Stupor Mundi

Roleplaying in the world of Frederick II Hohenstaufen

RuneQuest

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Introducing Stupor Mundi

De Stupore Mundi

This book is intended to allow you to run a roleplaying campaign set in Europe during the first half of the thirteenth century. By playing and enjoying Stupor Mundi games you will certainly learn something about European history, whilst in the meantime experiencing plenty of magic wonders and encountering weird creatures. Our hope is that by re-enacting the adventures of House Hohenstaufen across all of Europe and the Middle East you will see the Middle Ages in a new and unexpected light. Here, in the fascinating ethnic and cultural crucible of the Mediterranean Sea, the Muslims will often be your best allies against treacherous Christian princes, and the first seeds of modern democracy will start to show up in the battle for independence of small city-states. In the world of Stupor Mundi cultures and religions clash, yet they must find a way to live together if Europe is to have a future.

Why Stupor Mundi

Frederick the Second, of the House Hohenstaufen, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Naples and Sicily, is one of the most controversial and interesting figures in medieval history. Historians and biographers of his age called him the Stupor Mundi, Wonder of the World, and in fact he always succeeded in upsetting both his friends and his opponents. Son of a German Emperor and a Norman Princess, raised in a city that was more Arabian than Christian, Defender of the Faith and excommunicated, Crusader and friend of the Muslims, more Italian than German and yet enemy of the Italian cities' freedom. He razed cities and founded universities. He had plenty of sons, but his heritage did not survive long after his death, because the other rulers were afraid of all that he represented and managed to dismantle the kingdoms he passed on to his offspring.
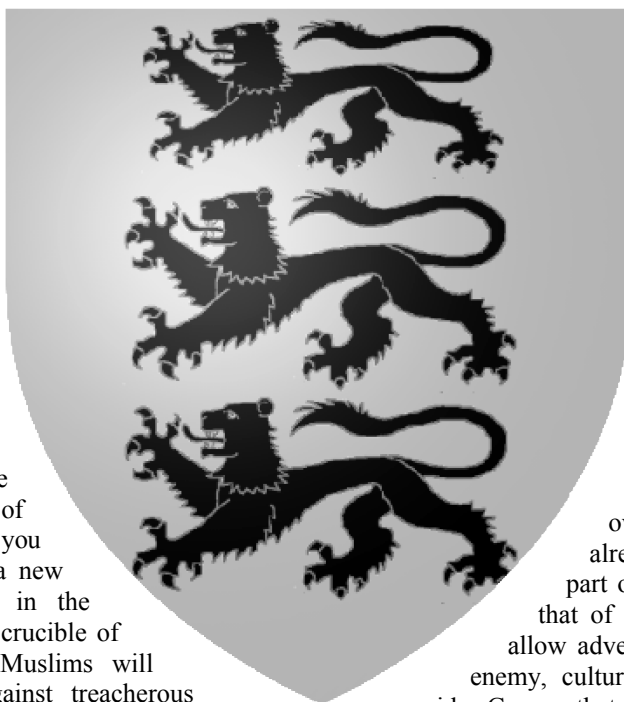
But these apparent contradictions are also the main reason why we have chosen the age of the Stupor Mundi among all other settings in real history that allow an enjoyable gaming experience. People among our readers who prefer roleplaying over combat simulation should already know that the most difficult part of a culturally aware campaign is that of finding out a reasonable way to allow adventurers from different, and often enemy, cultures to wander and fight side by side. Groups that practice good roleplaying, in the end, tend to have characters of the same race and culture in order to avoid this difficulty. This does not happen in the Frederick's world: the Emperor and his retainers like Hermann von Salza interacted, by force of arms and by diplomatic means, with a great variety of cultures. Popes, Viking conquerors, Italian city-states, Arab Sultans, Byzantine Emperors, Russian Princes and Baltic pagans were all enemies or allies, and often both of them at different times, of the Swabian rulers. In the court of the Stupor Mundi it is perfectly normal to have Teutonic Knights fight together with Vikings, Saracens and Italian mercenaries. This had not happened in Europe since the time of the Roman Empire, and it will not happen again in real history.

So enjoy this one-time opportunity: choose the homeland and religion you like the best, add the black eagle of the Holy Roman Emperor to your coat of arms and join the first and last Crusade in real history where you can choose whether the Sultan is your friend or your enemy!

Player Characters
De stuporis mundi dramatis personis

As in all roleplaying games, the first step you must undertake before starting your adventures in the service of House Hohenstaufen or one of its opponents is creating a character, also called an adventurer. In order to do this you must have access to the RuneQuest Main Rulebook and the RuneQuest Companion by Mongoose Publishing, which contain the basic procedures for creating a character and the core rules for playing. The rest of this chapter assumes that you are already familiar with the RuneQuest character creation rules, so make sure that you have read and understood all of them before proceeding.

In RuneQuest games, as in the real Middle Ages, the most important details about your character are where he comes from and in what deities he believes. Your medieval alter ego has plenty of figures that represent his physical and mental characteristics, but no matter whether he is tall or short, smart or dumb, quick or clumsy, what is more likely to distinguish him from someone else he meets in the dangerous world of the Dark Ages is his nation and, above all, his beliefs.

The second most important detail about your character is how rich he is and what possessions he owns. Assuming your character is not a landowner, as this would otherwise strongly discourage him from wandering through Europe in search of adventures, what really matters is what he carries around with himself, that is his professional tools, weapons and armour.

The rest of this chapter, together with the information contained in the RuneQuest manuals, will guide you through the definition of these important pieces of information. Do not forget, however, to add some personal motivations to your character, not necessarily connected to his homeland or religion, in order to make him stand out among all other adventurers that wander the roads in the age of the Stupor Mundi.

Choosing your homeland

Your character will most likely be a European. However a European identity had not yet developed in the thirteenth century (as well as in the twenty-first, we may add), and your adventurer surely thinks of himself as belonging to a much smaller social group than Europe. So your character can be a Spaniard, a Frenchman, a German, a Greek, a Pole, or whichever nationality you choose. However, when you select your homeland, keep in mind that your character feels much more of a connection with his home city than his home nation, perhaps with the exception of the French. So if he comes from the Iberian peninsula, you must decide whether he is from Castilla or from Leon, if he is from Italy being from Florence is totally different than being from Venice, and so on. Concentrate on the smallest social group that your character belongs to in order to define his strongest loyalties, and use a large-scale nation only to determine his language and his religion.

The recommended starting area for your character is Southern Italy, where Emperor Frederick spent his youth. This is the area where you can find the widest variety of ethnic groups (Normans, Arabs, Greeks and Latins) and religions, giving you every opportunity to customize your character and tailor it to your personal preferences. Even if your character was born in a different area, have him start the game in Lucera, Naples or Palermo. This will provide a good explanation as to why he knows the other languages or cultures needed in the course of his subsequent adventures.

The Age of Stupor Mundi chapter will give you a brief description of the various areas of Europe at that time. Whenever some facts that can influence the creation of a character who comes from that land are present, character creation notes have been added to the regional description, particularly if they involve the character's religion.

may select Islam or the Byzantine Church as your character's religion. This may cause some diplomatic disadvantages when dealing with Catholic rulers, but might provide interesting roleplaying options and a different choice of magic spells. In fact, we recommend that every party includes at least one Arab character in order to be able to interact with the myriad of Arabian colonies that were still present in Europe at that time. Your Arab character can come from any North African or Middle Eastern area, but we recommend that you choose Spain or Sicily as his homeland to give him a good excuse for knowing a European language and being accustomed to interacting with Christian characters.

Characters who start the game with the advanced skill of Lore (Catholicism), Lore (Patrology) or Lore (Islam) may choose to acquire Divine spells of their religion before play begins by simply paying the price listed for the spell in the RuneQuest Companion and moving the appropriate amount of POW points from their POW characteristic to their Dedicated POW pool. Characters who are priests, monks, imams or knight/monks get one single spell, or one point of a progressive spell, free of charge when they start the game, although they must still subtract the POW cost from their POW characteristic.

Consult the Religion of Stupor Mundi chapter to know how to give sorcery skills to your character if you wish him to be a sorcerer. This does not prevent him or her from being a good Christian or Muslim.

In some areas, Pagan religions are still present and dominant. With Gamesmaster permission, a character may belong to one of these ancient cults and this can give him access to a magic system that is more similar to the standard Rune Magic of basic RuneQuest.

In the thirteenth century, Jews are widely represented in many parts of Europe. This book does not describe Judaism, but your character is likely to interact with Jews in his travels, sooner or later.

Choosing your Religion

Most European characters are member of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, they are probably not aware of being part of it, as the Church is not labelled as Roman Catholic yet, and most Western Europeans are not aware of the existence of other forms of Christian worship. For game purposes, describe your character as being Catholic, but keep in mind that he refers to himself as Christian.

If you have chosen to come from a homeland where Muslim or Byzantine characters are common, then you

Equipping your hero

Once you have used the RuneQuest Main Rulebook to determine how smart, strong and nimble is your hero and how skilled he is at reading old tomes, debating about theological disputes or impaling other people on the tip of his spear, and you have decided where he comes from and what name he calls his God, it is time to equip him with the tools of his trade. If your character is a scholar or a magician, this is the easiest part: give him a tome of knowledge and a staff enchanted with his favourite spells, and he is ready to go.
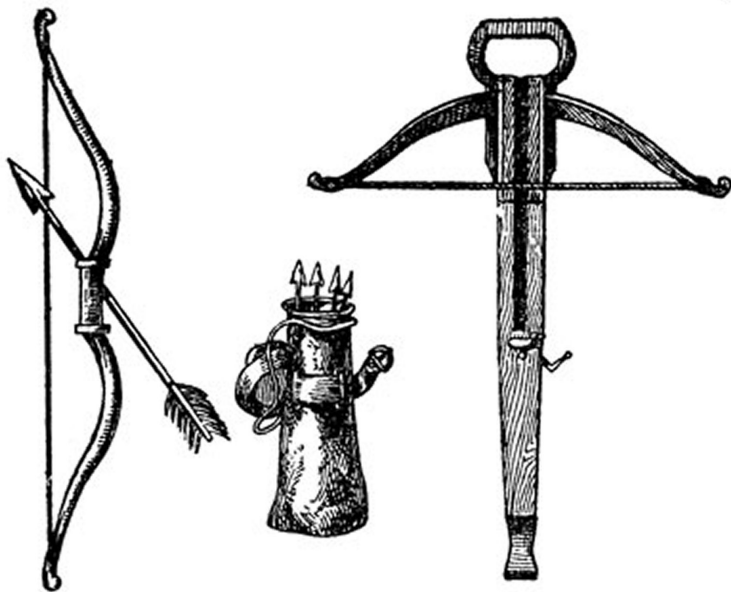
However, if he is a professional fighter, or even if he is a humble peasant or artisan that has decided to go adventuring, it is most likely that his role in your company of heroes will involve some fighting, and that you will be pleased if your hero survives the combat. This generally means that you should equip him with the best weapons and armour that he can use, or that he can afford.

All characters born as peasants or mariners can start with the various types of leather armour that are described in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook. They can also be freely equipped with all manner of spears, daggers, staves, axes, slings and bows, except the longbow which is a military weapon known only in the British isles. More expensive weapons and armour made of metal can be available at the Gamesmaster's discretion, as well as higher-quality items and weapons created with the rules given in the RuneQuest Companion.
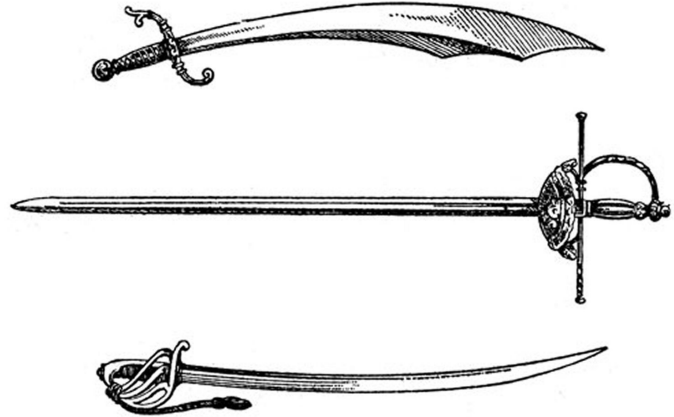
A townsman character can also buy more sophisticated equipment like metal armour, maces, swords, pole arms and crossbows. Gamesmasters may wish to limit possession of such weapons to characters that have served in the city militia or in a mercenary band, especially with regard to polearms or crossbows. Such characters can probably not afford more than leather armour anyway, but they can be equipped with light chain mail if they can pay the price.

Noble characters can usually afford good weapons and metal armour. If the Gamesmaster wishes and they can afford to pay double the normal price, they can be equipped with Greater quality weapons that deal +1 damage. Characters born to a noble family will almost inevitably be skilled with the sword, and sometimes with the cavalry lance, for the sword is the nobles' weapon, and the lance is used in mounted warfare. Note that rapiers and greatswords were not yet produced at that time.

Finally, keep in mind that Muslim characters will always use scimitars, while Christians will always wield straight-bladed swords. It is not a matter of convenience or effectiveness, the blade shape is a religious symbol in itself, a crescent or a cross, and using an enemy religion's symbol as your main weapon is something a medieval man would never even think about.

For more information about cost and protection of the various armour pieces consult the armour tables in the World of Stupor Mundi chapter.

Religion

De stuporis mundi fide

ost Stupor Mundi characters will receive all their available magic only through organized religions, cults in RuneQuest terms. The rules needed to handle this are described in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook and in the RuneQuest Companion.

There are, however, some important differences.

- Divine Intervention is not allowed in Stupor Mundi. The Gamesmaster is encouraged, instead, to give extra advantages to Initiate characters who want to spend Hero Points to bend the plot to their needs. Read the description of the Astrology skill in the Age of Stupor Mundi chapter for a way to increase your characters' Hero Point pool for this purpose.

- Unless stated otherwise, religions in Stupor Mundi do not teach Rune Magic but only Divine Magic.

- Divine Magic spells are referred to as Blessings in Stupor Mundi. The difference is only in the name, as the Blessings work exactly as the Divine Spells described in the RuneQuest Companion.

- At character creation, if a character is given a Runecasting skill, he must choose the appropriate Lore (Specific Theology) skill instead. If he already has the Lore (Specific Theology) skill, he adds +10% to its score for each new Runecasting skill he should have added. Note that this does not happen if your character is a sorcerer, even though a sorcerer usually belongs to a religion.

Roleplaying Real Religions

Religions in Stupor Mundi are the exact same religions that are present in the real world. As such, it is likely that a character will be of the same religion as one or more of the players. Always remember to roleplay your character's beliefs in a way that is not disturbing to other players, whatever your attitude to religion (and to *that* religion) may be.

In particular, always remember to use wit, humour and respect while roleplaying a character's beliefs.

Wit means that your character is not expected to behave exactly as his religion dictates. Many Catholic priests indulge in fornication on a regular basis, yet they are definitely holy men. Similarly, some Muslims drink alcohol, although they should not, yet they consider themselves believers. Friars and monks should practice charity and poverty, but abbots were frequently landowners. Just decide, before or during play, how often your character will manage to find an excuse to indulge in some forbidden practice.

Humour means that if you catch a character behaving in a not-so-virtuous way according to his religion's precepts, you are welcome to let him notice and even create some embarrassment for him or her. This will add to the game fun and to realism, too, since it is exactly what should happen in the real world. Remember that there were no official atheists in the Dark Ages, so it is unlikely for a character to simply not notice, though he will almost always condone small lapses on the part of a companion. Humour means also finding a really good explanation for why you did something forbidden, if someone notices.

Respect means that even though you may have fun with your character's not-so-strict obedience to his religious principles, you must never mock the principles themselves. Making other players laugh at how your Churchman interprets the strictness of his vow of celibacy does not mean you should start a debate about "Why on earth do Catholic priests not marry". There is plenty of that in everyday newspapers. Also remember that you must not "push it too far". If there are precepts that are often broken, there are others, clearly described in the "How to roleplay" section, that a believer would never break. So even though your buddy's Florentine character swears a lot (as he is expected to do), never ever have your Arab character utter the Prophet's name with less than maximum respect! A Muslim would never do this, even one who drinks alcohol or worse, and a modern Muslim seeing you roleplay an Arab this way might really take offence.

The Roman Catholic Church

Although this was not exactly the case, we will refer to all Christian communities whose main ritual language is Latin as Roman Catholics, or simply Catholics. This includes areas such as Britain and central Europe, where Catholics are no longer a majority at present.

Catholicism is not the original form of Christianity, which was more similar to the Byzantine church described later in this chapter. It resulted from the absorption of the Christian Faith into the Roman Empire, as is shown by the fact that it uses Latin as its ritual language, whereas its Holy Scriptures were originally written in Greek. However, the Roman Catholic Church claims supremacy over other Christian Confessions because of St. Peter's primacy. In the Latin Church the Bishop of Rome, also called the Pope, as St. Peter's successor, is considered the supreme authority for all Christians. By the time of Frederick II, however, almost all Greek-speaking Christians had rejected the Pope's authority.

Catholic priests are considered the assistants of Bishops, and are the ones who usually interact with common believers. However, whereas Bishops are usually highly educated, most lowly priests lack a real education and received only a basic training in the basic facts of Catholicism. Priests in rural areas are often illiterate. Catholic priests cannot marry, although many keep a concubine, a sinful practice that was repeatedly prohibited, in vain, by the Church. A Catholic priest is considered an Initiate in RuneQuest terms. Only a Bishop qualifies as a full RunePriest.

Catholicism is the most varied form of worship available in Stupor Mundi, because of the cult of the Saints. You can safely assume that the cult skill of Lore (Catholicism) is available at any Church or congregation, but other cult skills vary widely from church to church, according to the Saint to which the Holy Site is dedicated. In many cases even the Divine Blessings available at different churches depend on their patron Saint. Three important Saints and their religious orders will be described later, but many others exist. It is beyond the scope of this book to provide game details for all of them.

Corruption and fundamentalism

As we will explain in detail in the Age of Stupor Mundi chapter, the head officers of the Roman Church in the Middle Ages were more involved in mundane business than in the spiritual salvation of their flock, although there were still many holy men among the humble priesthood.

This was a cause of discomfort to the hearts and minds of the populace, which was mainly constituted of sincere believers who disdained their shepherds' corrupt behaviour.

As a result of this, in many areas of France, starting with the twelfth century, several fundamentalist groups started preaching the return to a purer Christian doctrine and the rejection of the Roman Church's corrupt ways. Although the reform carried over by Luther, Calvin and Zwingli in the sixteenth century is more widely known, the history of the fundamentalist movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is almost as interesting and full of interesting roleplaying opportunities. The main movements, termed heresies by their Catholic contemporaries, were the Cathars, also called Albigenses, and the Waldensians, which eventually spread to Spain and Italy.

The response of the Roman Church to these self-made preachers took two different forms. St. Dominic and other great preachers preferred to confront the heretics and confute their theories with their unbeaten eloquence, showing them their Theology was mistaken. On the other hand St. Francis and other humble preachers challenged the "heretics" on their own ground, adopting a more humble lifestyle which resembled that of the fundamentalists and made their teachings more credible.

A portrait of St. Francis drawn by the Spanish artist *El Greco*

Although the methods used by both Saints proved effective, in the end the heresies were fought also with massacres and genocides, resulting in the total destruction of all the Cathars, against which a Crusade was waged, and the disappearance of all the Waldensians outside Italy.

Catholic Monks

In the Stupor Mundi time frame, most religious activity was carried out by monks rather than secular priests. The difference between priests and monks is that the latter, besides having been ordained as ministers of the faith, also take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. In fact, many of the less literate monks are not even priests because they do not qualify for the role, but they just help keeping the monastery running. Monks must leave their family and live in a monastery, although Catholic monasteries are always less reclusive than their Byzantine counterparts. A monastery is a self-sufficient entity that cares for its own community's sustenance, while helping the neighbouring populace in both mundane and spiritual affairs.

Many monks, particularly the Benedictines, are also scholars, and spend a lot of time copying ancient manuscripts in order to preserve the knowledge of the Ancients. Historians think that most of the knowledge coming from the Greek and Roman world could have been totally lost to the Western world if humble monks had not worked hard to replace the crumbling manuscripts in their ancient libraries with newer and more durable copies. This implies that most monks are culturally superior to average medieval people.

Friars and Monks are considered Initiates of both the Roman Catholic Church and their specific order in RuneQuest terms. Abbots are considered Runepriests under the RuneQuest rules. Monks can learn any common Divine Blessing at both Catholic churches and monasteries of their order, and their special spells at monasteries only. The normal RuneQuest rules that limit spell magnitudes according to temple size, where the "temple" is the church or monastery, are in effect. When calculating the total number of believers belonging to a monastery remember that it may be inhabited by only a few dozen monks, but the attached church may attract thousands of believers on Sundays.

All religious orders uphold poverty, so a monk character's only possessions, at least at the start of a game, are a simple robe, a walking staff suitable also for defence and 1D10 silver coins. In exchange for this limitation, Monk characters receive additional skills at character creation.

Most orders also require that the monk give up all booty gained in adventures. This booty is usually donated to the order itself, so that it can be used to help the poor or uphold the Right Doctrine. Particularly in the case of blessed items, however, items belonging to the order can be used and even regularly carried by faithful believers, including the player characters. As a rule of thumb, you can assume that a monk is allowed to carry items Spellcharged with Blessings available to his order for a total of 1 point per each 2000 silver coins worth of booty donated to the order.

Sample Catholic Saints

Note that it is not possible to become initiates of these Saints: the following descriptions are used only to determine which skills and blessings are available at a given Catholic Holy Place. Lore (Catholicism) is always included in the Cult skill list.

Apostles

Apostles are the original followers of Jesus. St. Peter was the chosen among the Apostles, and is the patron Saint of Rome. Other Apostles were St. John., St. Andrew and St. Matthew.

Cult Skills: Oratory, Influence,

Blessings: All commons, Fear.

Evangelists

The Evangelists are the ones who wrote the four Gospels. They are St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John. Note that St. John and St. Matthew were also Apostles, while St. Mark is the Patron Saint of Venice.

Cult Skills: Literacy (Latin), Literacy (Greek).

Blessings: All commons.

Archangels

The mightiest of Angels can be venerated as saints. The three known Archangels are Michael, Raphael and Gabriel.

Cult skills: Sword, Resilience, Persistence.

Cult Blessings: All commons, Sunspear.

Nuns

Nuns are the female counterpart of monks, bound to the same rules that monks must follow. Everything that has been explained about monks applies to nuns, too, with two notable exceptions. First of all, common labour was entirely based on physical strength at that time, often requiring the presence of males to effectively practice agriculture or take care of the building itself, so a nunnery is more likely than a monastery to depend on the surrounding population for its survival. Secondly, and most importantly, females cannot become priests in the Catholic Church, so nuns are not allowed to lead worship. This also implies that they usually do not learn blessings at churches but only at nunneries of their own order, although this rule may be circumvented in some cases.

Benedictines

The Benedictine order was founded by St. Benedict, an Italian monk, during the darkest part of the Middle Ages. Benedictine monks must practise physical labour or some sort of craft, including writing, along with prayer and meditation. This ensures that their monastery is self-sufficient at all times, and possibly capable of helping the neighbouring populations in case of necessity. The head of a Benedictine Monastery, called an Abbot, is usually also a Bishop, and as such has a much greater power than his counterpart in another order, including dominion over some territories if the Emperor so wishes.

Note that there is also a female Benedictine order, founded by St. Scholastica, that has the same characteristics as its male counterpart. Nuns are less likely to leave their monasteries, but it is possible to run a Benedictine female player character if someone wishes to roleplay a female cleric-magician. Benedictine monks and nuns wear a black robe with a hood.

Many Benedictine monks enter their monastery as children, by being donated by their parents. This practice was common both among the commoners, who used it to allow their children to escape poverty, and the nobles, who did it to get rid of all their sons but the eldest, thus avoiding splitting their estates among multiple heirs. Although this practice could cause difficult situations when a person definitely not suited for a life of contemplation was secluded in a monastery, the most obvious consequence of this in game terms is that characters of a monastic origin are much more dedicated to their spiritual tasks than anyone else. In fact, Stupor Mundi treats being a Benedictine as a cultural background rather than an occupation.

Assuming your Benedictine character has been in his monastery since his childhood, his original background, whether noble or peasant, has no longer any effect on him. He then receives the Benedictine Monk background, which includes the following Basic skills: Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%, Persistence +20%, Sing +10%, Dodge or Staff or Resilience +10%, and the following Advanced Skills: Language (Native) +50%, Craft (any) +10%, Lore (Catholicism), Literacy (Latin) or Oratory or Language (another). Benedictine monks may choose their profession among the following: Healer, Scholar, Scribe, Priest, Wizard, Farmer, Craftsman, Alchemist.

Cult skills: Lore (Catholicism), Literacy (Latin), Craft (Any), Persistence, Sing.

Cult Blessings: All Common Blessings, Heal Body, Absorption.

Dominicans

St. Dominic De Guzman founded his order to act as the Church's guardians of the Faith against heretics like the Cathars or the Waldensians, which he often met while travelling from his homeland in Spain to the Papal Seat in Rome. As a result, Dominicans are preachers and moral standard upholders, and excel in the domain of personal relationship and knowledge of the human nature. Dominicans wear a white robe with a large cross, and a black cloak over it.

Special St. Dominic Divine Blessing

Eloquence

Duration 1 hour, Magnitude 1

This spell enables its target to display his point of view with shining clarity and to easily find the best evidence to support his opinions. For the duration of this spell the Oratory and Influence skills of the recipient are doubled. If the spell expires while the target is still engaged in a dispute, its effects last until the next test is called for by the Gamesmaster. This spell does not work if the target is lying, is arguing against evidence or is trying to persuade his audience about a subject he himself does not believe.

Note that the Dominican order was founded in 1207, and that St. Dominic was still alive and actively preaching till his death in 1221. This means that Stupor Mundi adventurers may encounter him face-to-face, and Dominican player characters have probably been instructed by the Saint in person. When roleplaying a Dominican, remember that the thing you value most is adherence to the right doctrine. Anything else may be sacrificed, but not the Truth.

St. Dominic taught his followers that the Truth can be looked for, and found, everywhere. As a result of this, some Dominicans sometimes learn sorcery from ancient tomes, although they will never admit it in public, as they know that people who cannot understand the true nature of magic usually mistake it for worship of the Devil.

When creating a Dominican character, add the following to his starting skills: Influence +10%, Lore (World) +10%, Oratory. Allowed occupations for a Dominican are Scholar, Diplomat, Priest, Wizard. A Dominican wizard usually knows no Divine Blessing, but learns sorcery. There is no female order of Dominicans.

Cult skills: Lore (Catholicism), Language (Any), Literacy (Latin), Oratory, Influence, Persistence.

Cult Blessings: All Common Blessings, Madness, Reflection, Eloquence (new spell).

