

In the Halls of Power©



Courtier and Coup D'etat
in the original fantasy
role playing system.

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Introduction

Over the many iterations of the “original fantasy role playing system”, there have been a good many rules systems written to simulate the political aspects of the game, such as war, the conquest and rule of a barony, kingdom, or other political realm, making alliances, building Provinces, etc. Some of the better known were *Birthright*©, for Second Edition, which had many clever innovations, such as its card-based warfare system, and Eden Odyssey’s *Fields of Blood: The Book of War*, for Third Edition, which took a very 3rd ed., “difficulty class” approach to the problem.

However, these systems and others like them all took very similar approaches to the “original fantasy role playing system” politics in the following sense: they were based on the ruler (the player character) issuing orders, usually on a seasonal or monthly basis, then possibly paying out money, and rolling dice to see what happens. Sometimes these systems worked well, other times not so much. However, they all shared a certain abstraction that really was not in the spirit of the role playing genre.

What follows is a system more based on the conventions of role playing gaming than of board gaming abstractions. *In the Halls of Power*© is a system that allows the ruler to role play his character’s political actions, as he does with the other aspects of his character’s life.

In the Halls of Power© seeks to achieve this by using the convention of the dungeon adventure, common to most the “original fantasy role playing system” games, somewhat modified, to represent political accommodation and strife. Thus, instead of a dismal dungeon, haunted with monsters and the restless spirits of the dead, the Player Character Noble walks the Halls of Power in the Imperial Palace: more gaily painted and brightly lit than the dungeon, but every bit as deadly. Here he seeks not enchanted swords and ancient gems, but the command of fleets and legions, the rulership of provinces (and the vast wealth that they command), titles, offices, and

all the rights and privileges of the ruler. He fights enemies that use the tongue as a weapon more often than honest steel, and, when steel is drawn, it is often a blade in the dark tipped with poison.

In the Halls of Power© also faces the reality that it is seldom possible to simply throw money and willpower at your political desires, and thereby make them a reality. Rather, political gains are usually made by seizing the opportunities that present themselves, and then usually by making political allies of those who have something to offer.

The setting is an extensive but somewhat ramshackle empire, in which the emperor is able to maintain only limited control over his great nobles. These nobles constantly plot, scheme, and even wage war to become emperor themselves. However, political realities must always be observed, and the approval of other great men is a necessity. Simply marching to the capital against public opinion will probably see the noble deserted by his supporters, and coming to a quick and painful end. Historical examples include 5th century Rome, Valois France, England in the Wars of the Roses, Samurai Japan, and the Holy Roman Empire of the Thirty Years War. Fantasy equivalents would be Janny Wurts’ Tsurani Empire, the world of George R. R. Martin’s [A Game of Thrones](#), or, for a science-fantasy version, Frank Herbert’s [Dune](#).

How the Game Is Played

The game is played in campaign turns measuring one year each. The campaign year is divided into several phases. These phases are the Imperial Banquet, in which the players meet, greet, and knife-in-the-back the great people of the empire. Then dueling takes place, if any player is challenged or has cause to challenge. Then warfare, if any war was generated in the events of the imperial banquet is resolved. Finally the player rules his realm: possibly upgrading it, hiring mercenaries and adventuring to improve his holdings.



The Imperial Banquet

Each campaign turn is one year. During this time, the players attend a great Banquet at the Imperial Court. When this is completed, duels may be fought between nobles with recognized cause, large battles may be fought with miniatures (or by a quicker and more abstract system, as desired), and adventures will take place.

Each year begins with a grand banquet at the Emperor's palace. The Imperial Banquet represents a "mixer" in which the characters mingle, attempting to secure important political contacts for themselves, while steering harmful ones toward their enemies. The objective is to meet and greet potentially helpful courtiers while dodging potentially harmful ones, make your way to a square adjacent to that occupied by the Emperor, and present the courtiers accompanying you to him. Once this is done, the player reaps the benefits of those courtiers, and leaves the Banquet for the rest of that session.

Most courtiers must first be encountered, and then a positive reaction roll made. The courtier will accompany the player character until he is presented to the Emperor, the Banquet ends, or some other encounter takes place that forces him away. However, some courtiers do not require presentation, and some have only negative effects. Each is explained fully in the individual encounter description.

The game is set up like an ordinary dungeon, except that it takes place in the Imperial palace, or on board one of the Imperial luxury yachts, etc. Encounter rolls are made and rooms and halls are explored, just like an ordinary exploration and combat-oriented adventure. The emphasis is not on combat, but on the negotiations with NPCs. In fact, combat is **EXTREMELY** dangerous in the Palace, as, if anyone sees it and the Praetorian Guards are notified, torture and death are the probable result.

Also, the location of the Emperor is often unknown (His Majesty may be incommunicado with a concubine, closeted with his generals planning the next war, etc.). He must be located, and a positive reaction roll made when the player character has some potentially beneficial courtiers in his retinue, before the Banquet ends. Some courtiers (and this is specifically listed in the encounter descriptions) will reveal the Emperor's location on a positive reaction roll.



Entering the Halls of Power

In order to enter the Banquet, the character must secure an invitation. He can get one if he is personally powerful (9th level or higher), if he is a titled noble, if he pays for one (costs 10,000 g.p.) or if he crashes the party.

A party crasher will be able to perform the same

actions as anyone else, as most courtiers will not ask to see invitations. However the Praetorian Guards, definitely will so demand, and will execute anyone who can't produce a proper invitation (they are all personalized), no questions asked.

Influence Points

These are a special treasure only available through contact with the rich and powerful, and can be given by some of the courtiers at the banquet (such as the Powerful Senator or Crown Prince) to fortunate player characters. Influence points can be spent one a one for one basis to modify any reaction roll made In the Halls of Power®, or anywhere else that the aristocracy is involved. An influence point represents powerful contacts or patronage.

Once spent, an influence point is lost for the remainder of the year, but is available again at the beginning of the next banquet. An influence point lost for other reasons (a negative banquet encounter, loss of a duel, etc.) is permanently lost. Influence points cannot be purchased for anything as tawdry as mere gold. Any use of an Influence point must be declared before the reaction roll is made. Influence points can be kept, like any other treasure, until used.

Note also that any other player character present at a reaction roll, who has a reasonable chance to know what is going on, and to be able to be heard, can use any of his influence points to modify the reaction roll, either in a positive or negative manner. Thus, influence points offer an opportunity for the player characters to attack each other politically, if desired.

Note, however, that influence points should not be spent too prodigally. No player character can rule more than a single province for each five influence points he possesses, and if he falls below this amount, he loses provinces (his pick which) until these numbers are again balanced.

The Courtiers

All courtier are level 1d4, unarmored, and armed with a dagger (cutlery and broken bottles are available) unless otherwise noted in their description. They will be of whatever class the Game Master thinks appropriate. There is a 1% chance per level that the courtier might be carrying a magic item. This is uncommon even among the powerful, because of the terrible risk of being caught with such a device here, where the Emperor's person could be threatened, and the Praetorian Guards are vigilant.

Once a courtier has performed his effect (see each courtier's description for this), he is neutralized, and leaves the banquet immediately (the GM decides how). He has no further effect. Prior to this, a courtier drawn into physical combat is subject to normal death, morale, and other combat effects.

