

RuneQuest

Guilds, Factions & Cults





GUILDS, FACTIONS AND CULTS

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INTRODUCTION

Society is about belonging. ‘Even outsiders - and that frequently means *RuneQuest* characters-’ belong to *something*, even if that is a conscious ideal to remain on the periphery where danger treads. However, for most Gloranthan characters especially, social context is of extreme importance, be this the family, the cult, the guild or some other grouping that holds certain ideals true and enforces certain modes of behaviour.

Indeed, behaviour is something this book is concerned with. Any social group, be it a religious cult, a trading guild or a political faction, is concerned with shaping and encouraging certain kinds of behaviour within its members. Those who do not behave in a similar way might be viewed with wry amusement, condescension, suspicion or even hatred. People are attracted to those who behave in the same way and every cult, faction or guild started because a group of like-minded people decided to codify their beliefs and behaviours in the hope of attracting other like-minded people and hence establish a form of importance in relation to those around them.

Even groups that share similar beliefs and behaviours may not share friendship. Slight and subtle differences in behaviour can result in schisms, feuds and outright war. A *similar* outlook is no guarantee of alliance; variance from the orthodox is a sure-fire way to suspicion and trouble.

Guilds, Factions and Cults explores social groups in *RuneQuest* terms. Look upon it as a companion volume to *RuneQuest Empires* (and you will discover some very similar concepts). Within its pages you will find:

Chapter One – Association Characteristics

Like Player Characters, associations can be assigned characteristics and certain kinds of skills and abilities; this chapter explores the common concepts.

Chapter Two – Guilds

The nature and workings of trade and other kinds of guilds.

Chapter Three – Factions

Defining factions, their aims, goals and methods of working.

Chapter Four – Cults

What defines a cult? What establishes its powers? How are its needs met and communicated?

Chapter Five – The Metagame

Having defined your Association, how are its characteristics and abilities used in a gaming context? This chapter provides the answers and guidance.

Chapter Six – Characters and Associations

What belonging to an association means for characters; benefits derived and powers attained. This chapter includes several new skills and Legendary Abilities.

Chapter Seven – Sample Associations

A range of guilds, cults and factions suitable for *RuneQuest* campaigns but which can be readily used in the published settings of Glorantha, the Young Kingdoms, the Tragic Millennium and several generic guilds, factions and cults to be slotted into any kind of fantasy campaign.

What are the Aims of this Book?

Ultimately this book is a Games Master reference but it may also be of value to players. Its aim is to help both Games Masters and Player Characters establish their own guilds, cults and so forth, with a common framework that will make game play fun and rewarding. The rules are structured to let associations be played as characters in their own right but, most importantly, for characters operating within an association or establishing their own, to gain a real sense of the their association's importance and power.

Terminology

The term 'association' is used to refer to guilds, factions and cults. Where it is used, the concepts apply to all kinds of associations more or less equally. Each type of association has its own, unique concepts explored in its specific chapter.

The book also makes frequent use of examples. These are drawn from the published *RuneQuest* settings of Glorantha, Hawkmoon and Elric. You do not need to be familiar with any of these to understand the examples and hopefully the examples will whet the appetite for exploring the settings in greater depth.

What Else Do I Need?

There is no question that the following books will prove highly useful:

RuneQuest Deluxe (or *RuneQuest* and the *RuneQuest Companion*)
Legendary Heroes
Arms and Equipment
RuneQuest Empires
Cults Books (*Cults of Glorantha* volumes I and II and *Cults of the Young Kingdoms*)
RuneQuest Spellbook

However they are not essential. This book strives to be self-contained.



ASSOCIATION CHARACTERISTICS

Associations are characterised by many separate, often unique factors. The first and most important characteristic is the driving ideal for the association and, for now, this will be left until the chapters dealing with the specific guilds, factions and cults. Other important characteristics are:

- Number of members
- Political Influence (locally, nationally, globally)
- Wealth (often a key factor in political influence)
- Armed or military capability (not all associations exercise or possess armed capability but many do or can)
- Popularity (how popular the association is or how favourably it is viewed by the populace beyond its membership).

All of these characteristics can be expressed descriptively and any good write-up of an association should do so but, in the same way characters are expressed in terms of their physical and mental characteristics, so can associations.

Characteristics

The characteristics are as follows:

SIZ Size. An indication of the number of members an association has, including active members, lay-members and sympathisers.

The SIZ characteristic determines how many members an association has. Use the table below to gauge the number of members. For a SIZ of 11 and below, all the members are active members; SIZ 12 and above will also have both lay members (those who generally follow the association's ways and rules but are not active beyond the most basic of duties) and sympathisers (those who are not members even in a lay sense but are sympathetic to the association's

ideals and goals). The sizes of the lay membership and sympathisers are not important at this stage of the association creation process.

| SIZ | Members | Average Members |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 1D6+1 | 5 |
| 2 | 2D6+1 | 8 |
| 3 | 2D6 x2 | 14 |
| 4 | 2D6 x4 | 28 |
| 5 | 2D6 x6 | 42 |
| 6 | 3D6 x6 | 63 |
| 7 | 4D6 x6 | 84 |
| 8 | 3D10 x6 | 99 |
| 9 | 3D10 x8 | 132 |
| 10 | 3D10 x10 | 165 |
| 11 | 3D10 x20 | 330 |
| 12 | 3D10 x30 | 495 |
| 13 | 3D10 x40 | 660 |
| 14 | 3D10 x50 | 825 |
| 15 | 3D10 x60 | 990 |
| 16 | 3D10 x70 | 1,155 |
| 17 | 3D10 x80 | 1,320 |
| 18 | 3D10 x90 | 1,485 |
| 19 | 3D10 x100 | 1,650 |
| 20 | 3D10 x1000 | 16,500 |
| 21 | 3D10 x 10,000 | 165,000 |

INF Influence. The association's political influence. The higher the value, the greater its influence either locally, nationally or globally. To represent these three areas of INF, this characteristic has three values separated by a slash. Thus, an association with INF 18/11/0 would have a very strong local influence, moderate national influence and no global influence.

When INF is used in calculating the association's Attributes and Capability scores, use the *highest* of the three INF values.

- WTH Wealth. The association's wealth, in terms of cash and assets (such as property and so forth).
- MIL Military. The association's ability to field arms and wage war, if necessary. The figure represents those parts of its membership who are actively warriors and those reserves who are willing to fight if called upon.
- COM Communication. The association's ability to communicate with its members and the outside world effectively.
- POP Popularity. A reflection of the association's charisma and appeal beyond its active and lay membership.

Determining Characteristics

Associations can determine their Characteristics randomly or on a point allocation basis. Characteristics are also open-ended: there is no maximum value; furthermore, most Characteristics can both increase and decrease as a result of various factors such as the making of alliances, the combination of two or more associations or changes in membership.

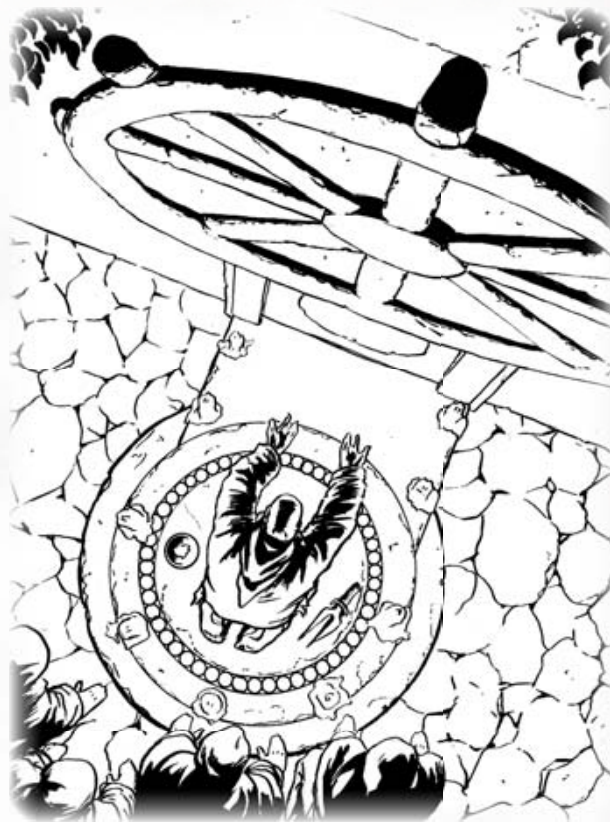
Random Characteristics

If an association is to be randomly determined, Characteristic values are rolled on 3D6. These can be rolled per Characteristic, in order or 3D6 can be rolled 6 times, the results noted and then assigned to each Characteristic according to preference or need to reflect a particular facet of the association.

For INF, remember that it has three values, one for local, national and global influence. When determining the INF values for an association, choose which of the three – Local, National or Global – will be the primary, secondary and tertiary areas of influence. The primary area is rolled on 3D6, the secondary on 3D6-3 and the tertiary on 3D6-6, reading any result of less than 0 as 0. It is quite possible for an association to have a global reach but minimal national or local representation – or vice versa.

Points Allocation

This can be done in one of two ways. Either allocate **100 points** amongst all the Characteristics with the proviso that *no Characteristic* can be less than 3; or, allocate the following values to Characteristics as appropriate: **17, 13, 11, 9, 7** and **3**. Then, distribute a further 20 points amongst the Characteristics as one sees fit. Remember that three values need to be allocated to INF, reflecting local, national and global influence. INF is the only Characteristic where one or two of the values can be assigned a value of zero.



Association Power Levels

Just as *RuneQuest* allows players to create characters at different levels of power – Seasoned, Veteran, Master and Hero – so too can associations be created at different levels of power to reflect different kinds of play. The rules for this follow the *RuneQuest* model:

Standard Association: The kind created by the rules in this chapter.

Examples:

John is creating two associations, a guild and a cult. The guild he is happy enough to generate randomly but as he has some specific needs for the cult, he chooses the points-buy option. The guild is for his Gloranthan campaign, based in Ralios; the cult is for his Hawkmoon campaign.

The guild is generated as follows, using 3D6 in straight order of Characteristics:

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| SIZ | 10 (3D10 x 10 members, for a result of 130) | MIL | 8 |
| INF | 16/11/0 | COM | 13 |
| WTH | 11 | POP | 13 |

The guild – an association of merchant-venturers, thus has a moderate membership, composed mainly of merchants and a few, hardy adventurers. It is politically strong locally, in its base city of Kustria and enjoys reasonable respect across Ralios but has no influence beyond Ralios’s boundaries. It is moderately wealthy – John decides it owns a guildhouse and stables in Kustria – and its MIL of 8 reflects the small band of adventurers and mercenaries who act as bodyguards for the caravans it mounts. Its communication (COM) is above average; its members and organisers hold regular meetings at the guildhall and its POP of 13 shows it is a popular guild; clearly the guild’s work has benefited many Kustrian tradesmen through its work. John names the guild the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs.

The cult John is designing is a small bunch of religious fanatics who worship the Runewheel, a mythical aspect of the legendary Runestaff. The cult believes that the Runestaff is the axle upon which the Runewheel turns, generating and dictating the fate of all life in Tragic Millennium Europe. He has the option of either distributing 100 points across the Characteristics or allocating the set values and then a further 20 points. He opts for the 100 points, with the following awards:

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----|----|
| SIZ | 3 (2D6 x2, for a result of 8) | MIL | 12 |
| INF | 18/11/0 | COM | 10 |
| WTH | 18 | POP | 18 |

The Brotherhood of the Wheel is therefore a very small group, numbering no more than 8 members. In its hometown of Bakarak, in Rhineland Germania, it is overwhelmingly influential and it carries a reasonable amount of influence across the Germanian principality of Pfalz. It is hideously rich – John decides that its founder, Count Albrecht von Hawkmoon is a relative of the famed Dorian Hawkmoon and thus has a great deal of property, land and cash to attract followers and exert influence. Militarily, it is also reasonably strong; its members are the warrior-elite known as the Stahlek Wheel Dancers. Its communication abilities are reasonable – it makes no secret of its beliefs and the cult spreads its opinions in a variety of ways – and its Popularity (POP) is very high; those who know of the cult attest to its humanitarian credentials and desire to stand-up to the insidious Dark Empire of Granbretan.

Now that the Characteristics of both associations are established, John can move on to calculating their Attributes and Capabilities.

Seasoned Association: A Seasoned association receives 150 Free Capability points; individual Capabilities may benefit from a maximum of 50 Capability points. In addition the association gains 1D3 extra Characteristic points to be allocated to Characteristics as the player sees fit. The association also gains an additional 1D3 Affinity Points.

Veteran Association: A Veteran association receives 200 Free Capability points; individual Capabilities may benefit from a maximum of 70 Capability points. In addition the association gains 1D4+1 extra Characteristic points to be allocated to Characteristics as the player sees fit. The association also gains an additional 1D4+1 Affinity Points.

Master Association: A Master association receives 300 Free Capability points; individual Capabilities may benefit from a maximum of 90 Capability points. In addition the association gains 1D6+2 extra Characteristic points to be allocated to Characteristics as the player sees fit. The association also gains an additional 1D6+2 Affinity Points.

Heroic Association: A Heroic association receives 500 Free Capability points; individual Capabilities may benefit from a maximum of 90 Capability points. In addition the association gains 1D8+4 extra Characteristic points to be allocated to Characteristics as the player sees fit. The association also gains an additional 1D8+4 Affinity Points.

Attributes

Attributes reflect certain aspects of an association's fabric and broadly map concepts such as Strike Rank. Attributes are:

Affinities All associations have affinities with a certain ideal or a source of power. For a guild, this might be mastery of a particular set of crafts or skills; for cults, it is an affinity with the Runes of their god or similar magical power source; for a faction, it might be the strength of a doctrine or ideal that drives its members to action.

Initiative The association equivalent of Strike Rank, Initiative is an association's ability to act first in any given scenario – be that negotiating a trade deal, mobilising its followers or striking the first blow for political freedom.

Reputation An association's Reputation is a measure of past deeds and the reputation that goes with them, either for good or ill.

Affinities

The number of Affinity Points an association has is based on SIZ+INF. Add the two together and cross-reference the result on the Affinities table. As INF can have three values, use the highest of the INF values:

| Total of SIZ and INF | Affinity Points |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1-5 | 1D2 |
| 6-10 | 1D4 |
| 11-15 | 1D6 |
| 16-20 | 2D4 |
| 21-25 | 2D6 |
| 26-30 | 2D8 |
| 31-35 | 2D10 |
| 36-40 | 2D12 |
| 41-45 | 2D20 |
| 46-50 | 2D20+5 |
| 51-60 | 2D20+10 |
| 61-70 | 2D20+15 |
| 71-80 | 2D20+20 |
| 81-100+ | 2D20+25 |

Affinities mean different things to different types of association. Cults, for example, might have a mixture of types of affinity: Runes, myths, sub-cults, special items, sacred places, spirits and so forth. The types of affinity available are discussed in the appropriate chapter for each type of association; but essentially Affinity Points are used to buy areas of influence, skills, myths, magic and so forth.

Initiative

The ability to seize the initiative in a given undertaking can make a tremendous difference to an association's fortunes. Initiative works much like Strike Rank;

the base Initiative is INF+COM divided by 2 (round down) and when Initiative is needed to decide who acts first, the result of a 1D10 roll is added to the base Initiative to determine the order of action. Always use the highest INF score when calculating Initiative.

Reputation

Reputation represents the association's general reputation – both of the association and characters who are members of it. The association's base Reputation is INF+COM+POP divided by 3 (round down); it works in the ways described on pages 165-167 of *RuneQuest Deluxe*.

Capabilities

Capabilities correspond to skills for Player Characters. Associations have both Basic Capabilities and Advanced Capabilities, with the base value being derived from one or more Characteristics. Capabilities can be used directly when associations are dealing with an issue at an abstract level or can lend themselves as bonuses to players' characters when dealing with situations at a personal level.

Basic Capabilities

All associations have the following Basic Capabilities:

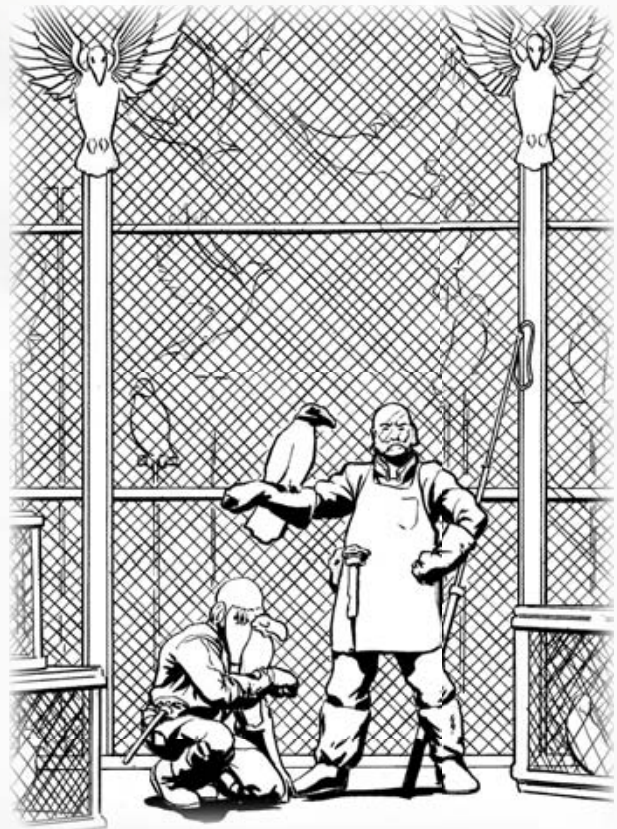
| Capability | Base Characteristic(s) |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Bureaucracy | 10+COM |
| Combat | MIL+SIZ |
| Credit | WTH+POP |
| Diplomacy | COM+POP |
| Favour | COM+POP |
| Lore (Association) | INF+COM+30 |
| Persistence | SIZ+POP |
| Recruitment | INF+POP |
| Training | COM+SIZ |

BUREAUCRACY (10+COM)

This is the capability to deal, efficiently, with the association's own bureaucracy and the bureaucracy of others the association comes into contact with. It is a measure of the skill of both individual officers working for the association, plus a general familiarity

with bureaucratic procedures to effect a reasonable and beneficial result.

For example, The Illustrious Guild of Aviators wants to open a new aviary in Filkhar's prestigious Westwall District. The local burghers have refused the development because locals do not want a massive pigeon-coop defiling their neighbourhood. The Illustrious Guild of Aviators has Bureaucracy at 94% – they are experts in negotiating red tape. With a successful roll of 64%, the Guild uses local planning law and its own knowledge of how Filkharian building developments work, to obfuscate the burghers and prove that what they are building is not really a pigeon-coop but a much needed 'communications enhancement facility'. The application goes through and pigeon squawking fills the peaceful lanes of Westwall.



COMBAT (MIL+SIZ)

When an association is forced into armed or violent conflict, this capability is used as an abstraction for the combat expertise of those who fight on its

behalf. Depending on the circumstances individual combat skills may be preferable but at an abstract level, the Combat capability is used to resolve inter-association conflicts.

CREDIT (WTH+POP)

The Credit capability measures an association's ability to raise credit or finance at short notice or to secure investment for one venture or another. Even cash-rich associations may need to secure a credit line to pursue certain projects, thereby limiting personal risk. An association with a good Credit score is seen as a low or reasonable risk by other investors, with the ability to repay loans at the agreed rate in the agreed time. If an association fails to meet its credit obligations, its Credit rating may be reduced to reflect the circumstances.

For example, the Brotherhood of the Wheel has a Credit of 46%. It wants to buy property in Mainz for use as a training establishment but the association's leaders do not wish to risk personal capital on the sale and seek a loan from a wealthy Mainz investor. On a successful Credit test of 37 the loan is granted and repayments set.

A year later and circumstances have impacted on the Brotherhood's finances; it is struggling to repay the instalments agreed on the loan. Although a deal is worked out, the Games Master decides that until the Brotherhood's finances are stable and solid, it will suffer a -15% penalty to its Credit, taking it down to 31%.

DIPLOMACY (COM+POP)

Diplomacy relies on finding peaceful resolutions to potentially violent conflicts and establishing good relations in areas where an association might be viewed with suspicion or hostility. This Capability reflects the investment in diplomats, forging the right connections, establishing good relations and a willingness to use diplomatic efforts in preference to more forceful means. Diplomacy can be used to contest against any of the Basic Capabilities with success achieving a peaceful resolution to a problem that would otherwise result in potential violence. A successful Diplomacy test, either opposed or unopposed, depending on the circumstances, manages to wheedle the sponsor out of an embarrassing and damaging incident.

The Order of the Wolf, a violent and egotistical Beast Order of Granbretan, has upset the Order of the Boar, which enjoys the favour of King Emperor Huon. Although the Grand Constable of the Order of the Wolf, Baron Meliadus of Kroiden, would prefer to have the head of the Order of the Boar assassinated, he realises that it would be better to find a diplomatic outcome – especially as Meliadus wants to gain favour with the King Emperor. The Order of the Wolf has Diplomacy at 29%; the Order of the Boar chooses to resist with its Lore (Order of the Boar). The Wolves roll 28% against Diplomacy and the Boars roll 22% against their Lore of 56%. Here, both sides are successful but because this is an Opposed Test, the higher success prevails; the Order of the Wolf manages to apologise for its slight, Baron Meliadus promises an exchange of valuable slaves and harmony is restored without bloodshed.

FAVOUR (COM+POP)

Favour equates to public relations; the ability to win-over others through the charisma of the association's ideals and the personal charisma of its officers and representatives. It could therefore be viewed as the equivalent of the Influence or Oratory skills for characters but takes into account not so much the political influence of the association but how well it markets what it stands for.

For example, the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs has Favour at 52%. Called to speak in the forum of the Kustrian Grand Council, where it hopes to sway the councillors into allowing it to place its guild crest above the gates of every stable in town, as a badge of quality, it needs to persuade the council of the merits of doing so. The Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs rolls 56 against its 52% Favour; clearly, although its standing and reputation is reasonable, it lacks a compelling argument in this instance and fails to convince the Kustrian Grand Council of its intentions. Its request is denied.

LORE (SPECIFIC ASSOCIATION) (INF+COM+30)

Used in precisely the same way as any other Lore skill, the Lore Capability is specific to that cult and is a measure of its history, depth of belief, customs,

conventions, rites and practices. The higher the Lore (Association) rating, the stronger and deeper the richness of its cultural tapestry. Any character that takes the same Lore (Specific Association) cannot exceed the association's own rating in this Capability.

PERSISTENCE (SIZ+POP)

Persistence measures an association's confidence, as represented by the strength of belief in its institutions, ideals and goals by its members. Persistence is used to resist hostile magic but also to counter attacks and threats that come in the form of negative publicity, scandal and other challenges that are levelled at its basis for existence.

RECRUITMENT (INF+POP)

This is the association's ability to recruit new members from amongst sympathisers and to convert others away from rival associations. Recruitment is vital to every association if it is to continue to exist and characters, when attempting to make converts, draw upon the Recruitment Capability to assist their efforts. Recruitment is used as part of Metagame Events but can also be used ad-hoc if an association needs to recruit specific skills for its undertakings.

For example, the Brotherhood of the Wheel needs to recruit a forger, on a temporary basis, to make some counterfeit travel papers allowing its members to operate in Granbretan-controlled areas of France. No one in the Brotherhood has the necessary skills, so the leaders decide to recruit a dedicated forger from the city of Mainz. The Recruitment Capability is used to find and attract someone with relevant expertise that will demonstrate loyalty to the Brotherhood's cause. A roll of 21 against the Recruitment Capability of 27% means that the Brotherhood of the Wheel successfully recruits a sympathetic forger who will offer the right levels of discretion.

TRAINING (COM+SIZ)

The ability to train members is important to any association. The Training Capability measures the availability of training from within its ranks and is discussed in greater detail in the chapters detailing each kind of association.

Valius, a merchant member of the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs, approaches the guild seeking

training in Lore (EWF) in preparation for a trade mission in the borderlands of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. The Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs' Training Capability is 23%; a roll against this produces 19 – a success. The guild knows that one of its members has spent time in EWF lands and will be able to offer training to Valius, at guild rates. It makes the arrangements for the two men to meet.

Advanced Capabilities

All associations possess the Basic Capabilities. Advanced Capabilities are not common to all and are accrued according to association type, background and specialisation.

| Capability | Base Characteristic(s) |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Commerce | INF+WTH |
| Culture | INF+POP |
| Espionage | COM+WTH |
| Indoctrination | COM |
| Technology | WTH |
| Warfare | MIL |
| Zeal | POP |

COMMERCE (INF+WTH)

The Commerce Capability measures the association's competence and skill in trading with others. The Capability is used in negotiating trade deals, bargaining on tariffs and duties and generally measures the strength and size of its mercantile base. When two entities, such as an association and a state, enter trade negotiations, Commerce rolls are made in an Opposed Test. The winner strikes the most advantageous deal or gains its way in the negotiations.

For example, The Illustrious Guild of Aviators' Commerce Capability is 80%, indicating a reasonably powerful trading capability. It intends to strike a trade deal with a rival guild over the price of pigeon feed. The rival guild's Commerce is 90%. In the Opposed contest to resolve the price of feed the Aviators roll a 75 whilst the rival rolls 07, a critical success. The rivals out-manoevre the Aviators in the negotiations, settling a deal at the price the Aviators want but on terms favourable to the rival guild: the rival guild manages to secure free messaging using Aviator resources for the next year – not something the Aviators would have ever offered willingly.

Culture (INF+POD)

The association has a strong tradition of pursuits in the cultural arts: music, scripture, poetry, sculpture, fine art and so forth. The importance with which it considers these pursuits depends on the value of the Culture Capability score, which also reflects its ability to influence others with its own cultural practices.

For example, the vogue amongst God Learner high society is for high-necked gowns with laced bodices. The Zistorwal Guild of Mechafashions detests this effeminate style and its members create new gowns based on the gearing mechanisms found in the Clanking City's prayer computers. With a Culture capability of 66%, the Zistorwal Guild of Mechafashions needs to roll 66 or less to get its designs into fashionable circles to have a cultural impact. It succeeds – critically – on 03. Gowns made from beaten copper with cogwheel collars and ruffs become all the rage following a devastatingly successful catwalk appearance at Jrustela Fashion Week.



Espionage (COM+UTCh)

The association's capability in discovering and keeping secrets – from its own people, other associations or within a state. The higher the score in this Capability, the more mature the apparatus for espionage and the greater the determination to use it to achieve superiority in some shape or form. Good Espionage relies on mature communication networks and the resources with which to fund it. Espionage can be subjected to modifiers depending on the integrity of those one is spying on. As a rule of thumb, reduce the Espionage Capability by 1 point for every 3 points of Espionage a rival has.

The Order of the Wolf has spies everywhere, reflected in its Espionage of 94%. Whenever Baron Meliadus, Grand Constable of the Order, wants to know what his enemies are doing, a roll is made against Espionage and, depending on the degree of success, Meliadus learns what he needs to know – and sometimes more.

However, Meliadus wants to know why Sir Huillam D'Averc, of the detested Order of the Boar, has been sent to the island of Sicilia. The Order of the Boar has an Espionage Capability of 60%; thus, on the 1:3 ratio described above, it will reduce the Order of the Wolf's Espionage by 20%. Thus, to learn the reason for D'Averc's appointment, the Wolves will need to roll 74% or less.

Indoctrination (COM)

This Capability is the art of indoctrinating others into the ways of an association through misdirection, brainwashing, deception and outright lies. It can be used to supplement or replace the Recruitment and Espionage Capabilities, as it is a subtle manipulation of the truth to subvert what individuals and other associations know (or strongly hold) to be the truth. Attempts at Indoctrination can be resisted by the Lore, Persistence or Culture Capabilities of an individual or an association, in an Opposed Test. If the party using Indoctrination succeeds, then it has successfully turned an opponent into an advocate and if it critically succeeds, has managed to completely subvert previous beliefs with its own views.

For example, an emissary from Granbretan, the odious Tarens Heval of the Order of the Weasel, is sent to meet with the Brotherhood of the Wheel,

intent on discovering what the Brotherhood knows of the Runestaff. The Brotherhood wines and dines Tarens Heval and decides that it will attempt to Indoctrinate him into their agenda, thereby gaining a useful spy inside Granbretan. The Indoctrination attempt takes place over the course of Heval's visit and the Games Master rules that Heval's Persistence can be used to resist it. The Brotherhood of the Wheel has Indoctrination 53% and Heval a Persistence of 58%. Dice are rolled. The Brotherhood rolls 52 and Heval 63. By the end of his week-long sojourn with the Brotherhood, Heval leaves with his will completely bent to the Brotherhood's belief that the Runestaff is just the axle of the Runewheel and thus of rather less importance than Granbretan had previously considered it.

Technology (UTCh)

In a fantasy world, technology may not have advanced very far beyond simple items such as waterclocks or windmills. However, some associations may have a relatively advanced technological base as a result of research, education, ingenuity or even magical experimentation. This Capability measures an association's technological base and maturity, with the higher the Technology score reflecting a higher propensity to develop and invest in technological and scientific exploration. The Capability is used to see if a particular new avenue of research is successfully pursued or if technological advances are successfully implemented elsewhere. Where two associations have developed similar innovations, then Technology Capabilities are Oppose Tested against each other, with the winner having the innovation that becomes accepted, widespread and moves into the annals of posterity.

The Zistorite Cult, the Cogs of Zistor, have captured a Mostali machine that they believe can be converted to make magical items at twice the speed of their current devices. Cogs of Zistor revealers are set to work studying the device. With a Technology Capability of 85%, the Cogs of Zistor have a very good chance of learning exactly how the Mostali machine works, how to get it working and, if they scored a critical on a Technology roll, even how to improve it...

Warfare (MIL)

The Warfare Capability is the association's ability to wage prolonged warfare under battle conditions and is, in this case, distinct from Combat. The higher the rating, the more effective the association is when going into battle. In Conflict, Warfare can be substituted for the Combat Capability.

Zeal (POP)

Zeal is the ability to inculcate followers with an overriding sense of purpose. Existing association members can be persuaded to exceed existing moral restraint in pursuit of the association's wider agenda or a single goal. It might be necessary for an association to first succeed in Indoctrination before a Zeal attempt can be made but where used successfully, Zeal forces association members to contemplate and engage in, acts that put their self-interest at the back of the queue, placing the association's needs first and foremost and pursuing them with righteous intensity.

The normally temperate Illustrious Guild of Aviators is fed-up with the rival Association of Righteous Messengers; its leaders decide to burn-down the Association of Righteous Messengers' brand new guildhouse on the outskirts of Raschil. The membership deplore the idea but with a Zeal of 18%, there is a chance that some of the more outspoken Aviators will be persuaded that their livelihoods are at stake if drastic action is not taken. The roll against Zeal is 47%; a dismal failure and the members are unmoved to march with flaming brands. Had the Zeal roll succeeded, then an angry mob of Aviators would have been prepared to commit arson in order to protect their ancient guild's future.

Cultural Background

Every association operates in a cultural framework, much as characters do. An association's cultural background determines its outlook, its structure and provides bonuses to its Basic and Advanced Capabilities.

The cultural backgrounds are similar to those available to Player Characters.

Barbarian

Barbarian cultures have no developed central capital city, with the government tending to be reliant on tribal and clan alliances. Literacy levels tend to be low and the state revolves around time-honoured cultures, practices, superstitions and taboos. Barbarian cultures may have some semi-developed sea-going capability (such as the Vikings) but are, largely, workers of the land and raiders of other territories. The propensity for violent conflict tends to be quite high, reflecting territorial concerns and the use of diplomacy either rare or non-existent.

However Barbarian cultures are neither ignorant nor uneducated. Learning and knowledge may not be codified and stored, as in many civilised nations but it is there in stories, myths, oral traditions and social practices. Civilised nations may scorn barbarians and civilised empires see them as easy conquests but the Barbarian culture usually displays a rugged tenacity that surprises those who feel it is a backward society or easy victory.

Basic Capabilities
Combat, Favour, Lore and Persistence +10%.

Advanced Capabilities
Choose one from Commerce, Warfare or Zeal.

Civilised

The Civilised culture is based around urban centres: towns, cities and great metropolises. Store is placed in the arts but may equally be placed in warfare and subterfuge. Government is supported by an organised bureaucracy and a governing body such as a forum, senate or parliament – although religious agencies such as temples and churches may exercise rule or have a heavy influence.

Civilised societies have reasonably developed trade and commerce systems with international imports and exports bolstering the economy. Coinage is used although it may not be commonplace for the lower

orders of the society, where barter still holds sway in the markets. Essentially the Civilised society is organised and takes care with its organisation, using centralised mechanisms of state to ensure decision making and matters of domestic and foreign policy are co-ordinated.

Basic Capabilities
Bureaucracy, Credit, Diplomacy and Training at +10%.

Advanced Capabilities
Choose one from Commerce, Culture or Espionage.

Primitive

Primitive societies have no form of government beyond simple tribal rituals. The ruler is usually the strongest individual, supported by a religious agent such as a shaman, although this is not always the case. The economy is hunter-gatherer subsistence with no coinage and primitive tools and techniques. The extent of the primitive culture's domain is usually defined by hunting trails and how far the hunters and gatherers are prepared to walk to find food. There is no domestication of animals and, whilst tribes might war with each other, there are no organised armies or fighting forces.

Basic Capabilities
Lore, Persistence and Recruitment at +10%.

Advanced Capabilities
Zeal.

Free Capability points

Having determined Characteristics, Capabilities and Cultural Background type, the association can now be rounded out by developing the base Capability scores.

Each state gains 100 Free Capability points that can be spent on developing Basic and Advanced Capabilities.

- ☒ Basic Capabilities increase by 1% for each Capability point spent.
- ☒ New Advanced Capabilities can be bought for 10 Capability points and further developed at the same cost as Basic Capabilities.
- ☒ Existing Advanced Capabilities can be developed by 1% for each Capability point spent.
- ☒ There is no cap on how many Capability points can be allocated to either Basic or Advanced Capabilities.
- ☒ Primitive Associations may not invest points in the Technology Capability.

- ☒ Allies and Enemies
- ☒ Possessions
- ☒ Personalities

The Characteristics, Attributes and Capabilities will be helpful in establishing the different framework elements, as explored below.

Origins and History

To develop this part of the framework, ask yourself (and attempt to answer) the following questions:

How and why, did the association come into being?

How old is it?

Who founded it?

What achievements has it made in its history?

What have been its defining moments?

Anything that contributes to the association's beginnings and development is pertinent to put into this framework element. Origins and History may not necessarily reflect how the association is *now* but they are important and may come into play at some point in the campaign.

Framework

Having calculated Characteristics, Attributes and Capabilities, it is now time to consider the association's *framework*.

In reality, the framework can come before any dice are rolled or points spent; the framework is the *narrative* that defines the association's history, aims, way of operating and so forth. The framework can be as vague or as detailed as one likes – it will develop during play or can be embellished later – but deciding on the basics of the framework is always useful at an early stage so that the developments that come in the later chapters have something solid to build upon.

The elements of the framework are:

- ☒ Origins and History
- ☒ Aims and Goals
- ☒ Modus Operandi

Aims and Goals

Aims are generally things the association wants to bring about in the short to medium term, whereas Goals are long-term, sustainable objectives supported by the Aims. It is best to have one or two Goals, supported by four or five Aims but there is no set limit. The clearer and more specific the Aims and Goals, the more easily understood the association is.

Examples

We left John having created two associations: *The Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs* and *the Brotherhood of the Wheel*. He now needs to determine the Attributes, Background and Capabilities for each.

The Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs has the following Attributes and Capabilities:

Affinities: 2D8 (SIZ+INF=26): John rolls 12 – the society has 12 Affinity Points.

Initiative: 15 (INF 16+COM 13, divided by 2 and rounded up)

Reputation: 14 (INF 16+COM 13+POP 13, divided by 3 and rounded up)

As Kustria is Civilised, it has *Bureaucracy, Credit, Diplomacy and Training* at +10%; for the *Advanced Capability*, John chooses *Commerce*. John then spends 100 points to develop these Capabilities as follows:

| | Base | Cultural Background Bonus | Free Capability points | Total |
|--------------------|------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| <i>Bureaucracy</i> | 23% | +10% | +0% | 33% |
| <i>Credit</i> | 24% | +10% | +20% | 54% |
| <i>Diplomacy</i> | 26% | +10% | +20% | 56% |
| <i>Training</i> | 23% | +10% | +20% | 53% |
| <i>Commerce</i> | 27% | N/A | +40% | 67% |

The Brotherhood of the Wheel looks like this:

Affinities: 2D8 (SIZ+INF=26): John rolls 9 – the cult has 9 Affinity Points.

Initiative: 14 (INF 18+COM 10, divided by 2 and rounded up)

Reputation: 16 (INF 18+COM 10+POP 18, divided by 3 and rounded up)

Again, *the Brotherhood of the Wheel* is a Civilised Association and so gains *Bureaucracy, Credit, Diplomacy and Training* at +10%; for the *Advanced Capability*, John chooses *Technology* (because the Hawkmoon setting has access to the sorcery/science of the Tragic Millennium). John then spends 100 points to develop these Capabilities as follows:

| | Base | Cultural Background Bonus | Free Capability points | Total |
|--------------------|------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| <i>Bureaucracy</i> | 20% | +10% | +0% | 30% |
| <i>Credit</i> | 24% | +10% | +12% | 46% |
| <i>Diplomacy</i> | 28% | +10% | +18% | 56% |
| <i>Training</i> | 18% | +10% | +25% | 53% |
| <i>Technology</i> | 18% | N/A | +20% | 38% |
| <i>Zeal</i> | 13% | N/A | +25% | 28% |

John uses 25 of his 100 points to buy the *Advanced Capability* of *Zeal* and increase it by an additional 10%.

Both Associations will be further developed as their natures are explored – and we will watch their progress in the following chapters.

Example Aims and Goals

| | Aims | Goals |
|---------|--|--|
| Guild | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduce the price of wood <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extend membership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establish a training college <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drive-Out the Carpentry Guild | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure better working conditions for members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Become the finest craftsmen in Kustria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain the Royal Warrant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Achieve the Royal Warrant |
| Faction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smash the Order of the Wolf <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learn the Sacred Spells of St Hrestol <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure enough votes to gain a council seat <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smear the reputation of Terhali's supporters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Find and wield the Runestaff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure supreme executive authority in Loskalm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Win the War for Freedom! <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Destroy all opposition |
| Cult | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learn the secrets of the Snake Dance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gain the Sixth Sword of Xiombarg the Empress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wrest the Rune of Light from the Darkness Cult <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prove the falsehood of the prophets of Aral Wilson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promote the worship of Orlanth the Dragon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instate the Sword Rulers as the State Religion of Jharkor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attain the Rune of Mastery through understanding each precept of Yelm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Become the sole religion of Granbretan, proving all others to be False Gods |

Modus Operandi

The way the association operates. Take into account the association's Capabilities and think about how it achieves its aims and goals. Some questions to ask yourself:

Is the association peaceful?

Is violence an option?

How does the association view its competitors and rivals?

Is it ruthless in how it gains the things it wants or prepared to compromise?

How does it use its wealth and maximise its assets?

What does it do particularly well and what could it do better?

Does it crusade for its beliefs?

Is it (or has it been) the subject of repression?

Again, the Modus Operandi can be as detailed or vague as one wishes but a general view on how it works is a useful foundation for further development?

One question that *should* be addressed as part of the framework is: *How are Members Expected to Behave?* What is required of members? How are they rewarded? What happens if they step out of line? Associations are concerned with forms of behaviour and reinforcing

certain modes of behaviour through common agreement, religious observance, political affiliation and furtherance of the Aims and Goals. If members do not behave as the association expects, sanctions in some shape or form usually follow: consider what those sanctions will be.

Allies and Enemies

Who are the friends, competitors, rivals and outright enemies of your association? These might be similar associations or specific guilds, factions or cults; the enemy might be a particular individual with an axe to grind or an oppressive government. Indeed, the association might have no enemies at all – but may gain them in time. Or it might be powerful enough so that no rivals dare contemplate becoming enemies. Consider all the options; the more this framework element has, the greater the scope for the Games Master during the campaign.

Possessions

Special possessions are bought using the Affinities but every association has various accoutrements of office that its history and wealth have brought it. For the sake of simplicity, every association has each of the following:

A Place of Meeting

Use WTH to help determine the size and nature of the meeting place, using the examples from the following table:

| WTH | Guild/Faction | Cult |
|-------|---|---|
| 1-3 | A rented room in a tavern, inn or other establishment | A sacred meeting place but no formal structure to house it |
| 4-6 | Several rented rooms in different parts of town | A makeshift shrine by a roadside |
| 7-9 | A rented house or office space | A decent shrine and a sacred meeting place – perhaps in a larger temple |
| 10-12 | A small house or office owned outright | 1D6 shrines scattered throughout the area of influence |
| 13-15 | A large house or office owned outright | A small temple of its own, maintained by donations |
| 16-18 | A large house or office owned outright, with 1D3 additional smaller, rented properties | A reasonable sized temple, that hosts shrines to other gods |
| 19-21 | A grand, imposing property, owned outright | A grand imposing temple that is dedicated to one god, unassailably |
| 22+ | A grand, imposing property, owned outright and 1D3 large houses or offices owned outright | A major cathedral |

Association Documents

These could be sacred scrolls, a holy book, articles of membership and so on. Every association has documents that describe it and form the basis of its rules.

Uniforms and Vestments

Clothing for ceremonial purposes. WTH dictates how fine and ornate these are; low WTH indicates badges and hand-made symbols of office; high WTH indicates the finest fabrics, uniforms for all members; bespoke coats of arms and so on.

Personalities

Associations are composed of people. The SIZ Characteristic determines the *overall* membership but every association has a number of Personalities. The number of personalities in each region where the association operates equals its INF. For example if a Guild has an INF of 13/7/3, then there will be 13 notables in the local area, 7 in outlying guild outposts within the nation and 3 somewhere in the rest of the world. These are the movers and shakers of the association; its leaders and proselytisers; the public face of the association and the embodiment of its aims. The personalities should be living characters, prepared using the *RuneQuest* rules and may include



Player Characters. Clearly, the number of personalities *cannot* be greater than the total number of members.

The Affinities Attribute is used for developing *Heroic Personalities*. You may spend 1 Affinity Point to turn any one **Non-Player Character** personality into a Seasoned, 2 points to turn a personality into a Veteran, 3 points into a Master and 4 Affinity Points into a Hero, using the rules from page 192 of *RuneQuest Deluxe*. This person is either a living, breathing hero of your association or may be the reputation and spirit of a hero long past, whose deeds and personality are still forceful enough to boost the association's credibility.

There is no limit, save Affinity Points, to the number of Heroes you can buy; but note that spending all one's Affinity Points on creating Heroic Personalities means there are less for other essentials for the Association – as detailed in the individual chapters for Guilds, Factions and Cults.

Once personalities have been determined, create their characters as per the standard *RuneQuest* rules and then flesh each one out by answering some or all, of the following questions:

What is the character's background in relation to the association? What is his rank? What are his deeds? What are his aims and goals? How is he viewed within the association? What are his likes and dislikes? How does he behave? How does he expect others to behave? Does he represent the association's best interests?