Franciscans

St. Francis of Assisi is probably the best-known Saint of the Middle Ages. Born to a noble family, he realized that the lust for power and richness that had been taught to him was totally against the principles of Christianity. He started wandering the world like a beggar, with no mundane belongings, relying on his neighbours' charity to survive, preaching poverty and universal brotherhood. His quest was successful, for his words caused a major wave of moral embarrassment in the incredibly corrupt Church of his times, and forced the clergy to adopt a more considerate style of life, at least officially. He was famous worldwide for his habit of calling every natural creature, and even natural phenomena such as fire or rain, as his brother or sister. As such, his name is usually associated with love for nature and animals, along with cheerful acceptance of poverty.

According to their poor lifestyle, Franciscans wear a brown robe made with very raw cloth, and simple sandals, or no shoes at all. A female order of Franciscans exists, and it is called the Order of St. Clare after St. Clare of Assisi, the most faithful female follower of St. Francis. For this reason a Franciscan nun is often called a Clarissa in vulgate Italian.

When roleplaying a Franciscan friar, uphold poverty and morals rather than dogmatic integrity. Treat everyone kindly, and treat all creatures as if they were humans in need of help, or whose help you need.

When creating a Franciscan Friar, add the following to his starting skills: Lore (Animal) +20%, Survival. Allowed occupations for a Franciscan are Healer, Alchemist, Animal Trainer, Farmer, Priest.

Cult skills: Lore (Catholicism), Lore (Animal), Lore (Plant), Lore (World), Resilience, Persistence.

Special St. Francis Divine Blessing

Winged Brothers

Duration 15, Magnitude 2, Ranged

This spell calls birds from the sky to hamper the target's combat capabilities. On the Combat Round after the spell is cast, 1D4 doves, sparrows or crows will appear and harass the target as per the rules given for a Falconry attack (see the Falconry skill description), except that the caster's Persistence is used instead of the Falconry skill. The target cannot resist the spell, but can try to chase the birds away with his weapons. The magic provides some degree of protection to the birds, so each time they are successfully hit one specimen is driven away but not harmed.

Cult Blessings: All Common blessings, Regrow Limb, Resurrect, Winged Brothers (new spell).

Knightly Orders

After the conquering of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, the Christian Sovereigns faced a great problem. Who would defend their newly conquered territories from the Saracens' revenge? Maintaining a strong garrison in the Holy Land was costly, and anyone dedicating too much time or attention to the Holy Land was in danger of finding some unpleasant surprise upon returning to the West. Yet protecting the Holy Sepulchre was their religious duty, so it had to be done.

The solution to this problem was provided by the knightly orders. Organized exactly as monks, with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, these young nobles devoted their lives to a Superior Goal just like friars, but

the game equivalent of monks with regard to skills and magic.

Cult skills: Lore (Catholicism), 1H Sword, 2H Sword, Shield, Riding, Healing.

Creating a Knight Templar character

A Knight Templar usually receives the background skill of a Noble, unless the Gamesmaster allows otherwise. He also receives the professional skills of a Knight, as described in the RuneQuest Companion, except that the advanced skill gained is not one of those listed in the book but the Lore (Catholicism) advanced skill. A Knight Templar is considered an Initiate of both the Catholic Church and his order upon acceptance as a Knight. Masters and Grand Masters of Knightly Orders are considered RuneLords in game terms.

Knights Templar can learn the following Divine Blessings at their Castles, and at any Catholic Church or Holy site that teaches the blessing. No other blessings are allowed.

- Holy War [Berserk], Dismiss Magic, Excommunicate[only casts out of the Order, not the Church], Extension, Find Enemy, Heal Body, Heal Wound, Mindlink, Shield, Soul Sight, Spirit Block, Sureshot, Truesword.

their tools were not prayer or hard labour but steel and military discipline. Obviously, these knights above all embodied all the positive ideals of chivalry.

There were many knightly orders, but since their differences were mainly in origin and in whom they considered their supreme guidance, whether the Pope or the Emperor, we will treat them as the same for game purposes and refer to them collectively as Knights Templars. Remember, though, that even though their skills, bravery and magic may be the same, a Knight Hospitaller's goals and loyalties can be quite different from that of a Teutonic Knight.

Above their mail, Knight Templars wore a white tunic with a large red cross on the chest, and a white cloak with a red cross. Knights Hospitaller, also called Knights of St. John, instead, wore a black cloak with a red Maltese cross.

Along with the fighting brothers, knightly orders often had non-fighting members who managed the logistics and the administration of their lands. Although not very interesting to roleplay, consider these people as being

Roleplaying a Knight Templar

You are the incarnation of all that is chivalrous and pious. Whereas normal knights often oppress the poor instead of protecting them, your duty includes tending the wounded, too. Apart from some occasional lapse, you and your brother do maintain celibate, and protect women instead of taking advantage of them as some secular knights so often do.

All this, however, does not prevent you from showing no mercy when confronted with an enemy. After all, you are fighting a Holy War, aren't you?

Teutonic Knights

Although similar in origin and organization to the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, the Teutonic Knights were a rather peculiar order. They were all Germans, while the other knights were mainly French or British, and wore a white tunic and white cloak, both with a peculiarly shaped black cross.
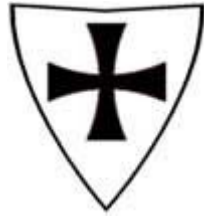
During the rule of House Hohenstaufen they played a very important role, mainly because of the great influence their Grand Master Hermann von Salza had on Emperor and Pope alike, and this resulted in their final destiny being very different from that of the other Orders. Their history will be covered in greater detail in the forthcoming Baltic Campaign.

You can find more information about Teutonic Knights in the game Mythic Russia by Firebird Productions.

The Byzantine Church

We will refer to all Christian communities that have Greek as their main ritual language as Byzantine. Although the difference in Theology is slight, the ritual details of the two Churches are great, so they are best treated in different chapters.

Note that Greek or Albanian-speaking areas in Southern Italy do in fact acknowledge the authority of the Pope of Rome, although they are Byzantine in all other respects. In game terms, treat these Christians just as Byzantine, but they owe obedience and loyalty to the Pope.

Byzantine Christians includes the most ancient Christian communities in the world, or at least those which have been less modified by Roman influence. Their ritual language is Greek rather than Latin, although they developed and thrived under the Eastern Roman Empire. Apart from the religious principles that are common to all Christian Churches, their main Theological lore sources are the Fathers of the Church, that is the Saints of the first centuries AD: St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, and others. They have different Saints than Catholics, but they pay them no less respect. The Lore (Theology) used by Byzantine Christians to invoke blessings is called, in game terms, Lore (Patrology), or simply Patrology.

A Byzantine priest is the equivalent of a RuneQuest initiate in game terms. He leads his congregations and helps his flock gain divine blessings when needed. Byzantine priests can marry before they become priests.

Roleplaying a Byzantine character

Byzantine Christians consider themselves the heirs to both the mighty Roman Empire of the East, which at that time still existed, and the Fathers of the Church, and as such they are extremely proud of their culture and ancestry. While this is definitely not evident in a peasant, a noble, a trader or a clergyman will often show explicit contempt towards all other cultures and religions, even Catholicism, which they consider as some sort of modern heresy.

A Byzantine character enjoys a deeper spirituality than a Catholic one, more biased towards contemplation and significance-rich rituals than ethics. He will be extremely respectful of Holy Icons, and any work of art that has a religious significance.

The priest's wife takes part in her husband's ordaining, so she also shares some of her husband's clerical powers.

A celibate Byzantine priest can become a Bishop. A Bishop (Episkopos, or overseer, in Greek) is the head of an entire area, and commands over dozens of priests. A Byzantine bishop is the equivalent of a RunePriest in game terms. Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Byzantine bishops never become political rulers, though many Byzantine priests became imperial counsellors and ministers who exerted more actual influence than the legitimate ruler.

Byzantine Christians have no Pope, though the Archbishop of Constantinople is generally considered the highest-ranking Bishop of the Eastern Church. This, however, does not confer on him any special authority over other Bishops, so it is safe to assume that a Byzantine Bishop can behave as he wishes, as long as he does not steer away from the doctrine of Patrology. This means that there are differences, although irrelevant in game terms, between the various local Byzantine Churches, and that, unlike his Catholic counterpart, a Byzantine character is in fact a member of his local church and not of the Church of Byzantium.

Byzantine places of worship are churches. These churches are always beautifully decorated and full of all manner of artistic representations of God and His Saints, though the central representation is always one of Jesus. The smoke of incense is always present in a Byzantine church, and the rituals held there are long and fascinating.

Byzantine Christians hold representations of Jesus and the Saints, called Holy Icons, in great respect. They usually concentrate their worship upon these items, knowing that the faith of the artist has imbued the image with the ability to transmit piety to the watcher.

A Byzantine church functions as a RuneQuest temple in game terms. Since it is usually dedicated to a Saint, the Saint, in addition to the number of believers that attend the divine rituals, determines which blessings are granted at a particular church. Remember that almost everything in a Byzantine church has received some sort of Blessing Enchantment, so its supernatural defences are always strong.

Byzantine monks

The Byzantine Church has monks like the Catholic Church. In fact, its monastic tradition is much older, and their monks are often more reclusive, hiding in mountaintop monasteries where they make blessed icons of unsurpassed beauty and power. A Byzantine Monk is just an Initiate in game terms, although his specialization in the Enchanting skill gives him access to an almost unlimited supply of blessings. Being admitted to a monastic order means that a Byzantine character has access to all normal cult skills, plus the following: Enchanting, Craft (Painting), Craft (Other), plus one speciality skill specific to the monastery. Only the Abbot in the Monastery qualifies as a RunePriest in game terms.

When a Byzantine monk creates an icon or another holy work of art, he often attempts to create a superior quality icon, as per the rules described in the RuneQuest Companion. After all, he has plenty of time to spend on his mountaintop. If the crafting roll results in a superior icon, the monk can then proceed to Enchant one or more blessings in it. For each special effect granted by the item quality, the Monk can enchant one additional magic blessing at no extra POW cost. At least one point of POW must be expended anyway.

A Byzantine monk can use this special ability on other holy items crafted with their other Craft cult skill, for instance medals or rings, but this will cost them a Hero Point per item crafted. Priests and Bishops can create icons, too, but they are subject to normal Hero Point expenditure if they want to use the special Enchantment bonus. On the other hand, a fair amount of all blessed icons produced by a monastery is usually given to the surrounding churches as a compensation for various services.

The Byzantine Church has no military orders like the Knights Templar. Byzantine monks never craft weapons or military tools.

Creating a Byzantine character

A character that comes from the East or from a Greek speaking area of Southern Italy is considered a lay member of his local Byzantine Church. If from Italy he is also considered a Roman Catholic from the administrative point of view, but this has no effect in game terms. He may become an Initiate of the Church if he wishes. If he wishes to become a Monk he must become an Initiate.

A Byzantine Church has the following basic cult skills: Lore (Patrology), Language(Greek), Sing. Each local church has at least three local speciality skills added to this list. For residents of Italy, one of these skills is always Language (Italian).

Islam

Islam is the second most important religion in medieval Europe. During the reign of Emperor Frederick, a large portion of Spain was still under Moorish rule, and southern Italy hosted many Muslim colonies dating back to the time of the Arabian conquest of Sicily. Arabs were better artisans and sailors than Europeans, so their presence often resulted in an increase in wealth in the conquered areas.

Islam has many points in common with Christianity, as well as many important differences. Jewish and Christian prophets are generally acknowledged by Islam, though only Muhammad is believed to have been given the Final Revelation by God.

A Stupor Mundi character of Arabian origin is automatically a lay member of Islam. He may become an Initiate without other restrictions if he or she wishes so. Cult skills for the Islamic religion are Language (Arabic), Lore (Islam) and Lore (World). When a Jihad has been declared, the skills of 1H Sword, Spear, Shield and Bow become available for tutoring as cult skills.

Muslim priests are called Imams, and are allowed to marry. Imams are the equivalent of Initiates in game terms. Islam has no higher-ranking priesthood, though particularly old or wise Imams are usually given a great deal of respect and obedience, similar to Christian Bishops or Abbots. In any case an Imam is never a political ruler, unlike his Christian counterpart.

A Muslim place of worship is called a mosque. This place is most holy to a Muslim, who must purify himself by washing his body parts carefully before entering it, always barefoot. A mosque is elaborately decorated by the best artisans available in the Dark Ages, but no decoration may depict any real object, not even flowers or animals. Muslim rituals are less elaborate than Christian ones, although there are several forms of prayers. A true Muslim must pray five times a day, even though there is no mosque around.

A mosque functions like any other temple in RuneQuest. Through prayer, a believer can gain access to a Blessing from God. Since there is no difference in dedication and function between mosques, there is no restriction to the Blessings that can be acquired at a given site. The only limit is that an Imam must be present and willing to teach that particular blessing. Blessings that are available at all mosques are: all common Divine Magic except Excommunicate, Absorption, Breathe Water, Fear, Heal Body, Madness, Mindblast, Reflection, Regrow Limb, *Jihad [Berserk]*, *Shield*, *Sureshot*, *Truescimitar*, *Truespear*. Italicized blessings are granted only when a Jihad, or Holy War, is declared. Other holy sites exist that can grant extra blessings to a believer.
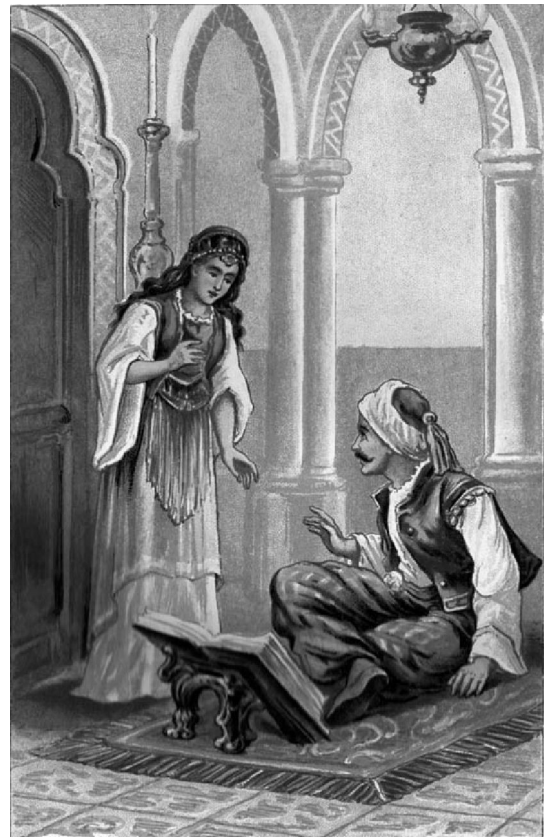
At least once during his life a believer must make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy place of Islam. In game terms, this pilgrimage allows a character to acquire any blessings he wishes for free. There is no limit but POW to the blessings he can learn there, nor to the magic items he can recharge, provided they are of Islamic origin.

Roleplaying a Muslim

A Muslim character should:
– show great respect for the name of God and of the Prophet
– never use his or her crafting skills to represent a human, animal or plant being
– never eat pork
– never drink alcohol

Creating a Muslim character

Strange as it might seem from a modern perspective, the Arabian nation was at that time more civilized than Europe. The Arabs taught the Europeans the basic principles of mathematics, as well as a great deal of ancient philosophy that had been lost during the early Dark Ages. Even though there is no great difference between peasants, starting at the townspeople level of culture a Muslim character is expected to be far more civilized than his Christian counterpart. He is more likely to be literate, is more concerned with personal cleanliness (if water is available, of course), and shows more tolerance towards other cultures. More tolerance compared to the mediaeval standards, of course.

A Muslim scholar has had much more opportunities to study the ancient tomes of knowledge than his European equivalent, and is therefore capable of showing a much broader point of view on many subjects. He can easily humble a Christian sage by means of his deeper knowledge, but his religion and his wisdom discourage him from doing so. For these reasons, it is advised that a Player Character who wishes to impersonate a scholar choose the Islamic religion.

Muslims consider the role of women in society as being rather fixed, with the real authority in a family being the husband. Polygamy is allowed by Islam, but not encouraged. Only rulers and merchants can afford multiple wives, but never more than four. Wives of powerful rulers (and sometimes even concubines) may be

as powerful as the ruler himself, but they must remain in the shadow of their man for their conduct to be considered acceptable. Which is, by the way, exactly the same as with Christian women at that time.

A Muslim character has Arabic as his native language. If he is from the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily or Apulia he also receives Language (Castilian or Catalan or Aragonese), Language (Sicilian) or Language (Apulian) as an extra advanced skill in order to be able to communicate with other characters.

Sorcery

Use the sorcery rules described in the RuneQuest Companion, plus any additional rule that is not tied to another setting, to represent sorcery in Stupor Mundi. Sorcery is usually despised by most religions, as it is regarded by both Christian and Muslim clergymen as being "the Devil's work", but some priests or even religious orders, like the Dominican Order of Preachers, may tolerate it. Sorcery is often mistaken for paganism, and paganism for sorcery.

Creating a Sorcerer character

A sorcerer must come from a townsman, noble or mariner background. Arabian characters are recommended as sorcerers, as they have a less limited access to libraries, but Christian characters can be sorcerers, too, and the character gallery will detail famous Christian sorcerers of the time like Michael Scot. Consult your Gamemaster if you want to start your character as a former student of one of these famous magicians.

To create a Sorcerer, use the Wizard profession as described in RuneQuest. For each Runecasting skill provided by the profession, give the character knowledge of a sorcery Manipulation skill instead, starting with Manipulate (Magnitude). Sorcery spells must be purchased with free skill points as described in the basic rules.

A sorcery using character can be a member of the Christian or Islamic religion. He can become an Initiate or a Priest in these religions if their leaders allow him to, as they will likely do if the sorcerer can supply political influence or knowledge. Bigoted priests in unknown villages, on the other hand, are more likely to regard the sorcerer's magic as coming from the Devil, and to order their flock to lynch him, regardless of the consideration that the Pope himself may have for the man.

Paganism

The word "pagan" is a vulgate Latin expression indicating a "man from the countryside". This clearly indicates in what sort of environment, in Stupor Mundi, you are likely to find non-Christian people that still worship their Roman, Greek or Phoenician ancestors' deities. Since most people at that time used to live in the country and not in cities, hiding in their lord's castle in case of danger, this kind of worship is by no means widespread, but is certainly not marginal in the Stupor Mundi time frame.

Pagan characters must exhibit formal adherence to Christian principles, and may or may not be in good terms with Christianity, at the player and Gamesmaster's opinion. They may not be initiated to either Christianity or Islam. In most cases the fact that the character worships the Old Gods or spirits must be hidden from church authorities, for fear of witchcraft accusations.

Roleplaying a pagan

Given the virtuous examples most priests give to their followers, you, as a pagan character, are rightly entitled to feel contempt towards these two-faced Christians. However, you know you must not show this openly at any cost, for the retribution would be bitter. Be also prepared to meet people who firmly believe that you are a worshipper of the Devil, because most monotheists consider all deities but their own as being thoroughly evil.

Nobles hardly ever worship pagan deities, no matter the distance from the nearest city. It is just a fact that position in the Church and political power were too often interlaced at the time, and no ruler would be so stupid to cut himself off from gaining more power by just worshipping the wrong deity. It was much more frequent for them to be secretly accused of paganism ("consorting with the Devil") by their subjects when their behaviour became too gruesome, but in few or no cases did this eventually lead to formal accusations or religious trials. Notable exceptions existed but they will be described in their own section.

Creating a pagan character

A pagan character has access to all runic procedures described in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook under the Rune Magic chapter. He is the only character who can learn the Runecasting skill, but he still has to integrate a Rune in order to become capable of casting magic. Characters who have the Priest occupation in Stupor Mundi are always assumed to be Christian Priests or Imams, so they never receive the Runecasting skill. The most common form of pagan magician in Mediaeval Christian Europe is therefore the Witch. Note that a Witch need not be necessarily evil, though most bigoted Christians will believe so.

Most Barbarians worship pagan deities. Follow the normal RuneQuest rules to generate characters from such a barbarian background, including pagan priests, but keep in mind that at that time only limited areas in Europe were still pagan, Lithuania and the other Baltic areas being the most interesting example.

Finally, remember that you can roleplay a pagan character only with your Gamesmaster's permission.

The Age of Stupor Mundi

De aetate stuporis mundi

Although many consider the history of the European Dark Ages as a colourless sequence of semi-barbarian rulers and greedy popes, this is only one face of the truth. Medieval history is a tale of peoples, cultures and religions. The more or less violent expansion of Christianity over the ruins of the old Roman Empire in Europe during the Middle Ages is an epic in its own. Although the majority of Europeans had converted by the time Emperor Frederick was born, including his fierce Viking ancestors, there were still a lot of areas not yet belonging to the Christian faith, or subject to Muslim rule. Often these religious struggles were just an excuse for a clash of cultures, or for wars driven by economic interests rather than religion, with the Christian populations not always being on the most civilized side, since they were usually just Celtic or German barbarians recently converted to the new faith.

This chapter provides a brief summary of the civil and cultural background of the various areas in the thirteenth century, along with the historical events that lead to the situation described. A few lands are in fact similar to the common depiction of the Middle Ages given by adventure books, notably France and the Papal state, and as such they are not described in depth. However, you will possibly find more variety than you have thought before.

Some descriptions will also include peculiar facts that must be considered when creating a character who hails from the highlighted area, such as cultural level, religion or peculiar weapons. When no information is provided, assume that any character coming from that area must be a Roman Catholic of Peasant, Townsman or Noble origin.

> Leave Heaven to the Lord of Heavens, and Earth to the children of man.
>
> – Salinguerra da Romano

Castles, towns and abbeys

During the earlier Dark Ages the bulk of the European population moved from the cities, which had flourished under the Roman Empire, to the countryside. This migration was caused by the frequent invasions on the part of barbarian populations coming from Eastern Europe, which were attracted to the cities by the loot that could be found there. Once the barbarians had all settled down and converted to Christianity, very little people remained in the once-overcrowded cities, now reduced to the size of small towns if not totally deserted.

The presence of more wealth in the cities, however, did not prevent pillaging of the countryside. Bandit raids were very frequent at that time, and things became even worse when the Vikings and the Arabs started raiding the coastal areas by ship. This caused the evolution of various types and sizes of castle where the local ruler could keep a permanent garrison to fend off bandits and marauders. Despite the fact that the militia used to rob them, too, peasants tended to build their villages close to a castle, in order to seek refuge there when an enemy army approached. This happened, incidentally, also when the army was just passing by, as many armed forces used to feed themselves by pillaging hapless farmers. Thus the castle, and not the city, became the real seat of power for the medieval ruler, and it was always the best-fortified position that was chosen as the fief capitol rather than the largest or richest city. Later on, when Empires and Kingdoms were rebuilt, the Emperor built imperial castles in most areas to strengthen his own rule over that of the feudal lords.

When trade and craftsmanship reappeared at the end of the early Dark Ages, they started to do so in those villages, called burghs, that were located just outside of the castles. This caused the urban settlements to grow once again to town size. When the castle had been built in or near an existing city, the city itself grew in importance.
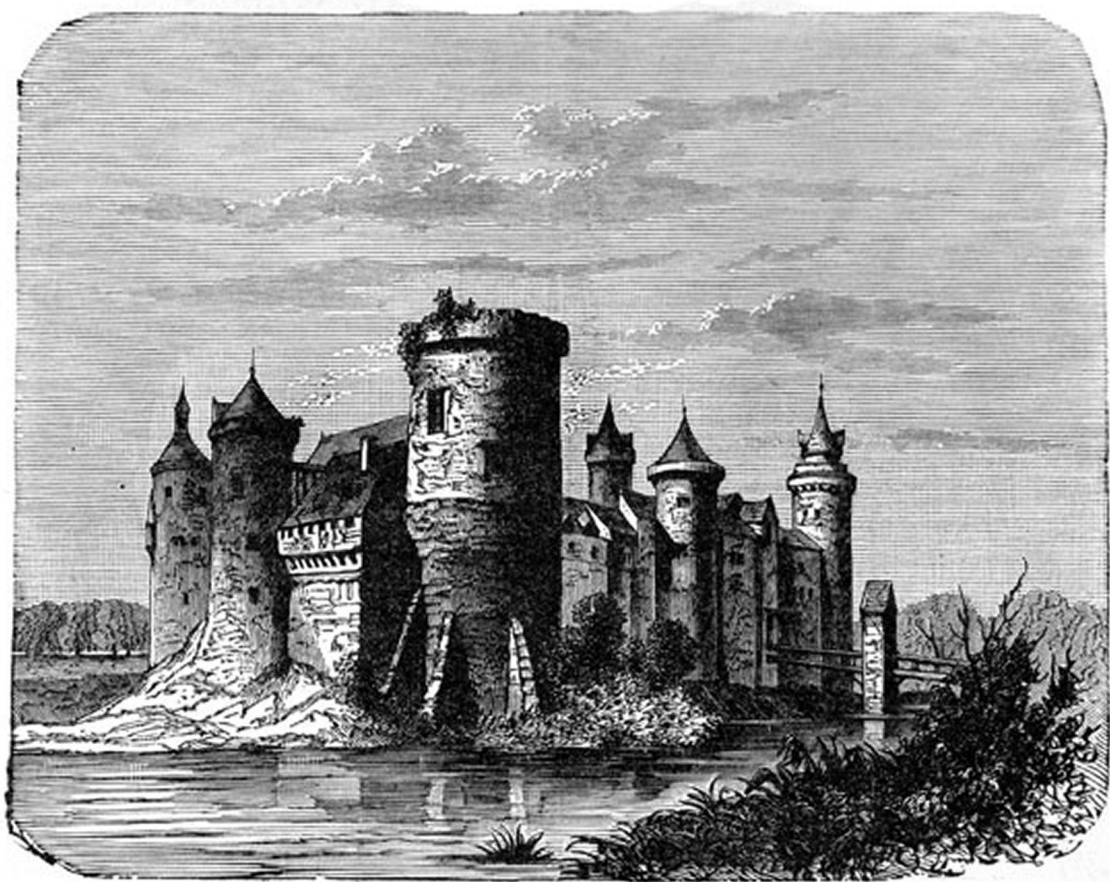
Guelphs and Ghibellines

One last thing that must be mentioned is that in many cases during the Dark Ages the actual ruler of a city was its Bishop, who was one of the few literate people in town. Similarly, the actual political power in rural areas where a Benedictine abbey was located was held by the Abbot, who, several centuries after St. Benedict had founded his Order, had often turned into a political rather than spiritual leader. This practice continued also when the old cities became important again, so if a city ruled by a bishop also had a castle and the military power to control the surrounding area, the bishop frequently turned into a feudal ruler to all intents and purposes, often neglecting his spiritual duties in favour of the more mundane arts of administration and military. It was at this time that the ranking position in the Catholic hierarchy, at least in some areas, including Rome, started to be reserved for the noble or rich families, whereas they had been open to everybody when the bishops had no actual power over the land. At this point the Emperor requested that all bishops that also served as landlords were appointed by the Crown and not by the Church. As it was to be expected, this did not please the Pope, and the so-called Investiture Controversy was born.