All courtiers that have potentially positive effects require a reaction roll when encountered by any PC. Unless specified otherwise, each encounter In the Halls of Power© can only grant his benefit to (or inflict his harm on), one player character, unless otherwise specified. If more than one PC meets a courtier or other political encounter, only the PC who makes the first positive reaction roll gains the benefit from him, or receives the opportunity to join him in seeking the Emperor, unless the PCs agree otherwise among themselves. The courtier is then removed from the banquet. A fight between the PCs will require new reaction rolls of all accompanying courtiers to all PCs, and at a -3 penalty to each roll Note that in rare cases, this can turn an initially negative encounter into a positive one, though the GM must be convinced that the change is justified by circumstances and role playing.

Courtiers with any potential negative effects that are not specified as requiring a reaction roll are handled differently. These are the Bureaucrat, Doppelganger, Dread Rune, Droning Bore, Drunken Boor, Guild Assassin, Praetorian Guards, Red Death, or Sorcerer Guard. They

have automatic effects on the first PC they encounter, or the first PC group if more than one PC can be effected. For all others, a negative reaction roll is required for a harmful effect. Of course, other rolls may be required in some circumstances, such as attack rolls for combat situations, or saving throws for magic. The GM can always require a reaction roll if he feels the circumstances require one.

The Emperor (or multiple Emperors, if one or more Usurpers are in play) is an exception to these rules. He is never removed from play unless the rules specifically require this, as with the High Butler ending the Banquet, or the Emperor's assassination. Instead, the PC and accompanying courtiers who encounter him are removed from the Banquet, after a reaction roll between the Emperor and the PC is made -one for each courtier presented- whether positive or not. Note, then, that for any courtier who must be presented to the Emperor to be effective, the PC must make two positive reaction rolls, the first with the courtier, so that he will accompany the PC, and the second with the Emperor. Each reaction roll with the Emperor is effected separately by a different expenditure of Influence Points.

Halls of Power Encounter Table (1d100)

Encounters are pretty frequent In the Halls of Power©. Roll 1d6 per turn; an encounter appears on a 4-6 at a random entryway to the room the character occupies, unless it is something secretive like a Guild Assassin, Dread Rune or Familiar; these can appear anywhere.

In addition to anything else encountered, each room will contain 1d6-1 zero level guests.

1-2: Ambassador: This courtier concludes a treaty with the Empire (through its representative, the player-character noble), who can immediately add a Province (produces 100,000 g.p. per year) to his dominions, if he gains a positive reaction roll and can present the Ambassador to the Emperor. On a negative reaction roll, the Ambassador is offended, and

foreign armies invade on of the Player character's realm (counts as a Goblin Invasion, see below). Level 1d6 Warrior or Thief and 1d6 level 2 guards. The Ambassador can only grant a province that lies on the Imperial border (the edge of the map). If none are available, this courtier can be used only for province upgrades.

3-4: Barbarian Chieftain: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. This officer joins the player-character's legions. On presentation the Emperor, the Player Character Noble immediately gains 100,000 g.p. value in barbarian troops. These troops do not have to be maintained (that is, paid) out of the character's funds. The assumption is that a treaty is made allowing the Barbarian Chieftain's subjects to settle on the Player-Character Noble's lands. However, if the Noble rules no lands, they must be paid 100,000 g.p. per year. He is a level 1d8 Warrior with 1d6 level 2 guards.

5-7: Buffet Table: A table spread with well-done triceratops steak, pixie sugared almonds, sprite cream cake, hippogriff eggs pickled in goblin-brandy, etc. There will also be 2d6 zero level

human diners sitting in the room enjoying their food. This is mostly here to provide color, obstacles, and witnesses to nefarious acts the players might attempt. A room containing a buffet tends to be loud, and conversations cannot be held at greater than 5' distance, unless shouting takes place.

8-9: Bureaucrat: Regardless of reaction rolls, you must immediately pay the bureaucrat a 1d6 x 10,000 g.p., bribe or he immediately summons the Praetorian Guards to escort you from the Banquet. Level 1 human.

10-11: Chariot Racing Champion: On a positive reaction roll, he tells you the present location of the Emperor. Level 2d6 Warrior. This courtier will point the characters in a general direction, and he is 1d4 rooms away.

12-13: Chatelaine: On a positive reaction roll, an unmarried character can present the Chatelaine to the Emperor and marry her. Her dowry is 1 Province, which produces 100,000 g.p., annually. A character can only have one wife at a time.



14: Crown Prince: As Young Noble (below), but he grants 1d6 influence points on a positive reaction. Beating him in a duel can be problematic. It has a 50% chance of causing

another noble house to try to gain kudos by invading the player character's domains.

15-16: Doppelganger: Probably smuggled into

the Banquet by an enemy noble. This could also be any other monster with the ability to blend into crowds or move disguised or unseen, such as an invisible stalker, mimic, vampire, slithering tracker, or anything else depending on the Game Master's wish or the level of the game.

17-18: Dread Rune: A powerful magical trap somehow smuggled into the Banquet, it can cause the effect of any evil spell or rune listed in the role playing rules. A character can choose to throw himself on the rune. This causes increased effect to him (double normal damage or a -4 penalty to saving throws, as the GM thinks appropriate), but to him only, as the force is internalized. Any other character who would be effected is not. If undertaken, this self-sacrificing action grants a +3 reaction bonus with any character who would otherwise have been damaged.

19-20: Droning Bore: When encountered, the droning bore begins talking endlessly with the Player Character Noble regarding his various ailments, romantic conquests, and last year's vacation. The Player Character Noble immediately stops moving on encountering this character. At the beginning of each of his succeeding rounds, he must make a successful saving throw, modified for intelligence to dodge the droning bore, if he fails, he spends another round listening. This continues until the saving throw is successful or the Banquet ends. Level 1 human.

21-22: Drunken Boor: When encountered, the drunken boor loudly and rudely accosts the Player Character Noble and anyone with him. Any courtiers accompanying the Player Character Noble make hurried excuses and leave. All courtiers not yet presented to the Emperor are lost and removed from the banquet. Level 1 human.

23-24: Dwarf Lord: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. The Dwarf Lord is a powerful mercantile force. On successful presentation the Emperor, the Player Character Noble immediately gains 1d6 x

100,000 g.p. On a negative reaction roll, the Dwarf Lord is offended, and closes his gates to the Empire for one year. This causes the player character to lose 10% of his total wealth. Level 1d6+6 Dwarf and 1d6 level 2 guards.

25-26: Elder Statesman: This retired noble controls the equivalent of a Mercenaries Guild (q.v.). On a positive reaction roll, he allies with you. On a negative reaction roll, his political clout costs you half your total Influence Points. Level 1d6+3 Warrior."

27-28: Elf Lord: This venerated natural wizard is skilled in the ancient mysteries of leaf and land. After presentation to the Emperor, he adds a permanent bonus of +3d6% to the production of any Province desired by the player (this can be given to another noble in exchange for something else).

29: Emperor: For many courtiers to be effective it will be necessary to bring them before the Emperor and make a positive reaction roll with him, which means that he sanctions the relationship. Those courtiers this rule applies to are detailed in their encounter descriptions. The Emperor is always accompanied by 1d6+2 Praetorian Guards and one Praetorian Guards Officer. The Emperor may be any class and any level, as the Game Master desires, from a grim old soldier and veteran of a hundred campaigns, to a drooling madman, to a babe in arms, carried by his nanny. He is armed with any weapons and magical artifacts the Game Master thinks appropriate.

30: Empress: When the empress is encountered, she immediately has a brief liaison with the noble who encounters her, probably in the nearest broom closet. The noble gets gifts in the form of 1d10 x 100,000 g.p., but is immediately hustled out of the Banquet by the Praetorian Guards (who will try to kill him if he makes trouble) to avoid embarrassing the Emperor. The Player Character Noble is removed from the Banquet for the rest of the year, and loses all courtiers not presented to the Emperor.

