

# SCROLL OF KINGS™





If there is one surety in the Time of Tumult, it is that there will be war. As nation struggles against nation, as the deathknights ride forth from the shadowlands, as the Realm slips closer and closer to civil war, as the Solars return to reclaim the Mandate of Heaven, wars engulf Creation. And if you're going to fight a war, fight to win. From the frozen steppes of the North to the burning wastes of the South, from the mysterious forests of the East to the savage islands of the West, from all four corners of the world to the heart of Creation, master the combat styles of all nations and wield them against your foes on the field of battle. The tools to do so are contained within.

This book does the following:

- Details the way Creation's great nations conduct wars
- Features many new rules for use in mass combat
- Provides an array of siege weaponry, naval craft and engines of war for use in any **Exalted** series

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# SCROLL OF KINGS™

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The third of five books dedicated to the supernatural locales of the **Exalted** setting, this supplement focuses on the Celestial City of Yu-Shan, home of the gods. Built by the Primordials as a refuge in which they might enjoy the Games of Divinity, while their subordinates tended to Creation, Yu-Shan was taken by the gods as the spoils of the Primordial War. Home to a massive bureaucracy rife with corruption, the continent-sized city has been the sole province of the Sidereal Exalts since the Usurpation. Will the Solar Exalted's return upset the status quo of the Celestial City, or will the Chosen of the Maidens succeed in maintaining their monopoly on the resources of Heaven?

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This second of the Scrolls of Esoteric Wisdom focuses on the two ancient allies of the Old Realm Solar Deliberative, the Dragon Kings and the Mountain Folk. Once the rulers of Creation before the ascendancy of man, the mighty Dragon Kings were nearly destroyed at the fall of the First Age and their descendents have long since fallen into barbarism. Does the return of the Solars signal a return to greatness for the Dragon Kings, or are they too far gone? The Mountain Folk once armed the Solars for the Primordial War, but those same Lawgivers later came to distrust the Jadeborn and had their creator Autochthon lay the Great Geas upon them, locking them in their subterranean world. Will the modern Solars make amends for their predecessors' misdeeds, or will they take further advantage of these stoic craftsmen and warriors?



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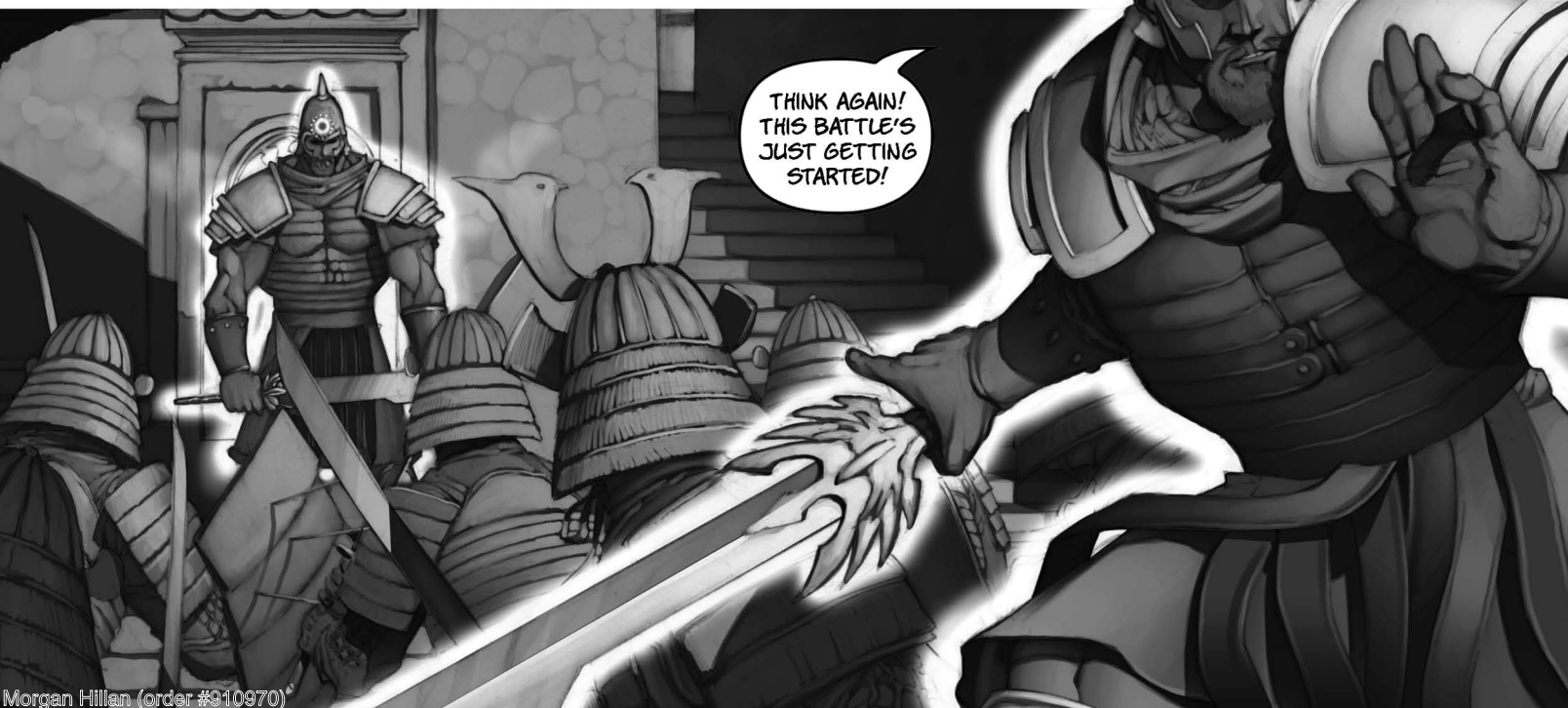
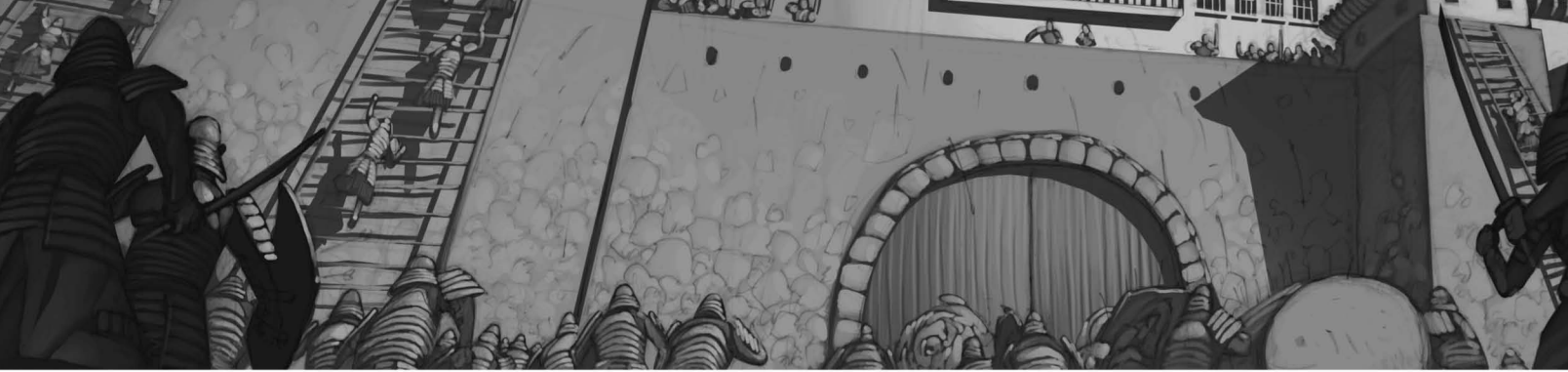


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# INTRODUCTION

*A prince ought, therefore, never to let his thoughts stray far  
from the exercise of war . . .*  
—Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

The Time of Tumult is a time of war. A cynic might say that every age is a time of war; but for the last few centuries in Creation, none of the wars mattered very much. Oh, they mattered a great deal to the people who fought and died in them. The shape of Creation was set, however: the fractious Threshold dominated by the stable, unified Realm and its all-powerful Empress. Nobody's little war could change that picture.

That world order now crumbles. A barbarian warlord destroyed an army of the Realm, and the Realm does not retaliate and crush the upstart. The Empress disappeared, and the Dragon-Blooded masters of the Realm are too busy maneuvering to seize her throne. They pull back the Realm's legions and fleets, leaving the Threshold to its own devices. Deathlords claim kingdoms in the mortal world and threaten Creation with armies of the dead. More than 100 Solar Exalted walk Creation, each one a hero who could raise an empire or cast one down.



The world is up for grabs, and a lot of people are grabbing. Some want to conquer. Others just want to avoid being conquered. Either way, there shall be war.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**Scroll of Kings** examines war in the Time of Tumult from the perspectives of the five Directions of Creation: East, West, North, South and the Blessed Isle in the Center. The environment and resources found in each sector of Creation give rise to particular forms of combat. The West, for instance, necessarily specializes in naval warfare, while the South's access to firedust encourages the development of incendiary and explosive weapons. The dominant war gods of each Direction further influence the ways that mortals make war—and are influenced by them in turn.

Each Direction's favored styles and techniques of warfare suggest new options for the mass combat system described starting on page 158 of **Exalted**. Using **Scroll of Kings**, you





now can factor the effects of fortification, naval warfare, harsh environments, combat engineering and the Exalted themselves into battles.

**Scroll of Kings** also describes the military postures of most of Creation's major states, and a few of the minor ones, too. Storytellers receive at least one sample combat unit from each country or culture.

**Chapter One: Fire and Iron** reveals the ingenious fire-dust weaponry of the South. The region's lack of water forces Southerners to master siegecraft, for attack and defense. The people of the cities cannot retreat and regroup, for outside the fertile oases and river valleys lie starvation, thirst and certain death. There is not enough for everyone, and envious eyes watch for any sign of weakness.

**Chapter Two: Blood in the Water** covers naval warfare, from the Lintha pirates to the corpse-rowed galleys of Skullstone. Naval warfare has many features peculiar to itself: one rarely defends territory, combatants are highly mobile and ships are so expensive that war is never cheap. And, of course, the field of battle itself can ruin all your plans through a sudden storm.

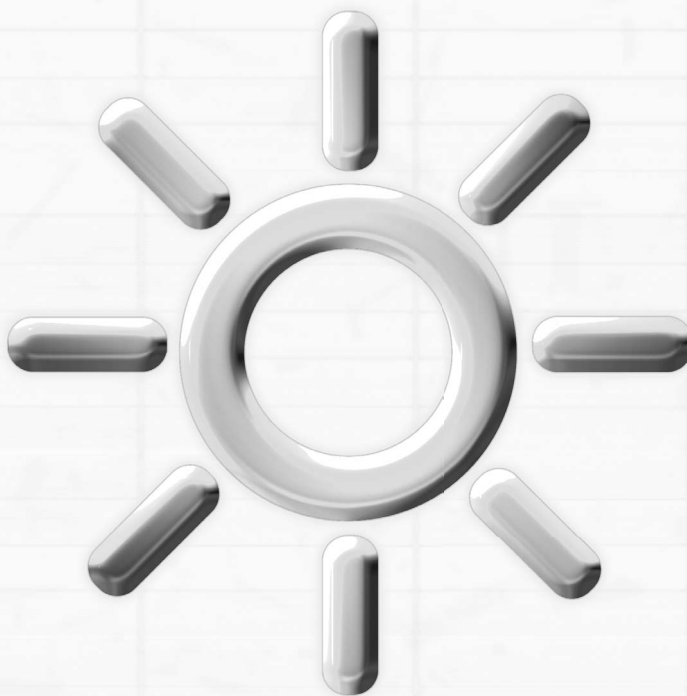
**Chapter Three: General Winter** tells how Gethamane, Whitewall and the Haslanti League make war. Northern warriors must plan their campaigns around the seasons: they have only a few months to fight before the terrible Northern winter destroys any army that remains in the field. The need

for quick, decisive battles now inspires a burst of military innovation from the Haslanti League and the return of a form of warfare that Creation has not seen since the First Age: air power.

**Chapter Four: Seeds of Conflict** describes the art of forest warfare as it is practiced from the redwoods of Halta to the jungles of the Southeast. Easterners master guerilla warfare. They specialize in commando raids, sniping, traps and ambushes. In this sector of Creation, wars can simmer for decades or centuries, with neither side gaining a conclusive advantage or fighting a decisive battle.

**Chapter Five: The Failing Center** tells how the Realm makes war. The Realm has two great assets: its immense population and the Dragon-Blooded. The Realm has one great hindrance: everywhere it wants to make war is hundreds of miles across the sea. The Imperial Army is the response: masses of highly trained soldiers, with the best weapons that mortal craft can provide, from simple spears to mobile siege towers. Where muscle and discipline fail, the Dragon-Blooded bring Essence to the battlefield and perform feats beyond the power of the greatest mortal soldiers and generals.