Although the matter of investitures had mostly been settled at the time of Frederick, there were still many bishop-princes around in the thirteenth century, and the Pope was very careful in keeping the mundane power of the Emperor subject to his final ruling. However, as he had a very limited military power, the Pontiff relied on the loyalty of his allies in order to limit the Emperor's. In doing this, the Popes exploited an anti-Swabian coalition that had formed in Germany in the previous century and was referred to as the Welfen after the ruling faction of Bavaria, while the Hohenstaufen allies were usually referred to as the Weiblingen coalition after the name of the main Swabian stronghold. When the heart of the anti-Hohenstaufen rebellion moved from Germany to Italy these two names mutated into the terms Guelph and Ghibelline.

Each city used to side with one of the factions, either the Emperor or the free cities supported by, and supporting, the Pope. This division survived even after House

19

Hohenstaufen became extinct and the Imperial Crown passed to other houses. You could easily tell to which faction a city or castle belonged by simply looking at its fortifications: a row of plain, square merlons meant the city was Guelph, while the sight of a swallow-tailed merlon revealed a Ghibelline city which supported the Emperor.

The Holy Roman Empire

The Empire was founded in 800 AD by Charlemagne, a Frank king, as an attempt to re-establish the Western Roman Empire that had dissolved more than four centuries before. Charlemagne's domains ranged from the Pyrenees to Bohemia and Moravia, and included Northern and Central Italy down to the area where the papal state was located in the thirteenth century. The Empire was primarily a feudal state, so the Emperor did not inherit his crown directly from his father, but had to be elected by the feudal princes of Germany, who were also called Elector Princes. Most Emperors in the 12th and 13th century, however, belonged to house Hohenstaufen, who ruled Swabia. When the Swabians seized the imperial crown, the Emperor had lost some influence, and in fact he ruled only upon Germany and Italy.

Germany

First of all, there was no such thing as a German nation during the Middle Ages. The areas that we now know as Germany and Austria were then a boiling crucible of lesser and greater feudal princes that struggled for their personal supremacy. Frederick's ancestors had had to fight a lot in order to reaffirm their rule upon these rebellious petty lords, and Frederick Barbarossa's everlasting argument with his cousin Henry the Lion is one of the clearest examples of how much influence the Emperor actually had over the German princes.

Still, this area was usually the most faithful to the Emperor, once he had been rightfully crowned. The nobles knew that their opportunity to seize Charlemagne's throne would come as soon as the current Emperor died, so they were not so eager to rebel against the current ruler. Withdrawing their due help from the Crown was another story, of course, and it was their usual political course whenever they felt they could gain some easy political or territorial advantage. So it was that the Emperor, albeit being the highest mundane authority of Christianity, was often lacking funds, supplies and troops. Much to the enjoyment of the Italian cities, which were the ones that actually revolted.

The Italian communes

Northern Italy was a vast, fertile plain that could support a lot of wealthy urban areas, encased by two mountain ranges that protect it from invaders. Due to this relative safety, the cities in this area had developed into independent political entities, called communes, that often fought among themselves, refusing to cooperate unless a great danger was approaching. They usually had no feudal noble as ruler, and were governed by a city council made mostly of city nobles or members of the merchant class. The main exception at that time were the DaRomano and the D'Este, noble families who ruled large areas in the North East.

The war between the Hohenstaufen emperors and the free communes is considered the great Italian epic of the Middle Ages. In the 12th century Frederick I Barbarossa razed the city of Milan, but the Lombard League of communes had its revenge at the battle of Legnano, where the Emperor had to hide among the corpses to escape an even more shameful fate.

Frederick the Second continued his grandfather's war against Milan and its allies, achieving some more victories but preferring a diplomatic solution whenever possible, usually after giving a demonstration of his armies' might. In the end, though, in a battle against the city of Bologna, Frederick's most promising heir, King Enzo, was captured and held captive for the rest of his life, thus causing the Hohenstaufen dynasty's eventual demise.

Venice

As happened in the Baltic and Northern Sea with the Hanseatic League, sea trade in the Mediterranean was dominated, in the late Middle Ages, by fleets built by semi-independent cities, ruled by merchant families rather than by nobles. Unlike the Hanseatic League, though, the Italian mariner cities never allied, and in fact they were usually at war with one another, until only one of them emerged as the undisputed ruler of the Mediterranean. This last one was Venice, which retained its primacy in sea trade for several centuries. In the thirteenth century, however, the rival cities of Pisa and Genoa were still powerful and able to muster strong fleets, although they were no longer a match for the Venetian fleet.

Venice is built upon several islands in a great lagoon. At the time of the Stupor Mundi it had no direct connection to the mainland, and any trip between Venice and the neighbouring cities like Padua or Verona always included a small lap by boat. Venice controlled very little land in the Italian peninsula, but it ruled a large extent of the Dalmatian coastline and several islands in the Aegean

Sea, including the islands of Corfu, Cephalonia, Rhodes and even Crete, which they called the Kingdom of Candia.
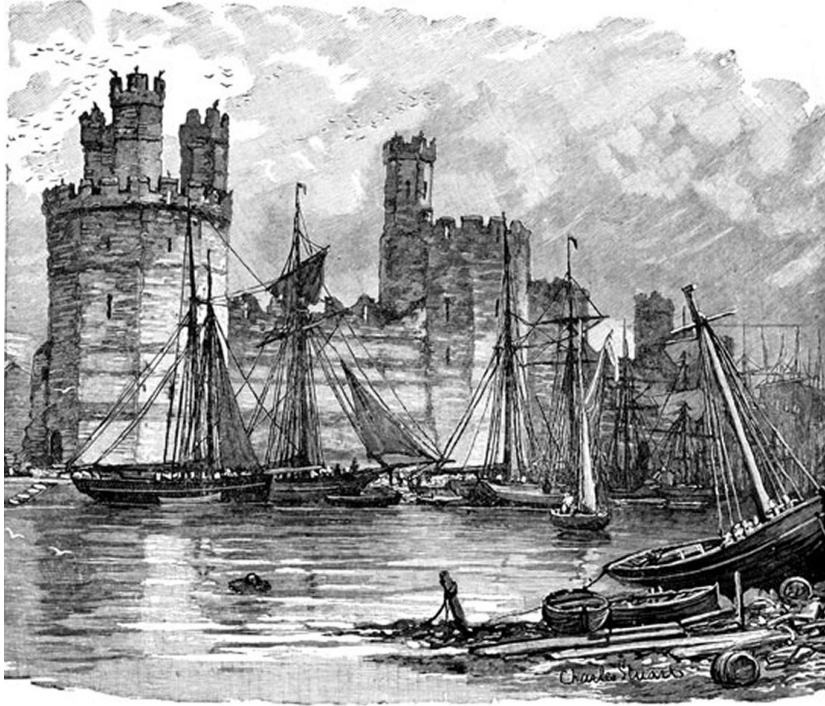
The formal ruler of Venice was called the Doge, a sort of dictator who was elected for life and commanded the city fleets in case of war. The Doge had less effective power than the respect the Venetians showed for him would suggest, and all the Doges who tried to become real tyrants were overthrown and mercilessly executed. The actual power was held by the merchant families, who formed Venice's Great Council and elected the Doge.

Venice was formerly a colony of the Eastern Roman Empire until the Fourth Crusade in 1204 AD, when the Venetian leaders that controlled the fleet that was carrying the crusaders to the Holy Land hijacked the expedition to Byzantium in order to sack the city. From that moment on it was clear that Venice had become richer and more powerful than Byzantium. This also shows how much control the Venetians had upon all sea expeditions in the Mediterranean.

The tight relationship between Venice and the Eastern Roman Empire is clearly reflected by the eastern style shown by Venetian churches and by the fact that its Archbishop was, and still is, called Patriarch rather than Bishop. According to the principle that everything that is in Italy reports to the Pope, however, the Patriarch of Venice always belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

All characters coming from Venice or one of its many coastal colonies in the Mediterranean are of Mariner background, and belong to the Catholic religion. Follow this guideline to create a character coming from Genoa or Pisa, too.

Rome

It would be easy to say that Rome was the Pope during Frederick's time, but this subject is less trivial than one might think. The City was in fact ruled by petty nobles that often succeeded in electing their dummies as Popes, thus keeping both Rome and the Catholic Church under their control.

The Pope did not control only the city of Rome, but also ruled over the lands that Charlemagne had appointed as the pontiff's personal domain, which covered the area of Latium. He also had his own regular militia, although it was in fact no match for any organized army and the Pope often had to rely on external help to defend his mundane properties in case of war.

The Kingdom of Sicily

Southern Italy was at that time among the richest and most civilised areas in Europe. Sacked by barbarians after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, it was later invaded by General Belisarius of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Byzantine rule over the easternmost part of Italy, known as Apulia, lasted so long that even now many towns in that area have a Greek-derived name. The area near Naples was later seized by the Lombards who called it the Duchy of Beneventum, and the Arabs invaded Sicily in the ninth century. All the southern lands were finally conquered by the De Hauteville, Norman adventurers who were no more than mercenaries and acquired the title of Duke and King after overthrowing the previous rulers. Despite this fact, the Normans were not disliked in the area, and they allowed the Byzantine and Arabian culture to survive in their lands. Emperor Frederick's mother, Constance, was a De Hauteville herself.

Emperor Frederick, after many years of struggle against the Arabian bandits of the Sicilian inland, issued a special pardon for all Muslims who gave up banditry, provided they moved to the town of Lucera, in Apulia, which hosted the greatest Muslim colony on the Italian

mainland. So it happened that in a great castle in this town, known as the Rock of Lucera or Saracens' Rock, was formed a garrison of Muslim archers whose loyalty to the Emperor was unsurpassed. Many of them would forfeit their lives in the last battle of House Hohenstaufen against the French.

In various towns of inland Sicily and Apulia, it is still possible to find colonies of former Byzantine citizens. Although subject to the Roman Pope, these people follow the Byzantine religion. As a consequence of these facts, a character coming from Sicily or Apulia can thus belong to any monotheistic religion in the game.

Several imperial castles were built in Southern Italy on appointment of Emperor Frederick, and, unlike the Rock of Lucera, many of them still exist. The most famous of them is Castel del Monte in Apulia, which is the castle pictured on the back of the Italian-minted one eurocent coin. Its peculiar, octagonal shape has given rise to a lot of speculations on the part of modern scholars, as medieval men never chose a number unless it had some meaning for them. Perhaps this shape was suggested by the Astrologers Michael Scot or Guido Bonatti, and the castle walls have some magical properties that only a quest may discover.

France

Ruled by one undisputed King and having a strong national consciousness even among the peasants, France was, at that time, the only real Nation in continental Europe. The Kingdom acknowledged the German ruler as the Holy Roman Emperor, but this was an utterly formal title, as Charlemagne's heir no longer had any real authority over the offspring of the Franks.

The Iberian Peninsula

The Spanish nation was at that time limited to the Northern part of the Iberian region, and was fragmented into four small kingdoms: Leon, Castilla, Aragona and Navarre. Portugal was the fifth Christian regional power. The southern part of the peninsula was under Moorish control, and was called the Caliphate of Cordoba. The epic struggle of the Spanish Christian Kings to drive the Moors out of Spain, called the Spanish Reconquista, is usually identified with the saga of Rodrigo Diaz, the Cid Campeador, although the war lasted more than seven centuries. However, el Cid lived more than 100 years before the age of the Stupor Mundi. During Emperor Frederick's reign, in fact, the Spanish kings finally succeeded in capturing Cordoba and winning back almost all of the land they had lost to the Arabs, although the

final battle against the Moors of Grenada only took place in 1492.

Even though it is possible that the conquered populations of Spain were subject to religious persecutions on the part of their Arabian rulers, they did not suffer any civil drawback, because the civilization level of the Arabs outclassed that of their European subjects by far. A visit to what remains of the Arabian buildings in Spain can easily provide evidence of this.

Player characters from the Iberian Peninsula can belong to the Islamic religion if their player so wishes.

The British Isles

Britain was at that time divided into three kingdoms: England was ruled by people of German or Scandinavian lineage (the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans), while Wales and Scotland still hosted truly Celtic populations. It is noteworthy to say that while the Roman domination had taught the Christian religion to the original Celtic tribes of Britain, the new rulers were pagan when they landed there, and they converted later. This made the distinction between Scottish, Welsh and English people even more sharp. Some historians believe that the legends about King Arthur originated from the struggles between the Celtic populations and the Anglo-Saxons

Although invaded several times by Vikings and other pagan people and currently ruled by the English Crown, thirteenth century Ireland was still a Celtic land with a strong Christian faith dating back to St. Patrick, some 1000 years before. This long-lived Christian tradition had incorporated, however, a lot more elements coming form the Druidic cults of the ancient era than in Britain.

Scandinavia

Although it had influenced the history of Europe in a major way, by sending out wave after wave of conquering Viking long ships, Scandinavia was no longer a major area of interest at that time, in which it had turned into an agricultural land converted to Christianity. Its former inhabitants had, however, left a significant mark upon Europe in the previous centuries. Likewise, the ancient spirits of that land are still strong, even though no one worships them any longer, and magical creatures like trolls or giants can still be encountered in the frozen land of Scandinavia. Use the descriptions and statistics found in the RuneQuest manuals to represent these weird creatures.

The Baltic area

The Baltic area is still a barbarian land in the thirteenth century. Only citizens of Riga, a city built by German colonists and ruled by the Germans, can be considered real town folks in the area. The Baltic populations are the only surviving Europeans who still hold tight to their polytheistic religious practices, called the Romuva. This means that a character from the Baltic area is the best candidate for being a pagan in a Stupor Mundi game. Note that a Baltic character that still believes in the Romuva religion is a fierce opponent of any Christian party. Consider this carefully before allowing such a character in your campaign. Allowing a pagan Baltic character in a campaign featuring Teutonic Knights is like allowing a Muslim PC in a Crusade scenario.

The Sack of Byzantium

The Christian army that had left for the Fourth Crusade was carried by a Venetian fleet. The pious combatants were too poor, however, to pay for the passage, and so the Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo, cursed be his name, demanded that the Crusaders help the Venetians capture enemy cities on their way to the Holy Land. First they conquered the Dalmatian city of Zara, but as their lust for blood and preyed gold was not satiated, they headed for Constantinople, and the Christian Army stormed and looted the capitol of Christianity instead of battling the infidels. Many treasures and works of art were stolen, and are now on display in St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. Such is the treacherousness of these Venetians!

The Eastern Roman Empire

Contrary to what had happened to the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern one still existed in the thirteenth century. Its surviving power was, however, nothing but a shadow of what it used to be in the previous centuries. The territory it controlled was first divided into four shards after the Sack of Byzantium during the Fourth Crusade (see box), and then gradually conquered by European kingdoms in the Balkan area and by the Turkish Empire in Anatolia. Frederick's Norman ancestors had already managed to conquer the Empire's colonies in Italy. During Frederick's reign, however, the Empire is still a major power, and, above all, its capitol Byzantium, also called Constantinople after the great Roman Emperor Constantine, is the most splendid city in the known world.

Byzantium used to be the seat of both the Eastern Roman Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople, who is the highest authority in the Orthodox Church, although not as influential as the Roman Pontiff is in the Catholic Church. The current emperor is, however, a Catholic puppet Emperor enthroned by the Crusaders in 1204, and most clergymen in the city are Latin-speaking, Catholic priests. This so-called Latin Empire, however, controls only the area around Byzantium, while the other shards of the Eastern Empire are still ruled by the Greek nobility, who will retake Byzantium from the Latins in 1261 AD. Characters from the Eastern Roman Empire speak Greek and belong to the Byzantine religion, unless you wish them to be a part of the Latin occupation force.

Russia

During Frederick's reign, Russia lived its most famous epic, the saga of Aleksandr Nevskyi. In fact, it was Frederick himself who sent the Teutonic Knights to the Northeast to convert the last pagan areas of Europe. Despite the fact that Russia was a Christian land at that time, the Teutonic Knights started the invasion of Novgorod that culminated with the famous battle of Lake Peipus, Aleksandr Nevskyi's most famous victory. So despite the long distance between them and the lack of direct interaction the two national heroes were in fact adversaries.

Mythic Russia

You can find it convenient to consult the game **Mythic Russia** by Firebird Productions for more information about Russia and the Baltic Area.

Famous Characters

De Stuporis Mundi viribus clarissimis

One thing that marks the difference between our era and the Stupor Mundi age is the limited importance of humble people in the Middle Ages. Whereas press, television and the Internet have given all the people of the third millennium an unprecedented opportunity to express their needs and feelings, the population of medieval Europe was almost completely made of masses of unnamed peasants for whose destiny the rulers hardly ever cared. On the other hand, the famous people of the times (Emperors, Kings, Bishops and great preachers) were given so much consideration that their name was well known by everybody even with the limited means of communication that were available.

This chapter describes all the European and Middle Eastern characters of the Thirteenth century that may have a remarkable influence on your adventurer's story. It will not be easy for your character to actually meet them, unless he himself succeeds in becoming an important character, but it is possible that he becomes involved in his deeds as a supporter, a soldier or a messenger. In some cases, like Michael Scot, the famous character may be the main source for some special knowledge, either magical or mundane.

Note that two important characters who are still alive in the first two decades of the thirteenth century, St. Dominic of Guzman and St. Francis of Assisi, have been described in the chapter about religion. A player character that joins their religious order before their death can easily meet them and be instructed by them if he wishes.

Frederick II Hohenstaufen

Holy Roman Emperor, King of Sicily, Stupor Mundi

Frederick's mother, Constance De Hauteville, was a Norman Princess that had taken religious vows, but was later requested by her family to marry Emperor Conrad Hohenstaufen when she was rather old, because both the Swabians and the Norman kings of Sicily wanted to unite their possessions under one heir. She bore Frederick, her only son, on a journey, assisted by Arabian nurses. This occurrence later allowed the Pope and some of Frederick's enemies to state that he was in fact the Anti-Christ, who was expected to be born from an aged nun.

Constance died when Frederick was only four, and the young prince was the Pope's ward while he was under age. Pope Innocent III had him swear that he would never attempt to unite the crown of Sicily with that of Holy

Roman Emperor, for he wanted to keep the two kingdoms separated in order to better control the political situation in Italy. Being raised in the geographical and commercial centre of the Mediterranean Sea, however, gave Frederick incredible opportunities to learn all the arts and sciences that were practised at that time, and he swiftly learned to speak and write at least nine languages, including Latin, Greek and Arabic. In the end, Frederick grew much more ambitious than the Pope would believe, and in 1220 he managed to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor even though he was also King of Sicily.

Frederick was as strong and determined in dealing with his enemies, especially the Italian city-states that were seeking independence, as his father Conrad and his grandfather, Frederick Barbarossa, had been. He was, however, less bloodthirsty, and always used diplomatic means to achieve a victory when war could be avoided. He was cunning and ambitious, and this earned him the privilege of being excommunicated by an angry Pope more than once. Frederick was also a very knowledgeable man who collected exotic animals and rare volumes, and had hundreds of Greek texts translated from Arabic into Latin to satisfy his lust for knowledge. He founded the first State University in the world in Naples, which is still named after him even though eight centuries have passed.

Sultan Malik al-Kamil

King of Egypt

Muhammad al-Malik al-Kamil was a nephew of the greatest of all Saracen warriors, the fierce Saladin. He became Sultan of Egypt in 1218 and resisted two subsequent crusades, more or less keeping control over the land that the Saladin had retaken from the Christians. He built a famous Madrassa in Cairo, and stopped all persecutions against the Coptic Christians of Egypt. Legends say that al-Kamil also met with St. Francis, who uselessly tried to convert him to Christianity.

Having received news, from travellers to Sicily, of an educated King named Frederick, al-Kamil wrote to him and even sent and ambassador to Palermo. Much to his surprise, the Emperor replied to his letters in Arabic. Later on, when al-Kamil met Frederick in person, he could appreciate the fact that the Emperor was actually able to speak Arabic fluently. This led to a very friendly relationship between al-Kamil and Frederick II, and the Sultan even offered to return Jerusalem to the Christians in exchange for peace.

In 1226 the Sultan was opposed by his own brother al-Muazzam, King of Damascus, and Frederick saw in this an opportunity to retake Jerusalem. He organized a Crusade, but secretly made a deal with al-Kamil: the Christians would get Jerusalem back and they would eventually exploit its position to keep al-Muazzam out of Egypt. When the Crusaders reached the Holy Land, however, al-Muazzam had died, and the final negotiation between the two kings just allowed free access to Jerusalem for Christians in exchange for a ten-year truce. The friendship between the two sovereigns continued, but both of them were blamed as traitors by the respective clergy for bargaining with the Infidels instead of fighting them!
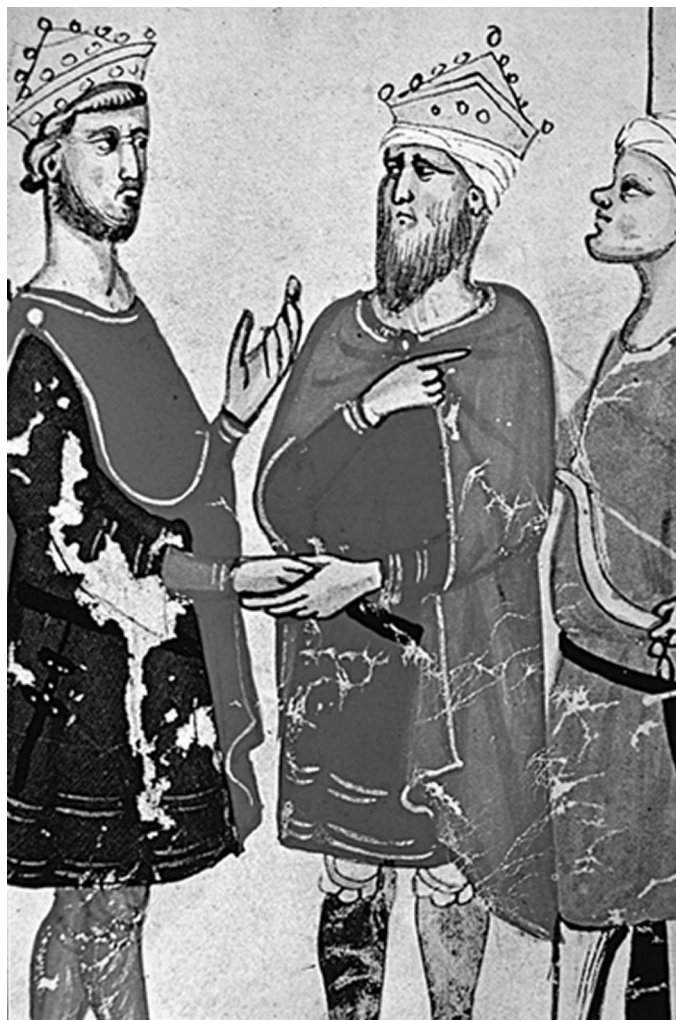
Hermann von Salza

Grand Master of the Teutonic Order

Hermann von Salza was a German nobleman who became Grand Master of the Teutonic Order between 1208 and 1211. In 1216 he met the young King Frederick, and a long and fruitful friendship was born between the two. Hermann was a valiant knight and a great politician, but above all he was a wonderful diplomat, particularly when dealing with the Papacy. In several situations the only factor that prevented a crisis between Frederick and the Pope was Hermann's intervention.

When Frederick managed to win his Crusade against the Saracens without bloodshed, Hermann and his Teutonic Knights were the only Knightly Order that supported him, and he did not abandon him even when the Pope finally excommunicated him. He was the only man who witnessed the Agreement of Jaffa between the Emperor and the Sultan Malik al-Kamil.

Hermann expanded the Order's area of activity from Spain and Palestine to the whole Europe and Mediterranean area. He founded castles in Apulia, and created many bases in Prussia and the Baltic region, the only part of Europe where pagan cults still survived. In 1226 he obtained from Emperor Frederick a formal permission to conquer and Christianise Prussia, where the Teutonic Knights ruled for centuries and from where they launched several attacks against Lithuania and Russia.

Despite being of true German origin, unlike Frederick who had been born and raised in Italy, Hermann chose the Kingdom of Sicily as his retirement place when he resigned from Grand Master in 1238 and ended his life in Salerno. He was buried in Barletta, in Apulia. After his death the relationship between Frederick and the Pope worsened greatly.

Michael Scot

Master Astrologer

Michael was the most famous Astrologer in the thirteenth century, a time when people believed that the stars had a great influence on their lives. The Pope granted him a bishopric, but he refused it and stayed in the service of the Emperor. He used to have great dinners where his guests were served by spirit waiters whose body was made of smoke.

Michael was so clever an Astrologer that he could anticipate the exact circumstances of his death. He predicted that a small stone, not heavier than an ounce, would kill him. For this reason he always kept an iron helmet upon his head to prevent this fateful event. Alas, one day while he was attending a holy ceremony in church, a circumstance which forced him to take the helmet off, a stone detached from a marble arch and hit him directly on the head, killing him on the spot.

> Such is the power that stars have on a man's life that even the most knowledgeable of the star readers cannot escape it.

People that befriend Michael Scot during the game have access to unthinkable sources of magic knowledge, including, but not limited to, all sorcerous Illusion spells. Having Michael as a mentor grants a character a full +20 to any sorcery skill increase roll.

Ezzelino Da Romano

Ruler of the Trevigian Mark, Son of the Devil

Ezzelino's ancestors had fought against Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in the twelfth century, but later they had joined the Ghibelline cause, receiving Lordship over the towns of Bassano, Marostica and Treviso in exchange. Having given military help to Emperor Frederick II on many occasions, Ezzelino managed to extend his family domains, either by conquest, by treachery or by Imperial grants. At its greatest extent, the territory he controlled included the cities of Brescia, Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Belluno and Trento. Through the Brenner Pass and Ezzelino's land the imperial troops were allowed to safely traverse the Alps from Germany to Italy.

> Ezzelino was more feared than the Devil. He was unsurpassed in cruelty, not even by Nero, or Domitianus, or Decius, who were the greatest tyrants
>
> – Salimbene, mediaeval historian.

When he took control over rich Padua, he imprisoned, tortured and executed hundreds – some say thousands – of people, often guilty only of being the offspring of former political adversaries of his. His mother was believed to be a witch, and predicted to him that his fortune would end "in Axanum", which he interpreted as being the town of Baxanum. It is worth noting that his final defeat, which happened after the downfall of House Hohenstaufen, by the hand of other nobles who had grown sick of his cruelty, took place at Caxanum on the Adda.

