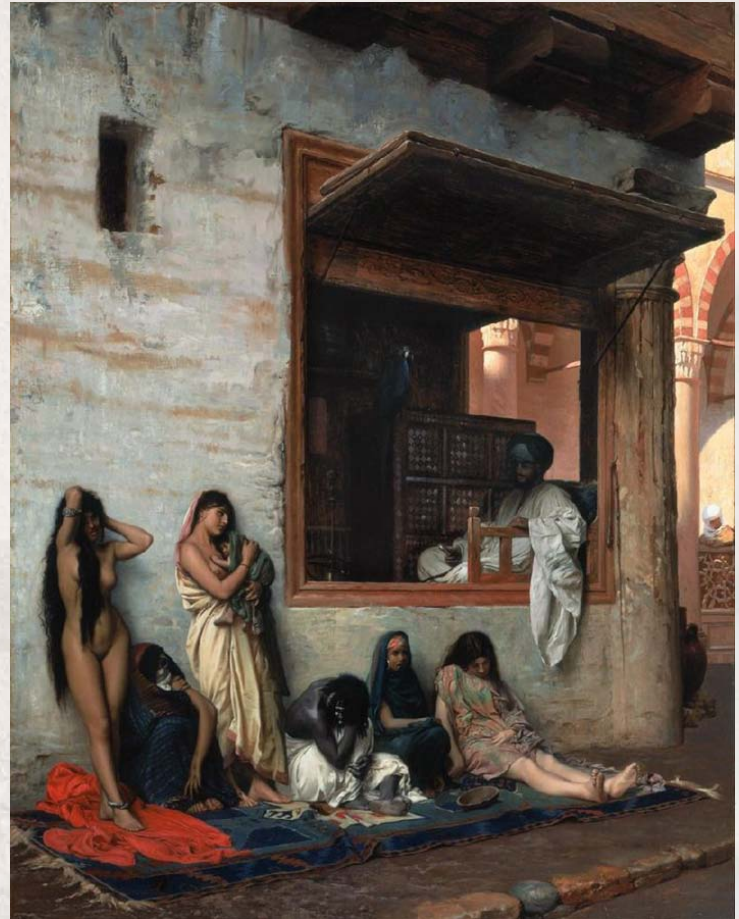
DEGREES OF SLAVERY

The three degrees of slavery are outlined below.

Servants. Servants are semi-autonomous. Their rights fall somewhere between free-person and slave. They have personal possessions, limited legal rights, and earn the same wages as free people. Servants are the most common type of slave owned by private citizens and businesses. Some governments and large institutions also use servants. Being a servant is a common way to repay a debt or learn a trade. Conditions of servitude are often temporary, though could last decades. Tutors, minstrels, shop managers, bookkeepers, wet nurses, and even law enforcement (like the Scythian Archers) all fall into this category.

Slaves. Slaves are usually the property of a government or temple. Some wealthy citizens and large business own slaves. Most slaves are people captured in war. Others are debtors or sentenced criminals. Thralls in the northlands also fall into this category. Slaves may be branded or tattooed or forced to wear collars or chains.

Chattel Slaves. These slaves are forced to do dangerous, backbreaking labor in mines, mills, fields, and construction projects. People convicted of serious crimes and those captured in warfare are the most common sources of chattel slaves. Chattel slaves endure brutal conditions and have short, painful lives. They are always marked with brands or tattoos and may be disfigured, maimed, or mutilated as well. The slightest infraction will bring beatings or torture. Chattel slaves have no opportunity to earn their freedom.



SUPERSTITION

People see omens in everything. A few chickens acting strangely, an unusual pattern in the clouds, or a bizarre coincidence can all be signs that something bad is about to happen to the person who witnesses it. To avoid the impending misfortune, the person should go directly to a temple or mystic and obtain a warding spell that will prevent the impending misfortune from occurring.

Apotropaic Rites. Cleansing or warding spells are called apotropaic rites. They cost 2d10 gp and require 1d3 days to perform.

Roman Superstition. Roman citizens are required by law to report these portentous sightings to the government. Clerks document the report and send it to a central office in Rome where secretaries compile and collate the reports. They sort and prioritize them, passing the most significant omens on to the priests who consult the Sibylline Books for clues and insight about the future.

Some of the events that have been reported in Rome on the eve of the Second Punic War include: an entire legion's weapons bursting into flame; a legion being struck with dozens of lightning bolts; and a storm of flaming meteorites striking a Roman town.

Sibylline Books. This collection of ancient scrolls written in Greek hexameter is filled with vague statements, enigmatic references, and symbolic allusions. The books are kept hidden in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Ten priestesses serve as their custodians. They consult the books to glean a meaning of the omens that the secretaries report. These deductions are presented to the Roman senate as prophetic advice concerning major political issues of the day.