**Chapter Six: Panoply of War** provides game traits for all the clever devices that people of the five Directions have invented for killing each other, from new sorts of blades to traps and vehicles of war. Go forth to battle!











# CHAPTER ONE

## FIRE AND IRON

Creation's southlands extend from the Summer Mountains in the East to the Fire Mountains in the West, with the Southeastern savannas and coastal An-Teng as transitional zones to the adjacent Directions. Populations range from the teeming millions of Chiaroscuro to tiny barbarian tribes in the deep desert. Southern warfare seems similarly diverse, from sieges that can last years to cattle raids that conclude in minutes. Nevertheless, wars in the South arise from similar causes and have similar goals.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

When people in other parts of Creation think of the South, they usually think first, "It's hot." And it is. More importantly, though, the South is *dry*. Rain is seasonal at best, and grows more scant away from the coast. People collect where they find water for their crops and animals. Rivers through the desert create densely populated strips of land. Beyond the coast, towns grow at oases, or wherever people can dig wells or hoard dribs and drabs of rain. People

marvel at Gem's wealth of precious stones; but the greater marvel may be the network of cisterns and channels that spreads out from the city to collect whatever traces of rain may reach this far south or across the Fire Mountains, and deliver them to the thirsty city.

These settled folk find themselves tied to their sources of water. In war, they cannot easily make a strategic retreat or flee to become refugees, for abandoning their home means dying of thirst in the arid lands beyond. Defense is critical. Southerners devote vast effort to building city walls, manning them with soldiers, stocking granaries with food and taxing the living daylight out of the populace to pay for it all. The centralized command required to husband and distribute scarce water supplies also permits total mobilization for war.

Nomads choose a different course. Instead of huddling around reliable, year-round sources of water, they go wherever they can find water and food for their cattle, sheep, horses, goats or camels. They use their beasts to collect traces of moisture from prairie grass or desert scrub, and take their share by drinking

the animals' milk or blood. In this manner, nomads can live on land too dry to farm, or take advantage of streams and water holes that are too small or erratic to support a town.

Whether townsman, villager or nomad, however, every Southerner lives with one ineluctable truth: there isn't enough water to go around. Sooner or later, the town or tribe grows beyond its water supply. In the comparatively well-watered coastal strip, the townsfolk look South in fear

of the desert nomads who long to move North and seize the land for their own. Even along the coast, however, sometimes the water supply itself shrinks. The rains don't come, streams change course, wells dry up. The people choose between starvation and war.

A prudent leader doesn't wait for such catastrophes. She tries to expand her community's water supply before drought. If she can bring other towns under her rule, she can take their crops to supplement her own. If she can drive away or destroy other nomad tribes, she has more space to graze her own people's herds.

And so, the South sees never-ending war. Deep down, every Southerner knows that every other Southerner is a potential water thief or a potential victim to be robbed. You can trust your family, your tribe, your empire... somewhat... but outsiders are fair game. The desert tribes, of course, feel this suspicion and greed most strongly. A common desert proverb goes, "Myself against my brothers; my brothers and I against my cousins; my cousins and I against my clan; my clan and I against my tribe; my tribe and I against the world."

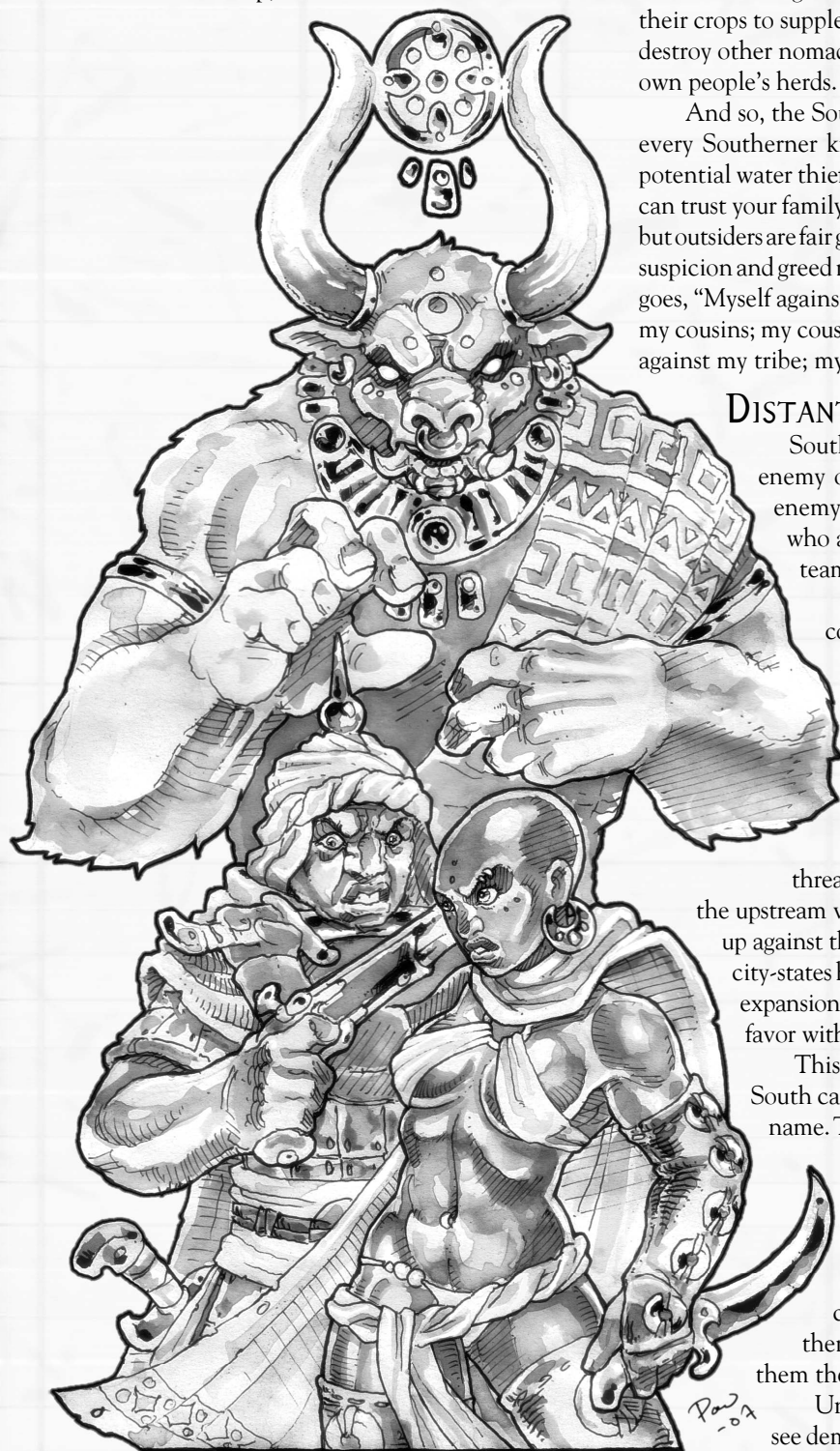
## DISTANT ALLIES, NEARBY FOES

Southerners have another proverb: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." When one enemy presses you hard, look for other people who also have a grudge against your foe, and team up—for a while.


Whether villages or empires, Southern communities rarely form alliances with their neighbors if they do not have some compelling, pre-existing tie such as membership in the same tribe. Neighbors have grievances. Instead, Southern communities try to outflank their rivals by allying with some more distant community that does not offer an immediate threat. When three villages lie along a stream, the upstream village and the downstream village team up against the village in the middle. The Varangian city-states have a treaty with Paragon to contain the expansion of Chiaroscuro, while Chiaroscuro curries favor with the Lap against Paragon.

This explains how every major power in the South can be a tributary of the Realm, at least in name. The Realm is powerful, threatening—but distant. Harborhead and Varang fear and hate each other more than they fear Realm interference; likewise Varang and Chiaroscuro, Chiaroscuro and Paragon, Paragon and the Lap. Ironically, their fear of each other delivered them into the Realm's hands, and it keeps them there to this day.

Unfortunately, Southerners also sometimes see demons, the Fair Folk and the dead as safely







distant powers they can exploit to gain advantages over nearer foes. The Salmalin cult of the demon Sondok, for instance, seems ineradicable in the South. No Southern nation as a whole has sought alliance with such creatures of darkness... that anyone knows of... but the possibility remains.

### FIREДУST, JEWELS AND STEEL

Southern monarchs can engage in massive fortification and sieges because the South is rich. No sector of Creation holds such a profusion of jewels, spices, precious metals and other luxuries. Just as importantly, the South is rich in iron, copper and tin, so no one lacks steel and bronze for weapons and armor.

The South also has one asset unique to itself: firedust. The greatest military innovations of the South rely on this wondrous natural explosive. The Second Age cannot match the destructive power of First Age magitech—but the military artisans of the South come close.

**Exalted** already describes the firewand and the flame piece (see **Exalted**, p. 373). See Chapter Six for many additional armaments, from personal weapons to huge engines designed to attack or defend entire cities.

## WAR GODS OF THE SOUTH

The chief war gods of the South owe their prominence to their success at aligning themselves in the wars that mortals fight. Ahlat, the South's official overseer of war in the Celestial Bureaucracy, presents an uncommonly perfect example of this—but not the only one. Other war gods gain in power as mortals fight in different ways, rendering Ahlat's dominance less secure than he would like.

### AHLAT

Very long ago, Ahlat was merely the God of Mating Fights Between Bull Walruses. A lucky chance earned him a new job as the South's God of Cattle. He gained a lot of power when he impelled ancient humans to domesticate cattle and offer him the occasional cow in sacrifice. Ahlat gained a great deal more power when he demanded the hecatomb—a sacrifice of 100 cattle—and punished tribes that did not obey his demand. This turned him back into a god of war, for very few of the small, scattered tribes of the South had so many cattle to spare. The tribes quickly figured out that they could avert Ahlat's wrath by stealing cattle from other tribes. When the Celestial Incarnae rebelled against the Primordials, Ahlat presented the Unconquered Sun with hundreds of brave, strong and cunning warriors as candidates for Exaltation. The Unconquered Sun rewarded Ahlat by promoting him to Supreme God of War for the South.

Ahlat has encouraged cattle rustling and tribal warfare for thousands of years. In so doing, he implicitly endorsed all the South's wars over water, food and wealth. No matter why people in the South go to war, they offer cattle and beg Ahlat for his favor—even many people who claim to follow the Immaculate faith. Ahlat's cult is strongest in Harborhead,

but it extends throughout the South, from mighty Chiaroscuro to tiny bands of desert nomads.

### POLICIES

Ahlat's last major interference in the mortal world came a few centuries ago, when his God-Blooded daughter created the nation of Harborhead from a collection of anarchic tribes. When the Realm slew Ahlat's daughter and subjugated her nascent kingdom, the furious God of War and Cattle challenged Tachi-Kun, the Central God of Exalted Battle, to a duel. Only the direct intervention of the Unconquered Sun prevented a brawl that could have shaken Heaven. Since then, Ahlat has treated Tachi-Kun as rudely as the laws of Heaven allow.

Ahlat also cultivated an alliance with Ingenious Flame, the God of Firedust Weaponry. Southern mortal armies with firedust weapons have wounded, routed or occasionally killed Terrestrial Exalts (and a few novice Lunars). Inquiries into these battles have never shown any direct and improper intervention by Ahlat in these battles. As a result, Southerners no longer see the Dragon-Blooded as utterly beyond mortal challenge... and Exalted commanders seek firedust weapons of their own, almost as avidly as they seek Essence artillery from the First Age.

Despite Ahlat's support of firedust weapons and sponsorship of Harborhead, the god does not like large-scale war. No sacrifice, however great, ever persuades him to help one nation conquer another. He sees war as a test of personal strength, skill and nerve, with glory and cattle (or other tangible assets) as the rewards. The South's wars of empire grew out of the raids for water and cattle that Ahlat sponsored long ago, but he finds them too strategic, too calculated and too cruel. Cattle-rustling tribes kill a few people as they raid back and forth, but the tribes go on, and both sides think themselves heroic. Exterminating a city just to make a point goes against Ahlat's temperament. Indeed, he lobbies the Bureau of Destiny to undercut empires that grow too big or too brutal. Currently, Ahlat has subordinates tasked with keeping a close eye on the escalating conflict between Gem and Paragon.