Examples

John needs to decide the framework for his two associations. He decides on a relatively vague format for each, for now, figuring that once he starts running his Glorantha and Hawkmoon campaigns, more detail will be added. Here's how the two associations look under the framework.

| Framework Element | Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs | Brotherhood of the Wheel |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Origin and History</i> | A relatively young guild based on the tenets of Saint Alagyus, a God Learner merchant who accompanied the Rightness Army caravans into new territories, at the very start of the God Learner Empire. Saint Alagyus was martyred in Kustria by a group of radicalised idealists opposed to free trade. The guild is only 20 years old. | An ancient order based in the village of Bakarak, a settlement on the Rhine in the shadow of Burg Stahlek – a brooding castle that was once home to sorcerers. The Brotherhood was founded two centuries ago to protect the fabled Runewheel, which was forged in Burg Stahlek and has been separated from its axle, the Runestaff. The Von Bok family, related to the Hawkmoons of Köln, are the appointed guardians of the Runewheel. All nobles of Bakarak are members of the order by birthright. |
| <i>Aims and Goals</i> | Aims: To secure free trade for all Kustrian caravan merchants, based on the best rates. Goal: To become the trading guild of choice throughout the God Learner Empire. | Aims: Protect Bakarak; find the Runestaff. Goals: Reunite the Runewheel and the Runestaff. |
| <i>Modus Operandi</i> | The guild regulates all caravans within the city of Kustria and guild members must use guild facilities, bodyguards and stables. A levy of 5% of all sales is payable each year to the guild and members must attend the Annual Guild Meeting at the guild's premises. The guild does not tolerate rivalry between members and insists on fair competition and equal prices. Anyone caught in breach of these rules will be expelled and forbidden to work as a merchant in Kustria's walls. | This is a martial order. All nobles of Bakarak are members and must swear an oath upon the Runestaff to reunite the Staff and the Wheel to ensure the progress of Fate. Every man, woman and child of Bakarak is in the care of the Brotherhood. No slight, insult or injury will be tolerated against any member of the community. In return, all must worship the sanctity of the Axle and the Wheel. Granbretan is considered an enemy: no mercy must be shown to the Masked Oppressors. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Allies and Enemies</i> | <p>The guild is opposed by the Free Trade Syndicate, which is a group of noble adventuring merchants who have got rich through exploiting the efforts of others, through inflated prices. As an ally, the guild has the Indomitable Mercenaries of Ahl – ex-Rightness Army warriors who also give worship to St Alagys.</p> | <p>The Hawkmoon dynasty of Köln is an ally.</p> <p>The Beast Orders of Granbretan are enemies, in particular the Order of the Tiger which has tried to steal the Runewheel and return it to Londra.</p> |
| <i>Possessions</i> | <p>A modest, self-owned guildhouse and stables, with a small staff including a blacksmith and farrier.</p> <p>The Grey Book of Alagys is the guild's foundation for membership: it is Saint Alagys's diary which explores the secrets of successful trade and profit.</p> <p>The guild has a decent crest: symbol of a wagon being carried in the claws of a griffin. Members wear a brooch bearing this design and the guild leaders a signet ring with the design as a seal.</p> | <p>The Wheel Lodge is an ancient house owned outright by the Brotherhood. It is nothing much to look at from the outside but within is treasure-filled and opulent. The Brotherhood meets here every month to discuss business and assign quests.</p> <p>The sacred tools of the Wheel Builders: wheelwrighting equipment found in Burg Stahlek which proves the Runewheel's existence.</p> <p>The symbol of the Brotherhood is a simple, golden, wheel-like pendant, inscribed with Runes. The elite warriors may wear a cloak emblazoned with the same symbol.</p> |
| <i>Personalities</i> | <p>Two Personalities:</p> <p>Valius the Dour (Master Level, Civilised Merchant) – the sombre, straight-talking head of the society and a direct descendant of St Alagys. He hates the Free Trade Syndicate passionately, blaming them for the ruin of his father and grandfather.</p> <p>Nashi'ain Whipblade (Veteran Level mercenary) – the snake-hipped and deadly leader of the Indomitable Mercenaries and a member of the society's council. Fearsome with both a rapier and bullwhip.</p> | <p><i>Three Personalities (and John spends an Affinity Point to create a Hero).</i></p> <p><i>Duke Lucius von Bok (Master Level noble) – the jovial but protective leader of the Brotherhood and custodian of the cult's secrets.</i></p> <p><i>Andreas Pyttel, Knight of the Wheel (Hero Level warrior) – foremost of the crusading warriors and the man who single-handedly slew the Ogretroll of Mainz with a single blow of his zweihander.</i></p> <p><i>Kristian Eynspaun (Veteran Level Scholar) – a friend of Bowgentle and a noted antiquarian; an expert in all matters relating to the Runestaff and Runewheel but tormented by dreams of a radiant beauty who will lead to the Brotherhood's destruction.</i></p> |

GUILDS

Guilds, in the western European tradition, are affiliations or societies of master craftsmen and other artisans, including professions such as scribes, who protect their trade and professional interests within a town or city. They are responsible for setting prices and creating standards of practice and 'marks' of quality. The modern trademark, quality mark and patent systems all originated with the guild system. Many had religious affiliations, leading to strong relationships between church and craft that have persisted to this day: freemasonry being perhaps the best known example.

In towns and cities where guilds operate, it is almost impossible to practice a particular profession without joining the guild. Those who do not, quickly find custom deserting them, accompanied by whispering campaigns decrying the poor quality of the goods or services being offered, deliberate acts of sabotage and, in extreme cases, outright violence. Joining a guild means paying a regular contribution to the guild's coffers and, in return, gaining support in disputes, access to certain materials in the guild's control, access to 'fair' markets (although that is fair in the eyes of the guild, not necessarily the member) and, at the highest levels, access to guild secrets. Guild members are bound by oath to uphold guild traditions, maintain guild secrets, abide by guild pricing tariffs and to offer goods and services meeting guild standards of excellence. This seems like good news and, for the most part it is but guilds are, first and foremost, concerned with their own interests. Standards of quality and set prices are what the guild believes to be reasonable, not the consumer and because independent trade is stifled, customers are frequently forced to accept guild terms and conditions that may not be (and often definitely are not) in their favour.

Guild Types

Guilds typically fall into two types: *merchant* and *craft*.

Merchant Guilds

Merchant guilds are merchant organisations involved in local and long-distance commerce of commodities in their hometowns and cities and foreign settlements where they have managed to gain the rights to establish themselves. The largest and most influential merchant guilds participate in international commerce and politics and have managed to establish offshoots in foreign cities. In many cases, merchant guilds manage to become inextricably entwined with the governments of their areas of operation.

Merchant guilds enforce contracts among members and between members and the outside world. Guilds police members' behaviour because commerce tends to operate according to a system of community responsibility. If a merchant from a particular town fails to fulfil his part of a bargain or pay his debts, *all* members of his guild could be held liable. When in a foreign port, guild members' goods can be seized and sold to alleviate the toxic debt. This enforces a return to base of operations, where the afflicted members would seek compensation from the original defaulter.

Merchant guilds also protect their members from the predations of rulers. A king seeking revenue for some endeavour (most notably and expensively, war) has an incentive to seize money and merchandise from foreign merchants. Guilds can threaten to boycott the markets of such rulers; and, since boycotts impoverish both kingdoms which depend on commerce and governments for whom tariffs are the principal source of revenue, the threat of retaliation acts as a deterrent against rulers making excessive demands or attempting both lawful and unlawful seizure.

Craft Guilds

Craft guilds are organised along the lines of particular trades with members typically being small businesses or family workshops. The guild provides the means for the produce of one crafter to be taken and converted into

the final, marketable product, without the individual member being exploited by those crafters who refine the raw material for market. Guilds of manufacturing trades make durable goods and when profitable, export them from their towns and cities to consumers in foreign markets. Guilds also sell skills and services; scribing and scholarly guilds, for example; or guilds for particular entertainers.

- Tallow chandlers (candlemakers)
- Upholders (upholsterers)
- Vintners
- Wax Chandlers (candlemakers)
- Weavers
- Wheelwrights
- Woolmen (winders and packers of wool)

Examples of typical craft guilds:

- Apothecaries
- Armourers & Brasiers (armourers and workers in brass)
- Bakers
- Barbers (including surgeons and dentists)
- Basketmakers
- Blacksmiths
- Bowyers (longbow makers)
- Brewers
- Broderers (embroiderers)
- Butchers
- Carpenters
- Chandlers (candle makers)
- Clothworkers
- Cordwainers (workers in fine leather)
- Cobblers
- Curriers (dressers of tanned leather)
- Cutlers
- Dyers
- Farriers (shoers of horses, distinct from blacksmithing)
- Fishmongers
- Fletchers (arrow makers)
- Girdlers (girdles and belts as clothing)
- Goldsmiths
- Loriners (tack, stirrups and other harness for horses)
- Masons
- Mercers (general merchants)
- Needlemakers
- Pattenmakers (makers of wooden clog-style footwear)
- Plaisterers (plasterers)
- Plumbers
- Poulterers
- Saddlers
- Salters
- Scriveners (writers of court letters and legal documents)
- Skinners



Guild Structure and Organisation

Guild members have to cooperate if they are to work effectively. A guild wishing to lower the costs of labour has to persuade all members to lower wages. Guilds wanting to raise the prices of products have to get all members to restrict output. Guilds wanting to develop reputations and corner niche markets have to ensure all members sell superior merchandise and work to impeccable standards. Some of these objectives are not mutually compatible but that does not mean that guilds will not attempt to achieve all their goals simultaneously.

The demand on guild members is therefore high: guild members contribute money through regular membership payments which are then used to pursue the guild's objectives and contribute time, emotion and personal energy in bringing those goals about (even where personal reasons make them reluctant to do so). To convince members to cooperate and advance their common interests, guilds tend to form stable, self-enforcing associations that possess structures for making and implementing collective decisions.

A guild's members can be expected to meet at least once a year (and in most cases more often) to elect officers, audit accounts, induct new members, debate policies and amend ordinances; decisions are usually made by majority vote among the master craftsmen.

In large guilds officers such as aldermen, stewards, deans and clerks are employed to manage the guild's day-to-day affairs.

- ☒ **Aldermen** direct guild activities and supervise lower-ranking officers.
- ☒ **Stewards** keep guild funds and their accounts are periodically audited.
- ☒ **Deans** summon members to meetings, feasts and funerals and in many cases, police members' behaviour.
- ☒ **Searchers** scrutinise members' merchandise to make sure it meets guild standards and inspect members' shops and homes seeking evidence of attempts to circumvent the rules.
- ☒ **Clerks** maintain records, take and publish minutes and attend to the common bureaucracy of the guild.

Guild officers administer a network of agreements among a guild's members. Details of these agreements naturally vary from guild to guild but the issues addressed are common. Members agree to contribute certain resources and/or take certain actions furthering the guild's activities – and members who fail to fulfil their obligations face punishments and sanctions.

Large guilds maintain a definite hierarchy. **Masters** are full members who own their own workshops, retail outlets or trading vessels. Masters employ **Journeyman**, (labourers working on short-term contracts for wages on a daily basis). Journeymen,

PLAYER CHARACTER MASTERS

In *RuneQuest* terms, a to qualify as a Master a character must:

- ☒ Have been a guild member for at least five years.
- ☒ Own his working premises and employ at least one apprentice and one journeyman.
- ☒ Have the appropriate skill for his occupation at 80% or greater.

through diligence, can, one day advance to the level of master. To do this, journeymen usually have to save enough money to open a workshop or if they are lucky, receive a workshop through marriage or inheritance. Masters also supervise **Apprentices**, who are usually boys in their teens working for room, board and perhaps a small stipend in exchange for a vocational education. Terms of apprenticeships vary from craft to craft and guild to guild but usually last between five to nine years.

Guild officers may be drawn from the membership or employed specifically for the purpose. Retired tradesmen, for instance, have the expertise and knowledge to act as effective Searchers without having a conflict of interest in being active guild practitioners.

Punishments and Sanctions

First time offenders are likely to be punished lightly, perhaps suffering public scolding and paying small monetary fines; but repeat offenders can expect harsher treatment. The ultimate threat is expulsion from the guild, effectively ending the transgressor's ability to maintain his livelihood in any area where the guild has influence. Guilds cannot, legally, do anything harsher than expel because every nation usually has laws protecting people and property from severe arbitrary action and physical abuse – and, unless the guild and state are synonymous, the legal system is likely to set the rights of individuals above the interests of organisations. Guilds are, essentially, *voluntary* associations – even if the ability to trade is dependent on joining the guild. Members facing harsh

punishments would either leave the guild or not join in the first place. In terms of fines, the most a guild can impose is the cost of membership or a multiple of it, depending in the severity of the crime.

The Guild Framework

Designing a detailed guild is handled via the Guild Framework. The framework outlines the crucial elements of a guild and this forms a model for factions and cults, handled in the later chapters of this book.

The elements of the Guild Framework are:

- Concept
- Trade
- History and Context
- Affiliations
- Traditions
- Runes and Affinities
- Magic and Powers
- Obligations and Deficits
- Membership, Officers and Ranks
- Training

Some of these are narrative elements; others are based around Affinities, Runes and then the various magic systems described in *RuneQuest Deluxe*. The way each framework element functions is dealt with, stage by stage, below.

The overall method to developing a guild should be to approach each element in order, allowing ideas to build, based on the decisions made for the preceding element. Therefore, the first element that needs consideration is the Concept.

Concept

What is the guild's purpose? Is it a small guild representing a particular facet of a larger profession or craft or does it cover every aspect of trade within the profession or craft? Does it simply aim to protect tradesmen or does it have a larger agenda? Is it



affiliated to other guilds or factions? Does it have a relationship with a cult or religion?

The concept need not be detailed but it needs to have a substantive hook for the rest of the framework. It might be as simple as a sentence or a more detailed paragraph or so that clearly outlines the concept. Here are two examples.

The Kustrian Enterprise Society is a guild of free-traders and caravan owners who live and operate in Kustria but range across the region of Ralios. Membership is open to traders of all kinds and it is affiliated with the Kustrian Mercenary Guild.

The Illustrious Guild of Aviators is a guild managing carrier-pigeon messaging throughout the Young Kingdoms nation of Filkhar. Based in Raschil, the capital, its members are all those who breed and train carrier pigeons, as well as those scribes trained in producing coded and uncoded messages. Its base of operations is The Aviary, a tower-like structure in the west of the city, where guild meetings are held but its members are spread across Filkhar with messaging stations established along the routes the birds are trained to fly. No one in Filkhar can breed or train carrier pigeons without belonging to the guild and although there are different forms of message transit, airborne communications – and message preparation carried by air – are fully controlled by the guild. It is affiliated to the Royal Guild of Scribes and Scholars.

Trade

What trade or trades does the guild represent, promote and protect? Most guilds have one focus of representation – a farrier’s guild, say – but a guild can have more than one, as long as each additional trade is strongly linked with its neighbour (the Farrier’s and Ostler’s Guild works but the Farrier’s and Brewers Guild is somewhat tenuous).

Every guild has a single trade to represent free of charge. Additional, linked, trades can be bought at a cost of 1 Affinity Point for each trade represented.

For example, John’s Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs represents merchant-venturers. John decides that he wants it to represent caravan mercenaries too, in the shape of the mercenary guild of Kustria specialising in guarding the venturing caravans. The Games Master agrees this is appropriate but John must spend 1 Affinity Point for the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs to gain the linkage.

History and Context

The guild’s history and context are important narrative parts of the framework. Answer the following questions in determining history and context:

- ☒ When was the guild formed?
- ☒ Why was it formed – was it in response to particular circumstances or needs?
- ☒ How has it developed in the years since its inception; how has it grown and spread its influence?
- ☒ Who formed it? Was it the idea of an individual or a collective?
- ☒ How was the guild’s formation viewed by other guilds and the local rulers?

The history and context need not be overly detailed; a couple of sentences or a paragraph should suffice – enough to provide a hook for further development.

Affiliations

The guild may support one or more professions, occupations or trades, as discussed previously. Affiliations, however, are formal connections (such as alliances) with other, established guilds. Affiliations are created through the spending of Affinity Points according to the scale in the Affiliations table.

Affiliations

| Affiliation | Affinity Point Cost | Benefits |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Loose affiliation of general friendship | 1 | Training in the affiliated guild’s skills at a 10% discount on normal training costs. |
| Formal, weak alliance | 2 | Training in the affiliated guild’s skills at a 20% discount on normal training costs. 10% discount on goods and services bought from the affiliated guild. |
| Formal, strong alliance | 3 | Training in the affiliated guild’s skills at a 30% discount on normal training costs. 20% discount on goods and services bought from the affiliated guild. |

The guild can have as many affiliations as it can afford and, indeed, need have none at all. The Benefits column of the Affiliations table shows the benefits that guild members can expect from the nature of the affiliation.

Guilds may establish affiliations with either cults or factions, achieving similar benefits, at a cost of 1 Affinity Point higher than that listed (so a Loose affiliation would cost 2 Affinity Points).

Guild affiliations usually ensure the support of the affiliated associations when the guild needs it – in making representations to a ruler, for example. If the guild calls upon its affiliates for support, then affiliates augment the guild’s Capabilities with their own in the following ways:

Affiliation Capability Augmentation

| Affiliation | Capability Augmentation |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Loose affiliation | + Critical Range |
| Formal, weak alliance | + 2 x Critical Range |
| Formal, strong alliance | + 3 x Critical Range |

For example, the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs buys a Formal, Strong alliance with the Kustrian Farriers Guild (3 Affinity Points). The governing council of Kustria is attempting to raise taxes on all guilds in the city and the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs opposes the move and goes to make representations to the governing council. To successfully persuade the council to drop its proposals, the Games Master tells John that the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs must make a successful test against its Diplomacy Capability (56%). John says that the guild will call on the Kustrian Farriers Guild to support it in the appeal. The Kustrian Farriers Guild has a Diplomacy of 63%, which, because of the Formal, Strong alliance, means it offers a +18% bonus to the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs’ Diplomacy skill, taking it from 56% to 74%. Dice are rolled and the Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs succeeds on a 58: had it not had the support of the Farriers, its attempts to influence the council would have fallen on deaf ears: the strong alliance it has with the Farriers has paid-off.

Affiliations With Individuals

Guilds can buy affiliations with particular individuals – such as a ruler, high-ranking council member, a hero, a sorcerer of repute and so forth. Generally affiliations of this kind are made with influential people; those in a position to assist the guild and help advance its agenda. The Games Master will need to create the game statistics for such Non-Player Characters (which they will invariably be) and should also calculate the individual’s Reputation, as per the Reputation rules on pages 165-167 of *RuneQuest Deluxe*.

The Affinity Point cost for cultivating a relationship is similar to that for an affiliation with another guild. The cost is based on the Reputation score of the individual with a modifier for the strength of the affiliation:

| Affiliation | Affinity Point Cost | Capability |
|---|---|----------------------|
| Loose affiliation of general friendship | 1 point for every 20 points of Reputation | + Critical Range |
| Formal, weak alliance | 1 point for every 15 points of Reputation | + 2 x Critical Range |
| Formal, strong alliance | 1 point for every 10 points of Reputation | + 3 x Critical Range |

Thus, to form a Formal, Strong Alliance with, say, a ranking noble who has the ear of the king and who has a Reputation of 40, it would cost 4 Affinity Points. A Loose affiliation would cost only 2 points but the noble’s influence exerted on behalf of the guild would be correspondingly weaker. The individual can either augment the guild’s Capabilities with any of his own skills (where appropriate) at the Capability Augmentation value listed for the strength of the affiliation.

Conversely, he may be persuaded to intervene on the guild’s behalf directly, using his own skills, if the guild can persuade him to do so. Persuading an individual to act in this way requires the guild to succeed in a Favour Capability test, opposed by the individual’s Persistence. The guild gains a modifier to its Favour based on the strength of the relationship and its WTH Characteristic, as follows:

| | |
|---|------|
| Loose affiliation of general friendship | +0% |
| Formal, weak alliance | +15% |
| Formal, strong alliance | +30% |
| Per point of WTH | +1% |

For example, the Illustrious Guild of Aviators has a Formal, Weak alliance with Earl Garras, a close friend of Filkhar’s king. The guild wants Earl Garras to petition the king directly to lift the import levy on pigeons bred in Dharijor (the finest pigeons in the whole of the Young Kingdoms). To succeed, the guild must successfully win an Opposed test against Garras’s Persistence of 58% with its Favour of 44%. The unmodified odds are in Garras’s favour but the

Traditions

| Tradition | Affinity Point Cost | Member Benefit |
|--|--|---|
| Access to superior quality materials and techniques | 1 (Greater) 2 (Exquisite) 3 (Marvellous) 4 (Surpassing) 5 (Heroic) | For each Affinity Point spent on this tradition, craftsmen members of the guild can make items of the level indicated in the Affinity Point Cost column at only half the restrictions listed for that level on page 176 of <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> . For example, making an item of Greater quality requires that the character reduce his Craft skill by only a quarter; for Exquisite by one half and so forth. |
| Superb or fearsome reputation in local community | 2 | Members can use the Guild's Reputation in place of their own, gaining the Influence bonuses described on page 166 of the <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> rules (and the same Disguise penalties). |
| Development of a particular professional technique known only to members. | 2 | Members may add the Guild's COM Characteristic to the skill most relevant to their membership (Craft, for instance, for Craft guilds) as a bonus when using that skill for guild endeavours. |
| A particular myth, pertinent to the guild's purpose, that lends particular insight into guild work, crafts and so forth. | 2 | Create a myth for the guild and calculate its Resonance. The Critical Range of the myth is added as a bonus to 3 particular guild skills. |
| The guild has developed a particular group ritual or ceremony that inspires its members when the ceremony is undertaken. | 3 | Members are allowed to make a Persistence test immediately after the ceremony. If successful, 1 skill relevant to the guild is increased by half for 1D6+1 days. |

guild gains +15% for its Formal, Weak alliance, plus +15% for its WTH of 15. Thus, the Opposed test is the Illustrious Guild of Aviators' Favour of 74% versus Garras's Persistence of 58%. The guild wins the test and Garras agrees to speak directly with the king on the guild's behalf.

Traditions

Traditions are certain practices, rituals and beliefs cultivated by a guild that aid their members in some way. Traditions are bought with Affinity Points and, as with Affiliations, there is no limit to the number of Traditions a guild can have. A list of Traditions and the benefits offered to members, is provided in the Traditions table, along with the Affinity Point cost but this list is by no means exhaustive and players and Games Masters are encouraged to develop their own, using the examples in the table as a guide.

Runes

Guilds can buy Runes using Affinity Points, just as cults can gain Runes reflecting their god or focus of worship. There are, however, restrictions on what Runes a guild can buy:

- Runes can only be selected from the list given opposite.
- A Rune must have a direct link with the trades or professions supported by the guild.
- No guild can hold more than two Runes.
- To hold a Rune the guild must buy the Myth Tradition for each Rune (see the Traditions table, above).
- The guild must have an explanation, in its History and Context or as a myth, describing how it came by the Rune or Runes.

The Runes available to guilds are as below, along with their Affinity Point cost:

| Rune Category | Available Runes | Affinity Point Cost |
|---------------|--|---------------------|
| Elemental | <i>Air, Earth, Fire, Metal and Water</i> | 2 |
| Form | <i>Man and Plant</i> | 4 |
| Power | <i>Cold, Fertility, Harmony, Heat, Illusion, Light, Luck, Movement, Stasis and Truth</i> | 4 |
| Condition | <i>Infinity, Law, Magic, Mastery and Trade</i> | 4 |

Magic and Powers

Guilds can, through spending Affinity Points, offer spells to their members. If a guild has a Rune, then it can teach Rune Magic spells associated with the Rune(s) possessed. It can also offer Sorcery and Enchanting (page 113 and onwards of *RuneQuest Deluxe*) but not Divine or Spirit Magic.

As with Runes, there are certain limitations on the spells guilds can offer:

- ☒ Spells taught must be pertinent to the guild's function and area of expertise. A trading guild cannot offer combat spells, for example.
- ☒ Rune spells can only be offered if the guild has the Rune governing the spell.
- ☒ It cannot offer more spells, of any type, than it has Guild Skills (see Training on page 32).

Rune Spells

Rune spells cost 1 Affinity Point per point of Magnitude offered. Thus, a Coordination at up to Magnitude 3 would cost 3 Affinity Points.

Sorcery Spells

Guilds can buy the Sorcery Manipulation skills (Duration, Range, Target and Combine) at a cost of 2 Affinity Points per skill and the maximum percentage that can be taught by the guild is equal to the sum of the INF, WTH and COM Characteristics +10. Thus, a guild wanting to offer Manipulation (Range) and having the Characteristics of INF 10, WTH 12 and COM 14 could teach its members Manipulation (Range) up to 46% – but no higher; and at a cost of 2 Affinity Points.

Sorcery spells then cost 3 Affinity Points per spell.

Enchantment

Offering the Enchantment skill costs 3 Affinity Points and the maximum percentage that can be taught by the guild is equal to the sum of the INF, WTH and COM Characteristics +10. It can also offer the Enchantment Effects at an Affinity Point cost as per the following table:

Enchantments

| Enchantment Effect | Affinity Point Cost |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Armour Blessing | 1 |
| Binding | 4 |
| Power Enhancer | 1 |
| Spellcharge | 2 |
| Spell Enhancer | 1 |
| Warding | 4 |
| Weapon Blessing | 1 |
| Environmental Condition | 2 |
| Target Condition | 2 |
| User Condition | 2 |

Legendary Abilities

Guilds may also offer Legendary Abilities, again with the proviso that the ability fits with the guild's area of expertise and can be defined narratively in the history and context of the guild to show how that ability came within the guild's remit. Legendary Abilities cost 1 Affinity Point to buy and become available to members as per the description of the Legendary Ability in terms of Hero Points and Minimum Skill Level. The *RuneQuest* rules, *Legendary Adventures*

and various *RuneQuest* supplements offer a large range of Legendary Abilities to choose from.

Obligations and Deficits

The Obligations and Deficits part of the framework covers the following areas:

- ☒ The guild's obligations to its members
- ☒ Members' obligations to the guild, including payments for membership
- ☒ Punishments for transgressing guild rules, customs and practices and other ways of enforcing behaviour

Obligations: Guild to Members

As a minimum, the obligations a guild has towards its members are as follows:

- ☒ Protect members' interests within the marketplace
- ☒ Represent members' interests at the highest levels
- ☒ Negotiate commodity prices on behalf of members
- ☒ Set tariffs and prices on goods produced by the guild
- ☒ Set standards for quality on goods produced by the guild
- ☒ Establish consistent weights and measures for members
- ☒ Extend and guarantee markets wherever possible
- ☒ Represent and support individual members on civil matters
- ☒ Negotiate the cost of raw materials for members
- ☒ Offer short-term loans to guild members at no or nominal interest

However, guild obligations may go further and be specific to the guild's nature. For example:

- ☒ Cover all funeral expenses for guild members and hold a memorial service in their name
- ☒ Provide a stipend to the family of deceased guild members of X Silver per year
- ☒ Overturn the punitive tax levies imposed by the ruler
- ☒ Reduce the influence of the guild so that trade in the city will be more equitable
- ☒ Gain access to specific markets in X city/county/country

And so on. Every guild has the common obligations but a guild should also choose between 2 and 5 additional obligations particular to them, perhaps reflecting its history, affiliations and position within the campaign. The list of obligations does not need to be overly extensive because that could place the guild in the position of being over-promising and under-delivering but obligations need to be broad enough to be attractive to members and specific enough to counter the offerings of rival guilds.



Obligations: Members to Guild

Like guild obligations to members, members' obligations to the guild are a mixture of the common and the specific. Common obligations are:

- ☒ Pay membership dues on time and in full
- ☒ Respect the officers of the guild, abide by their decisions and do their bidding when requested
- ☒ Uphold guild tariffs and prices
- ☒ Uphold guild standards

- ☒ Represent the guild with integrity and honesty
- ☒ Respect the work of other members
- ☒ Encourage others who are eligible to do so to join the guild
- ☒ Do not trade with those who are under guild sanction
- ☒ Report all discrepancies and transgressions to officers of the guild
- ☒ Attend the annual guild meeting and other such meetings, as demanded by guild officers
- ☒ Repay any guild loans by the agreed time and in full

Other obligations are specific to the guild and its purpose; for example:

- ☒ Do not trade with the X guild; this guild has raised raw material prices by Y% in the last year
- ☒ Offer a 10% discount to all members of the (insert name) family and its servants and representatives, in recognition of vital services performed for the guild
- ☒ Improve the quality of all types of (insert name of goods) but keep prices constant
- ☒ Recruit members of the (insert name) guild, because (insert name) guild has proved to be inferior

And so on. All members have the common obligations but also create between 2 and 5 specific obligations. These should not be too onerous or far-reaching, because that poses a risk of alienating members; but obligations should reflect the work done on members' behalf by the guild and reflect local circumstances.

Punishments

Once again, punishments are a mixture of the common and specific. The level of reparation a member makes to the guild needs to be set in agreement with the Games Master but some suggestions are in the Sample Guild Punishments table on page 30.

Any member suspended from a guild is unable to work for the period of the suspension and is therefore not in a position to earn income (although guild dues are still payable during the suspension period and members must continue to abide by guild rules); suspension is therefore a compelling method for ensuring compliance.

Expulsion means that the member is unable to work in that profession anywhere within the guild's sphere

of influence. Furthermore, word will spread to other guilds, making membership of another guild much more difficult to obtain – if not impossible. Expulsion from a guild can spell ruin for a trader.

Membership, Officers and Ranks

Gaining membership of a guild is never automatic. To qualify for membership, a trader must:

- ☒ Convince the guild's membership committee or designated officer, of his eligibility.
- ☒ Produce evidence that his work meets minimum guild standards.
- ☒ Obtain some form of sponsorship from an existing guild member (this is not a mandatory requirement and may be automatic for apprentices and journeymen).

The membership procedure can be abstracted as a series of skill rolls. To be accepted as a member, a character must:

- ☒ Have a minimum level of 40% for the relevant trade skill, craft or lore.
- ☒ Make a successful skill roll for the relevant trade skill, craft or lore.
- ☒ Be able to pay the first year's dues upfront.
- ☒ Swear an oath of allegiance to the guild.

Passing the membership test grants membership and allows the character to display the guild's crest, device or design prominently on and in his premises. It also obligates him to follow the guild's rules as outlined earlier but also obligates the guild to its responsibilities.

Membership Dues

These vary. As a rule of thumb membership dues are payable at the following rates:

- ☒ Standard members (those below the rank of Master): Between 1 and 5 silvers per month
- ☒ Masters: Between 6 and 10 silvers per month
- ☒ Masters are eligible to become officers of the guild and also have a voice in the guild's management of affairs. All members can vote on guild procedures.

New guild members must pay 1 year's dues upfront but may then pay monthly thereafter. Membership is life-long, unless the member does something to

Sample Guild Punishments

| Transgression | Fine (in Silvers) | Other Possible Penalties |
|--|--|---|
| Late payment of guild dues. | 1 Silver per month over the due date for payment. | Summons to the Alderman to explain reasons for late payment. |
| Non-payment of guild dues. | Fine of 12 Silvers for the first offence. | Fine of 24 silvers for second offenders; expulsion from the guild for all others. |
| Ignoring guild instructions and directions. | Equivalent of 3 month's guild dues, payable immediately. | Equivalent of 6 month's guild dues, payable immediately, if a second offence. Expulsion from the guild for all others. |
| Refusal/inability to repay a debt to the guild in full. | Fine of up to 2 years' dues; confiscation of equipment and so forth. | Suspensions or Expulsion from the guild, depending on the circumstances. |
| Failing to adhere to guild standards (quality, weights and measures and so forth). | Fine of up to 2 years' dues; confiscation of equipment and so forth. | Summons to the Alderman to explain reasons for the transgression. Suspension or Expulsion from the guild, depending on the circumstances. |
| Denying assistance to the guild's officers. | Fine of up to 1 year's dues. | Fine of up to 2 years' dues, for repeat offenders. Suspension or Expulsion from the guild, depending on the circumstances for all others. |
| Failure to attend annual and ad-hoc guild meetings. | Fine of 1 month's dues. | Summons to the Alderman to explain reasons for the lack of attendance. Fine of 2 month's dues for repeat offenders. |
| Under or overcharging for goods and services without prior guild approval. | Fine of up to 1 year's dues, depending on circumstances. | Suspension or Expulsion from the guild, depending on the circumstances. |
| Dealing with a guild or guilds against whom sanctions have been levied. | Fine of up to 1 year's dues, depending on circumstances. | Suspension or Expulsion from the guild, depending on the circumstances. |
| Bringing the name of the guild into disrepute. | Fine of up to 2 years' dues, depending on circumstances. | Suspension or Expulsion from the guild. |
| Abusing or enacting acts of violence upon guild officers or other guild members. | — | Automatic expulsion from the guild. |

warrant expulsion from the guild. If a character has been expelled from one guild and tries to join another anywhere within the previous guild's sphere of influence, he must not only fill all the qualification requirements for the new guild, he must also make an Influence test at -40% in a bid to convince the new guild's examiners that he is a worthy addition to their ranks.

Guild Ranks

The ranks of a guild are divided between Officers, Masters and Members. Officers are appointed officials of a guild, responsible for its day-to-day administration. Masters are the highest ranking members of the guild by dint of their expertise and experience and are responsible for making policy which is then carried out by both officers and members and enforced by officers. Members are everyone else; they have voting rights but no ability to formulate policy or direction.

Officers

Aldermen direct guild activities and supervise lower-ranking officers. They are appointed by the Masters to operate on the guild on behalf of the membership but are answerable to the Masters for their actions and decisions. A guild will usually have one Alderman per town or city where the guild operates. Aldermen can be required to represent the guild on official matters and it is common for retired Masters to be appointed as Aldermen therefore ensuring continuity of knowledge, influence and loyalty.

Typical Aldermen Skills: Commerce 80%+, Influence 80%+, Lore (Administration or Bureaucracy) 80%+, Lore (Guild) 80%+ oratory 60%+

Stewards manage guild funds and their accounts are periodically audited. They are responsible to the Aldermen but can be summoned to report to the Masters as and when required.

Typical Steward Skills: Commerce 70%+, Influence 60%+, Lore (Administration or Bureaucracy) 60%+, Lore (Guild) 60%+, Perception 60%+

Deans summon members to meetings, feasts and funerals and in many cases, police members' behaviour. They answer to the Aldermen and, like Stewards, can be summoned to report to the Masters.

Typical Dean Skills: Influence 70%+, Lore (Administration or Bureaucracy) 70%+, Lore (Guild) 70%+, Perception 70%+

Searchers scrutinise members' merchandise to make sure it meets guild standards and inspect members' shops and homes seeking evidence of attempts to circumvent the rules. Sometimes this function is conducted by Deans or even Aldermen but mostly it is a separate rank, with Searchers answering to Deans.

Typical Searcher Skills: Commerce 60%+, Influence 70%+, Lore (Administration or Bureaucracy) 70%+, Lore (Guild) 70%+, Perception 70%+

Clerks maintain records, take and publish minutes and attend to the common bureaucracy of the guild. They answer to the Deans.

Typical Clerk Skills: Lore (Administration or Bureaucracy) 70%+, Lore (Guild) 60%+, Lore (Scribe) 70%+

Masters

Any member with a profession skill relating to the guild of 80%+ can become a Master if:

- He owns his own premises and employs at least one Apprentice and Journeyman.
- He has been a guild member for at least 3 years.
- He has Influence 60%+.
- He has good standing within the guild and community.
- He has not seriously breached any guild rules.
- He can convince the Council of Masters, using a successful Influence test at -20%, that he is worthy of the accolade.

Masters pay higher guild dues than Members but gain the following benefits:

- A seat on the Council of Masters, which, with the Aldermen, formulates guild direction and policy.
- Gains preferential discounts on services with affiliated guilds.
- Can be called upon to represent the guild on official matters.
- Gains a preferential choice on lucrative contracts brought before the guild from the outside.

Masters are therefore the decision makers whilst the Officers run the daily business. The relationship is akin to that of a government and its civil service. Masters form a Council, which meets several times a year (usually quarterly but sometimes more often) to review, refine and develop guild policy. All meetings of the Masters are arbitrated by an Alderman, although the Alderman has no voting rights himself. Decisions taken by the council must be passed by majority vote, with any ties being either decided by a casting vote by the Head of Council or being put to a Member vote.

The Council of Masters appoints a Head of Council each year (although the term of office may be longer – anything up to 5 to 10 years, if that is written into the guild's constitution), with both Masters and Members voting for candidates.

Members

The rank and file of the guild, including working professionals, Journeymen and Apprentices. Members have voting rights on issues placed before them by the Council of Masters and this is generally a free vote, although Masters may try to influence the outcome one way or another by exerting subtle influence on the way members vote. Apprentices usually vote the way their master tells them and journeymen vote in accordance with who gives them the most work.

Training

All guilds offer training. Obviously to their members but also to those who can pay for it. Guild members may get training for free, depending on their position:

- ☒ Apprentices get free training as part of their indenture to an employer. Training is conducted over the course of their apprenticeship but once it is completed, the apprentice gains the relevant skills (usually those tied to the guild's purpose) at the skill's starting percentage, plus 20% and up to a maximum of half the master or employer's own level in the skill.
- ☒ Journeymen get free training but as they are already considered to be semi-skilled, acquire training at the usual rates as described in the *RuneQuest* rules.
- ☒ Guild members qualify for training at half the normal cost for training.
- ☒ Masters qualify for training at a quarter of the normal cost for training – some may be offered free training if a member thinks that doing so will advance his guild position. This is not against guild rules but is frowned upon.

A guild can offer training in any skills its members possess and any spells or magic it has bought as part of the guild framework.



How Many of Each Rank?

The composition of any guild is determined by its SIZ Characteristic. The table below shows the typical distribution of Masters, Officers and Members, by average membership SIZ. Use this as a guide for developing the composition of your own framework.

| SIZ | Members | Average Membership | Masters | Officers | Members |
|-----|---------------|--------------------|---------|----------|---------|
| 1 | 1D6+1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| 2 | 2D6+1 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| 3 | 2D6 x2 | 16 | 4 | 1 | 11 |
| 4 | 2D6 x4 | 32 | 8 | 1 | 23 |
| 5 | 2D6 x6 | 42 | 12 | 2 | 28 |
| 6 | 3D6 x6 | 63 | 16 | 2 | 45 |
| 7 | 4D6 x6 | 84 | 20 | 4 | 60 |
| 8 | 3D10 x6 | 99 | 24 | 4 | 71 |
| 9 | 3D10 x8 | 132 | 30 | 6 | 96 |
| 10 | 3D10 x10 | 165 | 30 | 6 | 129 |
| 11 | 3D10 x20 | 330 | 33 | 8 | 289 |
| 12 | 3D10 x30 | 495 | 40 | 8 | 447 |
| 13 | 3D10 x40 | 660 | 60 | 10 | 590 |
| 14 | 3D10 x50 | 825 | 80 | 10 | 735 |
| 15 | 3D10 x60 | 990 | 90 | 12 | 888 |
| 16 | 3D10 x70 | 1,155 | 100 | 12 | 1,043 |
| 17 | 3D10 x80 | 1,320 | 130 | 14 | 1,176 |
| 18 | 3D10 x90 | 1,485 | 140 | 14 | 1,331 |
| 19 | 3D10 x100 | 1,650 | 150 | 16 | 1,484 |
| 20 | 3D10 x1000 | 16,500 | 300 | 20 | 16,180 |
| 21 | 3D10 x 10,000 | 165,000 | 600 | 50 | 164,350 |

Rounding Out the Guild

Having worked through the guild framework, you should now have a decent definition and understanding of the guild's nature. The guild can now be rounded out by considering the following:

Name

The guild's official name. It always describes the professions it represents or the areas controlled: The Guild of Master Bakers, for example or Lumber Merchants' Affiliation. The name needs to be immediately recognisable and indicative of purpose to make it clear to all and sundry its purpose and position. Guilds favoured by royalty or other rulers may carry an additional honorific such as 'The Royal Guild of...' or 'The Most Excellent Guild of...' but such grandiosity is no guarantee of quality, honour or even-handedness.

Device

The guild's emblem, crest or coat of arms. A sword makers' guild might have a pair of crossed swords against a plain shield; the bakers' guild a golden loaf of bread and so forth. Again, the guild's device is immediately recognisable, distinctive and displayed prominently by its members on their signage and storefronts.

Guild Secrets

Every guild has a secret. This might be relatively mundane, such as knowing the best place to quarry a particular stone. Alternatively – and infinitely more fun – secrets might be truly esoteric, sensitive or dangerous – politically, religiously or magically. Choose at least one secret for the guild and decide who knows it: a handful of Masters; the Officers (or just the Alderman); all the Masters or a secret known throughout the membership but kept that way as part of the oath sworn to the guild.

How important is the secret to the guild? Some of this may be defined by any Traditions bought earlier. Some secrets may simply be ways of tying the guild together, whilst others might give competitive advantage to rivals or concern individuals in power that are truly earth-shattering in their nature.

Do rivals and affiliates know that the guild has a secret? What would be the repercussions if the secret was exposed? Write such elements into your History and Context and differentiate your guild from the run-of-the-mill, workaday guilds. As ever, the Games Master has the final say in whether a secret is appropriate and how it can be used.



FACTIONS

This chapter concerns factions. A faction is defined as any group of individuals who band together, especially within a political organisation, to promote a narrowly-focused aim or ideal. The term can include political parties although, in *RuneQuest*, the idea of political parties as they exist in the modern world is somewhat incongruous (although it may fit with your campaign). Factions are not concerned with promoting trade or religious ideals, as are guilds and cults but have other agendas to promote, usually of a political nature. Examples in *RuneQuest* works include the various sorcerer-venturers factions of Quarzhasaat in *Elric of Melniboné*, the beast orders of Granbretan in *Hawkmoon* and the various sects of power within Glorantha's Middle Sea Empire – the *Godlearners*. These groups have specific pseudo-political aims and a definite structure governing their operation.

Factions Defined

Factions are diverse and their structures far less rigid or wrenched in convention, than either guilds or cults; but, with some degree of organisation and, often, single-minded will on their side, they are no less powerful, even though their aims may be short lived. Most factions are very loose organisations, having no definitive list of members but some factions, have a formal internal structure, with membership lists, regular meetings, official positions – such as negotiators, conveners, whips and organisers – and a definitive policy position on every issue affecting the broader organisation. Such factions will typically be binding – that is, they rely upon all members casting their votes in accordance with the faction's official stance.

The aims of a faction are as diverse as the different types of bodies within which they appear. Typically, however, they include: advancing a particular policy, ideal or goal, preventing the adoption of alternatives and supporting given individuals to positions of power within the organisation or in the wider political world. A faction can primarily be based around supporting a given person or group or a single major aim, with little in the way of a common agenda or it can have

a comprehensive and definitive set of policies. Either way, factions typically revolve around *personality*, with a few individuals playing key roles, acting as a magnet for like-minded people, leading the activities of the faction and acting as a prominent voice for the shared objectives of the faction. Such individuals can be referred to by a variety of names, such as *powerbrokers* or *factional chiefs*.

Factions tend to be less concerned with representation (as are guilds) and far more focused on attaining power and exerting influence. Their aims and methods of operation are therefore concerned with persuading others to subscribe to their agenda and in placing key members in positions where influence can be exerted. Where one faction develops within an organisation, there will usually be at least one other that develops in opposition to it. Opposing factions may try to match each others' level of organisation and internal discipline and may engage in negotiations and trade-offs to ensure that the organisation's activities are not compromised and that every group has a chance to attain at least some of its goals. However, where the aims of competing factions are diametrically opposed, destruction of the opposition is almost always sought. This is not the waging of physical war necessarily (although it does happen) but via more clandestine methods: smear campaigns, rumour mongering, bribery, blackmail and other tools of skulduggery.

The existence of a factional system can have serious negative consequences for a political organisation. If factional strife becomes intensive and public, the organisation may suffer from perceptions of disunity. Taken one step further, if the conflict is particularly severe, it may cause ruptures within the organisation that seriously impede its effectiveness, leading to its break-up or collapse.

To avoid such harm, factions tend to operate under strong secrecy and with minimal public scrutiny and this often leads to the proliferation of unethical behaviour. Individuals who abandon a faction may be subject to intense personal attacks as their former comrades sabotage careers, expose personal secrets, blackmail, extort and emotionally terrorise. A climate of intense

factional conflict can also motivate individuals to focus on attacking their factional enemies rather than furthering the broader organisation.

- ☒ Obligations and Deficits
- ☒ Membership, Officers and Ranks
- ☒ Training

The Faction Framework

Designing a detailed faction is handled via the Faction Framework. The framework outlines the crucial elements of a faction, in the same way as for Guilds and Cults, handled in the chapters either side of this one.

The elements of the Faction Framework are:

- ☒ Concept and Aim
- ☒ History and Context
- ☒ Power Base
- ☒ Affiliations
- ☒ Opposition
- ☒ Affinities
- ☒ Magic and Powers

The overall approach to developing a faction should be to approach each element in order, allowing ideas to build, based on the decisions made for the preceding element. Therefore, the first element that needs consideration is the Concept.

Concept and Aim

What is it that a faction is fighting for? What does it hope to achieve? What are its aims and goals? These need not be strictly defined or defined in much detail; indeed, a concept and aim might simply be to 'stop another faction'. Generally a faction has a sense of passionate focus that drives its members to do the things they do. Some examples of factional concepts and goals:

Beast Orders of Granbretan – militaristic factions with a totemistic focus on a single animal. Members wear masks representing their animal and are focused on replicating its behaviour in a warlike manner in



the service of King Emperor Huon. Beast Orders are naturally antagonistic to each other and are encouraged to be so, each attempting to secure as much wealth and personal power as possible, in the hope of impressing King Emperor Huon and gaining his favour.

Hunting and Waltzing Bands of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends – proselytising mystics who aim to convert others to draconic worship and therefore improve their own personal power in the scheme of the Great Dragon To Be.

Godlearner Knife Divisions – politically motivated factions vying for control of the Middle Sea Empire through devotion to either the Missionaries, Postponers, Realists, Inherents or the Delayers. Knife Divisions are so called for their incisive grasp of the political condition but also for their tendency to stab in the back friends and foes alike.

The Concept and Aim of the faction can, and most likely will, change. Although the general goal will remain constant, the way of attaining it often shifts markedly according to how successful prevailing tactics and strategies have proven to be. Moderate factions can become radical and extreme; extremist factions can become moderate as they achieve their goals. Be prepared to have the concept and nature of the faction change.

History and Context

What caused the faction to emerge? What is the parent organisation that the faction is a part of? How is it viewed by others? Is this faction a long-standing one or a relatively recent development? If its aims are achieved, will it remain coherent? Does it have a timescale?

All these questions form part of the history and context of the framework. For your faction, you need to define, in a few words or a short paragraph:

- ☒ How and why your faction came into being.
- ☒ How your faction is viewed by others, especially the parent political organisation.
- ☒ Any direct opposition it has (you can then define the opposition as a full *RuneQuest* faction or simply leave it for the Games Master to work-up).
- ☒ What it will do once it achieves its goals.

Again, you can be as detailed or as vague as you wish, letting game play determine specifics but at this stage you should have a general idea of what your faction is about.

Power Base

Key to the operation of an organised faction is the existence of a power base. This will typically be some office, division or branch of the broader organisation over which the faction has effective control. Sometimes a power base may be an external or affiliated organisation that is involved with the broader organisation in some way. A power base serves several key functions:

- ☒ Acting as a recruitment centre for new members.
- ☒ Promotion of homogeneity within the membership – crucial for maintaining factional cohesion.
- ☒ As an organising centre for factional events and activities.
- ☒ Advancing the career of selected members and allowing them to gain skills that will increase their effectiveness and clout.