TAXES

Taxes exist in every land. Persia has one of the highest tax rates in the world, due to the expensive wars and infrastructure projects. Taxes in Carthage exponentially increase after the first Punic War.

In Egypt, Greece, and Persia everything is taxed—every chicken, child, and crop. Entering or leaving a town, using a main road, using a secure rest stop, owning weapons or books, or other activity is subject to taxation. Many kings demand a leg of every deer or boar that is hunted. 20% of a farmer's flocks and herds are taken in tax. Crops are nominally taxed at 10%, but the actual rate is usually much higher. Taxes vary depending on a person's national origin (not race). So Greeks in Egypt are taxed at a higher rate than Egyptians.

Payment Methods. In Egypt and Magna Graecia taxes can be paid with money, barter, or labor. You can work a few days (or weeks) for the state to pay off your tax debt. In Rome, taxes may only be paid in silver. Failure to pay taxes results in debtor's prison or temporary servitude.

Freelance Tax Collectors. Particularly in Persia and Egypt, taxes are collected by freelance tax collectors who form contracts with local leaders to extract money from a given region. For example, a political leader may announce that she needs to hire a tax collector. A number of small businesses will apply, making offers based on their estimates of how much they think they can extract from the area and still make a decent commission. Typically the one offering to extract the most revenue gets the job. The tax collector will pay the government the proposed tax revenue upfront, and then works to extract enough from the populace to cover the payment and make a profit.

Customs Stations. Anyone passing between two regions of the same kingdom usually pays a small tax (1 cp per person, more for trade goods) at these toll booths.

Paraphylakes and Horophylakes. These armed tax collectors operate customs stations and patrol local roads. They are also posted near town gates and monitor any caravans that enter or leave.

Head Tax. Taxes on the individual citizen simply for existing are rare in Magna Graecia. When governments attempt them, they are highly unpopular. However, towns that are based around forts or temples often have a head tax to offset a lack of revenue from trade. In Egypt, head taxes have existed for centuries and require a large bureaucracy to implement.

Religious Exemption. Religious officials are often exempt from state taxes.

ADVENTURES IN DEBT COLLECTION

Lord Mnesimachos is in debt and takes out a loan from the temple of Artemis. He uses his estate in Sardis as collateral. When he defaults on the loan, the temple attempts to seize the estate. Mnesimachos resists, stating the temple has not given him adequate time to pay. He rallies his troops and a small war breaks out. The estate includes three villages, dozens of farms, a mine, and a thick forest.

Agents of Artemis. The PCs are either aligned with (or hired by) the temple. They must help get control of the estate. The area is full of citizens loyal to the lord. They use the mines and forests to their advantage as they resist the temple's efforts.

Resisting Artemis. The heroines are aligned with (or hired by) the estate to help get them out of debt and resist the temple. Time is short. Payments are already far behind and the temple is getting aggressive.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

Industry is an important element in many adventures. Clearing a mine overrun with [Canocephites](#), protecting a caravan along a treacherous route, exterminating giant rats from a warehouse, locating exotic goods for resale, investigating corporate fraud, dealing with unscrupulous competitors, or managing the impact of war (or plague) on a business are all likely scenarios for adventurers to face.

Agriculture. Agriculture products including wheat, grain, wine, and lumber make up the bulk of goods shipped. Countless tons are loaded and unloaded daily in every major port of the world. Pack animals and carts haul these commodities along every major thoroughfare.

Construction. Monuments, roads, fortresses, temples, bridges, aqueducts, and apartments are constantly being built. Some building projects are extensive and employ hundreds or thousands of people. Rowdy, lawless boomtowns spring up around these sites. Major projects bring experts and artisans from foreign lands: painters, mosaic makers, sculptors, and more. When completed, most building projects are sanctified with religious rituals.

Franchises. Much like today, the service industry facilitates franchising. Taverns, inns, and bathhouses are common franchises. Characters in Tartessos can enter a particular brand of bathhouse (say, Symm's House of Steam) and expect to find many of the same products and services available that they would find at a Symm's House of Steam in Carthage or Rome.

Pottery. Crafting clay pots and amphora is huge business. Family-owned shops and large corporate factories churn out these containers in varying sizes and sell them to wineries, brewers, and other businesses that ship liquids, including fresh water.

MINING

Besides precious metals and gemstones, mines produce industrial goods like tin, alabaster, and alum.

Mining is labor intensive. Many miners are state-owned [chattel slaves](#).