Ahlat's greatest enemy is Siakal, the Western Goddess of Sharks and Slaughter. Siakal protests that the pirates who worship her are just robbers out for loot and a fun bit of murder—no different from Ahlat's cattle rustlers. Ahlat doesn't see it that way. The coastal countries of the South suffer many attacks by Western pirates, with little chance to retaliate. Ahlat's frustration leads him to back the Southern navies and their patron gods. When the Southerners perfect the use of firedust weapons on ships... oh, there shall be raids like the world has never seen, the very seas shall burn, and Siakal's pirates shall pray to their mistress in vain. Once again, only a direct command from the Unconquered Sun has prevented Ahlat from challenging Siakal herself.

Ahlat looks for opportunities to guide Solar Exalted and help them in small ways. The returning Solars give the



South new legends of heroic warriors, countering the shift toward artillery and mass warfare. If the Southern Lawgivers adopt Ahlat as their God of Exalted Battle and ignore Tachi-Kun, Ahlat could significantly undercut the Central God's influence. Ahlat also hopes to keep the novice Solars away from the Cult of the Illuminated, as he doesn't trust the Cult's Sidereal masters one bit.

### POWER AND WORSHIP

Ahlat's favorite sacrifice, the hecatomb, involves cutting the throats of 100 cattle. The priests sprinkle the worshippers with the collected blood and the bones, fat, gristle and entrails are burned on the altars. Properly performed, the hecatomb becomes a thaumaturgical Procedure in the Art of Spirit Beckoning:

*The Hecatomb* (2, Charisma + Performance, 2, special): Ahlat rewards the hecatomb with increased fertility for both humans and cattle, including a noticeably higher rate of multiple births. The benefits last one month per success, up to a maximum of one year.

The hecatomb also has a military application. Celebrants can also perform a special rite, the tauroboleum, in which they bathe in the collected blood of the sacrificed cattle:

*The Tauroboleum* (3, Charisma + Performance, 3, special): Ahlat's blessing gives the celebrants extra health and resilience, represented as an extra -1 health level. One celebrant receives this blessing per success rolled. The benefits last for three months. However, only mortals (including extras) can benefit from the tauroboleum. Exalts, God-Bloods, enlightened mortals and other such ilk do not need Ahlat's help so much, so the god lets them fend for themselves.

Neither of these blessings last very long. A tribe thus has an incentive to go cattle raiding no more than a season later, while their warriors have a better chance of survival, to restore the tribe's herds and prepare for the next hecatomb and tauroboleum.

### INGENIOUS FLAME

The Mandarin of Firedust Weapons has risen from a minor deity to a high minister in the Bureau of Heaven. Ingenious Flame constantly tinkers with new designs for flame projectors, cannon, mines and other incendiary devices, but she can only have ideas that a mortal has had already. She keeps close watch on mortals who experiment with firedust and surreptitiously plants notions from one inventor in another inventor's mind, in hopes that one artisan can solve the problems that defeated another. As a result, new firedust weapons tend to appear simultaneously throughout the South.

Ingenious Flame does not consider herself bloodthirsty, or even a god of war. This godmother of invention simply loves the technical challenge of inventing, crafting and using firedust weapons. How mortals choose to wield her beloved weapons is not her concern.

Ahlat assisted Ingenious Flame's rise in the Bureau of Heaven. The war gods of Varang, Chiaroscuro and Gem

now curry favor with Ingenious Flame almost as much as with Ahlat himself. If firewands and artillery become the defining element of Southern warfare, some gods say, the Bureau of Heaven might pick a new war god.

Wiser gods know better. Ahlat retains the fealty of all the warlike little gods of the tribes and still receives huge amounts of prayer, especially from Harborhead. More importantly, Ahlat is one of Heaven's greatest bureaucratic warriors: none of his alliances ever cost him power. Ingenious Flame, on the other hand, seems barely aware that she *has* a rank in Heaven. A few gods speculate that Ahlat grooms Ingenious Flame to take *E-Naluna's* job—as a figurehead, with Ahlat as the true overseer of warfare in Creation.

### SOUTHERN WARFARE

Southern nations conduct most of their warfare in the same manner everyone else does, with armies clashing in open battle. The Southern environment and social structures, however, encourage a few particular forms of warfare.

### RAIDING AND VENDETTA

Throughout the South, raiders strike from surprise to kill and loot everything they can, and then fade back into the desert, scrub or badlands. Some are nomads who hope to steal cattle or other wealth. Others are brigands. Many tribal cultures use raiding as a test of valor and manhood. Young men (and, in some societies, women) raid other communities simply to gain glory in their tribe for their strength, skill and daring.

Governments also sponsor raids against their neighbors and rivals—or at least they turn a blind eye when freelance raiders operate from their territory. Whether village or empire, a community wants to see its rivals' defenses tested. If those defenses weaken, it might plan a full campaign of subjugation. A nomad chief gathers a horde to sweep over the kingdom. One king sacks the capital of another. One village decides it can take more water from a river and short the villages downstream. And so every attack sparks a counterattack, which provokes a counterattack of its own.... And so, a conflict that may have begun in a moment of rage or greed can continue, tit for tat, for generations. Every community in the South has its ancestral grudges and traditional enemies whom it intends to pay back... someday.

### RAIDING TACTICS

Raiding usually involves small numbers of combatants. The combat units seldom exceed Magnitude 3—a bandit company, a desert tribe or a village militia. Combat units of Magnitude 0 to 2 lack special characters, and even their "commanding officer" is probably just a tribal war chief or a young man or woman who gathered a group of friends to go steal some cattle.

Professional raiders, such as bandits, wear light armor. An ordinary villager or nomad probably doesn't have any sort of armor in the first place. Raiders do not consider this a problem. They value mobility more than defense: a raider tries to dash





in, kill anyone who gets in his way and race out again with the loot before the enemy has time to arm and mobilize.

For all that Southerners often see raiding as proof of valor, raiders go after soft targets. A raider's intent is generally to cut down a helpless person the raider takes by surprise. Thus, raiders do not need high Morale.

Most raiders have low Drill. They are not professional soldiers trained to fight other professional soldiers. Bandits and such ilk may fight in skirmishing formation, but most raiders fight in unordered formation. But then, so do the people the raiders attack.

## POLIORCETICS: FORTIFICATION AND SIEGECRAFT

When you cannot flee with what you possess, build a wall around it. Most Southern communities build their walls as high, thick and strong as they can, from the thorn-bush kraals of Harborhead villages to the massive carved legs of the statue-mountain that supports the Lap.

Fortification involves more than walls, though. Southerners have spent centuries developing many sorts of towers, gatehouses, galleries, moats and machicolations, bastions and barbicans, casements, counterscarps, hornworks, crownworks and magistral lines—a whole architectural science of defense.

Such fortifications naturally demanded a counter-science of siegecraft. If besiegers can't go through the walls and gates,

they go over them or under them. If all else fails, an attacker with sufficient manpower simply tries to cut off the city from reinforcements and resupply, and begin a war of attrition. Sooner or later, starvation and disease must weaken the defenders enough that the fortress or city falls.

Of course, fortification and siegecraft are really the same military science, looked at from opposite directions. Together they form the discipline of poliorcetics—the taking of cities.

Builders and attackers of fortresses have the same goal: control of territory through control of strategic locations. A walled city is a prize and an obstacle at once, since cities tend to occupy regions that have value in their own right—a port, a reliable water supply, a powerful manse or crossing trade routes, for example. Other fortresses exist only to control space around them, such as a mountain pass that leads to a nation's heartland or a river that serves as a major trade route. An attacker must defeat the fortress to achieve her own control of the space. Even if she can bypass the fortress, she cannot leave its military force intact to attack her from the rear.

## FORTIFICATION AND COMBAT

Sieges can involve huge combat units, or huge numbers of smaller combat units. Blockading a city takes thousands of soldiers, and even a small keep can pin down many more attackers than it takes to defend. Such large or numerous combat units need an extensive chain of command. Not only does the





overall commander have a staff (including special characters who might be able to take command), but the leader of each combat unit has subordinate special characters. Relays become extremely important with such large armies.

### WALLS AND DEFENSE VALUE

The greatest factor in a siege may indeed be the height and thickness of the walls. When one side of a battle stands atop a high wall, both sides are obviously limited to ranged attacks. What's more, a well-designed wall has a parapet, crenelations, arrow-slits and other features that give cover to the defender, as described in **Exalted**, page 147. Moats and other outworks may also keep the enemy at a distance, so attackers suffer extra penalties for attacking at long range.

These modifiers apply to mass combat, too. A unit that has cover adds the appropriate bonus to the Defense Value that an attacker must overcome to mount a successful attack. Bonuses for cover and penalties due to range can go a fair ways toward countering other advantages—which is how a small but well-fortified force can resist a huge besieging army.

FORTIFICATION DEFENSE VALUE MODIFIERS	
Type	Ranged Cover Bonus
Parapet (50% hard cover)	+2
Crenelation (75% hard cover)	+3
Arrow-slit (90% hard cover)	+4

### SAPPING AND DEMOLITIONS

*Sapping* originally consisted of digging under a wall to collapse it. The sappers dig a tunnel (a *mine*) under the wall and prop the tunnel up with wooden beams as they go. Once the sappers are under the wall, they fill the tunnel with brushwood, straw, oil and other combustibles and set it on fire. The beams burn, and with luck, the tunnel collapses and takes a section of wall with it. By extension, all sorts of military earth-moving tend to be called sapping.

In the South, sappers can knock down walls using fire-dust charges. This is *demolitions*, an art that sees little use outside the South.

Sapping or demolition attacks call for an (Intelligence + Craft [Earth]) roll, at a difficulty set by the Storyteller based on the thickness and construction of the wall. For a stone wall, a difficulty equal to the wall's thickness in yards is a good base value. Demolition can take place on the normal time scale of mass combat. Sapping takes much longer: days or even weeks. Sapping is normally treated as a dramatic action. In mass combat units, treat sapper and demolitionist special characters as sorcerers.

You can also attempt to breach a wall by shooting at it with artillery. An expert demolitionist can assist this attack by locating weak points in the wall. In this case, the players of the demolitionist and the cannoneer can obtain a limited teamwork bonus.

### ALTERNATIVE TIME SCALES

Since fortresses are hard targets, conquering one can take a long time if neither side has Charms, sorcery or powerful siege weaponry. One solution is to change to time scale of battle, so that each tick represents hours, days or even longer intervals.

Another solution is simply to treat the siege as background to an adventure. The Exalted—especially the Celestial Exalted—have powers that trump normal tactical considerations. The players' characters resolve the siege themselves, through their great deeds and conflicts with the adversaries' leaders, whether sneaking into a walled city to assassinate the king or challenging the besiegers' commander to a duel.

### MORALE

Being inside a fortress can make a soldier feel safer, but this confidence has its limits. The soldiers inside a fortress may break before the walls do. Prudent commanders buck up the troops by maintaining drills, awarding small treats after battles or conducting ceremonies praising a particular soldier's gallantry in a recent skirmish. The attacking commander needs to worry about morale, too. If soldiers believe they will never manage to crack the fortress, they might desert. The Storyteller can call for hesitation/rout checks after one side in a siege has gone especially poorly.

An attacker may well attempt psychological warfare. For instance, an attacking commander with a gift for oratory might deliver a doom-laden speech about the certainty of the fortress's fall, and the horrible fate that awaits the defenders unless they surrender. In this case, the "battle" is resolved through social combat. Indeed, many a fortress has fallen because some important person inside was persuaded to turn traitor and open the gates.

### SORTIES


During the course of a long siege, smaller battles may take place. The defenders may send out a small combat unit to attack the besiegers, in hopes of destroying their siege weapons or provisions. (Besiegers have to worry about supplies, too. Tens of thousands of soldiers camped around a city can quickly strip the countryside bare of food.) These sorties are resolved as ordinary mass combat, on the usual time scale.

Attackers can attempt sorties as well. This usually requires some desperate assault such as having everyone rush forward to the walls with grappling-lines, and hoping that someone can ascend the wall before the defenders muster a response. Attackers may also attempt cunning ploys to sneak soldiers into the fortress, such as by pretending to abandon the siege while leaving a small, elite commando team hidden inside a huge wooden horse.

### SACKING AND MASSACRE

A long siege costs the attacker almost as much as the defender. When a city falls, therefore, its conqueror recoups





some of his losses by looting the place. The conqueror himself takes the gold, jewels, jade and other concentrated wealth. The common soldiers find their own rewards by robbing the common people of the city. Even temples are robbed, if the conqueror believes a large bribe to his own god can protect him from the pillaged god's wrath.

The victors also gain emotional rewards. Quite apart from any ancestral grudges, the soldiers build up tremendous resentment through a long, hard-fought siege. They vent that fury through rape, murder and destruction of property. They don't just conquer and loot the city: they *sack* it.