31-33: Entertainers: 1d6 entertainers are encountered. A band is playing, jesters are tumbling and telling jokes, a magician is performing stage magic, etc., making it difficult or impossible to hear anything at greater than melee distance (adjacent squares). There are also 2d6 zero level humans in the audience. A room containing entertainers tends to be loud, and conversations cannot be held at greater than 5' distance, unless shouting takes place.

34-35: Familiar: A magical creature is encountered. Roll 1d6: 1-2=small animal such as cat, rat, mouse, or bat. 3=imp. 4=quasit. 5=pseudo-dragon. 6=brownie. Whether this creature will be helpful or harmful to any player character encountered will depend on a reaction roll and relative alignments. It might or might not involve its master, though he is almost certainly not far away.

36-38: Footmen: These are unarmed characters who act as servants and serve a minor guardian function as well, not admitting certain persons to the more exclusive areas of the mixer. They are simply unarmed zero level humans, and can be easily killed or incapacitated. However, if given the chance to scream, everyone in the room will be alerted to what is going on, and there is a 50% chance that Praetorian Guards will be summoned within 1d3 rounds.

39-41: Grand Herald: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. The Grand Herald recognizes that the Player Character Noble has cause to fight a duel with any other noble (but not a royal personage) of his choosing, and sanctions the duel. See Duels below.

42-43: Guild Assassin: This character is masquerading as someone else. A positive reaction roll indicates that he follows the PC, using him as a decoy to strike at someone else. A negative reaction means that he will try to kill the PC as soon as he can do so without risk of discovery. Level 1d6+2. Armed with daggers and ingested poison, possibly (35%) he also carries a magical artifact that has some sort of

quick-kill effect.



44-45: High Butler: The Butler announces that the Emperor is retiring to his chambers. The Banquet ends immediately, and any courtiers that have not yet been presented to the Emperor are lost.

46-47: Imperial Alchemist: This character is level 1d4+2. He need not be presented to the Emperor. On a positive reaction roll, he can sell the player character a random potion for 2,000 gold pieces.

48-49: Imperial Favorite: On a positive reaction roll, she tells you the present location of the Emperor. This courtier will point the characters in a general direction, and he is 1d4 rooms away.

However, when they get there, there is a 50% chance that he has left, and a further 50% chance that no one knows where he went.

50-51: Jester: On a positive reaction roll, he tells the character the location of the Emperor. This courtier will point the characters in a general direction, and he is 1d4 rooms away. However, when they get there, there is a 50% chance that he has left, and a further 25% chance that no one knows where he went. On a negative roll, the Jester starts telling insulting jokes in a loud voice, and all courtiers accompanying the character immediately make excuses and leave the Banquet.

52-53: Lord Marshal / Feudal War: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. The Lord Marshal gives the Player Character Noble a writ of battle, allowing him to attack the holdings of one other Player Character Noble in the upcoming year or any future year (but only one), provided that no Goblin Invasion or Civil War take place in that same year, in a feudal war. Note that multiple feudal wars can take place in the same year, as long as no Goblin Invasion or Civil War takes place. Multiple Feudal Wars take place in the order desired by the players, or based on opposed saving throws, modified by intelligence, wisdom and charisma, if they don't agree

Each noble can negotiate with other player character nobles (only) for money, legions or fleets to be added to their forces, and another noble PC may himself join in the battle, if agreed. A player entering the feudal war in this manner cannot attack his ally, though it is up to him how ferociously he is supported.

If the defending noble is beaten, the winner gains control of one of his provinces. If the loser has no provinces, he loses his title and appointment, if any. If he has no title, he is executed, no saving throw, spell, or other power can prevent this.

Negotiations can continue during the battle that will resolve the feudal war, and anything agreed too is binding once the troops leave the field.

FEUDAL WARS AND BORDERS: Despite the writ of battle, one noble can only attack another if his forces can reach at least one of the enemy's provinces by land or sea border, or, if they can do so by crossing a province belonging to another noble who agrees to this. Such an intervening nobles is free to charge what he wants for such use of his lands. The lands of a noble passed through by agreement cannot be attacked along the way, neither can the intervening noble attack the forces passing through, or prevent them from returning home at the end of the battle.

54-55: Master Falconer: On a positive reaction roll, he tells you the present location of the Emperor. This courtier will point the characters in a general direction, and he is 1d4 rooms away. However, when they get there, there is a 30% chance that he has left, and a further 50% chance that no one knows where he went.

56-57: Master of the Hunt: On a positive reaction roll, he tells you the present location of the Emperor. This courtier will point the characters in a general direction, and he is 1d4 rooms away. However, when they get there, there is a 70% chance that he has left, and a further 20% chance that no one knows where he went.

58: Noble Bodyguards and Officer: The private guards of a great noble, these men are level 3, with the officer level 5. They are armed with long swords and wear plate mail armor. Note, however, that the Praetorian Guards despise them, and the feeling is mutual. If these two groups ever meet outside of the presence of the Emperor, Empress or Crown Prince, there is a 40% chance that someone will pick a quarrel, and steel will be drawn.

59-60: Pirate Admiral: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. This officer joins the player-character's fleets. On presentation the Emperor, the Player Character Noble immediately gains 100,000 g.p. value in war galleys and crew. These forces do not have to be maintained (that is, paid) out of the character's funds. The assumption is that a letter

of marque is granted to the Pirate Admiral allowing him to raid in the water's adjacent to the Noble's realm. However, if the Noble rules no lands, they must be paid 100,000 g.p. per year. He is a level 1d6 Warrior.

61-63: Powerful Senator: This courtier need not be presented to the Emperor to take effect. The senator has vast political influence. On a positive reaction roll, the Player Character Noble immediately gains 1d6 Influence points. On a negative reaction roll, the character instead loses 1d3 influence points, and the Senator leaves in a huff.

64-65: Rumor Monger: Needs not be presented to the Emperor. On a positive reaction roll, you can send him away, or to tell stories about any other character, causing him to lose 1d2 Influence Points. On a negative reaction roll, he tells stories about you, causing you to lose 1d2 influence points.

66-68: Praetorian Guard: A character encountering a Praetorian Guard must produce his invitation, or the Praetorian will execute him, if he can. If the character resists in any way, the Guard will use deadly force, and he is not impressed by charisma, noble rank, magic artifacts, displays of wizardly power, or anything else. The Praetorians will also react with deadly force if any courtier is wounded or killed by the character. Be aware that these Guardsmen are the only persons in the Banquet authorized to wear armor or carry weapons beyond a dagger, other than the Emperor himself. Praetorian Guards will usually be 4th level Warriors with Strength, Dexterity and Constitution 16. They wear +1 magical plate-mail, carry +1 magical shields and wield +1 long swords. Their officers carry +2 items, and are 6th level.

OPTIONAL RULE: RIVAL PRAETORIANS: It was not ahistorical for some of the crazier rulers to maintain competing forces of household troops. For example, in addition to the Praetorian Guard, Nero maintained a force of German bodyguards who were loyal to him alone. Such forces are always somewhat hostile

to each other. If the GM desires to maintain two or three units of rival bodyguards, roll randomly to determine which is encountered whenever Praetorian Guards are encountered. If two rival forces meet, there is a chance (each must fail a morale check for it to occur) that the two forces exchange petty insults and then draw swords and fight rather than cooperate. This can be a good means for player characters caught in an uncomfortable situation to make a quiet exit...