Ezzelino is the perfect villain in a chivalrous adventure: a ravenous ruler that is rumoured to be a black magician of non-human origin. His physical appearance, made more hellish by his sharp teeth and his fierce eyes, even suggest that there may be something true, in RuneQuest terms, in these rumours. Remember, however, that Ezzelino is the most loyal of the Emperor's retainers in the rebellious lands of Nortern Italy, and that he married one of the Emperor's daughters, Selvaggia, so opposing him can easily lead an adventuring party to being outlawed by Imperial decree.

EZZELINO III·DA ROMANO

Adventurer Life

De vita stuporis mundi hominum

In this chapter we describe additional skills and rules that complement the RuneQuest Main Rulebooks, in order to better portray the everyday lives, jobs and battles of the Stupor Mundi people. The rules section provides several options that are strongly recommended to make your characters' equipment more similar to the actual gear of medieval adventurers, and to make combat more exciting and realistic.

Another section deals with creatures and monsters that are peculiar to the Stupor Mundi setting. It explains which creatures from the RuneQuest monster list are not recommended to include in Stupor Mundi adventures, which creatures in Stupor Mundi differ from the published RuneQuest versions, and describes new creatures from Christian and Arabian classic mythology that are not present among the standard RuneQuest monsters.

Language Table

Family	Language	Intra-language penalty	Other penalties	Literacy
Latin	Latin	-	All Romance -50%	Latin
Romance	Italian	-10% to -20%	Latin -50%	Latin
	French and Provençal	-20%	Latin -50%	Latin
	Spanish idioms	-20%	Latin -50%	Latin
German	German	-10%	English -40%	Latin
	English	-	German -40%	Latin
Greek	Greek	-	-	Greek
Arabic	Arabic	-10%		Arabic

Languages

Although the rule of thumb that allows characters with 80% Language skill to read and write in that language may be adequate in a Fantasy setting, it is not the best way to portray the European world of the Middle Ages, where the immense treasures of knowledge left by the Greeks and the Romans were still available but very few people were able to read them. Stupor Mundi uses a different system to evaluate your character's capability to read a document or to understand a person who speaks another language.

It is manifest how Latin would benefit only a few, while the vulgate language will be useful to many

- Dante, The Convivium.

Related languages.

Most languages in Stupor Mundi share a common ancestor with some other language. Therefore, when a character is attempting to communicate with a stranger whose language he does not know, but he can speak a related language, he can do this by rolling a test of the language he knows, subtracting a penalty that is determined by the relationship between the two languages.

Latin is hardly spoken any longer in the Stupor Mundi era, except in religious ceremonies. It is however the language most widely used for writing, and almost half of Europe speaks a romance language, that is a language that is a derivative of Latin. There are three main families of romance languages: French, Spanish and Italian. Anyone speaking a language belonging to one of the three families can speak a language belonging to another family at -40%.

Italian is the language that most directly derived from Latin, but it has already evolved into a very different idiom, mainly because of the countless barbarian tribes that invaded the Italian peninsula in the Early Dark Ages. Moreover, the political divisions between the city-states create language barriers even between cities. The usual penalty for speaking with a person from another city in Italy is -10% if the cities are close to one another, but it can reach -20% for faraway areas like Venice and Sicily.

The Spanish family includes several different languages that have given rise, in modern Europe, to Castilian, Catalan and Portuguese, as well as languages that are hardly spoken any longer in modern Europe, like Aragonese. For game purposes, treat all the Iberian kingdoms as having a different language, with the penalty to speak to a person from another kingdom being -20%.

The French family is made of romance languages even though the Franks were a German people. There are two

main languages in the French families, the Language of Oil, or modern French, and the Language of Oc, or Provençal. French is spoken in the northern part of France, while Provençal is spoken in Southern France, North-western Italy and parts of Spain.

German is another widespread language that gave origin to different idioms. However, Germany is very fragmented in the late Middle Ages, and people tend to speak a local version of the basic language. Germans from distant areas suffer a -10% penalty to their Language skill when trying to communicate with each other.

English derived from many influences, including French and Latin, but in the end it is a German language. It has enough connections with German that anyone who speaks English can speak German at -40%, and vice versa. Celtic languages spoken in the British Isles, like Scottish and Welsh, have almost no connection with English.

Greek is spoken in the eastern Roman Empire and part of Anatolia (now called Turkey), but rarely outside the Byzantine area of influence. It is considered unrelated to all other languages, yet it is important because much of the ancient books, and a relevant part of the Bible, were written in Greek.

Arabic is a language unrelated to other languages in Stupor Mundi, too. It is spoken in Northern Africa, the Middle East and most of Spain. Arabian characters from very distant areas may have some difficulties understanding each other, though the penalty to communication between Arabians never exceeds -10%.

New Skills

Skills described here could just be defined as specialities of broader skills described in RuneQuest, such as Lore (Speciality) or Craft (speciality), but have been promoted to full skills because of the peculiar importance that thirteenth century people attributed to them.

Literacy (Alphabet) (INT)

In order tIn order to be able to read or write a manuscript, a character must know the basics of the related alphabet. There are three main alphabets in Western Europe: the Latin alphabet, the Greek alphabet and the Arabian alphabet. The Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet is used only in the easternmost part of Europe. A character can learn to read by acquiring the appropriate Literacy as an Advanced skill, provided that he already knows a language that is written with that alphabet. The Latin alphabet covers a wide array of languages, while the other alphabets are only used for one specific language.

In addition, Literacy (Latin) also teaches the basic syntax of classic Latin, so two erudite characters that are very skilled in written Latin can communicate in this language across the usual language barrier, although no one speaks Latin in everyday life any longer.

No matter how skilled he is in reading the related alphabet, a character's ability in reading a document can never exceed his ability to speak the language the document is written in. Apply the usual penalty for related languages before checking whether a character can use his full Literacy skill in order to read a text. Again, a passage that is written in plain Latin imposes no penalty whatsoever, unless the author used a very obscure style (such as, for instance, the phrasing used for a magic book).

When creating a character whose profession allows him to choose one Language as one of his advanced skills, a player can choose to give him the advanced skill of Literacy instead. Alternatively, Literacy can be purchased like any other advanced skills, but remember that most Europeans, even the nobles, were illiterate during the Middle Ages.

Falconry (POW+CHA)

Hunting with raptors was a very popular sport among the Dark Age nobles. Practising falconry was a mark of one's social status, much like playing golf is nowadays. Emperor Frederick himself wrote a treatise about falconry, probably based upon the translation of a similar work written by an Arabian scholar.

This skill allows a character to train and command a bird of prey. Possession of a suitable bird such as a falcon is the prerequisite for using this skill. A character cannot learn Falconry until he has at least 25% proficiency in Lore (Animal). Using Falconry to hunt requires two hours per roll, and can be performed while travelling by horse. A successful test means that the bird has caught rodents or

small birds enough for one meal. Using this skill with a nocturnal raptor such as an owl requires a Difficult Falconry test. A trained falcon can cost up to twice the price listed in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook.

Falcons do not normally attack humans or large animals, but with a Hard Falconry test the bird can be commanded to harass one target with its claws and beak, causing him to lose 1D3 Combat Actions per round until driven away. The bird cannot be targeted by missile weapons while harassing, and if the target wishes to hit the harassing bird with a close combat weapon he must subtract 40% plus the bird master's critical Falconry percentile from his Weapon skill. If another character tries to hit the pesky bird, each attack that does not hit the creature is supposed to hit its target, doing regular damage. Unless the bird is somehow magically protected from damage one blow is usually enough to kill it.

Astrology (INT)

People of the Middle Ages, from the lowliest peasant to the most educated scholar, believed that stars had a great influence upon a person's destiny. This was not considered to be in contrast with the religious precepts of Christianity or Islam. Many rulers kept an astrologer at their service, and Emperor Frederick was among them.

This skill allows the user to analyse the favourable and unfavourable influence of the stars upon a person's present and future destiny. The Astrologist must know the exact birth date of the person he is investigating upon. Discovering also the exact time of the day when the person was born allows more precise predictions. Astrologers often charge outrageous prices to perform their craft, usually not less than 100 silver pieces per 10% skill level they possess.

Astrology can be used to predict a character's future. The Astrologist must study the star alignments that witnessed the character's birth very carefully and then roll under his Astrology skill. If the roll is successful, a truth or prediction about the character is revealed by the Gamesmaster to the caster, who may choose to reveal it to the character or not. The Astrologer can attempt to make more predictions in a single reading of the stars, and each subsequent test is made at a -10% penalty. As soon as one test is failed the divination cannot reveal more. Players should keep track of all predictions made for their characters.

For each truth discovered the Astrologer must make a Persistence test. If the roll is not made, the Gamesmaster will express the truth in an obscure and sibylline form, or the truth will be an ominous and negative prediction. In any case, all predictions must not be more than a few words long.

Astrological Divination example

Sir Manfred von Gottingen, a Knight Templar, asks a Syrian astrologist to read the stars for him. The master astrologist is very skilled and uncovers four truths about Manfred's future. They are:

- Rely on the strength of steel
- A camel will mark your destiny
- You will receive the honour of the temple
- Danger is in water (ominous and obscure)

In a couple of days Sir Manfred is engaged in combat with the Infidels, and one lucky Saracen critically hits him with his spear. Sir Manfred attempts a parry with his sword and unexpectedly fails, but he uses the "Strength of Steel" prediction to reroll the parry and avoid a deadly wound. On the way back to his garrison, he runs out of water and repeatedly fails his survival roll. However, the Gamesmaster agrees that he can find water by following a camel in the desert, and he uses the second prediction to avoid sure death. Back to his garrison, he already has eight hero points stored and gains three from this adventure, so he needs just one more Hero Point to become a Master of the Templar Order, and the Gamesmaster allows him to use up the honour of the temple prediction to attain this prized rank. Finally, the wise Sir Manfred chooses to avoid all bodies of water from the moment he is informed of potential danger, so the Gamesmaster finally rules that the prediction about water means that he witnesses the drowning of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa during a Crusade and is greatly shocked by this fact.

An Astrologer can perform Astrological Divination upon himself at a -20% penalty to his skill.

For each truth discovered, the character has the equivalent of one Hero Point that he can spend to alter the course of events during play as described in RuneQuest, provided that the alteration is related to the prediction. The Gamesmaster is the final judge as to whether an effect is related to a predicted truth or not. Furthermore, the Gamesmaster may decide to activate an unused prediction at any moment, particularly if it is a negative or obscure

one, in the form of one Hero Point that is applied to a roll made by any PC or NPC in the game. In doing so he must reveal this immediately, and have the player mark the prediction off his divination tally.

A player can use the hero points that are connected to the divination to make his character gain Heroic Abilities if the Gamesmaster allows him, but he cannot use more than one divination Hero Point per heroic ability acquired. A new astrological divination cannot be cast upon a character until all the predictions made in a previous divination have been used up.

Optional Rules

The following rules are variations of the standard RuneQuest rules designed to make combat more realistic, and to enhance the difference between armoured and unarmoured combat. They are strongly recommended for use in Stupor Mundi adventures.

Advanced combat sequence

The number of Combat Actions that a Character can perform in a given round is not based on his DEX but on the rolled Strike Rank as explained in the Combat Action Table. During a round, actions take place in reverse SR order. Each subsequent Combat Action that a character can perform takes place as if its SR was 10 points lower than the character's previous action. Extra attacks provided by two-weapon use, or other special rules, take place as they had Strike Rank 0, after all normal attacks have been resolved.

Combat Action Table

Rolled SR	CAs allowed
1-10	1 CA
11-20	2 CA
21-30	3 CA
31+	4 CA

This alternate rule was proposed by Aaron Dembsky-Bowden. Many thanks to him.

Dodging

When a Dodge result indicates that the blow does minimum damage, the damage modifier is reduced to a minimum, too.

Combat sequence example:

Abdul the Saracen gets SR 18 and acts on SR 18 and 8, plus SR 0 because he has a shield. Konrad the Landsknecht is faster and gets SR 25 , and also has a glaive that gives him a +4 advantage, so he acts on SR 29, 19 and 9. Konrad gets to act twice before Abdul does, as follows:

29 – Konrad the Landsknecht
19 – Konrad the Landsknecht
18 – Abdul the Saracen
9 – Konrad the Landsknecht
8 – Abdul the Saracen
0 – Abdul the Saracen (shield bash, if he did not parry thrice)

Weapon length

When a character is using a short weapon like a dagger, a shield or a natural weapon, subtract 4 from his actual strike rank for that attack only, with a minimum of 1. When a character is using a polearm or a long spear, add 4 to his actual strike rank for that attack.

If you are also using the advanced combat sequence, the modification applies only when evaluating the exact time of the attack, not the number of Combat Actions allowed.

Reactions

When an attacker scores a hit and the defender successfully uses a reaction, but does not score a critical success with his reaction, do the following:

If the defender succeeds and rolls higher than the attacker's roll use the Attacker Fails row of the combat table (dodge avoids all damage, weapons block double their APs).

If the defender succeeds and rolls lower or equal than the attacker, use the Attack Succeeds row of the standard combat tables (dodge reduces damage to minimum, weapons block their basic APs).

This alternate rule was proposed by Rurik. Many thanks to him.

Advanced Critical hits

When a critical hit is rolled, the AP value of any armour worn by the target of the critical hit is reduced by an amount of Armour Points equal to the D100 roll that resulted in the critical hit, to a minimum of zero Armour Points. This is valid also for natural armour and magical armour like Protection and Shield, but not for Damage Resistance.

Critical Hit example

At the Battle of Fossalta King Enzo is wearing chain mail and casts Shield 2 upon himself for a total of 5+4=9 APs. Guido Bonatti also casts Damage Resistance 10 upon him. A pesky Bolognese infantryman scores a critical hit with a glaive against him. The roll is 03, which cancels 3 out of 9 of Enzo's total armour points. The Damage Resistance is unaffected by the critical hit, so only by rolling more than 10 points of damage will the footman injure Enzo. Unfortunately a critical hit also means that the glaive does maximum damage plus the rolled damage modifier. As the actual damage rolled is 11, King Enzo receives a full 11 points of damage in the abdomen, with his armour only stopping 6, leaving the young king with a glaive impaled in the abdomen for five points of damage. This is enough to save his life, but not his freedom.

The Bastion armour described in the RuneQuest Companion has an all-or-nothing effect on critical hits. That is, if the to-hit roll is equal or greater than the AP value of the armour, not counting magical protection, the armour is ignored. If it is lower, the armour has its full effectiveness.

Precise Attacks

If you use the Advanced Critical Hit rule, precise attacks cannot be used to bypass armour.

Unavailable weapons

Rapiers, Greatswords and Long Bows are not available in Stupor Mundi. In fact a form of greatsword called a claymore was available in the British Isles, but not exported. The same is true of the English Longbow.

Moreover, if any character but a British archer actually gets hold of an English Longbow, he uses it at a -40% penalty.

Unavailable armour

Plate armour was not used at that time, except for helms, and even helms provide roughly the same cover that is listed for a chainmail coif in RuneQuest. Ring mail armour is not allowed in Stupor Mundi, and is replaced by light chain mail.

Armour

Professional soldiers in the Middle Ages often wore armour in battle to avoid deadly wounds, especially those caused by projectile weapons. Characters in roleplaying adventures often exploit the presence of armour in the standard adventurer equipment, due to the fact that most fantasy roleplaying adventurers are in fact mercenaries, to run around in chainmail as though it was a t-shirt. This is something that should be avoided in a realistic setting like Stupor Mundi. The RuneQuest rules provide the armour skill penalty, that reduces an armoured fighter's combat skill in order to reflect the tactical disadvantage of the reduced freedom of movement caused by the additional weight carried. However, as the standard RuneQuest rule of each location AP given by armour produces a -1% to combat skills is so heavy a penalty that it can lead to unrealistic situations, this paragraph will introduce some optional rules that provide for a more realistic penalty at the cost of some added complexity.

The Gamesmaster is also encouraged to give characters a penalty to NPC reaction tests if they wear armour at inappropriate times, like when they are inside towns or aboard ships, etc. Also remember that armour is a valuable asset that can be sold on the black market, and while keeping it on in the wilds can be a very good way to encourage highwaymen to practise their profession with the next party of travellers that passes on that lonely road, using it in a city's dark alleys or sewer systems might, on the contrary, persuade muggers that the best opportunity of their lives has come.

Armour table

Piece	Covers	AP	Enc/Cost per SIZ class					
			6-10		11-15		16-20	
Helmet	Head	4	0.7	150	1.0	225	1.4	340
Scale shirt	Ch, Abd, Arms	4	3.2	630	4.5	900	6.5	1350
Scale skirt	Legs	2	1.6	280	3.2	400	4.8	600
Scale greaves	Legs	4	2.7	490	3.8	700	5.5	1050
Chain Coif/Helm	Head	5	0.5	210	0.7	300	1.0	450
Iron Hat[1]	Head	5 [1]	0.6	280	0.8	400	1.2	600
Chain light shirt	Ch, Abd, Arms [2]	5 [2]	2.5	630	3.6	900	5.4	1350
Chain skirt	Legs	3	1.5	420	2.0	600	3.0	900
Full Helm	Head	6	0.9	700	1.3	1000	1.5	1500
Chain shirt	Ch, Abd, Arms	5	2.8	875	4.0	1250	6.0	1875
Chain trews	Legs	5	2.2	560	3.2	800	4.8	1200
Hood [3]	Head	1	0.5	3	0.8	5	1.0	8
Cloak [3]	Ch, Abd, Arms, Legs	1	2.0	15	3.0	20	4.0	30
Leather Hauberk	Chest, Abdomen	1	0.5	70	0.8	100	1.0	150
Leather Shirt	Ch, Abd, Arms	1	0.8	105	1.2	150	1.6	225
Leather Leggings	Legs	1	0.5	70	0.8	100	1.0	150
Leather Cap	Head	2	0.2	50	0.3	75	0.4	110
Cuirbouilli Hauberk	Chest, Abdomen	2	0.7	245	1.0	350	1.5	525

Ch = Chest, Abd = Abdomen

(1) This special helm has an increased effect when the wearer is hit from above or by a mounted opponent.
(2) Protection is 3 points on arms, not 5
(3) Hood&Cloak provide their protection and penalty if the character is totally enveloped by them. Once he starts fighting, the character must declare he pulled down the hood or pulled back the cloak and protection is no longer in effect, though encumbrance is.

Armour sizes

In the basic RuneQuest rules, the cost and encumbrance of armour double for a character whose SIZ is greater than 25 and are halved for a character whose SIZ is 5 or less. In Stupor Mundi armour sizes are categorized in 5-point increments instead, so while the "standard" armour size is adequate for characters of SIZ ranging from 11 to 15 (the human average), also characters with SIZ in the 6-10 or 16-20 range will have lighter or heavier armour suit, as well as spend a different amount of coins to buy it. Also note that we have expressed the armour weight and ENC with the precision of one decimal place to allow a more precise calculation of the individual weight for armour pieces. Round the fractions down to the nearest half point once the total weight your adventurer is carrying has been determined.

Armour penalty

Carried objects or backpacks, which tend to accumulate their weight on one side only of the human body, use their actual mass as their ENC value because they give some form of unbalance penalty to a character's movement rate and freedom of action. Armour, on the other hand, is crafted so that its weight is evenly distributed on its wearer's body. For this reason the basic ENC given in RuneQuest for armour does not reflect its actual weight, allowing a character to wear an armour suit that he could not easily carry in his backpack.

In the Stupor Mundi armour tables the ENC values have been slightly adjusted to reflect the extra weight of some armour types like scale mail. When you need to determine the actual weight of an armour piece, simply double the ENC provided in the table. No skill penalty based on armour protection is listed. Instead, figure out the total ENC of the armour, rounding down to the nearest half unit, and apply the table below. Note that in this table the

Armour Penalty Table

Total ENC	Effects on Combat and Fatigue
Less than or equal to STR	No problem.
Between STR+1 and STR+SIZ	Hindered. Skill penalty equal to the armour ENC, rounding fractions down, to all combat or agility skills and to all rolls to avoid fatigue. Call for a fatigue check for every CON / 2 hours of movement on foot.
More than STR+SIZ	Overloaded. Skill penalty of 20% + double the Armour ENC to all combat or agility skills and to all rolls to avoid fatigue. Movement halved. Call for a fatigue check for every CON minutes of movement on foot or every CON combat actions in combat.

total ENC level is based on the total ENC value, including weapons and carried items, while the skill penalty is based on the armour ENC only.

Most Stupor Mundi characters will be equipped with chain mail armour when they expect a fight. Magicians are more likely to be equipped with cloaks or leather armour, although nothing prevents them from wearing a heavier protection: Michael Scot in fact wore a metal helmet all the time.

Description of Armour pieces

Full Helm: Thirteenth century armourers crafted mainly chain mails, limiting the plate pieces to small pieces covering the ankle or the knee. Even helms did not cover that much of the head, and protection of the neck was left to the underlying chain coif, while the face was bare. The full helm was specially crafted armour which covered all the head from the neck to the skull, with only a small opening for the eyes and was probably the only armour piece that neared the weight and effectiveness of the plate armour suits that became common in Europe in the fourteenth century and later.

Coif & Helm: Soldiers that wore chain mail suits also usually wore a metal helmet with a nose protector. If a Stupor Mundi character wears only a chain coif without a helmet, encumbrance is halved and protection on his head is considered to be three points and not five.

Iron Hat: Foot soldiers are often equipped with the iron hat, a special helm with a wide circular edge that provides the same protection as if it was plate armour (6 points) but only when the soldier is hit by a mounted opponent or from above. As usual the hat must be worn over chain mail to provide its full protection.

Light chain shirt: a lighter version of the chain mail shirt that is used by city militia and fighters that cannot afford a heavier protection. Its sleeves are shorter, forcing the soldier to wear leather gauntlets too. It provides only three points of armour for the arms. It is usually woven in one piece with a chain skirt.

Chain skirt: a length of chain mail that goes from the waist to the knee. As with the lighter chain mail, the unprotected area in the lower leg decreases total protection to 3 points instead of 5.

Chain trews: Chain mail leggings worn under a chain skirt for complete protection of the lower limbs. They provide protection as in RuneQuest. The listed Encumbrance includes the skirt, which is usually one piece with the shirt, so when assembling a full suit of chain armour either add the price and encumbrance of the skirt only or that of the trews, but not both.

Chain Shirt: as in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook. It is usually woven in one piece with a chain skirt.

Helmet: represents a standard helm worn over leather protection instead of chain mail. It is usually used only by barbarians and mercenaries.

Scale shirt: as in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook.

Scale skirt: the basic leg protection for a scale suit, it is usually combined in one piece with the scale shirt.

Scale greaves: provide extra protection for legs when worn with a scale or chain shirt. The listed Encumbrance includes the skirt, which is usually one piece with the shirt, so when assembling a full suit of scale armour either add the price and encumbrance of the shirt only or that of the greaves, but not both.

Leather armour: as in the RuneQuest Main Rulebook.

Hood & Cloak: most travellers wear these garments to protect themselves from weather. They can also absorb some damage, but they are not real armour. When a character is hit by surprise, his cloak is worth one point of protection. Once he draws a weapon, however, he must state that he is taking his hood off and drawing his cloak back on his shoulders, or else he must fight with a penalty of -20% for melee weapons and -40% for missile weapons. Note that this does not include dodging and spellcasting, so cloaks are often the favourite armour for most priests and magicians.

Standard armour suits

For those who do not like making calculations, here is a list of realistic armours that your Stupor Mundi character can wear, providing he is wealthy enough to purchase them, or that his employer provides him with equipment free of charge. Encumbrance and price are provided as a

triplet of figures that represent the appropriate values for SIZ in the 6-10, 11-15 and 16-20 ranges respectively.

Leather suit: Leather shirt, Leather leggings and Heavy leather cap. 1 point on limbs, 2 points on torso and head. Enc 2.0/3.5/4.5, cost 525/675/1000. Good for sailors, thieves and archers.

Light mail. Light mail shirt, with skirt, chain coif and helm. 5 points of protection on torso and head, three on limbs. Enc 4.5/6.0/9.0, cost 1260/1800/2700. Good for soldiers of fortune. With an additional cost of 75/100/150 coins the helm can be replaced by an iron hat, a favourite of foot soldiers.

Chain mail. Heavy mail shirt with skirt, trews, coif and helm. Five points of protection everywhere. Enc 5.5/8.0/12.0, cost 1645/2350/3525. Good for wealthy soldiers and mounted knights. Many characters will be hindered or even overloaded if they wear this armour and carry a weapon and a shield.

Creatures

Most creatures described in the RuneQuest Monsters book can be used in a Stupor Mundi adventure. However, all creatures specifically designed for use in other settings should be avoided in order to preserve the consistency of the encounters with the Arabian or Western European myths.

Creatures that should be specifically avoided in a Stupor Mundi adventure are: all Giant Insects, Amphisboena, Behemoth, Chonchon, Dinosaur, Dragonsnail, Dragonewt, Duck, Fachan, Gorp, Grampus, Grotaron, Headhanger, Hellion, Jack-o-Bear, Lamia, Ludoch, all Lizards, Morokanth, Newtling, Orc, Peripatus, Sandswimmer, Scorpion Man, Shadow Cat, Sky Bull, Slarge, Giant Solpugid, Giant Spider, Stingworm, Stoorworm, Timinit, Cliff Toad, Trollkin, Tusk Rider,

Tusker, Voralan, Waertagi, Walktapus, Wind Child, Wyrm.

The following creatures can be included in Stupor Mundi adventures, but have different characteristics from the ones described in RuneQuest Monsters: Broo, Dwarf, Elf, Ghoul, Ogre, Troll.

Angel

An angel is a particular form of spirit that has no other purpose than serving God. Both Christianity and Islam acknowledge the existence of Angels, but Christians consider them spirits while Muslims consider them creatures of Light. Another difference is that Christians believe that Angels can rebel to the will of God and become devils, whereas the Muslims believe they cannot. Angels appear as winged men of great beauty, but they are sexless. They usually wield flaming swords when they must fight or threaten a mortal being.

The most powerful of Angels are named Archangels, and their names are revealed in the Old and New Testament and in the Qur'an. In fact, the Islamic religion even acknowledges that it was Archangel Gabriel, the greatest of all Angels, who contacted the Prophet on behalf of God. Christians venerate the Archangels like Saints.

The RuneQuest rules for spirits apply to Angels, too. Dominate spells for angels do not exist, since Angels are bound to the will of God. Fighting an Angel, and even defeating it, is not a forbidden act for a believer, particularly if the fight is intended as a trial for him and the person is not aware of the creature's nature, and in fact there are several tales of fights with angels in the Bible. The statistics below are for a common angel. An Archangel has at least twice the values for stats and superior skills and magic.