Heads of state may encourage sacking to show other potential enemies what they can expect if they resist demands. In fact, serial conquerors often practice deliberate atrocities in order to terrify other leaders into submission. They might order an entire city burned, half the population slaughtered and the other half scattered or sold into slavery, or the construction of some horrific monument such as a pyramid of human skulls. Such psychological warfare falls outside the purview of mass combat, or even the Mandate of Heaven system for nations (from the **Exalted Storytellers Companion**). The decision whether to fight or submit to a conqueror who performs atrocities is entirely personal.

Of course, such tactics carry their own risks. Too many deaths, whether from starvation, disease or massacre, can turn a city into a shadowland. A few megalomaniacs, however, see this as an ultimate testament to their destructive power. A few of the South's shadowlands were deliberately created to warn other cities of the awful fate that awaited them if they did not surrender to a conquering tyrant.

## DESERT WARFARE, DESERT SURVIVAL

In the South, most of the warfare takes place in the fertile coastal strip because that's where most people live. Nevertheless, war sometimes happens in the true desert. The desert tribes make war on each other; armies from civilized folk pursue desert raiders into their homeland, or pass through the desert on their way to attack a city. Any armies that would make war in the desert, however, must take utmost care, or they shall die before they reach their battleground. People who live in the desert know about these dangers and plan for them. Indeed, desert raiders turn their harsh environment into their chief defense.

### ENDURING HARDSHIP FOR MASS COMBAT UNITS

Soldiers can suffer from heat, thirst, sunstroke and other ills, and this affects the army as a whole. Just as an individual, a combat unit can endure for a limited period before hardship penalizes the unit's ability to fight and, eventually, the unit's survival.

A combat unit can have a collective Resistance rating, based on the average Resistance of the soldiers. In this case, the army can endure hardship for (Stamina + Resistance) days before suffering a daily loss of one point of Endurance. The unit also suffers a -1 penalty to its Close Combat and

Ranged Combat ratings (it's hard to fight while dying of thirst). When the unit's Endurance reaches 0, the unit loses a point of Magnitude as soldiers die or desert, and the Endurance count resets. The unit also suffers an additional -1 penalty to its attack ratings.

Heavy armor increases the hardship. Subtract the fatigue value for the unit's armor from both the initial (Stamina + Resistance) total and the unit's Endurance rating for purposes of the cycle of decline. Of course, the soldiers can remove their armor and carry it in wagons or the like, but that leaves them defenseless if they suffer a surprise attack.

This system applies to more than deserts. An army that marches through Northern cold or the steaming, pestilential swamps of the Southeast endures equal hardship. The army suffers collective fatigue, death and desertion at the same rate, and needs excellent wilderness skills or special equipment to resist the elements.

### AVOIDING ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

The people who live in hostile environments avoid these problems by devoting most of their time to survival instead of marching to battle. They also know their particular environment very well. Desert nomads, for instance, know the location of small oases or caves where they can take shelter. They have a supply of food and water through the animals they herd and ride: nomads on a migration may bleed their horses or camels and live on the blood for a time.

Using such stratagems, a commander can keep an army marching and resist the death-spiral of a desert march. The commander's player rolls (unit's Stamina + [lowest of Survival, War or unit's Drill]), at a difficulty of half the unit's Magnitude (round up). Success prevents the loss of Endurance and penalty to attack values for another (Stamina + Resistance - armor fatigue) days.

Armies can counter some of the factors that make desert travel deadly, but it costs. Most importantly, they can bring their own food and water. They can also invest in survival gear. For a simple rule, the monthly Resources cost for moving an army through the desert equals half the unit's Magnitude (round up), +1 for extreme desert. This is a lot, but consider just the matter of water for hundreds of men: all those skins or casks of water need camels to carry them, and the camels themselves need water, which means more camels.... Similar to the natives, a military force that wants to operate in the desert needs a secure base with a reliable water supply and provisions.

The effects on desert warfare are clear. Native fighters tend to be cavalry because this enables them to get to and from a battle quickly, and they don't wear much armor because they would wear out from fatigue more quickly. They also tend to operate in units of small Magnitude that have less trouble living off the land. When a commander has high Survival and War ratings and the troops have excellent Drill, however, a horde can form that sweeps over civilized lands.

## HARBORHEAD

Of all the nations in the South, Harborhead has the largest number of people under arms. Harborhead is not the largest, richest or most populous country in the South... but ancient custom says that *all* citizens, male or female, should train with weapons throughout their lives. Harborhead's society has two castes: the free, who carry weapons, and slaves, who don't. From the monarch to the midwife, every free Harborheadite is ready to grab her weapons and fight.

And the citizens do fight, with great enthusiasm. After all, how can you prove yourself as a warrior without a battle? Harborheadites live in a constant, low-intensity war against their hereditary enemies, other Harborheadites. The Five Peoples of Harborhead all have old rivalries with each other, and each village raids its neighbors.

Harborhead holds literally thousands of separate combat units. Most are little village militias that steal cattle from other villages and defend against other bands on the same mission. Harborhead also has a large national army, but no one can guarantee that its divisions would obey a general mobilization order. The most powerful and disciplined military force is the Royal Guard—thousands of elite female warriors, every one sworn as a Bride of Ahlat, Southern God of War and Cattle, and fanatically devoted to their husband.

## ARSENAL

Harborhead relies almost entirely on the sort of weapons that villagers can easily make for themselves. Everyone has a short spear, javelins and an iron knife. Most people own a single-edged short sword—a stout machete that they use as a daily tool as well as a weapon. War axes are also common. Raiders use clubs when they intend to take slaves instead of cattle, as the blunt weapons are more likely to leave enemies alive. For missile weapons, Harborheadites use easily made self bows and slings.

Harborhead makes little use of firedust. The Royal Guard trains with firewands and firedust grenades, but these do not form the Guard's chief weapons. A few units of the national army keep these weapons on hand as well, but only for the

officers. Harborhead does not make or use any of the larger incendiary weapons found in other parts of the South.

For defense, most Harborhead citizens own a large oxhide shield (equal to a tower shield) painted with tribal symbols. They do not wear any sort of armor—not even the soldiers. They prefer mobility to defense: on a cattle raid, being able to run away matters more than improving the odds of surviving a blow. Officers, chiefs and other leaders sometimes wear armor in imitation of the Realm legions that have occupied the land for so long. Harborhead leaders favor lamellar armor rather than the Realm infantry's reinforced buff jacket, though, since lamellar armor is cooler and less fatiguing to wear in the hot climate.

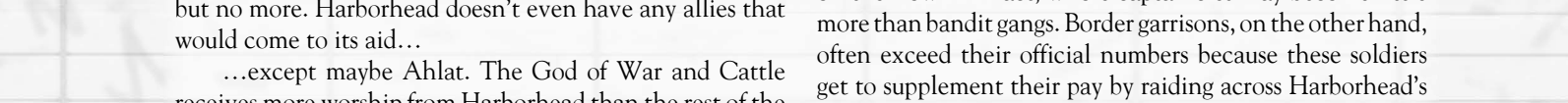

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Most of Harborhead's warfare is internal. Raiders make hit-and-run strikes between villages to acquire slaves



Harborhead





and cattle. Harborheadites also raid neighboring tribes and the Varangian city-states, mostly for slaves to sell to the Realm. So far, the Realm prevents Harborhead from attempting conquest. If hotheads have their way, though, hundreds of thousands of Harborheadites—not just the national army and Royal Guard—will flood across the border to attack Varang in a vast, disorganized horde. The army and Royal Guard, however, practice tactics of their own.

## DEFENSE

Harborhead's defense rests on its national army, which mans mud-brick forts throughout the country and along its coasts and borders. The Realm garrison, meanwhile, supplies port defense for Kirighast, with extensive fortifications and firedust artillery.

The real threat to an invader, however, comes from the deeply hostile countryside. Villages have only thorn-bush kraals for defense, but every adult is a soldier, and the Harborheadites believe the best defense is a vigorous counterattack.

## OTHER ASSETS

Harborhead has no Celestial Exalted patronage (so far as anyone knows), and the Realm stripped the country of any First Age weapons. The population of Terrestrial outcasts is low and lacks training in the synergistic fighting that is the greatest strength of the Dragon-Blooded. Harborhead has a normal proportion of God-Blooded and thaumaturges, but no more. Harborhead doesn't even have any allies that would come to its aid...

...except maybe Ahlat. The God of War and Cattle receives more worship from Harborhead than the rest of the South put together. If Harborhead's very survival were at stake, he might break his usual policies and assist the country. Only a massive assault by creatures of darkness (such as an entire Fair Folk court or an invading Deathlord) could bring Ahlat himself and his war aurochs from Heaven, but in other circumstances, he could recruit Exalted champions, loan out divine weaponry and supply bureaucratic cover for any small gods who wanted to fight.

## THE ARMIES OF HARBORHEAD

Officially, Harborhead has five separate armies: one for each of the country's four geographical divisions and one stationed around the capital of Kirighast. Each army has its own command structure. The Realm and its puppet ruler, locally called the Leopard Seat, like this arrangement because it prevents one general from commanding too great a fraction of the nation's armed forces and, perhaps, getting ideas about mounting a coup. In addition, each army is widely scattered throughout many garrisons.

## ORGANIZATION

Both men and women join Harborhead's armies. Recruits must pass a set of physical tests, but the hard and active life of farming and cattle-herding means that few applicants fail. Once enlisted, recruits engage in weapons drill, using

the same weapons commonly found throughout the country. Recruits also learn the art of camouflage, if they aren't already well versed. To instill discipline, new recruits spend a lot of time on menial labor such as cleaning the barracks and maintaining the grounds of their forts.

Each of the four regional armies is supposed to have 25,000 soldiers. Actually, they probably have a bit less: officers at every level invent "ghost soldiers" to pad their payrolls. The armies each consist of five commanderies of 5,000 soldiers. Each commandery is in turn divided into 25 captaincies of 200 soldiers. Captaincies may break into units of 100, 50 or 20 for smaller operations, led by non-commissioned officers.

In a commandery, five captaincies occupy a permanent fort in the center of their province. This fort is the army headquarters for the region. A "high captain" takes overall command of these units. This force of 1,000 soldiers consists of light infantry and cavalry, so it can respond rapidly to emergencies. The other 20 captaincies occupy border forts and watchtowers. They guard important roads and crossroads, passes, bridges, towns and other strategic locations. Platoons of 20 may go on patrol; centuries or the whole captaincy are mobilized to hunt bandits.

Some captaincies are woefully under strength. Their captains do not exercise their forces enough, or they don't get paid enough, and soldiers desert to go home or go raiding on their own. In fact, whole captaincies may become little more than bandit gangs. Border garrisons, on the other hand, often exceed their official numbers because these soldiers get to supplement their pay by raiding across Harborhead's borders; the army does not discourage this because their job, after all, is to fight the enemies of Harborhead.

The armies are paid from tax revenues and the Realm's cut of the slave trade. Each level of command supplies the payroll for the next layer down. Since the Empress disappeared, the Realm's payments for slaves have become... irregular. The net loss of revenue is debatable, but it makes a great excuse for a commander or captain to keep some of the payroll—the commander blames the shortfall on the Realm. Increasing numbers of soldiers turn to freelance cattle rustling, slave raiding and other forms of banditry to supplement their income. Eventually, the Realm satrap and the Leopard Seat disburse extra funds to bring salaries up to date (and pay off rogue officers), and the military quiets down, but Harborhead has seen eight such episodes of mass brigandage in the last five years.

The Capital Army is much smaller than the other four and has a somewhat different arrangement. The army occupies 40 camps of 250 soldiers each, scattered in and around Kirighast. None of these units may do more than patrol within their assigned district, serving as the police force for the capital and about 100 miles around it. They guard caravans headed into and out of the city, keep order in the marketplace, break up riots and quell other civic disturbances. For what it's worth, the Capital Army is the

most ethnically balanced and integrated of the armies, and the least corrupt. It's also the military force most closely watched by the Realm's garrison.

Captaincies frequently go on maneuvers to practice tactics on the scale of 20s and 50s. Sometimes, a whole captaincy practices combined tactics such as one platoon drawing out a hypothetical enemy while the others wait in ambush, or encircling a bandit encampment before attacking from all sides. The warlike temperament of Harborheadites and the tactical practice give the captaincies excellent drill and morale.

The armies hardly ever practice with multiple captaincies, as banditry and border skirmishes hardly ever call for anything larger than a captaincy. The Realm garrison also does not want the Harborheadites gaining too much experience at the mass combat that is the Realm's greatest strength. On the rare occasions when the army engages in large-scale maneuvers, each captain and commander has a Realm officer to advise, interpret the orders from higher up the chain of command and coordinate with other captaincies. Harborhead has never attempted any war games involving more than a single commandery. As a result, none of the native officers have real command experience in a full-scale war. Could the commanders even hold the armies together in a crisis? No one knows.