69: Red Death: This unpleasant fellow is a personification of plague, famine and war. He counts as a mummy for all purposes, except that he cannot be killed, and runs around infecting as many people as he can with his vile disease. He can be harmed by nothing, and is vulnerable to no spell or power. He can be made to vanish, temporarily, by the successful use of a turn undead / banishment / forbidding spell or power, but even then there is a 1 on d6 chance that he will reappear each time a new room in the same banquet is entered. The GM may decide that some artifact/relic level item can drive him away, though this should, of course, be extremely rare. In any case, he vanishes back to his own

mysterious realm after the banquet ends.

70-72: Revellers: Minor Courtiers who have nothing to offer, but are just here to have a good time and generally get in the way of the real politics. They can only be told from more important Courtiers from close up (adjacent squares).



73-74: Spy Master: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. He creates an intelligence network for the player character noble. At any time (other than while adventuring) the noble can pay 1d6 x 10,000 g.p., and ask the GM any single question, answerable yes or no only, about an enemy's forces, plans or anything else. The GM must answer truthfully. Level 1d6+4 Rogue, Assassin or Thief.

75-76: Usurper and Civil War: Another character with claim to the throne declares himself to be Emperor at the Banquet. When this courtier is played (he is not presented to the Emperor, but appears immediately) the empire erupts in civil

war. There are now two Emperors in play, and any courtier can be presented to either one for the same effect. Place 1d6 Usurper Praetorians in the same room as the Usurper Emperor. From the point at which the Usurper is encountered, all future Praetorians met are either Usurper Praetorians or Loyal (present Emperor) Praetorians (50% chance of each). If both factions are encountered together, they will be fighting to the death. At the end of the Banquet, and if both Emperors survived, all player character nobles must serve the faction of the last Emperor to whom they presented courtiers, when the two meet on the battlefield. Anyone supporting the winning Emperor immediately gains 1d6 x 100,000 g.p., one Province and 1d6 Influence Points. Anyone supporting the loser immediately loses 1d6 x 100,000 g.p., one Province and 1d6 Influence Points.

In the Civil War, each Emperor fields 1d6 x 100,000 g.p. in troops to support his claim, along with whichever PCs must pledge their loyalty to him.

77-78: Seneschal: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. The player character is given an Imperial Appointment to high office, provided he is a titled noble. If he has no title, the courtier will not acknowledge him. When this courtier is first encountered, roll 1d20 on the table below to determine which appointment is available:

1-2 Minister of State: At the beginning of each year during which this appointment is held, the Player Character Noble add 1d3 influence points to his total or 1d3 x 100,000 g.p. (not both).

3-5 Chancellor of the Exchequer: At the beginning of each year during which this appointment is held, the Player Character Noble can add 1d3 x 100,000 g.p. to his Wealth.

6-10 Commander of the Emperor's Escort: On a successful reaction roll, this officer can order any Praetorian Guards out of the room. Only the Crown Prince, Emperor or Empress can countermand this order.

11-15 Lord Chamberlain: This character gains a

+3 bonus to reaction rolls with the Emperor.

16-18 Minister of Justice: At the beginning of each year during which this appointment is held, the Player Character Noble can charge any other Player Character Noble with embezzlement. Each then rolls a saving throw, modified for charisma. If the Minister succeeds and does so by more than the accused player, then the accused is convicted, loses all gold pieces (the Minister gains 25% of this through embezzlement) and the accused is incarcerated for 1d3 years (adventures may involve his escape).

19-20 Lord Constable: The Player Character Noble gains 500,000 g.p. worth of Imperial troops to command in any battle. These represent Imperial forces, and he does not have to pay them (they are paid out of the treasury). If the appointment is lost, he can no longer call upon these troops.

Once a player character gains an appointment, he only loses it if he dies, loses his noble title in some way, or the same appointment is given to another character. Only one appointment can be held by any player character at a time. A player character can choose to relinquish one appointment for another, if he gets the opportunity to do so.

79-80: Sorcerer-Guard: This character is a level 1d4+2 magician, who will use the Detect Magic spells to determine if any magic spells or artifacts are in use at the Banquet. If such is detected, the Praetorian Guards are summoned, usually with unfortunate consequences for the offending character.

81-83: Waiter: Carries a tray of drinks. Taking one to any character grants a single +1 reaction bonus with that character only. However, there is a 15% chance that the waiter is actually an Assassin, and the drink is poisoned, with obvious negative consequences.

84-85: Wounded Castellan and Goblin Invasion: This character must be presented to the Emperor to take effect. The Wounded Castellan informs the Emperor that a Goblin Invasion (or skeletons,

lizard men, savages, orcs, whatever) is pouring over the border. In gratitude for bringing him the information, the Emperor will grant the player character a command in the coming war. The command will be one befitting his rank (a low level noble might be given command of an infantry company, while a high level noble might be given command of a wing of the army).

The Goblin Invasion consists of 2d6 x 100,000 g.p. worth of troops, of whatever type the GM wants invading his campaign. The Empire fields only the troops provided by the player characters and their allies and retainers.

86-87: Young Noble: Need not be presented to the Emperor. On a positive reaction roll, he shares a drink with the character, giving him 1 influence point. On a negative reaction roll he proffers a writ of duello, signed by a Grand Herald. The character must duel him immediately. The noble is a level 1d6+1 Warrior, armed with a sword.

88-89: Wizard Eye: An invisible wizard eye (maintained by the Emperor's sorcerers) has entered the room, and is observing what is going on. Should the player characters be up to something nefarious, the Praetorian Guards will soon know. A player character with the ability to see invisible, and a bit of cleverness, however, might be able to turn this to his advantage.

90-100: Roll Twice More On This Table.

Features of the Halls of Power

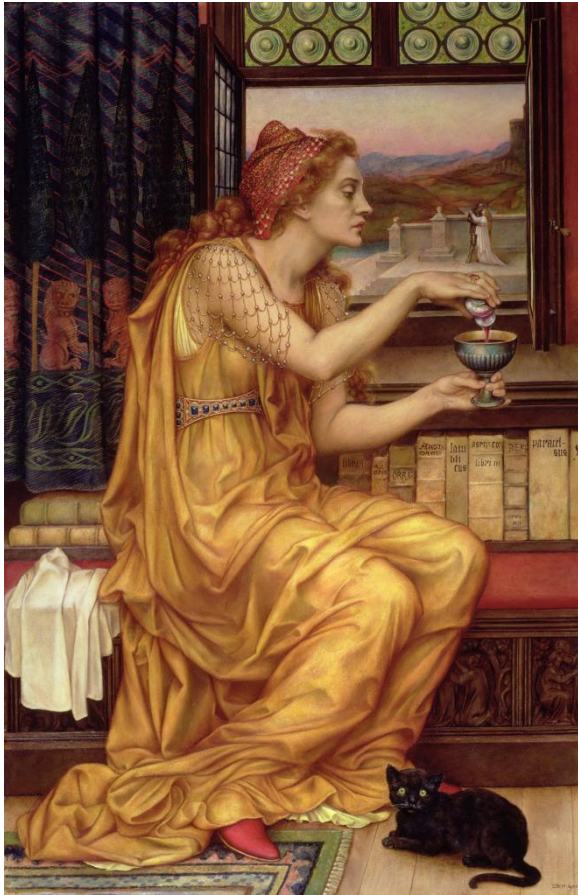
The Halls of Power section is meant to be a twist on the typical dungeon-crawl to represent the benefits and perils of political life. Just as dungeons contain not only monsters but also pit traps, secret doors and mysterious idols, the strongholds of the politically powerful also have their various features.