The Power Base is defined by spending Affinity Points. The cost is dependent on its type and nature:

Power Base Affinity Cost

| Power Base Type | Affinity Points |
|--|-----------------|
| A loose group of sympathisers | 1 |
| Secretariat in a wider political organisation | 2 |
| A small, local guild | 3 |
| A medium sized guild with power in several towns or a large city | 4 |
| A large guild with extensive operations | 5 |
| A small, local cult | 3 |
| A medium sized cult with established influence | 4 |
| A large, powerful cult with extensive operations and reputation | 5 |

Some of these potential power bases – guilds and cults – are self-explanatory and dealt with in this book but a couple require further explanation.

Loose Group of Sympathisers

The power base is a very loosely organised group of like-minded people who wish to maintain some distance from the faction but are, nevertheless, supportive of its aims and happy to help in a non-confrontational, clandestine capacity. Sympathisers can be relied upon to gain new recruits, supply information and spread rumours. A power base of this kind needs no detailed definition but it is recommended that it be given a skill that covers its ability to support the faction: Sympathise. The Sympathise skill covers all ad-hoc functions of the sympathisers from recruiting new, active faction members through to supply or disseminating information. The base percentage for the skill is equal to the faction's POP+WTH Characteristics. It can be strengthened by spending an additional Affinity Point for every additional 10% to boost the skill.

For example, the Nine Path Brotherhood is a Draconic Hunting and Waltzing Band of Glorantha that seeks to bring Lord Great Burin to power as the leader of the Eternal Dragon Ring. Its power base are those converts it has made in the city-states of the Janube Valley in the land of Fronela. The Nine Path Brotherhood spends 1 Affinity Point to gain these Loose Sympathisers and the Sympathisers have a Sympathy Skill of 22% (the Nine Path Brotherhood's POP of 13 and WTH of 9 added together). By spending a further 2 Affinity Points the Brotherhood increases the skill to 42%; clearly it is spending time in cultivating its reputation amongst the Janube sympathisers, making them more willing and competent to support their ideal.

SECRETARIAT

A secretariat is any official office within a larger political group that supports the faction's aims. This could be a ministry, an office of civil servants, a large department or even a group of prominent individuals. However, they are in a place and position of influence and so form the faction's power base by dint of this situation.

Like Sympathisers, a Secretariat has a single skill to define its capabilities in assisting the faction: in this case it is called Influence and it works in the same way as the Sympathy skill noted above. However it is based on different Characteristics of the Faction. Secretariat Influence is based on COM+POP and it can be boosted by 10% per additional Affinity Point spent.

For example, the Modernisers are a faction within the authoritarian court of Queen Yishana of Jharkor, a kingdom of Elric's Young Kingdoms. They seek to replace the queen with a republic and have, as their power base, the Royal Exchequer, which is concerned at the way Yishana squanders public money on finery and unsuitable lovers. As the Modernisers have a COM of 12 and POP of 16, the Exchequer's Influence is 28% and the Modernisers spend a further 3 Affinity Points to boost this to 58%.

GUILDS AND CULTS

If either a guild or cult forms the power base, then the Characteristics, Capabilities and other resources are used to support the faction's goals. This does not mean that the guild or cult is a puppet for the faction; rather it means that the faction has a great deal of sympathy within the guild or cult which makes it willing to support the faction's aims and cause.

Affiliations

Affiliations are created through the spending of Affinity Points in a similar way to both guilds and cults. A faction can be affiliated with another as long as their aims and goals are not contradictory or diametrically opposed.

The Affiliations table shows the cost, in Affinity Points, for buying affiliations at different strengths and the benefits that come with the affiliation.

Affiliations

| Affiliation | Affinity Point Cost | Benefits |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Loose affiliation of general friendship | 1 | Access to the affiliated faction's resources if the faction can succeed in making a successful Favour test at -30% |
| Formal, weak alliance | 2 | Access to the affiliated faction's resources if the faction can succeed in making a successful Favour test at -20% |
| Formal, strong alliance | 3 | Access to the affiliated faction's resources if the faction can succeed in making a successful Favour test |

The resources an affiliated faction has depends largely on the faction; but it will include elements of its power base – so one faction could draw upon the use of an affiliated faction's power base Sympathy or Influence skills or the Capabilities of an entire cult or guild.

A faction can have as many affiliations as it can afford and, indeed, need have none at all.

Factions may establish affiliations with cults and guilds directly – essentially widening their power base – achieving similar benefits, at a cost of 1 Affinity Point higher than that listed (so a Loose affiliation would cost 2 Affinity Points).

If the faction calls upon its affiliates for support, then affiliates augment the faction's Capabilities with their own in the following ways:

Affiliation Capability Augmentation

| Affiliation | Capability Augmentation |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Loose affiliation | + Critical Range |
| Formal, weak alliance | + 2 x Critical Range |
| Formal, strong alliance | + 3 x Critical Range |

Affiliations With Individuals

Factions can buy affiliations with particular individuals in precisely the same way as guilds. Generally affiliations of this kind are made with influential people who are *outside the power base*; those in a position to assist the faction and help advance its agenda. The Games Master will need to create the game statistics for such Non-Player Characters (which they will invariably be) and should also calculate the individual's Reputation, as per the Reputation rules on pages 165-167 of *RuneQuest Deluxe*.

The Affinity Point cost for cultivating a relationship is similar to that for an affiliation with another faction. The cost is based on the Reputation score of the individual with a modifier for the strength of the affiliation:

| Affiliation | Affinity Point Cost | Capability Augmentation |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| Loose affiliation of general friendship | 1 point for every 20 points of Reputation | + Critical Range |
| Formal, weak alliance | 1 point for every 15 points of Reputation | + 2 x Critical Range |
| Formal, strong alliance | 1 point for every 10 points of Reputation | + 3 x Critical Range |

Thus, to form a Formal, Strong Alliance with, say, a ranking bureaucrat who has the influence in the court or in a parliament and who has a Reputation of 40, it would cost 4 Affinity Points. A Loose affiliation would cost only 2 points but the bureaucrat's influence exerted on behalf of the faction would be correspondingly

weaker. The individual can either augment the faction's Capabilities with any of his own skills (where appropriate) at the Capability Augmentation value listed for the strength of the affiliation.

Conversely, he may be persuaded to intervene on the faction's behalf directly, using his own skills, if the faction can persuade him to do so. Persuading an individual to act in this way requires the faction to succeed in a Favour Capability test, opposed by the individual's Persistence. The faction gains a modifier to its Favour based on the strength of the relationship and its WTH Characteristic, as follows:

| | |
|---|------|
| Loose affiliation of general friendship | +0% |
| Formal, weak alliance | +15% |
| Formal, strong alliance | +30% |
| Per point of WTH | +1% |

Opposition

Factions rarely operate in a vacuum; the aims of one faction are usually anathema to another group, with a rival faction rising to counter the other – and, sometimes, multiple factions will arise, if the faction you are creating has strong ideals, views or goals that might be deemed politically dangerous, subversive, heretical, rebellious and so forth.

You can, as part of the Factions Framework, create an opposing faction in its entirety or simply give it a name and assume that it stands for the reverse of what your faction represents. Alternatively you may leave the entire thing to chance and use the Opposition table on page 41 to decide what opponents stand in the way of your faction. Modify the roll on the Opposition table by subtracting either your faction's highest INF Characteristic or its POP (but not both).



Opposition

| 1D100 –INF or POP | Opposition |
|-------------------|---|
| 0 or less | No Opposition. Your faction has either discredited it, destroyed it or occupies a position where opposition is impossible to mount effectively. |
| 01-10 | Low level opposition. A few individuals voice their opinions but there is no organised faction operating against you. |
| 11-20 | A loose affiliation of individuals has formed, making their views known in influential circles. |
| 21-40 | A formal opposing faction with a secretariat in a wider political organisation as its power base. |
| 41-60 | A formal opposing faction with a small, local guild or cult as its power base. |
| 61-80 | A formal opposing faction with a medium sized guild or cult with power in several towns or a large city as its power base. |
| 80 or more | A formal opposing faction with a large guild or cult with extensive operations as its power base. |

What are the tactics of the opposition and its disposition? Roll on the Attitudes table, subtracting either your faction's COM or WTH (but not both).

Attitudes

| 1D100 –COM or WTH | Opposition |
|-------------------|---|
| 0 or less | — |
| 01-10 | Muted verbal opposition conducted in political arenas but otherwise negligible. |
| 11-20 | Constant protests at how your faction operates and its aims, conducted in political circles. |
| 21-40 | Orchestrations of public opposition, including smear campaigns and rumour mongering. |
| 41-60 | Confrontational and antagonistic tactics levelled against individuals in your faction, designed to discredit and harm reputation. |
| 61-80 | Intermittent physical attacks carried out by third parties the opposition has hired. |
| 80 or more | Constant physical, verbal and political assaults against your faction, conducted by both opposition members and third parties. |

Affinities

Faction affinities are resources a faction can buy using Affinity Points. The typical kinds of resources factions are able to secure are as follows, along with their Affinity Point cost.

Affinities

| Affinity Type | Affinity Point Cost | Actions/Effect |
|------------------|---------------------|--|
| Informer | 1 per informer | A sympathiser in a place of power can be called upon to secretly supply the faction with inside information and facts. The Informer may be vulnerable and so the faction may need to provide security and must always provide discretion. The Informer is usually paid for his information but this may not be in kind and not necessarily money. |
| Spin Doctor | 2 per Spin Doctor | The faction employs the talents of someone highly skilled in presenting a positive gloss in terms of public relations, for the faction's activities and can turn bad press into good press through cunning manipulation of the facts, publicity and so forth. |
| Rabble Rouser | 2 per Rabble Rouser | The faction benefits from having someone willing to stir-up trouble at public gatherings, in taverns and inns – anywhere where gossip and opinion are formed. His talent lies in orchestrating confrontation to the faction's advantage (or the disadvantage of the opposition). |
| Corrupt Official | 3 per Official | A bureaucrat or other official person who is prepared to provide not just information but also take direct action, in exchange for money, whilst remaining outside the faction. Corrupt Officials can rarely be trusted and some may play both sides of a faction. But whilst benefiting the faction, they have their uses. |
| Secrets and Lies | 2 per Secret or Lie | The faction knows something about the opposition or the object that the faction has issue with: this might be a secret or it might be an untruth; whatever its nature, it is highly damaging to the person or office it concerns – even if it is complete fabrication. The faction can use this information as a lever to gain its own ends or simply keep hold of it until the right time presents itself. Discuss the nature of the information with the Games Master. |
| Publicity Agent | 1 per Agent | A Publicity Agent ensures that news beneficial to the faction gets out in some shape or form but is not himself a Spin Doctor – merely an active sympathiser. The Spin Doctor and Publicity Agent roles can be combined at a cost of 3 Affinity Points. |

| Affinity Type | Affinity Point Cost | Actions/Effect |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Supportive Myth | 4 per Myth | The faction is in possession of a myth, perhaps attached to its power base, that supports its aims. The myth shapes behaviour of faction members in the same way as it does for cult members and reinforces the faction's ideals, explaining their cause and justifying their actions. |
| Supportive Doctrine | 2 per Doctrine | The faction is in possession of written or codified doctrines (philosophical texts or theses, religious documents, charters, affidavits and so forth) that support and justify the faction's stance and direction. The doctrine acts as a form of myth, in that it drives behaviour. Calculate its Resonance based on the faction's COM x3. The doctrine offers the same kinds of insight as a myth and influences behaviour; however it cannot be interactive. |
| Thugs | 2 per 5 thugs | <p>Thugs are heavies who can be relied upon to promote the faction's agenda through physical violence when it is needed. They do as they are told or directed and have no qualms about going to extremely violent lengths. Thugs have the following statistics, identical for each Thug:</p> <p>STR 16, CON 12, DEX 13, SIZ 15, INT 7, POW 10, CHA 7</p> <p>Combat Actions 3, Damage Modifier +1D4, Strike Rank 10, Magic Points 10, Move 4m</p> <p>Skills Athletics 42%, Dodge 34%, Influence 44%, Perception 26%, Persistence 31%, Resilience 40%, Stealth 35%, Streetwise 44%, Throwing 30%, Unarmed 55%</p> <p>Combat Skills 1H Weapon 73%; 2H Weapon 52%</p> <p>Thugs have no intrinsic loyalty and, if captured or threatened with superior force, tactics or intellect, soon break.</p> |
| Sacred Symbol or Relic | 2 per Symbol or Relic | <p>This is a symbol of the faction's righteous struggle or cause. Like a myth or a doctrine, it drives behaviour and a Resonance should be calculated for it based on the faction's INF x3. The relic offers the same kinds of insight as a myth and influences behaviour; however it cannot be interactive.</p> <p>A symbol or relic may provide magic; see below for the additional conditions and Affinity Point cost.</p> |

Magic and Powers

Factions generally have to rely on whatever magic their individual members have or that possessed by the power base. Cults have more magic (potentially) available; guilds less so. As factions do not possess Runes, Rune Magic is not available; as factions do not worship gods (although if a religiously motivated faction, with a cult as a power base, this may be the case), Divine Magic is not available. Sorcery and Enchantments may be, however.

Sorcery Spells

Factions can buy the Sorcery Manipulation skills (Duration, Range, Target and Combine) at a cost of 2 Affinity Points per skill and the maximum percentage that can be taught by the faction is equal to the sum of the INF, WTH and COM Characteristics +10. Thus,

a faction wanting to offer Manipulation (Range) and having the Characteristics of INF 10, WTH 12 and COM 14 could teach its members Manipulation (Range) up to 46% – but no higher; and at a cost of 2 Affinity Points.

Sorcery spells then cost 3 Affinity Points per spell.

Enchantment

A Sacred Symbol or Relic may also offer magical powers. Make a test against the symbol or relic's Resonance (faction's INF x3); if successful, then the item has been enchanted with a number of points of POW equal to the Affinity Points the faction wishes to spend, to a maximum of 10. For a further 1 Affinity Point, the faction can then choose the Enchantment Effect from those given in *RuneQuest Deluxe* (pages 115-118). If not, then the Enchantment Effect is determined randomly:

| 1D6 | Enchantment | Notes |
|-----|----------------|---|
| 1 | Armourblessing | The symbol or relic, if held, offers armour protection equal to the invested POW. The effect is applied only to the person holding it. However, for the cost of a further 1 Affinity per metre radius, the relic can extend its protection out to cover others. |
| 2 | Power Enhancer | As per the description on page 115 of <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> . |
| 3 | Spellcharge | The item contains 1 Rune spell (preferably one reflecting the nature of the faction) which is available as per the description on page 115 of <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> . For an additional Affinity Point per spell, more Rune spells can be added to the enchantment. |
| 4 | Spell Enhancer | As per the description on page 116 of <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> . |
| 5 | Warding | As per the description on page 116 of <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> . |
| 6 | Weaponblessing | The item can be used as a weapon and is bestowed with a random Weapon Spell: 1D6 1 Bladesharp 2 Bludgeon 3 Damage Boosting 4 Fire Arrow 5 Speedart 6 True (appropriate to the weapon) The enchantment works as per the description on page 118 of <i>RuneQuest Deluxe</i> . |

Legendary Abilities

Factions may also offer Legendary Abilities, again with the proviso that the ability fits with the faction's area of expertise and can be defined narratively in the history and context of the faction to show how that ability came into the faction's remit. Legendary Abilities cost 1 Affinity Point to buy and become available to members as per the description of the Legendary Ability in terms of Hero Points and Minimum Skill Level. The *RuneQuest* rules, *Legendary Adventures* and various *RuneQuest* supplements offer a large range of Legendary Abilities to choose from.

Obligations and Deficits

A commitment to a faction is one of belief, depending on current circumstances. As a faction typically pursues a single goal, changing circumstances can diminish the faction's aims, its importance or make it obsolete altogether. A faction committed to replacing a ruler, for example, is effectively obsolete once regime change occurs; unless the faction has a broader aim and remit, it has no continued reason for existence.

However the strength of feeling amongst members can keep factions going in the face of changing circumstances and long after the goal has been achieved. Continued existence depends very much on what attracts people to the faction in the first place: passion, commitment to the cause and shared ideals.

People join factions because they believe strongly enough in the faction's goal and are amongst people who think and feel the same. However, unlike a cult or guild, a faction's obligation is to its cause rather than its members. Those who dissent or lose commitment can be jettisoned without necessary detriment to the cause: the cause has no duties or obligations towards the welfare of its members; no specific reason to

reward loyalty; and no inherent need to regard their feelings in any way shape or form.

However, members' obligations to the faction and its cause are driven by passion to see change. Characters who are members of a faction or might become members of one, can gauge their passion using the Passion mechanics described below. Of course, passion can be roleplayed, so consider the Passion mechanics as optional (though they have considerable use beyond just a faction).

Passion

A character's passion for a thing is measured like any other skill – on a scale of 1 to 100 and above and should be recorded as an Advanced Skill on the character sheet. The object of the passion can be anything – a person, a group of people, a country, an object, an ideal: essentially it reflects the faction. Passion can be established at any point – either during character creation or and perhaps most interestingly and appropriately, during game play but passion must be in place for all characters forming a faction, so that a measure of obligation and commitment can be made. All a character needs to do is stipulate that he intends to Love or Hate something. If this is stated during character creation, there is no cost in terms of skill points: the Love or Hate skill is not counted as either a cultural, professional or freely chosen skill, it simply comes into being.

If the Love or Hate is established during play, then it costs 1 Hero Point to establish it at its base value. If the circumstances warrant it, then the Games Master can choose to waive the Hero Point cost.

The starting value of the Love or Hate varies according to the type of Love or Hate being declared:

Love and Hate Starting Percentages

| Loving or Hating... | Starting Percentage |
|---|---|
| A person, in a romantic context. | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> Loved one's POW+CHA. |
| A person in a platonic context (a friendship, for example). | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> Loved one's CHA. |
| A group of people. | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10. |
| A country. | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10. |
| An object (the Runestaff, for example). | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10. |
| An Ideal (Tanelorn, for example). | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> 10+1D10. |
| A political goal (get the EWF into power in Loskalm, for instance). | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> the faction's INF. |
| Opposition to another faction (stop the EWF at all costs, for example). | Character's POW+CHA, <i>plus</i> the faction's INF. |

All the Starting Percentages may be modified by the Games Master to reflect deeper or lesser devotion; thus, Hate (EWF Bastards) might begin for a character at 35%, using the above Starting Percentage calculation but, because the character is a devout God Learner who loathes all things draconic, the Games Master decides to increase the Starting Percentage to 45%, taking into account the loyalty to Loskalm.

Where a person or people are concerned, the passion *does not need* to be reciprocated. It is up to the Games Master to decide if it is or not and the Player must decide if unreciprocated love will strengthen his character's Love/Hate or weaken it. If the decision is made to strengthen the depth of feeling (unrequited love often drives the heart to *deeper* fondness or infatuation), then the Love/Hate value can be increased (or decreased, if the depth of feeling is diminished) by 1D10%.

Where a faction is concerned, a successful test against the passion skill determines if a character is prepared to join the faction and what degree of commitment he offers it. If the passion is Hate (something) and the faction is dedicated to getting rid of the object of hatred, then a successful test against the Hate means the character is prepared to join the faction: he will remain obligated to it until either his hatred diminishes or the faction's aims are accomplished. If his test is critically successful, then he is an ardent supporter and will throw himself into the faction's business.

Similarly, if the passion is Love (something) and the faction seeks to preserve the object of affection, then a successful roll indicates obligation to the cause and membership of the faction.

If the passion test fails, then the character has clearly found something within the way the faction works that does not compel him to join. At this point, the faction itself can exert some influence, especially if it feels the character has something important to offer. The faction can use the higher of its Favour *or* Recruitment Capabilities in an Opposed Test against the character's Persistence in a bid to win the character over. Furthermore, it can call upon its power base or affiliated individuals to assist in the attempt with skill augments to the Favour or Recruitment Capability roll. If the faction wins in the Opposed Test, then the character is convinced and joins; if it fails, the



character remains unconvinced. If the faction fumbles, then it has created a truly negative impression in the character's eyes. However, if it succeeds critically, then the character has been fully swayed as though he had made a critical success on his first passion test.

Increasing and Decreasing Passions

Like any skill or Pact, Love and Hate can increase through Skill Improvement rolls, if the Player wishes to spend a roll on the relationship. However, if, during play, something happens that would deepen the passion or diminish it, the Games Master can either impose an immediate increase or reduction of up to 20%, depending on the circumstances; or he can call for the character to roll for the increase (or diminishment) himself:

- 1D10 For a minor deepening or diminishment (harsh or loving words)
- 1D10+5 For a substantial deepening or diminishment (harsh or loving acts)

Passion Example: Farric, El'nassa and Malagan

Farric, a warrior, has fallen in love with the daughter of the local chieftain. Farric's POW and CHA total 22 and the chieftain's daughter, El'nassa, has POW and CHA totalling 32. Thus, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is at 54%. However, because Farric has to keep his love a secret from the over-protective chieftain, the Games Master decides to increase this by 5%, so Love (El'nassa) is now 59%. Pete, Farric's player, also decides that El'nassa has never declared her love for Farric and Farric knows that the sorcerer, Malagan, has also been courting her. Because Farric's love is unrequited, Pete reasons that Farric's infatuation for the princess is deeper and so it is increased by a further 1D10% – resulting in 8%. Therefore, Farric's Love (El'nassa) is now at 67%.

And, because Farric hates the sorcerer Malagan, who is his rival for El'nassa's affections, the Games Master gives Farric Hate (Malagan) at 52% (Farric's POW+CHA, plus Malagan's POW+CHA of 30). He also declares that, because Malagan has caused Farric's exile from Pikarayd, following the revelation of his feelings towards El'nassa, his Hate (Malagan) increases by 20%, so it is now 72%.

Farric loves El'nassa – but he hates Malagan more.

Some time later, Farric encounters a faction of people who, like him, despise Malagan and the way he controls the chieftain's every decision, running the town like his own, personal fiefdom. The faction is dedicated to destroying Malagan and freeing the town from his influence. The Games Master calls for Pete to test against his Hate (Malagan) of 72%; Pete rolls 06 – a critical success. The Games Master says that not only will Farric willingly join this faction, he is prepared to become one of its most devoted members – such is his hatred for the sorcerer.

1D10+10 For a major deepening or diminishment (life threatening or saving, acts)

Once a Love or Hate has been established, it can fall below its starting value but can never be reduced to zero or less. Once established, Love and Hate are permanent fixtures on the character sheet.

Using Passion

Passions are used in several ways.

- ☒ As a *comparative value* to demonstrate strength of feeling. If the value of the Love or Hate exceeds 100%, then it is an all-consuming passion. An intense Love or Hate is likely to drive the character to extraordinary lengths in pursuit or defence of his faction's aims.
- ☒ As a *bonus* to any skill that might be used to help, defend or influence in the name of the object Loved

or Hated. The bonus is equal to the Love or Hate's critical range. So, if Farric was fighting a duel with Malagan, following a slight about El'nassa, Farric could gain a bonus to his combat skill of +6% for his Love (El'nassa) of 67% and a bonus of +7% for his Hate (Malagan), for a total bonus of +13%. The Games Master is always the arbiter of when Love and Hate can be used as an augmentation in this way and to which skills any augmentation should apply.

- ☒ As the *skill in an opposed test* that concerns the object of the Love or Hate. For example, Lady Sathril's Hate (Tanelorn) 75% could be used in an opposed test (instead of Persistence, say) where Jurgen, an Agent of the Balance, is trying to use his Influence of 80% to persuade her to fight in Tanelorn's defence against Miggea's wolf army. Whether or not the Love or Hate is used as a skill outright in this way or used as an augmentation to, for instance, Influence or Persistence, is dependent on the circumstances and the strength of feeling. If Sathril's Persistence was higher than her Hate

(Tanelorn), then an augmentation would serve her better. If Persistence was lower, then Hate (Tanelorn) can be used as the active, resisting skill.

- ☒ As a *skill in its own right* where the character is wrestling with his conscience over some matter concerning the strength of his obligation to the faction or the object of his Love or Hate.

Membership, Officers and Ranks

Factions tend to be secret, loose-knit affairs often with little in the way of formal ranks or officers. However, disorganisation is generally a detriment to a particular cause and so this chapter assumes that factions have some form of structure to ensure they can effectively achieve their objectives.

Joining a Faction

The minimum that is needed to join a faction is proof of dedication to the cause. This can be achieved in one of four ways:

- ☒ The character succeeds in a successful Influence test in front of those in the faction responsible for recruiting. This test can be made into an Opposed test of Influence versus the examiner's Persistence or Lore (faction) skill, if the Games Master thinks it necessary (where secrecy and trustworthiness is essential).
- ☒ Use of the Passion mechanics, described earlier.
- ☒ The character performs some form of task, mission or quest that proves dedication and loyalty. This might qualify the character automatically or provide a bonus to the Influence or Passion test.
- ☒ The character comes highly recommended by a sponsor known to (or is a member of) the faction already.

However, there may be other conditions for membership. Factions are always on the look-out for people who can significantly aid the cause – people with simply a general interest or sympathy are useful but not always valuable.

Additional conditions for membership are dependent on the faction's nature and aims. Where conditions apply, it is recommended that no more than two or three are chosen. Membership condition examples include:

- ☒ Connections within an agency that might extend the faction's power base.
- ☒ Connections with an individual or group of individuals who exert influence at a high level.
- ☒ Personal wealth (if the faction needs money).
- ☒ Certain skills: natural candidates for desired skills are *Combat skills, Disguise, Engineering, Evaluate, Influence, Languages, Lore (any, as long as it supports the faction's aims), Magical skills (any), Mechanisms oratory, Persistence, Sleight, Stealth, Streetwise* and *Survival* – but other skills may be equally or more, appropriate. Generally factions will be looking for skills of at least 50% and usually higher.
- ☒ Family connections.
- ☒ Prominence in a guild, cult or another faction.
- ☒ Experience of similar factional situations (and success in dealing with them).

Ranks

New members are most likely to join at the lowest point – Rank and File – but, depending on what they have to offer the faction, may be fast-tracked to a more prominent rank. Names of ranks will vary considerably between factions; some may not have any formal names or a discernible structure but for the sake of simplicity, the following ranks are used for *RuneQuest* factions:

Rank and File

Rank and File members are generally the first stage of the factional ladder. They are more than simply sympathisers; they are employed to do the faction's bidding on a wide variety of assignments relating to the faction's purpose. The Rank and File members need nothing more than the conditions used to satisfy

their membership; if any of these skills, passions or other attributes improve or if they prove their worth to the faction in other ways, then advancement is possible.

Duties: Act as directed by the Decision Makers of the Faction.

Agents

Agents are above the Rank and File. They are singled-out for specific assignments, often long-term and often with a single, specific objective. Agents are expected to act with absolute discretion, leading their normal lives as much as possible but always feeding-back vital information to the Decision Makers.

Any character with specific skills of above 50% or connections/positions highly useful to the faction, may be fast-tracked to the Agent rank, bypassing the Rank and File stage. Generally qualifying for this rank involves proving one's worth through diligently following instruction at the Rank and File stage and making appreciable improvement in 5 skills – and/or passion – to above 50%.

Duties: As for Rank and File, plus complete specific assignments, achieve objectives and report back to Decision Makers.

Decision Makers

Decision Makers are the ones who are most passionate about the cause. They demonstrate important skills at a level of 80% or higher and have proved their worth time and again to the cause. They have secured valuable contacts and connections, exercised sound judgement and are thus in a position to direct the faction's activities. These are the people who decide the faction's strategy and tactics; they control the purse strings, decide and assign missions to Agents and decide just how far the faction will pursue any of its aims.

Decision Makers are also in a position to choose, if needed, a Figurehead. This is someone with a high public profile, obvious dedication to the cause and someone with absolutely the right connections to bring about change. Decision Makers can replace that Figurehead if necessary – or even dispense with one altogether, depending on the nature of the faction's cause.

Duties: Direct faction strategy; assign key tasks; monitor loyalty and progress of members; ensure success in all the faction's aims.

Figurehead

Some factions may appoint a figurehead; the public face of the faction – someone who embodies its aims and desires and with the right level of connections to command the attention of others. The Figurehead need not be a Decision Maker; he need not have been a successful Agent; he is the person who can best be associated with the faction in the public consciousness (if that is needed) or in other arenas where the faction needs to operate.

The Figurehead is appointed by the Decision Makers and will usually have at least 3 skills useful to the faction at 90% or higher and have the right levels of connections to make an impact in terms of representation and public relations. The Figurehead may or may not be involved in decision making: often he represents policy rather than formulates or enacts it but equally he might be part of the Decision Maker rank or even a particularly effective Agent whose task is to be the frontman for the faction.

Duties: Be the public face of the faction; advance its aims in accordance with decisions, policies, strategy and tactics. Act in accordance with Decision Makers.

Training

The training a faction can offer is based on the skills within the organisation. It is unusual for formal training to be offered on a regular basis; rather it is an ad-hoc arrangement to support specific tasks where an Agent might be required to improve his knowledge or capabilities.

Factions therefore need to buy-in skills. The faction's Training Capability is the percentage chance that someone from within the faction can be found to offer training in a particular skill if it is required. The faction funds the cost of the training but the individual is expected to demonstrate results once training has been undertaken.

Rounding Out the Faction

Having established the faction's framework, some rounding out completes the process. Consider the following:

Long Term Success

Can the faction achieve its goals in the long-term? What sort of strategies will be necessary to make them happen?

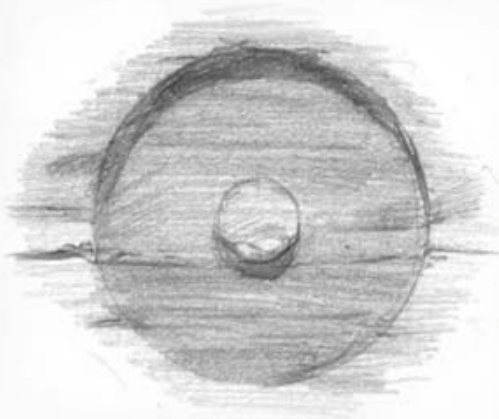
Continued Existence

Once the goals have been achieved, will the faction be able to continue in the same or a different form? Will its aims change? If so, how? Does the faction desire continued power, either directly or through influencing someone else, effectively becoming a power behind the throne?

Competing Interests

Are there any competing interests or agendas within the faction? Do different Decision Makers want different things? Might this cause interesting or dangerous divisions amongst all levels of membership? Does the Figurehead fall in line with Decision Maker agendas or does he have one of his own? How do affiliated power bases view the key interests of the faction?

All these final elements need not be decided in advance but provide keys for how the faction may develop during game play.



CULTS

Cults are an important part of *RuneQuest*. The cults of Glorantha are the best-known example of cults and much has been written on them in the companion *RuneQuest* volumes, *Cults of Glorantha Volumes I and II*; and in *Cults of the Young Kingdoms* for the *Elric of Melniboné* game. This chapter expands on the cult structures found in all these volumes but also lifts concepts from them and offers them in a more generic style for Games Masters and players to devise new cults that will have an energising effect on play and offer characters both tangible benefits (and some tangible drawbacks) to membership and progression through the cult's ranks.

If you are regularly using *Cults of Glorantha* you will find that many of the ideas explored in this chapter change the nature of those cults. The changes are certainly for the better and aim to develop the notion of the relationship between worshipper and god in ways that have been hinted at but not explored at length. The biggest change is in how Runes and both Rune and Divine magic work. As ever, though, you are the arbiter; you decide if you want to integrate the concepts from this chapter into your Gloranthan cults or if you want to keep them as they are. Future *RuneQuest* supplements dealing with cults will draw upon the core rules presented here; but all the cults found in *Cults of Glorantha Volumes I and II* can continue to be used as they are written.

If you are an *Elric of Melniboné* player or Games Master, then much of what you will find in here will be familiar, although the way some concepts are framed and worded are different – as is necessary for a more generic approach to cult development. The cults from the *Elric of Melniboné* rules and *Cults of the Young Kingdoms*, remain unchanged – although, again, you may freely adapt concepts from this chapter if it better fits *your* game.

What is a Cult?

The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines a cult as:

1. A system of religious worship directed towards a particular figure or object.
2. A small religious group regarded as strange or as imposing excessive control over its members.
3. Something popular or fashionable among a particular section of society.

For the purposes of *RuneQuest*, the first two definitions are what this chapter is concerned with. The third is addressed in the *Factions* chapter. Here, we are dealing with religious, mystical and philosophical groups that come together in veneration of some form – be that of a god, demigod, myth or personality.

It is common to find, within a cult, a sect. The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines a sect as:

1. A group of people with different religious beliefs (typically regarded as heretical) from those of a larger group to which they belong.
2. A group with extreme or dangerous philosophical or political ideas.

Sects are dealt with in this chapter and both definitions are pertinent.

Cult Framework

Cults can be as detailed or as nebulous as one desires; but to get the very most from a cult, the following framework elements should be used as the basis for development.

- ☒ Concept
- ☒ Object of Veneration
- ☒ History and Context
- ☒ Myths
- ☒ Runes
- ☒ Magic and Powers
- ☒ Obligations and Deficits
- ☒ Membership and Ranks
- ☒ Training

Some of these are narrative elements; others are based around Affinities, Runes and then the various magic systems described in *RuneQuest Deluxe* (Rune, Divine, Sorcery, Enchantments and Spirit Magic). The way each framework element functions is dealt with, stage by stage, below.

The overall method to developing a cult should be to approach each element in order, allowing ideas to build, based on the decisions made for the preceding element. Therefore, the first element that needs consideration is the Concept.

Concept

What is the basis of the cult? Is it a formal religion covering an empire, a nation, a community or a small body of people? Is it, perhaps, outside of an overarching religion due to a difference of belief, although an agreement on most aspects of the orthodox? Is the god living or dead? Is the god represented by a prophet or ideal that forms the basis of the belief? Is the cult focused on worshipping a particular aspect of a god's nature? Is the focus of the cult a charismatic individual who might become a god? Or is it a personality of such heroic, charismatic stature, that veneration is the only way to show the appropriate love and respect?

The concept need not be detailed but it needs to have a substantive hook for the rest of the framework. It might be as simple as a sentence or a more detailed paragraph or so that clearly outlines the concept. Here are two examples.

The Brotherhood of the Wheel venerates the purity of the Runewheel and its relationship with the Runestaff; the two must be rejoined.

The cult of Orlanth Dragonbreaker venerates Orlanth's victory over the dragons Shakaharzeel and Aroka. Through his slaying of these dragons Orlanth



learned the weakness of all dragons and through that strength shaped the world into what we see now. Orlanth Dragonbreaker is the strength of the storm and the wind against the fire and the earth. Worshipping Orlanth Dragonbreaker channels that strength to his faithful, permitting them to face all dragons, defeat their magic and see through the lies and torments of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. The most devout of Orlanth Dragonbreaker fear no enemy and receive Orlanth's strength when faced with dragonkind.

The first example is used elsewhere in this book. *The Brotherhood of the Wheel* has a narrow concept that can be explained in a single sentence: what is venerated and what is important.

The second, a Gloranthan cult, is more detailed and more far-reaching. It names a specific god Orlanth but focuses on a single aspect of Orlanth's nature (dragon killing). The concept defines the kinds of benefits its members can expect to receive if they are dutiful and faithful and establishes a clear path for how the rest of the framework is likely to progress.

Do not feel compelled to go into too much conceptual detail. Concepts change over time, so if the concept is relatively simple and straightforward, it is easier for members to understand and depth will come through

both development of the cult using the framework and through active game play.

Object of Veneration

Cults are formed to venerate someone or something. The object of veneration for the cult – its heart and focus – should be clearly defined. There are many different kinds of objects for veneration but the most common are:

- ☒ A single god or goddess – such as Orlanth, Arioch or...
- ☒ A group of gods and goddesses – a pantheon; examples are the Solar and Storm pantheons of Glorantha.
- ☒ An aspect of a god or goddess's nature – one particular form of behaviour that adherents find sacred.
- ☒ Someone who embodies both the nature of mortals and gods – a demigod.
- ☒ A holy prophet or messenger – such as Mohamed, Moses, Jesus or Malkion.
- ☒ A person, creature or monster of singular power – heroes, demons and so forth (Cran Liret, Aubec and Terhali from *Elric* are good examples).
- ☒ A charismatic individual, either living or dead, who inspires love and devotion – a Personality cult.
- ☒ A philosophy of existence leading to some form of unearthly reward – Buddhism, for instance.
- ☒ An object or relic of power or significance – a saintly relic, perhaps, such as the Turin Shroud; or something legendary, such as the Runestaff from the *Hawkmoon* saga or the Holy Grail.

History and Context

What is the history behind the cult? What role does it play in society? Much depends on the cult's size but small cults can be very powerful in a local area and large ones weak when their influence is spread across distances. The kinds of questions to consider are similar for any association, as discussed in the Associations chapter.

- ☒ Who founded the cult or how did it come into being?
- ☒ When was it founded – recently or long ago?
- ☒ How has it maintained its position – has it changed over time?

- ☒ Does the cult have enemies? What other cults is it affiliated with?
- ☒ Is the cult part of a pantheon? How does it contribute to the overall myths of that pantheon?
- ☒ Does the cult worship differently or believe different things to similar cults? If so, is it considered heretical?
- ☒ What social services does the cult offer to its lay members? Is it a beneficent cult or inherently selfish? Does it care a jot for the welfare of others?
- ☒ What is the cult's future? Are new members being attracted or is its influence on the wane? Are new beliefs eroding old ones from within?

The history and context should be a narrative that addresses some or all, of the above questions. Again, it need not be too complex or detailed, as the following examples show:

The cult of Ernalda Earth-Singer is a sect of the Ernalda All-Mother cult. Founded 150 years ago when Priestess Granny Calmeyer heard Ernalda's birthsong through the rippling current of the Laughing River. The cult cares for all life and promotes healing for the clans in and around the Laughing River area – even those who might be enemies. Members of the clan are midwives and wet nurses, as well as healers and carers.

The cult of M'gret the Thatcher is one of the ancient orders of Londra, worshipping the Unturning Lady of Despair – she who fitted the roof to the Great Slave Halls and defeated the demon Skargyle at the Battle of the Pits. Her worship is promoted amongst the beast orders who construct, challenge and destroy. As a cult it knows no peace and promotes a single-minded, destructive approach to any and all problems. Its will can never be turned and because of this it shows no mercy and demands none. Older, even, than the cult of Kynok, which the aberrant monks of the west follow, its secrets are carved in the sacred tomes of Thatcher-schism which are found only in the nerve-dungeons of Miltonkeens, city of Circles and the Bulls of Stone. The cult of M'gret the Thatcher should rank higher than those of the Roaring God, Brin Adass and Mi'ikmorkok; that is doesn't signals the denial of King Emperor Huon and is to be considered the signal for rebellion by all who have witnessed the Unturning

Lady's power, glory and beauty. This cult is hated by all and hates all. Its members nurture the flames of hatred and bitterness but keep them hidden until the glorious day when all Hell shall be let, unrestrained, to flow through the heart of Londra.

Myths

Every cult has myths. A myth is a story or set of stories, that describes and exemplifies what the cult stands for and how it behaves. Myths are, typically, timeless and concern the deeds of gods or the object of veneration. They may be considered unassailable truths or stories that provide a meaning or parable but are known to be a work of fiction. The important fact is that a myth explains, teaches and promotes the ethics, values and behaviours of the cult.

As with all things in this chapter, myths can be as simple or elaborate as one wishes them to be. Many myths concern the eternal questions of:

- ☒ How was the world made?
- ☒ How did people come into being?
- ☒ How does the god handle certain challenges and problems?
- ☒ How were enemies defeated?
- ☒ How will the world follow its course and how might it end?
- ☒ What does my god do for me?

Myths are powerful because, when observed, they reinforce behaviour and belief. A cult with many myths may have many answers to many questions but each myth will reinforce a certain pattern of behaviour or demonstrate the right kind of behaviour to a certain set of circumstances.

It is usually the case that no one knows who created the myth and how it came into being; a myth simply is – whether written down or communicated through word of mouth. Myths are typically unquestioned (although the myths of other cults, especially where they conflict with a cult's own myths, may certainly be challenged, even violently), even when it is known that much is fabrication, because the power of the lesson is inherent in the myth's structure. It is easier to reinforce behaviour if one tells a story to show that behaviour in action, rather than simply listing a set of rules and restrictions. Children are particularly receptive to the

power of myth and cults ensure that myths form a part of a child's education so that patterns of behaviour and belief can be established early on.

However, myths go beyond the merely educational. Myths can be entered and experienced. This is the essence of Glorantha HeroQuesting or Melnibonéan Dreaming: a person enters the realm of myth and takes part in its story, re-enacting the deeds of the god and emerging at the other end with enlightenment, treasure, power or other benefits relating to the key elements of that myth. For *RuneQuest* purposes, myths, with the right kind of magic, community support or other devices, can become fully immersive and interactive – important stories within stories. Anyone who enters a myth experiences the same things – the same challenges – as the god that the myth concerns. He may not become the god but he channels that god's experiences. When the experience is over, then the individual has some of that god's power, even though it may be only a small part and certainly some of the god's insight.

Cult Myths

So, how many myths does a cult have? How strong are they? Are they interactive? These questions are answered by the spending of Affinity Points.

Every cult has one myth that is granted for free. Additional myths can be bought for a cost of 1 Affinity Point. To make a myth interactive (so that it can be used for HeroQuesting, for instance), it costs another Affinity Point. There is no limit to how many myths a cult has; it is limited only by its available Affinity Points.

Myth Resonance

Every myth has a strength, known as a Resonance. The myth's Resonance represents its power in terms of conveying lessons, wisdom and desired behaviours. The more resonant the myth, the greater its ability to resonate with the character and determine how he behaves.

Every myth has a base Resonance equal to the cult's COM multiplied by 5. If you prefer not to use the Characteristics explained in the **Association Characteristics** chapter, then the Resonance is equal to 2D10+10.

The base Resonance can be increased at a cost of 1 Affinity Point per additional 1D10 of Resonance.

For example, the Brotherhood of the Wheel has, as its core myth, how the Runewheel's spiritual maker, Jemahias Karelion, used it to make the world. It has a base Resonance equal to the cult's COM x5, which makes it 50%. John decides to strengthen it, spending 3 Affinity Points – 1 to make it interactive and the remaining 2 to increase its Resonance by an additional 2D10%. When the dice are rolled, the myth has a final resonance of +18%, so an overall Resonance of 68%.

Resonance has several game effects, depending on circumstances, characters and the cult itself.

Calling upon a myth to inform actions or for insight
If a character wants to call upon a myth to gain some insight into a problem or challenge or gain some general inspiration when faced with a problem, he may attempt to call upon his knowledge of a myth. All the character needs to do is make a standard test against Lore (Specific Theology); if his success is *lower* than the myth's Resonance, then he gains insight in one of the following ways:

Critical Success: The character is fully and heroically inspired by the myth; he can clearly see how the myth relates to his situation and determines, from the myth's context, how to prevail. He gains a +30% bonus to a single skill roll (weapon or otherwise) that is used in overcoming the challenge.

Success: The character gains partial insight or inspiration from the myth. He gains a +15% bonus to a single skill roll (weapon or otherwise) that is used in overcoming the challenge.

Fumble: The character has completely misinterpreted the myth in a way that places him at a disadvantage. He suffers a –15% bonus to a single skill roll (weapon or otherwise) that is used in overcoming the challenge.

INTERACTING WITH A MYTH

If a myth is interactive, it can be entered through appropriate magic. The Resonance score indicates the difficulty of completing the myth, the level of challenge to be expected and the rewards one gains from it.

To enter the myth, appropriate magic (such as HeroQuesting) must be used. The myth can resist entry with its Resonance in an Opposed Test. If the myth wins the test, the hero cannot enter the myth until a particular period of time (usually measured in days rather than hours; but could be months, if the character fumbled his roll to enter the myth) has elapsed.

Once inside the myth, the character is forced to re-enact the story of the myth, stage by stage, emulating the actions and deeds of the god or other forces the myth concerns. Here, the myth's Resonance determines several things:

- ☒ The number of stages (or encounters) that the character *must* face to complete the myth and emerge with a reward of some kind. Myths can have many stages but as a rule of thumb, a myth has *up to* a number of stages equal to its Resonance divided by 10 and rounded to the nearest whole. So, a myth with a Resonance of 72% would have up to 7 stages, whilst a myth with a Resonance of 48% would have 5. The Games Master should decide how many stages must be completed successfully for the character to emerge victorious; it might be all the stages or just a handful. Note, also, that success does not always mean winning. Myths often have heroes learning valuable lessons from their defeats – so the objective of a particular stage might not be to win but to actively lose (although the character may not be aware of this).
- ☒ The strength of the challenges and foes he will encounter. As a general rule, the opposing skills used by any challenges, be they magical, combative or otherwise, will be equal to the myth's Resonance but may be adjusted by the Games Master to suit circumstances. So, a myth with a 72% Resonance will have adversaries with combat skills or magical skills of at least 72% themselves. The stronger the myth, the greater the challenge.
- ☒ Resistance to tampering. In some settings (Glorantha being the most obvious), myths can be altered, radically affecting the culture of those who rely on them – changing their magic, philosophies and so on. The God Learners of Glorantha are the arch Myth Breakers. The myth's Resonance is the resistance of each stage of the myth to *fundamental* alteration. Whoever is trying to manipulate a myth to fundamentally change it must defeat the stage's Resonance resistance with appropriate magic; it is

impossible for normal myth interaction to result in fundamental change – it must be a dedicated, wilful, magically-supported act.

- ☒ Level of reward. The myth's Resonance indicates but does not guarantee, the level or quality of the reward for completing it. What the reward is requires Games Master fiat; it could be knowledge, a spell, a magical item or the saving of an entire society from destruction. Myths with a strong Resonance have far-reaching implications for those who believe in them, with rewards that match that strength. Weaker Resonance myths have shallower consequences and, perhaps, less obvious rewards.