Thousands of mines exist across Greece, Hispania, Anatolia, and southern Europe. Most are small operations and many are hundreds of years old. A few of the largest mines are outlined below.

Laurion. Lying 30 miles (50 km) south of Athens, the Laurion mines are rich in silver, copper, and lead. State-owned slaves - naked, branded, and chained - work these mines in dim lamplight.

Riotinto. The huge mining complex at Riotinto lies 25 miles (40 km) north of Tartessos. The bustling community of 10,000 people is a rich source of silver and copper which requires a strong security presence. Speculators agree to pay the government 50% commission on all value extracted from a prospective mine.

Monte Arci. The massif in southern Sardinia has been mined for 6,000 years. People once mined obsidian here. Today, they mine iron, lead, and copper. More than 100 mining communities are scattered across the massif. Many have large smelting and iron working operations and export finished goods as well as raw metal ingots. Carthage controls all of Sardinia and vigorously protects this asset.

Clearwell. The Forest of Dean in Britannia conceals the vast Clearwell cave system. Originally a source of ochre, the cave system is now mined for iron. [Giant bats](#) live in the caverns and hunt the forest. Some say the mines are haunted.

ADVENTURES IN TRADE AND COMMERCE

Delayed Construction. A new aqueduct is being built, but construction at the remote headwaters is plagued by mishaps and setbacks. The project is being sabotaged by goblins, [Canocephites](#), kobolds, or undead.

Caravan Guards. The heroines are hired to protect a caravan. Unfortunately, some other guards on the caravan are actually criminals. They have a longstanding feud with a retired ranger who has joined the caravan with his family while they journey to their new home. The criminals attempt to kill the ranger.

The Grain Ships. Pirates have seized the last three shipments of grain from Egypt to Athens (or to Rome), causing shortages, rationing, and panic among the people. Hoarding and fighting over dwindling food supplies has started. Someone must stop the pirates and secure the grain route before famine takes hold.

The Unusual Suspect. The body of a government auditor is found near the mines he monitors. While there is no shortage of suspects, the heroines notice clues that suggest some sort of creature may be prowling the region.

Foul Play in the Iron Trade. Factions of a mining town are feuding over the price of iron. Some people have agreed to sell at a discount price and undercut their neighbors. The guild is unable to resolve the conflict, especially since the guild master has recently gone missing.

Wide Spot, Dirt Road. Two merchant caravans cross paths along a trade route. They stop to exchange wares and news. Being late in the day, they decide to camp together. That evening, strange events occur. Perhaps a lycanthrope or doppelganger lurks among them. The PCs, who are guarding one of the caravans, must resolve the conflict soon. This road is heavily patrolled. Law enforcement could ride over the hill any moment. They will have lots of questions about any dead bodies.

Off to the Mines! The heroines are part of an army or civilian population that is captured and sent to work in the mines. They must escape before the conditions kill them. The longer they wait to escape, the weaker they get.



TRAVEL

The Amber Road. Stretching north from Rome across central Europe, through Germania and up to Ingria, the Amber Road is the main trade route bringing amber, whale ivory, and furs south. It also carries wines, fabrics, and spices to the north.

The Royal Road. Darius the Great renovated the Hittites' archaic trade route and connected it to the Khurasan Road, creating the modern Royal Road. It connects Susa with Sardis on the Aegean Sea, passing through Nineveh, Kirkuk, and Edessa. It is part of the Silk Road network. As a Post Road, its rural stretches are lined with caravanserais every 8 to 10 miles. It is paved, patrolled, and heavy with traffic.

The Silk Road. The ancient trade routes that connect the distant regions of the world are as dangerous as they are famous. Bandits and pirates ply the Silk Road as frequently as merchants. Long stretches of the road pass through uninhabited regions infested with wild beasts and legendary creatures.

Besides exotic goods, the Silk Road facilitates the exchange of cultures and ideas. Buddhist missionaries and Indian scholars can be found in Greece and Carthage.

Tunnels. Dwarves are likely to know about the vast, prehistoric network of underground tunnels that crisscross Europe. These tunnels can be used to travel great distances in a short time. Unbeknownst to most travelers, these tunnels cross briefly into Svartalfheim, which reduces the distance between two points on the prime material plane by hundreds of miles. For example, if they know the route and can brave the dangers, travelers can venture from Greece to Hibernia underground on foot in a matter of days (6 +1d4).

Maritime. Moving goods by boat is safer, easier, and faster than moving them overland. Most trade vessels follow the coastlines and rivers, anchoring at night in a cove or way station. Adventures are likely to follow these coastal routes when they travel.