As a result, Harborhead's armies have no combat units larger than a captaincy (Magnitude 4). The legion-sized commanderies (Magnitude 8) are only theoretical entities, unless someone can teach the Harborheadites the craft of large-scale command, control and strategy.

### SAMPLE CAPTAINCY

**Description:** This captaincy could be located anywhere in Harborhead. It's supposed to have 200 soldiers, but 20 of the soldiers are accounting fictions. The captaincy occupies a small mud-brick fort. Although the soldiers are quite disciplined in combat, they are thoroughly undisciplined in every other way.

Instead of a uniform, Harborhead's armies use a distinctive shield. Army shields are painted with a stylized leopard to show their allegiance to the monarchy, with other symbols for their commandery and captaincy.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Ordinary clothing with an oxhide shield; skin may be scarified or tattooed.

**Motto:** "Battle for the Bull!"

**General Makeup:** 180 light infantry with light spears, a pair of javelins, a knife and either a self bow or sling.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 4

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 0 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 4



**Formation:** Army units normally fight in skirmish or relaxed formation. They do not train at close formation fighting. Each captain has four officers as heroes and another four relays; these are heroic mortals. The rest of the captaincy consists of extras.

### THE ROYAL GUARD

Harborhead also has a separate military force of frightening power: the Royal Guard, better known as the Brides of Ahlat. Its three commanderies of 5,000 women guard the Royal Palace, the great temple called the Fane of the Upswept Horns and Kirighast's Old Town around it. They are nominally attached to the Capital Army, which they outnumber, but no one in that army would dream of giving an order to a Bride of Ahlat. The Brides of Ahlat also sometimes accompany the regular army on battles against Varangian city-states or nomads who drift up from further South. Everyone in Harborhead knows the Royal Guard's red-and-black kilt, tasseled cloaks and horned steel caps wrapped in red-and-black turbans. Harborheadites view the Guards as paragons of the nation's warrior ideal.

Guardswomen range in age from 16 to 27. At 27, they must retire unless Ahlat himself appears and commands that they be allowed to stay; such fortunate women usually become senior commanders. The Brides of Ahlat have no trouble meeting their recruitment quota thanks to Harborhead's fervent piety.



When a woman joins the Royal Guard, she swears an oath of service and is ceremonially wed to Ahlat. The god himself invisibly attends these ceremonies and whispers his acceptance into the Bride's ear. Royal Guardswomen *know* they fight for their god, and their god appreciates their loyalty and valor. They have superb morale. They stiffen the morale of any unit they accompany, too, since angry Brides sometimes accuse the secular army of cowardice after a defeat, and decimate them as a way to warn soldiers to fight harder in the future. The Brides absolutely terrify Varangian forces, since the Brides drink the blood of their fallen foes and sacrifice human captives to their divine husband. Even the Realm's legionnaires find the Royal Guard unnerving.

The Realm garrison commander, General Cathak Lazera, does not like the Royal Guard. Every woman in this army has pledged herself to the god Ahlat, in gross defiance of Immaculate doctrine. More importantly to Lazera, the Royal Guard does not accept supervision by Realm officers and shows considerably more reverence for its divine patron than for the monarch the Guard supposedly protects. One word from Ahlat could unleash a highly disciplined, elite fighting force against Harborhead's government—or the Realm garrison itself.

## ORGANIZATION

The Royal Guard occupies three sets of barracks near the Royal Palace. Each commandery consists of eight watch-groups of 625 women each: two sleeping, four training and two on guard duty. The three commanders take orders directly from the Leopard Seat... and that monarch hopes they will continue to do so. Harborhead seldom commits more than one watch-group to a battle. Each watch-group has its own captain. Watch-groups in turn break down into 25 groups of 25 Brides of Ahlat, each with a lieutenant who can take command if the unit must act on its own. These groups of 25 are called "Horns of the Bull."

Every one of the commanders and captains can channel Essence, whether because they are outcaste Terrestrial Exalted, God-Blooded or as a gift from Ahlat himself. Some are also thaumaturges, as are many of the priests and priestesses of Ahlat at the Fane of the Upswept Horns. In time of war, Royal Guard combat units always carry a variety of thaumaturgical talismans and alchemical drugs to enhance their combat prowess, from walkaways (see *Exalted*, p. 379) to blood-staunching compresses (see *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex, p. 130).

The Royal Guard includes several outcaste Terrestrial Exalted who were born in Harborhead. These outcastes view their Exaltations as gifts from Ahlat rather than the Dragons, and serve their god as long as he chooses. After retirement, they usually enter Ahlat's priesthood.

## ROYAL GUARD WATCH GROUP

**Description:** Under normal circumstances, Brides of Ahlat seldom fight in groups larger than a single Horn—but how often do circumstances stay normal for heroes?

When Harborhead goes to war, entire watch-groups take the field. Whoever they fight faces hundreds of fanatical young women trained to the peak of combat prowess and screaming for blood.

Ahlatsehun ("Ahlat Keeps Promise" in an old tribal tongue), a third-generation Bride of Ahlat and God-Blooded daughter of one of her gods' war-aurochs, commands this unit.

**Commanding Officer:** Ahlatsehun

**Armor Color:** Red-and-black kilt, red-and-black turban around horned steel cap, tasseled cloak, some leather straps.

**Motto:** "Blood for Ahlat, blood for the Bull!"

**General Makeup:** 625 light infantry armed with spears, knives and oxhide shields. They also have one or two minor items of protective or healing thaumaturgy per Horn of soldiers, and the hecatomb blessing.

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 5

**Drill:** 5

**Close Combat Attack:** 4    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 3    **Ranged Damage:** 3

**Endurance:** 9    **Might:** 1    **Armor:** 0 (-0 mobility)

**Morale:** 5

**Formation:** Brides of Ahlat usually fight in close formation, stabbing their spears in unison. In addition to Ahlatsehun,





the watch-group has five lieutenants with sufficient skill and charisma to function as heroes and rally groups of Magnitude 2 or 3 around themselves, if need be. Another five Brides are trained as relays; they send messages using colored streamers tied to their war-goats. All Brides are heroic mortals.

## THE VARANG CITY-STATES

The city-states that stretch along the western border of Harborhead and the Summer Mountains are best known for their people's obsession with astrology. Not only are Varangians assigned a limited choice of careers based on their ancestry and their horoscope, they check the stars constantly for omens. They believe the positions of the Five Maidens reveal the destiny of their cities and themselves. This obsession leads the Varangians to craft the best astronomical instruments and chronometers in Creation.

Outsiders do not always appreciate that skill at precision metalwork has military applications: an artisan who can make a pocket-watch or astrolabe can also make a firewand or a ballista. The Varangians are as good at crafting mechanical weapons as mere mortals can be. Only gods, the Mountain Folk and the Exalted can surpass the Varangians' ability. The sheer number of such artisans also gives Varang an economy of scale. No country in Creation arms so many of its soldiers with firewands and other wonders of mortal artifice. Varang's finest work remains inferior to the artifacts of the Realm's Dragon-Blooded or the magitech of Lookshy... but it remains impressive and powerful. When a thousand Varangians raise their firewands in unison, even Dynasts think they might be in for a nasty fight.

The city-states themselves have at times fought one another. More often, they fight against marauders from the highlands of Harborhead to the North and East, or from the great deserts to the South and West. Each Varangian city fought the Delzahn Horde, for instance, during that tribe's long trek from the Far South to Chiaroscuro. Varang's greatest enemy, however, is Harborhead. Both claim allegiance to the Realm, but the Empress never stopped the Harborheadites from raiding across the border to capture Varangians as slaves. Of course, she never stopped the Varangians from taking slaves from Harborhead either, but hard feelings remain. As the Realm pulls its forces back and Harborhead grows more restive and aggressive, the leaders of Varangia build up their militaries as fast as they can, for the great war they know must come.

## ARSENAL

Even the lowest-ranking Varangian soldier has good steel weapons and armor, with a metal-reinforced bow slung on his back. Varangian militaries use every sort of hand-to-hand weapon, from knives to sledges. Every city has its own preferred weapons, but also fields a complete assortment of light and heavy infantry, cavalry and archers, plus artillery and other specialists.

At least a quarter of all Varangian infantry carry firewands. Varang calls these soldiers fusiliers. Special squads of

fusiliers operate a variety of heavy weapons. Flamethrowers, fire projectors, fire cannon and catapults that launch firedust grenades are only the most common.

Varangian armies can treat fire cannon and large catapults as mobile squad weapons because the city-states employ elephants to haul these weapons around the battlefield. The elephants themselves may carry howdahs mounted with fire projectors or flamethrowers.

Common Varangian soldiers wear reinforced buff jackets, or breastplates if they need extra mobility. Officers wear lamellar armor. So do the elephants. Every soldier receives a pot helm, while officers wear masked helms with clear glass lenses over the eyes. An unlucky blow could shatter the lenses and shred the wearer's eyes... but the Varangians worry more about accidents with the firedust weapons they use in such quantities. The glass lenses ensure that errant blasts from a firewand won't cook the victim's eyes. Soldiers who carry firewands or man the heavy weapons don't carry shields; they stay behind other soldiers, who often carry target shields. Helmets carry crests that identify a soldier's city, while large badges painted on the armor identify a soldier's unit, rank and military occupation.



The city-states' metallurgical expertise makes superior equipment far more common than in most parts of Creation. Every officer commanding a unit of talon size or larger definitely has at least one item of *fine* quality; *exceptional* equipment is not tremendously rare; and there's at least one *perfect* weapon or suit of armor in every city-state's army, owned by someone in the high command. Varang even produces the occasional superior firewand—an achievement not duplicated anywhere else in the South.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The regular armies often go out on maneuvers, when they don't keep busy punishing the larger incursions from Harborhead. Whole dragons occupy major border forts, with season-long tours of duty. From these bases, talons patrol the border and sometimes follow Harborheadite raiders back to their villages, which they burn.

In wartime, however, a city-state doubles or triples the size of its army with levies of spearmen, called landsers. The landsers' job is to protect the regular army by forming walls of shields and spears as living battlefield obstacles. Landsers also dig earthworks and perform other simple but manpower-intensive tasks.

The country's most famous deployment is the so-called Varangian Flame Wall. It involves combining two combat units, a unit of landser conscripts and a unit of fusiliers. Two lines of landsers hold up their shields and spears. Behind them stand the fusiliers. The fusiliers shoot their firewands all at once, creating a wall of flaming death. The fusiliers march to the rear to reload while the next rank steps forward to fire again, assuming anyone on the other side still lives and is dumb enough to approach the battle line. The Flame Wall's great weakness, however, is that it moves with great



difficulty, if at all: both units must move at once while staying in close formation.

## DEFENSE

Walls five to six yards high encircle every Varangian city, with many pointed bastions to permit crossfire by archers or artillery. Varang is not a naturally defensible country, though. Its rulers and strategoi remain intensely aware that Harborhead has the high ground. Some leaders call for a massive effort to build a wall between the various border forts in hopes of discouraging Harborhead raiders or the horde expected to come.

## OTHER ASSETS

The Varangian city-states have no potent supernatural backup: the Realm poaches most outcaste Terrestrials who Exalt in the country, and took most First Age magitech long ago. Varang does, however, have Creation's best mortal astrologers. At the Storyteller's option, a Varangian combat unit can include a sorcerer (really a thaumaturge) whose player rolls (Intelligence + Occult), once. The commander's player can then allocate these successes, one at a time and one per action, to any rolls in the ensuing battle.

## VARANGIAN ARMIES

Each city-state has its own army, and the city-states do not attempt an integrated command. The confederation's members do not trust each other *quite* well enough to cede control of their military. Besides, each city-state has its own astrological fortune, and its army likewise, and trying to merge those fates could only lead to chaos.

## ORGANIZATION

As long-time allies of the Realm, the Varangian city-states copy the Imperial legion structure in their armies. Although their legions are smaller (Magnitude 7), they are divided into dragons, wings, talons, scales and fangs. The Varangians assemble soldiers into mass combat units, and combat units into armies, based on combinations of military logic (such as the celebrated Flame Wall) and astrological advice. A military force's "constellation" is its specific combination of soldiers. Some units have quite odd constellations of sub-units, such as war elephants carrying flame projectors, backed by slingers, spearmen and axemen, but a legion tends to have a bit of everything. Relays send messages between commanders and units using steel drums.

The size of each army is roughly proportional to the city-state's population. About four percent of the population is assigned to the regular army or navy as the life's work foretold by the stars, or at least chooses that option.