Angel

Characteristics

INT	2D6+6	13
POW	4D6+6	20
CHA	6D6	21

Hit Points: 20   **Magic Points**: 20

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Sword	75%	1D8

Special Rules

Movement: 20
Skills: Lore (Christianity) or Lore (Islam) 100%, Persistence 75%.
Armour: None
Traits: Dark Sight, Night Sight, Recurring.
Magic: usually knows Divine Blessings for at least 2D6 total magnitude. Favourite spells include Absorption, Fear, Heal Body, Madness, Mindblast, Resurrection, Shield, Sunspear, Truesword.

Devil

Medieval tales and artworks include all manners of devils, usually represented as twisted humanoids with horns and hooves. In other representations, like Dante's Inferno, the devils are depicted with a couple of bat wings, possibly a relic of their lost angelic heritage. Use the RuneQuest Broo statistics to represent Christian Devils in Stupor Mundi. Winged devils are usually only encountered in Hell, a place your adventurers are not likely to visit.

The devils of the Islamic tradition, called Shaitan, are rebellious Djinni rather than fallen angels. Use the Djinni stats to represent them.

Djinni

There are several types of Djinni in Islamic mythology, some malignant and some benevolent. The Shaitan, or devils, are a corrupted form of Djinni according to Islam, while their Christian equivalents are fallen angels. The exact powers of Djinnis vary from type to type, but most of them can become invisible at will, like spirits in RuneQuest. For this reason they are treated as spirits in Stupor Mundi, although they are not considered spirits but rather fire beings by Muslims.

Djinni can be dominated by means of spells, and they can be bound to enchanted items, like in the tale of Al Laddin and the Magic Lamp. However, since the Djinni are sentient beings with their own will and motivations and not mere spirit servants, mistreating a Djinni that is in your service is considered an evil act.

Characteristics

INT	2D6+6	13
POW	4D6	14
CHA	3D6	11

Hit Points: 14   **Magic Points**: 14

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Various	50%	1d4

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +27
Move: 14m flying
Skills: Dodge 40%, Persistence 40%, Perception 40%, Stealth 50%.
Armour: None
Traits: Dark Sight, Night Sight, Become Invisible. Other traits can be possessed by some Djinni varieties.

Dwarf

The dwarfs of Viking legends are a race of short humanoids with malformed feet, sometimes very malevolent towards humanity, who hide underground and hoard immense treasures in their subterranean halls. They cannot withstand the brightness of the sun and turn to stone if they ever face direct sunlight. Use the Dwarf race described in RuneQuest to represent the Scandinavian dwarf.

Faerie

The Faeries that are often encountered in King Arthur's saga are the remnants of the fey folk that the ancient druids used to contact before the diffusion of Christianity. These creatures are not malignant, but after losing contact with humans they have become mistrustful of them. Use the Elf described in RuneQuest to represent the Faerie folk.

Ghul

Ghouls, more correctly referred to as Ghuls, are the demons of the desert in Islamic mythology, and can be found in the Arabian and North African desert areas. Ghuls eat corpses and emit bloodchilling howls, but they are not undead, nor are they poisonous. Except for these two facts, the statistics given in the RuneQuest monster book are appropriate for Ghuls in Stupor Mundi.

Incubus

One of the most interesting forms of devil that the medieval scholars had categorized was the Incubus. This demon visited lone women at night, abusing them sexually, and sometimes making them pregnant with a child of the Devil. However, since the Devil has lost the power to give birth, the Incubus had to borrow semen from a human being in order to carry over his blasphemous mission. In order to get this, it shapechanged into a beautiful female who visited and seduced male humans. In female form, the creature is called a Succubus.

An Incubus or Succubus can seduce a member of the opposite sex by matching its Courtesan skill against its victim's Persistence. If the Incubus wins, the victim will surrender to its lust and lose the exact memory of what happened, believing that the encounter was just a pleasant erotic dream. For every subsequent night in which this happens, the victim has a cumulative -10% penalty to his or her Persistence roll, and, if a male, also loses 1 point of CON permanently. When CON reaches zero, the victim dies.

An Incubus or Succubus is formed from the psychic remnants of a particularly heinous sexual crime, like incest or rape. For this reason, an Incubus is a spirit in RuneQuest terms, although it can take physical form like a nymph, of which it is possibly the evil counterpart. If the Incubus is destroyed in combat, it cannot use its Recurring trait to reform its body until it has drawn strength from a new sexual crime.

Incubus

Characteristics

INT	3D6+6	17
POW	2D6+12	19
CHA	2D6+18	25

Hit Points: 19   **Magic Points**: 19

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Fist	50%	1d3

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +27
Move: 19m (flying)
Skills: Dodge 30%, Craft (Courtesan) 90%,
Manipulation (Magnitude) 50%, Persistence 40%.
Armour: None
Traits: Dark Sight, Night Sight, Recurring.
Magic: usually knows 1D6 sorcery spells. Favourite
spells include Dominate Human, Enhance Charisma
and Venom.

Ogre

When a human female mates with the Devil or some of its
servant monsters, like an Incubus, the resulting child is
somehow corrupted by Evil. Sometimes it is a deformed
monster, but more often the Devil's offspring is more
handsome and fascinating than normal humans and has a
strong magical aptitude that can make him a great
sorcerer. People are not usually aware of the fact that the
person is not of human origin, although they may suspect
something if the Devil's offspring openly indulges in
bloody practices.

Use the RuneQuest Ogre stats to represent such a tainted
creature.

Troll

The Norse troll is a malignant creature that haunts the
Scandinavian wilderness. Use the Great Troll statistics,
skills and traits printed in RuneQuest to represent the
Scandinavian Troll, except for INT which is 3D6. Trolls
use neither armour nor metal weapons, and are always
armed with big clubs.

All references to other Troll subspecies given in the
RuneQuest books are not to be used in Stupor Mundi
adventures.

Event synopsis

1186 – Heinrich von Hohenstaufen, son of Friedrich the Barbarossa, marries Constance de Hauteville.
1190 – Death of Barbarossa. Heinrich is the new Emperor.
1194 – Birth of Friedrich II.
1197 – Death of Heinrich. Pope Innocent III is named Friedrich's tutor.
1204 – Fourth Crusade. Byzantium sacked by the Venetians. Founding of the Latin Empire
1209 – Otto von Brunswick crowned Emperor.
1211 – Crusade against the Albigenses.
1212 – Franciscan Order founded.
1216 – Dominican Order founded.
1216 – Innocent III dies. Honorius III is Pope.
1220 – Friedrich II is the new Emperor.
1221 – Death of St. Dominic.
1224 – University of Naples founded.
1226 – Death of St. Francis.
1229 – Treaty of Jaffa. Friedrich reconquers Jerusalem by means of diplomacy.

1235 – Friedrich quells a rebellion in Germany.
1236 – Fernando III de Castilla retakes Cordoba from the Moors.
1237 – Battle of Cortenova. Friedrich defeats the Italian communes.
1245 – Pope Innocent IV excommunicates Friedrich.
1248 – Sixth Crusade, led by Louis IX of France.
1249 – Battle of Fossalta. King Enzo, natural son of Friedrich, captured by the Bolognese.
1250 – Death of Friedrich II.
1254 – Manfred, natural son of Friedrich, becomes King of Sicily.
1259 – Death of Ezzelino Da Romano.
1261 – Byzantium recaptured by the Emperor of Nicea. End of the Latin Empire.
1266 – Manfred defeated and slain by Charles of Anjou at Beneventum. End of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily.
1268 – Konradin, Friedrich's last grandson, executed by Charles of Anjou.
1272 – Death of King Enzo in Bologna. House Hohenstaufen becomes extinct.

Adventures

Res gestae stuporis mundi

Having described how to create, equip and roleplay your thirteenth century alter ego, it is now time to provide some practical examples of the adventures that your Stupor Mundi character can be involved in. The following two chapters include two fully developed scenarios that take place in Italy. They introduce the themes of struggle between factions in the Italian city-states, and the mysteries of the Arabian districts in Sicilian cities. The player characters will also have an opportunity to interact with some of the characters described in the prominent personalities section, like Ezzelino Da Romano or Michael Scot.

The final chapter contains eight ready-to-go adventurers that players who are not yet familiar with the character generation system can use as their starting characters. Alternatively, the Gamesmaster may use them as interesting non-player characters that the adventurers meet.

Kidnapping in Al-Halisa

Adventures in the Arabian District

This scenario is a city adventure set in the most beautiful Arabian district of Palermo, which is known as al-Halisa, or "the Elect" in Arabic. During the Saracen rule this district housed the Sultan's residence, as well as many noble mansions, and although the Arabian nobility is no longer present in the city, the area is still rather wealthy because all trade with the Middle East is conducted by its inhabitants. The district's architecture is that of a typical Arabian city, with low houses with one or two stories at most, winding streets and myriads of alleys that end in unexpected places.

This adventure is intended for beginners to intermediate characters who know at least a little magic and can handle a fight without too many casualties. However, some of the magical creatures that can be found in the district are very dangerous, and some encounters must be resolved with diplomacy and wit rather than brute force, or the party will be doomed. Caution and mastery of the skills of Influence and Streetwise, as well as some previous exploration with magical means, are the key to success in this scenario. A Gamesmaster who knows his players have the tendency to go for all-out combat should avoid this adventure altogether or persuade the adventurers that only caution, investigation and planning can save the day when walking the streets of al-Halisa.

The Plot

The plot of this adventure is very simple, as it is in fact nothing but an excuse to have your characters explore the fascinating mysteries of al-Halisa. The party of adventurers is approached by Wilhelmo, a trader who is in great trouble and is seeking the help of tough-looking guys, possibly Arabic-speakers. It turns out that the man's daughter, a delightful young girl named Katrina, has been kidnapped near an Arabian market, and the man is afraid that the Saracens that have abducted the girl want to sell her on some slave market in North Africa, or worse. A reward of one thousand silver coins awaits anyone who can bring the poor girl back to her father.

Wilhelmo is a Norman merchant, and if the party inquire about the circumstances of the incident, he admits that on the previous day he had conducted an "unfair trade" with an Arabian merchant, that is he had cheated him. Later that day the Arabian trader went back to him complaining about the affair but the man would not give his money back to him, so the Saracen went away mumbling that he would have his revenge anyway. On that morning, which happens to be a Sunday morning, the man was coming back from Church with his thirteen year old daughter when he was distracted by a group of Arabian youngsters. The moment he turned back his attention to his daughter the girl was missing, but he could see a couple of Saracens fleeing with a small figure on the back of one of them. Desperate, the

man wandered the winding alleys of the Arabian market district in search of his missing daughter, and a few moments before giving up any hope of getting her back he heard a scream from a nearby house, and he could swear it was his daughter's voice. He immediately called to her loudly, but instead of an answer he got a dagger thrown from the house roof, which miraculously missed him. Forced to retreat, he marked the house location and asked his retainers, who were not known to the kidnappers, to stand guard around the city block where the house was located in case the men tried to take the girl away. However, he is unable to find his way in the Arabian city labyrinth, and needs assistance to recover the poor lass from her kidnappers before they can take her outside the city and sell her to some ruthless Saracen slaver.

Searching the district

The adventurers start investigating the Arabian district from area D, where Wilhelmo was targeted by the dagger thrower. They can easily spot the roof of house #22 from where the weapon was thrown, but climbing up the wall is no easy task. If they attempt it in daylight they are immediately blocked and questioned by a group of Saracen guards bearing the Imperial Eagle Sign, coming from building A. Some of the guards are sometimes bribed by the slavers to avoid messing with their business, so no matter what the PCs say, they will not be allowed to climb the wall from area D, and the soldiers will not investigate the area themselves. The adventurers must find another way into the house.

If the party wishes to wait till night to attempt a sneaky assault from area D, suggest to them that once the kidnappers have been alerted by Wilhelmo's presence action must be taken as soon as possible or they could carry the poor girl away. A hasty reconnaissance of the area on the part of Wilhelmo's employees reveals that the house is part of a large block of buildings, most of which can be entered only through dark alleys where they refuse to enter, no matter how much their master insists.

On the other hand, the kidnappers have no idea that the adventurers are working for Wilhelmo, at first, so they can explore the area quietly and expect no opposition. Remember though that moving around in armour will immediately attract the slavers' attention. If any of the characters has a Streetwise skill score of 30% or more he is immediately aware of this.

During their investigation the adventurers come across many shops, and pretending to be a customer in order to question the shopkeepers is a good tactic to learn something. Of course, if the adventurers find something interesting in the shops nothing prevents them from making an actual purchase. Each shop described also has

its owner's Influence skill noted. If an adventurer wishes to buy something at a discount price, he must overcome the shopkeeper's Influence in a skill contest. Arabian traders haggle a lot, and they could be disappointed if their customer does not try to get a discount, to the point of refusing to sell more wares to these "uncivilized infidels".

At some point the party will either find the main entrance to building #22 or a different building from which the characters can jump to the roof of building #22. Luckily this building is one of the lowest ones, and so it will be rather easy for them to reach, though evading the bandits watching is another story.

About Arabian architecture

Arabian houses of the Middle Ages were very different from their Western European equivalent. While European buildings were arranged in regular rows facing a main street, with crops and orchards in their backyards, Arabian buildings often had an inner courtyard where the denizens spent a great deal of their time. Their tops were flat and easily accessible, and a parapet surrounded them to prevent accidental falls and to mark the border between a building and another. With a little effort it was possible to jump from building to building.

The adventurers will have to somehow exploit the characteristics of Arabian houses to succeed in their quest. Study the provided maps carefully before staging each encounter, and have your non-player characters exploit all obstacles and passageways to gain a tactical advantage over the adventurers.

Buildings

1. Small house. A couple of young women live here. They are the mistresses of the two Saracen officers that command the garrison in building A. Threatening them is a sure way to end up in an Imperial jail, or worse.

2. Family house. A poor and large family with many children lives here. They know absolutely nothing about the girl, but as soon as the father understands the situation, he will offer to "rent" his ten-year-old boy to the party to help them deal with the shopkeepers in the area. This will cost the Adventurers 5 silver pieces, and the boy will vanish at the first sign of a fight. He knows everything about the shopkeepers and crafters, but nothing about the magicians or the bandits, save the fact that alley C is "inhabited by Very Bad Things". He will not mention this to the PCs, however, unless they want him to enter the alley, which he will not do.

District Map

A. Palace of the Emirate. Now it houses an Imperial garrison of Saracen Archers waiting to be relocated to Lucera.

B. Open Bazaar area. Most houses here are shops with an opening on the main road.

C. Alley Entrance. The entrance to building #22, where the girl is held captive, is at the other end of the alley.

D. Spot where Wilhelmo heard his daughter's cries. The sound was coming from building #22.

Consult the text for numbered building description .
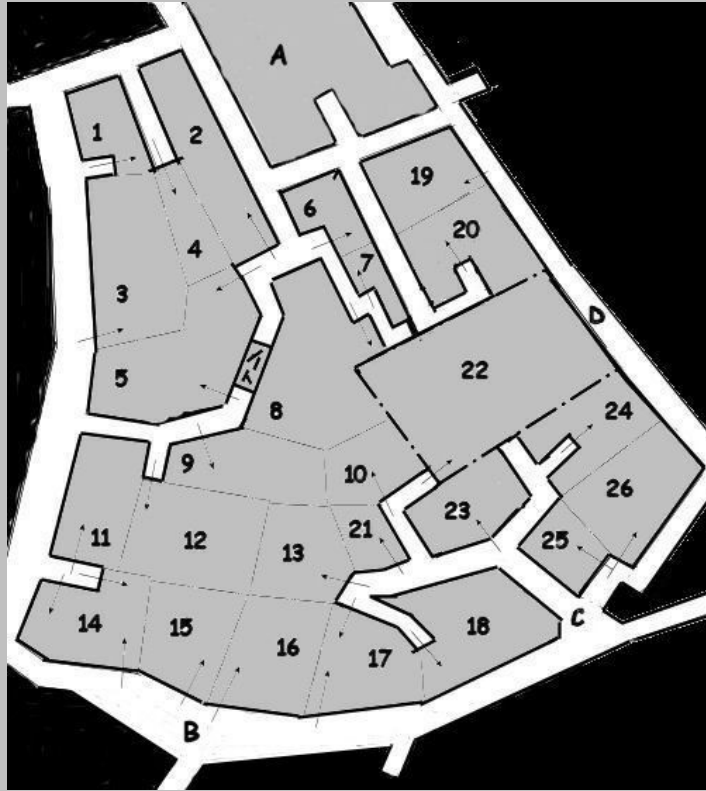
3. Abdel's armoury (keeper's Influence 60%). Abdel creates all manners of leather armour. He can easily craft a +1 leather hauberk for the price of 850 coins, 700 if persuaded to make a discount.

4. Warehouse. At the end of the alley is the entrance to a warehouse belonging to the artisan in building #19. It is closed with a -20% lock. Nothing relevant is inside, unless your character is very fond of cloth and dyes.

5. Mehmet and Sheira's Alchemy Shop (keeper's Influence 75%). This shop has two doors, one for each alley, which lead to two different rooms with different goods for sale. Sheira attends the northern room, while her husband Mehmet takes care of the southern one. Sheira sells medicines and various other ointments. She also has three doses of Healing potions of Magnitude 1D3, worth 200 coins each, but will not sell them to Infidels. Mehmet sells various alchemical tools and other trinkets that ought to be magical but are in fact powerless. He has, however, a magic sword "borrowed" from a Templar by one of his cousins in Damascus during the last Crusade, and if he believes his customer is a ruthless Christian warrior he will offer him the weapon for "the discount price of 2500 imperial coins". He can be persuaded to go down to 2000 but not lower. The weapon is a war sword with a Holy

Relic in its pummel, enchanted with Weaponblessing for +2 damage and +10% to attack. Note that purchasing such an item is a blasphemous act for a Knight, for it has clearly been looted from a Crusader.

6. Poor house. Several families sleep here, and the whole building is overcrowded with poorly fed children.

7. Beggar's house. A poor, lice-ridden beggar sleeps here at night, with only a few cats as companions. The beggar knows nothing of interest, as he usually minds his own business. Entering this building is dangerous, too, as many of its beans could collapse at any time, causing 1d12 damage to anyone who is walking around carelessly, unless he makes a Dodge or Athletics test. Beside the house is a small archway that leads to another alley, but it is blocked by a locked iron gate.

8. Mustapha the spice merchant. His shop is elsewhere in town, but he has some spice barrels full of spices at home, too. They are precious but difficult to carry. An axe-wielding eunuch is always at home and will not let anyone enter for any reason, whatever story they may tell. From the roof of this house it is possible to jump down to the roof of building #22.

9. Abandoned house. This house is totally deserted and shows no sign of being inhabited. A Perception test reveals footprints, though. If an adventurer investigates further and makes a Hard Perception test he may discover the secret door that leads to house #10. Note that if anyone actually enters the other house its occupant, Kadibah, might notice it and later on inform the slavers.

10. Kadibah's house. Kadibah is a widow with two children, and is helping the slavers for money. Her house is their emergency exit should they be trapped in their hideout. They have built a secret door that leads to house #9, and can escape at any moment by jumping here via the roofs and then moving to the abandoned house. They will use this way to take the girl away only if they feel threatened, because carrying the bound girl from one roof to another is not easy and will probably attract someone's attention. Kadibah can be bribed with gold into betraying the slavers, but the amount must be 200 coins at least, and the adventurers must look tough enough to defeat her current accomplishes, or she will not give away her only source of cash.

11. Kabil's live birds (owner's Influence 50%). Kabil sells mainly chicken and geese, however on this particular day he has also a falcon for sale for the special price of 300 coins. A strange man is here, too, asking questions about who laid the eggs that are on display on Kabil's desks, and whether any one of them has perchance been laid by a rooster.

12. Poor house. Dozens of beggars live here. Most of them are muggers, so entering this house may put a character's purse in danger. A successful Streetwise test can tell a character that the place is potentially dangerous before it is too late.

13. House of Larisa the Despicable. This woman is an old crone who survives by making false predictions. She pretends to be an astrologist but she is not. She exploits the fact that Al-Murqiba lives nearby to make herself appear important. She has nothing to do with the slavers, although she knows that something wrong is going on in building #22. On the other hand she is on good terms with Abdellah of building #18, who often lets her peruse his books about exotic animals, and she knows that the animal trader is expecting to receive a fabulous beast, "one of the kind that can kill with a glance", in a matter of days. She does not know the Western word "basilisk" although she can describe the beast fairly well. Any prediction made by her has no effect on the adventurers, although it still costs 20 coins to have her tell one's fortune.

14. Ali the smith's shop (owner's Influence 70%). Ali is in fact just a provisioner selling ropes, baskets, pottery and metal wares of all sort, and does not make metal wares himself. In the back of his shop, however, Ali keeps some interesting stuff, including grappled ropes and a set of Lockpicks +10%. This shop has a back door in the nearby alley.

15. Ben Youssuf's finest pottery (owner's influence 40%). Here you can find all sorts of pots, vases, amphorae and the like. He also has some glass items, like vials.

16. Kareem's bow shop (Keeper's Influence 80%). This Bowyer has a Greater Nomad Bow in stock. He charges 400 guilders for this weapon, but can be persuaded to sell it for 300.

17. Sons of Lahrat's cloth shop (owners' Influence 50%). These two honest brothers have a wide selection of cloth, wool and linen. Their shop has a backdoor in the c) alley.

18. Abdullah the animal merchant. Abdullah sells cows and sheep at a market outside the city walls. After hearing that the Emperor has developed a great interest for exotic animals like elephants, he decided to import some weird beasts from Africa and the Middle East, hoping to get exorbitant prices for them. In his house you can find a domesticated cheetah and a couple of vultures. At present he is interested in acquiring a basilisk, which he hopes to sell to Michael Scot one day. He is studying the sorcerous rituals needed to create this magical beast, and this is the reason why he can sometimes be found at the nearby bird shop in building #11 inquiring about rooster eggs. He has recently purchased a beast called basilisk from a merchant in Tunis, recommended to him by Larisa the Despicable, but knowing very well that the woman is untrustworthy he is convinced that his purchase will turn out to be a fake. Unfortunately, this time Larisa was telling the truth, as Abdullah and his family and retainers will find out very soon. The house contains the trader and his wife, and is guarded by one-armed eunuch, if the basilisk has not yet stroke.

19. Artisan's Mansion with Flying Carpet. See detailed map and description.

20. Al-Murqiba's house. See detailed map and description.

21 Abandoned house. Rats and all kinds of other vermin abound here, and nothing else is to be found. However, if the adventurers let the slavers notice that they are exploring the alley searching for the girl, a young guard will be there at sunset, waiting for the PCs to come in order to warn the slavers with three whistles.

22. Bandit Hideout. The kidnapped girl is here. See detailed map and description.

23. Fatima the prostitute. Many guards in the Saracen garrison are her customers. There is a 10% chance each time that the party approaches the woman's house that a soldier comes out of it. If the party has got into trouble

with the garrison before, the guard is clearly not pleased to see the adventurers there. Fatima knows where the kidnapped girl is but will not tell anyone. Even threatening her with weapons will not scare her enough to betray the slavers, for she knows that they will punish them with the worst tortures imaginable if she find out. Only Hell itself can be more scary to the woman, so the only way to make her spill the beans is to threaten her with a malignant spirit. Note that she does not know that Djinnis are not demons, so showing them one of Al-Murqiba's guardians may be enough, in the end.

24. Yossef the Seafarer's mansion. Yossef is a not-so-wealthy sailor who has a small fishing boat in the harbour and also accepts passengers for a fair price. He knows what usually happens in house #22, but he keeps his mouth sealed for fear of the slavers. He has in fact done some dealings with them, too, although he is not the one who will help them carry the girl to North Africa. He is not very happy about living near these criminals, either. If he realizes that the party has eliminated their threat from his neighbourhood he might even be willing to offer them transportation at a discount price in the future.

25. Mustapha's lamps and candles (keeper's Influence 60%). Mustapha swears that one of his lamps contains a Djinni, a good demon of the desert, that can be summoned from it with "The proper quality of oil and a pinch of sand from the desert". Mustapha will sell it for 250 guilders, initially asking 500 and eventually pretending to be convinced to make a discount. The lamp has absolutely nothing to do with Genies and any other form of spirits whatsoever. However, Mustapha sells some decent lanterns, too.

26. Berto's Vegetable Bazaar. Berto is an Arab but his family has converted to Christianity through fear of religious persecutions. He is the best source of gossip and rumours in the area, as he speaks Arabic and actively seeks to be in good terms with the Christians. Berto sells all sort of common vegetables at the standard prices for a large city, and never makes any discounts.

Events

At the start of each hour in which the Adventurers are searching the district, roll on the event table and apply the results as follows.

Slaver goes to the market

One of the girl's captors goes out of the hideout and wanders about the market. He is only interested in buying some food and will not recognise the adventurers, unless they have managed to attract the slavers' attention earlier in the day. A Hard Streetwise test can tell a player character that a man in the market is behaving very

carefully. If the PCs somehow identify the slaver and follow him, a regular Stealth test is needed to follow him without being noticed. If the slaver realizes he is being followed, he will use the secret passage in building #9 to go back home, appearing to the party like he had disappeared in the abandoned house.

Opportunities for booty

Ali is a young, poor man who lives in building #12. He is a honest acquirer of third party valuables, that is a thief. He approaches the adventurers with a casual attitude, then suddenly whispers to the toughest-looking of them "Oh,

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Event table

Roll 1D100 once per hour

01-03 Slaver goes to the market

04-12 Opportunities for booty

13-25 Customers complain

41-55 Porters carrying strange crate

56-60 Al-Murqiba's assistant in the street

61-80 Michael Scot arrives/leaves

81-00 No event

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great fighter, you will never believe what poor Ali found in the house down there." pointing at building #19. When the adventurers ask for more information, he takes them into the nearest dark alley, assuring them that there is no trap in it, and tells them that he has heard, by eavesdropping around in the harbour district, that a magical flying carpet from faraway Persia has just been delivered at merchant Kareem's house, which happens to be that building. A successful Streetwise test can confirm that the young man is telling the truth and there must be some sort of magical treasure in the building, though it will take the usual 1d4 hours to get the news. Ali tells the adventurers that he has a plan to get hold of the magical treasure, but he needs the assistance of companions that are braver than his usual accomplices.

Even though the adventurer's ethic sense may make them reject the thief's offer of taking part in a robbery, they will immediately notice that there is a fast and easy way, by waking on the roofs, from building #19 to building #22, and that Ali can in fact provide them with a good way to reach the captive girl's prison as soon as the sun has set. The young man will confirm, if asked, that the people in building #22 practice slavery, and that the roofs are the

best way to enter the building without risking interception by an armed welcome committee, but will provide no more information about the slavers.

Ali's plan and its possible outcomes are described in the appropriate paragraph. If the party tells Ali that they are interested in an exploration of the house, they can now enter building #12 without risking a mugging, as they will be recognized as "Ali's friends". Yes, thieves have honour, too.