Myth-enforced behaviour

Although characters can gain special insight from a myth, as described earlier, myths become ingrained into the psyche and enforce certain patterns of behaviour. Stronger myths are more successful at this. For every myth created, decide what forms of behaviour it seeks to exemplify. These should be simple, clear statements such as...

- Lying is wrong*
- Bravery is necessary*
- Tricksters cannot be trusted*
- Hospitality to enemies and friends is essential*
- Hard work provides the best rewards*

A single myth can have a number of such behaviours equal to its Resonance divided by 20, rounded to the nearest whole.

Whenever a character is faced with a challenge, problem, situation or dilemma where he has a choice of action where a myth would or could be influential, the appropriate myth asserts itself through its Resonance, forcing the character to behave in a certain way. The character should make a 1D100 roll and note the result. If the roll is below the myth's Resonance, he is compelled to behave according to the moral of the myth. If he rolls higher than the myth's Resonance, he may act as he pleases, ignoring the lessons the myth has ingrained into him.

For example, Lady Sathril, a Melnibonéan noblewoman in an Elric of Melniboné campaign, is a follower of Eequor, the Blue Lady of Dismay. One of the cult's key myths is how Eequor seduced a major Lord of Chaos in order to secure her release from a demonic prison.

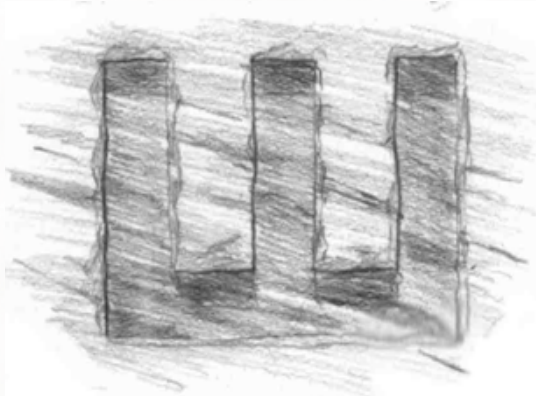
Lady Sathril has been captured by the repulsive Falcius Ghro of Pan Tang. Ordinarily, followers of Eequor hate men with a passion and would never surrender themselves willingly. Lady Sathril has a choice – attempt to use force against Falcius Ghro (her natural reaction, given her murderous nature) or relent to his odious, amorous advances in the hope of escaping without killing. The Games Master declares that the myth is asserting itself; Lady Sathril must roll against the myth's Resonance of 66%. The roll is a 41 – Lady Sathril channels the myth, acting just as Eequor herself acted. She will seduce Falcius Ghro rather than seek to wring his scrawny little neck. Had she rolled more than 66, she could have ignored the myth and gone for the more violent (and certainly satisfying) option...



Runes

Not every *RuneQuest* cult has or needs Runes; but for some settings, Glorantha in particular, Runes are a fundamental part of the cult framework since they derive from the god being worshipped and determine the magic available to cult members.

Runes are bought with Affinity Points. However, a cult can only buy those Runes that are directly associated with the Object of Veneration or directly correspond to its nature. For example, the god Orlanth is the storm god. His Runes are Motion and Mastery. A sub-cult of Orlanth – *Orlanth Deathlord for example* – being developed using these rules, can certainly buy the Motion and/or Mastery Runes to be associated with the Orlanth Deathlord cult. However, as the cult is concerned with Death, then the Death Rune, although not specifically associated with Orlanth, does correspond with the cult's nature and so is permissible.



Certain Rune combinations are *not* compatible:

| This Rune... | Is Incompatible with... |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Cold | Heat |
| Death | Fertility |
| Disorder | Harmony |
| Fate | Luck |
| Motion | Stasis |
| Illusion | Truth |
| Light | Shadow |

So, the cult of Orlanth Deathlord could have Mastery and Death but it could not have Fertility as well, as Fertility and Death are incompatible.

No cult may have more than three Runes. Most have only one or two.

The Affinity Point cost for Runes depends on their type and power. Runes can be categorised into different groups of powers; when these powers interact in the realm of the gods tremendous acts of creation, change and destruction occur – and this is how gods make worlds and the things that live within them and destroy them. The classes Runes can be categorised into are as follows:

Elemental or Primal Runes

The components of all creation. Most worlds contain all these Runes in different combinations of strength but some worlds may be devoid of a certain Rune. A world made without the water Rune or where the water Rune is weak, would have no seas, rivers, lakes or even rainfall. It would be a dreadfully arid, probably lifeless place. In a world where the darkness Rune is strongest, perpetual night would shroud the place. Thus the strength and combination of Runes determines the conditions of the world. Most worlds have the Runes in a certain balance, thereby promoting life and the conditions under which life thrives.

Rune Integration - A Major Change

The act of associating a cult with a Rune puts the powers of that Rune at the disposal of the cult. Cult members of Initiate and higher will carry some representation of their cult's Runes with them as a normal part of their regalia – perhaps in the form of tattoos, pendants, engravings onto weapons or armour or any of myriad representations. Once a character has committed himself to membership of a cult, passed its tests and been accepted, he channels the cult's Runes, through his belief and his cult symbols. He does not need to find and hold a physical Rune as described in the *RuneQuest* core rules; his cult membership effectively provides that relationship.

This introduces a major change to *RuneQuest's* previous handling of Runes. It is done in order to better represent the relationship between Gloranthan cults and Runes and how cult members have access to magic. Of course, if your campaign enjoys the use of physically integrated Runes, then you may happily disregard this alteration to the way Runes work. But, all future *RuneQuest* books concerning Gloranthan cults will assume that Runes are at the immediate disposal of cult members, with no need for personal integration beyond becoming an initiate (and advancing) in a cult.

The Elemental Runes are: *Air, Darkness, Earth, Fire, Metal, Moon and Water.*

Affinity Point Cost per Rune: 1

FORM Runes

The Form Runes describe the elements of life and the shape it takes. Usually a single form of life – such as man – is associated with a single Rune but sometimes a form of life is a combination of two or more Runes. A combination of the Runes of Man and Beast, for example, might create a form of life such as a centaur or an intelligent, bipedal cat or perhaps a man with the intellect, nature and abilities of a particular beast. Much depends on how the Runes are mixed by the gods. Of the Form Runes, Chaos is the most feared, because it preys on the nature of the other Form Runes and denies them consistency. The Chaos Rune imposes constant, unremitting change for its own sake. In some worlds the Chaos Rune is excluded and guarded against with utmost vigilance. In others it is rampant and causes untold misery whilst the gods watch with glee at the unleashed havoc. Such is the way of gods.

The Form Runes are: *Beast, Chaos, Dragon, Dragonewt (where dragonewts exist, in Glorantha, for instance), Man, Spirit and Plant.*

Affinity Point Cost per Rune: 2

POWER Runes

The Runes of Power are arranged in diametrically opposed pairs. They characterise the chief motivations of gods and so are invested in whatever they create. They derive from and are influenced by, the Elemental Runes and influence the Form Runes. They are typically manifestations of a specific type of power derived from a primal source. Most cults are therefore invested with those Runes characterising the god or gods they worship and consider as enemies the opposing Runes (and consequently the deities characterised by them) – although outright enmity is not always guaranteed and depends very much on the mythic relationships and alliances struck by the gods during the creation of the world and its subsequent history.

The Power Runes are:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| <i>Cold</i> | <i>Heat</i> |
| <i>Death</i> | <i>Fertility</i> |
| <i>Disorder</i> | <i>Harmony</i> |
| <i>Fate</i> | <i>Luck</i> |
| <i>Heat</i> | <i>Cold</i> |
| <i>Illusion</i> | <i>Truth</i> |
| <i>Light</i> | <i>Shadow</i> |
| <i>Movement</i> | <i>Stasis</i> |

Affinity Point Cost per Rune: 2

Condition Runes

The Condition Runes are the final group and they define how gods, cults or individuals deal with any of the preceding Runes. There are five main conditions: Infinity, Law, Magic, Mastery and Trade. Each works in a different way:

Infinity – this is the mark of the gods. It implies complete freedom of will and the ability to act like a god oneself. It is conferred only on those worthy of the status and is the preserve of demi-gods, true heroes and enormously powerful creatures such as dragons.

Law – the Law Rune aims to defend against Chaos. It stabilises another Rune and helps prevent Chaos from disrupting it. Those who possess or command the Law Rune commit to rationality, steady progress and natural evolution. They tend to dislike anything that attempts to twist or shape reality and thus, in many respects, is the antithesis of the Magic Rune.

Magic – the Magic Rune is derived from the Chaos Rune and lacks its parent’s malignancy. It represents the ability to command, shape and control another Rune but on a temporary basis.

Mastery – the Mastery Rune signifies mastery of a particular Form, Power or Condition Rune and is an indication of the ascendancy of power. It is meaningless without another Rune to define it, although its presence signifies the independence of its owner from the rank and file. Cults possessing the Mastery Rune are the true movers and shakers of the world. Individuals possessing it are those destined for greatness (or infamy).

Trade – the Trade Rune is that of communication. It signifies a willingness to enter into dialogue and to bargain or compromise. It is seen as a Rune of agreement and amicability although the Trade Rune can also be employed ruthlessly.

Affinity Point Cost per Rune: 2

Example. The cult of Orlanth Dragonbreaker, being built by John for his Glorantha campaign, has the Air Rune (Elemental Rune, 1 Affinity Point); Dragon (Form Rune, 2 Affinity Points) and Mastery (Condition Rune,

2 Affinity Points). This defines that the Dragonbreaker aspect of Orlanth has control over both the air and dragons, in keeping with specific myths regarding how Orlanth slew two of the great beasts and has a total Affinity Point cost of 5.

Magic and Powers

What magic can a cult offer to its members? This is dependent on a number of things:

- ☒ Whether or not the cult reveres a god, personality or ideal – the latter two cannot offer Divine Magic but may be able to offer Sorcery and Rune magic.
- ☒ The Runes the cult possesses (if any). Cults without Runes cannot offer Rune magic. Cults can only offer Rune magic if they have the Rune associated with it.
- ☒ Magic conferred via myths and other legacies.

Again, a cult’s magic is bought with Affinity Points. Some cults may offer only a couple of Rune spells and a couple of Divine Spells. Some may offer more spells based on sorcery but have no Rune or Divine magic. Myths, too and their strength, contributes to magic availability.

The Affinity Point cost per spell, according to its type, is found in the Magic table.

Magic

| Magic Type | Prerequisite | Affinity Point Cost |
|-------------|--|---------------------|
| Rune | Rune Associated with the spell. | 1 per spell |
| Divine | Cult must worship a god. | 3 per spell |
| Sorcery | None. | 3 per spell |
| Spirit | At least one myth, with a Resonance of at least 70%, explaining the link with the spirit world. | 2 per spell |
| Enchantment | At least one myth, with a Resonance of at least 70%, explaining the enchantment’s origin and illustrating its purpose and meaning to the cult. | 3 per enchantment |

Enchantments are described in the Powers section, below.

Powers

In addition to magic, cults may have access to fabled, enchanted treasures (enchantments) and Legendary Abilities (which mirror things the cult or its focus of worship excel at). The Games Master should discuss with the player the enchantment's nature, powers and so forth and decide if its Affinity Points cost should be raised accordingly or even made conditional.

Conditions for enchantment availability are varied but here are some ideas:

- ☒ The enchantment can only be obtained through a HeroQuest.
- ☒ The enchantment is not in the material possession of the cult and has been lost.
- ☒ The enchantment is well hidden and protected from the cult's enemies.
- ☒ An enemy cult has stolen the enchantment.
- ☒ The enchantment can only be used by an individual with specific powers (a particular Legendary Ability or in exchange for a number of Hero Points or a Runelord of the cult).

For instance, John wants the cult of Orlanth Dragonbreaker to be custodians of Orlanth's spear, Wyrmbane, with which he slew Aroka. The spear always inflicts critical hits when used against dragons and dragonkind and has a damage of 2D10+2. The Games Master decides this is acceptable, because one of the myths of the cult is how Orlanth killed the dragon and has a Resonance of 73%; however, he decides that the spear is a very powerful weapon and offers John a choice: either pay 6 Affinity Points for it and have the cult keep it as one of their prized treasures or pay the 3 Affinity Points for an enchantment but make the spear only available on the completion of a successful HeroQuest into the Orlanth Kills Aroka myth.

Legendary Abilities cost 1 Affinity Point to buy and become available to members as per the description of the Legendary Ability in terms of Hero Points and Minimum Skill Level. The *RuneQuest* rules, *Legendary Adventures* and various *RuneQuest* supplements offer a large range of Legendary Abilities to choose from.

Obligations and Deficits

Obligations and Deficits are another framework method for enforcing certain kinds of behaviour. Essentially, cult members are rewarded for acting in the right ways and penalised for acting against the behavioural norms of the cult. These things can take different forms and it is up to the Games Master to decide which (and they can be mixed and matched) are most appropriate to the campaign and thus available as part of the Cult Framework.

Gifts and Compulsions

Introduced in *Elric of Melniboné*, Gifts and Compulsions are awards and drawbacks given and imposed by the Lords of Law and Chaos to their members. Gifts can be wondrous; Compulsions catastrophic. The system presented in *Elric of Melniboné* is designed to model the flavour of Michael Moorcock's books and so may prove to be unsuitable for cults in other settings but the overall principle can be adapted and brought into other *RuneQuest* settings. What is presented here is a more generic approach to Gifts and Compulsions.

Gods reward their followers with Gifts but the strength of the relationship always comes at a price, in the form of Compulsions. Gifts vary in their power, as do Compulsions and what is offered depends on the god worshipped. A worshipper of a god is entitled to select one gift each time a compulsion is *imposed*: a worshipper *always* gains a compulsion every time he advances one rank within the cult. The maximum value of the combined gifts cannot exceed the POW dedicated to the deity. In certain circumstances, such as successfully completing a mighty quest for the god or its cult, the Games Master might offer the faithful worshipper a chance to accept a new gift. If accepted, the gift always comes with a further compulsion.

Gifts

A Gift is a power or ability, usually of a permanent nature, granted to faithful cult members. The opportunity to receive a Gift is only granted to those who have shown dedication or performed a major service for their deity and only one Gift is permitted each time. Characters are not required to *accept* the Gifts of their cult but the powers offered are seductive and few can resist their allure. Once all available POW has been bartered they may not receive any further Gifts. The list of Example Gifts is far from exhaustive: Games Masters should feel free to create their own Gifts to supplement the ones presented here.

Example Gifts

| Gift | Effect | Dedicated POW Cost |
|------------------|---|--|
| Abstinence | Exist without one requirement, for example air, food, water, sleep. | 1 POW. |
| Animal Familiar | The recipient receives the companionship of a <i>natural</i> animal (choose from the animals listed in <i>RuneQuest Monsters</i>) with a SIZ in D6 no greater than the POW spent on this gift. The familiar obeys simple commands but will not go against its nature. If a further point of POW is invested, the creature can speak with its master. | 1 POW per D6 of SIZ; additional 1 POW for a talking creature. |
| Divine Training | Raise a <i>cult</i> skill to 100%. | 1 POW the first skill, 2 the second and so forth. |
| Elemental | Gain an elemental helper which may be called once per adventure. | 1 POW per metre of the elemental's size. |
| Endurance | Endure any pain. Never needs to check <i>Resilience</i> to prevent unconsciousness when wounded and immune to torture. | 1 POW. |
| Eternal Life | The recipient will not die of natural causes during the lifetime of the gift, although he is still vulnerable to death through violence. | Costs 1 POW. |
| Perfection | Raise a single characteristic by 1D3 (any POW gained is automatically forfeit to that deity), up to the human maximum, including SIZ. | Costs 1 POW the first time, 2 the second, and so on. |
| Sanctuary | The deity provides the recipient with a magical structure or plane as a residence. 1 POW buys a villa or manse; 2 POW buys a castle; 3 POW a city and so forth. The property always belongs to the deity and can be removed at any time if the deity so chooses. The residence may have further powers as desired. | Initial cost is variable. 1 POW for Hidden (residence itself cannot be perceived); 1 POW for Movement (flying, rolling, crawling, and so on); 1 POW for Shifting (interdimensionally); 1 POW for Isolation (residents cannot be located magically); 1 POW for Impregnability (access cannot be forced, save at the deity level), 1 POW for Peacefulness (residents suffer no violence or insanity). |
| Second Life | Return from the dead once (all POW sacrificed to <i>other</i> entities and their Gifts are lost). | 1 POW the first time, 2 the second and so forth. |
| Slave | Gain a demonic servant (available to the cult) which may be summoned for one task per adventure. | 1 POW per Magic Point required to summon such a demon. |
| Return Loved One | A loved one is brought back from death. Their POW automatically belongs to the god and the resurrected person serves the god's agenda completely. | 1 POW the first time, 2 the second and so forth. The cost increases even if used on <i>different</i> loved ones. |
| Ward | Gain total invulnerability to one form of harm. Each time this gift is taken a new form of harm is selected (for example: swords, spears, arrows, fire, poison, a <i>specific</i> Rune and so forth). | 1 POW the first time, 2 the second, 3 the third and so forth. |
| Youth | Return to a young body, reversing all aging effects. | 1 POW. |

If a cult designed using the systems presented in this chapter offers gifts, there are some restrictions:

- ☒ The cult must have a god as a focus.
- ☒ The gifts must reflect the god's nature. A god of death, for example, would not offer a Gift such as Second Life or Immortality.
- ☒ It costs 1 Affinity Point per Gift.

Usually, Gifts are made available at certain stages in progressing through the cult's ranks. As part of the cult framework Games Masters need to decide when Gifts will be offered (at Initiation say or attaining Runelord). Gifts may also be dependent on certain tests for a character – such as completing a HeroQuest or by making a specific donation or even making a series of Persistence and Resilience tests.

Compulsions

Compulsions are behaviours imposed by gods and they always accompany a Gift, although Gifts may not *always* accompany Compulsions. Compulsions, unlike Gifts, quite often do not have specific game mechanics dictating how they work. This is deliberate; Compulsions are often based on perception and motivation that require roleplaying, not mechanics,

to implement. A character might not be aware of the depth of a particular affliction, for example or a Compulsion might skew his ideals.

Games Masters should always be aware of the Compulsions characters carry and use judgement to remind them when a Compulsion may dictate the way they act, feel or respond in a given situation. Penalties to skills are always a useful way of applying game mechanics to a Compulsion's manifestation and the depth of the membership in the cult is always a guide to how deeply a progressive Compulsion affects skills.

Therefore, as a *general* rule a Compulsion, if used in this way, penalises an appropriate skill by –10% for every 20% of a Cult Pact (round to the nearest). For example, a character who *Hates Granbretan* and has a Cult Pact of 60% can expect skills such as Courtesy and Influence to be subject to a –30% penalty whenever the character has to deal with Granbretanians or those allied to them. Again, use judgement to modify the penalty if the circumstances warrant it; our Granbretan Hater might suffer only a –15% penalty when dealing with Granbretan's allies, for example; or –60% when being forced to deal with his Beast Masked arch-enemy.

Example Compulsions

| Compulsion | Effect |
|-------------------|---|
| Abstinence | Refuse to eat or drink. Becoming cadaverously thin. –1 SIZ and –1 CON. |
| Acute Hydrophobia | Develop fear of water (cannot approach large bodies of water; must make a Persistence test to avoid fleeing in fear or being rooted to the spot in terror). |
| Acute Insomnia | Unable to sleep for fear of never waking. Become gaunt-eyed, cadaverously thin and intensely paranoid of even one's closest associates. |
| Agoraphobia | Develop Agoraphobia. Cannot abide wide-open spaces where Lassa's spies can watch. |
| Armour Rejection | Never wear armour on a particular location (emulating, perhaps, the fact that a god never wore a helmet) or shun armour of any kind. |
| Attention Deficit | Unable to concentrate for long periods. Tasks requiring periods of concentration take twice as long to complete. |
| Challenge | Must always challenge and attack signs and representations of Chaos. |
| Chaste | Undertake a vow of chastity. |
| Chivalrous | Refuse to act in any way that contradicts the laws of chivalry. |
| Claustrophobia | Develop claustrophobia. Cannot enter any space of less than 3 times SIZ willingly; stricken with panic if forced into such a space. |
| Collector | Collect and catalogue obscure objects constantly. |
| Colour Obsessed | Wear nothing but a specific colour or hue. |
| Compassionate | Must always offer healing to those who need it – even enemies. |
| Dedicated Lover | Fall hopelessly in love with one particular individual. Pledge heart and soul to serve her. |
| Dominion | Craves the sanctuary of a particular environment (the sea, dry land, forests and so on). Become panicked if separated from the dominion for any length of time. |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Empire Builder | Become obsessed with challenging an empire and replacing it with a regime that embodies your cult's qualities. |
| Fear of Death | Increasing fear of death. As the Pact skill increases the fear of death grows stronger until the individual is unable to act for fear of accident, murder or assassination. |
| Forgetful | Lose short-term memory (-1 INT). |
| Forgo Shield | Never use a shield. |
| Gluttony | Cannot stop eating or drinking. Becoming corpulently fat. +1 SIZ and -1 CON. |
| Hate Armour | Never wear armour. |
| Hate | Hatred of a particular person, country, race or ideal. The object of the hatred must be prevented from realising its own ambitions at all costs. |
| Hydrophobic | Must never come into contact with water, save for drinking. |
| Insomnia | Insomnia. Sleep is almost impossible; fatigue constantly builds. |
| Jealousy | Uncontrollable, irrational obsession over some trivial matter: a jealousy over a lover or the tendency to find a slight where none occurred. |
| Kleptomania | Become compelled to steal – magical and sorcerous items, naturally but also mundane things that could very easily be bought. |
| Knowledge Eater | Overwhelming desire to consume brains, intent on the belief that the knowledge they contain can be absorbed. |
| Mechanical Fetish | Develop an unhealthy fascination with machinery, regardless of its origin. Doubly fascinated by implements of torture. |
| Merciful | Show mercy to any defeated enemy, no matter what their crime, status or degree of enmity towards you. |
| Merciless | Never surrender or accept the surrender of any foe. |
| Never Ending Search | Obsessed with finding the ultimate location for something lost to your cult. |
| Nightmares | Experience terrifying dreams and sleepless nights. Awake suffering from one level of fatigue. |
| Obsessive Compulsive Paranoia | Develop obsessive/compulsive disorder. Must check everything several times. Must complete simple, everyday tasks in a set order. Eat the same foods in the same places at the same times. |
| Paranoia | Become increasingly paranoid. Friends and colleagues are inferior beings jealous of your impending god-hood. |
| Pattern Obsessed | Become obsessed with the shapes and geometries of things, seeking to study and understand every nuance and every angle. |
| Pedantic | Obsessed with detail. Study every word and every letter without fail. Tasks involving study and concentration take twice as long to accomplish. |
| Perfectionist | Develop an uncontrollable anger and violent temper if things are not done perfectly – and they never are. No one can meet the cultist's impossibly high standards. |
| Phobia | Develop an irrational fear of three separate things: the dark, the cold, spiders, rats and so forth. |
| Pyromania | Become obsessed with starting fires, opposing all those who try to extinguish them. |
| Pyrophobia | Fear of fire and naked flames. Unable to bear being close to controlled sources of fire; terrified to the point of fleeing any uncontrolled sources of fire. |
| Rage | Develop a vile, argumentative and violent temper threatening to destabilise all attempts to remain calm. |
| Ritual Scarring | Sacrifice 1 point of CHA (through ritual scarring). |
| Ritualistic | Undergo a regular vigil of 3 days and 3 nights in preparation for cult holy days. |
| Sacrifice | Make a sacrifice of a living thing every month. Sacrifice is appropriate to the cult's myths. |
| Secretive | Become intensely secretive and jealous of information gained. Takes unusual and risky measures to protect even the most trivial knowledge. |
| Self-Pitying | Destined to sorrow. Nothing brings comfort or pleasure. All dreams are nightmares, all experiences fleeting and unfulfilling. Life is futile. Retirement to the realm of the patron is the only solace. |
| Stalwart | Never dodge a blow. |
| Target | Become a known and visible target to those who serve your enemies. |
| Tedious | Become an oppressive bore on one particular subject, imparting all knowledge about it in long, rambling, tedious eulogies. |
| Tic | Develop a nervous tic, mannerism or speech impediment. |
| Unkillable | Develop the overwhelming belief that one is invulnerable to mortal weapons. |
| Vegetarian | Eat only vegetables. |
| Veneration | Sanctify a particular thing, such as an animal, bird, fish and so forth. Never allow harm to that focus. For example – never eat the flesh of any bird or winged creature. |

For a cult to offer or impose a Compulsion, like Gifts, there are certain restrictions:

- ☒ The Compulsion *must* reflect the focus of the cult's nature.
- ☒ Imposing a Compulsion is not a punishment; it is a consequence of accepting a cult's ideals and way of operating; it is wise to therefore balance it with a reward of some form.

Compulsions do *not* have an Affinity Point cost; however, a cult should not have more than 3.

Gifts and Compulsions Example

John, in designing the Orlanth Dragonbreaker cult, decides that Runelords will gain the Gift Identify Wyrmfriend. This Gift allows Runelords to automatically sense when someone they encounter belongs to a draconic cult. It costs 1 Affinity Point to buy the Gift. He also wants to add the Immortality Gift but the Games Master deems that it is inappropriate for the cult's nature. To balance the Gift, the Games Master suggests that all Runelords also gain the Hate Wyrmfriend Compulsion (Hate, from the Example Compulsions table). The Compulsion has no Affinity Point cost.

Geases

A geas is a cult taboo and may act in a similar way to either a Gift or Compulsion. If a cult member under a geas violates the associated taboo he will suffer dishonour or even death. On the other hand, the observing of one's geas is believed to bring power and good fortune. In traditional mythology, a hero's doom comes about due to violation of the geas, either by accident or by having multiple geases and then being placed in a position where they have no option but to violate one in order to maintain another. For instance, the Irish hero Cúchulainn has a geas to never eat dog meat and he is also bound by a geas to eat any food offered to him by a woman. When a witch offers him dog meat, he has no way to emerge from the situation unscathed and this leads to his death.

It costs no Affinity Points to add geases to the cult framework and multiple geases can be built into the cult as long as:

- ☒ The geas reflects the nature of the cult or god
- ☒ Cult myths display examples of the geas in action or explain its reason for being

A geas can be a social condition, such as a vow of chastity or being forbidden to eat meat on clan festival days. It may also be more perilous, compelling the cultist to act in a way contrary to clan or individual norms in order to atone for the broken taboo. Sample geases include:

- ☒ Never use a sword in battle.
- ☒ Take a vow of permanent silence.
- ☒ Accept no healing from wounds inflicted in battle.
- ☒ Wear no armour.
- ☒ Drink no alcohol.
- ☒ Take a permanent vow of chastity.
- ☒ Become a direct slave of the chief or an elder.
- ☒ Accept exile from the clan and make no attempt to join another.
- ☒ Quest into enemy lands and kill X enemies.
- ☒ Live outdoors permanently, never accepting shelter.
- ☒ Eat no meat – offer all meat given to the ancestors or clan chief.
- ☒ Eat no vegetables – offer all vegetables given to the ancestors or clan chief.
- ☒ Never utter a single lie.
- ☒ Seek-out and start a blood feud.
- ☒ Journey to a holy place and remain there in the god's sight for nine days and nights.

SUPERSTITIONS

Superstitions take many forms and are usually associated with avoiding bad luck (rather than encouraging good luck). These simple acts prevent one from becoming prematurely noticed by one's fate and a few examples of typical cult superstitions are as follows:

- ☒ Never bid farewell on a bridge (if you want to see the other person alive again).
- ☒ Seeing a single crow is very unlucky; seeing a single hooded crow signals war is close by.
- ☒ If a bride does not sew a swan's feather into her husband's bedding, she cannot guarantee his fidelity. If a husband does not sew a hawk's feather into the bride's, then likewise.
- ☒ Burning beef bones when making broth brings a bad harvest and poor hunting.
- ☒ Malice and envy are to be feared when sparks jump out of the fire.
- ☒ If thirteen people sit down to dine, the last to rise will meet with ill fortune.



Superstitions have no Affinity Point cost and there is no limit to the number of superstitions that a cult supports. However, there must always be some reason, usually embodied in a myth, to support the superstitions.

Taboo

Taboos are things that are *not* done, both as a matter of cult tradition and as a way of avoiding bad fortune. Usually breaking a taboo is considered as bringing bad fortune on the whole cult or community and not just oneself. Some typical taboos are:

- Arson
- Cowardice
- Defiling an artefact of the cult
- Eating human flesh
- Homosexuality
- Killing animals sacred to the cult
- Killing innocents
- Lying
- Making independent peace with a blood feud enemy
- Marrying
- Murdering outside of a blood feud

- Necrophilia
- Paedophilia
- Rape
- Theft of cult treasure
- Theft within the cult
- Torture
- Treachery to the cult
- Worshipping false/foreign gods (indeed, worshipping any gods)

Breaking a taboo usually involves a cult punishment – a trial or quest, for instance but also by the accepting of a gas (see above).

Membership and Ranks

This cult framework element is of substantial importance to both cults and characters. It defines how people join the cult and what stages are open to them through cult progression.

Membership

Becoming a member of a cult can be as simple as proclaiming worship of a god, following of a personality or ideal or undergoing some form of initiation rite. For

most, this is enough for their personal requirements and, as Lay Members (see page 68) they will progress no further in the cult and have no desire to do so.

However, the more dedicated and devout – those who want to make a real commitment to the focus of their veneration – must go somewhat beyond the Lay Membership requirements and become Initiates. Initiates dedicate themselves to the inner workings of the cult and place themselves on a track for progression, allowing the cult to become the focus for their activities.

Initiation involves a ritual of some form. The precise nature needs to be defined as part of the cult framework and can take any of a number of forms. Some examples are:

- ☒ Initiation ritual involving much pomp or ceremony, such as a communion rite, baptism or other, symbolic acceptance into the cult's ways.
- ☒ Trial or ordeal.
- ☒ Vigil, fasting or abstinence.
- ☒ Swearing of a binding oath.
- ☒ Making a sacrifice.

Performing the initiation ritual can either be a focus of a roleplaying session or, for simplicity, abstracted to a roll against a particular skill (such as Resilience, Persistence or a Lore). Once the initiation rite is complete and if the Initiate meets any prerequisites for membership (see Ranks, page 68), then he is considered an Initiate.

By becoming an Initiate, the character becomes liable for any Gifts, Compulsions, Superstitions, Taboos and Geases the cult holds. He is making a commitment to the cult's ways and, by undergoing the initiation ritual, is making a bond with the focus of the cult's veneration. Cult ranks, from Initiate onwards, start to channel the cult's behaviour, reflecting the nature of their god. In return, they gain access to benefits such as Runes and Rune magic (if offered) and also Gifts (again, if offered). They are, in effect, making a Pact with the cult's focus of veneration.

Pacts

The concept of a Pact will be familiar to *Elric of Melniboné* Games Masters and players but it may be a new concept to others. Essentially a Pact is a

dedication to serve a god through dedicating one's soul through worship. The making of a Pact is represented by *dedicating* one or more points of POW to the focus of worship. The character still possesses the POW for calculating skills but upon their death, the entity to which they promised their soul will come to collect.

Making a Pact is simple: the character, at the point of Initiation, declares how many points of POW he intends to dedicate to the Pact. He may dedicate as much or as little as he likes, with a minimum of 1 point and a maximum of his available POW. The dedicated POW then forms the basis of his Pact Skill and determines the availability of any Gifts the cult has to offer.

Available Magic Points are limited to the amount of *undedicated* POW. Thus, a character with a POW of 12 dedicating 7 points to his cult would have only 5 Magic Points available for use elsewhere. Once a point of POW has been dedicated to a cult, it cannot be used for any other Pacts or Gifts from membership of other cults. Thus, a follower of Orlanth Dragonbreaker with a POW of 10 might dedicate 6 points to the Dragonbreaker cult but this would leave only a further 4 points to be dedicated to another cult.

Dedicated POW is not only used for Gifts. It is used for Divine magic, forming the basis of a 'pool' of points used to power Divine magic spells. If a point of Dedicated POW is used for a Gift, it cannot be used to also store Divine spells. For example, a Runelord with 8 POW dedicated to his god might have 4 POW invested in one or more Gifts; this means that he has 4 POW remaining to invest in Divine spells – not the 8 POW of the dedication.

The Pact Skill

This is a measure of one's devotion to the cult and its object of veneration. The higher the Pact skill, the more dedicated the follower. Dedicating POW to a cult automatically creates the Pact at a base percentage equal to: $CHA + \text{Dedicated POW}$. It is not a measure of how much a character knows about the cult or god; that is still measured by the Lore (Specific Theology) skill. Pact can be developed in the same way as any skill, through Improvement rolls but it also improves through certain other circumstances, as detailed in the Pact Improvement table.

Pact Improvement

| Circumstance | Pact Improvement |
|--|---|
| Improving Lore (Specific Theology) | Pact increases by the same amount; no improvement roll is needed. |
| Undertaking and completing a HeroQuest successfully | 1D10+1 |
| Undertaking an unsuccessful HeroQuest | 1D6 |
| Undertaking a successful mundane quest for your god or cult | 1D4+1 |
| Undertaking an unsuccessful mundane quest for your god or cult | 1D2 |
| Dedicating more of your own POW to the Pact | 1 per point of POW dedicated |

These improvements are in addition to any Improvement rolls a character wants to use for developing the relationship with his god.

Characters who form a Pact can use their Pact skill to augment their chance to cast Rune Magic. Add the Pact's critical range to the Runecasting percentage (for example, a character with a Pact of 40% would add +4% to the Runecasting percentage).

As the Pact increases, so does the propensity to act in the way or ways the god or focus of veneration acts – much in the way that Myth Resonance influences behaviour. *The higher the Pact, the more like the god or object of veneration, the character becomes.* Thus his character, judgements, deeds and actions reflect those of his god, because the character is essentially becoming more and more like his god. This kind of behaviour requires roleplaying for its effectiveness and Games Masters should watch for situations where the strength of the Pact will assert itself in a character's actions. Characters can, as their Pact increases, undergo complete personality changes as a result, although the circumstances where this happens are judgement calls for the Games Master.

For example, one of John's players, Carl, is running his famed Orlanth Dragonbreaker Runelord, Harvaldson. Harvaldson's Pact (Orlanth Dragonbreaker) is 65% and the character is engaged in a diplomatic errand to the hall of a neighbouring clan allied to the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. Ordinarily, Harvaldson is a mild-mannered, polite, good, dutiful Orlanthe who would never breach the strict rules of Orlanthe hospitality but, as a debate surrounding tribute grows heated, Harvaldson becomes embroiled in an argument with the chieftain's son. John calls for Carl to make a roll against Harvaldson's Pact: the roll is a 04 – a critical success. John rules that Harvaldson channels the same kind of aggression Orlanth Dragonbreaker displayed when entertaining dragons at his own stead and becomes uncontrollably angry. Harvaldson rises and strikes the chief's son a mighty blow to the side of the head, because his rage against those who ally with dragons is so profound. Harvaldson has literally become Orlanth Dragonbreaker for a short period of time.



Note that behaviour dictated by a Pact may be countered by behaviour enforced by a myth. In the above example, for instance, Harvaldson's rage could be tempered by the character remembering the myth explaining what happened when Orlanth slew the dragons who visited his hall. In such a case, the Games Master can also call for a roll against Myth Resonance, matching its result against that of the Pact result in an Opposed test. If Carl rolled a success (but not a critical) against the myth's Resonance, then John could rule that Harvaldson recognises the potential consequences for his actions and holds his blow. If he *failed* the Resonance test, then Harvaldson would act as described in the example.

Pacts, Dedicated POW and Divine Magic

No character may have more Divine spell magnitude than the POW dedicated to the Pact skill, *minus any gifts they may have taken*. Divine spells are still cast as per the *RuneQuest Deluxe* rules and once successfully cast, the Divine spell is placed beyond use but, depending on their rank within the cult, it can be regained upon a successful Pact test, showing that the character has re-established the trusted relationship with the god and is able to channel that god's power once more through the Divine spell.

- ☒ Lay Members – No access to Divine spells.
- ☒ Initiates – Must return to a shrine or temple to regain Divine spells. Each one requires a successful Pact test to recover; failure requires that they try again the following day.
- ☒ Acolytes – May test to regain a Divine spell the day after it was used; however, if the test fails they must return to a shrine or temple and recover the spell there.
- ☒ Runelords – May test to regain a Divine spell an hour after it was used; however, if the test fails they must return to a shrine or temple and recover the spell there.
- ☒ Runepriests – May test to regain Divine spells an hour after they have been used; failing the roll simply incurs a delay of another hour before they can try again, whereas a fumble means the spell must be recovered at a temple.

Using this modified system for Divine magic has certain advantages over the previous method in *RuneQuest*, namely:

- ☒ Skills are unaffected by dedicating POW to the Pact.
- ☒ The loss of Magic Points is compensated by a quicker recovery of Divine magic.
- ☒ Divine magic can be regained without the need to find a temple, if the Pact is strong enough.

Ranks

Some cults have several ranks of membership, whilst others only one or two, depending on the nature of the cult. Part of the cult framework is to determine what ranks are available and how characters progress from one to another. The core rank structure is summarised below, along with the advancement requirements and appropriate benefits.

Lay Members

The first step in joining a cult and rising through its ranks is to become a lay member. A character can belong to several cults as a lay member, so long as they are not diametrically opposed. The vast majority of members of a cult are lay members, casual worshippers who follow the basic doctrine of the cult and attend regular ceremonies.

Requirements: Candidate must have at least a basic understanding of the beliefs of the cult and make a small donation of between one and ten silvers.

Duties: There are very few duties required by lay members – they will be expected to attend celebrations on special Holy Days but unless they are aiming to rise in the ranks of the cult, they will not even be expected to attend regular ceremonies.

Benefits: The character will automatically be able to find tutors for any skills the cult teaches. They must still pay the normal rates for these services.

Initiates

This is the start of the inner membership of the cult and initiates have to donate a substantial amount of time and money to the organisation. In return, they receive benefits denied to lay members. It is possible for a character to be an initiate of more than one cult at a time.

Requirements: Candidates will be tested to determine their knowledge of the cult, their sincerity for joining

and even their current reputation. The character must succeed in five skill tests of cult skills and enter into a Pact with the focus of the cult's veneration, dedicating POW in the process. As a result, he gains the Pact skill and may be eligible for any Gifts the cult offers; he also becomes liable for Compulsions, if the cult has any. In addition, he must also make a donation of at least 50 silvers. Every additional 50 silvers donated increases the strength of the Pact skill by 1%.

Duties: Initiates are expected to donate 10% of all income to the cult and attend services at their place of worship at least one day every two weeks. They must also attend all ceremonies during Holy Days.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by lay members, the initiate will have automatic access to cult Rune spells (those only taught by their cult) up to a Magnitude of 4. Initiates pay half the normal price for being taught both these spells and any cult skills. Additionally, Initiates may learn cult Divine spells up to a maximum Magnitude of 2.

If a character is an initiate of a cult, he will usually be considered a lay member of all allied cults without being required to make any donation.

Acolytes

Few members of the cult will rise to the position of acolyte, a rank that requires dedication and service but where the inner secrets of the cult begin to be revealed. Acolytes can be lay members and even initiates of other cults but cannot be acolytes of more than one cult.

Requirements: Candidates must have been an initiate of the cult for at least two years and must have at least four cult skills of at least 50% and a Pact of at least 50%. A gift must be made to the cult of at least 1,000 silvers.

Duties: Acolytes are expected to donate 25% of all income to the cult and attend services at their place of worship at least one day every week. They must also attend all ceremonies during Holy Days.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by lay members, the acolyte will have automatic access to cult Rune spells (those only taught by their cult) up to a Magnitude of 6. Acolytes pay half the normal price

for being taught both these spells and any cult skills. Additionally, Acolytes may learn cult Divine spells up to a maximum Magnitude of 4.

Acolytes may also call for Divine Intervention.

Runepriests

The most senior acolyte of each congregation of the cult, Runepriests live to serve their faith. They are leaders among the cult and each looks after an entire congregation and place of worship.

Requirements: Candidates must have been an acolyte of the cult for at least two years and must have at least five cult skills and a Pact of at least 75%.

Duties: Runepriests are expected to donate 50% of all income to the cult and lead services at their place of worship every day of the week, though one day a week may be left for his own time at his option. They must act as administrators of their place of worship, monitoring both tithes and members. A Runepriest can never become a Runelord.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by acolytes, Runepriests have no limit on the Magnitude of cult Rune and Divine spells. Cult skills are learnt for free while cult spells are learnt at half the usual cost. Moreover, Runepriests have the resources of their entire congregation at their disposal though they are advised not to abuse the trust of the cult's members.

Runelords

The heroes of the cult, Runelords are masters of everything the cult stands for and have access to its deepest secrets. When trouble threatens the cult, it is the Runelords who will fight for its survival and prosperity.

Requirements: Candidates must have been an acolyte of the cult for at least three years and must have at least five cult skills and a Pact of at least 80%.

Duties: Runelords are expected to donate 50% of all income to the cult and spend a similar proportion of their time pursuing cult duties – this may range from simply attending services to being sent on Quests by their Runepriest, recovering sacred items or protecting cult members. A Runelord can never become a Runepriest.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by acolytes, Runelords may also learn cult Rune spells up to a Magnitude of 8 and cult Divine spells of up to Magnitude 6.

Cult skills are learned for free while cult spells are learned at half the usual cost. Runelords are also given a metal weapon by the cult, either iron or silver, for the duration of their service to the cult.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Any worshipper of the god may call for Divine Intervention. The character must roll a 1D100. If the number is greater than their Pact score, then the call for Divine Intervention fails. If the number is less than or equal to their Pact score then the god hears the plea and grants it. However, in this case the value of the Pact is *permanently* reduced by the number rolled. This may cause the severance of the pact out of the god's disgust at having to save his worshipper! In this case, the character loses all the POW he dedicated to that god and must make a rededication at a shrine or temple.

Runelords have an *automatic* chance of Divine Intervention. However, each request *reduces* their Pact's percentage by 1D10%

The ranks offered by a cult will depend on the cult's style and function. Just about every cult will have Initiates and Priests, whereas some may have no official priesthood and instead rely upon Runelords to fulfil the priestly function. Other cults may exist with only Initiates and Acolytes, having no ecumenical and Runelord tier. The decision on what levels to include requires consideration and the examples in the following table may assist in that process.

| Nature of the Cult | Ranks Available |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Loose, primitive or barbarian warrior cult | Initiates, Rune Priests, Runelords |
| Nature cult | Initiates, Acolytes |
| Ecclesiastic city cult | All |
| Active, civilised questing cult | Initiates, Rune Priests, Runelords |
| Peaceful Personality cult | Initiates, Rune Priests |
| Forceful Personality cult | Initiates, Runelords |
| Devout monotheistic cult | Acolytes, Rune Priests |

Training

Cults teach skills as part of the rewards offered to their active members and look for certain skills when recruiting members. The kinds of skills offered reflect two things: the cult's nature and purpose (pious, peaceful cults will focus on Lore and communication skills, for example; martial cults will offer weapon skills); and the kinds of qualities the focus of veneration exemplifies. For instance, the Orlanth Dragonbreaker cult might look for and teach, combat skills and Lore skills relating the understanding – and hence defeat – of dragons. Whereas the Brotherhood of the Wheel, a cult dedicated to protecting the Runewheel and the Runestaff, might offer defensive and investigative skills, reflecting its questing nature.

Therefore, as part of the cult framework process, give some thought to the following questions when choosing cult skills:

- What skills does the object of veneration display and promote?
- What skills are used in the myths fundamental to the cult?
- What skills are important to the cult in achieving its aims?
- What skills might members naturally bring to the cult, given the culture and campaign background?

Every cult can have up to five skills, chosen from Basic, Advanced, Combat and Magical, that it uses as a benchmark for membership and progression

and offers training for. If more skills are wanted or necessary, they are bought in blocks of three at a cost of 1 Affinity Point.

TRAINING

Cults offer training in cult skills again in order to enforce certain kinds of behaviour but also to make sure that the cult is equipped with what it needs to achieve its goals and ensure its survival. Training happens in several ways:

- ☒ Through dedicated training academies, supported by the cult
- ☒ Through the indenturing of lower ranks with higher ones
- ☒ Through mentoring and required study
- ☒ Natural transfers of knowledge through religious ceremonies, festivals and services
- ☒ Through the teaching of myths and beliefs

As part of the cult framework, consider which ways – and choose up to three – that are available through the cult. There is no need to formalise each and every academy, rite, mentor and so on; simply a consideration of which methods of teaching suit the cult the best.

Rounding Out the Cult

Having worked through the cult framework, you should have a good idea of your cult's focus, function, history, myths, magic and structure. It is now time to apply some finishing touches that can be used during game play. None of these finishing elements are crucial but they offer completeness.

- ☒ Roll 1D4+1 – this is the number of Holy Days the cult observes during the year. At least one day will mark the founding of the cult and one will mark another major point of importance, reflecting a key myth or deed (such as the martyrdom of a prophet or hero, for example). Decide, where in your game calendar, these Holy Days will appear and their importance to members of different ranks. The founding day and additional day of importance will be marked by all cult members; other days may be marked by only one rank and hold lesser significance.
- ☒ What are the ceremonies for the cult? How is worship conducted? Are ceremonies formal and highly ritualised or are they loosely structured and simple in approach? Do different Holy Days require different ceremonies? Be as vague or as detailed as you wish but assemble some notes on what ceremonies usually require, using myths, history and other elements of the cult framework to determine what they consist of.
- ☒ Where is the cult's home? This might be obvious, if the cult is local to a small community but large cults generally have a base of focus, where the major temple, church or shrine is located. Agree this with the Games Master.
- ☒ What happens to those who stray from the cult's path, betray its ideals or attempt to leave the cult? Are magical punishments enforced? Are apostates condemned to death? Is there no sanction at all? Consider the cult's nature and outline the punishments, if any, for going against the cult's ideals. Some cults use the threat of punishment as a propaganda tool to enforce behaviour but may never carry out the threat; others will do so rigorously and publicly.