In time of war, the city-states recruit able-bodied men and women and hand them a spear, a target shield, a non-reinforced buff jacket and a pot helm. Some castes are drafted based on the astrologers' reading of the current celestial portents; other castes are forbidden to join the battle. Most Varangians, however, can volunteer for a brief period as land-

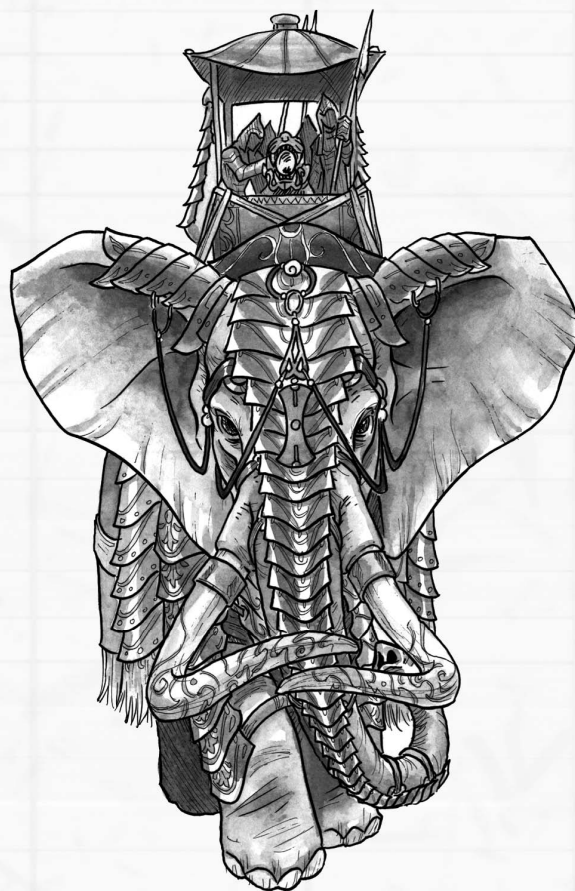
sers, and during wartime, a significant fraction of Varangians find their personal horoscopes advising them to do so.

The professional soldiers train diligently and have good morale. (It's not as if they can quit and do something else.) The levies barely know how to fight and are not terribly brave. Much of their training consists of marching and performing simple maneuvers in unison. They are trained with the help of picture books that break down every move in combat, from firing a bow to thrusting with a spear, into many precisely described steps that a recruit can easily practice again and again. Their officers constantly tell the levies that they are safest if they hold the line, spears out and shields up, shaping the battlefield to benefit the regular army.

## WAR ELEPHANT TALON

**Description:** This cavalry talon consists of 20 armored elephants, each carrying five soldiers in a howdah. The soldiers have a flamethrower with a 30-degree arc of fire in front of the elephant. One soldier operates the flamethrower. The remaining soldiers carry spears to strike enemies who try to attack the elephant from the side or rear; one of those four also guides the elephant. All the soldiers have the same skills and can operate the flamethrower.

The howdah gives the soldiers 50% hard cover, and they can be attacked only using weapons with Reach. The elephants themselves don't attack; they just push their way through anything in their path, disrupting enemy formations.





**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Various colors. The howdahs carry the city-state's flag.

**Motto:** "Hesiesh rides the Haywain!"

**General Makeup:** 20 squads, each of four spearmen and one gunner with a flamethrower, all in reinforced buff jackets and pot helmets; and one armored elephant.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 2   **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 2   **Ranged Damage:** 4

**Endurance:** 6   **Might:** 1   **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The armored elephants supply the unit's Might as special equipment. The elephants cannot manage any formation tighter than skirmishing, though the soldiers stay close on their howdah; for rules purposes, relaxed formation supplies a compromise between these factors. Note the benefits the soldiers receive from their elevated position (see **Exalted**, p. 147). The commander has three relays with steel drums to send and receive messages, and three "sorcerers" in the form of officers with staff slings and a supply of firedust grenades. Except for these special characters, the soldiers are extras.

### YANE 3RD FUSILIER WING

**Description:** Every Varangian army includes large numbers of professional soldiers who train with firewand and bayonet. A typical wing of fusiliers marches shoulder to shoulder, firing in unison to create a Flame Wall when an enemy comes within range. If the enemy breaks ranks, the fusiliers might break into four scales that operate independently to further divide the enemy forces.

**Commanding Officer:** Winglord Euric

**Armor Color:** Red with orange plates

**Motto:** "Hesiesh throws the Spear!"



**General Makeup:** 200 light infantry carrying firewands fitted with bayonets, wearing reinforced buff jackets and pot helmets.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 4

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 2   **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3 (4)   **Ranged Damage:** 4

**Endurance:** 6   **Might:** 0   **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The fusiliers' greatest strength lies in close formation, but when they split up to pursue a disordered or retreating enemy, they might fight in skirmish formation. Each component scale has its own relay drummer and tetrarch hero with War 2 and one specialty in splitting and merging units. The winglord has War 3 and one specialty in splitting and merging units. The fusiliers all have two Archery specialties in Flame Walls, adding to their Ranged Attack value for that maneuver.

## CHIAROSCURO

The bright towers of Chiaroscuro mark the greatest hub of commerce in the South—and the greatest fear of other countries on the fertile coast. Everyone fears that the former desert nomads might go from raiding caravans to sacking cities and conquering nations. After all, it happened before. For centuries, the Delzahn were just another loose grouping of nomadic tribes that fought each other as much as they fought anyone else. Then the warlord-prophet Tamas Khan united the tribes into the Delzahn Horde. The Horde swept aside all who opposed them, and finally seized Chiaroscuro and made it their own. Tamas Khan died... maybe... but since then, his descendants have ruled a Delzahn nation with Chiaroscuro as its capital—and tribal chiefs across the South have dreamed of equaling his deeds.

Many Delzahn still live as nomads, herding goats and camels. They frown a bit at the perfumed, silken robes of Chiaroscuro's Delzahn nobles and mutter that their city-dwelling cousins have gone soft. The urban Delzahn are not so soft that they can't ride out now and then to sack a village and drag its people to the slave-blocks of Chiaroscuro, though. The Delzahn Horde is still the military of the Chiaroscuran nation. More often than not, when neighbor countries fight the Horde, the survivors limp back, saying the Delzahn haven't gone nearly soft enough.

## ARSENAL

The Delzahn are cavalymen, and their horses and camels are their most important weapons. Delzahn steeds might not equal the best of Marukan, but lean, desert-bred Delzahn horses can gallop for hours without stopping for food or water. Delzahn camels are slower, but keep moving in heat and drought that would kill a Marukani horse in hours.

When the Delzahn ride to war, they favor lances, javelins and slashing swords. Some may carry long-handled pickaxes



## VARANGIAN NAVY

Varangia has a shared navy. This navy began after confederation, and so, the navy's fate is tied to that of the confederation as a whole, rather than any single city-state. After its formation, the astrologers added the navy to the list of professions that could be determined by the stars. A complex astrological formula determines each city-state's annual contribution to the naval budget.

The Varangian navy operates from the port of Yane. The navy numbers some 497 ships, mostly triremes. At present, it engages only in coast guard duty. The navy patrols out to 50 miles from the Varangian coast. Any crew that enters this zone can expect the navy to find them, board their ship and inspect their cargo before they reach their port. In the last five years, though, the navy has worked to build large troop transports: the confederation's strategists note that Harborhead has no navy worth mentioning. Once the Realm garrison leaves, Kirighast and the entire Harborhead coast shall lay open to invasion from the sea.

A Varangian can join the navy only if his or her horoscope permits such occupations. No one is actually forced into the navy; as a relatively new occupation, the navy is still somewhat optional by Varangian standards. Everyone is, in a sense, a volunteer, and so, the navy's morale is quite good: few sailors desperately want to leave. Since they make the navy their life's work, most sailors also train hard to fulfill the destiny that the stars gave them. They are not the best navy in the Inland Sea, but not the worst, either.

(see *Scroll of the Monk*, p. 157) for dealing with heavily armored opponents. Any Delzahn with a noble title—about a sixth—tries to obtain a blade wrought from the steel-hard, imperishable glass of Chiaroscuro. Such weapons have been Delzahn status symbols since the Delzahn took the city.

Delzahn warriors also tend to be expert archers. In fact, it was they who re-introduced the composite bow to the South after the Great Contagion. When a Delzahn wants to be especially annoying, he uses a lasso (see *Scroll of the Monk*, p. 158) and takes an enemy for a drag through the desert.

Nowadays, though, the flame piece has become the trademark weapon of the urban Delzahn. They *love* to gallop past an enemy, controlling their steeds with their knees, a flame piece blazing in either hand. Delzahn often shoot into the air from sheer high spirits. Rural Delzahn usually eschew these weapons.

The Delzahn do not neglect heavy weapons, either. Some of the biggest cannon ever built in the Second Age protect Chiaroscuro's harbor, not to mention smaller flame weapons placed to burn ships that try to dock without permission, and an assortment of catapults to attack ships

further from shore. These can launch firepots, simple stones or clusters of bolts.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Delzahn military relies on cavalry. Delzahn men are recruited into their military by birth, and training proceeds from there. The urban Delzahn might not get as much practice at riding and archery as their still-nomadic cousins, but they make up for it with extra practice at swordplay, for dueling, and flame pieces, for fun. Urban Delzahn aristocrats still leave town to go hunting when they get the chance, and when they can't, they play sports on horseback or camelback that simulate the necessary skills.

In battle, Delzahn try to herd their enemies the way the Delzahn herd their livestock, and hunt the enemy commanders as they hunt sand lions or antelopes. Commanders are superb at coordinating units to lure enemy soldiers into traps such as the "Delzahn Circle": an enemy spots a small Delzahn force of light cavalry, gives chase and follows them right into the crossfire of two larger units of archers, while heavy cavalry move in from the rear with lances. Firedust grenades complete the massacre.

## DEFENSE

Chiaroscuro expanded beyond two rings of walls, and then, the Tri-Khans gave up. The sprawling slums of the outer city are fully indefensible. Though the Delzahn fortify their villages with mud-brick walls up to five yards high, their nation's defensive posture fundamentally relies on a rapid cavalry response to any attack. The local tribe or sept makes hit-and-run raids on any outsider who dares to invade their grazing-lands until the Tri-Khan can mobilize the Delzahn Horde.

## OTHER ASSETS

The Delzahn don't know it, but they have a powerful Lunar Exalted patron. The Lunar elder called Tammuz engineered their rise and guided their nation's growth. (See *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars* for the full story.) Tammuz lets the Delzahn fight their own battles, but in a desperate crisis, he might play his ultimate gambit: Tamas Khan returns in the Delzahn's hour of greatest need! And he brings friends—young Lunars who want the glory of fighting alongside one of the Silver Pact's heroes.

Chiaroscuro is also the chief base for Sidereal operations in the South. (See *The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals* for a description of the Sidereal presence.) The agents of the Maidens are not likely to interfere in a merely mortal war, but combatants and commanders who defy fate—such as creatures of darkness, or the Celestial Exalted—might rouse the Sidereals if they try to destroy Chiaroscuro.

The Delzahn Horde itself has two additional assets, one well-known and one obscure. The close partnership between Chiaroscuro and the Guild means that the Tri-Khan can hire whatever mercenaries he wants, in whatever numbers



he wants, to supply whatever military skills or armaments he wants. The long Delzahn policy of letting anyone live and trade in Chiaroscuro, so long as he obeys the laws, also makes the city a haven for renegade gods and God-Bloods, Fair Folk, thaumaturges with a taste for strange experiments, outcaste Terrestrial Exalted and other dubious but powerful folk. Lately, this category includes Solar Exalted and death-knights, so long as they do not flaunt their powers and put the lie to the Tri-Khan's public pose of forbidding residence to Anathema. The Tri-Khan has files about several of these interesting people. In a military emergency, he might suggest ways they can repay his generosity in shielding them from the Wyld Hunt and other foes.

All in all, a major attack on Chiaroscuro could bring an amazing assortment of powerful people out of hiding. How they would react to each other is anyone's guess. Certainly, the Realm (and especially the Immaculate Order) would find it all quite appalling.

## THE DELZAHN HORDE

Although the Delzahn Empire has long paid tribute to the Realm, the Delzahn military owes nothing to the Realm's legions. The Delzahn military still consists of every Delzahn male—several hundred thousand men, from city, town and country. When the Tri-Khan calls for war, the clans gather and ride out with the Tri-Khan or one of his close relatives

at their head, and sweep over the foe as they did in the time of Tamas Khan. Nobody gets paid for this; they do it because of tribal obligation, and for whatever loot they can grab.