These and similar may appear anywhere the Game Master desires:

Gas Traps: Fighting in some rooms may cause

any monitoring guards to release a paralytic gas into the area. Save each turn or be paralyzed for 1d4 hours.

Wizard-Locked Doors: Doors into some areas may be be-spelled with wizard locks, or other magic, to keep out intruders.



Secret Doors: Operate exactly as they do in the dungeon. Such doors are usually not trapped or monitored by magic, as their purpose is to let those knowing of their existence (usually the Imperial Family) to escape quickly.

The Diplomat's War

It is important to remember that the Reaction Roll is the main device for interaction at the Banquet. Physically, the war of words (the skilled noble's true weapon) can be represented by the standard the "original fantasy role playing system" combat rules with a few modifications.

First, confidential, close up conversation can only take place at melee distance (roughly 5'). If both participants to a conversation are willing to keep their voices down, no one who is more than 5' away from them both can hear them (assuming no magic is used). When conversations take place at greater distances, anyone in the room is considered to hear what is said, unless the GM rules otherwise for special circumstances (loud music, hand signals, etc.).

Second, actual persuasion (that might result in a Courtier's joining a PC Noble's entourage) cannot take place at greater than melee distance (adjacent 5' squares on a battle map).

Third, the time it takes to persuade a Courtier (and thus attempt a reaction roll) is usually about ten minutes (one turn), though, again, the GM can rule otherwise in special circumstances. An example of this is more esoteric, but the following would probably be one: A courtier is just sitting down to eat when a minor demon appears standing before him. Just as it knocks the Courtier flat and would eviscerate him, a PC Noble with a sword takes off the demon's head, extends his hand to the prostrate Courtier, and shouts, "Come with me if you want to live!" This represents an extreme situation, and that is as it should be. Most Courtiers are pretty canny folk, and it will take a lot to immediately shake them.

Wherever a Courtier's reaction to a Player Character Noble is not described, it will be to listen politely and chat, but take no helpful action, on a neutral reaction roll, or to leave as quickly as possible on a negative reaction roll. On a positive reaction he will accompany the Player Character Noble for the rest of the Banquet, fighting to defend him if he is attacked, as long as the player does not take too many risks with his person, put the Courtier in harm's way, etc. The GM may rule that certain characters, may react more truculently (such as the Barbarian Chieftain) or less so (such as the Bureaucrat) in such situations.



Any character treated rudely or accosted will react negatively, and any character attacked or manhandled will fight or call for help as the GM thinks appropriate. Note also that any Courtier treated in a cavalier fashion by the Player Character Noble (mocked, left to fend for himself while in battle, etc.) may well re-roll his reaction, again, as the GM sees fit.

Experience

Experience here is given in the same manner as it is in a dungeon adventure, except that most “monsters” are overcome by clever role playing and reaction rolls, rather than by slicing them in two. Treasure stolen directly in this fashion is worth experience, but remember, this is extremely dangerous, and can lead to quick execution.

No experience is given for the money value of Provinces, offices, etc. Influence points gained grant 5,000 experience points each.

Mixed Adventures

It is possible to mix a dungeon style adventure with an adventure In the Halls of Power© in several ways. The GM can modify the rules in any way he wishes to represent this, though a few possibilities are offered below:

Royal Hunt: This version of the Banquet takes place in a woodland, with clearings replacing actual rooms. In addition to meeting and greeting, the PCs must bag dangerous animals, or at least avoid being killed by them.

Before making an encounter roll in a royal hunt, roll 1d6.

On a score of 1-4, the roll indicates an encounter rolled in these rules. Any noble or other VIP encountered will be armed with spear, short bow and arrows, and leather armor (any other weapons and armor are too heavy, and would slow down the hunter) and mounted on a light

horse, unless the encounter, includes any of the following: Buffet Table, Entertainers, Chatelaine, Empress, Imperial Favorite, Revellers, Jester or Waiter, *in which case all characters encountered here will be feasting*. Their weapons will be present but they will be unarmored and dismounted, with horses tied at the edge of the clearing. Note also that magic weapons are still not allowed at a royal hunt (it is considered unsporting).

On a score of 5-6, quarry is encountered instead. This can be rolled up on an encounter table based on the terrain involved, or any special table devised by the GM. The quarry is panicked, and is fighting for its life, thus it will not check morale, and makes all attacks at a +2 bonus to hit. Powerful quarry will impress the Emperor, and grant a +1 reaction for every three hit dice of the strongest creature bagged.

Masked Ball: Only minor changes here from the standard scenario In the Halls of Power®. All persons encountered, except waiters, footmen, and Praetorians are in costume (roll a monster encounter to see what they are dressed as) and who they really are cannot be determined unless they are forcibly unmasked (grievously insulting, and cause for the duel or other retribution, if the person is a VIP), or willingly unmask themselves, which requires a positive reaction roll.

Also, for some reason, the Red Death really enjoys these events, and in addition to encountering him as encounter #69, he will also appear on any roll of doubles (11, 22, 33, etc.), along with whoever is ordinarily encountered on that roll.

Coup D'etat: Some faction or other is out to kill the Emperor and overthrow the present government, and the banquet is less of a gala celebration, and more of a full-blown war.

All characters encountered have drawn weapons (at least steak knives, which count as daggers, if nothing else) and any encounter between actual armed bodies of troops, such as Praetorians,

noble bodyguards, or any character with bodyguards, is 70% likely to already be an ongoing battle, or at least a Mexican standoff.

For example, a Banquet might be going on when renegades serving the evil wizard burst in, planning to kill the Emperor. Or, possibly the Banquet takes place on the Imperial Yacht, which has been hijacked, or hit an unexpected storm, which will send it plunging into the deep.

Becoming A Titled Noble

According to ancient tradition, a commoner can become a noble only by risking his life in some great service to the Empire. This most commonly happens on the battlefield.

Whether any particular service qualifies for a title is up to the Game Master, but it should require success in the service of the Emperor at great personal risk; for example: cutting through a group of enemies to save a fallen general or battle standard.

Becoming a titled noble gives the player character four advantages:

A titled character is landed. He gains a single Province to rule, that generates 100,000 g.p. per year.

A titled character is influential. He generates 1d3 influence points per year, that he can use on his own behalf, or give/trade to other characters.

A titled character is a member of the Court. He receives an invitation to every Imperial Banquet (see The Halls of Power, section).

Finally, *a titled character is eligible to receive Imperial Appointments* (see The Halls of Power, section).

A player character can receive only one title, and all Imperial titles are effectively equal. The character may be titled baronet, baron, marquis, viscount, count, earl or duke. Royal titles such

as archduke, prince, king, and Emperor are reserved to the Imperial family alone. A player character who has no title but gains rule over a Province is referred to as procurator, squire, lord mayor, viceroy or governor; these are not noble titles.

Dueling

After the Banquet, any duels (which have been recognized by a Grand Herald) are resolved. The Young Noble encounter is an exception to this rule, he must be fought immediately.

The duel is fought to first blood, or to the death as decided by the challenger. Each party fights with blade and shield only.

The winner gains 1d3 influence points (double this amount if the loser is of higher level, half this amount if the loser is of lower level), and the loser loses the same amount (which can go into negative numbers, indicating he has just become the winner's slave). Each Player Character Noble may bring up to two seconds, who enter into the combat only if cheating takes place, or if the rules of the duel are not followed (such as continuing the fight beyond first blood in a duel to first blood). The use of such things as poisoned or magical weapons is prohibited. If attempted by unscrupulous Player Character Nobles, the GM will rule on whether or not it is noticed. Note also that unsanctioned dueling is prohibited, and will result in the loss of appointment and title (if the player character is a noble), or execution if the player character is a commoner.