THE METAGAME

There are two key ways to use the guilds, factions and cults defined in the previous chapters:

Firstly, as background elements for characters; associations they belong to, sympathise with or oppose. In this sense, the Characteristics, Capabilities, Powers, Magic and other resources need do no more than sit in the shadows, brought into effect when needed and even then in a passive capacity, supporting the characters' actions and lending colour to the campaign.

Secondly, as a game in its own right and this is what is meant by the term *metagame*. In this capacity the association itself is played as a character – in much the same way *RuneQuest Empires* encourages entire nations or empires to be played as character-like entities. The rules from the preceding chapters have helped to define associations to a similar degree of depth as a Player Character, complete with skills, magic, beliefs, motivations and resources to support their activities. In a metagame, the players control an association, focusing on the association's characteristics as part of a scenario developed by the Games Master. The outcomes of play may then feed into and influence continued play at the character campaign level; or may be completely removed from it.

Of course the two styles can be readily combined and, in the next chapter, we will discuss how characters can use the characteristics, capabilities and resources of their associations when operating on specific association business or when support and reputation will be of importance.

The elements of the metagame discussed in this chapter are:

- Economics
- Events
- Physical Conflict
- Political Conflict
- Social Conflict

Each section below details how the Characteristics, Capabilities and other resources are used within the metagame.

Metagame Timescales

The standard unit of time for the metagame is a year. A year can be broken into four seasons for additional granularity and some happenings, such as conflict, are handled on a seasonal basis. Others, such as Events and Economics, are handled on a yearly basis.

During the year a number of things must be done, in the following order

1. Restore WTH to its normal value for the association
2. Carry Over any Surplus WTH from the previous year and add to the WTH point total
3. Repay any debts that fall due
4. Spend WTH points in support of Characteristics
5. Make Improvement Rolls for Capabilities or Characteristics
6. Roll to see if any Events occur that year
7. Roll for Event Effects
8. Resolve any WTH deficit
9. Recruit
10. Resolve Conflicts (Optional)

RESTORING WTH

WTH is spent during the course of the year. At the start of each new year, WTH is restored to the association's original value and taking into account any circumstances imposed by Events from the previous year (which may give either a bonus or penalty, depending on the Event and its consequences).

SURPLUS WTH

If, at the end of a year, the association has unspent WTH, these can be carried over to the next year, increasing the WTH points available.

REPAY DEBTS

It might have been necessary to borrow to meet commitments. Debts usually fall due either 1 or 3 years after the loan has been made. Failure to repay

a debt will trigger certain consequences, which may include conflict or sanctions.

Events

For each year, roll 1D4-1 to see how many significant Events affect the association for that year. Events can be beneficial or debilitating and their effects can linger over several years. The Events table on page 75 is used to randomly determine the nature of Events and their effects.

Improvement Rolls

Improve the association's Capabilities or Characteristics.

Support Characteristics

WTH is spent supporting the essential needs of the association. See the Wealth section.

Resolve WTH Deficit

If not enough WTH is available to meet the support of Characteristics, then the deficit needs to be resolved somehow.

Recruit

Associations check to see if they have recruited new members – or even lost members – during the year. Events influence the resolution of Recruitment.

Resolve Conflicts

Social, political and physical conflicts are resolved as the final stage of the yearly turn. Some Conflicts will be the result of a roll on the Events table; but, at the end of the year as the final act, an association can decide if it intends to take any action against rivals as a general part of the metagame. It can initiate Conflict or respond to a conflict that the Games Master decides to introduce. How the Conflict is resolved depends on its type. It can be resolved in an abstract fashion, as the rules for Conflict detail or roleplayed through using characters, as part of a character-driven campaign.

Economics

An association's wealth is abstracted by the WTH Characteristic. This score represents the exploitable resources the association has and therefore how much revenue it can generate in a single year. The WTH

Characteristic changes each year, reflecting different conditions and circumstances. It is important to track the WTH value to see how the resources of the association are being managed. WTH must also be spent each year to support the association's activities; WTH points are used for this expenditure.

Each Characteristic of the association needs to be supported by WTH points. This represents the *essential* cost of running the association and different Characteristics have different costs attached to their upkeep. 1 point of WTH achieves the following:

- Supports 5 points of SIZ.
- Funds 3 points of MIL to field in the event of war.
- Fund 4 points of POP in promoting the association within the areas it operates.
- Fund 6 points of COM in terms of essential internal and external communications.
- Fund 4 points of INF in terms of exerting influence, through its officers and other employees or dependents.

In all cases round fractions to the lowest whole. For example, to upkeep a COM of 17 it would cost 2.83 WTH. Round this down to 2, representing the way in which associations cut costs and bargain for services.

Wealth Surplus

Any surplus WTH, after all Characteristics have been supported, debts repaid and so forth, is carried over to the next year and added to the WTH total.

Wealth Deficit

If an association finds that it does not have enough WTH points to cover its essential expenditure it has a number of options.

- Reduce the funding for that Characteristic or refuse to fund it altogether. This has consequences for Capabilities but may be a sensible option in the long run.
- Try to find extra WTH from within untapped resources or selling assets.
- Borrow what is required.

If the deficit cannot be resolved, it is carried across to the next year, reducing the replenished WTH at the start of the year – solving that may be problematic if old debts need to be made good.

The Deficit rules can also be applied if an association has a surplus available but anticipates hard times ahead and wishes to save resources in some way to deal with future difficulties. Thus, the Deficit phase need not be reserved for an association that is in financial trouble; it may reduce funding, tap resources or borrow even when it has sufficient WTH to meet its obligations.

Reduced Funding

An association is not *obliged* to fund a Characteristic completely. It can fund part of a Characteristic or offer no funding at all. Reducing the funding has a negative impact on the association's Capabilities, as indicated in the table below:

| Characteristic | Reduced Funding Consequence |
|----------------|--|
| INF | Every unfunded point reduces the Lore Capability for that year by -5% |
| SIZ | Every unfunded point reduces the Bureaucracy Capability for that year by -5% |
| COM | Every unfunded point reduces the, Diplomacy and Favour Capabilities for that year by -5% |
| POP | Every unfunded point reduces the Credit Capability for that year by -5% |
| MIL | Every unfunded point reduces the Combat Capability for that year by -5% |

However, continued under-funding of a Characteristic may result in certain long-term difficulties for the association. For example, failing to spend the required 3 WTH to support an INF of 12 results in the association having reduced influence in the local courts. Failing to support COM results in knowledge of the association or its myths being forgotten. This means that the association must put more effort into restoring its Characteristics in forthcoming years.

If a Characteristic is under-funded in a year, it not only receives the Capability penalties listed above, it risks the Characteristic reducing. Multiply the under-funded Characteristic by five and attempt to roll the result or less on 1D100:

Critical: The Characteristic, although unfunded, remains unchanged.

Success: The Characteristic reduces by 1.

Failure: The Characteristic reduces by 1D3.

Fumble: The Characteristic reduces by 1D4+1.

Tapping Resources

The sensible course for balancing a deficit is to try to realise assets or untapped resources through sale, hard work or ingenuity. The association is permitted one roll against Credit, Favour or Commerce, with the following results:

Critical Success: Gain 1D4+1 WTH

Success: Gain 1D3 WTH

Failure: No Gain or Loss

Fumble: Lose 1D3 WTH (i.e. increase the deficit)

BORROWING

WTH can be borrowed from affiliated associations or even internally, from the association's nobles. To borrow WTH, make a Credit roll at a penalty of -10% for each WTH point borrowed. The success of the Credit test determines the length of the loan.

Critical Success: Repayment of loan in 3 years (or earlier)

Success: Repayment of the Loan in 1 year

Failure: Loan is denied

Fumble: May not attempt to borrow money for the next 1D3 years

If an association has no affiliations built into its framework, then it may attempt to make a Favour test (calling upon favours offered to non-affiliated groups) at -40%, plus and additional -10% for each WTH point borrowed.

If the loan is repaid early, this is to the greater good and whoever made the loan will look favourably on future deals: gain a 10% bonus to any future Credit rolls when seeking to borrow WTH from that source.

If a loan is not repaid when it falls due, then the consequences can be serious. The borrower needs to make either a Favour or Diplomacy roll.

Critical Success: The loan is extended for 1 additional year.

Success: Conflict is averted but the borrower cannot borrow from that source again.

Failure: The lender uses force to seize assets and punish the borrower. This pushes the association and the creditor into Conflict.

Fumble: The lender takes immediate action to recover the debt. The association suffers a -40% modifier to all Capability tests as the creditor makes the debt and the default public; it also moves the association into Conflict.

Events

All manner of things can befall an association during a year. Each year roll 1D4-1 to see how many Events befall the association. If you wish, a Bureaucracy test can be made to see if the association anticipates the Events and either prevents them happening or makes things worse through negligence.

Bureaucracy Results

| Roll | Result |
|------------------|---|
| Critical Success | The association anticipated and planned ahead with efficiency. Up to 3 Events can be ignored if wished. |
| Success | Good planning means that 1 Event can be ignored, if wished. |
| Failure | Roll for Events as normal. |
| Fumble | The association has been negligent. No Events can be ignored and roll for 1 extra Event. |

Specific events are determined using the Events table and a roll of 1D20. The consequences of each event are outlined in the sections following the table. Note that these events offer a plethora of scenario and campaign hooks for standard, character-driven play, as well as hooks for an ongoing metagame.

Events

| 1D20 | Event |
|------|----------------------|
| 1 | Assassination |
| 2 | Association Unrest |
| 3 | Commercial Disaster |
| 4 | Conflict |
| 5 | Corruption |
| 6 | Cultural Opportunity |
| 7 | Favour |
| 8 | Magical Occurrence |
| 9 | Mobilise the Masses |
| 10 | Political Upheaval |
| 11 | Recruitment |
| 12 | Religious Upheaval |
| 13 | Reputation |
| 14 | Research |
| 15 | Resource Discovery |
| 16 | Scandal |
| 17 | Spies and Traitors |
| 18 | Trade Success |
| 19 | Training |
| 20 | War! |

Voluntarily Initiating Events

As well as Events occurring randomly, an association can choose one Event as a free action for this year. So, whilst no Events may occur as a result of the 1D4-1 Event roll, the association can still decide to engage in Recruitment or a Cultural Opportunity, and so on. Associations can choose an Event in this way even if they would experience multiple Events that year. All Events – rolled and chosen – are cumulative and must be resolved individually.

ASSASSINATION

An assassination attempt is launched against a prominent member of the association. The association should make a test against Persistence. If successful, the assassination attempt fails. If the test fails, then the assassination attempt succeeds, creating a power vacuum within the association. For the rest of the year, the association suffers a -20% modifier to its INF-dependent Capabilities.

Preventing the assassination or tracking down the assassins can form part of standard, character-driven play – as can selecting a replacement for the dead personality if the assassination was successful.

If the replacement personality is selected during the metagame, make a test against the association's Recruitment Capability and note the result:

Critical Success: A highly effective replacement for the assassinated personality is found and he makes an immediate impression on the association's standing. INF and POP gain an increase of 1D3 points. The -20% penalty is lifted after the end of the year.

Success: An effective replacement is found. The -20% penalty is lifted after the end of the year.

Failure: An unsatisfactory or temporary replacement is found. The -20% penalty to INF dependent Capabilities remains in force for a further year.

Fumble: No replacement can be found; a power vacuum results. The -20% penalty to INF dependent Capabilities is increased to -30% for this year. It also remains in force next year, at -20%. Next year, a further Recruitment test is needed to find a replacement, in addition to any other events. The effects of the Recruitment test remain in force until a competent replacement is found.



ASSOCIATION UNREST

Something the association does causes unrest amongst the membership unless a Bureaucracy test is successful. If the test fails, lose 1D3 WTH through lost opportunities and disruption to business.

Commercial Disaster

The association's finances suffer a severe blow. Make either a Credit or Commerce roll to minimise the effects:

Critical Success: Gain 1 WTH

Success: No WTH loss

Failure: Lose 1D3 WTH

Fumble: Lose 3 WTH

Conflict

The association comes into conflict with rivals. Roll 1D6 for the conflict type:

| 1D6 | Conflict Type |
|-----|--------------------|
| 1-2 | Physical Conflict |
| 3-4 | Political Conflict |
| 5-6 | Social Conflict |

Resolve the conflict using the Conflict rules (page 80).

Corruption

High level corruption in the association is discovered. Reduce WTH by 1 point. The association must make a Diplomacy test to assess the consequences:

Critical Success: The corruption is kept a secret and those involved disciplined according to the association's rules or doctrines. If Player Characters are involved in rooting out the corruption, then they have gained enemies as a result of their actions.

Success: The corruption is rooted out and those responsible disciplined. The association must make a Bureaucracy test. If successful then the corruption is kept from public gaze. If unsuccessful, then the corruption is made public and the association suffers a -20% penalty to its POP dependent Capabilities for the rest of the year.

Failure: The corruption is publicly exposed. The association suffers a -20% penalty to its POP dependent Capabilities for the rest of the year and -10% next year.

Fumble: The corruption goes unchecked. Replay this event each year until it is successfully resolved. The association continues to lose 1 WTH until resolution.

Cultural Opportunity

The association has the opportunity to contribute to a cultural event or project. If it has the Culture Advanced Capability, make a Culture test; otherwise, make a test against Lore (specific association) at -30% and note the result.

Critical Success: The association advances its Reputation by +10. It can also make a Recruitment test which, if successful, increases the association's SIZ by 1D3.

Success: The association's Reputation is advanced by +5. It can also make a Recruitment test which, if successful, increases the association's SIZ by 1.

Failure: No effect.

Fumble: Somehow the association's influence, culturally, is damaging. Reputation is reduced by 10 and the association must also make a successful Recruitment, Indoctrination or Zeal test to avoid losing 1 point of SIZ and 1 WTH.

Favour

Another association asks for a non-financial favour. Make a Favour test and note the result:

Critical Success: The favour is granted and the association helped is hugely indebted. Your association gains +10 Reputation and +10% Diplomacy.

Success: The favour is granted and the association helped is indebted. Your association gains +5 Reputation and +5% Diplomacy.

Failure: The favour backfires. Make a Persistence test to avoid losing 5 Reputation and 5% Diplomacy.

Fumble: The favour backfires disastrously. Make a Diplomacy test to avoid Conflict from arising. If the Diplomacy test fails, treat this event as the same as the Conflict event, page 77.

Magical Occurrence

A gift from the gods or some form of magical event brings prosperity. Increase any one Capability by 1D4+1% and increase WTH by 1 point as the event attracts foreign interest and respect.

Modiſe the Classes

The association has the opportunity to improve its standing amongst its Sympathisers or affiliated power bases. Make a Zeal test.

Critical Success: The Sympathy or Influence skill improves by 1D6+1%.

Success: The Sympathy or Influence skill improves by 1D3%.

Failure: No effect.

Fumble: Something the association does damages its standing in the eyes of sympathisers. The Sympathy or Influence skill decreases by 1D3%.

Political Upheaval

Political circumstances have a profound influence on the association and the way it operates. The association must make a Favour or Culture (whichever is higher) test to assess the consequences. Note the result of the roll:

Critical Success: The association benefits from the changes. Raise 3 additional WTH this year.

Success: The association gains fringe benefits. Raise 1D2 additional WTH this year.

Failure: The association fails to anticipate or deal with the changes. Lose 1D2 WTH.

Fumble: Lose 3 WTH due to mismanagement of the change.

Recruitment

The association makes concerted attempts to recruit new blood. Make a Recruitment test. If the association has either or both, the Indoctrination or Zeal Advanced Capabilities, then it may augment the Recruitment test with the critical ranges of these skills.

Critical Success: The recruitment is a resounding success. Increase the association's SIZ by 1D6+1.

Success: The recruitment is a resounding success. Increase the association's SIZ by 1D3.

Failure: The recruitment drive does not bring in any more members.

Fumble: Existing members are alienated by the tactics used to recruit new blood. Make an Indoctrination or Zeal test to avoid losing 1 SIZ. If the SIZ loss takes the association to 0 or below, then the association has completely fallen apart and ceases to exist.

Religious Upheaval

Religious upheaval affects the association. Make a Lore (specific association) or Culture test (whichever is the higher) to assess the consequences. Note the result of the roll:

Critical Success: Any one magical element of the association's framework (such as a myth, magical skill and so forth – any magical area with a skill percentage attached to it, including Resonance) increases by 1D8+1%.

Success: As for a critical success but the increase is 1D4+1%.

Failure: No gain or loss.

Fumble: The religious mood turns against the association. Reduce POP or INF by 1D3 points.

Reputation

Something the association does has an influence on its Reputation Attribute. Make either Diplomacy, Espionage or Indoctrination test (whichever is highest) and note the result:

Critical Success: Reputation increases by 10 as the association advances its name and standing.

Success: Reputation increases by 5 as the association advances its name and standing.

Failure: Reputation decreases by 5 as the association's name and standing suffers for some reason.

Fumble: Reputation decreases by 10 as the association's name and standing suffers for some reason.

RESEARCH

Make a Lore (specific association) test for the association and note the result

Critical Success: Research into a myth, doctrine or other association resource increases its Resonance (or similar percentage) by 10%.

Success: Research into a myth, doctrine or other association resource increases its Resonance (or similar percentage) by 5%.

Failure: No gain or loss.

Fumble: Research into a particular area is misguided and proves to be harmful. A myth, doctrine or other association resource decreases its Resonance (or similar percentage) by 5%.

RESOURCE DISCOVERY

The association develops a new resource, working method or exploits some aspect of its nature that improves its finances. There is no WTH gain in this year but next year WTH is *permanently* increased by 1D3 points.

SCANDAL

A scandal of some kind paralyses the higher echelons of the association. Make a successful Espionage or Diplomacy roll to avoid the consequences. This costs 1 point of WTH. If the roll fails, then the WTH point must be spent and the Diplomacy and Favour Capabilities suffer a -20% penalty for the rest of the year. If a successful Indoctrination test is made, then the rank and file of the association can be persuaded into ignoring the scandal and the -20% penalty is halved to -10%.

SPIES AND TRAITORS

The association has the opportunity to steal secrets from a rival. Make an Espionage test. If the association lacks the Espionage Capability, it may substitute Indoctrination at -30% or Diplomacy at -40%. Note the result of the test.

Critical Success: The association uncovers a deeply held secret by its rivals. As a result, it may increase the percentage of any one Capability, Myth or equivalent, by 1D6+1%.

Success: The association uncovers an important secret held by its rivals. As a result, it may increase the percentage of any one Capability, Myth or equivalent, by 1D3%.

Failure: The spies or espionage attempt is uncovered by the rivals. The association must make a successful Diplomacy test to avoid the espionage triggering a Conflict. If the roll fails, then immediately take the Conflict event and resolve.

Fumble: The espionage attempt automatically results in Conflict. Immediately take the Conflict event and resolve.

Trade Success

A trading endeavour results in potential financial success for the association. Make a Credit or a Commerce Capability test

Critical Success: WTH increases by 1D3 points.

Success: WTH increases by 1 point.

Failure: No Gain or Loss.

Fumble: WTH decreases by 1 point.

TRAINING

New training methods for association members are investigated. Make a Training test:

Critical Success: The association is able to offer training to its members at a 20% reduction to the standard training cost. Its Mentors (*RuneQuest Deluxe*, page 184) add *twice* their critical range in a skill when training pupils.

Success: The association is able to offer training to its members at a 10% reduction to the standard training cost. Its Mentors (*RuneQuest Deluxe*, page 184) add *one and a half times* their critical range in a skill (rounded up) when training pupils.

Failure: No effect.

Fumble : New training methods become flawed. Costs for training stay the same but Mentors add *only half* their critical range in a skill (rounded up) when training pupils.

War!

The association has no alternative but to become the initiator of a Conflict (either Physical, Political or Social – Games Master’s choice). The association automatically gains the Initiative in the Conflict but the conflict must be played through as per the Conflict event, on page 77.

Conflict

Conflict comes in three flavours: physical (armed conflict), political and social. Any kind of conflict is damaging, either through physical harm, harm to reputation or assets or to public standing and confidence. The different levels of harm are explored in the descriptions of each conflict type, opposite.

Conflict arises for all kinds of reasons; bad debts, simmering feuds, political arguments and so forth. The ability of an association to handle the conflict and emerge victorious (or, at least, unscathed), depends much on its capabilities and resources, as defined in the **Associations Characteristics** chapter and the frameworks for each type of association.

Conflict continues until one side is either victorious or the other withdraws (effectively surrendering).

An association can or may find itself, waging Conflict against multiple opponents on multiple fronts and in different ways. A guild, for example, may find itself waging a trade war against its rivals in a Physical Conflict and a battle for a particular piece of legislation in a Political Conflict. Or the battle might be a Physical



Conflict against two rival guilds. Where multiple conflicts are to be handled, the Games Master decides the order of resolution. He may rule that a conflict of one type or against one opponent is resolved in its entirety before the next Conflict is resolved or he may alternate the Conflicts with one round focusing on a Physical Conflict and the next on the Political.

Initiative

The attitude to conflict is also important. Some associations, especially radical factions, thrive on it; others try to avoid it as much as they can. Who initiates conflict is where the Initiative Attribute comes in but Initiative also helps those associations who prefer to avoid it to prepare for the inevitable.

When conflict is unavoidable, each party rolls 1D10 and adds its Initiative modifier. The side with the highest Initiative has the upper hand, be this in striking first, anticipating potential strikes or bracing for repercussions. If the sides tie, then both act simultaneously. The winning side has the following options:

Strike

This might be a physical, political or social attack, resolved using the Capabilities relevant to the type of conflict.

Mitigate

The association uses Capabilities and/or resources at its disposal to reduce the ability of an opponent to strike or limit the damage it can cause. Again, each different type of conflict has its own, relevant, capabilities.

Defend

The association takes a defensive stance, either trying to avoid damage or to block its opponent's attacks.

The losing side of the Initiative is only able to Defend. However, once the winning side has acted it can attempt to Strike back or do nothing (indeed doing nothing might be the only option open to it, depending on circumstances).

Physical Conflict

Physical conflict involves attacks levelled at the personnel and assets of the opposing side.

Strike

The association moves to damage either assets or personnel. Assets are things such as buildings or physical symbols of an association. Personnel are members of the opposing association.

When an association chooses to Strike it must decide whether assets or personnel will be targeted; it cannot target both at the same time. The attacker then uses its Combat Capability to attempt to inflict damage. Make a Combat Test. The result of the Combat Test is compared with the outcome of the opposition's defence (see below) and the effects applied.

Mitigate

The association uses its assets and resources to limit physical damage done to its assets and members. This includes hiring bodyguards, using safe houses and making every attempt to protect its people from harm. Mitigating in physical conflict is the equivalent of a warrior donning armour. The association, when Mitigating, makes a Persistence test. The success of the result determines the amount of Mitigation the defending association can muster:

Critical Success: The association reduces any damage inflicted by the attacker by a number equal to *twice* the critical range of its Combat Capability.

Success: The association reduces any damage inflicted by the attacker by a number equal to the critical range of its Combat Capability.

Failure: No effect.

Fumble: In attempting to Mitigate, it leaves itself exposed. Its next Initiative roll is made on 1D6 rather than 1D10.

Defend

The association opposes the attacker's Combat capability with its own, hoping to emerge victorious.

Resolving Combat

Where an attacking association Strikes an opponent who is Mitigating, then it makes a simple test against Combat to see if it hits and inflicts damage. Damage is then reduced by the outcome of the Mitigate roll.

If the defender is Defending, Combat rolls are made in an opposed test and the results cross-referenced.

Combat

| | | Aggressor | | | |
|----------|----------|--|--|--|---|
| | | Critical | Success | Failure | Fumble |
| Defender | Critical | Higher Success scores Partial Victory. Lower Success inflicts minimum damage | Aggressor Scores Partial Victory Defender scores Normal Victory | Defender scores Normal Victory | Defender scores Major Victory |
| | Success | Defender Scores Partial Victory Aggressor scores Normal Victory | Higher Success scores Partial Victory. Lower Success inflicts minimum damage | Defender scores Partial Victory | Defender Scores Normal Victory |
| | Failure | Aggressor scores Normal Victory | Aggressor scores Partial Victory | Stalemate | Aggressor may not roll for Espionage or Magic next campaign |
| | Fumble | Aggressor scores Major Victory | Aggressor Scores Normal Victory | Defender may not roll for Espionage or Magic next campaign | Stalemate |

Espionage

A cunning association spies on its foes and attempts to sabotage their efforts. This is where the Espionage Advanced Capability is used.

The Espionage test is always unopposed and represents months of field work by a network of spies and agents, not simply a single mission against the enemy. The success of the Espionage roll has the following effects:

| Espionage Roll | Modifier to Opponent |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Critical | -30% |
| Success | -15% |
| Failure | — |
| Fumble | +15% |

The modifier is applied to the Combat or Persistence (if Mitigating) Capability of the opposing side, representing gathered intelligence, sabotage, misinformation and other tactics that reduce the capability to fight effectively. Conversely, if the Espionage test fails, it provides vital information to the opposition that actively aids its fighting capability.

The degree of success determines the damage and special effects applied to the losing side.

| Name | Effect |
|------------------|---|
| Partial Victory | Roll normal damage |
| Normal Victory | As above, plus select one special effect |
| Major Victory | As above, plus select two special effects |
| Critical Victory | As above, plus select three special effects |

Damage

In Physical Conflict, the amount of damage an association can inflict is based on a combination of MIL and Combat. Cross reference the association's MIL in the table below. It also receives a +1 bonus for every full 50% Combat skill. So a guild, with a MIL of 7 and 55% in Combat inflicts 1D8+1 damage.

| MIL | Damage |
|-----------|--------|
| 2 or less | 1D2 |
| 3-4 | 1D4 |
| 5-6 | 1D6 |
| 7-9 | 1D8 |
| 10-12 | 1D10 |
| 13-15 | 1D12 |
| 16-18 | 2D6 |
| 19-20 | 2D8 |
| 21+ | 2D10 |

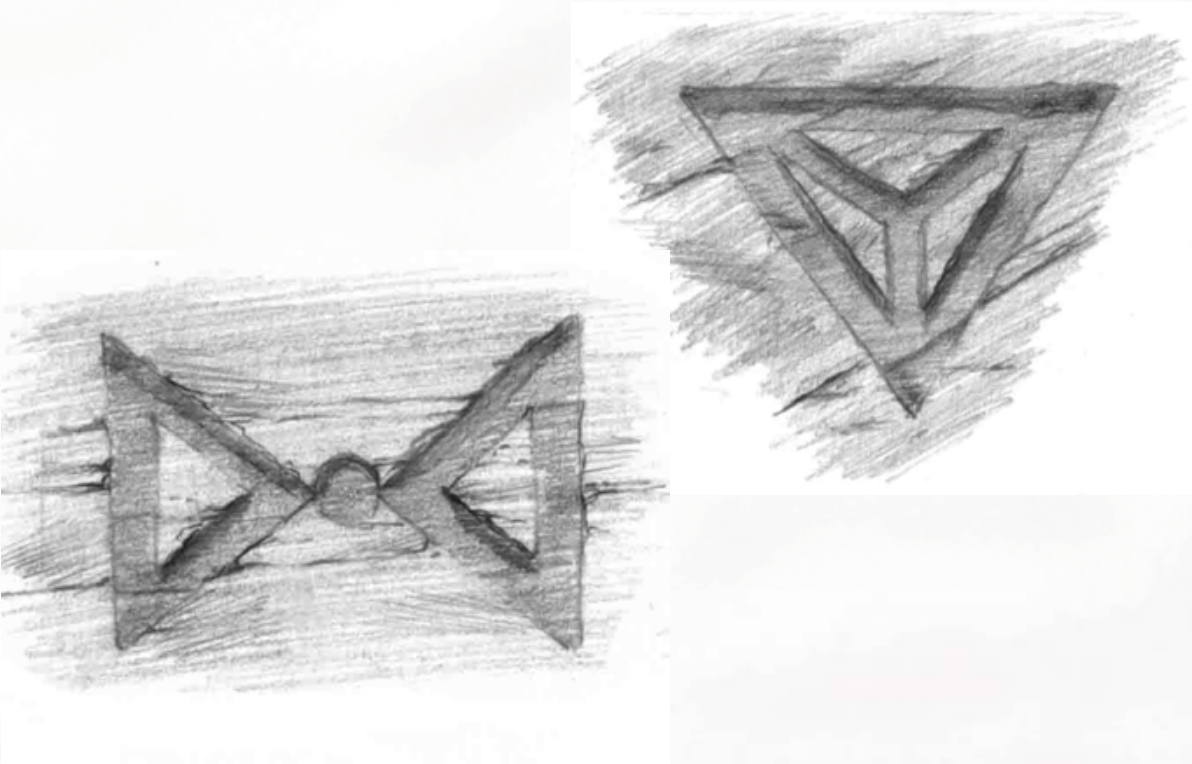
Damage is applied to defender's SIZ Characteristic, with any Mitigation reducing the amount of damage taken. If SIZ reaches zero, then it has been completely defeated.

If the defender sustains an amount of damage, in a single strike, that is greater than half its SIZ, it must make a Persistence test, with the following results:

- Critical Success:** The defender keeps fighting.
- Success:** The defender keeps fighting, if conflict continues but it must make a successful Zeal test at the start of each round of conflict to continue the combat. If it fails or does not have the Zeal Advanced Capability, then the association can only Mitigate or Defend; it cannot Strike.
- Failure:** The membership of the association forces the association's leaders to call a truce or surrender. It cannot face further bloodshed.
- Fumble:** Unconditional surrender. The attacker wins.

Special Effects

Special effects reflect superior actions and their consequences, for the winning side in the contest. Up to three special effects can be obtained, depending on the scale of the victory and they are chosen from the following list.



Physical Conflict Special Effects

| Effect | Consequences |
|-------------------------|---|
| Maximise damage | One of the force's dice automatically does maximum damage. For example an association that normally does 2D6 damage would instead inflict 1D6+6. |
| Seize Assets | The association manages to seize assets as part of its campaign which provide a one-off bonus to WTH of 1D6. Reduce the WTH of the defender by 1D6. |
| Damage Morale | The victory seriously damages the morale of the opposition. The opposing side suffers a -40% penalty to its next Combat roll. |
| Minimise Damage | Any damage sustained due to the opponent securing a Partial Victory inflicts only its minimum damage. For instance, an association that would inflict 1D6+2 damage will instead inflict a maximum of 3 points of damage. |
| Strategic Advantage | The association secures a major strategic advantage during the conflict. Its chance for a Critical success is tripled for its next roll. For example, an association with Combat of 50% would score a critical success on 01-15 instead of 01-05. |
| Technology Advance | If the association with this Special Effect has the Technology Capability, it develops new techniques to enhance its capabilities. In the next round of combat it may choose to reverse the reading of the dice roll result, so that the tens die becomes the units and the units die the tens. |
| Propaganda Victory | The association with this Special Effect secures a propaganda victory over its foe. On the next round of combat its Combat Capability gains a bonus equal to its COM Characteristic. |
| Rebellion of the Masses | If the association with this Special Effect is the Defender, its populace in the region of the combat rises-up to defend against the Aggressor. The Defender gains 1D4+1 points of Mitigation to be used against damage. |

Some Special Effects take immediate effect whilst others are applied in the next round of combat. Those taking immediate effect are applied at the end of the Combat Round, once all rolls have been made.

Political and Social Conflict

Political and Social Conflict naturally involves clashes of ideals, policies and agendas in a bid to secure and increase, power. The political arena is every bit as bloodthirsty as any street battle and, even though blood is not always spilled, the casualties are every bit as high.

Political and Social Conflict follow similar lines to Physical Conflict but different skills are used, damage is different and successful strikes or defences have different Special Effects.

Strike

The association moves to inflict damage by harming the credibility of opponents and thereby securing advantage for itself. When Striking, the association has the option to use either Diplomacy or Zeal as the attacking Capability. However, once chosen, the Capability cannot be switched until the entire conflict is ended.



Mitigate

The association attempts to limit political damage in much the same way that it would mitigate physical damage. In this case, the association Mitigates using its Diplomacy or Espionage Capabilities – but with the proviso that, once chosen, the Mitigation method remains fixed for the entire duration of the conflict. The test against Diplomacy or Espionage yields on of the following results:

Critical Success: The association reduces any damage inflicted by the attacker by a number equal to *twice* the critical range of its Favour Capability.

Success: The association reduces any damage inflicted by the attacker by a number equal to the critical range of its Favour Capability.

Failure: No effect.

Fumble: In attempting to Mitigate, it leaves itself exposed. Its next Initiative roll is made on 1D6 rather than 1D10.

Favour, Sympathy or

Influence Roll

Modifier to Opponent

| | |
|----------|------|
| Critical | -30% |
| Success | -15% |
| Failure | - |
| Fumble | +15% |

Once the Strike/Defend round has been resolved, the degree of success determines the damage and special effects applied to the losing side.

Name

Effect

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Partial Victory | Roll normal damage |
| Normal Victory | As above, plus select one Special Effect |
| Major Victory | As above, plus select two Special Effects |
| Critical Victory | As above, plus select three Special Effects |

Defend

The association opposes the attacker's Diplomacy or Zeal Capability with either its own Diplomacy or Zeal, hoping to emerge victorious.

Resolving Combat

Cross-reference Strike and Defend results on the Combat table.

Damage

In Political Conflict, the amount of damage an association can inflict is based on a combination of INF and Lore (specific association). Cross-reference the association's INF in the table below. It also receives a +1 bonus for every full 50% Lore (specific association) Capability. So a faction, with INF of 12 and 55% in Lore (specific association) inflicts 1D10+1 damage.

Popularity and Favours

An association can call upon its own popularity or call in favours, when trying to politically damage an opponent. When Striking, the association can make an unopposed test against *either* its Favour characteristic or, if it has Sympathisers or a Secretariat, then the Sympathy or Influence Capability as appropriate. The success of the test determines the modifier applied to the opponent's Defending Capability

INF

Damage

| | |
|-----------|------|
| 2 or less | 1D2 |
| 3-4 | 1D4 |
| 5-6 | 1D6 |
| 7-9 | 1D8 |
| 10-12 | 1D10 |
| 13-15 | 1D12 |
| 16-18 | 2D6 |
| 19-20 | 2D8 |
| 21+ | 2D10 |

Damage is applied to defender's POP Characteristic, with any Mitigation reducing the amount of damage taken. If POP reaches zero, then it has been completely defeated, politically.

If the defender sustains an amount of damage, in a single strike, that is greater than half its POP, it must make a Persistence test, with the following results:

- Critical Success:** The defender keeps fighting.
- Success:** The defender keeps fighting, if conflict continues but it must make a successful Zeal test at the start of each round of conflict to continue the combat. If it fails or does not have the Zeal Advanced Capability, then the association can only Mitigate or Defend; it cannot Strike.
- Failure:** The membership of the association forces the association's leaders to resign the issue.
- Fumble:** Unconditional surrender. The attacker wins.

Special Effects

The Special Effects for Political Conflict are similar in some respects to those for Physical Conflict but do have certain differences.

Political Conflict Special Effects

| Effect | Consequences |
|---------------------|--|
| Maximise damage | One of the association's dice automatically does maximum damage. For example an association which normally does 2D6 damage would instead be treated as an 1D6+6. |
| Seize Assets | The association manages to seize assets as part of its campaign which provide a one-off bonus to WTH of 1D6. Reduce the WTH of the defender by 1D6. |
| Damage Morale | The victory seriously damages the morale of the opposition. The opposing side suffers a -40% penalty to its next Capability used to Strike. |
| Minimise Damage | Any damage sustained due to the opponent securing a Partial Victory inflicts only its minimum damage. For instance, an association that would inflict 1D6+2 damage will instead inflict a maximum of 3 points of damage. |
| Strategic Advantage | The association secures a major strategic advantage during the conflict. Its chance for a Critical success is tripled for its next roll. For example, an association with Diplomacy of 50% would score a critical success on 01-15 instead of 01-05. |
| Political Advantage | If the association with this Special Effect has the Espionage Capability, it may choose to reverse the reading of the dice roll result, so that the tens die becomes the units and the units die the tens. |
| Propaganda Victory | The association with this Special Effect secures a propaganda victory over its foe. On the next round of combat its Capability used to Strike gains a bonus equal to its COM Characteristic. |
| Discredit | Applying this Special Effect to the opposition discredits it in the eyes of others. The opposing side suffers a penalty to any of its tests equal to the INF Characteristic of the association applying the Special Effect. |

Some Special Effects take immediate effect whilst others are applied in the next round of combat. Those taking immediate effect are applied at the end of the Combat Round, once all rolls have been made.

Improving Associations

Just as characters improve over time, so do associations and in broadly the same way.

Whilst characters have the opportunity to improve skills once every adventure or so, associations improve once per year. An association gains 4 Improvement Rolls each year which can be made for any of its Capabilities. Roll 1D100:

- ☒ If the result is higher than the current capability rating, it increases by 1D4+1%
- ☒ If the result is lower than the current capability rating, it increases by 1%
- ☒ If the result is *exactly* equal to the current capability rating, it increases by 5%

Improving Characteristics

For a cost of three Improvement Rolls, a nation can opt to increase a Characteristic by 1 point. Any Characteristic can be improved, except SIZ, which is handled via Recruitment.

Gaining Affinity Points

An association may trade 1 improvement roll for a gain of 1 Affinity point. Affinity point gains can be used immediately to buy new affinities or strengthen existing ones, according to the association's type.

Recruitment

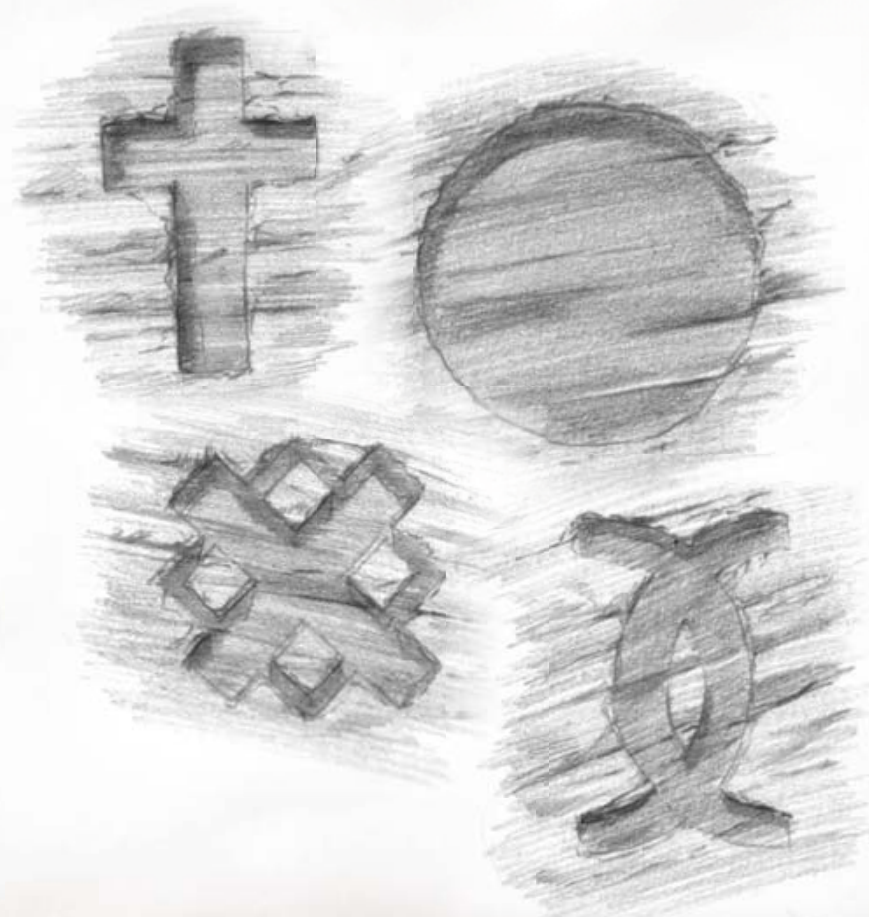
As part of the yearly round of activities, associations check for Recruitment using their Recruitment Capability. This works in exactly the same way as for the Recruitment Event, described earlier: a test against Recruitment and note the result. However, when handled as part of the general yearly actions, the size of the increase is smaller than that for the specific event entry:

Critical Success: The recruitment is a resounding success. Increase the association's SIZ by 1D3+1.

Success: The recruitment is a resounding success. Increase the association's SIZ by 1.

Failure: The recruitment drive does not bring in any more members.

Fumble: Existing members are alienated by the tactics used to recruit new blood. Make an Indoctrination or Zeal test to avoid losing 1 SIZ. If the SIZ loss takes the association to 0 or below, then the association has completely fallen apart and ceases to exist.



CHARACTERS AND ASSOCIATIONS

This book takes different kinds of associations and abstracts them into character-like entities that can be played without any reference to player or Non-Player Characters in the form of a metagame. The real intention of *Guilds, Factions and Cults*, however, is to establish a deep framework to support characters and for them to act within. Societies and associations are complex constructs that can operate without reference to single, individual members but, nevertheless, cannot exist without individuals being present.

This chapter examines how characters – both player and non-player – derive personal benefits and support from a guild, faction or cult.

Financial Support

Any association can provide financial support to a character. Financial support takes the form of short-term loans, acquiring goods or services on their behalf, meeting medical or legal expenses and, when the character retires, providing a pension or paying for funeral expenses at the end of the character's life (indeed, the guild system did all of these things throughout medieval Europe).

Loans

To qualify for a loan from an association, the character must fulfil the following conditions:

- Have been a member, of good standing, for at least one year
- Have paid all relevant membership fees and dues, on time
- Be able to demonstrate that the loan can be repaid
- Be prepared to agree to specific repayment conditions as laid-down by the association

Some of these criteria will be evident through game play. However, if not, then the character needs to demonstrate credibility by making an Influence roll, modified by the following circumstances:

Loan Circumstances

| Circumstances | Influence Modifier |
|---|--------------------|
| For every 1,000 Silvers to be borrowed | -5% |
| For every late payment of dues | -5% |
| No apparent collateral to repay the loan | -10% |
| Member for less than 1 year | -40% |
| Member for more than 5 years | +20% |
| Always paid dues on time | +10% |
| Has performed an important service for the association in the past five years | +20% |

The result of the Influence test dictates the conditions attached to the loan:

Critical Success: Loan is granted, with repayments being made as equal instalments every month over 5 years, interest free.

Success: Loan is granted, with repayments being made as equal instalments every month over 1D4 years and with an interest payment of 1D3% of the value of the loan.

Failure: Loan is declined but the character may reapply once he can prove his circumstances have changed.

Fumble: Loan is declined; the character cannot reapply even if circumstances do change for the better. The association is simply unprepared to take the risk.

Acquiring Goods and Services

This works in the same way as applying for a loan, save that the character is looking for the association to acquire goods or a service on his behalf, instead of lending money. An Influence test is made and, depending on the degree of success, the request

granted. The association uses its own influence and resources to find and procure the item or service the character wants and then places it at the character's disposal on the following conditions:

- ☒ The item belongs to the association, NOT the character (unless a gift is specifically made of it)
- ☒ The character is responsible for the item's safety; he will be accountable for loss or damage
- ☒ The item must be surrendered to the association when so called
- ☒ The association stipulates the conditions of use of the item; breaching these conditions will incur penalties, not least forfeiting the item
- ☒ The character must divulge, truthfully, what the item or service is needed for.

Similar modifiers as those for loans apply to the Influence test. In addition, magical items or items with special powers, attract an additional negative modifier of between -10% and -60% depending on the item's nature and strength.

Medical and Legal Expenses

Generally, characters must have been an association member for a year before any such expenses will be met; and, even then, the percentage of the expenses covered will depend on length of membership.

Characters must have been in good standing to qualify for medical or legal help. They can expect the guild to cover 10% of medical or legal bills for every year of membership and the association may well use its Credit and Favour Capabilities to negotiate a discount on the amount payable. In most cases the association will pay the expenses up-front and then recover any remainder from the character as though it was a loan.

So, for example, Ranyart Finn, a member of the Raschil Guild of Gentlemen Entertainers for six years, gets drunk one night, falls down a flight of stairs and breaks his leg badly. The local surgeon who tends to him charges 800 Silver for the treatment. Ranyart, always broke, cannot afford to cover this and turns to the guild for help. As a member of six years, the guild agrees to cover 480 Silvers (60% of the bill) but pays the full amount and converts the outstanding 320 Silvers into a loan. Ranyart makes an Influence

test, scoring 47 – a success. He must repay the loan in monthly instalments of 14 Silver per month for the next two years.

Pensions

If a character retires from a profession where he has been supported by an association, he may qualify for a pension. A pension is a fixed amount that is paid out to the retired individual for the remainder of his life, assuming certain conditions have been met. The pension is usually paid monthly and is always a percentage of the membership fees or dues the character paid as an active member. To qualify for a pension the character needs to fulfil the following criteria:

- ☒ Have been a member, of good standing, for at least five years
- ☒ Have paid all relevant membership fees and dues, on time
- ☒ Have retired on grounds of age, injury or ill-health
- ☒ Have no other pension from a rival association

The amount paid is equal to 10% of monthly fees or dues per every two years of membership above five years. Therefore, a character who was a guild member for 13 years, paying 10 Silver per month, would receive a monthly pension of 4 Silvers for the rest of his life (10% equalling 1 Silver, multiplied by 4). The maximum amount payable under a pension system is 60%.