## ORGANIZATION

The Horde has no officers or formal chain of command. The Tri-Khan normally leads the Horde, though he may delegate this task to a relative. (He has several dozen uncles, brothers, sons, nephews and cousins to choose from.) Such a delegated war leader is called an Ilkhan. The Tri-Khan then calls on the khans of the Delzahn tribes to muster their people, in accordance with the oaths their ancestors swore to Tamas Khan. It helps that many khans also belong to the royal family (which numbers at least 40,000, not counting in-laws.) The khans, in turn, pass the command to their subordinate sept elders, or orkhans, who mobilize the warriors of their extended families.

Other Delzahn nobles are personal retainers of the Tri-Khan: they can recruit their own troops through promise of patronage and booty, which enables the Tri-Khan to muster Delzahn who no longer have clearly defined sept or tribal membership. Many lesser nobles use this stratagem to gain the Tri-Khan's favor. Most of the Delzahn artillery consists of such war bands; so do the heavy cavalry, or *spahis*, who carry weapons and armor beyond the means of most Delzahn.

The Horde's officers consist of these khans, orkhans and entrepreneurs. The chain of command consists of whatever

Delzahn



ties of kinship, hereditary oaths or personal oaths of fealty the officers choose to honor. (After a few centuries of inter-marriage, an orkhan may have hereditary oaths to several khans.) So far, the Tri-Khan always manages to cobble together a temporary chain of command that satisfies at least half of the Delzahn Horde, and so can mobilize hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

Loosely speaking, each khan leads a *minghan* ("thousand"), the militia gathered from his tribe, comparable to a legion. Orkhans lead a *jaghun* ("hundred") of warriors from their sept. An orkhan's subordinates (usually close relatives) can lead smaller divisions, called *arbans* ("tens"). When the Horde must fight on more than one front, each army is called a *tumen* ("ten thousand") and has its own Ilkhan. The Horde has grown almost tenfold since Tamas Khan ordained this military structure, and so, the military units tend to be six to 10 times larger than their names suggest.

### MANSEF JAGHUN

**Description:** This is one of the larger septs, with about 800 warriors commanded by its most prestigious elder, whose several-times-great-grandfather was ennobled by Tamas Khan himself. Everyone in the jaghun wants to add new honors to the Mansef name. Mansef Jaghun could also stand in for a complete desert tribe mobilized for war.

**Commanding Officer:** Ikhwari Mansef Orkhan

**Armor Color:** Desert or grassland camouflage patterns

**Motto:** "Honor of Mansef! Honor of the Dragons! Honor of Tamas Khan!"



**General Makeup:** Light cavalry in reinforced buff jackets and turban-wrapped pot helms, armed with slashing swords and composite bows. If the jaghun must break into smaller units, soldiers might pull out different weapons, such as picks, flame pieces or lassos.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 6

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Delzahn light cavalry use skirmish, relaxed or close formation as seems appropriate. For instance, they use their swords in relaxed formation but their bows in skirmish formation. For special characters, the jaghun has Ikhwari's five sons, who can each take command of a talon-sized arban as heroes. A retainer who relays orders using ram's-horn trumpets accompanies Ikhwari and each son. The orkhan and his children carry glass slashing swords and ride simhatahs trained by Ikhwari himself: even among Delzahn, these characters are considered extraordinary riders.

### SPAHI JAGHUN

**Description:** Unlike most Horde members, spahis tend to be professional soldiers. These Delzahn shock troops cut apart their foes with massed cavalry charges.

**Commanding Officer:** Zihraz Pasha

**Armor Color:** Bronze-and-scarlet, horsetail crest

**Motto:** "Spit them for roasting!"





**General Makeup:** 300 heavy cavalry in reinforced breastplates and masked helms, armed with lances and flame pieces, plus target shield.

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 5

**Drill:** 4

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 3 (5 for lance charge)

**Ranged Attack:** 3            **Ranged Damage:** 3

**Endurance:** 8    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 3 (-3 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** Spahis usually fight in close formation. Zihraz Pasha has four subordinate heroes and four relays who transmit commands using ram's-horn trumpets. The jaghun also two "sorcerers" who pelt the enemy with garda egg grenades hurled using staff slings. Target shields raise the unit's DV by +1.

### THE CHIAROSCURAN NAVY

The Delzahn nation also has a navy, with Chiaroscuro as its home port. At 500-some ships, operating on the standard Realm model, the navy is a formidable force for hunting pirates, guarding Delzahn waters and escorting Guild merchant vessels throughout the Southern Inland Sea. And that's the problem: Chiaroscuro's navy is more loyal to the Guild, which pays much of its expenses, than to the Tri-Khan. The navy has many Delzahn sailors, but most sailors come from the other people who moved to Chiaroscuro. That includes most of the commanders. The Guild and the Delzahn Empire have a comfortable partnership that neither side wants to test... but who knows what the Time of Tumult may bring?

## PARAGON

Two small rivers meet at the city of Paragon, and lush groves of almonds and olives cloak the hills around the city. The streams have failed in years of drought, however, and the land dries rapidly beyond the hills. The outlying towns see many visits by desert tribes and occasional raids by tribal bandits who think they can evade the Perfect's justice.

They are usually wrong. A century ago, the Perfect of Paragon sent his best troops to capture a number of the nearest desert tribes. He forced the survivors to swear fealty to him, and these tribes return every 10 years for their new members to bind themselves in turn. The rest of the decade, these tribes wander the wastes. They collect firedust as tribute for the Perfect, but otherwise live as they choose... except when the Perfect's ambassador comes to ask them what they have seen, what they know of the other tribes and to tell them whom to attack at the Perfect's command. Other tribes have learned that some of their fellow desert dwellers serve a master they fear more than death. They will not speak to anyone who does not show that neither of his hands bears the

scarlet eye that is the supernatural sign of fealty to Paragon. They do not yet know that the Perfect can place his mark somewhere else on a person's body, and so, the Perfect's spies hear many things at the oases and caravansarais. When they learn a tribe has attacked Paragon's caravans or robbed its farmsteads, the Perfect's legions march, and his tribal allies ride. Captured raiders receive the choice of death or swearing fealty to the Perfect and so becoming another one of his slaves. Many raiders choose death.

Paragon's regular army resembles that of the Realm, since they are both modeled on the Shogunate's military. A core of heavy infantry does most of the fighting, with light infantry and cavalry for support. Only the heavy infantry, however, can call themselves legionnaires; the rest are merely auxiliaries. Legionnaires are all men, but auxiliaries have separate units for men and women.


Paragon also has a large body of reservists who have military training but only mobilize for major wars, when the Perfect wants to destroy a fortress or conquer a city. His regular army, legions and auxiliaries, numbers just 20,000 soldiers. The reserves multiply his forces tenfold. The desert tribes add up to no more than a thousand warriors: The Perfect uses them with care, as scouts, spies and plausibly deniable raiders.

## ARMORY

Similar to the Realm's legions, Paragon's heavy infantry wear reinforced breastplates and masked helms. None complain about wearing that much metal in the Southern heat. They do not carry shields, though, because their standard weapon is the ghi, a polearm similar to a spear with a pair of outward-curving, crescent-shaped blades mounted behind it. (See **Scroll of the Monk**, p. 157, for the traits of polearms.) A ghi can be used either as a short spear or a light poleaxe, but it takes both hands to wield. Paragon legionnaires also carry a short sword for infighting. If necessary, legionnaires can wield other weapons instead, such as axes if they have to build a log palisade and fort while expecting attack at any time.

Auxiliaries can carry just about any weapon, but few varieties wear armor heavier than buff jackets. Large (Magnitude 4-5) contingents of archers or slingers often accompany the legionnaires to give them ranged combat support, as Paragon's most common form of light infantry. Archers with long bows attack from a greater distance, and slingers launch volleys while the enemy closes with the legionnaires. Paragon also has light cavalry scouts and skirmishers. For most purposes, though, the Perfect prefers auxiliaries to be numerous but cheaply equipped. His strategic doctrine is to overwhelm the enemy through numbers and his troops' extraordinary Morale.

Paragon uses relatively few incendiary weapons, by Southern standards. Its most important weapon is the simple firepot, launched by catapult against enemy fortresses. Paragonese troops might also use firedust petards to burn through fortress gates.



Unlike most nations, Paragon has a small industry devoted to producing artifact weapons, even though the city has no meaningful population of Exalts or spirit citizens. The Perfect can grant the power to channel Essence, and so, he can give artifacts to his champions. No artifacts (weapons or otherwise) exceed a rating of 2.

Perhaps the most important “weapons” in Paragon’s arsenal, however, are the pickaxe and the spade. On a major campaign, Paragon’s army includes whole legions of conscripts tasked with earth-moving. These sappers dig moats and throw up berms to shape the battlefield. The sappers ring an enemy’s fortress with earthworks and then dig zigzag trenches toward the fortress walls. At last, they dig mines to collapse the walls.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Perfect wants to expand his rule while still acting like a dutiful satrapy of the Realm. Thus, he attacks states or tribes that are too small for the Realm to give satraps of their own. In the last year, he has begun a covert war against Gem to wrest mining areas from the other city’s control. This campaign, however, is conducted using mercenaries and the Perfect’s subjugated desert tribes. In open war, Paragonese forces simply march toward their goal and engage anyone who stands against them, then lay siege until the enemy

fortress falls to their sappers. In the covert war, Paragon’s forces attack caravans of jewels and firedust but make it look as if bandits did the deed.

Whether legionnaire or auxiliary, recruits do a great deal of marching and weapons-practice in unison, to build unit solidarity and train them to fight in close formation. The legionnaires also receive regular harangues about what an honor it is to fight for the Perfect—more, even, than regular Paragonese receive—and they chant hymns to the Perfect as they practice running in full gear. In the warm South, this training gives legionnaires quite remarkable Stamina. Legionnaires also have exceptional Morale from their life-long reverence for the Perfect, their training and their sure knowledge that desertion results in their painful death.

Paragon’s legions often must fight the light cavalry of desert raiders (not to mention the Delzahn Horde). As a result, the legions practice using their polearms to attack the legs of horses running past. This is represented by the troops having two Melee specialties in attacking cavalry, for a net +1 to their Close Combat Value.

## DEFENSE

Paragon itself has massive stone walls with square towers no more than 75 yards apart. Outside the walls, five rings of brick berms and trenches encircle the city, with fortified





gatehouses along every road. Normally, the gates stay open. An enemy who wants to take Paragon must fight past layer after layer of soldiers, who always have the advantage of being above their attackers. Then they must pass the city walls and overcome the Perfect's own fortified palace.

## OTHER ASSETS

Only the Perfect himself knows how many covert agents he has in other Southern states and their militaries, feeding him information and ready to sabotage their countries' war efforts. The Perfect *definitely* has a Lawgiver working for him: the Eclipse Caste called Scarlet Whisper, whose official title is Minister of the Arts and whose unofficial duty is chief of propaganda. A measure of her skill is that she performs this function while remaining hidden from the Immaculate Order and the resident Realm garrison, who both would surely object to an Anathema wielding such power in an important satrapy. The Perfect himself, of course, has vast power, the exact limits of which are not generally known.

## PARAGON'S ARMY

The legions of Paragon are easily recognized by their plain, gray-glittering armor and plain slotted helmets that make them look like an army of faceless automatons. Each dragon in a legion has its own standard, a pole topped with a white silhouette of the Perfect on a black square and a silver-gray banner with the dragon's number in black. Paragon has smaller legions than the Realm, though: only 2,000 soldiers (Magnitude 7) in five dragons of 400 soldiers each. These in turn divide into two wings of 200 each or four talons of 100 each. Either way, legionnaire scales always number 25 soldiers, who subdivide into five fangs of five. Every legionnaire has a unique number that precisely describes his legion, talon, scale and fang. Paragon has six such legions.

The auxiliary units also have numbers, such as "Ninth Dragon Slingers" or "Sixteenth Scouting Talon." The Perfect does not approve of fanciful names. Reservist conscripts are attached to these auxiliary units—usually the six sapper legions.

## ORGANIZATION

Each unit in Paragon's army, from fang to legion, has its own commanding officer (though the lower officers are not usually special characters unless they are promoted through a Rally action or the unit splits off from the main force to act independently). Paragon uses the Realm nomenclature of fanglord, scalelord, talonlord and so on, with the rank of strategos for legion commanders. The army observes the chain of command quite stringently, though in the heat of battle, a commander sometimes has to bypass dead or unavailable subordinates to issue orders directly to junior officers. Orders are relayed through a form of semaphore with the standards or with a banner tied to a ghi.

Every dragonlord and strategos has an enlightened Essence as a gift from the Perfect, conferred through a dangerous thaumaturgical rite that sometimes kills the recipient (described in **Scroll of the Monk**, p. 19). This is

one of the few occasions when the Perfect requests rather than demands: an officer who wants to reach the height of command must show he would risk death for his sovereign *without compulsion*, as a volunteer. The survivors receive an artifact weapon (usually a dire lance or daiklaive) and artifact lamellar armor as their special tokens of command. The Perfect may also issue hearthstones with useful properties, though only for short periods. A few high officers are God-Bloods or outcaste Terrestrials.