Player Character Nobles (both those participating and those not) may agree to wager wealth or Provinces on the outcome of the duel. Anyone attempting to Welsh on such a wager loses 1d2 Influence Points immediately.

Note: While a duel can certainly be fought with two characters hacking at each other until one drops from loss of blood, see Dueling Rules For Old School Gaming (copyright Dragon Trove LLC, 2016) for extensive tactical and

roleplaying additions to dueling.

The Effects of Provinces

Provinces have resources and populations, which generate wealth. Each Province initially generates 100,000 g.p. At the beginning of each campaign year. Such monies must be used to pay for troops and other upgrades desired by the player character noble.

The GM can give Provinces a +5% or +10% bonus production, for such things as: industrial capacity, high population, valuable resources, or good positioning as a trade center. Similarly, Provinces with few resources, low population, or backwaters get a -5% or -10% penalty to production.

In addition, each time a Province changes hands directly because of a war, a -10% penalty is imposed on its production, caused by battle damage.

The only way to improve a Province's production roll is with the ELF LORD courtier, or by a Province upgrade (see below).

Provinces: Control of Influence Points and Borders

The control of Provinces is thus extremely important. It is also important to note that a Player Character Noble can possess no more than one Province per 3 Influence Points he holds. If his Influence Points drop below this level, he must lose Provinces (GM selects which randomly) until this minimum ratio is regained.

A province acquired other than by war cannot already be ruled by another PC. In Feudal War, the primary victor can choose any one of the primary vanquished PC's provinces. In a Civil War, each victor can choose one province uncontrolled, or controlled by a vanquished PC, though each vanquished PC can only lose one province. In a Goblin Invasion, each victorious PC can choose one uncontrolled province on the Imperial border (edge of the map), only.



Note also that all of the player's Provinces must be connected by a chain of uninterrupted friendly Provinces (i.e. Provinces that control bordering lands or seaways) to the player's capital Province. If at any time the loss of a Province causes other Provinces to be broken off from this chain, these other Provinces are lost as well. Thus, it is important to build up a relatively compact dominion. Becoming too attenuated can turn a single lost battle into a devastating defeat.

Sea Borders: All provinces that can be reached, one from another, by an uninterrupted chain of sea hexagons (only, not rivers or swamps) are considered to border each other, unless the chain narrows at any point to a single hexagon. This assumes that a sufficiently narrow strait is controlled by artillery, and coastal forces.

Any territories connected only by a sea border can be fought over only by fleets. Those connected only by land (including those

connected only by a one hexagon wide strait) can be fought over only by legions. Those connected in both ways can be fought over by fleets or legions, with the opposing commanders rolling saving throws, modified by wisdom and intelligence, if they do not agree as to how the battle will be fought.

Province Upgrades

Whenever a PC (Noble or not) who rules at least one Province ends a banquet having presented any positive courtier to the Emperor, he can, instead of taking the benefit associated with the courtier, choose to purchase an upgrade for one Province he presently rules (including any he gained in the same year). The ruler can choose one Province to receive any single upgrade from the list below for each 100,000 g.p. so spent and each positive courtier not otherwise used. Each Province can receive any single upgrade once only (*exception: garrison*). Multiple different upgrades to the same Province can be made.



Province upgrades can only be made to a province randomly determined from among the PC's holdings. This is an opportunity presenting itself to the ruler; he can choose what upgrade to make, but where he can make it is a function of fortune. The PC can roll for which of his provinces he can upgrade before deciding whether to upgrade it. Multiple upgrades after a Banquet are allowed, to no more than one of each single PC's provinces.

Whenever a ruler loses any Provinces for any reason, *all upgrades associated with that Province are lost*, and any new ruler does not gain the benefit of them, but must start over from scratch.

Tradesman's Guild: This gives the ruler the ability to earn interest on his money. Any money invested with the guild earns 10% per year. However, such money takes one year to cash out, and if the province containing the guild is lost, all money invested is lost as well.

Watchtowers: A system of guard posts, dispatch riders and fast ships is created throughout the Province, making it difficult to attack by surprise. The ruler of any defending Province with watchtowers always determines whether a war will be fought by legions or fleets. Note that this upgrade is ineffective if the opposing realms are connected *only* by land or *only* by sea. Note also that when one ruler attacks another realm that has watchtowers in any Province, the attacking ruler must declare if he intends to conquer a Province containing watchtowers, and, if so, which Province. This is an exception to the normal rules.

Syndicate: Most Provinces contain thieves and assassins guilds, and other such nefarious organizations, however, creation of a syndicate indicates that the realm's ruler has effective control over those underworld organizations in a particular Province. The ruler gets an annual free assassination attempt (takes place immediately

after the banquet, by an assassin of level 1d8+3) against any person, anywhere in the empire except the Emperor (the Guild won't take that risk, it becomes a role playing function). This upgrade also halves the chances that any assassination attempt against him will be successful, while he is in the Province controlled by his syndicate.

Grand Temple: Dedicated to the ruler's favorite divinity, the Grand Temple grants the ruler up to two free cleric spells per year (any level) and a bonus to the Province decided upon by the game master, as based on the preferences of the god in question. It should be a useful benefit, but not overwhelming. For instance, a grand temple devoted to a war god might give a bonus of 1 point to all of the local troop's morale, while defending. One dedicated to a god of prosperity might give a 25% chance of gaining the ruler 100,000 g.p. per year, one dedicated to an evil god of terror might give a penalty of 1 point to the morale of any invading forces, etc.



Multiple Grand Temples to different gods cannot

be created by the same ruler, even in different Provinces. The gods tend to be jealous.

Garrison: This is the only upgrade that can be made to the same Province multiple times. A garrison indicates drilled units of local irregulars will take up arms in the defense of their Province only, but these cannot be mustered for foreign wars, nor even to defend other provinces belonging to the same ruler (We're not defending those scallywags from Eastfaerthing! Bloody foreigners...). Each garrison gives the ruler 100,000 g.p. worth of troops or ships (his choice) for the defense of the province in which the garrison is raised. Player characters do not pay upkeep for garrison troops.

Salon: By opening a salon, the noble becomes a great patron of artists and musicians. At the beginning of the year, the noble gains 1d4-1 Influence Points for each Salon in his realm.

Mercenaries' Guild: Patronizing the sell-swords can bring many fighters under the noble's banner. Each mercenaries' guild in his realm raises 50,000 g.p. in mercenaries before any battle for the ruler. These remain for the duration of the battle, and are gratis of the guild; the ruler pays nothing for them.

Note also that only troops raised by a Mercenaries Guild can be used to support allied nobles in a feudal war.

University: By creating a university, the ruler becomes a patron of the sage's, alchemist's and magician's guilds. Each University grants the ruler up to two free magic-user spells per year (up to seventh level) or two free queries of the sages or up to two potions (or any combination of each totaling not more than 2).

Tax Gatherers: These fellows are private entrepreneur who collect the taxes for the Province on a contractual basis. Because they tend to use rather brutal methods, the Tax Gatherers can greatly increase the wealth generated by production, but also make the locals resentful. This upgrade gives any

Province a +20% point bonus to its production, but, there is a 10% chance per year that, the locals rebel, and the Province is lost. If there is at least one garrison in the Province, the chance of losing it drops to 5% per year. There is a 50% chance that any Province that rebels will beseech another (random) PC or NPC noble for his protection. If this happens, and the noble so besought assents, he gains the Province for his realm, along with all its upgrades. This is an exception to the general rule that Province upgrades are destroyed when the Province is lost.