If a character is forced to retire through injury or illness, rather than age, then the guild may, on a successful Influence test by the character, meet medical expenses as described previously. Furthermore, the character will need to make an Influence test to determine the value of his monthly pension:

Critical Success: The pension is paid at the full entitlement and the association meets 100% of all medical expenses for 1D4 years, then 50% of medical expenses every year thereafter.

Success: The pension is paid at the full entitlement and the association meets 50% of all medical expenses for 1D4 years, then 25% of medical expenses every year thereafter, up to the number of years of the character's membership.

Failure: The pension is paid at 50% of entitlement

until the character reaches the age of retirement (usually 50 years of age), when the full entitlement is then paid. No medical expenses are covered.

Fumble: The pension is paid at 25% of entitlement until the character reaches the age of retirement (usually 50 years of age), when the full entitlement is then paid. No medical expenses are covered.

Funeral Costs

If a character has been a member of good standing for at least a year, then the association will meet all funeral expenses if the character dies whilst a serving member of the association. The association will usually make the funeral arrangements on behalf of the next of kin, paying for a funeral in keeping with association rank and social standing.

If the character leaves behind a family, any pension due to him will be paid to the next of kin at a rate of 50% of the character's pension entitlement.

Acting With Authority

Characters may become the movers and shakers of their association, acting as its key representatives and even figureheads. In these circumstances, characters gain bonuses to skills derived from the association's Characteristics and Capabilities; but, for any association's authority to act as a bonus, the character must carry papers, statements or other signs of empowerment (guild seals, cult Runes or holy symbols, a faction's letters of mark and so forth). When a character possesses such a statement of empowerment and is engaged on sanctioned, official association business, then he gains the bonuses described later in this chapter.

To be able to draw upon the authority of his symbols, the character must be acknowledged as an agent of his association. This may be automatic, if he is expected or presenting himself to an ally. If not, he must make an Influence or Lore (association) test to demonstrate his credentials as he reveals or displays his symbol of authority. If the test is successful, there is no doubting



his position and he gains the bonuses conferred by his association. If the test fails, he has not convinced enough; the bonuses of authority work but at only a quarter of their normal magnitude. He may, at a later time (decided by the Games Master) reattempt to convince of his status; however if the test fails a second time, the bonuses of authority have no effect in these particular circumstances.

Skill Bonuses

The authority of an association manifests as a bonus to a character's skills and other abilities. For example, a Runelord of the Orlanth Dragonbreaker cult, attempting to negotiate a tricky political situation with an opponent from God Learner cult of Saint Talor, would use his Influence or Lore (Diplomacy) skill to resolve the conflict. However, as an agent of a powerful cult he channels the authority of his cult into his negotiations, increasing either his Influence or Lore (Diplomacy) skills by an amount based on the cult's Diplomacy Capability.

This reflects the authority and weight of the association's voice; it also reflects the implied threats and boons of the power. It works thus:

If the character's authority is recognised, as described earlier, he gains a bonus equal to *twice* the appropriate Capability's critical range (20% of the Capability). For instance, in our example above, if the Dragonbreaker cult has a Diplomacy Capability of 80%, our Runelord would gain +16% to his own Influence or Lore (Diplomacy) skills.

A character channelling authority in this way can boost the magnitude of the bonus in one of two ways:

- ☒ Spending a Hero Point provides a bonus of *three* times the Capability's critical range.
- ☒ Making a successful Persistence test at half their normal Persistence percentage provides a bonus of *four* times the Capability's critical range.

Only one augmentation method can be chosen to work at once. It is impossible to combine Hero Points and Persistence rolls to gain a vastly boosted bonus.

So, in the Runelord Dragonbreaker example, our hero could gain up to 16% as a bonus to his Influence or Lore (Diplomacy) skills. By spending a Hero Point he could gain +24%; by making a successful Persistence

test roll against his halved Persistence of 25%, he could gain +32%.

Specific Capabilities offer bonuses to specific skills. The Authority Skill Bonuses table maps the two.

Authority Skill Bonuses

| Capability | Character Skills |
|--------------------|---|
| Bureaucracy | Lore (Bureaucracy), Perception |
| Combat | Influence, Lore (Strategy and Tactics or Warfare), Survival |
| Commerce | Evaluate, Influence, Lore (Trade), Lore (Economics), Streetwise |
| Credit | Courtesy oratory |
| Culture | Artistic Expression, Courtesy, Dance, Influence, Lore (Arts or Cultural Arts), Lore (World) |
| Diplomacy | Courtesy, Influence, Lore (Diplomacy), Lore (Philosophy) oratory |
| Espionage | Evaluate, Influence, Perception, Lore (Local Knowledge), Lore (Psychology), Lore (World) |
| Favour | Influence, Lore (Politics), Lore (World) oratory, Perception |
| Indoctrination | Influence, Streetwise |
| Lore (Association) | Influence, Lore (Philosophy), Lore (Specific Theology) |
| Persistence | Persistence, Resilience |
| Recruitment | Influence |
| Technology | Engineering, Evaluate, Mechanisms |
| Training | Training others |
| Zeal | Oratory, Streetwise, Survival |

The bonus of authority applies to *all* applicable skills simultaneously; so, our Runelord would gain a bonus to Courtesy, Influence, Lore (Diplomacy), Lore (Philosophy) and Oratory. However, the Games Master is quite at liberty to rule that the bonus is not applicable to a qualifying skill if that skill is being used in a quite different way where the bonus of authority simply would not come to bear.

For example, the Runelord has a bonus of +16% to Courtesy, Influence, Lore (Diplomacy), Lore (Philosophy) and Oratory. In his dealings with the arrogant High Priest of Saint Talor, in Eastpoint, his bonus is active for all these skills. Later, at another

engagement, he is trying to impress a noble woman of the city of Galastar with his knowledge of philosophy. The Games Master rules that, as this attempt to impress is clearly nothing to do with Dragonbreaker cult business, his +16% bonus is redundant.

DURATION OF THE BONUS

A bonus lasts only for the game session in which it is first applied. The Games Master may decide that the weight of authority is powerful enough to last for the entirety of a scenario or even a campaign, if circumstances dictate it or rule that it needs to be recalculated for a new session.

For instance, the Runelord in the previous example turns his attention to the God Learner ruler of Galastar and tries to use his enhanced Lore (Diplomacy) once again. The Games Master rules that the ruler of Galastar is a more wily adversary than the High Priest of St Talor and so the Runelord must re-prove his credentials: he must therefore re-roll his Influence to re-establish them and continue using his authority bonus. Similarly, in the next game session, when the Runelord returns to his negotiations with the Church of St Talor, the Games Master rules that the odious High Priest has become somewhat inured to the Runelord's constant boasts of his friendship with Alakoring Dragonbreaker (a hero of the Orlanth Dragonbreaker cult) and must re-roll his Influence to make his cult credentials forceful again.

MULTIPLE BONUSES

A character can combine potential bonuses from two separate Capabilities. For example, the Runelord

already uses the weight of his cult's diplomatic power to enhance his own Lore (Diplomacy) skill but he could also attempt to draw upon the cult's Espionage Capability to further enhance it. This is permissible but the character must make a successful Influence test first to be able to combine the disparate weights of authority; furthermore, any attempt to combine bonuses in this way halves the value of the additional bonus.

Our Runelord already has a bonus of +16% to his diplomatic skills. As negotiations with Galastar's ruler reach a particularly delicate stage, he states that he wants to use the Dragonbreaker cult's Espionage capability as an additional bonus in order to demonstrate to Galastar that the Dragonbreaker cult is the only force that can counter the strengthening EWF cults operating in the Janube valley. The Dragonbreaker cult's Espionage Capability is 40%: our Runelord will need to make a successful Influence roll to draw upon the Capability and, if successful, he will gain a bonus of +4% instead of the +8% he would gain if Espionage was the primary Capability being channelled. He may still spend a Hero Point to triple this bonus but the enhancement would be +12%, not +24%. The Runelord succeeds in his Influence test to establish the credibility of his Espionage knowledge and elects to spend that additional Hero Point. His combined bonus to Lore (Diplomacy) is now +28% (16 + 12).

Skill bonuses derived from authority stack with any bonuses for circumstances. So, if a particular situation is rated as 'Easy' for its difficulty level, then the +40% bonus stacks with the authority bonuses. Conversely, a situation rated as 'Hard' would attract a -40% penalty.

NEW LEGENDARY ABILITY: SUPREME EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

Requirements: INT 15 or CHA 15 or higher, Influence 90% or higher

Hero Points: 12

You are the embodiment of your association; a supreme agent – a legendary troubleshooter. The authority of your association surrounds you like a cloak and your very presence signifies that you channel the complete power of the association through your words, deeds and expressions. When abroad on association business, you *are* the guild, faction or cult.

- ☒ You derive the minimum bonuses from your association's Capabilities as permanent bonuses. You need not make an Influence test to establish your credentials
- ☒ Your name and reputation goes before you: Symbols of Authority are unnecessary; your name suffices
- ☒ To stack multiple bonuses you must still succeed at an Influence test and bonuses are still at half their normal value

SAMPLE ASSOCIATIONS

This chapter presents a whole series of different associations built using the rules presented in this book, which can be used in the published settings for *RuneQuest* or, with a little modification to background and context, your own campaign background. A series of generic associations, reflecting those found in *RuneQuest Deluxe* and the *RuneQuest Games Master's Handbook*, are also provided.

Guilds

The Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs (Gloranthan Merchant Guild)

A relatively young guild based on the tenets of Saint Alagyus, a God Learner merchant who accompanied the Rightness Army caravans into new territories, at the very start of the God Learner Empire. Saint Alagyus was martyred in Kustria by a group of radicalised idealists opposed to free trade. The guild is only 20 years old.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ Aims: To secure free trade for all Kustrian caravan merchants, based on the best rates.
- ☒ Goal: To become the trading guild of choice throughout the God Learner Empire.

Modus Operandi

The guild regulates all caravans within the city of Kustria and guild members must use guild facilities, bodyguards and stables. A levy of 5% of all sales is payable each year to the guild and members must attend the Annual Guild Meeting at the guild's premises. The guild does not tolerate rivalry between members and insists on fair competition and equal prices. Anyone caught in breach of these rules will be expelled and forbidden to work as a merchant within Kustria's walls.

Allies and Enemies

The guild is opposed by the Free Trade Syndicate, which is a group of noble adventuring merchants who have got rich through exploiting the efforts of others, through inflated prices. As an ally, the guild has the Indomitable Mercenaries of Ahl – ex-Rightness Army warriors who also give worship to Saint Alagyus.

Possessions

A modest, self-owned guildhouse and stables, with a small staff including a blacksmith and farrier.

The Grey Book of Alagyus is the guild's foundation for membership: it is St Alagyus's diary which explores the secrets of successful trade and profit.

The guild has a decent crest: symbol of a wagon being carried in the claws of a griffin. Members wear a brooch bearing this design and the guild leaders a signet ring with the design as a seal.

Personalities

Valius the Dour (Merchant Venturer): The sombre, straight-talking Alderman of the society and a direct descendant of St Alagyus. He hates the Free Trade Syndicate passionately, blaming them for the ruin of his father and grandfather.

Nashi'ain Whiplade (Veteran Level mercenary):

The snake-hipped and deadly leader of the Indomitable Mercenaries and a member of the society's council. Fearsome with both a rapier and bullwhip.

Characteristics

| | |
|-----|------------------|
| SIZ | 10 (130 members) |
| INF | 16/11/0 |
| WTH | 11 |
| MIL | 8 |
| COM | 13 |
| POP | 13 |

Attributes

Affinities: 12 (12 spent on Affiliations and Traditions – see below)
Initiative: 15
Reputation: 14

Capabilities

Bureaucracy 33%, Combat 18%, Commerce 67%, Credit 54%, Diplomacy 56%, Favour 26%, Lore (Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs) 59%, Training 53%

Affiliations

Indomitable Mercenaries of Ahl (*Mercenary Guild, Formal, Strong Alliance* – 3 Affinity Points)

Traditions

Superb Reputation in Kustria (2 Affinity Points)
Myth of St Alagyus (Resonance 65%) (2 Affinity Points)
Rune of Trade (4 Affinity Points) – Golden Tongue (1) (1 Affinity Point)

Obligations and Deficits

- Protect members' interests within the marketplace
- Represent members' interests at the highest levels
- Negotiate commodity prices on behalf of members
- Extend and guarantee markets wherever possible
- Represent and support individual members on civil matters
- Offer short-term loans to guild members at no or nominal interest
- Pension offered as per standard terms
- Legal and Medical expenses covered as per standard

Member Obligations

- Pay membership dues on time and in full
- Respect the officers of the guild, abide by their decisions and do their bidding when requested
- Uphold guild standards
- Represent the guild with integrity and honesty
- Do not trade with those who are under guild sanction
- Report all discrepancies and transgressions to officers of the guild

- Attend the annual guild meeting and other such meetings, as demanded by guild officers
- Repay any guild loans by the agreed time and in full

Membership, Officers and Ranks

Traders (Standard Membership Rank): Influence 40%, Lore (Trade) 40% – 5 Silver per month
Merchant Venturer (Master Rank): Influence 80%, Lore (Trade) 80% – 10 Silver per month
Guild Officers: Alderman, Dean, Steward, Clerks (x3)

Training

Standard costs for training in *Influence*, *Lore (Trade)* and *Lore (Kustrian Society of Ardent Entrepreneurs)*.

Training in *1H Sword* and *Riding* available at guild rates from the Indomitable Mercenaries of Ahl.

The Mereghn Brotherhood (Elric Craft Guild)

Based in Ilmiora, the Mereghn are the oldest guild of spies and assassins in the Young Kingdoms. Originally the tools of the council of Bakshaan, it quickly grew self-sufficient by intimidating and blackmailing the senators to gain its own independence. The guild was first recorded soon after the withdrawal of the Bright Empire from the northern continent but has now spread tendrils throughout its neighbouring kingdoms and city-states. Although small in terms of membership, the guild is a secretive yet disciplined organisation. It has a reputation for the superiority of its operatives, complete customer discretion and honouring its contracts.

Aims and Goals

- Aims: To subtly gather all gossip, rumours, secrets, political deals, betrayals and other news for brokering. To ensure a guaranteed level of professionalism for all contracted spying and assassination commissions.
- Goal: To place information gathering networks in every city in the Young Kingdoms.

Modus Operandi

The guild is normally contacted by leaving a note at the local shrine of Mirath of Law or a similar cult in foreign lands. The sender will initially be investigated prior to a meeting to determine his objectives and if any threat is posed to the guild. Each negotiation is set up in a private place with a disguised or concealed representative and the terms of the deal confirmed. Payment is always made in advance. If the Mereghn are unable to supply the requested information or fail to complete the requested mission, then the contractor is fully refunded. Prices are set according to the difficulty of the task and are in complete accordance with the Mereghn's reputation for excellence.

Whilst individual beliefs are impossible to quantify, the general guiding principles of the Mereghn are:

- ☒ Knowledge is power
- ☒ All information has a purpose
- ☒ All information has value
- ☒ Everyone can be manipulated
- ☒ Everyone has a price
- ☒ All prices are negotiable
- ☒ Life, like knowledge, is a commodity

Mereghn are unsentimental about what they do. Political and religious boundaries mean nothing to them and no single power, be it mortal or supernatural, is unassailable. If contracted to do something, the Mereghn inevitably find a way. If they cannot, they do not take the contract and give their reasons why.

Members of the Mereghn pay no dues; rather they are paid for their information or services by the guild. The guild earns its income by brokering information and hiring out its operatives on spying and assassination missions.

Allies and Enemies

The guild is a neutral organisation which surrounds itself with secrecy, even within its own organisational ranks. In addition its reputation for discretion and honourable dealing ensures customer satisfaction. As such the guild has no allies and very few, albeit temporary, enemies – usually those who have suffered from the Mereghn's exceptional information gathering, such as kings or priests of various cults.

Possessions

If taken overall, the guild is extremely wealthy. However its possessions are distributed far and wide, to both protect and aid the organisation. It owns several merchant companies through which news can be transmitted quickly, inns and flop houses which are useful places to pick up casual conversation and meet discretely, safe-houses in most of the major cities on the northern continent and a handful of training facilities hidden in the dives of the seediest towns of Ilmiora. All properties are generally modest establishments and even those private homes given as benefits to higher ranked members are discreet. There are no central guildhouses or imposing buildings to attract attention.

Neither has the guild any identifying mark, crest or badge. Any such would undermine the guild's secrecy. Instead guild members are taught a ritual phrase which is uttered if they are ever apprehended during a mission. This identifies their membership and offers the cancellation of the contract in exchange for their release.

PERSONALITIES

The Council of Nine. They have no public reputation since their identities are clandestine and any one of them could be a beggar on the street or the wife of a senator. The Mereghn portray themselves as a faceless organisation with no individuals.



CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 12 (720 members)
 INF 16/14/10
 WTH 16
 MIL 9
 COM 15
 POP 6

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 14
 Initiative: 16
 Reputation: 12

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 35%, Combat 21%, Credit 42%,
 Diplomacy 31%, Espionage 91%, Favour 21%, Lore
 (Mereghn) 61%, Persistence 38%, Recruitment 22%,
 Training 47%

AFFILIATIONS

None

TRADITIONS

Fearsome Reputation in Ilmiora and Vilmir (4 Affinity Points)

Professional Mereghn Techniques (*Disguise, Insight, Memorise, Stealth, Perception*) (10 Affinity Points)

OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES

Guild Obligations

- Negotiate contracts on behalf of members
- Guarantee contractual obligations
- Guarantee employer anonymity
- Protect members from threats or investigation
- Guarantee retribution for death of members
- Offer payments for information or administration duties
- Pension offered as per standard terms
- Legal and Medical expenses covered as per standard

Member Obligations

- Keep membership secret
- Gather information, no matter how innocuous
- Perfect guild skills
- Never break the honour of a contract
- Never reveal your employer or mission
- Never betray the guild
- Obey your superior
- Do not kill without sanction from a councillor

PUNISHMENTS

Death by assassination if any of the obligations are broken; save in the event of capture during a mission, when a guild member can reveal their membership in order to negotiate their release in exchange for the cancellation of the contract against the target.

MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS AND RANKS

One cannot apply to join the Mereghn. If the Mereghn wants someone, *they* will approach *him*. Very often recruitment is *invisible*; that is, a Mereghn agent is completely unaware of whom he works for. These invisible members form the vast bulk of the Mereghn network and include most of the paid informants supplying the Mereghn with information. Invisible informants come in all shapes and sizes; street-beggars, drunks, prostitutes orphans, petty-criminals, thugs, small-time blackmailers, gamblers and so forth. Such agents equate to over three quarters of Mereghn membership.

The higher ranks know of their membership, since they must swear a blood oath to be promoted. However, the guild maintains a structure of isolated cells to avoid collateral damage if a local group is compromised. Thus an officer will only know of his immediate superior and those lower ranking members over whom he has been given authority.

- Invisibles (Unaware Lay Members): By invitation
- Signatures (Apprentice Rank): 40% in three non-weapon Mereghn skills and swear a blood oath
- Journeymen (Journeyman Rank): 60% in Influence and three non-weapon Mereghn skills
- Savants (Professional Rank): 80% in Influence and four non-weapon Mereghn skills
- Councillors (Master Rank): 100% in Influence and five non-weapon Mereghn skills

TRAINING

Members above the rank of Invisible may receive training in the following skills. *Acrobatics, Athletics, Courtesy, Craft (Forgery), Disguise, Influence, Insight(*), Lore (Ciphers), Lore (Poison), Mechanisms, Memorise(*), Perception, Persistence, Seduction, Stealth, Streetwise, Torture and Weapon (Dagger, Garrote, 1H Sword, Sling, Bow, Blowgun or Throwing Star).*

*New Mereghn specific skills

Mereghn Skills

The following special Advanced skills are available to Mereghn agents as part of their rank benefits.

CRAFT (FORGERY) (INT+DEX)

The skill of producing expert replicas of documents and texts. Time and materials are the two crucial elements of the Forgery skill and penalties to the test are imposed according to the complexity of the document in question. However, a successful Forgery test results in a replica that will pass for the real thing if no detailed scrutiny is applied to it. A critical success renders a copy that is virtually indistinguishable from the real thing.

GAMBLING (INT)

The ability to understand and play games of chance, including calculating odds, keeping one's composure under high stakes and noticing when someone is cheating or when a game has been rigged.

IMPERSONATION (INT+CHA)

The ability to replicate the voice, accent and mannerisms of someone else which, when coupled with Disguise, allows the Mereghn to impersonate another person accurately. For someone else to see through the impersonation, they must make a successful Perception test, opposed by the Impersonation skill. However, that person must have some underlying suspicion before the opposed test is called for.

INSIGHT (INT+POU)

Insight is the ability to read a person's verbal and non-verbal behaviours and signals to determine their motives and state of mind. Insight is used to determine if someone is telling you a lie or to determine how someone feels about a particular situation. It is distinct from the Perception skill, since it is used to detect subtle expressions of character and attitude, rather than tangible effects that can be assessed through general observation alone.

LORE (CIPHERS) (INT)

The Mereghn use many different codes and ciphers to protect their communications from prying eyes. This skill tutors the character in the codes used by the Mereghn so that they can render information – be it written or verbal – into a code that can only be understood by a fellow Mereghn. The skill also allows the user to attempt to decipher intercepted codes from others.

MEMORISE (INT)

The ability to use a variety of memory tricks and approaches to commit names, faces, events, sequences and processes to memory perfectly. If the Memorise skill is failed when a Mereghn agent is observing something, it requires a second, successful Memorise test to recall it in adequate detail. Otherwise, recall is always accurate.

TORTURE (INT+DEX)

This skill is used to torture victims into parting with information. Torture need not be physical; it can be emotional and psychological. To resist the torturer's efforts, the victim needs to succeed in an opposed Resilience test, if the torture is physical and Persistence if the torture is psychological or emotional.

The Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen (Generic Craft Guild)

A small, select guild priding itself on fine furniture and metalwork. It supplies exclusively to the duke of the region and the city's most prestigious houses and families. Members are drawn from several other guilds and invited to join only if they have supplied someone of importance. Membership is therefore extremely prestigious and, because this guild poaches members from other guilds, it is viewed with considerable animosity by other crafting guilds in the city. Because it supplies exclusively to the rulers and people of moneyed importance, both the prices of its goods and the fees charged for membership, are exorbitantly high. Members of the Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen take their membership very seriously and treat it as the highest professional accolade possible.

Many are snobbish and dismissive of the lesser guilds that were probably responsible for nurturing their initial talents in the first place.

Guild Secrets

The Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen knows that the duke of the city has several illegitimate children by various street whores and maintains a secret harem of high-class courtesans that he visits regularly. The guild has been blackmailing the duke for over a year now, although it has done so carefully and without undue threat. The duke has tolerated the relationship for a while but the current Grand High Chiseller is desperate to win an especially lucrative contract for the renovation of a palace outside the city and has been applying too much pressure.

The duke is now growing tired of the relationship and is secretly plotting to have the Grand High Chiseller silenced (and the whole Chiseller Council, if needs be), by any means necessary.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ Provide the finest quality of goods and services to the finest people in the city. Keep prices in line with market forces but benefit members through the continued promotion of excellence and quality. Continually watch for and recommend for membership, emerging talent throughout the city. Ensure that the goods of its members are not just the finest in the city but throughout the land.

Modus Operandi

All craft professions are represented but particularly those of furniture and cabinet making, polishing, silverware and jewellery. The Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen has no cordial affiliations with any other guilds representing the same trades but it does have scores of enemies, especially amongst the Guild of Master Craftsmen, which finds its own ranks being depleted as the Most Excellent Guild steals its best connected tradesmen.

Trades

Cabinet Making, Polishing, Silver/Gold Smithing (2 Affinity Points)

Allies and Enemies

No allies but plenty of enemies. The guild is viewed with unalloyed disdain for its selective nature, targeting of lucrative contracts and poaching of trades from other guilds.

Possessions

A fine guildhouse in the wealthy quarter of the city, plus two smaller premises on the waterfront.

Personalities

Alardyce Crump (Master level Cabinet Maker): The arrogant Alderman and leader of the guild; a man who lives to inveigle his way into the highest echelons of society and delights in prestige and courting the rich and famous.

STR 14, CON 16, DEX 14, SIZ 14, INT 9, POW 18, CHA 10

Combat Actions 3, Damage Modifier +1D2, Strike Rank 12, Hit Points 15, Magic Points 18, Move 4m

Acrobatics 48%, Athletics 62%, Boating 26%, Dodge 47%, Driving 77%, Evaluate 25%, First Aid 66%, Influence 54%, Lore (Animal) 93%, Lore (Plant) 44%, Lore (World) 62%, Perception 64%, Persistence 30%, Resilience 77%, Riding 56%, Sing 21%, Sleight 39%, Stealth 27%, Throwing 33%, Unarmed 39%

Advanced Skills

Craft (Cabinet Making) 98%, Craft (Tools) 36%, Craft (Weapons) 48%

Crump has managed to be elected to the position of Alderman and guild head for ten years in succession. His arrogance is matched only by his political acuity, which has brought friends in high places but also the string of enemies the guild enjoys.

Characteristics

SIZ 10 (110 members)
 INF 16/14/0
 WTH 16
 MIL 4
 COM 15
 POP 6

Attributes

Affinities: 13
Initiative: 16
Reputation: 12

Capabilities

Bureaucracy 75%, Combat 16%, Commerce 75%, Culture 54%, Credit 82%, Diplomacy 41%, Favour 38%, Indoctrination 51%, Lore (Most Excellent Guild of Fine Craftsmen) 76%, Persistence 36%, Recruitment 42%, Training 85%

Affiliations

The Baroness Mons (wealthy noble patron). Formal, strong alliance. The Baroness Mons is an influential patron of the guild whose weak-willed husband sits on the High Council. The guild exerts its political power through the Baroness, offering her substantial discounts on items of excellent value produced by guild members. Her influence is 30%. (3 Affinity Points).

Traditions

Access to superior quality materials and techniques (Exquisite) – 2 Affinity Points

Rune of Trade (3 Affinity Points)

Spells: Irrefutable Offer (*RuneQuest Spellbook*) up to Magnitude 3

Obligations and Deficits

Members of the guild must pay the appropriate annual fee, which depends on their rank.

Fees

Class Three: 500 SP per year
Class Two: 800 SP per year
Class One: 1,100 SP per year

Guild Obligations

- Negotiate contracts on behalf of members
- Guarantee contractual obligations
- Protect members from threats or investigation
- Offer payments for information or administration duties
- Pension offered as per standard terms
- Legal and Medical expenses covered as per standard

Member Obligations

- Pay membership dues on time and in full
- Respect the officers of the guild, abide by their decisions and do their bidding when requested
- Uphold guild tariffs and prices
- Uphold guild standards
- Represent the guild with integrity and honesty
- Respect the work of other members
- Encourage others who are eligible to do so to join the guild
- Do not trade with those who are under guild sanction
- Report all discrepancies and transgressions to officers of the guild
- Attend the annual guild meeting and other such meetings, as demanded by guild officers
- Repay any guild loans by the agreed time and in full
- Make friends in high places.
- Refuse to trade with anyone from the lower social orders
- Bring new members into the guild from other guilds.

Punishments

Standard fines are in existence for breaking guild rules. However the most potent punishment is ostracism. Such is the guild's power that not only will a person never work again but rumours begin that link the ex-member with all sorts of scandals, thus completely wrecking good reputations.

Membership, Ranks and Officers

Membership Levels

Membership is by invitation only. Ad-hoc applications to join are always rejected. Membership levels range from Class Three (lowest) up to Class One (highest). Class Three members are given or recommended for, the lowliest or least prestigious jobs, whilst Class One takes the cream of the commissions. Class One members also elect the guild's ruling council, the Chisellers, who are responsible for coordinating and distributing all contracts and arranging the collection of membership dues. Chisellers are initiated into the secrets of the guild. The guild's foremost member is known as the Grand High Chiseller, an elected position held by a Chiseller for two years.

Professional Titles

Class Three: Fine Master Craftsman – must have one Craft skill at 70% or higher
 Class Two: Most Excellent Master Craftsman – must have one Craft skill at 90% or higher
 Class One: Supreme Master Craftsman – must have one Craft skill at 70% or higher and a second at 100% or higher

Officers

Alderman, 2x Deans, 2x Stewards, 6x Searchers

TRAINING

Crafts (Cabinet Making, Carpentry, Jewellery, Masonry, Polishing, Silverware); Influence; Oratory

Fortuitous Association of the Ratcatching Trade (Generic Trade Guild)

This guild, which revels in its acronym, represents all rat catchers in the city. Looked down upon by most other guilds its members nevertheless provide a vital service and know all there is to know about vermin of all types. It serves both the humble and the lofty alike but has never been able to shake-off its somewhat squalid reputation, perhaps because of the acronym of which it is so proud. It is loosely affiliated with the secretive thieves' guild, trading secrets and knowledge in return for a small percentage.

Aims and Goals

- Keep the vermin of the city under control
- Supply information to the Thieves Guild

Modus Operandi

Members are often the poorer members of the city's society; itinerants with small dogs and a clutch of nets and traps. The guild rents a room in the attic of a warehouse down by the quay where services can be bargained for but the most common way for someone to be hired is simply by hailing them in the street. The guild can handle most kinds of pest – from rats and mice, up to larger vermin such as the reviled Dire Squirrel.

Trades

Exclusively rat catchers. Anyone expressing an interest in vermin control or demonstrating a particular aptitude for it, may apply to join. Membership is secured through swearing the FART oath, paying the first year's membership fee in advance and succeeding in the famed Rat Run Test.

Allies and Enemies

None in particular.

Possessions

A grubby, rented room, where the only employee of the guild, its Alderman, handles all paperwork and administration.

PERSONALITIES

The Piper (Hero level Rat Catcher): The Piper is a mysterious, motley-clad figure who appears in the city from time to time. Said to be immortal, having pactured his soul to the Three Headed Rat God, the Piper can control rodents through his magical pipes, which causes all rodents to follow his tune. To all within the guild, the Piper is known as King Rat.

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 8 (56 members)
 INF 8/0/0
 WTH 6
 MIL 3
 COM 18
 POP 10

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 5
 Initiative: 13
 Reputation: 12

Capabilities

Bureaucracy 31%, Combat 13%, Credit 48%, Diplomacy 37%, Favour 29%, Lore (Fortuitous Association of the Rat Catching Trade) 85%, Persistence 29%, Recruitment 27%, Training 46%, Zeal 75%

Affiliations

Thieves Guild, Formal, weak alliance (2 Affinity Points)

TRADITIONS

Ratting Ritual (3 Affinity Points). This ritual calls for the Piper to dance and play his pipes. By emulating his moves, the members of the guild are allowed to make a Persistence test immediately after the ceremony. If successful, the Craft (Pest Control) skill is increased by half for 1D6+1 days

Secret

The King Rat has access to the powers of the Three Headed Rat God. The guild's biggest and best kept, secret is the Cult of the Three Headed Rat. In the deepest recesses of the sewers this demonic creature schemes and births the millions of rats infesting the city. It cannot control its children and relies on the guild to do it for her. In return, the guild, via the exalted King Rat who is the high priest of the Cult of the Three Headed Rat, is granted use of Rat Magic, a small selection of sorcery spells and enchanted items the Rat God has collected over the years. The King Rat is also taught the Summon Gaitha ritual, which allows him to summon forth the feared rat demon Gaitha, father of all vermin.



Obligations and Deficits

FART members must wear the knitted woollen cap of the guild, with a rat's tail attached to the back. The guild knows the sewers and streets of the city intimately. It knows how to access important buildings using the sewer network and teaches this knowledge to Masters of Rats when they have been in service for one year. Rat Lords also coordinate the exchange of information with the thieves' guild.

Guild Obligations

- Protect members' interests within the marketplace
- Extend and guarantee markets wherever possible
- Represent and support individual members on civil matters

Member Obligations

- Pay membership dues on time
- Attend the Ratting Ritual whenever the Piper is in town
- Keep secret, on pain of death, the secret of the Three Headed Rat.

The guild offers no pension or death duties.

Punishments

Most punishments are nominal fines but betraying the cult's secret is death. Members are gnawed alive by fierce, fighting rats bred specially for the purpose, their bodies being dumped at the waterfront with a live rat stitched into their stomach to eat from within.

Membership, Ranks and Officers

Most members are Ratters; the rank and file rat catchers who serve the general populace of the city. The second level is Master of Rats and allows access to contracts in the home of merchants and more prosperous clients. The third level is Rat Lord, which allows access to vermin control for the noble houses of the city. Rat Lords manage the guild, set prices and so forth. The fourth and final level is King Rat, occupied by only one individual. See the guild's Secret.

Members must supply their own cats and traps.

Professional Titles

Ratter – 10 SP per year. Either Lore (Animal) or Craft (Rat Catching) at 40% or higher

Master of Rats – 15 SP per year. Either Lore (Animal) or Craft (Rat Catching) at 60% or higher

Rat Lord – 20 SP per year. Either Lore (Animal) or Craft (Rat Catching) at 80% or higher
 King Rat – see guild secrets, above

Fees

Ratter – 10 SP per year.
 Master of Rats – 15 SP per year.
 Rat Lord – 20 SP per year.
 King Rat – see guild Secret

TRAINING

Craft (Rat Catching), Lore (Animal), Lore (Sewers), Mechanisms, Streetwise

Thieves Guild (Generic Unofficial Guild)

The Thieves Guild is, obviously, highly secretive. This is not a society of gentleman thieves and burglars; it is a loose affiliation of conmen, pickpockets and cutpurses who roam the city stealing what they can. The guild is always on the lookout for wealthy marks but generally its crime is low-level and opportunistic.

Aims and Goals

- Train and protect the low-level criminals of the city

Modus Operandi

The guild is run by the pockmarked individual who goes by the name of the Grey Hatter (or just The Hatter). He trains those who are forced to live on the streets and in poverty, taking a quarter of their earnings but offers a sort-of welfare scheme to those who cannot steal any more, ensuring that they or their families receive fresh bread, milk, some decent meat and the occasional bottle of ale.

TRADES

All thieves, conmen and cutpurses.

Allies and Enemies

The authorities.

POSSSESSIONS

None. The Hatter lives in a squalid garret above a crumbling warehouse in the choked quarter of the waterfront.

PERSONALITIES

The Grey Hatter (Master Level thief): Clad in a tattered, grey, stovepipe hat, the Hatter has a withered, pockmarked face, wispy beard and a thick, gravelly voice. His nose is a carriage-wreck' his mouth a graveyard for teeth. He is utterly unscrupulous but maintains a certain compassion for those who have worked for him and can do so no longer.



The Hatter has links with the Piper or King Rat (see above). The rat-catchers' guild offers the Hatter information on an ad-hoc basis and he occasionally teaches them some of his skills in thievery. The Hatter knows of the Three Headed Rat Cult and fears it; he fears the Piper too, having been in one town where the children were spirited away by the Piper's pipes when the burghers refused to pay the Piper's fee for ridding the town of vermin.

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 15 (360 members)
 INF 5/0/0
 WTH 13
 MIL 5
 COM 21
 POP 5

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 7
 Initiative: 13
 Reputation: 10

Capabilities

Bureaucracy 31%, Combat 30%, Credit 100%, Diplomacy 26%, Favour 33%, Lore (Thieves Guild) 100%, Persistence 75%, Recruitment 83%, Training 88%

Affiliations

Fortuitous Association of the Rat Catching Trade – Formal, Weak Alliance (2 Affinity Points)

Traditions

The Six Fingers Technique (2 Affinity Points). By this technique, used in lifting wallets, purses, rings and so forth, members may add the Guild's COM Characteristic of 21 to their Stealth or Athletics skills as a bonus when using the skill for guild endeavours.

Obligations and Deficits

Members must pay a quarter of the value of whatever they steal to the Hatter, visiting his garret weekly to hand over their loot. Those that fail are prey to the Hatter's wrath and some disappear to be sacrificed to the Three Headed Rat God. The Hatter's temper is legendary and he has beaten to death many poor waifs who thought themselves smarter than the wily-old crook.

Those who serve him well are looked-after – as are their families – with weekly gifts of good quality bread, cheese, milk, meat, ale and decent drinking water.

Punishments

Beatings, disappearance.

Membership, Ranks and Officers

The guild has no ranks. The Hatter is its only officer.

Training

The Hatter trains, free of charge, the following skills: *Athletics, Perception, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Throwing, Unarmed Combat.*

Factions

The Vanchite Trading Company (Glorantha Merchant Faction)

The Vanchite Trading Company is an organisation of traders, porters and mercenaries who ply their trade across the region of Saird, in the south of Peloria in Glorantha. In reality the Company is a front for an anti-draconic organisation opposed to the actions of the Empire of the Wyrms Friends, specifically the Golden Dragon Emperor of Dara Happa. They have been corrupted from within and become one of the most influential criminal organisations in Genertela.

History and Context

The Vanchite Trading Company was originally a group of Vanchite merchants who grouped together for mutual protection against the dangers of the lands that they travelled. Their trade routes criss-crossed the south of Peloria, from the borders of Chaos ridden Dorastor to the Elder Races plagued wilderness of Balastar. Many mocked the VTC claiming that they were a poor man's version of the Dara Happan Associations, however the company grew almost unchecked until the rise of the Empire of the Wyrms Friends. When forced to compete with the EWF's draconic empowered traders the company went into rapid decline.

It was not until 891 ST that the Company began to change its fortunes. It had dwindled from six hundred members to a mere hundred. However during this period rebellion was fermenting amongst the clansmen of Saird (Holay, Vanch and Imther), the leaders of the rebellion sought a way of communicating amongst each other and approached the leaders of the VTC. At that time Nobile Dog-Walker and Basengi the Silent were the two most prominent members of the company, both had made their money through the lucrative trade in dogs. Both men had a hatred of the EWF, Basengi especially who had been deprived of his tongue by a particularly vindictive Talon. They rapidly agreed to the deal with the chieftains. In return for carrying secret messages the clans bolstered the mercenaries, porters and apprentices of the company with their own numbers.

By 901 ST the Vanchite Trading Company had established a strong communication network, the EWF took little notice of the rugged, weather worn traders criss-crossing their glorious Empire, the VTC paid its taxes, appeared to abide by the law and showed sufficient humility before their masters. The VTC traded in slaves, dogs, flint and other lowly goods and so had no clash with the draconised worshippers of Issaries. However the VTC also carried with them poisonous words, rebels warriors disguised as slaves and many of the dogs were magical beasts. With their aid the rebels were able to secure secrets about the EWF, steal back their lost treasures and free their kinsmen from thraldom.

By 899 ST the VTC underwent several major changes, Basengi the Silent was killed by Tusk Riders who were raiding caravans in the Dog Plains. Despite his muted nature Basengi had been the conscience of the VTC, he regulated the behaviour of the brooding Nobile and had resisted corruption entering the Company. Nobile, a devoted worship of Jajagappa the Hound, an ancient Sairdite death cult, wanted to directly use the VTC to attack the EWF and he quickly allowed many bandits and outlaws to join his cause. The VTC began to smuggle as well as trade, they began to attack EWF caravans and began to quickly take control of many of the criminal elements in the cities of southern Peloria.

In 908 ST the VTC is rapidly becoming one of the largest criminal elements in the Oslir basin. Nobile is now ageing but powerful. He has declared himself the Dog Father and is surrounded by loyal family members. He has sufficient information on the rebellious nobles of Saird to have them all executed by the EWF. The VTC enforcers and bandits terrorise the trade routes and merchant outposts. They have criminal contacts in every city in Saird and even Dara Happa and northern Dragon Pass. The EWF is aware of the VTC and has made several attempts to infiltrate its inner core; however the power of Jajagappa and his pack of hound demons protect the inner core of the company, who hide their inner secrets within the Underworld home of their deity. The EWF has been unable to act directly against the company, it would seem that the Dog Father even has information on the highest ranking members of Empire, at least enough to keep it safe. Despite these protections the VTC does not seem to be expanding, it seems to have reached a

point of stability. However that may change were the Dog Father to fall.

The Future of the VCC

The VTC remains relatively stable throughout the period, it gains its greatest power during the fall of the Golden Dragon Emperor where it seized power within some sections of the Dara Happa criminal underworld. Later, during the reign of High King Verenmars in 986 ST, the VTC returns to its earlier roots and assists in the undermining of the EWF, gaining honours from the dragon fighting king. This brings special privileges and tax exemptions and the Company becomes a Royal Corporation. By the Third Age of Glorantha the VTC has undergone so many changes, it has become thoroughly corrupted from within but amongst the decadent Lunar Empire this is hardly noticed.

Aims and Goals

The Vanchite Trading Company seeks to maintain its influence over the criminal underworld of Saird. It seeks to maintain its trade relationships and to forge deals in new lands. The VTC seeks to keep its criminal business secret from the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends. The organisation seeks to maintain its control over the nobility of Saird, however it is also willing to assist those rebellious nobles who seek to overthrow the EWF. In order to accomplish these goals the VTC has to keep its internal factions separated and under the control of the sworn men guided by the Dog Father and his sons.

CHARACTERISTICS

| | |
|-----|--|
| SIZ | 19 (1,300 members) |
| INF | 25/13/7 (Competent orators, tough negotiators and competent blackmailers) |
| WTH | 22 (The coffers of the VTC are equal to many petty kingdoms) |
| MIL | 12 (Mercenaries, gang toughs, etc) |
| COM | 25 (A comprehensive networks of spies, traders and scouts) |
| POP | 16 (A popular public face, control of many nobles and good cult relations) |

ATTRIBUTES

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Affinities: | 39 |
| Initiative: | 17 |
| Reputation: | 17 |

Capabilities

Bureaucracy 61%, Combat 38%, Commerce 77%, Credit 54%, Diplomacy 76%, Favour 46%, Lore (Vanchite Trading Corporation) 51%, Training 43%, Persistence 70%, Recruitment 34%, Espionage 71%, Zeal 69%

POWER BASE (5 Affinity Points)

The VTC controls the main trade routes throughout the traditional lands of Saird. The majority of the company's buildings are waystations and trading posts established in tribal centres and cities. To the majority of people the VTC is a reputable trading enterprise and its traders are welcomed. Its waystations and trading posts are seen as comfortable hostels for weary travellers, open to everyone with a few coppers. The central heart of the VTC is the so-called Dog House, a secret hideout which is situated in the city of Bikhy. This veritable fortress is guarded by demon hounds and loyal sworn men, dedicated to protecting the Dog Father. The VTC counts as a guild in many respects but its strong cult associations and criminal connections mean that it operates in a slightly different manner.

Affiliations (5 Affinity Points)

The VTC is tied to both the Nobility of Saird and to the cult of Jajagappa so strongly that it is deemed to have an affiliation with both. The secrets and blackmail used to control the nobles has weakened the strength of the relationship between the nobility and VTC, however the cult actively supports the cult of Jajagappa and all his associated canine deities. Many members of the VTC also follow the faith of Issaries and the Company funds several shrines in the region. Finally the VTC knows how to manipulate the officials of the Empire of the Wyrms Friends and pays its taxes on time so as to maintain a positive relationship.

- Loose affiliation with the Nobility of Saird (controlled through blackmail and corruption). Affinity 1.
- Loose friendship with the cult of Issaries. Affinity 1.
- Cordial and formal relationship with the EWF. Affinity 1.
- Formal and very strong alliance with the cult of Jajagappa. Affinity 2.

Opposition

The opponents of the Vanchite Trading Company are the Nobles that they once assisted; they are at present held in place by the blackmailing of the Dog Father,

who carries many documents that could incriminate them. However at present the nobles are virtually powerless. The draconised traders of the EWF view the VTC as a potential threat to their commercial dealing, however the VTC tend to deal in commodities that they do not favour. On a local level the many smaller gangs seek to compete with the VTC but just do not have the manpower or strength to oust them. Local bureaucrats are easily bribed and city guards have families to worry about. Anyway why would any of these people question such legitimate businessmen?

Affinities

Informant network – The VTC has a large number of informants throughout the Saird region, many collect knowledge without knowing that they do so for a criminal organisation. Most are merchants, couriers and dog handlers, although a small number are actual spies (3 Affinity Points).

Secrets and Lies – The VTC controls many documents that could result in the public execution of its enemies. They are always seeking new information about the opposition (4 Affinity Points).

Corrupt Official – His name is unknown to any but the Dog Father, however the VTC controls a very high powered official within the EWF, who actively protects their interests (3 Affinity Points).

Thugs – The core members of the VTC are hard line crooks, skilled in blackmail, corruption and brutality. There are twenty sworn men active at any one time (8 Affinity Points).

Spin Doctor – Tarinvar (aka the Terrier) is the spokesman for the VTC he is a priest of both Issaries and follower of Jajagappa, he has a fearsome reputation for never letting go of any subject he chooses to pursue. He is also a competent lawyer and strikes fear into Lhankor Mhy and Buserian cultists whenever they meet (2 Affinity Points).

Magic and Powers

The VTC has no inherent magic to most of its members. However it is believed that the sworn men and Dog Father pay tribute to demonic hounds that protect them from other world assailants. These creatures have not been seen by those not within the inner Dog Pack.

PERSONALITIES

Papa Nobile the Dog Father (Hero level – 4 Affinity Points): They call him Papa as a term of deference and respect (but mainly due to fear). However Nobile is no longer a young man, he has become fat and grey, well loved by his family, respected by his sworn men and feared by his enemies. Papa Nobile has many sons, all who know that they have to remain in line or they will not live long, as a polygamist Papa still has the potential for plenty of heirs. Papa is a potent shaman of Jajagappa and is never without his three great mastiffs, all reputed to be man-eaters. However most people who have met the old man say he is a pleasant fellow, gifted with a clear mind, strong vision and exceptional palate.