Customer complains

A customer of one of the bazaar shops, likely #15, Ben Youssouf's fine pottery, is complaining that he has paid an unfair price for an item. The man is very angry and gets even angrier when the shopkeeper refuses to hear his complaint. At one point a curved dagger is drawn and the situation becomes very dangerous. If the PCs intervene and avoid bloodshed, the shopkeeper will be very grateful to them.

Porters carrying strange crate

The party meets two porters who are carrying a strange crate along the street. A large piece of heavy cloth, larger than a blanket, is covering the crate. A successful Perception test reveals that rattling sounds come from the crate, indicating that something is moving inside it. Pulling aside one corner of the cover will reveal that the crate is in fact a large cage covered with cloth and rags.

The porters are not fighters, but they are tough guys with a dagger hidden under their coats, and they will not let anyone peek into the crate. They know that the contents are dangerous, though they do not know why or how much. Their destination is Abdullah's house (building #19), and once they deliver the crate there they will be on their way home in a matter of moments.

One hour after the crate has been delivered to Abdullah's house, the building is in the situation described in the related paragraph.

Al-Murqiba's assistant in the street

The adventurers meet a tall, silent man walking in the street. The man is enveloped in a kaftan and wearing a keffiyah that hides most of his face, and walks very slowly, dragging one foot after another. If questioned, he will not answer, and if the speaker insists he will dismiss him with a simple, slow gesture of his right hand. During the brief time in which the man allows the speaker to stand in front of him, however, he will notice that the man's face is covered with wrinkles and his skin looks like a very old parchment scroll.

The creature is in fact Al-Murqiba's familiar, a mummy, which the sorcerer has sent to run some unknown errand, possibly related to the coming of Michael Scot if the magician is currently at al-Murqiba's house. The creature will not attack the player characters if they interfere with his mission, but rather go back to al-Murgiba's refuge.

If the PCs follow the mummy, event 41-55 will be triggered, too, and the creature will meet the porters who are carrying the crate with the basilisk. The mummy will immediately stop upon sensing the presence of the magical creature, then turn back and return to his master's home (building #20).

Michael Scot arrives/leaves

Michael Scot is visiting Al-Halisa to meet al-Murqiba. Michael is very famous among noblemen and astrologers because guests at his dinners are served by otherworld entities whose body is made of smoke. These beings are, in fact, just corporeal illusions, as Michael is a master illusionist but knows very little about the Spirit World. For this reason he wants to discuss the secrets of genies with wise al-Murqiba to expand his knowledge of the mystic arts. Michael will remain in al-Murqiba's house for several hours this day.

Michael is accompanied by four armed guards with the imperial coat of arms on their tunics, who must prevent any contact between the magician and all commoners. Attempting any violent action against Michael or the guards will result in a fight, with no one in the district willing to aid the incautious attackers and possibly the garrison in building A) joining the fight in a few moments (usually 1d12 combat rounds). While Michael is inside al-Murqiba's home, two soldiers will stand guard in the alley and the other two will remain in the house internal courtyard, very nervous about being accompanied by a Djinni in their watch duties!

If the adventurers wish to interact with Michael while he is walking in the street, they must use their Influence skill on the guards in order to be introduced to their master. Using some pyrotechnic magic or doing other weird things can attract the magician's attention, though not necessarily win his trust, but the only certain result will be attracting the attention of all the denizens of the district, including those the adventurers would not like to reveal their activity to.

The first time this result is rolled, Michael is arriving at the district, the second time he is leaving. If this entry is rolled afterwards, treat it as "No event".

No event

No event. Apart from myriads of urchins flocking everywhere, dogs chasing chicken across the street, shopkeepers boasting the unsurpassed virtues of their goods but only providing evidence of the unsurpassed loudness of their voices, and all the endless mess of a typical Arabian district during daytime.

Special places and events

Abdullah and the Basilisk

Building #18

Abdullah the trader has purchased a basilisk from a magician in Tunis. One hour after event 41-55 is rolled on the random event table, Abdullah opens the cage he received to inspect the beast he purchased, expecting to find some sort of exotic lizard with a fancy make-up. His last thought is "Well, it does look like the real thing, after all..."

Finding the dead Abdullah unpalatable, the now-free beast starts exploring the lower part of the house. It easily finds the two vultures in area C) and imagining they must be much more tasty than a dead Arab trader it jumps at the neck of the first one and kills it with his poisonous bite in a matter of seconds. The horrified squawks of the second vulture attract Abdullah's eunuch guard, who, seeing the foul beast feasting upon the dead bird, chops at it with his scimitar, almost severing the basilisk's left wing. Having appreciated that an armed eunuch is more dangerous than a vulture, the beast switches back to its most deadly attack and dispatches the guard before finishing off its meal. Then, with its hunger satiated, it seeks refuge upstairs, waiting for his broken wing to heal before fleeing into the night. Yasmina, the merchant's wife, who is upstairs, having heard the death cry of the eunuch and now seeing the unspeakable monstrosity climbing up the stairs, rushes to hide in the chest in area F) where she passes out.
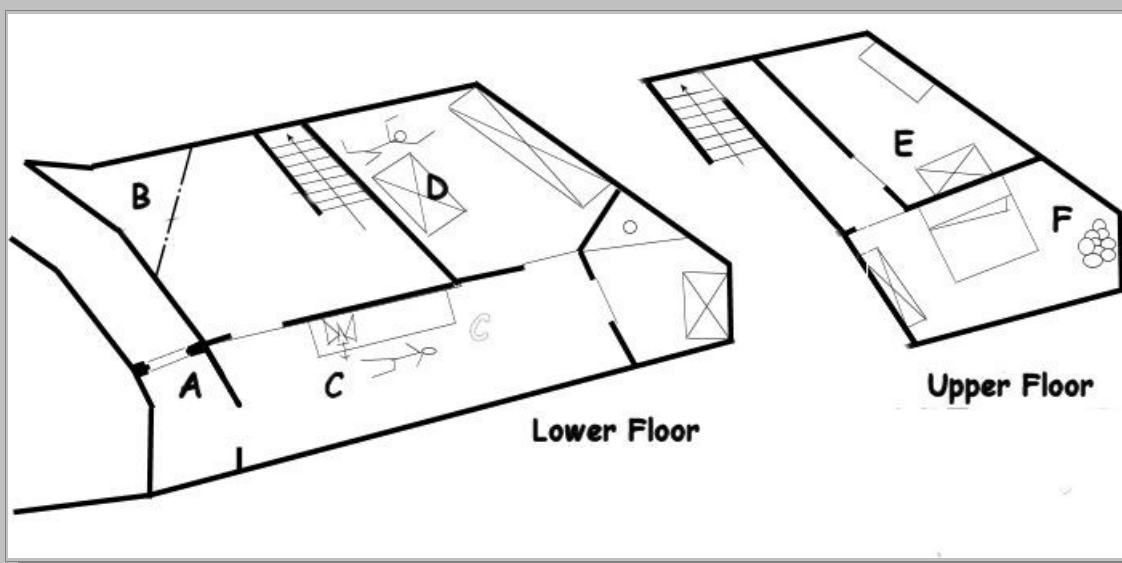
Abdullah's house (#18)

A) Entrance. The gate is blocked by a regular lock.

B) Cage of the domesticated cheetah. The beast is unharmed but extremely nervous.

C) Vulture resting pod. One vulture is dead and almost completely eaten, the second is scared to death but still alive. The dead eunuch is on the ground near the vulture's remains. His scimitar is lying on the floor, too, and it looks like its blade has been eaten away by something more powerful than rust. Anyone familiar with alchemy can notice the fumes of acidic corrosion still coming from the devastated weapon.

D) Empty cage. Abdullah has removed the blanket that covered it, and he is now lying on the floor, motionless. Anyone entering the room cannot see the interiors of the cage clearly, but will not fail to notice the merchant's body.

E) Storeroom. Yasmina is hiding there, unconscious.

F) Bedroom. There are some fine pillows in a corner, which the merchant and his wife used for their marital exercises. The basilisk is asleep amidst them, slowly digesting its last meal.

This is the situation in which the party finds building #19 if they suspect something and wish to investigate.

If the party manages to overcome the basilisk, the widow will reward them with 600 SP for saving her life, plus her husband's surviving animals if they want them. Incidentally, the woman is rather young and attractive, and currently lacking a husband. She will not marry an infidel, but can be induced into having an affair with a Christian, especially if he has saved her life.

The dead basilisk is worth 200 coins to either Michael Scot or al-Murqiba. If the adventurers can manage to catch it alive, Michael Scot will pay up to 2000 coins for it. Simply discovering what has happened and reporting it to the local garrison in area A) will yield a 100 coins reward (and a bunch of dead guards before they finally kill the beast).

Ali and the magic carpet

Building #19

Ali's plan to steal the magic carpet is simple. He knows that building #4 is Kareem's warehouse, so if he sets it ablaze the trader and his retainers will come out of the mansion to douse the fire, leaving the building unguarded. Ali has stolen and duplicated the key to the front door of the house, but he suspects that there may be some magical traps guarding the carpet, so he wants to give the adventurers the key and let them enter the house. He wants just 25% of the carpet's value in cash once the adventurers have sold it, or a net sum of 500 coins if they want to keep it for themselves. Ali's trust in his new fellows' sense of honour may seem too great, but in fact he secretly plans to join them in the exploration of the house in order to avid being cheated, and to take at least some
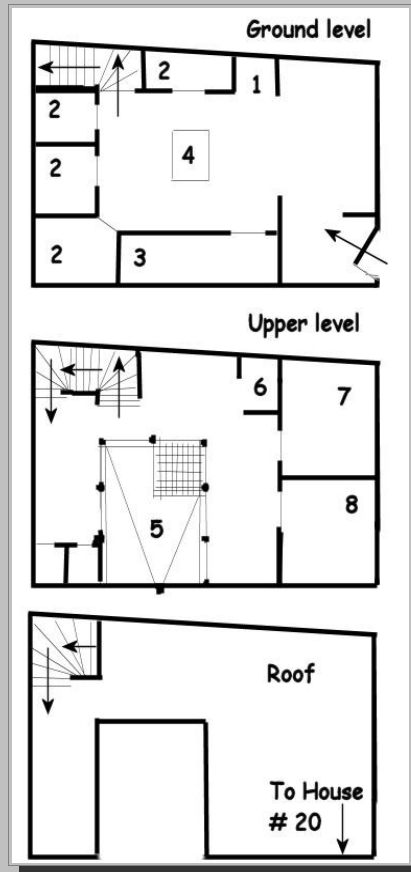
Kareem's house (#19)

1. Cooking area. It is connected to area 6 above.

2. Storerooms. Each door is blocked by a regular lock. They contain food, furniture and some cloth.

3. Retainer room. The eunuch also sleeps here

4. Small pool filled with fresh water

5. Impluvium. This section has no roof. Light and rain water reach the internal courtyard through this section.

6. Chimney. This section allows the smoke from section 1. to escape the house. The magic carpet is hidden in the chimney.

7. Guest room. The eunuch is hiding here, if he realizes someone has broken into the house, waiting for an opportunity to ambush the intruders.

8. Kareem's bedroom. It contains some valuables.

"interesting souvenirs" from the merchant's mansion while exploring.

If the adventurers decide to follow Ali's plan, everything will go the right way, and they will easily enter the building without anyone complaining, as everybody is busy. Unfortunately, Kareem's eunuch guard is not allowed to leave the house, and he is still there when the party enters the mansion, hiding in room 7 if the party does not manage to be extremely quiet when entering the building. Ali will also climb a wall and break into the house from the roof, instead of remaining outside as he stated he would do. The eunuch alone is not a big threat for a group of fighters, but the presence of Ali on the upper floor can turn the whole situation into a mess.

A) The front gate is locked, but the lock is rather easy (+20%) to pick, as it is not the real protection

B) The first Djinni stands guard in the central courtyard. This Djinni is always present at all times. When Michael Scot is visiting his fellow sorcerer, two of his guards are here, too, clearly looking like someone who would rather not be there standing guard side by side with some sort of ghost.

C) Al-Murqiba's bedroom. The vases where the sorcerer keeps his bound Djinnis are all there. Only al-Murqiba can use the binding enchantments. The mummy stands guard directly in front of the door. The familiar is there only when al-Murquiba is sleeping.

D) This is al-Murqiba's library. Anyone who avoided the Djinnis can easily sneak in undisturbed. It contains several bulky tomes in Arabic, which even a character that knows this language can hardly read. The only thing that can be easily taken away are a small knife that the sorcerer uses for enchantment rituals, which can harm disembodied spirits, and a small parchment scroll written in Arabic that allows to research the spell Dominate Ghoul.

E) A second Djinni stands guard here when Al-Murqiba sleeps.
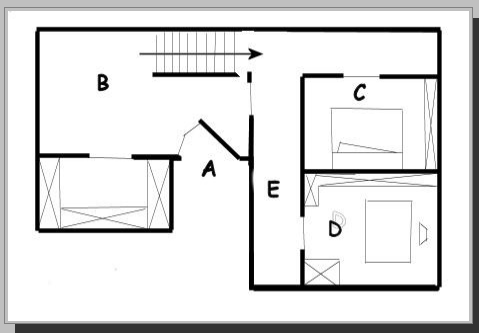
Building #22 is easily reached from the roof. If the party has done something useful for the sorcerer, like selling to him or to Michael Scot the basilisk, dead or alive, he will let the adventurers pass through his house at night. Persuading him to lend one of his Djinnis to help them in the assault requires a difficult Influence test.

There is, in fact, a magic carpet hidden in the house, but the characters must guess that it is hidden in the chimney area and then succeed in a Perception test to find it. The item is a small Persian carpet that has been Spellcharged with a Magnitude 4 Fly spell, with the condition that one of the spell targets must always be the carpet. The item is worth 3000 silver coins if sold to a magician. If the party wishes to keep the item, remember that it has an Encumbrance of 10.

If the adventurers decide to go on to building #22 from Kareem's mansion, they will easily climb down to the roof of al-Murqiba's house, and from there to the top of building #22. Note that they may also decide to explore al-Murqiba's house in the meantime, where there are at least two Djinnis active during the night.

If the party heads to building #22 and has not recovered the magic carpet, Ali will whine for a little that they are breaking their pact, but as he has already taken 50 coins worth of small valuables from the house and he is in fact not sure that the carpet is there, he will eventually vanish into the night, pretending to be angry with the adventurers while in fact he is not. He will not follow them to building #22, as he knows that its inhabitants are dangerous.

House of the Djinni
Building #20

The House of Fateh al-Murqiba is inhabited by the sorcerer, his familiar and his four Djinnis. Al-Murqiba is a harmless old man who delights in studying ancient lore manuscripts, and all the magical creatures in his mansion are there only to serve and protect him. Nevertheless, anyone sneaking into his residence unprepared will undergo a very scary experience. The first living being that is visible when entering the mansion is a Djinni, and the sorcerer's mummy stands guard in front of his bedroom door, while another Djinni often patrols the upper floor. These creatures will not normally harm intruders, because the mere sight is enough to keep common robbers away, but if they see someone heading for their master's apartments they will undoubtedly attack him.

Al-Murquiba himself can be very friendly to strangers who visit him in search of knowledge, provided they want to share their personal knowledge with him on a mutual enlightenment basis, but this does not normally include people who break into his house uninvited. He certainly does not wish to be disturbed while talking with Michael Scot.

Assault on the slavers

Building #22

The house where the bandits live is very difficult to assault directly, because there is only one way in, and if the criminals are aware of the attack they can set up a very effective defence with archers shooting from the roof at anyone who crosses the inner courtyard (area 2), while the guys with axes and scimitars block a choke point like the staircases or the doors. It is rather unlikely that fully armoured and armed fighters can enter unnoticed from the main entrance during the day. On the other hand, coming at night or from the roof, or both, will grant a much higher chance of success.

Rolling under both a character's Athletics skill and his Stealth skill allows him to get to the roof (area 7), quietly, from the roof of al-Murqiba's house. Coming from Kadiba's house is even easier and only requires a Stealth test, because the slavers themselves keep a small ladder on the other roof. Note that the ladder will not be there at night if the widow has been harassed, however. A bandit archer stands guard on the roof at night, but if the slavers are not expecting trouble he is probably distracted or even asleep. If, on the contrary, the bandits have had the time to set up a defence, both archers are here, shooting at all enemies that cross the inner courtyard. All the other bandits sleep in room 5, with the exception of Abdul who sleeps alone in room 6 (he snores a lot).

Katrina is held in room 6, bound and gagged tightly. As a female slave is more valuable if she is still a virgin, the poor girl has neither been harmed nor molested, but she is very, very scared of her captors, and will probably scream in fear once ungagged by her saviours.

Epilogue.

If the party succeeds in freeing Katrina her father will pay the promised reward. The Arabian garrison will not provide any reward for capturing or killing the slavers, as they were in fact a source of income for some of them. In any case the adventurers will probably gain one or two points of reputation among the Arabian denizens of Palermo. Befriending Al-Murqiba is also likely to be very useful in subsequent adventures.

The Slavers' hideout (#22)
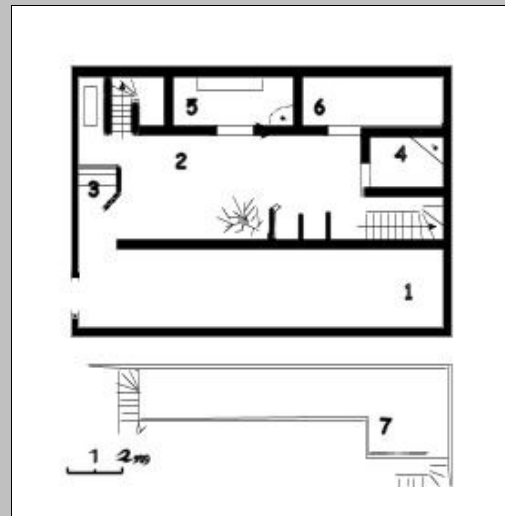
Building #22 is a large one-story Arabian house with two external courtyards. The slavers spend their daytime in the inner courtyard, and sleep in the rooms at night.

1. Outer courtyard. It is filled with garbage and timber. The gate that connects to the alley is locked with a regular lock. A mule is here, too, and it will make a lot of noise if disturbed.

2. Inner courtyard. The passageway to area 1 is unblocked at all times.

3. Latrine. The smell leaves no doubt about the purpose of this area.

4. Kitchen. It contains only the remains of a roasted goat.

5. All the bandits but Bulky Abdul and the one who stands guard are in this room at night. A small vase contains four Arabian gold coins worth a total of 80 silver pieces.

6. Bedroom Bulky Abdul sleeps here at night.

7. Roof. Accessible from building 10 and building 20

Saracen Guard

These soldiers are stationed in area A. Each soldier is equipped with a scimitar, and either a bow or a spear.

Characteristics

STR	11
CON	10
SIZ	12
INT	12
POW	9
DEX	12
CHA	11

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	2/6
10–12	Chest	2/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Scimitar	50%	1D6+1	4/10
Long Spear	50%	1D10	2/10
Bow	50%	1D8	

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +12
Magic Points: 9
Move: 4m
Skills: Resilience 40%, Persistence 20%.
Armour: Boiled leather (2 AP) on torso and head.

Eunuch

This is the typical guard kept by a wealthy Arabian trader in his house. There is one each in building 8, 18 and 19.

Characteristics

STR	16
CON	17
SIZ	15
INT	10
POW	9
DEX	9
CHA	9

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/7
4–6	Left Leg	-/7
7–9	Abdomen	-/8
10–12	Chest	-/9
13–15	Right Arm	-/6
16–18	Left Arm	-/6
19–20	Head	-/7

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Scimitar	50%	1D6+1+1d4	4/10
Axe	40%	1D8+1+1d4	3/8

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +9
Magic Points: 9
Move: 4m
Skills: Resilience 30%, Persistence 20%.
Armour: None

Al-Murqiba's Familiar

The familiar is an undead mummy that al-Murqiba found in an ancient tomb in Egypt. A mummy is particularly vulnerable to fire, and cannot be healed, although it can be Repaired with the appropriate spell. The mummy cannot speak, but it can cast magic, though his master does not allow him to unless in immediate danger. The mummy carries his staff when outside his master's residence, but is dangerous even when unarmed.

Characteristics

STR	28
CON	26
SIZ	15
INT	14
POW	-
DEX	7
CHA	1

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	2/5
4–6	Left Leg	2/5
7–9	Abdomen	2/6
10–12	Chest	2/7
13–15	Right Arm	2/4
16–18	Left Arm	2/4
19–20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Fist	80%	1D6+1d4	
Staff	80%	1D8+1d4	3/8

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +10
Magic Points: 10, plus 13 in dead crystal
Move: 3m
Skills: Resilience 50%, Persistence 30%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 40%.
Armour: Skin (2 AP)
Magic: Palsy 60%, Spell Resistance 50%.
Traits: Disease Immunity, Poison Immunity, Vulnerable to fire.

Basilisk

The basilisk is not hungry after eating Abdullah's vultures, and would rather be left alone. If disturbed, it will use its gaze to get rid of any intruder.

Weapons hitting the basilisk are damaged by its acid blood by the same amount of damage they inflict, not counting their armour points.

Characteristics

STR	4
CON	13
SIZ	2
INT	3
POW	15
DEX	7
CHA	3

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–2	Right Hind Leg	2/3
3–4	Right Hind Leg	2/3
5–6	Left Hind Leg	2/3
7–8	Hind Quarters	2/4
9–10	Fore Quarters	2/5
11–12	Right Wing	2/2
13–14	Left Wing	2/2
15–16	Right Fore Leg	2/3
17–18	Left Fore Leg	2/3
19–20	Head	2/3

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Gaze	100%	Death
Bite	30%	1D6-1D6+poison

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +5
Move: 4m, 6m flying
Skills: Athletics 60%, Dodge +30%, Persistence 45%, Resilience 70%, Stealth +40%, Survival 40%
Armour: Scaly skin (2 AP)
Traits: Gaze Attack (active, match basilisk's Persistence vs. Target's Persistence, if the victim is overcome he dies), Poison (Bite, POT 65, inflicts 1d3 damage to all locations and -6 to CON for 6d10 minutes)

Slaver

Two of the criminals have axes, while the other two have bows. Both wield a dagger as their secondary weapon. A slaver met in the streets has neither his bow nor his axe, but he will surely carry his dagger.

Characteristics

STR	11
CON	9
SIZ	14
INT	12
POW	11
DEX	11
CHA	8

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	-/6
10–12	Chest	-/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Axe (2H)	50%	1D6+2	3/8
Dagger	40%	1D4+1	4/6
Bow	50%	1D8	

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +11
Magic Points: 11
Move: 4m
Skills: Resilience 40%, Persistence 20%, Streetwise 45%., Dodge 30%.
Armour: none

Bulky Abdul

Abdul is just another slaver, the only difference is that he is huge and nasty. Abdul is the one who is guarding the girl, and never leaves the house unless the whole gang is fleeing.

Characteristics

STR	15
CON	14
SIZ	18
INT	9
POW	9
DEX	7
CHA	5

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/7
4–6	Left Leg	-/7
7–9	Abdomen	-/8
10–12	Chest	-/9
13–15	Right Arm	-/6
16–18	Left Arm	-/6
19–20	Head	-/7

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
War Maul	60%	2D6+1D4	3/12
Unarmed	60%	1D3+D4	4/6

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +8
Magic Points: 9
Move: 4m
Skills: Resilience 50%, Persistence 20%, Streetwise 25%.
Armour: none

Al-Murqiba

Fateh Al-Murqiba is a very wise sorcerer who has been collecting genies (Djinnis in Arabic) for twenty years. Having now retired in Sicily he is spending his last years far from the places he used to visit as a scholar, enjoying all the pleasures that civilized life can give.

Characteristics

STR	8
CON	9
SIZ	13
INT	17
POW	20
DEX	8
CHA	15

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	-/6
10–12	Chest	-/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	25%	1D8	3/8

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +12
Magic Points: 20, plus 25 in various crystals
Move: 4m
Skills: Resilience 30%, Persistence 90%, Enchanting 60%, Language (Arabic) 90%, Language (Sicilian) 50%, Literacy (Arabic) 70%, Literacy (Latin) 30%, Lore (World) 70%, Lore (Arabian) 90%, Lore (Sicilian) 50%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 90%, Manipulation (Targets) 90%, Manipulation (Combine) 50%, Manipulation (Duration) 40%, Manipulation (Range) 50%.
Armour: none
Magic: Spell Resistance 50%, Spirit Resistance 60%, Damage Resistance 50%, Damage Boosting 40%, Palsy 90%, Dominate Djinni 80%, Glow 40%, Form Wood 40%, Animate Wood 40%, Sense Wood 40%, Treat Wounds 60%, Sight Projection 60%, Hearing Projection 60%, Spiritual Projection 40%, Skin of Life 40%, Protective Circle 50%, Fly 90%.

Djinni

Al-Murqiba uses these Djinnis as guardians. They appear as bare chested humanoids with a turban, with their lower body made of some sort of smoke. They carry a big, dangerous-looking scimitar hung to their sash. Al-Murqiba usually keeps all of them except one in their magical vases, unless he expects trouble.

Characteristics

STR	-
CON	-
DEX	-
SIZ	-
INT	14
POW	15
CHA	13

Hit Points: 15   **Magic Points**: 15

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Ethereal Scimitar	50%	1d4

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +27
Move: 15m flying
Skills: Dodge 40%, Persistence 40%, Perception 40%, Stealth 50%.
Armour: none
Traits: Dark Sight, Night Sight.

Ali the Thief

Ali is the typical street mugger of the Arabian districts. He does not want to get in trouble, but he needs money to survive and the adventurers can help him get some.

Characteristics

STR	9
CON	14
SIZ	11
INT	15
POW	11
DEX	15
CHA	9

Combat Actions: 3
Strike Rank: +15
Magic Points: 11
Move: 4m

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	-/6
10–12	Chest	-/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Knife	35%	1D3-1D2	4/4
Unarmed	45%	1D3-1D2	

Skills: Athletics 50%, Dodge 40%, Evaluate 40%, Sleight 40%, Stealth 40%, Resilience 50%, Streetwise 40%, Influence 40%, Language (Arabic) 70%, Lore (Arabian) 20%, Lore (Sicilian) 50%.
Armour: none

The Lord of the Golden Eagle

Adventures in Northern Italy

In this adventure the player characters will leave Southern Italy and be involved in a conflict between the ruling families of two cities. They will also meet hostile magicians and fight supernatural menaces on their way to the Land of the Golden Eagle.

Introducing your characters

The adventure starts with the characters having dinner at an inn in Palermo. A lone youngster is seated at a table, looking at the adventurers, especially those who clearly belong to the fighting lot. After dinner is over, the adventurers are approached by the innkeeper, who suggests the lone man might have a job for them, and adds "He introduced himself as the Lord of the Golden Eagle, and sure he has some money, mates!"