Public Works: Such things as aqueducts, irrigation and firehouses are built by the noble, improving public safety and the business climate. Public works add a permanent 10% bonus to the Province' production.

Raze Province: This "upgrade" operates in reverse. When a Province is razed, any or all of the Province's upgrades are permanently lost. The Province itself is not destroyed.



Mass Combat and Miniatures Gaming

Mass combat is quite common In the Halls of Power© campaigning. This can be resolved in two different ways:

SIMPLE BATTLE RESOLUTION: When opposing armies meet, each side immediately rolls 1d6 per 100,000 g.p. value of its forces. The higher total score destroys the enemy, without significant harm to itself. If the scores are equal, the armies are locked in a war of skirmish and maneuver until the next year. No army will move while locked in battle.

THE COMMANDING GENERAL: If a PC is commanding general of his side's forces, and he

chooses to fight by simple battle resolution, rather than to make a Heroic Stand, and loses the roll, he can, if he makes a save modified by Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma (player's choice), reroll the result; the second roll is final. If two player character commanding generals are facing each other in this situation, each gets a maximum of a single reroll. If either player does not agree to fight the battle by simple battle resolution, it is automatically fought as a Heroic Stand. Note that once the first roll is made to generate companies or champions for either side (see below) the battle must be fought as a Heroic Stand.

HEROIC STAND RESOLUTION: If player characters are present at a mass battle, the battle

can be fought as above, or as a Heroic Stand, at the player character's discretion. In a Goblin Invasion, the player characters will face the enemy champions, consisting of one per each 100,000 g.p. of forces available to the goblins, each rolled up as a single 7th-9th level monster, and their minions consisting of 2d6 per each 100,000 g.p. of forces available to the goblins, each rolled up as a company of one type of 1st-3rd level monsters. The player character forces (as well as any Imperial or Usurper forces in a Civil War) get themselves plus their troops, 2d6 per each 100,000 g.p. of forces for a Goblin Invasion, each rolled up as a company of one type of troops from the table below:

1=Dwarf Guards HD:4 AC:16 Damage:1d8 MV:6
2=Elf Rangers HD:3 AC:14 Damage:1d6 (ranged) MV:12
3=Knights HD:5 AC:17 Damage:1d10 MV:15
4=Men At Arms HD:3 AC:17 Damage:1d8 MV:6
5=War Dogs (as wolves).
6=Militia HD:1 AC:12 Damage:1d6 MV:12.

In a Civil War, the GM can add in NPCs to represent either Emperor or Usurper(s), and possibly other characters if he feels the need to balance the fight.

All minions and troops are organized into companies consisting of all minions or troops generated by the same roll. Player characters and champions are never organized into companies and operate independently. Combat rules for a Heroic Stand are the same as any other battle, with three additions:

BANNERMEN: A bannerman is one minion (Chaos) or troop (Law) out of each company who is assigned to hold the standard. He has the same statistics as all other troops or minions in his company, but is automatically assigned maximum hit points (give him a banner, use a banner to represent him, or just use some big, beefy figure of his general type). All troops or minions in the company must remain within 3 squares of their bannerman, any not within this distance fight at a 2 point penalty to hit. In addition, if the bannerman is in the front rank (at least as close as all other troops in his company to the enemy) all troops in the company gain a 2

point bonus to hit. If the bannerman is slain or incapacitated, all troops/minions in his company suffer a 2 point penalty to morale checks made thereafter.

FACING: All troops, minions, champions and player characters fighting in a battle that is being resolved as a Heroic Stand must have a definite facing across one square. All troops and minions in the same company must always be facing in the same direction. Facing can be changed only as a movement action. The square across which the figure is facing, as well as the two squares adjacent to it on either side are the figure's front facing. The two squares to the figure's right and left, as well as the two squares to the right-rear and left-rear, are the figure's side facing. The single square directly to the figure's rear is its rear facing. Any attack made in a Heroic Stand that comes even partially across a figure's side facing is made at a +2 bonus to hit, unless it also is made even partially across a figure's rear facing, in which case it is made at +4 to hit.

MORALE: Each company checks morale (saving throw of 9+, 2 point penalty for poor quality troops, 2 point bonus for elite troops, GM decides troop quality, though, generally, those below two hit dice are poor, and those above two hit die are elite), when the number of its troops or minions drops below 50%. All troops or minions (not champions or PCs) are removed from play if check fails. Champions must check morale or flee if half their total number is destroyed, or if half hit points are lost by a lone, single champion.

The side losing at the Heroic Stand (the critical juncture of the battle) is destroyed. A player character does not check morale, but can flee at his discretion, taking a single back attack (-4 AC penalty) from each adjacent foe, but escapes if he survives. If all PCs flee, their side loses, as above.

NAVAL BATTLES: These can be waged as land battles if desired, or by lining up several ships and simply fighting the battle out as boarding actions (which is what most ancient

and medieval naval actions came down to anyway). For appropriate warship/battlemats, Paizo makes some good ones in its Armada pack <https://paizo.com/products/btpy9qhx?Pathfinder-Map-Pack-Armada>

For some free ones, the galleon, here, is really nice. <http://north-american.yeoldeinn.com/tiles-shirtz-sea-tiles.php>

I combine both sets, and fight out actions similar to Lepanto, where Don Juan of Austria defeated a much larger Ottoman Turkish force under Ali

Pasha. Some vessels in each of the two fleets were armed with cannons, bows were also used, and a lot of ramming took place. In the end, though, each fleet essentially became a massive platform, with infantry (and even some cavalry!) fighting across the decks of the ships.

For more extensive naval rules, see Disruptors & Dyson Spheres© Dragon Trove LLC., which has concise rules for converting its simple starship fleet combat system into one for ancient and medieval fantasy miniatures.



HOW LOSSES EFFECT FUTURE BATTLES: Troops lost in a battle are lost for the rest of the year, only, and the value lost counts against the total value of troops what can be brought to any future Feudal War battles fought in the same year. At the beginning of the next year, all forces are adjusted to their original strengths, as modified by any gains or losses from that year's Banquet.

A Note on paying the troops: Forces can only be raised In the Halls of Power© by the various methods described in these rules, such as a successfully encountering characters such as the Barbarian Chieftain or Pirate Admiral, by province upgrades such as the Garrison or Mercenaries Guild, or in any other way explicitly provided, and only as provided by these rules, or as a role playing function granted by the GM (perhaps an artifact level enchanted

wolf's jawbone grants you a thousand wolves once a year). Thus, forces raised by a Pirate Admiral cannot be used in land combat, and garrison forces can only defend the province in which they are raised. Money cannot, in any other way, be directly converted into troops before battle. This represents the political and monetary problems of fielding armies. Note also that only troops raised by a Mercenaries Guild can be used to support allied nobles in a feudal war.

Courtly Battle Mats and Dungeon Tiles

In my humble opinion, a good set of battle mats and/or dungeon tiles is essential to making adventures In the Halls of Power© an enjoyable experience. The best I know of are a set of Royal

Palace tiles done by Ron Shirtz, and available free on the web, here: <http://english.yeoldeinn.com/tiles-shirtz-palace-set.php>

These print out really beautifully, and, unlike full-sized battle mats, have the advantage of being re-arrangeable. It is easy to resize the Great Hall (in windows paint or a similar program) into a number of smaller rooms usable as bed chambers, salons, offices, etc. It can also be easily narrowed into a columned hallway to connect various rooms.