The Straw Dogs (Hawkmoon Faction)

Perhaps the most well known mercenary company since the end of the Tragic Millennium, the Straw Dogs have a reputation of never losing a battle. Faced with Granbretanian incursions which are slowly conquering Europe, the Straw Dogs have taken an aggressive stance against the beastmasks in order to protect the status quo which is their livelihood; since without petty feuding principalities there can be no work for soldiers of fortune.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ Aims: To maintain the reputation of the Straw Dogs as an unbeatable mercenary organisation. Gather as much surviving weaponry and transport technology as possible to ensure their battlefield edge.
- ☒ Goal: To drive the beastmask warriors of Granbretan from Europe.

Modus Operandi

The Straw Dogs maintain a loose network of contacts throughout Europe to gather political information and as a means for negotiating deals. Since the mercenary company is only a small team of experts, they normally offer short-term contracts for training, tactical advice and leadership of existing forces, rather than supplying their own troops. They can also be hired to perform one-off commando style missions.

In recent years the Straw Dogs have become a politically driven organisation, openly undermining Granbretanian propoganda and using their growing myth of being unbeatable to bolster resistance to the beastmasks. Once merely regarded with respect for their prowess, the Straw Dogs are slowly becoming an icon of hope in the war for freedom in Europe.

Allies and Enemies

The Straw Dogs are archenemies of several Grand Constables of the beast orders. They have become such a thorn in the side of the beastmasks that God Emperor Huon has begun to take an unhealthy interest in them. They are regarded as adversaries by those Principalities and Dukedoms in thrall to Granbretan.

The Mercenaries have few allies. However, Kyruus granted them full support after the Straw Dogs overthrew beastmask rule of the island, providing troops and provisions. Also the city-state of Milan and the nation of Shekia are sympathisers.

Possessions

Since the successful raid on the black treasure hulks of Granbretan's annual tribute fleet, the Straw Dogs have enough funds to conceivably buy a dukedom. Yet because the mercenary company must constantly move to prevent the beastmasks locating it, the group has no permanent residence, nor property to its name. Most of the group's possessions take the form of rare technology, mainly weaponry, which is used to support its military missions. Most of its financial spending

takes the form of political bribes to rulers, purchasing new equipment, counter propaganda and funding insurgent uprisings within territory newly conquered by Granbretan.

The Straw Dogs wear no identifying uniforms or badges, all members are known to one another by sight. It does however possess two identifying icons, one being the torn and many times repaired battle standard of a snarling mongrel, the other is the Sword of Tasis, the legendary founder of the company.

PERSONALITIES

Jurgan – Commander of the Straw Dogs: A tall Scandian with terrible facial scars, Jurgan is driven by a combination of desiring violent revenge for the loss his village, betrayed by his wife to the Shark Order and a growing sense of duty to satisfy his oath on the Runestaff to drive the Ganbretanians back to Londra. He bears the Sword of Tasis and suffers the weight of every life lost under his command.



Mikhail – Figurehead and public relations officer:

This tough Moscovian displays a streak of almost suicidal bravery, spitting in the faces of Grand Constables and even defiantly urinating on their boots! Mikhail follows his countrymen’s tendency to mope depressively, having little faith in the Straw Dogs’ ability to win against increasingly great odds. He is also obsessed with jealousy over not being promoted to command of the mercenaries when the last leader ended up dead, spread-eagled across the front of a Granbretan lokamotiv.

CHARACTERISTICS

- SIZ 3 (14 members)
- INF 0/0/15 (no local political power base, only a global reputation)
- WTH 21
- MIL 21
- COM 15
- POP 15

ATTRIBUTES

- Affinities: 8
- Initiative: 15
- Reputation: 15

CAPABILITIES

- Bureaucracy 25%, Combat 64%, Credit 36%, Diplomacy 30%, Favour 40%, Lore (Straw Dogs) 70%, Persistence 28%, Recruitment 30%, Technology 15%, Training 48%, Warfare 51%

POWER BASE

Loose group of sympathisers from all over Tragic Europe (1 Affinity Point), Sympathy 36%

AFFILIATIONS

- Strong Formal Alliance with Kyruss (3 Affinity Points)
- Loose Affiliation with Milan (1 Affinity Point)

OPPOSITION

Constant physical and political assaults from the Orders of the Wolf, Shark, Tiger and Vulture.

AFFINITIES

Informer – Huillam D’Averc of the Order of the Boar (1 Affinity Point).

Sacred Symbol – Sword of Tasis (2 Affinity Points). The Sword of Tasis is a black-bladed bastard sword of iron, a slug of quicksilver channelled into its blade. The weapon inflicts 2D8 damage when striking.

Obligations and Debits

- ☒ Hate Granbretan
- ☒ Love (Serve) Runestaff

Membership, Officers and Ranks

The organisation of the Straw Dogs is egalitarian. Formal membership is by invitation only, after proving their hatred of Granbretan and demonstrating sufficient prowess in combat and technological skills. These are usually tested by sending the candidate on a dangerous mission. These qualifications are sometimes overlooked in those candidates of proven reputation or close companions of existing members.

Rank and File – These are the nameless warriors and soldiers who are often recruited prior to a specific battle. They rarely join the Straw Dogs officially, instead briefly fighting under its reputation (and command) to complete an objective: a temporary levy of native sailors to free Kyruss for example. As such, these provisional members are not counted towards the company's SIZ, since they generally remain in their homeland or die fighting for it.

Agents – All full members of the Straw Dogs are at least of agent level. When assigned to command troops they are granted a suitable brevet rank according to the size of the unit.

Figurehead (Voice of the Straw Dogs) – This is the representative who is sent to parley with employers or enemies alike. The figurehead acts as second in command of the company and as its faux leader during negotiations in order to deflect any potential assassination attempts. To aid the subterfuge, the figurehead and the leader are kept in instantaneous two-way communication by use of techno-sorcerous telepathy gems.

Decision Maker (Leader of the Straw Dogs) – The sole commander who dictates the mercenary company's strategy and tactics. A leader must be elected to the position, by majority vote of the other members of the Straw Dogs. This is normally done after the previous

leader has retired or died. However, incompetent leadership can provoke a succession if the other mercenaries agree to a new election.

Training

The Straw Dogs offer training in most areas involving warfare. Normally training is only offered to the temporary Rank and File, since the upper echelons of the company have little time to learn, save by hard experience. Skills offered: *Acrobatics, Athletics, Engineering, First Aid, Lore (Military Tactics), Lore (World), Perception, Persistence, Resilience, Riding, Stealth, Survival, Tracking and Weapon (Any).*

House Dro (Generic Political Faction)

House Dro serves to represent the interests of the extended Dro family, an ambitious clan of politicians, aesthetes and power-seekers who want nothing more than complete control of the city-state, wresting it from their hated rivals, House Menesen. House Dro comprises of many families, all with tenuous connections to the ancestor of the clan, Ulias Dro, the so-called 'city father'. All the families in House Dro are concerned with acquiring prestige and power at any cost.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ Control the city-state. Place Dro members in every position of power or control it from behind the scenes.

Modus Operandi

Beguiling and murderous, House Dro is quite prepared to contemplate blackmail, extortion and murder to achieve its goals. It works by marrying its offspring into as many influential families as possible, then gaining secrets and scandals to be used against those it wishes to manipulate. These activities are never openly voiced, of course; House Dro maintains a veneer of respectability and its vast wealth means few are keen to turn down their advances. Some members of the House are more ethical than others but virtually every single member displays reprehensible traits to some degree.

Allies and Enemies

House Menesen (enemy) – the current rulers of the city-state and bitter rivals in the war for power.

House Parys (allies) – the similarly despicable ruling house of the neighbouring city-state.

POSSSESSIONS

House Dro owns several mansions and numerous fine houses throughout the city-state. It controls the Dro Fleet, a merchant shipping company that operates from the harbour.

PERSONALITIES

Maren Dro: The current patriarch; an eagle-faced man with a political acuity as sharp as a scalpel and a pathological lack of scruples.

Coru Dro: Maren’s youngest, prettiest and most devious daughter. She has been married four times in her twenty six years, with each husband providing fortuitous political advancement before being ditched for the next handsome, wealthy victim.

CHARACTERISTICS

- SIZ 12 (530 members scattered across 20 families claiming Dro lineage)
- INF 18/10/2
- WTH 26
- MIL 9
- COM 17
- POP 9

ATTRIBUTES

- Affinities: 13
- Initiative: 16
- Reputation: 15

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 54%, Combat 32%, Credit 110%, Culture 74%, Diplomacy 98%, Espionage 53%, Favour 56%, Lore (House Dro) 80%, Lore (City State Politics) 80%, Persistence 65%, Recruitment 30%, Training 48%

POWER BASE

Secretariat (2 Affinity Points) – House Dro controls the Shipping Council, which administers trade within the city-state.

League of Merchant Sailmen (4 Affinity Points) – A medium sized shipping guild with presence in the local city-states.

AFFILIATIONS

House Parys – Formal, Weak alliance.

OPPOSITION

House Menesen – in particular the Exchequer, which is under Menesen’s complete control.

AFFINITIES

Two corrupt officials (6 Affinity Points). The head of the Merchant Sailmen is completely in the pockets of House Dro – as is Lord Vacal, head of the city-state’s militia. House Dro knows scandalous truths about both men. Lord Vacal is Coru Dro’s latest (besotted) husband.

OBLIGATIONS AND DEFICITS

- Hate (Menesen)
- Love (Political Power)

MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS AND RANKS

Any member of one of the twenty families comprising House Dro is automatically a member of the organisation. Most are lay members, scheming for their own ends but the immediate Dro family members are the Decision Makers of the clan, with Maren Dro as its figurehead. Coru Dro is eyeing this position for herself; her father is in ill-health and her siblings lack the wit to realise the family’s ambitions. With her new husband, Lord Vacal, Coru Dro is intending to seize control of House Dro and instigate a coup against House Menesen, purging the city-state of its influence once and for all.

TRAINING

House Dro offers little formal training. Those who gain the favour of the immediate Dro family (Maren or Coru) can gain training, free of charge, in Lore (City State Politics).

The Opening Revealers (Gloranthan God Learner Revealer Group)

The first study groups were formed by the God Learners circa 500 but these were relatively disorganised, ad-hoc institutions with no clearly defined remit other than to expand the Empire’s knowledge base. Four hundred years later, study groups have developed. Predominantly known as *Revealers*, these are highly organised, tightly focused research teams. Revealers are always formed to research a single subject and are

always disbanded when the task is complete. Some Revealers have been operating for a hundred years or more, whilst others might only last days. They are hot-houses of intellectual and magical activity, intensely private and operating to the detailed Study Codes drawn-up by Saint Serezos the Revealer which he condensed from certain obscure passages of the *Abiding Book*.

In the Earth Season of 903, the God Learners sent Bruyant Openwing to study the ruins of Hrelar Amali. His initial survey established their undoubted importance to the Middle Sea Empire's magical agenda and also established that this would be a long-term enterprise. A base of study was essential and one that could offer the kind of comforts necessary to the calibre of scholars Bruyant intended to attract to the ruins. Dangk, despite its lack of character, was ideal: close enough to Kustria and the other major Safelster cities but remote enough to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and factional meddling, whilst still offering certain *standards* of habitation.

Flattery, bribery and a modicum of blackmail swiftly followed, securing the cooperation of Dangk's city elders, the Marsh Council. As more and more God Learner scholars arrived in Dangk, bringing yet more money and more corruption, Bruyant proposed that the governorship of Dangk pass to the Revealers, which now numbered some 300 Revealer Fellows. The Openwing Stewardship was granted legal status in 905 and Dangk effectively passed into the hands of the God Learners.

Bruyant returned full-time to the study of Hrelar Amali, handing civic power to Esclafr Lanpth, a procrastinator who faces the difficult task of balancing the conflicting interests of Bruyant's strident Revealers against the religious concerns of various other scholars and mystics who believe that Hrelar Amali is a heresy against Malkion and should be levelled, not studied.

Foremost of these zealots is Fluilea Gencourt, one of the most fervent Malkionist proselytisers in the Empire and an ardent denier of Hrelar Amali. He arrived in Dangk three years ago, accompanied by his cadre of supporters, the fanatical Flotsam and has spent his time haranguing the theists of Dangk – resident and pilgrim alike – making a fair few converts to the way of the Invisible God – but also making enemies. Fluilea

has no time for tolerance. His methods are based on intimidation, scare-mongering, strong-arming and outright violence. The Flotsam, numbering almost three hundred, carry-out Fluilea Gencourt's will and happily stir-up resentment and trouble whenever Fluilea's interests are threatened (real or perceived) and groups of Flotsam have been known to 'Go Orlanthi Bashing' just for fun. When summoned by Esclafr to account for the violent antics of his followers, Fluilea is apt to shrug and suggest that perhaps pagans should be forbidden from the city altogether, if they do not like the way they are treated.

The stewardship is enforced by the Revealers' Security Faculty. Soldiers drafted in from the Rightness Army, plus mercenaries hired for the task, patrol both Dangk and Hrelar Amali. Whilst the Dangk garrison is capable, it is also bored. Unless one is of a studious nature and deeply interested in the ruins or a fanatic like Gencourt's Flotsam, Dangk has few charms. Security is therefore lax, with corruption and drunkenness common amongst the Dangk Garrison and a blind eye being turned to a fair amount of petty crime.

Aims and Goals

Break the secret of the sacred temple of Hrelar Amali, near the city of Dangk, in Ralios.

Modus Operandi

Revealers, depending on what is being studied, can number in the hundreds but the structure is always the same. At the head is the *Chancellor*, responsible for directing the study methodologies and outcomes. The Chancellor carries the Revealers' reputation and the most experienced and successful Chancellors lead the largest or most prestigious study projects.

The body of the group is arranged into *Faculties*. Typical Faculties are History, Magic, Myth Interpretation, Engineering, Security and Accounting. Each has its own *Faculty Head* (even in small groups, where the entire Faculty is a single person) and they direct the study according to the programme outlined by the Chancellor.

Revealers are well-funded with budgets approved by the exchequer of Emperor Ilotos. Bruyant Openwing's Revealers, for instance, has a budget sufficient to run a small city (and there are Revealers much larger than Bruyant's elsewhere in the Empire). All Revealers can

draw upon the God Learners' considerable religious and magical resources as needs dictate, although the most important Revealers take priority – often at the expense of the smaller or less prestigious.

Finally, Revealers are intensely competitive. Each seeks to add the most to the God Learners' banks of knowledge; each seeks to advance the Empire the furthest. Feuds between Revealers are not uncommon and, on some occasions, even blood has been spilled.

Allies and Enemies

The Old Ways Traditionalists of Dangk (enemies)

Possessions

The Opening Revealers effectively control the city of Dangk, with their power base located in the group of richly appointed faculty buildings in the heart of the city. The God Learners have also built a marvellous cathedral dedicated to Malkion, Saint Serezos, Saint Volanc and Saint Xemela.

Personalities

Bruyant Openwing, Chancellor, Hrelar Amali Revealers (Figurehead): Irritatingly enthusiastic, Bruyant Openwing is a portly, late-middle aged man with a round, ruddy face, wide brown eyes and a frame of unruly white hair that gives him the appearance of a stunned dandelion clock. Bruyant babbles incessantly at high speed, accompanied by blasts of spittle, especially when he is waxing on a particular area of expertise. He is an astute and faithful servant of the Empire and Malkion. Cracking the secret of Hrelar Amali consumes him and every day he conceives a new theory contradicting those of the day before. He knows he is close to unravelling the secret; he knows that gods were involved before the Great Compromise was forged. He is certain that the Lightbringers' Quest is central to the entire enigma and he is frustrated that, every time the Revealers get close to striking the truth, some new fact is uncovered putting the truth out of reach. Theists, he believes, are misguided fools. However, their prayers, stories and myths are compelling in their simplicity, hinting at deeper, more potent truths. He admires their singular adherence to the pantheistic, whilst patronisingly certain that, one day, their gods will cease to have relevance and they will unite under the great rightness of the words of the Abiding Book.

Fluilea Gencourt, Malkioni Zealot and Rabble-Rouser: Small head, small face, small body, big mouth. Tufts of hair protrude from an otherwise bald head and beady, pernicious eyes glare out from beneath a dense, single eyebrow. Fluilea Gencourt is Dangk's resident religious fundamentalist: a Malkioni of such stridency that you can almost (but not quite) see the halo. Fluilea carries a great deal of religious power in Dangk. He is not part of the Study Group but his success as a proselytiser is barely matched and he boasts an extraordinary conversion rate. He descended on Dangk three years ago with two aims: turn as many theists into Malkioni as possible and get the blasphemous ruins of Hrelar Amali completely levelled and even thrown into Lake Felster. God Learner tolerance has passed Fluilea by. Theists are worthless and should be forced into accepting the Invisible God and his Holy Saints; the Abiding Book should be read to them morning, noon and night until they can recite it as precisely as he can.

Thus it is that Fluilea has sanctioned his Flotsam to disrupt the work at the ruins in whatever ways they can. The tactics they use are underhand and even involve consorting with Wymfriends (through intermediaries but consorting nonetheless) to provide information useful in sabotage. Fluilea also believes that, if the pilgrims are given a hard enough time, they will stop making the journey and eventually render the ruins powerless, so he ensures that the Flotsam make life very hard for the theist pilgrims.

Esclafr Lanpth ('The Crumbler'), Dangk Administrator (Decision Maker): Esclafr maintains a tall and noble bearing with a head tilted at just the right angle to make it seem as though he is squinting down his nose at everyone. He is not; he cricked his neck one morning and it has remained at this angle ever since. He is known as The Crumbler because he seems to cave-in readily on most points. It is a cunning tactic: Esclafr is sharp-witted and devious. Giving-in and backing down from confrontation disarms an opponent to a certain extent. The result is usually to make whoever he is arguing with stop, think through what's been said and then mutter something like 'Really? I'll go away and think about it...'

Esclafir is a highly competent administrator and politician. He knows which palms need greasing, by how much and what other insurances need to be secured to maintain the greasiness. Like most God Learners he is contemptuous of all other religions but canny enough to understand their importance to the prosperity of Dangk.



CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 12 (320 members)
 INF 20/8/0
 WTH 19
 MIL 16 (detachment of the Rightness Army garrisoned in Dangk)
 COM 12
 POP 8

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 16
 Initiative: 16
 Reputation: 13

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 95%, Combat 65%, Credit 70%, Culture 36%, Diplomacy 71%, Espionage 49%, Favour 48%, Indoctrination 41%, Lore (God Learner Revealer) 90%, Lore (Hrelar Amali) 40%, Persistence 41%, Recruitment 27%, Training 75%, Warfare 70%, Zeal 85%

POWER BASE

Large Guild with extensive operations (5 Affinity Points)

AFFILIATIONS

Rightness Army Garrison; Formal, Strong Alliance (3 Affinity Points)

OPPOSITION

Old Ways Traditionalists of Dangk and Hrelar Amali Pilgrims

AFFINITIES

1 x Rabble Rouser (Fluilea Gencourt) – 2 Affinity Points

MAGIC

These two sorcery spells are taught to Revealer Fellows and above (6 Affinity Points):

Adept (Evaluate) (*RuneQuest Spellbook*)
 Quarantine (*RuneQuest Spellbook*)

OBLIGATIONS AND DEFICITS

Love (Knowledge)

MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS AND RANKS

Revealer membership is highly sought after and the entry requirements as strict as those for any cult.

- ☒ **Revealer Fellows** must have at least 70% in a key skill (such as a particular Lore skill) and must pass the compulsory examinations set by the Chancellor (usually requiring three successful tests against the key skill). Fellows must have the Love (Knowledge) passion at 30% or higher.
- ☒ **Faculty Heads** must exhibit at least 80% in two key skills, have completed at least three years of Study Fellowship and undergo similar examinations. Faculty Heads must have the Love (Knowledge) passion at 60% or higher.
- ☒ **Chancellors** must have attained at least 90% in two key skills and served as a Faculty Head for at least five years. Chancellors must have the Love (Knowledge) passion at 90% or higher.

Revealer Groups offer paid employment, food and board and access to knowledge and training (mundane and magical). To many they serve as extended families; to others, as just a way of making a living.

Training

The Openwing Revealers offer training in: Evaluate, Lore (God Learner Revealer Groups), Lore (Hrelar Amali), Perception, Manipulation (Duration), Manipulation (Target).

Cults

The Brotherhood of the Wheel (Hawkmoon Cult)

The cult believes that the Runestaff is the axle upon which the Runewheel turns, generating and dictating the fate of all life in Tragic Millennium Europe. It is a very small group, numbering no more than 8 members. In its hometown of Bakarak, in Rhineland Germania, it is overwhelmingly influential and it carries a reasonable amount of influence across the Germanian principality of Pfalz. It is hideously rich – Count Albrecht von Hawkmoon is a relative of the famed Dorian Hawkmoon and thus has a great deal of property, land and cash to attract followers and exert influence. Militarily, it is also reasonably strong; its members are the warrior-elite known as the Stahlek Wheel Dancers. The Brotherhood makes no secret of its beliefs and the cult spreads its opinions in a

variety of ways; those who know of the cult attest to its humanitarian credentials and desire to stand-up to the insidious Dark Empire of Granbretan.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ Aim: Spread the truth of the relationship between the Runestaff and the Runewheel
- ☒ Aim: Oppose Granbretan
- ☒ Goal: Find and reunite the Runestaff and the Runewheel

Modus Operandi

The Stahlek Wheel Dancers are the active members of the cult. They spend their time abroad searching for clues to the Runewheel and Runestaff's whereabouts, spreading the word of the cult and opposing Granbretan at every opportunity.

In Bakarak, the remaining members of the cult meet monthly to discuss the fortunes of the town and collate information sent back by the Stahlek Wheel Dancers.

Allies and Enemies

The Hawkmoon Dynasty of Köln (Allies)
The Beast Orders of Granbretan (Enemy)

Possessions

A splendid, pre-Tragic Millennium townhouse in Bakarak which acts as both headquarters and temple for the cult. The ground and upper floors are given over to offices and a meeting area and in the cavernous underground basement (once a wine cellar), the large, oval chamber is the main worship area. At one end is the altar where representations of the Runestaff and Runewheel, joined together into the Axle of Fate, stand. These holy symbols are fashioned from gold, silver and obsidian, at great expense by Albrecht von Hawkmoon.

Personalities

Count Albrecht von Hawkmoon: Master level Warrior-Priest, a devout believer in the Runewheel and founder of the cult.

Jeremiah von Bec: Hero level Warrior-Priest; leader of the crusading Stahlek Wheel Dancers – a noble knight who rides the albino warhorse White Raven and wields the von Bec family sword, Ravenwing.

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 3 (8 members)
 INF 18/11/0
 WTH 18
 MIL 12
 COM 10
 POP 18

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 9
 Initiative: 14
 Reputation: 16

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 30%, Combat 15%, Credit 46%,
 Diplomacy 56%, Espionage 91%, Favour 28%, Lore
 (Runewheel) 58%, Persistence 21%, Recruitment
 36%, Technology 38%, Training 53%, Zeal 28%

MYTHS

How the Runewheel Made the World (Resonance 68%, Interactive)

The Brotherhood of the Wheel has, as its core myth, how the Runewheel's spiritual maker, Jemahias Karelian, used it to make the world.

'In times gone past, a great civilisation, filled with wisdom and grace, ruled over the world and knew of the existence of many others. Their prophet, Jemahias Karelian, travelled much along roadways of light and became wise in the ways of these separate worlds. In time, he came to see that all things are linked but happen in individual ways and with separate consequences; but ultimately, all things belong to a chain of being.

It came to pass that the world fell to war. The dark gods, who had been forgotten, drove their followers to build terrible weapons that were used against the cities of light and reason. The destruction was total; few escaped and across the millions of worlds Jemahias had visited, the impact of the war caused strife and hardship.

Jemahias survived and he knew that the world needed to be remade and restarted. In a dream or vision he saw the Great Wheel of Fate, Rune-covered, moving the million spheres amongst its spokes with a staff-like axle, also Rune-covered, at its heart. Jemahias

knew then that to remake and restart the world, the Runewheel and Runestaff must be forged to bring stability to creation.

And so he summoned the finest smiths and sorcerers from amongst the ruins and together they created the designs for the Runestaff and the Runewheel. The designs Jemahias took to the Eldren and they worked in their forges to create the symbols of the Axle of Fate: and, with the shards of material left over from the creation of the Wheel and the Staff, they forged the Black Blades, to defend the Wheel and Staff from those who would destroy them.

Next, Jemahias took the Wheel and the Staff to the summit of the highest mountain, where the Grey Lords dwell and gave unto them the Wheel and Staff for safe keeping. The Grey Lords received these things gladly but in time, allowed the Wheel and Staff to become separated, thus disrupting the remaking of the world.

Meanwhile Jemahias gave each of the Black Blades to four champions who came together from across the million spheres to aid Jemahias in his task. The blades were given names but these are no longer remembered and, like the Wheel and Staff, have become lost.

Jemahias then sang the songs which span the Wheel upon the Staff and the world turned and began to be remade. The ruins could not be repaired and so the people of the world fell into a long and peaceful sleep whilst around them Time was changed and the things that had brought destruction were hidden from view. The dark gods who made war were banished and some destroyed and Jemahias lifted his voice into the chorus that created a barrier about the world and prevented the dark gods from ever again visiting destruction upon the Earth.

The song became a dream and the dream lasted one thousand years. When the people awoke, the world was fresh and new and their minds had been cleansed of the memory of the old times and the dark gods. However, as they awoke, the Wheel and Staff became separated. The heroes who carried the Black Blades were separated also, cast to the winds of limbo and carried to the edges of infinity. Without the Wheel and Staff to maintain balance, the world faltered again and soon men returned to their old, violent ways.

Jemahias wept for this failure and went, in sorrow, into exile, so that he might contemplate the loss of the Wheel and the Staff. His dreams echo to us even now and appear as visions and callings, showing the way to the true faithful who know the reality behind the Runewheel and the Runestaff. This is why we seek it; this is why it is important to bring them together.'

The myth is interactive. It has six stages that form the Wheel Quest and it can be entered by any hero of the Brotherhood who makes a critical Pact test whilst meditating in the sacred chamber of the temple in Bakarak. The stages are as follows:

Stage One

Survive the Coming of the Dark Gods. Two demon-like entities rise-up from the blackened earth and attempt to strike at the HeroQuester with their barbed swords. The HeroQuester must make a successful Dodge against one and a successful Parry against the other. Each demon has a Sword skill of 68%. If the HeroQuester succeeds, he moves to Stage Two of the quest; if he fails, he is ejected and suffers two levels of fatigue for his ordeal.

Stage Two

Forge the Wheel and the Staff. The HeroQuester directs the architects of the Wheel and the Staff. He must succeed in a Lore (Runewheel) test; a Mechanisms test and a Perception test. Succeeding in all three results in the character gaining +15% to his Lore (Runewheel) skill; succeeding in two, +10% and succeeding in just one, +5%. He must succeed in all three to pass onto Stage 3. If he fails all three, he is ejected from the myth and suffers a level of fatigue.

Stage 3

The Giving of the Black Blades. The HeroQuester faces the four heroes of the multiverse. One is a black-skinned man with white hair (Erekose); one is a white haired man with red eyes (Elric); the third is a gaunt man with one eye and one hand (Corum); and the fourth is a familiar-looking man with a black gem buried in his forehead (Hawkmoon). The HeroQuester must engage in an Influence test with each hero to convince them to accept one of the Black Blades and become a defender of the Wheel and the Staff. It matters not who the HeroQuester picks first; each opposes the HeroQuester with their Persistence. Erekose – Persistence 68%, Elric – Persistence 88%,

Corum – Persistence 58%, Hawkmoon Persistence 78%. The HeroQuester gains +5% to his Influence for each contest he wins. He must convince all four heroes to take the Black Blade offered to move onto Stage 4. If he fails, he is ejected from the quest and suffers two levels of fatigue.

Stage 4

The Singing of the Song. Here, the HeroQuester sings life into the world, changing all the destruction to growth. He must succeed in a Sing roll three times in succession and he must always improve on the previous roll. Thus, if a character has Sing at 60% and he rolls 45 for his first attempt, he must roll 44 or less for the second and so forth. If the HeroQuester completes the task completely, he is rewarded with a vision of a high tower, deep in a range of snow-choked mountains. The tower is protected by creatures of ice and rock and they guard the upper level of the tower where a massive wheel of gold, silver and obsidian turns slowly. This is a clue to the whereabouts of the Wheel – the exact location is left to the Games Master to decide.

Stage 5

The Losing of the Staff. The HeroQuester find himself amongst the ruins of a once mighty city, surrounded by ghosts. He supports himself upon the Runestaff and the ghosts attempt to snatch it away from him. He must succeed in an Athletics roll three times in succession and he must always improve on the previous roll. Thus, if a character has Athletics at 60% and he rolls 45 for his first attempt, he must roll 44 or less for the second and so forth. If the HeroQuester completes the task completely, the Runestaff is still snatched away from him by the ghosts but he sees that they carry it into the depths of the city and he will know the landmarks again if he ever sees them (the city is D'nark, in Amarehk). If he fails, he is ejected from the quest.

Stage 6

The Exile of Jemahias. The character is Jemahias. He wanders the streets of a ruined city a shattered man. With each step he grows younger until he is no more than a boy of seven or eight years old. The character must succeed in the following tests, in the following order: Perception (to understand the relationship between Wheel and Staff: they are the same); Lore (Runewheel) (to understand the power of the Wheel to keep the Multiverse in motion); Resilience (to have

the strength to fight to bring the Wheel and Staff back together again); and Evaluate (to make sense of the components of the HeroQuest). Each roll must always improve on the previous roll. Thus, if a character has Perception at 60% and he rolls 45 for his first attempt, he must roll 44 or less for the Lore (Runewheel) test – and still be successful in that test.

If the character succeeds in this final stage, he emerges from the HeroQuest with the knowledge of the location of the Runewheel and the Runestaff. However, both are protected and finding them will be true quests in their own right.

MagiC

The Brotherhood offers the following sorcery spells to its members:

- Cure Disease (3 Affinity Points)
- Enhance (DEX) (3 Affinity Points)

Obligations and Depicts

Members of the cult must form a Pact (Runewheel), dedicating at least 3 POW to the Pact. In return, the cult offers the following Gifts (which are not mandatory): Perfection, Endurance. It also has the Compulsions of Chaste and Chivalrous.

Member Obligations

Cult members are forbidden from:

- Displaying Cowardice
- Refusing to help the sick, the destitute and the desperate
- Refusing to aid the call of a fellow Germanian

Membership, Officers and Ranks

The cult's lay members are all those who live in Bakarak. It has no initiates; its active members are the equivalent of Runelords and Runepriests.

Initiates

Although there are none at present, the cult will take new members. Initiates must fulfil the following criteria:

- Make a Pact with at least 3 POW dedicated
- Succeed in five Skill tests: Athletics, Influence, Perception, Sing and any weapon skill

Initiates do not need to donate any income to the cult but they are expected to act as retainers to the Stahlek Wheel Dancers whenever commanded.

Stahlek Wheel Dancer (Runelord)

Dancers must actively quest to oppose Granbretan and discover more about the location of the Runewheel and the Runestaff. To qualify as a Dancer, one must:

- Increase one's Pact by a further 3 POW minimum
- Have the five cult skills and a Pact, of at least 80% each

Training

The cult offers training in Athletics, Influence, Lore (Runewheel) Perception, Sing, 1H Sword, 2H Sword, Shield, 1H Spear, 2H Spear.

Orlanth Dragonbreaker (Gloranthan Cult)

Orlanth Dragonbreaker opposes the draconisation of the Storm Tribe. It rejects the notion that Orlanth, the Storm God, made a truce with dragons and that he learned to speak their tongue. It propounds that all draconic influence leads inevitably to destruction and that all dragons and their kin are enemies. The cult actively fights against the EWF and is active in areas of Peloria, Ralios and Dragon Pass.



Its hero is Alakoring the Dragonbreaker. Born in Ralios (the region is unknown but possibly Lankst) he followed the traditional warrior Orlanthi path eventually becoming a Wind Lord and travelling western Glorantha to gain wisdom and knowledge. During these travels Alakoring found himself HeroQuesting with members of the small but ardent Orlanth Dragonlayer cult. Undertaking the Drathdaw HeroQuest, in which Orlanth slays the Stone Dragon who tries to mate with Kero Fin, Alakoring emerged to find he has assimilated Orlanth's dragon-killing power. When dragonewts attempted to kill him, he slew the entire nest, including their eggs: so was the name Dragonbreaker given to him.

Few hate the EWF with as much passion as Alakoring. The same hatred of dragons that flowed through young Orlanth flows through Alakoring. He knows that dragons are contemptuous of humans and gods and Alakoring hates contempt, believing in respect for all things, even things that are not understood. He is therefore driven by the same passions that drive Orlanth: to drive away tyranny, to live as a free man; to honour the family and hearth; and to visit terrible vengeance (but never contempt) on one's foes.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ Aims: Slay dragons and their kin, wherever they might be
- ☒ Aims: Oppose the defeat the Empire of Wyrms' Friends; free Dara Happa from the Golden Dragon
- ☒ Goal: Free Genertela from the influence of all things draconic

Modus Operandi

The cult has many members scattered across Genertela, pockets of EWF resistance created by Alakoring's incessant travels and recent events in Dara Happa that have seen the might of the EWF shaken and challenged. As the cult grows in size, so does its fervour; it welcomes new members from any Orlanthi faithful and considers any Old Ways Traditionalist who is prepared to renounce the heresies of Wyrmfriendism as an initiate.

Worship is always at the temple of Orlanth, although if such a temple or shrine does not exist, Dragonbreaker shrines are hastily erected – cairns of stone reflecting the Drathdaw myth, the cult's Runes carved into the largest base stones. Dragonbreaker proselytisers

wander through the clans who have converted to Wyrmfriendism demonstrating their magic and telling the stories of how Alakoring has gained Orlanth's dragon-killing magic and, in Dara Happa, led the fight against the Wyrms, slaying the Golden Dragon Emperor with his bare hands on the stairs of the infernal ziggurat.

Allies and Enemies

Any ardent, dragon-hating cult is considered an ally. In this regard, the cults of the Solar Pantheon are considered allies, even though the Solar and Storm pantheons traditionally have no liking for each other.

Enemies are all the draconic cults, particularly the Hunting and Waltzing Bands that scour the landscape seeking to split the tongues and minds of the Old Ways Traditionalists.

Possessions

None

Personalities

Alakoring Dragonbreaker (Hero level warrior): Alakoring arose in Ralios and roamed across the western lands bringing terror to the dragons and dragonkin. He undertook the Drathdaw HeroQuest and emerged from it with the ability to smite dragons of all types and sizes – a power greatly feared by the EWF enemy. In Peloria he came to the aid of Karvanyar, a Dara Happan who rose to challenge the Golden Dragon Emperor but could not do so alone.

But Karvanyar betrayed Alakoring through neglect and, when Alakoring went questing into Dragon Pass, he was captured and interred in a version of Hell so that his powers might not challenge the EWF's mighty rulers. Alakoring is imprisoned still, separated from his kin.

Karvanyar (Hero level warrior): A man of folly and bravery who rose to challenge the dragon in Dara Happa, he is destined to be emperor of the Sun Lands. In his naivety he betrayed Alakoring, leading to his friend's imprisonment in a draconic hell. Karvanyar atones for this and has begged the Dragonbreaker cult to help find and free their great hero. In this regard Karvanyar is still a friend and ally – even though his rash actions have led to tragedy.

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 17 (1,360 members)
 INF 12/8/2
 WTH 11
 MIL 15
 COM 11
 POP 6

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 14
 Initiative: 12
 Reputation: 10

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 21%, Combat 78%, Credit 27%,
 Diplomacy 37%, Favour 57%, Lore (Orlanth
 Dragonbreaker) 83%, Persistence 33%, Recruitment
 18%, Training 38%, Zeal 75%

MYTHS

How Orlanth Slew Sh'harkazeel (Resonance 75%, 3
 Affinity Points, Interactive)

*Sh'harkazeel – the Mover of Heavens – was the primal
 Cosmic Dragon and older than the gods. Sh'harkazeel
 beget itself and dwelt coiled around the world, with
 its tail in its mouth. The Mover of Heavens was so
 powerful that it refuted the divine laws of the Cosmic
 Court, confounded the machinations of Zzabur and
 devoured the spirits.*

*Orlanth and his new tribe of unruly gods disturbed the
 inner parts of Sh'harkazeel and troubled the Cosmic
 Dragon. Moving, running about and creating new
 things, they gave the Mover of Heavens reason for
 concern, for their clamour gave the Cosmic Dragon
 pain.*

*When Orlanth killed the Emperor, Sh'harkazeel made
 ready to devour the gods to silence their clamour.
 The Primal One prepared to attack. The coils of the
 Mover of Heavens enveloped the Sky Dome and when
 the Emperor's sons learned of this, they became numb
 with fear and fled.*

*Seeking a champion, the gods assembled at Orlanth's
 camp, full of fear. They came before the Slayer of Yelm*

*and asked him for his protection and aid. Without fear
 orlanth agreed to face Sh'harkazeel.*

*The gods rejoiced and acclaimed Orlanth as king of
 the gods. They bestowed upon Orlanth his regalia,
 his matchless weapons of war and the irresistible
 thunderbolt. Orlanth filled his body with breath for a
 year and a day, made ready his weapons, took up his
 sword with his right hand, set lightning before him,
 called forth the Six Winds and various hurricanes
 and mounted his irresistible chariot of storm with
 four steeds, whose names were Crisis and Rage; he
 placed Humakt on his right and the shield of Aran on
 his left, a nimbus of lightning around his head, garbed
 in armour; with a magic word clenched between his
 teeth, a healing plant pressed in his palm orlanth leapt
 into the heavens to face Sh'harkazeel.*

*A snorting world serpent, hissing, having thunder,
 lightning, mist and hail at his command, Sh'harkazeel,
 the Mover of Heavens without hands or feet, pronounced
 an incantation; and it terrified all three worlds.*

*But Orlanth was not terrified and the storm god let fly his
 breath that poured into the Primal Once's belly, so that
 its courage was taken from it and its jaws remained open
 wide. Great Orlanth let lose his irresistible thunderbolt
 and smote to death the firstborn of Dragons. Orlanth
 with his own and deadly weapons cut the Mover of
 Heavens into 49 pieces. The spine he cut into two and
 fashioned the Dragonspine mountains. Sh'harkazeel's
 blood flooded the seas and swore revenge. Its ribs
 were used to hold up the Sky Dome after the Mover of
 Heavens had attacked the sky.*

*Orlanth inhaled the last breath of the Primal One and
 with that breath learned the Four Sacred Breaths: the
 Calm Breath that clears the mind, the Storm Breath
 that gives one might, the Healing Breath that restores
 life and the No Breath that gives insight and wisdom.*

*Finally orlanth decapitated the corpse of Sh'harkazeel
 and, with his left hand, took its head as the source of
 his Power over Dragons. He fashioned his great hall
 out of its skull and, with his left hand, carries the
 Green Head of Sh'harkazeel to confound and terrify
 his foes. In the heavens orlanth's Ring is preceded
 by the Green Dragon's Head, the source of Orlanth's
 Dragon Power and his residence on the Other Side.*

Drathdaw Myth (Resonance 55%, 2 Affinity Points, Interactive)

Drathdaw the Stone Dragon came across Kero Fin bathing in the river one day and, overcome with lust, decided he would mate with her. Kero Fin did not see the dragon watching her from the bulrushes but felt burning eyes on her body and so rose to her full height so that he would not see her face. This caused Drathdaw much anguish, for, being of stone and therefore ugly, it wanted to see the face of true beauty. Drathdaw took to the wing and climbed almost as high as the sun but was still no closer to reaching Kero Fin's face.

The goddess turned her back on Drathdaw and encouraged the dragon's wrath. He seared the sky with flaming venom and bit chunks out of the earth, howling with rage. And this woke Orlanth, who had been resting in his hall. Orlanth mistook the sounds of the dragon for a half-dream and turned back to his sleep.

Drathdaw flung itself at Kero Fin, trying to mate with her. Kero Fin snatched at the dragon's wings and knocked scales from them, which formed the hills around her feet. Drathdaw pinned himself to her side and made to kiss her neck whilst its tail thrashed, creating the gorges at the foothill of the mountain. And now Kero Fin cried out to her son, because Drathdaw's coils were tight around her and the dragon was nearing its prize.

Hearing his mother's cry Orlanth took the weapon, Death and ran from his hall. He found Drathdaw and his mother wrapped in a rocky embrace, she struggling and the dragon raging.

First Orlanth sliced away the dragon's wings, so it could not escape. Next, he sliced off its tail so that Drathdaw could not cling to his mother. Next he sliced off its member, so that it could not reproduce and then, when Drathdaw turned to bite him, he sliced off its head, killing it stone dead. Orlanth collected the pieces of the dragon and assembled them into a cairn, which became the mountains. The skull he set into the ground so that the things of the dark places might find a useful home. He called to Barntar to plough the dragon's penis into the earth, so that it might make plants grow but not inflict itself upon goddesses.

And then he scolded his mother for taunting the dragon with her nakedness. Kero Fin was angry with

her son, even though he had saved her, because it was her choice when and where to bathe. Orlanth stormed back to his hall and Kero Fin turned her back on her son, becoming the form of the mountain that is known as Wintertop. And the two gods have not spoken since.

MagiC

Runes: Motion, Mastery, Dragon

The cult gained the Dragon Rune through Alakoring's completion of the Drathdaw HeroQuest; it powers their dragon breaking magic (Dragon Bane – see below).

Rune Spells: Coordination, Mobility, Thunder's Voice, Dragon-Bane (*RuneQuest Spellbook*).

Divine Magic: Attune (*RuneQuest Spellbook*), Cairn of Worship (*RuneQuest Spellbook*), Divine Strike (*RuneQuest Spellbook*).

Obligations and Deficits

Initiates must make a Pact with Orlanth, dedicating at least 3 POW to it. In return they gain a Gift from either: Divine Training, Perfection (STR or DEX) or Ward (Dragon Magic). They must also accept a Compulsion from either: Empire Builder, Forgo Shield or Perfectionist.

All members are compelled to view everyone associated with dragons or the EWF as their enemies. They are also compelled to find any information relating to the whereabouts and methods of Alakoring's imprisonment, so that he might be freed.

Membership, Officers and Ranks

Lay Members

Lay Members are any who hate dragons and are prepared to offer worship at the shrines of Orlanth or Orlanth Dragonbreaker.

Initiates

Initiates must succeed in the standard tests against five cult skills. They must also dedicate at least 3 POW to their Pact with Orlanth Dragonbreaker, receiving at least one Gift and one Compulsion.

Acolytes

Acolytes are the proselytisers of the cult, moving through Genertela spreading the news of Orlanth's

defeat of the dragons and the emergence of the heroes in Peloria. They pave the way for the Runelords. Acolytes must dedicate at least 5 POW to their Pact with Orlanth Dragonbreaker and accept a second Compulsion. They receive a further Gift in return.

Dragonbreaker (Runelord)

Dragonbreakers must have defeated at least one draconic being (dragonewt or dream dragon, preferably or an EWF agent) in combat. They must also dedicate at least 7 POW to their Pact with Orlanth Dragonbreaker. Cult skills must be 80% or higher. As the heroes of the cult, they are expected to find and return Alakoring to the world and to challenge all dragons wherever they are found.

The cult has no Rune priests.

TRAINING

The cult offers training in the following skills: *Acrobatics, Athletics, Persistence, Resilience, 1H Sword, 2H Sword, 1H Spear and 2H Spear.*

Fire Spirit Cult (Minor Generic Cult)

OBJECT OF VENERATION

The dancing goddess of devouring flames.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The spirit was a major fire spirit who danced in the wilds during the dream time. Worshipped as a minor goddess by the hunter-gatherer tribes, she was trapped between two hilltop monoliths when the darkness came and remained entombed until awoken by the new sun when she was awoken by heroes who inadvertently completed her quests and freed her.

The fire spirit's cult is local to the region, popular with the tribes living on the open plains of the sweeping wilderness. But the cult's vibrant, passionate nature is attracting a growing number of worshippers from regions bordering the wilds who have heard rumours of her power. She is linked with the Runes of Fire and Spirit and provides both Rune and Divine magic to her followers.

She dislikes all water divinities which are her antithesis and the elves whose forests she craves to consume.



CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 16 (1,190 members)
 INF 15/3/0 (no global reputation)
 WTH 5
 MIL 7
 COM 16
 POP 12

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 19
 Initiative: 16
 Reputation: 14

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 26%, Combat 23%, Credit 17%, Diplomacy 28%, Favour 28%, Lore (Cult of the Fire Spirit) 71%, Persistence 68%, Recruitment 67%, Training 32%, Zeal 52%

Myths

The cult has two core myths, both of which can be interacted with through dreams. The first is the Dancer which describes her journey across the wilderness, defeating and tricking all those who tried to impede her wild dance – incidentally burning down the thick forests which choked the land, opening it to the light of the sun. The second is her Imprisonment, when the rivers rose to flood her plains trapping the goddess upon a hill, whereupon a son of the elf-folk bound her to the monoliths standing there – a cautionary tale but with a twist, since hidden within her prison the goddess claims she was overlooked by the new sun’s herald, allowing her to now act directly on the mortal plane (3 Affinity Points).

Runes

The goddess’s Runes are the elemental Rune of Fire and the form Rune of Spirit (2 Affinity Points).