When the PCs approach him, he invites them to sit down and buys them a round of drinks. Then, cautiously, he tells them that he is Francesco Dente, nephew to Count Dente, ruler of the town of Placeola on Brenta, in north-eastern Italy. He used to be a student at the University of Naples, and was on a scientific journey to Palermo when he was informed that his uncle had passed away. Being the last heir to the Count, as assessed by a small parchment with a Golden Eagle signet marked on it that he carefully shows to the player characters if requested, he is now the rightful ruler of the small town.

He explains that the powerful family of the Da Romano, led by the cruel Ezzelino Da Romano, who rules upon the higher Brenta valley and the Mark of Trevigium, wishes to take control over the town and its castle in its struggle to conquer the cities of Verona, Vicentia and Padua. It is for this reason that Francesco is beginning to fear he needs an escort, because if he failed to reach the town alive it would be much easier for the Da Romano to claim the city for themselves or one of their minions.

If the party wonders why this petty noble does not appeal to the Emperor for safe passage to his fief, he replies that the Emperor will never deny his rights openly, but since the Da Romano are his most faithful followers in northern Italy it is doubtful that his protection would really save him from an assassination attempt. Basically, he needs to find protection himself until he reaches Placeola. And here is where the PCs come in.

Francesco promises 400 silver coins to each one of them, but also explains he has not much money left on him, and he would not be able to pay them anything but room and board and a passage to Venice by ship until he is acknowledged as the ruler of Placeola. Luckily he has a letter of credit from a friendly banker in Padua that will allow him to pay his guards if he cashes it in. After the brief stop in Padua to get the cash, the party will head to Placeola, where the adventurers will be given the opportunity to study some ancient magic books as a boon. The adventurers can persuade Francesco to increase their wages up to 500 silver coins, but not higher. He lets them understand that their efforts will be well repaid if he becomes Count, and that should be enough.

Once they have a deal on the price, Francesco informs them that his ship is leaving for Venice in three days' time, so they must conclude their current business in that time. Let all PCs purchase any extra equipment that has a reasonable chance to be available, and have priestly PCs pray for up to Magnitude 3 Divine Blessings if they wish and have the money. The adventurers can carry anything with them except horses and other big animals.

The sea journey

The journey to Venice is eventless, and all characters are able to familiarize themselves with life on board a ship. The PCs have enough spare time to practice any combat or physical skill they know at 50% or less, or any magic skill below 50% for which they have the relevant grimoires with them. Practising skills lower than 50% may yield more than one increase roll at the Gamesmaster's option. If a character has the Shiphandling skill, he can practise it on the ship. As long as his skill is below 100%, he gets one increase roll.

It is advisable, however, that at one point you place a ship map on the table and have your players state where their characters are at that moment, then announce that a sail has been spotted. After all players have prepared themselves for the ensuing boarding, announce that the sail has disappeared. This will keep your players on their toes, and prevent them from thinking that a battle must necessarily take place whenever you place a map on the table.

After landing in the port of Venice, Francesco starts looking for a group travelling towards Padua, and it does not take long until he finds one. The group leader is glad to have the PCs join them, realizing that they know how to defend themselves. Bandits are hardly unknown in that land, so every extra blade is welcome in a travelling party. On the following morning the group is ferried to the mainland and starts to travel westwards on a well-kept road.

Checkpoint

The first three days pass without any event of note. If you wish, act out a raid attempt on the part of a half dozen brigands, but these should flee after the first resistance on the part of the PCs, who are better armed than them.

Late in the afternoon of the fourth day since they left Venice, the group the PCs are travelling with is stopped by a group of men-at-arms. There are twenty of them, all mounted and armoured. The soldiers start asking the caravan leader about a man with a Southern accent, travelling with a number of companions that they describe surprisingly well. Apparently, they have been informed that Francesco is travelling with the PCs, and are using them to identify the poor fellow.

As soon as someone realizes this, Francesco says to the adventurers: "Grab your stuff and flee into the woods! It is our only chance." It should be rather clear to the adventurers that they cannot overcome so many enemies, nor outrun their horses in open terrain, so an escape through the woods is the only solution. Luckily the group was headed to the southwest when they were stopped, and the woods are on their right side, so the escape route will not drive them far from their destination.

If the PCs are sneaky enough, no soldier will notice they have left the group until they have already entered the forest. In any case, they can reach the woods before the soldiers can catch them, and the pursuers will not dismount to enter the forest, which is definitely too thick for horses. However, a successful Perception test will tell the party that the leader of the soldiers, after swearing a lot against his underling, is sending some of them after the PCs. Luckily they have gained a considerable advantage

over their pursuers, but they must still hurry if they do not want them to catch up.

In the deep forest

The moment the party enters the woods, a weird silence seems to surround them. Although they are still able to hear noises that other party members produce, these are unnaturally faint and sound like they were made more than one hundred meters away. This is not immediately evident to party members, however. Make an INTx1 test for each PC to notice for the first hour's walk, an INTx2 test for the second hour's, and so on until someone succeeds. Since the test is made at the end of each hour, the group should have entered deep in the woodland when they become aware that there is something strange in this forest. If one of the PCs wishes to turn back, have Francesco tell them that this may be weird but it is by no means dangerous, while Ezzelino's troops are, and that they will not get paid if they abandon him now.

A few hours after they entered the woodland, the day ends abruptly, almost with no sunset. A successful Lore (World) test tells anyone that this is probably due to some mountain formation to the west. An INTx3 test tells them that they cannot remember seeing any, though. Immediately after sunset they find a strange stone in the woods, covered with thick moss but with ancient man made carvings clearly visible on the surface. These are runes, unknown to all characters and weird to look at, but they do not appear threatening or evil in any way.

Caught by the night, the party must stop to rest, as marching in the dark is very difficult in the thick forest. Remind them that lighting up torches to show the way might reveal their position to pursuers, if there are any. If they decide to proceed anyway using torches, they will be harassed and consistently slowed by a lot of moths and other nocturnal flying bugs, and by an even greater number of bats who attack the moths and threaten to douse the torches. A successful Lore (Animal) reveals that attacking moths is normal for bats, but approaching fires is not. After about one hour's walk they will be confronted by a very big owl, which causes 1d2 damage to the torchbearer in the arm and douses the flame. When they manage to set the lights up again, they will discover that they have stopped by the strange rune stone again: they must have been walking in circles since dusk!

Night robberies

Either because they stopped at sunset or because they returned there later, the party is now forced to set camp near the rune stone. A careful examination reveals there is nothing dangerous in it, nor does it detect as harmful on a

magical examination. It is slightly magical in its nature, however, as any magical examination will tell. No one is able to tell the meaning of the runes. They are in fact a leftover of the time when the Celtic druids dominated northern Italy, more than a thousand years before.

The camp is somehow near a powerful Dryad's grove. Jalleyn is a very ancient Dryad and she can move much farther than her tree than other plant spirits. Moreover, she will constantly keep a bat or owl watching over the party while they are there. She will be very, very displeased if the party lights a big campfire near her tree, while she might be not so afraid of a small fire that is carefully kept under control, as the PC should do to avoid being caught by the guards.

It is almost sure that the party will set up watches during the night. Have PCs make Simple Resilience tests to avoid falling asleep. If the watch falls asleep, the Dryad will sneak into the camp and steal all swords and axes the party has, no matter how well hidden. She has supernatural stealth abilities, so a sleeping guard has no chance of hearing her. She then goes to her tree and buries them under its roots.

Once the weapons are taken, if she feels threatened by the fire she will return to the camp to deal with it. Allow the watch a normal Resilience test to wake up, but even if he does he will have a hard time locating the sneaking Dryad, unless he passes an INTx3 check and notices his weapon has vanished.

Unless the fire is very small, in which case she will probably let it go if the party has not otherwise damaged the grove, the Dryad will summon a bear to help her deal with it. A bear is unlikely to go unnoticed if the watch has awakened, but if he is asleep the party will suddenly wake up in total darkness, with most of their weapons gone and something very big thrashing around in their camp. Fortunately the bear will just go away at this point, unless someone is clever (or stupid?) enough to find a way to stop him. If the bear is forced to fight, the Dryad will help him with magic, trying to remain hidden if possible. Remember that she can even entangle an opponent with vines, although she is more likely to do so in order to simply let the bear get away.

Once everything is accomplished, nothing else happens until sunrise. If the PCs start looking for their lost weapons with torches, they will inevitably end up approaching the Dryad's tree with fires lit, and this will trigger an aggressive reaction on her part, including an attack on the part of a powered-up bear, backed by vines and possibly backstabbing owls. If this happens the Dryad will try to kill the party, and will only surrender if her tree is threatened. Guessing which tree is the real receptacle of her life force is not so easy, assuming the party knows

something about dryads, but usage of magic sight, or noticing that someone has recently dug near the base of an old oak, may provide a good clue.

If fire is placed near her tree and she has no suitable defenders left (it takes her one hour to summon a new bear if the first one is killed), the Dryad will manifest in a harmless form and plead for mercy. She promises to give back "all the stolen woodcutters, plus all the ones that other tree-haters left here many, many seasons ago". If the PCs agree, she commands a badger to dig under her tree and recover all the weapons, plus the extra treasure hidden there. It is now up to the characters' honour to keep their word and let the Dryad live. She is clearly a pagan spirit, and true Christians should not tolerate her existence. However, if the PCs are not totally bigoted, they can

easily figure out that no one will ever know that they have made a deal with such a spirit, which is clearly not of demonic origin. Francesco will insist that they do not harm the creature, for he will need all possible allies if he becomes the ruler of Placeola.

If they spare her, she can teach them magic, too, at that time or later. In fact, the runes on the rune stone can be carved out with a successful Craft roll, after which they have the same effect as a Fertility or Beast rune, according to the chosen glyph. This cannot be guessed by means of any roll, and only the Dryad can reveal this secret.

Ambush in the woods

If the party has befriended the Dryad during the night, skip this part and just tell them that their new friend has ensured that "the evil woodcutters that were after you have been sent to disturb another part of the forest".

On the following morning, the party is ready to resume its journey (minus some weapons, maybe). However, while they are packing their stuff again, they realize someone is coming their way, making a lot of noises of cracked branches and loud swears. The Da Romanos! Remark to the players that the pursuers are breaking a lot of branches and waving torches in all directions.

The PCs will obviously try to flee the other way, especially if they are critically low on weapons, but unfortunately that was only a trick to lure them in the wrong direction. After they make a few steps away from the noises they are ambushed by more guards, all armed and armoured. There are twice as many soldiers as there are PCs. At this point Francesco draws a stiletto (it is not a slashing weapon, so it has not been stolen) and cries "You will not take me alive!" to which one soldier replies, grinning: "This has never been our goal!" Meanwhile the "pursuers" reach the clearing where the PCs have been ambushed, drop the torches, which immediately set a couple of bushes alight, and draw their swords and axes. Three rounds packed with action follow, during which the party can only attempt a heroic defence against the soldiers. When a character is disabled, the soldiers do not try to finish him, but rather move on to engage another one.

At the start of the fourth round of combat, one of the soldiers screams: "Surrender your employer and we will let you live, scoundrels!" While the PCs are busy determining whether they should commit this treachery or die heroically, something happens.

A huge furry figure jumps into the clearing, growling like the hell and clawing at one of the shieldless soldiers from behind. Some of the soldiers that have a shield try to move closer to the bear to take him out, only to find that their feet are entangled by snakelike vines and they cannot move. For each soldier that the bear disables, one of the others remembers that discretion is the better part of valour and flees. Very soon there will be plenty of swords and axes on the ground, and any PCs still capable of fighting should have an opportunity to grab one. Assess a temporary penalty of -10% to any Arab character that is forced to use a straight-bladed sword if he has never wielded one. In the meantime, any badly injured PC that is lying on the ground is gently touched by a delicate hand and healed of six points of damage. If Francesco is badly injured, he will be healed first, and in any case he will survive the fight.

The buried treasure

Under the Dryad's tree are hidden all the weapons stolen from the PCs. Along with them are other items she has collected during the centuries. Most of the weapons are rusty and useless, but a few still have some value. One bastard sword has clearly been there for a few years only, and apart from the wooden hilt it is still usable. A simple Craft (Weaponsmith) roll, or a difficult Mechanism test, allows anyone to use the weapon until it has been taken to a smith for proper repairs. A couple of bronze short swords have survived since the time before the Roman Empire and can be easily repaired by a smith. Finally, a Battleaxe blade of exceptional quality is buried there. It does +1 damage for weapon quality, and has been enchanted by means of some obscure Lombard deity's rituals for two points worth of weaponblessing, for a total of +10% to hit and +3 damage. Unluckily the haft is rotten, so the weapon cannot be used until it has been repaired at a workshop

Assuming this event is enough to turn the tides of the battle, in a few rounds there should be no more than two guards in the clearing, possibly struggling to break the grip of a tanglevine. One of them cries: "Mercy! We wanted to give you quarter, do the same with us!" Unfortunately brown bears are not that skilled at understanding the Trevigian dialect, so taking one of them alive could be a problem.

Whether or not the PCs have noticed the Dryad, Francesco has spotted her for sure, and has realized that the wood dwellers are not enemies. When the fight is over, the party has one more opportunity to befriend the plant spirit (and get their weaponry back), but at this point it all depends on how they roleplay the encounter, for they cannot locate the Dryad's tree easily. Defeating the soldiers should have given them plenty of replacement weapons, though.

All weapons and shields left on the battlefield are usable. Armour, though, must be somehow adapted to the wearer, and cannot be used before it has been taken to a smith. Remember that carrying a chain suit in a backpack doubles its encumbrance. Each soldier also carries 2D10 silver coins in his purse.

Towards Padua

If the party has befriended the Dryad, she will use her Clear Path spell to quickly take them out of the deep woods. She cannot take them more than a couple of kilometres away from her tree, but she can show them the best way to Padua.

If they cannot, or will not, ask for the Dryad's help, the adventurers need to make a Lore (World) or Tracking test to find the way out the woods. Failure means they lose half a day to reach Padua, thus allowing the surviving soldiers to alert their friends in that city.

Padua is a large town, and the party will have no trouble finding a way to hide. Furthermore, the Trevigians cannot openly pursue them once they are there. Upon entering the town, Francesco goes to his banker friend and withdraws a fair amount of money.

Meanwhile, the PCs can easily find a smith who can repair the scavenged weapons and adapt any looted mail to their size. Given that the adventurers are in a hurry and that the stuff looks stolen, however, he will charge double the price for the repairs (50 for the bastard sword, 200 for the battleaxe and 200 for each mail suit). He will not accept anything stolen from the soldiers as payment, for the equipment is clearly marked as belonging to Ezzelino's militia, and nobody wants any trouble with the cruel ruler of the March.

Once their shopping duties are over, the adventurers meet Francesco again. As promised, he pays them their wages, and tells them that if anyone wishes to leave he is free, as. If however, any of the PCs are willing to follow him to Placeola he will keep his word about the magical rewards.

Francesco has rented a room for everybody in a luxury inn in Padua, and insists that even those who are going to leave be his guests for the night. The inn is guarded and the innkeeper is clearly on Francesco's side, so the lodging should be safe. Or at least they think so.

Worshippers of Satan

While Ezzelino cannot send troops to search the inns of Padua, he has a much deadlier way to deal with his enemies in this city. Padua hosts a small sect of worshippers of the Devil, who, among their other evil duties, act as Ezzelino's fifth columnists in that city. They practice evil sorcery, and their eldest members are rather adept at it.

Shortly before they go to sleep, any PCs that make a Perception test can catch a glimpse of a black cat walking on a roof on the opposite side of the alley that lies beneath their window. It is in fact the Master of Satan's familiar, and anyone using magical detection can easily figure out that the animal is enchanted. Any further investigation does not yield interesting results, though, so the PCs have no other options than to go to sleep.

Later on in the night one of them is awakened by a noise (fake a Perception roll, but they do wake anyway). Upon exploring the corridor outside their room, the adventurers stumble upon a body. It is one of the inn guards, with his axe still at his belt, eyes rolled and foam pouring out of his mouth. There is absolutely no injury nor blood on his body. He appears to have just died of fear.

Whatever killed the guard is also fearsome enough to keep everybody in his room, too. For the duration of the following encounter, neither the innkeeper nor the other guests will come out of their rooms, which are firmly locked from the inside. Also remember that the PCs have no armour on them during this encounter, as they were sleeping.

While they continue exploring the silent inn, they notice, almost in the meantime, that the back door to the alley is open, with strange grunting noises coming from the outside, and that the second guard is engaged in combat with someone on the upper story. The PCs cannot see the opponent in the dim light of the candles that illuminate the corridor, but notice that the guard swings at someone and apparently misses him. Then he falls to the ground, hit by and invisible blow that knocked him out cold.

Anyone approaching the fallen body can distinguish the shape of the Shade in front of him. Immediately after noticing the dark silhouette he is engaged in combat by the monster. Due to its nature, the creature is -20% to hit until the corridor is somehow illuminated by a better light. To make things worse, no more than two characters at a time can fight in the narrow corridor.

Other heroic characters that investigate the open door, instead, will find themselves facing a gruesome vision. Two to four thugs with daggers are in the alley (they are four if the party gave the soldiers time to alert their buddies in Padua), and in the background a man covered in a black cloak is giving instructions to a huge, horned figure. If Francesco is in this group, he whispers: "The Devil...", utterly overcome by fear.

Within a few seconds the cloaked figure disappears (unless someone is fast enough to knock him down with an arrow), leaving the others engaged in melee with the adventurers. This time the lack of room can be exploited to the PCs advantage by just retreating behind the doorway. This can be accomplished before the engagement begins, or even in melee by retreating for one Combat Action. The opponents must then come two at a time at most, and if the Broo is one of the two the other one is at a -20% penalty to his Dagger and Dodge skill because of the huge beast swinging his club and waving his head.

When the Shade is defeated, the winning PC will catch a quick glimpse of the black cat running away and diving out of a window. It was the one, in fact, that was controlling the shade. The creature itself just dissolves when it is killed, leaving behind a viscous puddle of a fluid that is halfway between muck and tar. The guard in the corridor is not dead but he does not remember anything of the encounter, because of the shock that overcame him. When the group in the alley is defeated, instead, there are some leftovers, notably the thugs, but they look like common thieves with no peculiar marks upon them, and by the time the city night watch comes to the rescue of the besieged inn the Broo has reverted to its original form. Upon a quick investigation, the beast pen outside the inn appears to have been opened, and the goat that the landlord purchased the previous morning is missing. The watch hastily deduces that these were just thieves who wanted to abduct the beast and that the guard who discovered them was too faint-hearted for his job. The innkeeper then asks for compensation for the killed goat ("Yes, I know you drove the robbers away, but what use was killing the beast, too?"), which Francesco willingly pays.

Nobody believes the tales of Black Magic told by the adventurers, although everyone confirms that if the DaRomanos are involved, then sorcery is to be expected, as Ezzelino is the son of the Devil.

Placeola

The trip to Placeola runs smoothly and without incidents. Once the party is there, Francesco drops his disguise and introduces himself to the city constable as the heir to Count Dente, showing the Golden Eagle on his documents. His claims to the throne are genuine, and since there is no imperial decree that states that Placeola should return to the Crown after its rightful ruler is dead, Francesco's claim is about to be accepted by the city council.

Later that day, however, a group of people from the Mark of Trevigium arrive in Placeola. It is led by one Arrigo Dal Dente, and accompanied by a young Astrologer destined to become rather famous in Northern Italy, Guido Bonatti. As soon as he is informed of Francesco's claims, Arrigo declares he is the one and only rightful ruler of Placeola. He can in fact trace a faint connection to the dead Count's family, but this should not be enough to claim the title of Count. The PCs can try to debate the subject with their opponent, and winning the contest should be enough to persuade the city elders that Arrigo's claim is null and void. Unfortunately, their opponent in the debate is not Arrigo but Guido Bonatti, whose social skills and reputation are definitely high. At the Gamesmaster's option, Guido can also perform Astrological Divination on behalf of Arrigo. Moreover, any Oratory success scored to impress the city council doubles the Influence score of the debating character, and do not forget to have the players roleplay the debate in order to assess further bonuses or penalties.

If the party fails to thwart the opponents' claims, then the city constable may call for a Trial by Ordeal to determine who is right. This may take the form of walking on a bed of hot coals, or a duel on the part of two champions.

The Ordeal

Surviving the Ordeal is no easy task. The character undergoing the ordeal may first attempt to make an Athletics roll to walk swiftly and minimize the time his feet are in contact with the searing surface of the coals. If he succeeds he only suffers 1d4 heat damage, if he fails he sustains a full 1d6 damage. For every single point of damage suffered the character must then make a successful Resilience roll or scream in pain, thus losing the Ordeal.

Arrigo walks first, and he passes the trial with no sign of pain or distress, almost taking a stroll upon the burning carpet of coals. In fact Guido has cast Damage Resistance 6 upon him, and he is taking no damage. If any PC guesses this and can dispel the spell, Arrigo immediately starts screaming like mad and loses the trial. Even showing evidence that Arrigo has used magic to pass the test is enough, because such sorcerous magic must surely come from the Devil. Even though evidence of sorcery is found, the city council is unlikely to punish Arrigo or Guido for this, or to let the PCs harm them, because they

know that Ezzelino is behind them and they do not want to create a Casus Belli for the Da Romano to exploit in order to conquer the city by force.
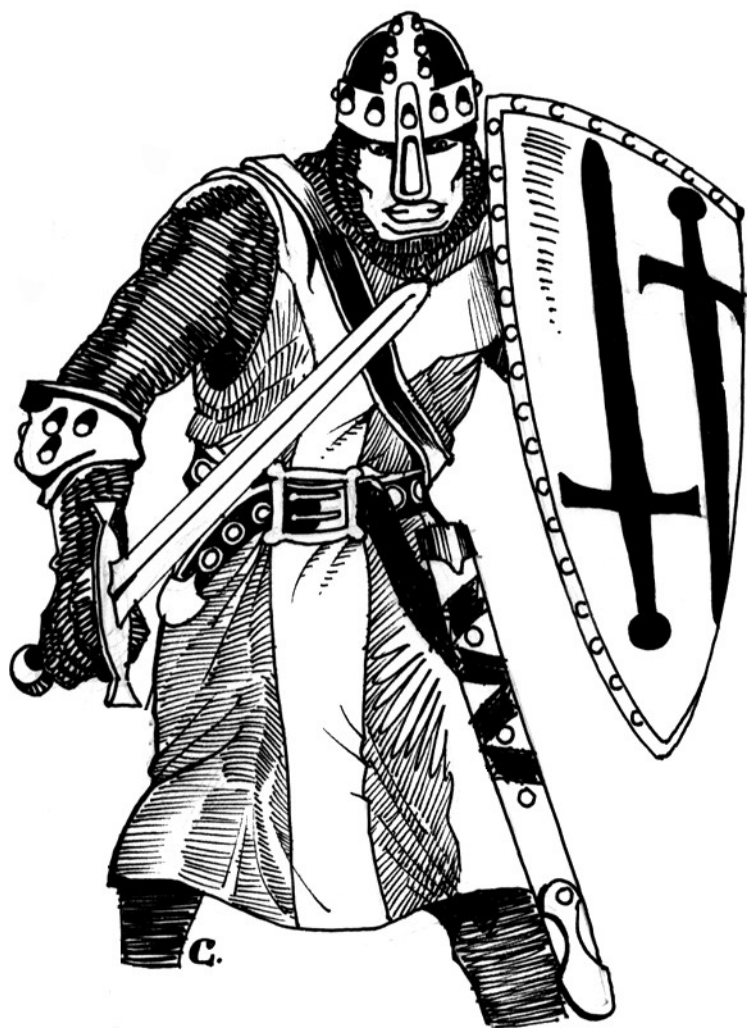
The Duel

Arrigo will choose no champion and enter the battle himself. He is not a great fighter but is rather clever from horseback, and Guido will cast Damage Resistance 6 upon him, increasing the effectiveness of his defences. Again, finding evidence of sorcery use is enough to win the test, but will not result in Arrigo or Guido being jailed or lynched.

Francesco is no fighter, instead, and will ask any PC who is competent enough to fight from horseback to be his champion. He will be equipped with a mount, and the reward for winning is the horse itself.

Note that if any PC magician uses a spell during the duel Guido will notice, and the trial is over for the adventurers. Francesco will warn the party not to use magic, but if they do not guess that Guido has Mystic Vision they may be tempted to cheat.

The duel follows the laws of chivalry: the two opponents start mounted, and if one is tossed off his mount but do not wish to concede the other must dismount. Invoking a Christian blessing to heal oneself is allowed, as long as it is the combatant himself that does this, but the opponent is free to strike in the meanwhile. As soon as one of the combatants is disabled or surrenders the duel is over. A priest with Heal Wound is near, so it is unlikely that one of the opponents will be really killed.

Epilogue

If the party manages to establish Francesco as the ruler of Placeola, they will be offered free hospitality in the town whenever they wish, and as promised they will have free access to the Astrology texts in the library. This allows them to research all sorcerous manipulations and about a dozen interesting spells. Fighter type PCs can find an employment in the militia while the scholarly PCs are using the library, and all of them are welcome as permanent members of Francesco's retinue if they wish, although the salary he can afford to pay them is rather low at first.

Guido Bonatti is a honourable man, unlike his master Ezzelino, and if the PCs win fairly he will bear no resentment towards them. Arrigo, on the other hand, is an ambitious man and will not forget that he has been deprived of a title by the PCs. When later on Ezzelino conquers almost all of northeastern Italy, Arrigo will surely be in his army.

In any case, the adventurers have gained Ezzelino Da Romano as an adversary, and he is a dangerous and cruel enemy. He will not oppose anyone loyal to the Emperor overtly, but he does not mind using any sort of treachery or sorcery to exterminate his enemies. After all, it is rumoured that the Devil himself is his real father. Given that Ezzelino is such a nice guy and that Placeola is still among the top lines of his agenda, it will not be long until Francesco issues another distress call to the adventurers.

Francesco Dente

Francesco is just a young student, and needs protection by the PCs. He is rather conscious of his noble origin and the associated privileges, but not to the point of feeling contemptuous to peasants and burghers, especially because he is aware of the growing political influence that merchant classes are gaining in Italy. He is also rather educated for his age, and values knowledge over political power, although his new position forces him to look for strength and wealth rather than wisdom to secure his newly acquired county.

Characteristics

STR	9
CON	15
SIZ	14
INT	15
POW	13
DEX	11
CHA	13

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	1/6
4–6	Left Leg	1/6
7–9	Abdomen	1/7
10–12	Chest	1/8
13–15	Right Arm	1/5
16–18	Left Arm	1/5
19–20	Head	1/6

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Stiletto	40%	1D3+1	3/6

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +13
Magic Points: 13
Move: 4m
Skills: Dodge 40%, Influence 40%, Lore (World) 50%, Literacy (Latin) 40%, Language (Italian) 80%, Resilience 35%, Persistence 35%.
Armour: Cloak (1 AP).
Spells: None
Special: Carries 5 Arabian gold coins worth the equivalent of 100 silver pieces in total.