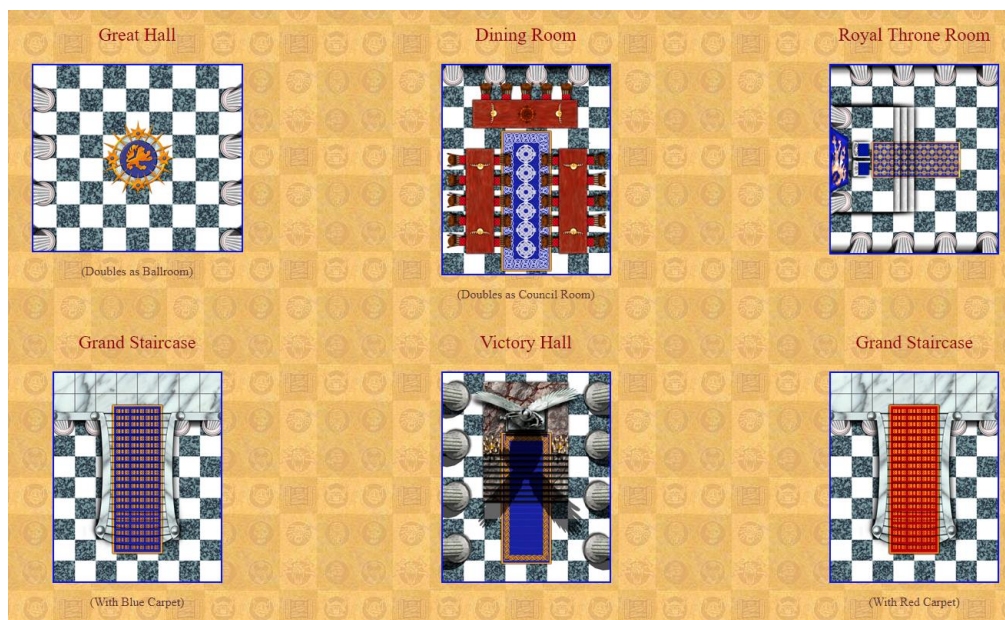
Note further that other, more plebeian dungeon tiles can be added in for sculleries, kitchens, storerooms, treasuries and stables, as well as (for the darker side of political life) secret passages in the walls, prison cells and torture chambers.

Of course, full sized battle mats can be quite useful for these purposes as well. Many of Paizo's battle mats make excellent sites for

political chicanery. Among these, I really like the Noble Estate, the Monastery or Cathedral (for political intrigue involving the clergy), the Pathfinder Lodge (for after the royal hunt), the Theater (politics after and during the opera and the play).

Of course, as stated above, many variants on the theme are possible. A royal hunt would be held on forested maps. A political adventure could certainly be had as an addition to a gladiator fight at the arena. The Game Mastery tiles packages included a jousting set, with a tourney field, archery range, throne and bleachers, etc. A warship could host the nobles, admirals and generals of a great seafaring empire. The thieves' guild is another good one, for REALLY cutthroat political play.

Even a typical dungeon mat could be quite the good adventure In the Halls of Power© of the Dark Lord of Angband, or of Mordor,



Witchland's capital of Carce, or Skeletor's fortress of Snake Mountain.

Courtly Miniatures

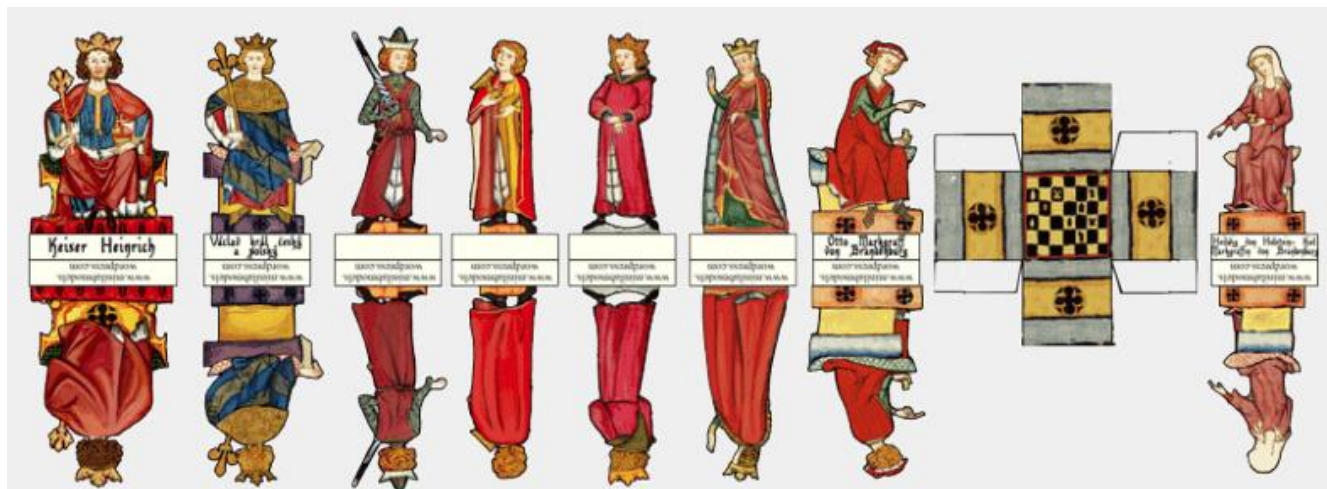
Of course, appropriate miniatures will be needed

as well. Praetorian Guards can probably be done with armored fighters from among your dungeoneering figures, but kings, margraves, pfalzgrafs, seneschals, bailiffs, footmen and jesters become more problematic.

For paper miniatures gaming, the following link

goes to a very nice free set.
https://minilabmodels.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/codex-manesse_of-kings-and-lords.png
 Print them out, fold them up, and you are ready to go, at least as far as the nobility is concerned. The cardboard warriors forum also has some

decent nobles here:
<http://www.onemonk.com/ewExternalFiles/Nobles.pdf>. Other free downloads from cardboard warriors include servants and entertainers:
<http://www.onemonk.com/ewExternalFiles/MarKetFolk.pdf>.



For 3d metal miniatures, Turnkey has the best I know of. Much pricier than paper, of course, and you have to paint them, but they look great.
http://www.turnkeyminiatures.com/Set-of-Royal-Court-x18-p_213.html. Turnkey also has a nice set of townsfolk.
http://www.turnkeyminiatures.com/Set-of-Townfolk-x28-p_214.html. It should be pointed out that this set is 25mm, and, though a slightly big 25, it is still a smidgeon smaller than the 28mm miniatures (often scale-creeping into 30 or even 32mm) that are most popular today. However, since these guys are NPCs, they might as well be a little shorter than the heroes who REALLY have to save the day.

So Which System Do I Use?

In the Halls of Power© works equally well with

any version of “The Original Role Playing System.” Personally I would recommend Dragon Trove LLC’s system, Swordsmen & Skeletons© (big surprise, huh?). The practical reason for this is that it is an extremely bare-bones version of “The Original Role Playing System.” The rules take up all of one sheet of paper. Fairly small print, but one sheet. Everything you need are there: character classes, monsters, spells, etc., but nothing more. You can add it as the last page of In the Halls of Power©, and are ready to play.

This just makes it easy to focus on the political system In the Halls of Power©, and keeps out the needless complexities. However, if you are really into any version of “The Original Role Playing System”, don’t let my recommendation slow you down.

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