Portals. Some characters may know of portals deep in the forests and swamps that use the dimensions of Alfheim or Arcadia to cross great distances in Midgard. Elves, nymphs, and fauns are the most likely PC races to know about these portals.

Flying. The most powerful characters in this setting have flying mounts (Pegasi, giant eagles, or griffons) and can travel rapidly between any two points on the map.



EXPLORATION

Wealthy civilizations hire explorers to venture into unknown regions to meet new trading partners or find legendary places. The countries most involved with exploration into the frontiers are:

Carthage. The Carthaginians hope to find more trading partners across the seas beyond the Pillars of Heracles. They already sail as far as Britannia and Nanogia.

Egypt. Scholars in Egypt believe Africa can be circumnavigated. Reports of a Phoenician ship wrecked on the eastern coast of Africa suggest it is possible to sail south from the Red Sea and arrive in the western Mediterranean. The Pharaohs are also interested in expanding their influence further south along the coastline, beyond Kush and Troglodytia where there are rich natural resources.

Gothiscandza. Scandinavian explorers sail north along the coasts of Scythia and west beyond Hibernia. They seek trading partners and fertile land to colonize.

Greece. Greek explorers are interested in finding new trade routes or conducting ethnographic and geographic studies in the northlands. Among these adventurers is Pytheas of Massalia, who has traveled as far as Hibernia and Norway.

Rome. Although not exactly exploring, Romans are very interested in the northlands and send merchants and trade delegations deep into Gaul. Some of these travelers are cartographers, ethnographers, or scientists. Some may be scouting parties.



WAR

Every campaign path in this setting involves war. At least thirteen major wars occur across the time period, including the Punic Wars. Soldiers may be deployed on battlefields, besieged in fortresses, assigned covert missions, or forced to serve in a naval fleet. Non-combatants may be swept up in military campaigns as support personnel or driven from their homes by an invading army.

War is so prolific it is causing depopulation. Persia, Macedon, Greece, and Thrace all struggle with declining populations. They rely increasingly on mercenaries from Europe, Africa, and Asia. As the empires fight for domination, their own power is dissolving. Subjugated kingdoms rebel and break away. In some cases, the slaves become the masters. Barbaric invasions have increased both east and west.

Mass Combat. Battles between phalanxes amount to a lot of shoving at the center. Once one side breaks, defeated troops flee as the victors cut them down. Any battle involving northerners is usually a chaotic free-for-all with very little coordination between units.

War Season. Romans, Greeks, and other cultures have “War Season,” which lasts from March until October. This season is framed by celebrations and religious observances where weapons are blessed, sacrifices are made, and heroic tales are told.

A Way of Life. War is a way of life for millions of people. Most aristocrats rely on their military to maintain their power. War is their first response to adversity. Most kings see themselves as generals rather than civic leaders. They believe the purpose of the state is to support the army. And the army’s purpose is to conquer more lands to increase the state. Thoughts of war influence every decision they make and they scoff at any suggestion to consider other methods.



Blood feuds, vendettas, and dwindling resources drive the tribes of Germania, Caledonia, Scandinavia, and Gaul into frequent wars. Most of the wars among the Celtic and Germanic tribes are small conflicts, but some spread to involve tens of thousands of troops.

Causes of War. According to the stoics, the causes of war are commercial aggression backed by militaries, national pride in the acquisition of foreign territory, and the spirit of adventure and craving for glory.

Trauma. Enduring the horrors of war can leave characters stricken with trauma. 3.5 D20 Guidelines for PTSD and dissociative disorder are available in the [Book of Broken Dreams](#).

Champion’s Duel. When northerners take to the battlefield, a champion among them will often come forward and challenge a champion from the opposing army. Sometimes the armies agree to let the results of the duel determine the outcome of the battle, but more often this fight serves to work both armies into a battle lust. Regardless of who wins the duel, the two armies clash as soon as it ends. Notably, Romans never accept this challenge as it goes against their training.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Hobnailed Sandals. While wearing these sandals, you can move over a prone creature as if it were difficult terrain and inflict 1d4 piercing damage to that creature in the process.

NAVAL WARFARE

Characters will likely find themselves fighting aboard a ship engaged in navel combat. The cluttered chaos of a ship deck during battle is difficult terrain. Characters can attempt to move at regular speed, but if they do, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the water.

SIEGE WARFARE

The PCs will be involved with at least one siege. Sieges are characterized by rationing, panics, battle, and disease. Taking a fortress by storming the walls is frequently attempted but rarely successful. Most fortresses are virtually impregnable and can only be taken through treachery or subterfuge. Thus, the defenders are highly motivated to root out spies and saboteurs. The people conducting the siege are interested in bribing or blackmailing someone to open the gate. They also attempt to sneak soldiers into the city to open the gate.