Possessed Brown Bear

There is nothing inherently magical in this bear, it is just a big male specimen. However, for the time it remains under the Dryad's influence, his appearance is marked by swarms of cute insects and falling leaves that create a sort of "fairy" aura around him. This effectively raises his CHA by five points.

The bear bites once and claws once or twice per round. He never parries or dodges. The Dryad often enchants him with a Bestial Enhancement 6 spell which gives him +30% to hit and +6 to damage. On special occasions the Dryad may even cast Cover of Night, making him sneaky and more difficult to hit.

Characteristics

STR	29
CON	15
DEX	9
SIZ	30
INT	5
POW	10
CHA	10 (magical)

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–2	R Hind Leg	3/6
3–4	L Hind Leg	3/9
5–7	Abdomen	3/10
8–10	Chest	3/11
11–13	R Fore Leg	3/8
14–16	L Fore Leg	3/8
17–20	Head	3/9

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Bite	60%	1D8+1D12
Claw	50%	1D6+1D12

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +7
Move: 6m
Skills: Athletics 60%, Resilience 50%, Persistence 15%, Perception 50%, Tracking 25%, Stealth 5%.
Armour: Tough hide (3 AP)

Jalleyn the Dryad

This Dryad is very ancient and wields powers far beyond those of a normal Dryad. She can command any beast in her grove at a cost of one Magic Point per beast per hour. These usually include wolves, badgers, hawks, owls, bats and more small animals, which can provide some challenge to intruders if she enchants them with Bestial Enhancement and Cover of Night. When she must cope with a real danger, however, she summons a large brown bear.

Jalleyn can turn any branch in her grove into a staff in a single combat action, but rarely does so because she usually relies on her followers for attack and on dodge for defence.

The Dryad's runes are hidden among her tree's roots, and she is considered to be holding them even when she manifests a human body. Even though the party actually kills her, which is only possible if they chop the tree down, it is very unlikely that they may take her runes.

Jalleyn can speak in some sort of classic Latin, which she learned before the advent of Christianity in the Roman Empire turned the people of the land against all nature spirits. It is close enough to Italian or Provençal to let people understand what she is saying, but communication with her is rather difficult.

Characteristics

STR	5
CON	12
DEX	18
SIZ	7
INT	25
POW	30
CHA	20

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/4
4–6	Left Leg	-/4
7–9	Abdomen	-/5
10–12	Chest	-/6
13–15	Right Arm	-/3
16–18	Left Arm	-/3
19–20	Head	-/4

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	50%	1D8-1D4	2/8

Combat Actions: 3
Strike Rank: +21
Magic Points: 30
Move: 3m
Skills: Dodge 100%, Stealth 90%, Resilience 35%, Persistence 100%, Perception 90%, Track 90%, Lore (All) 90%, Speak (Druidic) 90%, Speak (Latin) 50%.
Armour: None
Runes: Fertility 90%, Plant 100%, Beast 70%, Shadow 50%.
Spells: Clear Path 8, Heal 6, Endurance 1, Bestial Enhancement 6, Cover of Night 6, Douse (1), Entangle (3)

Special powers

Douse: Works like a rune spell of Magnitude 1, and extinguishes torches, candles and small camp fires. It cannot extinguish a large camp fire.

Entangle: Vines from a nearby bush silently wrap around the target and hold him fast, preventing him from moving. The vines have a STR equal to the caster's INT and hit points equal to her POW for the purpose of breaking free or severing them. They have four armour points.

The Master of Satan

The Master is the oldest worshipper of Satan in Padua, and he and his familiar are extremely skilled in sorcerous spells related to blood and darkness. He is a very cruel man, and is willing to give over his city to the DaRomanos even though he knows very well what Ezzelino will do to its inhabitants.

The master is very cunning and cautious and will appear to the PCs for a few moments only, and only if they look out of the door or a window and into the alley. Unless they are extremely lucky with an arrow shot into the darkness the player characters will not be able to harm him.

The Black Cat

The Master's familiar is a sneaky black cat. It knows several sorcery spells related to darkness. Its main purpose in this adventure is to animate the shade, making it capable of human-like attacks. It remains hidden until the shade is vanquished, and then it springs out of its hiding place and leaps out of the window into the dark alley, never to be seen again, at least for this adventure's duration.

Adepts of Satan

These low-ranking members of the Worshippers of Satan, wearing dark hoods that hide their faces and whispering unholy curses that suggest they might not be humans but rather some hell spawn, may look rather scary if met in a dark alley. In truth, however, they are moderately skilled in street fighting, but little more. They will not retreat if wounded, though, because they know that the Master will feed their souls to the Lord of the Bottomless Abyss if they show any sign of cowardice.

Characteristics

STR   11
CON   10
SIZ   12
INT   10
POW   10
DEX   14
CHA   15

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	-/6
10–12	Chest	-/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Dagger	50%	1D4+1	4/6

Combat Actions: 3
Strike Rank: +12
Move: 4m
Magic Points: 10
Skills: Dodge 35%, Resilience 20%, Persistence 30%.
Armour: None

Broo

This creature is just a big, hapless goat bought by the innkeeper for the Sunday dinner and turned into a hellish creature by the Master of Satan. The Master has also Combined an Enhance Strength spell with his Dominate and Shapechange in order to increase the creature's combat capabilities. Although not very aggressive on its own, the creature must obey the Master's commands and will attack relentlessly until killed.

Characteristics

STR   26
CON   15
SIZ   15
INT   4
POW   8
DEX   10
CHA   3

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/6
4–6	Left Leg	-/6
7–9	Abdomen	-/7
10–12	Chest	-/8
13–15	Right Arm	-/5
16–18	Left Arm	-/5
19–20	Head	3/6

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Club	36%	1D6+1D8	2/10
Head butt	73%	1D6+1D8	

Combat Actions: 3 (special)
Strike Rank: +7
Magic Points: 8
Move: 4m
Skills: Resilience 23%.
Armour: Horns (3 APs on head)
Special: the Broo gets an extra combat action per round, but this must be a head butt attack.

Shaped Shade

This darkness elemental has been summoned by the Master of Satan, and is controlled by his familiar via sorcery. The familiar has also Combined a Form Darkness spell with his Domination charm, so he can give the creature a semi-humanoid form in order to scare its opponents.

The Shade has thus acquired, in exchange for its normal attacks, the ability to hit with a semi-corporeal fist which appears to enlarge and to partially engulf its opponent when it strikes. The shade's normal weakness of having only one hit location is also negated by this combination of spells, so it is necessary to destroy its chest in order to banish it. Destroying a leg or the abdomen gives the creature a -20% to hit penalty for falling to the ground, while destroying the head is nothing but a nuisance for it. Destroying both arms, however, leaves the creature harmless, forcing the black cat to dissolve it. A location brought to 0 hit points is considered destroyed, as the creature has no Resilience score. If the creature is not engaged in melee and it is still controlled by the Black Cat, the animal can use its Form Darkness spell to restore one hit location per round to full HP.

Anyone seeing the creature may guess its nature with a Hard Lore (World) test, or a standard test if he is a magician. Note however that understanding the changes that the Black Cat's spells caused in the creature's nature requires a critical success, or the use of a Mystic Vision spell. If the familiar's magic is somehow dispelled or the cat is killed (unlikely, because it is well hidden), the creature returns to its original blob-like form, and is treated as a normal RuneQuest shade. All damage already done to its chest is transferred to the creature's regular Hit Points.

Characteristics

STR	9
CON	-
SIZ	2 cubic meters
INT	2
POW	8
DEX	11
CHA	1

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/4
4–6	Left Leg	-/4
7–9	Abdomen	-/5
10–12	Chest	-/6
13–15	Right Arm	-/3
16–18	Left Arm	-/3
19–20	Head	-/4

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage
Claw	40%	1 (cold) + Fearshock

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +6
Move: 4m
Skills: Dodge 50%, Resilience 0%, Persistence 30%.
Armour: None
Note: If the shade hits, it causes 1 point of cold damage to a random hit location. Armour is useless against this damage, as are successful dodges that reduce damage to minimum. The most unpleasant effect, however, is that if the character takes damage the shade matches its Persistence versus the Target's Resilience, with the following detrimental effects:

Result	Outcome
Shade Succeeds, Victim Fails	Victim collapses for 20 minus CON rounds and must roll a successful Resilience test or die.
Both Fail	Victim is Demoralised (as the Rune Magic spell). The effects last for 20 minus CON rounds.
Both Succeed	No effect on creatures with normal INT. Creatures with fixed INT are Demoralised (as the Rune Magic spell) for 20 minus CON rounds.
Shade Fails, Victim Succeeds	Victim is unaffected, cannot be targeted again for 24 hours.

DaRomano Soldiers

These fellows are just the toughest among the peasants that live in the lands controlled by the Family, who have been supplied with weapons and armours and some basic military training. They have no idea of honour whatsoever, and indulge in pillaging and other sorts of felonies whenever they know that their master would not disapprove. Which means quite often, given Ezzelino's cruel nature.

Each soldier rides a cavalry horse in the first encounter. Later on they are on foot. When the party confronts them in the woods, some of them are carrying a sword and a torch, and some are carrying an axe and a shield or a sword and a shield.

Characteristics

STR	12
CON	10
SIZ	13
INT	13
POW	10
DEX	11
CHA	10

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	5/5
4–6	Left Leg	5/5
7–9	Abdomen	5/6
10–12	Chest	5/7
13–15	Right Arm	5/4
16–18	Left Arm	5/4
19–20	Head	5/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP-HP
Sword	60%	1D8+1D2	4-10
Battleaxe	50%	1D6+1+1D2	3-8
Shield	50%	1D6+1D2	8-12

Combat Actions: 2 (+ shield if applicable)
Strike Rank: +12
Move: 4m
Skills: Riding 40%, Resilience 35%, Persistence 25%, Perception 40%.
Armour: Light Chain Mail and helm (3 AP on limbs, 5 AP elsewhere)

Arrigo Del Dente

Arrigo is one of the myriad of landless nobles who lived in that part of Italy during the thirteenth century, always hoping that the Emperor or a major noble would reward them with a fief for supporting him in one of the petty wars that were so common during the Dark Ages. Arrigo has just found his opportunity in the ambitious Ezzelino Da Romano, one of the most power thirsty characters of Italian history, who needs to take control of Placeola in order to use it as a base from which he can later launch an attack against Padua. He is probably really related to the Dente family, but the connections are too faint to have any significance. Nevertheless, he always sports the Dente coat of arms, a golden eagle on a blue background, on his shield, to remind everybody of his origin.

Arrigo is brave and ambitious, but not a very cunning man, and this is probably the most important reason why Ezzelino chose him as his tool to conquer Placeola. He blatantly declares to uphold the rules of chivalry, and will never behave less than honourably in public, but his true opinion is that chivalry is just nonsense and a true ruler should take advantage of whatever opportunity he is given, no matter if honourable or not.

Characteristics

STR	11
CON	12
SIZ	13
INT	9
POW	11
DEX	13
CHA	12

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	5/5
4–6	Left Leg	5/5
7–9	Abdomen	5/6
10–12	Chest	5/7
13–15	Right Arm	5/4
16–18	Left Arm	5/4
19–20	Head	5/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP-HP
Sword	60%	1D8+1D2	4-10
Shield	40%	1D6+1D2	8-12

Combat Actions: 3 (+ shield bonus)
Strike Rank: +11
Move: 4m
Skills: Riding 60%, Resilience 25%, Persistence 45%, Perception 30%.
Armour: Chain Mail and helm (5 AP). When Guido casts Damage Resistance 6 on him, he can ignore all blows dealing up to 6 damage.

Guido Bonatti

Guido is an Astrologer who is destined to become extremely famous in the thirteenth century and all the centuries to come. He served several lords of the time, including Ezzelino, Emperor Frederick and Guido da Montefeltre, Lord of Siena.

At this time, however, the official court Astrologer of the Emperor is Michael Scot, and Guido serves the Emperor's faithful liege Ezzelino, who ordered him to support Arrigo in his mission of claiming Placeola. Guido's role in this mission is mainly casting protective magic on Arrigo, as Ezzelino fears he might get himself into trouble without some help. Guido will never question his master's wishes, even when they involve cheating in a matter of

honourable challenges, but he usually prefers more straightforward conduct. He will provide advice to Arrigo if he discovers the party has devised something unexpected, but Arrigo is not likely to listen to him anyway.

Characteristics

STR	8
CON	11
SIZ	11
INT	17
POW	17
DEX	11
CHA	15

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	1/5
4–6	Left Leg	1/5
7–9	Abdomen	1/6
10–12	Chest	1/7
13–15	Right Arm	1/4
16–18	Left Arm	1/4
19–20	Head	1/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	40%	1D8-1D2	5/12

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +14
Magic Points: 17 (+10 crystal)
Move: 4m
Skills: Dodge 20%, Influence 60%, Lore (World) 60%, Astrology 70%, Language (Italian) 100%, Literacy (Latin) 70%. Resilience 35%, Persistence 75%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 60%, Manipulation (Combine) 60%.
Armour: Cloak (1 AP).
Spells: Resist Damage 80%, Mystic Vision 40%, Resist Spirit 80%, Stupefaction 30%.
Special: Guido has a superior quality staff that is far more effective at parrying than normal quarterstaffs. He also has a special crystal that holds 10 magic points bound into the staff.

Sample Player Characters

Cavalcante Della Faggiola

Florentine Mercenary

Cavalcante is a kind of Italian Don Quixote, the son of a town merchant who always dreamed of adventure and glory rather than profit. He has been a professional soldier in the employ of several city councils during the frequent wars between the city-states and the Empire. After a period of relative quiet, however, Cavalcante has become masterless, and he is actively seeking a new job.

Characteristics

STR	15
CON	16
SIZ	13
INT	11
POW	9
DEX	14
CHA	8

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	4/6
4–6	Left Leg	4/6
7–9	Abdomen	4/7
10–12	Chest	4/8
13–15	Right Arm	4/5
16–18	Left Arm	4/5
19–20	Head	4/6

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Glaive	50%	1D8+1+1D2	3/10
Mace	70%	1D8+1*+1D2	4/10
Shield	70%	1D6+1D2	8/12

Combat Actions: 3 (+ shield bonus)
Strike Rank: +12
Move: 4m
Skills: Influence 35%, Evaluate 25%, Lore (World) 35%, Resilience 60%, Persistence 25%, Craft (Weaponsmith) 15%, Streetwise 20%, Dodge 20%, Lore (Italy) 11%, Language (Italian) 61%.
Armour: Scale Mail and helm (4 AP).
Magic Points: 11
Equipment: Armour and helm, mace & shield, glaive, travelling pack, 30 SP in coins.
Special: Mace is very well crafted and deals 1 more point of damage than average maces

Ugo Pezzin

Venetian Mariner

After his ship had been boarded and pillaged by ruthless Genoese pirates, Ugo was stranded in the Palermo harbour in search of a job. He has been a sailor since he was ten, and nobody can best a Venetian sailor when it comes to sailing ships and boats, so he is confident that he will find a new position as soon as a new crew is recruited. Proficient in weapon and survival skills, Ugo is a suitable candidate for other sorts of jobs, too, and, having always dreamed of a more adventurous life, however, he is also willing to accept assignments that do not involve sailing..

Characteristics

STR	11
CON	12
SIZ	13
INT	12
POW	13
DEX	13
CHA	10

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	-/6
10–12	Chest	-/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Hand axe	40%	1D6+1	3/8
Dagger	50%	1D4+1	3/8

Combat Actions: 3
Strike Rank: +13
Magic Points: 13
Move: 4m
Skills: Acrobatics 30%, Boating 40%, Athletics 45%, Dodge 45%, Throwing 20%, Resilience 30%, Persistence 25%, Perception 50%, Lore (World) 30%, Lore (Animal) 30%, Sing 20%, Shiphandling 15%, Language (Venetian) 62%.
Armour: None
Equipment: Axe, three daggers, 20m rope, travelling pack, 50 SP in Venetian currency
Special: Persian amulet Spellcharged with sorcerous Treat Wounds, which Ugo can cast at 25% skill.

Sir Wolfgang von Tiesbeck

Teutonic Knight

Sir Wolfgang belongs to the Knightly Order of the Teutonic Knights, made up mainly of German nobles that devote their lives to the cause of the Church. Under Emperor Frederick, the Teutonic knights have been turned into a political and military tool of the Holy Roman Empire, to the point that Frederick has commanded them to convert the pagan lands on the Baltic Sea shore. Not being particularly eager to travel to the Baltic area, Sir Wolfgang is looking for a task that he finds more suitable for a Christian Knight.

Characteristics

STR	14
CON	10
SIZ	13
INT	13
POW	8
DEX	11
CHA	14

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	5/5
4–6	Left Leg	5/5
7–9	Abdomen	5/6
10–12	Chest	5/7
13–15	Right Arm	5/4
16–18	Left Arm	5/4
19–20	Head	5/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Sword	70%	1D8+1D2	4/10
Shield	50%	1D6+1D2	8/12
Dagger	25%	1D4+1+1D2	4/6

Combat Actions: 2 (+ shield bonus)
Magic Points: 8
Strike Rank: +12
Move: 4m
Skills: Athletics 35%, Riding 45%, Perception 25%, Influence 50%, Courtesy 30%, Resilience 30%, Persistence 50%, Lore (World) 25%, Theology (Catholic) 28%, Language (German) 65%, Lore (Germany) 15%, Language (Latin) 15%.
Armour: Chain Mail and helm (5 AP).
Equipment: Armour and helm, sword & shield, dagger, travelling pack, 10 SP in coins.
Spells: Truesword (3)
Dedicated POW: 3

Father Gaius Aulenti

Catholic Priest

Good Father Gaius was the personal teacher of a wealthy artisan's children. Unfortunately it was found out that he showed far too many attentions towards one of his employer's daughters, and this cost him his job, along with most of his reputation. He is now faced with the idea of entering a monastery, something he has always been uncomfortable about, in order to earn a living. Before resorting to this kind of solution, however, he is determined to try out other careers, especially if he can persuade some noble to request his spiritual services.

Characteristics

STR	9
CON	9
SIZ	13
INT	14
POW	7
DEX	9
CHA	11

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	-/6
10–12	Chest	-/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	-/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Staff	30%	1D8	3/8
Unarmed	30%	1D3	

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +11
Magic Points: 10
Move: 4m
Skills: Dodge 30%, Resilience 25%, Persistence 30%, First Aid 35%, Influence 50%, Survival 25%, Oratory 20%, Lore (Catholicism) 40%, Language (Italian) 80%, Lore (Animal) 25%, Lore (Plant) 25%, Lore (World) 20%, Lore (Italy) 14%, Literacy (Latin) 15%.
Spells: Heal Wound 3, Consecrate, Soul Sight 2, Dismiss Magic 3, Mindlink 1.
Dedicated POW: 10
Armour: Cloak (1 AP)
Equipment: Staff, robe, ceremonial equipment, writing kit, 10 SP in coins.
Special: Silver Cross Spellcharged with Madness spell, can be cast with Lore (Catholicism). This was given him by his former student as a parting gift, and can be recharged only at special Chapels.

Marina Salimpietra

Townswoman (thief)

Born to a family in which women had little opportunities besides professional street walking (and we do not mean patrolling the streets), Marina preferred to earn her living by means of bravery and sleight of hand, which he regarded as more honourable, albeit not equally lawful. She has, however, been very lucky to have survived to her current age, which we will not reveal as she is a lady, without being caught. Since her sinews and reflexes are not as good as before, and she is not wealthy enough to consider retirement yet, she is in search of a new kind of job where she can exploit her considerable talents.

Characteristics

STR	7
CON	11
SIZ	9
INT	11
POW	13
DEX	16
CHA	15

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/4
4–6	Left Leg	-/4
7–9	Abdomen	-/5
10–12	Chest	-/6
13–15	Right Arm	-/3
16–18	Left Arm	-/3
19–20	Head	-/4

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP-HP
Dagger	50%	1D4+2*-1d2	4-6

Combat Actions: 3 (+double weapon bonus)
Strike Rank: +13
Magic Points: 13
Move: 4m
Skills: Acrobatics 30%, Athletics 25%, Dodge 55%, Resilience 25%, Persistence 25%, Evaluate 30%, Influence 35%, Sleight 40%, Stealth 65%, Perception 35%, Mechanisms 30%, Streetwise 40%, Language (Italian) 61%, Language (Arabic) 11%, Lore (Italy) 11%, Lore (World) 21%.
Armour: Cloak (1 AP).
Equipment: Special dagger, common dagger, 20m rope with grapple, lockpicks (+10%), travelling pack, 30 SP in coins.
Special: Marina has a specially crafted dagger that deals +1 damage, for a total of 1D4+2 damage. She usually fights with two daggers.

Berengario Volpati

Scholar and Astrologist

Formerly a student of the famous Michael Scot, personal Astrologer of the Emperor, Berengario has just returned from a journey to the Middle East, where he learned important secrets about the influence of the stars upon the events to come, which include the downfall of House Hohenstaufen by the hand of the French. Unfortunately, his former master was not interested in hearing what he had to say, and Berengario is now in search of a way to make the Emperor believe his predictions. Perhaps accomplishing some heroic deeds will attract his attention?

Characteristics

STR	9
CON	10
SIZ	10
INT	17
POW	16
DEX	9
CHA	14

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	1/5
4–6	Left Leg	1/5
7–9	Abdomen	1/6
10–12	Chest	1/7
13–15	Right Arm	1/4
16–18	Left Arm	1/4
19–20	Head	1/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP-HP
Staff	40%	1D8	3-8
Dagger	40%	1D4+1	4-6

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +13
Magic Points: 16
Move: 4m
Skills: Evaluate 42%, Lore (World) 35%, Astrology 20%, Lore (Italy) 17%, Resilience 30%, Persistence 55%, Driving 36%, Streetwise 30%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 45%, Manipulation (Range) 35%, Enchantment 25%, Language (Italian) 75%, Literacy (Latin) 25%.
Armour: None
Magic: Mystic Vision 45%, Project Sight 35%, Dominate (Owl) 35%.
Equipment: Staff, Dagger, writing kit, tome of Astrology, cloak, domesticated owl, 30 SP in coins.
Special: Dagger is enchanted with Power Enhancer 2, which increases the magnitude of any Progressive spell he casts by 2.

Kareem bin Youssef

Saracen Archer

Kareem was born in Sicily two centuries after the Normans had taken the island from its former Arabian rulers. As a member of a barely tolerated minority, many Arabs had become outlaws, making the inland of Sicily a very dangerous area, and so had Kareem. After waging a successful war against these brigands, the Emperor has eventually issued a pardon for all those who abandoned their gangs and move to the Italian mainland, where the safety of the city of Lucera is waiting for them. Event though he is forced to leave his homeland to obey the Imperial edict, Kareem does not wish to be confined to the Rock of Lucera, and is looking for a new party to join, possibly one with good opportunities for loot.

Characteristics

STR	11
CON	9
SIZ	11
INT	11
POW	14
DEX	17
CHA	9

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	-/5
4–6	Left Leg	-/5
7–9	Abdomen	2/6
10–12	Chest	2/7
13–15	Right Arm	-/4
16–18	Left Arm	-/4
19–20	Head	2/5

Weapons

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Scimitar	55%	1D6+1	4/10
Dagger	28%	1D4+1	4/6
Nomad bow	80%	1D10+1*	

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +13
Magic Points: 10
Move: 4m
Skills: Athletics 30%, Dodge 45%, First Aid 25%, Resilience 55%, Persistence 25%, Lore (Animal) 21%, Lore (Plant) 21%, Craft (Bowyer) 11%, Survival 35%, Language (Arabic) 61%, Language (Italian) 15%, Lore (Mediterranean) 11%.
Armour: Leather Hauberk & cap (2 AP torso and head).
Equipment: Scimitar, bow, dagger, travelling pack, quiver w/30 arrows, 20 SP in Italian coins.
Special: Nomad bow is particularly well-crafted and deals +1 damage.

Muhammar al-Kerbal

Saracen Magician

Born to a Saracen noble of Sicilian origin, Muhammar travelled all over the Mediterranean Sea after his father's family was expelled from the Island by King Roger of Hauteville. During this trip he has learned almost everything a good Muslim should know about magic and spirits, and even something he should not know, and he has become a practitioner of magic. He is now back to his father's homeland in search of more powerful spirits to study, because, as he often says, "The spirits of the lands of the Infidels are stronger."

Characteristics

STR	7
CON	5
SIZ	17
INT	16
POW	18
DEX	9
CHA	13

Hit Locations

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1–3	Right Leg	1/5
4–6	Left Leg	1/5
7–9	Abdomen	1/6
10–12	Chest	1/7
13–15	Right Arm	1/4
16–18	Left Arm	1/4
19–20	Head	1/5

Weapon

Type	Skill	Damage	AP/HP
Scimitar	26%*	1D6+1	4/10
Dagger	30%	1D4+1	4/6

Combat Actions: 2
Strike Rank: +12
Magic Points: 18
Move: 4m
Skills: Evaluate 26%, Influence 46%, Resilience 35%, Persistence 40%, Language (Italian) 20%, Language (Arabic) 70%, Lore (World) 30%, Lore (Mediterranean) 16%, Literacy (Arabic) 20%, Streetwise 31%, Manipulation (Magnitude) 45%, Manipulation (Range) 35%.
Armour: Cloak (1 AP).
Spells: Spiritual Projection 35%, Damage Boosting 35%, Spirit Resistance 35%, Damage Resistance 45%.
Equipment: Scimitar, dagger, cloak, travelling pack, writing kit, 50 arabian gold coins worth 10 SP each.
Note: Muhammar uses Damage Boost on his dagger only to fend off hostile spirits. He has never engaged a physical opponent in melee, as he is too clumsy to use his scimitar effectively.

Motion pictures about the Middle Ages

There are plenty of history books in everyone's bookshelf that can expand the knowledge provided in this manuscript, but reading them might prove boring. Movies, however, are usually more interesting to watch, and some of them provide a realistic, although entertaining, representation of the medieval world. Note that these films are not suitable for children.

Aleksandr Nevsjij (S. Eisenstein, 1938) – the great epic battle between the Russians and the Teutonic Knights.

Andrej Roublev (A Tarkovskij, 1970) – the story of the most famous icon painting monk of Russia

The Name of the Rose (J. J. Annaud, 1986) – a mystery story in a Benedictine monastery.

The Thirteenth Warrior (J. McTiernan, 1999) – an Arab scholar fighting alongside Vikings.

Knights of the Quest (I cavalieri che fecero l'impresa - P. Avati, 2001) – almost unknown outside Italy, gives an unusually realistic representation of a knight's life.

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This book is about roleplaying religions that exist in the real world, including Orthodox and Catholic Christianity as well as Islam. As such, it is recommended for Mature Readers.

Requires the RuneQuest Main Rulebook and the RuneQuest Companion, available from Mongoose Publishing.