Magic and Powers

The cult of the Fire Spirit is vibrant with power and offers the following spells to her worshippers:

- ☒ Rune Spells – Firearrow, Fireblade, Firebolt (*RuneQuest Spellbook*), Ignite, Spirit Bane and Spirit Screen (6 Affinity Points).
- ☒ Divine Spells – Soulfire, Summon Salamander (6 Affinity Points).
- ☒ Soulfire: Duration 15, Magnitude 2 – This spell is unique to the goddess. It intensifies the strength of flames, making them burn brighter. For the duration any fire magic used by the recipient will have its damage doubled.
- ☒ Summon Salamander: Duration 15, Magnitude 1, Progressive – Summons a salamander of a size in cubic meters equal to three times the Magnitude of the spell.

Gifts and Compulsions

The goddess offers a special gift to those worshippers who achieve Runelord or Runepriest within her cult. She will grant the ward of Invulnerability to Fire Damage (costs 1 POW), in exchange for the Compulsion of ‘never bathe or swim’ (1 Affinity Point).

Geases

The goddess demands that worshippers emulate her mythic examples. The cult has the following geases:

- ☒ Spend an hour each day dancing
- ☒ Burn something every day
- ☒ Never trust an elf

Membership

Ranks within the cult follow the standard format. Allied spirits for Runelords and Runepriests take the form of bound salamanders.

Divine Intervention

Instead of the normal methods of Divine Intervention, the goddess prefers to incorporate directly within the body of her devotee, forcing the host’s spirit onto the spirit plane. The possession lasts 15 minutes after which the host’s spirit returns to his body but unaware what has happened in the meantime. The benefit of her manifestation is that the possessed worshipper becomes magically enhanced and if lower all cult skills are raised to 100%.

Fire Spirit’s Possession

- | | |
|-------|-----------|
| ☒ STR | As host’s |
| ☒ CON | As host’s |
| ☒ SIZ | As host’s |
| ☒ DEX | 21 |
| ☒ INT | 26 |
| ☒ POW | 29 |
| ☒ CHA | 25 |
- ☒ Rune Magic Known (Magnitude limited to invoker’s cult rank) – Countermagic, Demoralise, Detect (Enemy, Magic, Spirit), Dispel Magic, Firearrow, Fireblade, Firebolt, Ignite, Protection, Spirit Bane and Spirit Screen
 - ☒ Divine Magic Known (Magnitude limited to invoker’s cult rank) – One spell per Combat Action, limited to Absorption, Banishment (*RuneQuest Spellbook*), Dismiss Elemental*, Soulfire, Soul Sight, Spirit Block and Summon Salamander

**Dismiss Elemental: Instantaneous, Magnitude 1, Progressive – Disperses an elemental of a size in cubic meters equal to three times the Magnitude of the spell.*

In addition, the worshipper’s body takes on a female perspective and burns with a nimbus of blue flames which cause 1D6 damage to the weapon arm/limb of anyone striking the host (non-magical armour does not protect). At the end of the possession, the worshipper must roll a Persistence test. If failed, male hosts remain female!

TRAINING

The Cult offers training in the following skills which reflect the goddess's myths: *Acrobatics, Dance, Persistence, Resilience and Survival.*

The God Awakeners (Hawkmoon Fanatical Cult)

Concept

The God Awakeners are the last vestiges of an ancient group of Sorcerer-Scientists who travelled the blasted lands of Europe. They searched amongst the ruins of the Tragic Millennium seeking out the "Eternal Sleepers" the cryogenically preserved remains of ancient folk, seeking to awaken them and learn their secrets. The search has gone from scientific research to a religious pilgrimage. The God Awakeners no longer see those they awaken as mere humans but instead as sleeping gods, bearers of great wisdom. However the fate of those they awaken is not always an enviable one.

OBJECT OF VENERATION

The God Awakeners venerate the Sleeping Gods; these are the cryogenically frozen remains of ancient humans. Initially their founders would have awoken the sleepers and assisted them in adapting to the new and shattered world around them. They acquired knowledge from these ancients and gave them purpose. Many of the secrets known to Sorcerer-Scientists across Europe were acquired in this way. Over time the group changed its nature and philosophy, the cult rarely awakens the sleepers now, instead it is the machines that allow them to sleep that have become the focus for worship, mechanical sepulchres, filled with potential secrets, placed upon the world by the Ancients. Those that are awoken are kept cloistered, hidden from prying eyes, worshipped as living saints, often placed in lofty towers or dark catacombs to prevent their secrets escaping to the outside world.

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

The initial story of the God Awakeners is tied to the Duke of Lyonesse. Over four hundred years ago Duke Murgan was a great sorcerer. On one occasion he was presented with the fabled Head of Casmir, an ancient artefact, which Murgan realised, was in fact a living head which slumbered in an icy dream. He used his magic to awaken the head and conversed with

it deeply. The Head of Casmir revealed the secrets of its icy sleep and told Duke Murgan where many such sleepers could be found. When the first Ancient was uncovered in Tunis and was returned to life, Duke Murgan declared the ancients to be "Sleeping Gods of Knowledge". The Institute of Awakeners was founded and sent forth to locate the sleeping Ancients. The Duke and his Coven extracted great secrets from the Sleepers. These were jealously guarded but the courts of Europe were brutal in their inquisitiveness, the treasury of Lyonesse was raided and the Duke slain by a Burgundian assassin's blade. The Awakeners were forced to flee, seeking sanctuary in the catacombs of K'Nak which sprawled beneath the Western Seas and were unknown to outsiders. Without a duke or its finest sorcerers the Dukedom of Lyonesse was annexed by the King of Burgundy.

For the next hundred years the Awakeners became a legend and many sought their secrets, they became known as the God Awakeners and were imbued with many mystical powers. Many believed they had travelled to another world or time. However at the coronation of King Drunais of Burgundy a group of sorcerers appeared, they carried amongst them a great sarcophagus of metal. To the horror of the gathered nobles they revealed within the preserved body of an angel, who then awoke and declared that he would destroy Burgundy unless Lyonesse was once again freed from tyranny and that he would share his secrets with the true Duke of Lyonesse. The enraged King Drunais's courtiers were shocked when their king was slain on the spot by the sorcerers who then knelt before a lesser nobleman of unknown blood. That nobleman was Allas, who in time became Duke Allas founder of the modern line of Lyonesse, who Burgundians claim is not of noble blood or even human. The secrets the Awakeners bestowed upon Allas allowed him to easily defend his throne and the wealth of Lyonesse grew. The Awakeners it would seem were composed of the original sorcerers who had served Duke Murgan, their lives greatly extended, they were lead by the Angel who was known as Jean-Pryce, who had once served as the court sorcerer to the legendary King Lubke. He proclaimed himself to be a prophet of the Gods and with the aid of Duke Allas he began to seek out more Sleepers across Europe. The sleepers were declared demi-gods and their worship was encouraged throughout the kingdom. With each Eternal Sleeper that was discovered the power of Jean-Pryce and the

Ducal House Lyonesse grew. Those sleepers that were awoken were treated as living saints but were rarely seen by the faithful, for they are kept in lofty towers or ancient catacombs and jealously guarded. Those that do not awaken are place within the Cathedral still within their sleep chambers, their names recorded in the cult's annals.

The fate of the cult is tied directly to that of the Ducal House of Lyonesse, the search for Sleepers is costly and many of those that are found are dead. However each Sleeper's ancient wisdom is of such great benefit that the king is willing to give the cult anything that it desires. Under the threat of the Dark Empire of Granbretan the cult has increased its defences by tenfold, however Johan insists that there are spies and traitors everywhere and demands the present Duke expel all foreigners from Lyonesse. Johan is seeking to have the ancients removed from Lyonesse for their own safety, perhaps beyond this world itself. The cult is not huge but has many adherents in the Ducal courts and amongst the nobles and sorcerers of Lyonesse.

Myths (Resonance 50%)

The Head of Casmir, it is held, was the mouthpiece of the gods, sent to earth to be found by the faithful. The location of the head is lost but greatly desired by the members of the cult. Some believe that the soul of Duke Murgan is bound within the Head now, he was a potent sorcerer who learned deep secrets, not only of how to revive the Eternal Sleeper but also how to raise the dead. However Johan has declared this to be a heresy and denies the powers of the Murgan, claiming that the worship of the Resurrecting Duke is against the tenets of the faith. With each Eternal Sleeper that is found a new demi-god is added to the pantheon of the God Awakeners. Their names and deeds are documented and read aloud to the congregation but their secrets are only bestowed to the Priesthood. Johan is revered as a living saint and the accounts of his heroism against the monstrous Grotewolf and his breaking of the Iron Curtain with his mighty sword called Skorpion are celebrated in his honour. The greatest myth of the Awakeners is the stories of the Crypts of Zygon, where a thousand holy sorcerer-warriors sleep in an eternal slumber, at their sides stand their mounts. Each of these heroes is equipped with golden armour and weapons beyond the ken of the modern man. When they are found they shall unite with King of Lyonesse and shall leap to defend the country from its enemies,

leading it to glory and making it the greatest kingdom in all of Europe. Johan promotes this belief and it has become extremely strong since the coming of war to Europe.

The Myth of the Crypts of Zygon (2 Affinity Points)

The exact details of the myth seem to change with each telling but Jean-Pryce insists that each fact is true and is a cryptic clue to the secret location of the Crypts of Zygon and the sleeping Sorcerer-Warriors. The key protagonist in the legend is Grotewolf, who rode upon Urssa a colossal war bear and could form walls of iron with a gesture, killing armies, destroying families and slicing even countries in half. Under the leadership of King Nato-Un, the World Leader and a coven of sorcerers summoned down angels from heaven to destroy Grotewolf. The army was victorious but tainted with blood and could not return to Heaven and so instead they were place in a great tomb and sent into a deep sleep so that their dreams could be with God. The army still sleeps, awaiting the day when Europe is threatened and they shall awake and under the leadership of Jean-Pryce.

Mythic Resonance: 56%

If the ritual of Jean-Pryce goes to plan, the myth will become interactive allowing him to travel back and interact with the past and locate the exact location of his warrior brethren.

Awaken Ancient Sleeper (3 Affinity Points)

Casting Time 1 week, Resist (Roll 1D100 to determine age and condition of the Sleep Sarcophagus and ease of awakening), Requires Laboratory.

This spell must be cast upon a single Sleep Sarcophagus, the name given to the strange metal capsules in which the Ancient Sleepers are discovered. The player must match their skill with the spell against a random 1D100 roll which represents the age, condition of the capsule and status of the occupant). If successful the occupant is revived with their memories fully intact. A fumble kills the occupant, a fail revives the occupant but they have lost most of their skills and memories, on a critical the occupant is restored and any ailments are healed. In some cases dependant on the GM's whim this also gives the occupant additional abilities such as longevity and disease resistance. Upon awakening the occupant is somewhat delusional,

this last for 1D4 hours. During this state the God Awakeners indoctrinate the awakened Sleeper to their new divine role.

The Mists of Lyonesse (4 Affinity Points)

The lands of Lyonesse are often reported by outsiders to be shrouded by strange shadowy mists that embroil the country, obscuring roads and making travel difficult, especially for invading forces. The mist is a potent magic controlled by the Duke of Lyonesse but it was initially an ancient secret discovered by the God Awakeners and is their greatest gift to their homeland. True inhabitants of Lyonesse are not impeded by this mist and do not suffer any penalty in battle, a great asset to the lands limited number of knights. The secret of the mists creation is amongst the most guarded myths of the cult. Locals say that the mist is created by the breath of the Awakened Saints.

This counts as both a Myth and an Enchantment.

Mythic Resonance 72%

MagiC and POWERS

The cult has access to a vast array of Sorcery-Science, any spell in the *Hawkmoon Roleplaying Game* can be learnt by the priests of the cult and on occasions these secrets are taught to outsiders at extortionate costs but only at the behest of Jean-Pryce. The cult continues to seek new spells and occasionally an Ancient is located with unique spells or secrets. The cult's followers can gain magical healing and aid against many diseases from the priesthood but pay dearly to do so. Gifts of sorcerous artefacts such as Flamelances, Gliding Membranes and Healing Scarabs are on occasions loaned to those who aid the search for sleeping Ancients. The most important spell of the cult is the Awaken Ancient Sleeper spell, which allows them to break the icy grip of eternal sleep to glean new secrets.

The Myths of the God Awakeners are potent dreams for the cultist to follow, the desire to find greater information about the past and unlock its secrets. Jean-Pryce is at the moment is preparing a great ritual magic to send himself and some of his closest followers back through the streams of time to locate more caches of technology. The myth of the Crypts of Zygon drives Jean-Pryce with desperation and has directed his followers to focus upon in their prayers.

Membership and Ranks

The Cult of the God Awakeners has limited scope, it is found primarily in Lyonesse, with a few scattered explorers initiated into the cult. There are around 400 members in total.

Lay Members

The majority of the cult's followers have only lay membership, they are typically the knights, servants and lesser sons of the noble houses of Lyonesse who seek to use the cult's position in court to gain notoriety and perhaps access to limited amounts of sorcery. There is also a substantial proportion of those who follow the tenets of the faith in the order, who do so to find employment as seekers of the Eternal Sleepers. The adventurers trade the caches of sorcery they find with the Cult but rarely locate the Sleepers, as they are never privy to the inner secrets of the cult. Most lay members actually place sacrifices and pray before the Sleep Chambers within the cathedral seeing them as the source of the cult's power, many also keep small versions of these chambers in their homes made from wood, clay or stone into which they place offerings. Small idols of the living Ancients are also found in the homes of Lyonesse.

Requirements: Candidates must have at least a basic understanding of the beliefs of the cult and make a small donation of twenty silvers. Lay members may occasionally be chosen for those who are not of Lyonesse blood but they must swear fealty to the Duke and to Jean-Pryce.

Duties: There are very few duties required from lay members – they will be expected to attend celebrations on special Holy Days, such as the Festival of Awakening and the Remembrance of the Lost Awakeners but unless they are aiming to rise in the ranks of the cult, they will not even be expected to attend regular ceremonies.

Benefits: The character will automatically be able to find tutors for the skills the cult teaches. They must still pay the normal rates for these services. Sorcery will not be taught to lay members however.

Venerators of the Awakened (Initiates)

Only the elite few, such as the dedicated Knights of Lyonesse, the Duke and his nobles and the Penitent Searchers of the Ancients are inclined to become initiates of the God Awakeners. Most people are content to benefit from their secrets.

Requirements: Candidates will be tested to determine their knowledge of the cult, their sincerity for joining and even their current reputation. The character must succeed in five skill tests of the cult skills of Lore (World), Lore (Any Sorcery Spell), Perception, Persistence and Lore (History) and enter into a Pact with the Jean-Pryce and the Awakened Ancients, dedicating POW in the process. This is done via the aid of a strange machine called the Veneration Coupler. As a result, he gains the Pact skill and is eligible to learn any sorcery spell listed in the *Hawkmooon* Sorcery Section (not the *Granbretan* book). In addition, he must also make a donation of at least 50 silvers. Every additional 50 silvers donated increases the strength of the Pact skill by 1%.

Duties: Initiates are expected to donate 10% of all income to the cult and attend services at their place of worship at least one day every two weeks. They must also attend all ceremonies during Holy Days. The primary duty of all initiates is to aid in the quest to find more Eternal Sleepers and to awaken them. Initiates are also expected to put their life at risk to defend Lyonesse, Jean-Pryce and the Duke of Lyonesse.

Benefits: Access to skill training via the cult tutors and access to sorcery magic that the cult has available. The initiate may gain limited entrance to the Awakener's laboratory beneath the Primal House and thus access its ancient library and secrets. The cult will loan equipment to Initiates such as flamelances and healing scarabs for any mission they undertake.

God Awakeners (Priest).

There are normally between five and ten priest of the cult at any time. They are leaders amongst the cult, the disciples of Jean-Pryce, dedicated to his mission. They know the inner secrets of the cult and have access to laboratories, libraries, guards and equipment as they wish. All are accomplished sorcerers. The cult has no Acolytes.

Requirements: Candidates must have been an initiate of the cult for at least two years and must have five sorcery spells, including the cult spell of Awaken Ancient Sleeper and a Pact of at least 75%.

Duties: God Awakeners are expected to donate 50% of all income to the cult and lead services at the cathedral every day of the week, though one day a week may be left for his own time at his option. They must act as administrators of their place of worship, monitoring both tithes and members. The God Awakeners remain for most of their lives in the Cathedral underworld researching the cult secrets, unless they are accompanying a mission to locate an Ancient Sleeper.

Benefits: Priests may learn the cult skills for free and learn any of the core sorcery spells for half price. Moreover, God Awakeners have the resources of their entire congregation at their disposal though they are advised not to abuse the trust of the cult's members. They can also access any technology that the cult possesses at the time and gain free audience with Jean-Pryce.

PERSONALITIES

Jean-Pryce (Hero Level Sorcerer 4 Affinity Points): Pryce is dark haired, powerfully built with a strange sheen to his skin. He regenerates from wounds, is immune to poison and disease. Those that know him say that he does not age. He wears ancient armour of an unknown material under robes of flowing silver. He does not venture forth from his mist-shrouded cathedral. He is coldly intelligent and those that have met him have described him as fearsome and yet he does not desire anything beyond his cult. His accent is strange and he talks of things long past. He is driven by one obsession, locating the crypts of Zygon. He is visited monthly by the Duke, where Jean-Pryce teaches the nobleman in sorcery and science. Pryce is no angel, he was a member of a regiment of super-warriors, created by the sorcerer Malin during the Tragic Millennium wars. He usurped the original God Awakeners for his own purposes when they awoke him.



Jean-Pryce is not the hero that he portrays, he was actually part of an ancient project to produce super warriors to fight against Asiacaommunista and its allies. He is effectively immortal but what many do not know is that he has the ability to drain lifeforce from the Awakened, stealing their memories and regenerating his cells. This has been the fate of many of those that have passed before. He has been draining Mergania in secret. If Jean-Pryce uncovers the Crypts of Zygon then he will gain nearly a thousand superhuman and nearly immortal warriors. Strangely Jean-Pryce's draining power does not work on modern Tragic Europe humans.

The Awakened Ancients (2 Affinity Points): There are at present thirteen ancients alive at the moment, their ages range from the infant prophet Alabarian who speaks in babbling tongues of strange worlds to the decrepit sorceress Mergania, who choose to lie within her Sleep Sarcophagus and sing ancient hymns to a crowd of intrigued Lyonesse sorcerers who seek to glean knowledge from her music. Each of the Ancients is protected by at least four knights of Lyonesse, who are not only skilled in the blade but also know sufficient sorcery to make them feared on the battlefield.

The Ancients are fragile, in their own times they were ordinary folk, not mighty heroes; their ancient knowledge is their greatest gift to the modern inhabitants of Tragic Europe. Only Alabaria and Mergania possess truly notable skills, making them Seasoned characters, with high skills in Sorcery-Science, not few other worthwhile abilities.

The Cathedral of the God Awakeners and other holdings

This ancient mist-shrouded cathedral has existed for thousands of years, known by many as the Primal Hall it is a glittering white edifice of marble. The great vaulted hall is decorated with images of all the awakened Ancients that have been found, beautifully detailed in ruby, gold, ivory and turquoise. Twenty three Sleep Chambers each contain the desiccated remains of Ancients, who have passed from this world to lie beneath the crystalline floor of the building. The cathedral is guarded by twenty knights, each equipped with flamelances and other secrets of sorcery-science. The building is intended to impress but it is not the functional heart of the cult. Far beneath the Primal Hall through sorcery warded doors and chambers guarded by inhuman servants lies the laboratory of the God Awakeners, with their studies, libraries, thinking machines and god boxes. It is here that Jean-Pryce is most often encountered and the Awakened Ancients are enshrined.

There are few other buildings associated with the cult, even in Lyonesse, there are several small shrines to favoured Ancients within Noblemen's halls and there is an institute of science within the city which is funded by the cult. The most notable exception to this are recruiting halls situated within Parye and Berlin, which masquerade as a guilds for scouts and explorers but in fact are secretly used to steal the knowledge of the well travelled and adventurous to locate new sites where Ancients may lie. At any one time the cult may be exploring as many as ten sites looking for Ancients, these are usually well defended by knights of Lyonesse disguised as mercenaries.

The most secret location of the cult is the caverns of K'Nak these lie to the Northwest in Brittany, beneath the waves of the Gulf of Morbihan. They are sealed with sorcery but worse they are flooded with poisonous air, which most humans could never tolerate and can

mutate horrifically. The site still contains many secrets but Jean-Pryce, the final holder of the sites exact location, would never give up this knowledge.

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 11
INF 17/6/2 (Predominantly the social elite of Lyonesse)
WTH 17
MIL 8
COM 10
POP 4

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 15
Initiative: 11
Reputation: 9

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 34%, Combat, 39% (Knights of Lyonesse), Credit 31%, Diplomacy 44%, Espionage 47%, Favour 54%, Indoctrination 30%, Lore (God Awakeners) 53%, Persistence 85%, Recruitment 37%, Training 61%, Technology (Sorcery-Science) 87%

OBLIGATIONS AND DEFICITS

- To protect the secrets of the Awakened from outsiders.
- To defend the House of Lyonesse.
- Respect the leadership of Jean-Pryce, for he is an Angel incarnate. Abide by his decisions and do his bidding when requested, without question.
- To seek out the whereabouts of the Ancient Sleepers and pass that information to the cult above all others.
- To venerate the Awakened Saints without question.
- Pay cult tithes on time without question.
- Respect the priests of the cult, abide by their decisions and do their bidding when requested.
- Do not discuss the nature of the cult or its secrets with outsiders on pain of death.
- Report all discrepancies and transgressions to the priesthood.
- Attend the weekly services of the cult.
- Repay any guild loans by the agreed time and in full.

TRAINING

Standard costs for training in the cult skills of Lore (World), Lore (History), Perception and Persistence are available to lay members with reduced cost for members of higher ranks. The cult has access to a vast array of sorcery spells, virtually every one in the *Hawkmoon the Roleplaying Game*, however if the Games Master wants to restrict this, then it is suggested that there is only a 55% chance (rolled) that any spell can be learned. These are only taught to initiate and higher in the cult.

The Moon Goddess (Civilised, Generic Cult)

The Moon Goddess is revered as the partner of the sun god and the mother of the earth god. Her single eye shines balefully down on her creation from the veil of the night-sky, where she was imprisoned by the Devil, jealous at her relationship with his old enemy, the Sun King.

Her followers are from either sex but she is served by priestesses who conduct their ceremonies by moonlight at the wax and the wane. She symbolises stability, motherhood and good fortune and, at each ceremony, the priestesses offer prayers in the hope that she will be released from her prison and remain in the sky throughout both day and night.

AIMS AND GOALS

Worship the Moon Goddess; revere her and seek her freedom from the Devil's night-time chains.

MODUS OPERANDI

The cult has many shrines and one, major cathedral. Ceremonies are conducted at night, with the high holy day being for the new waxing. The ceremony for the waning is a more sorrowful affair, as the cult believes that the Devil is pulling the goddess back into her cell, denying her full sight of her husband and child. This is a charitable, compassionate cult that appeals to women more than men but attracts male worshippers nonetheless. Many sailors, who use the moon to steer by, are followers of the cult.

Allies and Enemies

Cult of the Sun King (ally)
 Cult of the Earth Mother (ally)
 Devil Worshipers (enemies)

Possessions

The central Lunar Cathedral occupies the highest hill of the city. Its single, vast spire is open-roofed and, at its base, mirrors capture and reflect the light of the moon into the central worship chamber, filling it with glorious, silvery light.

Shrines are simple, rooftop affairs; a wooden frame from which hangs a silvery orb or stone (pearl, in the case of wealthier shrines) where people can pay their private respects. As the cult believes the goddess is imprisoned, it is customary to reserve a portion of each meal, which is left at the shrine for the goddess to eat when the demons that guard her are not looking.

Personalities

Moon Daughter Alandrea, High Priestess (Master level priestess): In a life dedicated to the service of the gods, she has seen miracles and divine wrath and is humbled by both. But she is devout and has little time for those who stray from the lunar path or refuse to believe. Her life is prayer and dedication. She can relate all actions to the holy books and views the behaviour around her the way her goddess would view it. If she could transcend the mundane, she would do so and sit with her goddess and learn the secrets of the universe in serene splendour. Tied to the mundane world she must be patient with it although it tries her patience daily. This is why she drinks more wine than she should and why she is short tempered with the blinkered faithful who cannot grasp the truth of the goddess's divine teachings.

STR 8, CON 6, DEX 8, SIZ 10, INT 10, POW 18, CHA 16

Combat Actions 2, Damage Modifier -1D2, Strike Rank 9, Magic Points 6 (12 dedicated POW to Pact), Move 4m

Acrobatics 14%%, Athletics 24%%, Boating 20%%, Dodge 43%, Driving 33%, Evaluate 31%, First Aid 24%, Influence 66%, Lore (Animal) 17%, Lore (Plant)

19%, Lore (World) 59%, Perception 56%, Persistence 38%, Resilience 41%, Riding 32%, Sing 31%, Sleight 51%, Stealth 31%, Throwing 47%, Unarmed 24%

Advanced Skills

Lore (Moon Goddess Theology) 104%, Runecasting (Fertility) 80%

Pact: Moon Goddess (12 Dedicated POW) 70%

Gift: Divine Training, Youth

Compulsion: Perfectionist.

Divine Magic Spells: Consecrate, Heal Body

Shanoula Moon-Driven, Mood Goddess Champion

(Runelord): Shanoula is the great hero of the Moon Goddess's cult; a questing champion who has dedicated her life to stealing the Keys of the Night from the Devil and freeing her goddess. A young, brave woman who has vowed to remain pure until the goddess is free, she scours the world for those who worship the Devil and challenges them, taking secrets from each victory that lead her closer to the infernal place where



the golden key is hidden. She wanders the earth in her bright, silver armour, her sickle-shaped sword in hand and round, moon-blessed shield on her arm. A fearsome foe but a passionate friend, she is, like the moon, permanent and melancholy.

STR 17, CON 16, DEX 13, SIZ 10, INT 10, POW 15, CHA 15

Combat Actions 3, Damage Modifier +1D4, Strike Rank 12, Magic Points 5 (10 dedicated to Pact), Move 4m

Armour: Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty (worn only when in battle)

Acrobatics 16%, Athletics 35%, Boating 32%, Dodge 85%, Driving 74%, Evaluate 33%, First Aid 64%, Influence 75%, Lore (Animal) 48%, Lore (Plant) 26%, Lore (World) 83%, Perception 65%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 49%, Riding 89%, Sing 61%, Sleight 28%, Stealth 50%, Throwing 46%, Unarmed 76%

Advanced Skills

Artistic Expression (Poetry) 47%, Lore (Chivalry) 85%, Lore (Moon Goddess) 103% oratory 96%

Pact: Moon Goddess (10 Dedicated POW) 70%
Gift: Divine Training, Eternal Life (2 POW)
Compulsion: Obsessively pursue the Key of the Night; Cannot commit to relationships but destined to fall in love with a hero of the Sun God.

Combat Skills

Broadsword 82%, Lance 73% Shield 81%

Runecasting (Moon) 80% – Lunar Boon (*RuneQuest Spellbook*)

Divine Magic: Fateful Omen, Favour, Magnify (all *RuneQuest Spellbook*)

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 14 (960 members)
INF 16/12/10
WTH 17
MIL 9
COM 9
POP 16

ATTRIBUTES

Affinities: 16
Initiative: 13
Reputation: 12

CAPABILITIES

Bureaucracy 44%, Combat 42%, Credit 67%, Diplomacy 84%, Favour 77%, Lore (Moon Goddess) 83%, Persistence 53%, Recruitment 55%, Training 44%, Zeal 29%

MYTHS

The Imprisonment of the Moon (3 Affinity Points, Resonance 64%, Interactive)

In the beginning was the Moon and the Sun. Though far apart, they came together each year where they embraced, turning each other to black but sheathed in gold. From the first union came the stars; from the next came the earth and so was the universe made.

The Devil watched the Moon and the Sun and was jealous of their love. All he knew was darkness and he hated the brilliance of light they created when they made love. One day, the Devil tricked the Sun into failing to rise and, when the Moon came to look for her lover, he caught her in a net made of nightfall. He begged her to be his lover and showed her how they could make new worlds together but she refused, being faithful to her husband, the Sun.

The Devil was furious and told her that the Sun would never rise but First Hero had freed the Sun King and the Devil could see his light breaking on the horizon. So he made a fortress of blackness and threw the Moon within it; then he took the key and buried it deep in Hell, protected by demons, so that the Moon would forever be his to gaze upon and never the Sun's.

So the Moon and Sun can never appear in the sky together. The Sun travels through the sky in search of her and she appears nightly, as he vanishes over the horizon, calling his name. Until they are reunited and appear in the sky together, the world shall never know peace and the Devil shall always have dominion.

Only the Golden Key which locked the Moon in the Fortress of the Night can free her; all the scriptures speak of a hero who shall travel into Hell and battle the Devil for it and bring new hope to this old and battered world.

Magical

Runes: Moon, Fertility, Truth (3 Affinity Points)

Rune Spells: Lunar Boon (*RuneQuest Spellbook*) up to Magnitude 4

Divine Magic: Fateful Omen, Favour, Magnify (all *RuneQuest Spellbook*)

Obligations and Deficits

Initiates and above must make a Pact (Moon Goddess) although there is no minimum POW dedication. Cult Gifts are: Perfection, Eternal Life, Second Life, Youth and Divine Training.

Cult Compulsions are: Perfectionist, Chivalrous, Claustrophobia, Dedicated Lover and Compassionate

Members must attend all holy day ceremonies, either at the cathedral or a private shrine.

Membership and Ranks

Lay Members

Lay Members are those who simply pay their respects to the Moon Goddess and attend the ceremonies; they have no other obligations.

Initiates

Requirements: Initiates must succeed in three skill tests of cult skills and enter into a Pact with the Moon Goddess, dedicating 1 POW. All Initiates must accept 1 Gift and 1 Compulsion.

Initiates can be male or female.

Duties: Initiates are expected to donate 10% of all income to the cult and attend services at a shrine or the Lunar cathedral. They must also attend all ceremonies during Holy Days.

Benefits: Access to cult Rune spells up to a Magnitude of 4. Initiates pay half the normal price for being taught both these spells and any cult skills. Additionally, Initiates may learn cult Divine spells up to a maximum Magnitude of 2.

Acolytes

Candidates must be female and have been an initiate of the cult for at least two years; they must have at

least four cult skills of at least 50% and a Pact of at least 50%. A gift must be made to the cult of at least 1,000 silvers.

Duties: Acolytes are expected to donate 25% of all income to the cult and attend services at a shrine or cathedral at least one day every week. They must also attend all ceremonies during Holy Days.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by initiates, acolytes will have automatic access to cult Rune spells up to a Magnitude of 6. Acolytes pay half the normal price for being taught both these spells and any cult skills. Additionally, Acolytes may learn cult Divine spells up to a maximum Magnitude of 4.

Acolytes may also call for Divine Intervention. All acolytes must accept 1 Gift and 1 Compulsion.

Runepriests

Requirements: Candidates must be female and must have been an acolyte of the cult for at least two years; they must have at least five cult skills and a Pact of at least 75%.

Duties: Runepriests are expected to donate 50% of all income to the cult and lead services at a shrine or the cathedral every day of the week, though one day a week may be left for his own time at his option.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by acolytes, Runepriests have no limit on the Magnitude of cult Rune and Divine spells. Cult skills are learnt for free while cult spells are learnt at half the usual cost.

All Runepriests must accept 1 Gift and 1 Compulsion.

Runelords

Requirements: Candidates must have been an acolyte of the cult for at least three years and must have at least five cult skills and a Pact of at least 80%.

Duties: Runelords are expected to donate 50% of all income to the cult and spend a similar proportion of their time pursuing cult duties – chiefly the search for the Golden Key.

Benefits: As well as all the benefits enjoyed by acolytes, Runelords may also learn cult Rune spells

up to a Magnitude of 8 and cult Divine spells of up to Magnitude 6.

Cult skills are learnt for free while cult spells are learnt at half the usual cost. All Runelords must accept 1 Gift and 1 Compulsion.

TRAINING

The cult offers training in: *Lore (Moon Goddess), Lore (World), Perception, Resilience, Riding, 1H Sword, Shield.*

Order of the Knights of Saint Talor, the Laughing Warrior (Gloranthan Malkioni Hero Cult)

Talor was once a knight in the service of the Fronelan kingdom of Akem. A warrior of profound bravery but of a persistently optimistic persuasion, he was known as the Laughing Warrior for his good nature and tendency to display his mirth even in the face of his enemies.

The Knights of Saint Talor are charged to go forth in the world and suppress the foes of religion. Their primary purpose is to destroy chaotic temples and other horrors which encroach on the world with darkness but they have historically been equally happy fighting other foes, including heretical cults, theists and the enemies of the Invisible God. They are unwilling to sully their weapons with bandits or other ignoble foes and thus reserve their wrath for worthy opponents. Taloran knights are always armed and armoured with the best the Order can provide and they would prefer to field fewer knights than to field a knight who was not properly armed.

Aims and Goals

- ☒ To defend the Malkioni True Faith
- ☒ To Slay Chaos and the agents of Gbaji
- ☒ To act with chivalry and honour in every respect

Modus Operandi

A martial cult, it has a set of central beliefs based on what is known of Talor's life and character. The central beliefs are:

- ☒ The belief in righteous war and conquest
- ☒ The belief in abiding love
- ☒ The belief in singular purpose
- ☒ The belief in duty and honour
- ☒ The belief in personal regret

On these, all cultists are agreed and every cultist tries to emulate Talor's devotion to each belief, usually taking one or two that are especially resonant and placing them at the forefront of their personal actions.

This is truly a hero cult and even the EWF, so scornful of the saints of the Invisible God, recognises that Talor was a mighty and noble hero and deserved that honour. Thus, the cult of Saint Talor attracts those who see him as an enemy of Chaos. As a hero cult, Talor appeals to warriors, would-be-warriors and would-be-heroes. His veneration is strong in the Fronelan kingdoms of Loskalm, Junora and along the Janube Valley. He is also a popular figure in Carmania and regarded as an ancestor hero.

The structure of the cult lacks any form of Rune Priest rank; veneration of Talor is unfettered by ritual and not marked by holy days or ceremonies of worship. Lay membership requires nothing more than remembering Talor and ascribing to the core beliefs of the faith.

Allies and Enemies

Other Malkioni Warrior Cults (allies)
Chaos Cults, EWF Cults, Heretics and Blasphemers (enemies)

Possessions

Every Fronelan Hrestoli and Malkioni cathedral has a shrine to Saint Talor and members of the order erect a shrine at any place where they have vanquished an enemy. Otherwise, the most prized possessions of the order are the weapons and armour of the knights – that and persistent good humour.

PERSONALITIES

Sir Huwayn the Smiling, Knight of Northpoint (Hero Level Warrior): The handsome and optimistic knight of Northpoint is a famed hero of Saint Talor's cult throughout Loskalm. A righter of wrongs, defender of the weak and shining example of Saint Talor's irrepressible spirit made flesh. Sir Huwayn is, nevertheless, troubled by patterns. He sees shapes, patterns and trends in all things and is convinced

that the world is a formula; something that, if deeply studied and understood, will reveal the universal truths of the invisible god to those who are prepared to understand.



STR 17, CON 18, DEX 17, SIZ 16, INT 18, POW 17, CHA 16

Combat Actions 3, Damage Modifier +1D4, Strike Rank 17, Magic Points 9 (8 dedicated to Pact), Move 4m

Armour: Plate 6 points. -42% skill penalty

Acrobatics 76%, Athletics 45%, Dodge 78%, Lore (Order of St Talor) 107%, Persistence 86%, Resilience 125%, Riding 56%, Survival 82%, Tracking 85%

Pact: Saint Talor 87%

Gifts: Divine Training (2 skills)

Compulsions: Never Surrender; obsessed with the shapes and geometries of things, seeking to study and understand every nuance and every angle.

Combat Skills

Broadsword 129%, Shortsword 108%, Shield 114%, Long Bow 106%

Runecasting: (Infinity) 82% – Bladesharp, Light, Warmth, Multimissile

Sorcery Spells: Damage Resistance 64%, Fly 80%, Smother 96%, Spell Resistance 110%, Spirit Resistance 74%

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZ 10 (160 members)
 INF 10/10/3
 WTH 9
 MIL 17
 COM 11
 POP 11

ΑΤΤΡΙΒΥΤΕΣ

Affinities: 7
 Initiative: 11
 Reputation: 10

Capαδιδιτιες

Bureaucracy 21%, Combat 31%, Credit 20%, Diplomacy 25%, Favour 67%, Lore (St Talor) 93%, Persistence 41%, Recruitment 25%, Training 75%, Warfare 80%, Zeal 30%

Myths

The Defeat of Varganathar (Resonance 65%, 1 Affinity Point)

Sir Talor made his name in the battle against Varganathar, who brought his barbarian hordes against Akem. Known as the Unconquerable Knight, Varganathar had vanquished all before him and he encircled the cities of Akem with an impenetrable ring of iron and bronze, challenging the greatest warriors to pit themselves against him. The faithful of Malkion stepped forward to the challenge, brave men all, only to be felled with his massive axe of enchanted iron. Finally, chuckling to himself, Sir Talor rode out, stripped to the waist and ready to die in defence of Akem, his King, his Queen and his Prophet.

Sir Talor and Varganathar faced each other over a field of blood. Varganathar issued threats and insults

and Talor treated each as a joke, laughing almost to the point of collapse. Varganathar took this moment to strike the unarmoured warrior but found each blow countered by Talor's sword and shield, a grin and a chuckle accompanying each ring of blade on blade. A full day and a night the battle raged, neither warrior besting the other. Finally, at the dawn of the second day, Sir Talor suggested that the two men rest and kill each other after a decent sleep. 'I have no wish to meet the Invisible God only to be too tired to greet him,' Talor said. Varganathar wearily agreed to a truce but promised to have Talor's head by noon.

The men slept and Hrestol watched over them. When they awoke, they had been enlightened and their truce lasted. 'Maybe I shall kill you tomorrow,' Varganathar said. 'Perhaps you will,' Talor replied. 'But that's for tomorrow. Today, we have no need for killing.'

In their enlightenment both Talor and Varganathar realised that what had driven Varganathar to commit the acts of war he had committed, was the presence of Gbaji, in the very walls of Akem. The two enemies became allies and turned their attentions to the defeat of Gbaji and his followers, forgetting their earlier quarrel.

It took Talor many years to clear Akem of the Gbaji worshippers and more still to locate and close the Gate of Banir, through which they had come; but he was successful and he brought peace to Akem and showed that men who were once enemies can always find a common ground and an enemy more pressing and dangerous.

MagiC

The cult offers the following sorcery spells: Damage Resistance, Spell Resistance and Spirit Resistance (6 Affinity Points total).

Obligations and Deficits

All initiates must make a Pact with Saint Talor, dedicating at least 1 POW point to it. A Gift and Compulsion is received in return. In addition, initiates become immediately cheerful; acolytes become wryly humorous and knights – the Runelords – are as mirth-filled as Saint Talor.

Gifts: Divine Training, Endurance, Perfection

Compulsions: Compulsive/Obsessive, Challenge Chaos, Chaste, Chivalrous

Followers of the cult are expected to evince Talor's qualities in everything that they do, as described in the central beliefs and adopted by the Guiding Principle chosen as a Squire. Specific duties for each rank are as follows:

Squire

- Act in a chivalrous manner.
- Seek a cause to serve, be that a country, king, comrade or ideal.

Earl

- Engage upon a quest that embodies Talor's qualities.
- Make the central beliefs his own.
- Continue to maintain the duties ascribed to as a Squire.

Knight

- Maintain and continue the qualities of Squires and Earls.
- Serve Talor's memory through making the personal quest central to their life.
- Prepare for Saint Talor's return and to serve at his side.

Membership and Ranks

Squires of Saint Talor (Initiates)

A new Squire of Saint Talor can only be accepted into the cult at a shrine to Saint Talor. The largest and most famous is the Northpoint Cathedral. However, other, simpler shrines are scattered around the provinces of Losklam.

Squires (and all subsequent ranks) are required to form a Pact (Talor) by dedicating themselves to following and upholding the central beliefs of the cult and selecting one of the central beliefs as their personal Guiding Principle. Only a single point of POW needs to be dedicated to establishing the Pact although more can be dedicated if the new Squire wishes. At this stage the Squire gains a single Gift and a single Compulsion. However, to progress within the cult he must dedicate time to studying and developing one skill related to the central belief he has chosen as his Guiding Principle:

Guiding Principle

The belief in righteous war and conquest
 The belief in abiding love
 The belief in singular purpose
 The belief in duty and honour

Skill

One sword skill
 Lore (Chivalry)
 Influence
 Courtesy, Lore (Chivalry)
 Perception

Earls of Saint Talor (Acolytes)

To become an Earl of Saint Talor, a Squire must have achieved the following:

- ☒ Developed the skill linked with his Guiding Principle to 50% or greater.
- ☒ Developed his Pact (Talor) to 50% or greater.
- ☒ Must be able to recount a deed conducted whilst a Squire that demonstrates his pursuit of his Guiding Principle.

Again, the initiation into Earldom is conducted at a shrine to Talor. Further POW can be dedicated to the Pact and, whilst this is not mandatory, it is traditional. A Compulsion is chosen irrespective of a POW dedication; a Gift is forthcoming only if additional POW is dedicated to the Pact.

Every Earl of Saint Talor is expected to choose a quest, which must fulfil two objectives: first, it must embody the Earl's chosen Guiding Principle but it must also embody a second Guiding Principle selected from the central beliefs. Secondly, the quest must become a focal point for the cultist's subsequent career. The

quest undertaken is decided by the new Earl but it is common for it to concern the general defeat of Chaos, heretics and enemies of Malkion and Hrestol.

Knights of Saint Talor (Runelord)

The Knights of Saint Talor are the cult's heroes. They are considered to embody Talor's spirit and to become a knight the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- ☒ Develop two skills associated with the Guiding Principles to 80% or higher.
- ☒ Develop the Pact (Talor) to 80% or higher.
- ☒ Dedicate at least an additional 1 POW to the Pact.
- ☒ Have evidence of the progress of their personal quest, begun as an Earl of Saint Talor.

All Knights of Saint Talor gain the benefits listed in Benefits below. They must also dedicate themselves fully to the cause of Talor by making their personal quest the complete focus of their career, henceforth.

Training

The following skills are taught to cult members, usually free of charge, as long as the cultist dedicates the time to training and study to the exclusion of other activities:

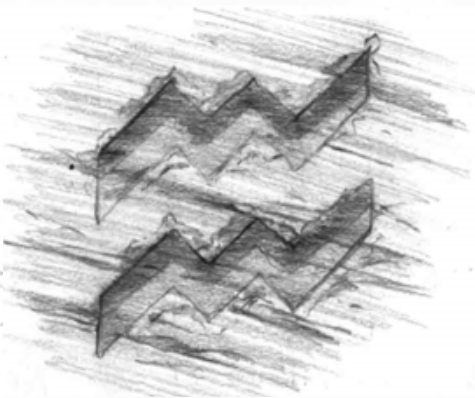
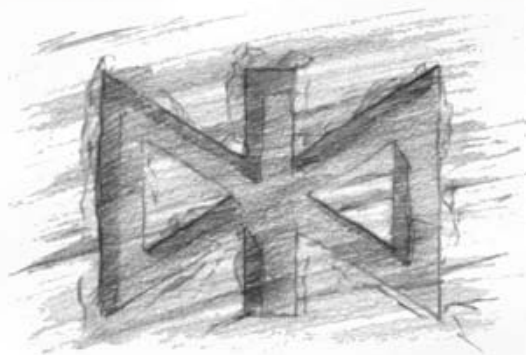
1H Sword, 2H Sword, Shield, Artistic Expression (Poetry), Courtesy, Influence, Insight, Lore (Chaos), Lore (Chivalry), Lore (Law), Lore (St Talor), Lore (World), Martial Arts, Riding, Survival.

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Guilds, Factions and Cults Association Record Sheet

Device, Symbol or Runes

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Name | Background |
| Association Type | Allies |
| Homeland | Affiliations |
| Race | Enemies |

Characteristics and Attributes

| | | | |
|------------|---|----------------------|---|
| SIZ | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | Number of Members | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| INF | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | Affinity Points | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
| WTH | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | Initiative | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> |
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| POP | <input style="width: 30px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | | |

History, Background, Aims and Motives

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Basic Capabilities

| Skill | % | Characteristics |
|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Bureacracy | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | 10+COM |
| Combat | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | MIL+SIZ |
| Credit | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | WTH+POP |
| Diplomacy | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | COM+POP |
| Favour | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | COM+POP |
| Lore | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | INF+COM+30 |
| Persistence | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | SIZ+POP |
| Recruitment | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | INF+POP |
| Training | <input style="width: 20px; height: 15px;" type="text"/> | COM+SIZ |

Affinities

Myths, Runes, Magic, Secrets

Advanced Capabilities

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Affinities

Others

Personalities, Heroes and Notables

Possessions, Assets, Special Items

RuneQuest

Guilds, Factions & Cults

Suitable for all RuneQuest settings, including Elric and Hawkmoon, *Guilds, Factions and Cults* opens up the possibilities to players seeking to ally their characters with greater forces. From humble craftsmen guilds and cults following demonic demigods, to nation-spanning political forces and the mightiest gathering of mages, this book allows players and Games Masters to create new guilds and cults within their games, detailing their membership, benefits, and rivalries. As players ascend through the ranks of their cult, they may get embroiled in guild wars and missions vital to the survival of their allies.



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