Food Stores. Part of a city's defense is its store of preserved food used to sustain the inhabitants during a siege. These emergency supplies include smoked meats, pickled fish, dried fruits, wine, beer, grains, and nuts. Securing these resources from desperate, panicking citizens is as difficult as protecting it from rats (normal and giant).

SIEGE WEAPON DAMAGE

Siege weapons are often used as anti-personal weapons. When fired into a mass of troops, heavy boulders and massive spears hit more than one person. Therefore, most siege weapons inflict damage in an area. Trebuchets, ballista, and catapults hurling a single heavy object strike all creatures in a line 30 to 90 feet long, depending on the machine and projectile. Dexterity saves can be made for half damage, DC 12 for catapults and trebuchets and DC 15 for a ballista. Catapults and trebuchets hurling a cluster of smaller objects strike all creatures in a 20-foot radius circle (Dexterity saving throw DC 12 for half damage).

WHY WE FIGHT

Despite being overwhelmingly common and the way of life for millions of people, war is not very popular among the average citizens. Most people, including many soldiers, pray for peace. They pin hopes of peace on their leaders and with every victory beg for an age of peace to begin.

Militancy pervades every culture, encouraging violence and aggression precisely because many people are actually reluctant for war. This propaganda is both overt and subtle. Military leaders often promise peace through victory.



WOMEN

A number of issues affect women differently than men. In some cases, these are modern misunderstandings. This section addresses some of those issues.

Women's Rights. Below is a quick summary of women's rights in different lands.

Egypt. Gender equality has been a matter of religious law in Egypt for 4,000 years. Women and men share in all daily tasks and responsibilities. Egyptian women have all the same legal rights as men.

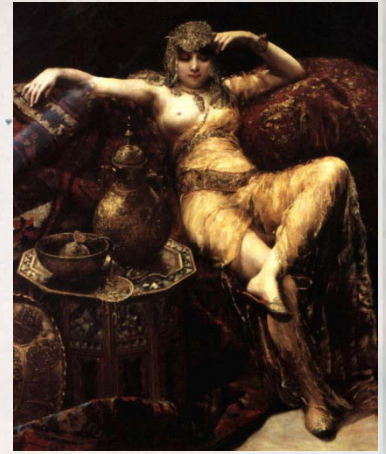
Persia. Persian women are protected by equal pay laws and have legal authority in the home. They can own property and businesses. A Persian widow can have the courts declare her the Guardian of the Family and grant her control of her late husband's businesses.

Sparta. Spartan women are trained in athletics, combat, and business management so they can protect the city and maintain business operations while the men are away fighting. Because of these responsibilities, they have more rights than other Greek women.

Northlands. Young Celtic and Germanic women have all the same rights and responsibilities as their brothers. If they marry, they give up some of those rights. Thus, many northern women simply don't marry. If unhappy with their marriages, northern women can easily obtain a divorce and regain their rights.

Rome and Athens. Roman and Athenian women live sheltered, cloistered lives (unless they are poor). They have fewer rights than most other women and are insulated from the rest of society. They frequent temples and inns and attend religious festivals that exclude men. In these settings, they interact with each other and influence the events of the world with their wealth and network of minions.

Abortion. Abortions are not only possible; they are relatively common in cities with brothels. Most alchemists, apothecaries, or pharmacists can provide a potion that will eliminate a pregnancy. In some regions, these concoctions are illegal.



Military Service. Women are explicitly prevented from serving in the army in Rome, Athens, and a few other places. Spartan women are not conscripted into the army, but they are trained to fight and can form an auxiliary force when the city is attacked. Persian and Egyptian women are allowed to serve in the military, although due to the Macedonian occupation, there is no Egyptian army. Egyptian citizens may only serve in the navy or as auxiliary troops (scouts, archers, messengers, spies, etc.). Celtic and Germanic women often go to battle with their husbands, fathers, and brothers. 30% of all Scythian warriors are women.



Property Rights. Women retain possession of the property they bring into the marriage. If there is a divorce, they take those possessions with them. For the wealthy, these possessions may be large estates with accompanying villages, natural resources, businesses, and security forces.

Religion. Women control several major temples including the Great Mother, Artemis, Demeter, Dionysus, Athena, Skadi, Vesta, Isis, Tanit, and Astarte. Besides their social influence and financial assets, these temples also have tremendous political power.



APPENDIX

THANKS!

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NEXT STEPS

With this Campaign Primer complete, we turn our attention to the Crime and Punishment supplement and more paladin oaths. We continue working on adventure paths for this setting and hope to have some ready for publication within the next year.

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