The auxiliary units have their own chains of command, but ranks extend only up to senior winglord, for an officer who commands a dragon-sized unit. A very few senior winglords have an enlightened Essence, such as Paragon's most celebrated commander of archers, who carries a short powerbow.

The sapper legions are legions only by virtue of their numbers. The professional soldiers in each legion number no more than a talon, and their commander carries the rank of senior winglord. A dragonlord can command a senior winglord, if there's no strategos handy.

## THIRD LEGION, SIXTH DRAGON

**Description:** The legionnaires of Paragon occupy the front line in any battle. They stand shoulder to shoulder, stabbing and chopping with their polearms, or sweeping at the legs of horses.

**Commanding Officer:** Dragonlord Lucky Dingo

**Armor Color:** Plain steel

**Motto:** "Strike a blow for the Perfect!"

**General Makeup:** 400 heavy infantry in reinforced breastplates and slotted helms, armed with polearms and short swords.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 5





Drill: 4

Close Combat Attack: 3 (4 vs. cavalry)      Close Combat Damage: 3

Ranged Attack: —      Ranged Damage: —

Endurance: 8    Might: 0    Armor: 3 (-2 mobility)

Morale: 4

**Formation:** The Sixth Dragon legionnaires usually fight in close formation, but can spread out into relaxed formation if circumstances warrant. Lucky Dingo has a dire lance (actually an artifact version of the ghi carried by his troops) as well as artifact lamellar armor. For special characters, he has four relays to the four talonlords under his command, who serve as heroes.

## THE LAP

Unlike most of the Southern states, the Lap worries about neither its water supply nor its security. The Realm extends its own spirit pacts and magic to safeguard the Lap's seasonal rainfall, so the rivers that flow through the city-state's territory never fail. The city itself is ridiculously well-defended by its placement atop the crossed legs of a mountain-sized statue: Any intruder would have to penetrate the three tunnels into the city, or climb hundreds of feet up the steep outer surface of the statue's legs. Lay siege? The Lap's granaries hold enough food for three years. As a crowning touch, the Realm finds the Lap's agricultural surplus sufficiently valuable that the Realm stations an entire legion to protect the city... and the Realm's interests.

As a result, Laplanders don't worry much about invasion. No one has attacked the city in centuries. Bandits and nomads merely raid the outlying farms. These must be fortified, but there's not much for robbers to take besides food. What, they're going to fight a war over wagonloads of squash?

## ARSENAL

The Lap makes its own swords, lances and other ordinary melee weapons, plus some rather fine composite bows. The city also buys firewands and flame projectors from Gem, as well as flamethrowers from the Varang city-states. The flame projectors protect the city's access tunnels. The flamethrowers can be wheeled about the parapets that line the edge of the mountain-statue's legs, to rain flaming oil on anyone who tries to climb. The flamethrowers, however, are largely for show. In the event of an attempt to climb into the city, the Lap's soldiers plan to attack by throwing down rocks, dung and boiling urine before they wheel out the valuable and temperamental flamethrowers.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Lap would never attack a neighbor unless the Realm satraps told the Lap to. Its strategic posture is entirely defensive: retreat to the city and wait for rescue from the Realm. Recent events make leading Laplanders wonder if they might need to learn how to fight a war—but no one really knows how to live without the Realm to supply direction.

## POTATO WARS

In fact, the Lap's food surplus does have a military aspect. Laplander grain and produce reach as far as Chiaroscuro and Gem. The Lap has an extremely profitable arrangement with Gem, without which the latter city would become much smaller and poorer. Many other small states and tribes rely on the Lap's surplus as well, trading precious metals, jewels, firedust and other Southern commodities for food and good Laplander wine and beer. Much of this wealth then goes to the Realm in tribute and pays for the legion's presence.

This trade gives the Lap considerable leverage over smaller states. First, the Lap can hire mercenaries for any fighting the Realm's legion doesn't care to do. Perhaps more importantly, the Lap government can embargo anyone who doesn't back the city-state's policies, and offer food and silver to any tribe willing to attack the Lap's foes. The Laplanders call these "potato wars": When the city rebuilt after the Great Contagion, its rulers hired nomad tribes using dried potatoes, a durable foodstuff that enabled the nomads to travel long distances and fight longer campaigns without worrying about provisions. The Lap still engages in such proxy wars. A few hundred scruffy desert raiders can't seriously threaten a great state such as Paragon, but they add weight to diplomatic warnings that the Lap will not be pushed around. Such a tribe is more than enough to deal with another tribe or the average gang of bandits.

## DEFENSE

The Laplanders can adopt a posture of total defense because their city occupies one of the most defensible spots in Creation. Without powerful artifacts, sorcery or Charms, no army can enter the Lap. Neither the Realm garrison nor the Laplanders ponder how to defend the city if it faces attack by a foe with such a capability, such as an Anathema sorcerer or a fleet of Haslanti-style air boats.

## OTHER ASSETS

Laplanders believe their greatest military asset is their alliance with the Realm. Why should they try to develop any special military capability of their own? The Realm has always protected the Lap; the Realm will always protect the Lap.

Unless, of course, it doesn't.

## THE LAP SEPOYS

Strong, healthy young Laplanders are advised that the Lap's own military is a good way to serve their 40-year indenture to the city. These soldiers, the sepoys, escort caravans, chase away the occasional bandit gang and police the city itself. Inside the city, the soldiers ride horses to trouble spots but dismount to fight. They carry weighted ropes, nunchaku and bolas (see **Scroll of the Monk**, pp. 155, 156 and 158)

to knock out and restrain the drunk and disorderly. Outside the city, half carry composite bows instead of bolas, and half carry slashing swords instead of nunchaku. Under these circumstances, the sepoys act as light cavalry. Common tactics are to gallop past an enemy and slash at him with a sword or nunchaku.

A sepoy must master riding, thrown weapons and melee weapons, with a bit of martial arts training to use the nunchaku. Learning such a diversity of abilities, however, prevents the sepoys from developing great skill with any one—at least considering the modest training that sepoys receive. Neither is their morale especially good. The Lap's government expects that the Realm legion will deal with any severe military problem, so it does not demand that sepoys train and drill to develop their prowess or courage to legionnaire standards. If any sepoy feels driven to become an elite combatant, that's fine. He can volunteer as a legion auxiliary, and perhaps become a legionnaire and Realm citizen himself, in time.

About half of all sepoys learn archery because it raises a soldier's pay grade. Sepoy archers carry composite bows when they escort caravans or chase raiders. Skilled archers also train with the coveted firewands and the frightening and dangerous fire projectors and flamethrowers. In the event of an attack on the Lap, archers defend the city's tunnels. Archers' buff jackets carry the design of two crossed arrows; soldiers rated to wield firewands add an aura of flames around the arrows. At least half the sepoys in a talon are archers, too, and most talons include a scale with firewands.

Common soldiers wear ordinary buff jackets and pot helmets and typically find them sufficient to deal with their usual threats. Officers wear breastplates enameled green and gold, and their helms bear a crest of plumage: green for lower officers, golden for commanders.

## ORGANIZATION

The sepoys follow a simplified version of the Realm's command structure. The Lap military doesn't need units as large as a dragon; it just has talons, standardized at 126 soldiers each. The talon consists of five scales of 24 soldiers, each with a subaltern, and a captain in command (Laplanders don't have the nerve to call them "talonlords"). The captains answer to a command staff, the Portreeve's Office, which in turn serves the Golden Triumvirate that rules the Lap as a collective satrap. The Portreeves began as the gatekeepers for the three entrance tunnels. Now, they command the soldiers who do the actual guarding. Most Portreeves are former captains who served their 40 years and had friends in the city's power elite.

The resident legion commander can commandeer the sepoys at her pleasure, though, completely bypassing both the Portreeves and the Golden Triumvirate. Captains also know they had better obey any command from a dragonlord as if it came from the Portreeve's Office, because their own commanders will not defy the Realm.

The Lap typically assigns a talon or two to guard caravans headed to Gem or other allies. If they chase bandits or raiders, the sepoys often receive a scale of legionnaires to stiffen their spines. The Realm considers this a pleasant training exercise for the legionnaires, and a bit of extra practice at command for the scalelord, who does not defer to the Laplander captain in any way.

The Lap currently has just 22 talons of sepoys. At least eight are out of the city at any given time, escorting caravans or patrolling the city-state's boundaries to remind the neighbors that someone's on guard. The talons within the city seldom fight as a unit. Instead, fangs patrol the city to quell civic disturbances. Several talons are spread through sections of the city's ramparts to watch for trouble; they more often spot house fires inside the city than enemies outside. In these circumstances, the sepoys also serve as the city's fire brigade. Talons also gather for training exercises.

## LAPLANDER SEPOY TALON:

### THE FIGHTING FOURTEENTH

**Description:** This is a typical sepoy talon sent to hunt robbers or escort a caravan. Its commanding officer, Captain Sladek, has just two years before his indenture ends and he can retire; he has no illusions of promotion into the Portreeve's Office. Captain Sladek prays that he can get through his last escort mission without any trouble.

**Commanding Officer:** Captain Sladek

**Armor Color:** Green with a "14" (in Realm script) on the sleeves







**Motto:** “In the Lap of the Dragons” (official); “Let the legion handle it” (unofficial)

**General Makeup:** One scale each armed with slashing swords and bolas, slashing swords and composite bows, nunchakus and bolas and nunchakus and composite bows; one scale armed with firewands and either nunchakus or slashing swords; all wear buff jackets and pot helms.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 2   **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 2   **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5   **Might:** 0   **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 2

**Formation:** Every sepyoy has ratings of at least 3 in all Physical Attributes, but the average sepyoy has only one dot in Archery, Martial Arts, Melee and Thrown. Firewand troops have Archery 3 (for what these weapons cost, the officers want to make each shot count); by itself, the firewand scale has Ranged Attack 3, Ranged Damage 4.

The captain and four of the subalterns have two dots in each combat Ability; they are the “heroes” of the combat unit. The subalterns have only War 1, though, and the captain has War 2. The firewand scale’s subaltern has Archery 4 and is both a hero and the closest the unit comes to a sorcerer. Only the captain is a heroic mortal; everyone else is an extra.

Sepoys normally fight in skirmish formation, just because their enemies tend to spread out. Sepoys can manage relaxed and even close formation, but rarely see any reason to do so.

## GEM

No city in Creation can match the mineral wealth of Gem. And nowhere else do so many people depend on such a precarious water supply. Envious eyes watch Gem and plot its downfall, even from more than a thousand miles away. Fortunately, Gem is also nearer the sources of firedust than any other city. Prodigious wealth and easy access to firedust shape the military posture of humanity’s Southernmost city.

Gem has no military of its own. None. And anyone caught trying to create a military becomes very dead, very quickly.

With so much wealth at stake, who can a ruler trust to command her army? No one. Eventually, a commander must succumb to temptation and mount a coup. Whatever Gem’s monarch pays his troops, a usurper could promise more. Gem’s hereditary Despot, Rankar VII, knows this all too well: His great-grandfather Kolar III became Despot through just such a usurpation.

Kolar was wiser than previous Despots, however, and found a solution to the conundrum of guarding his treasure. He hired mercenaries (whose first job, incidentally, was to slaughter the rest of his officers’ cabal). More particularly, he hired *lots* of mercenaries, from enough different companies that no one group could possibly defeat all the others. Any captain who tried to seize the throne would face immediate attack from all the other mercenaries.

## THE GUILD

At least half the mercenaries hired by the Despot come from the Guild. Rankar VII tries to keep the fraction as low as possible: he fears that the Guild could attempt a usurpation using the mercenaries Rankar himself hired. The Guild responds by disguising its ownership of various mercenary companies that apply for contracts. Maybe the Guild factors just want to claim a larger fraction of the lucrative contracts, but Rankar prefers not to take chances. Each mercenary contract includes a clause that lying about ownership is grounds for terminating the contract and, indeed, the mercenaries.

This system has worked for more than 60 years. Now and then, a group of mercenary captains tries to form a usurping junta, but so far, a soldier has always revealed the plot to gain the Despot’s standing reward for evidence of treason.

The system also attracts mercenaries from thousands of miles away. A 10-year contract with the Despot can make everyone in a mercenary company rich enough to retire in modest comfort. The Guild brings many mercenaries—and hires many of the hopeful freelancers who make the long, hot trek to Gem. By now, the market for mercenaries sustains itself, far exceeding the Despot’s needs.

## ARMORY

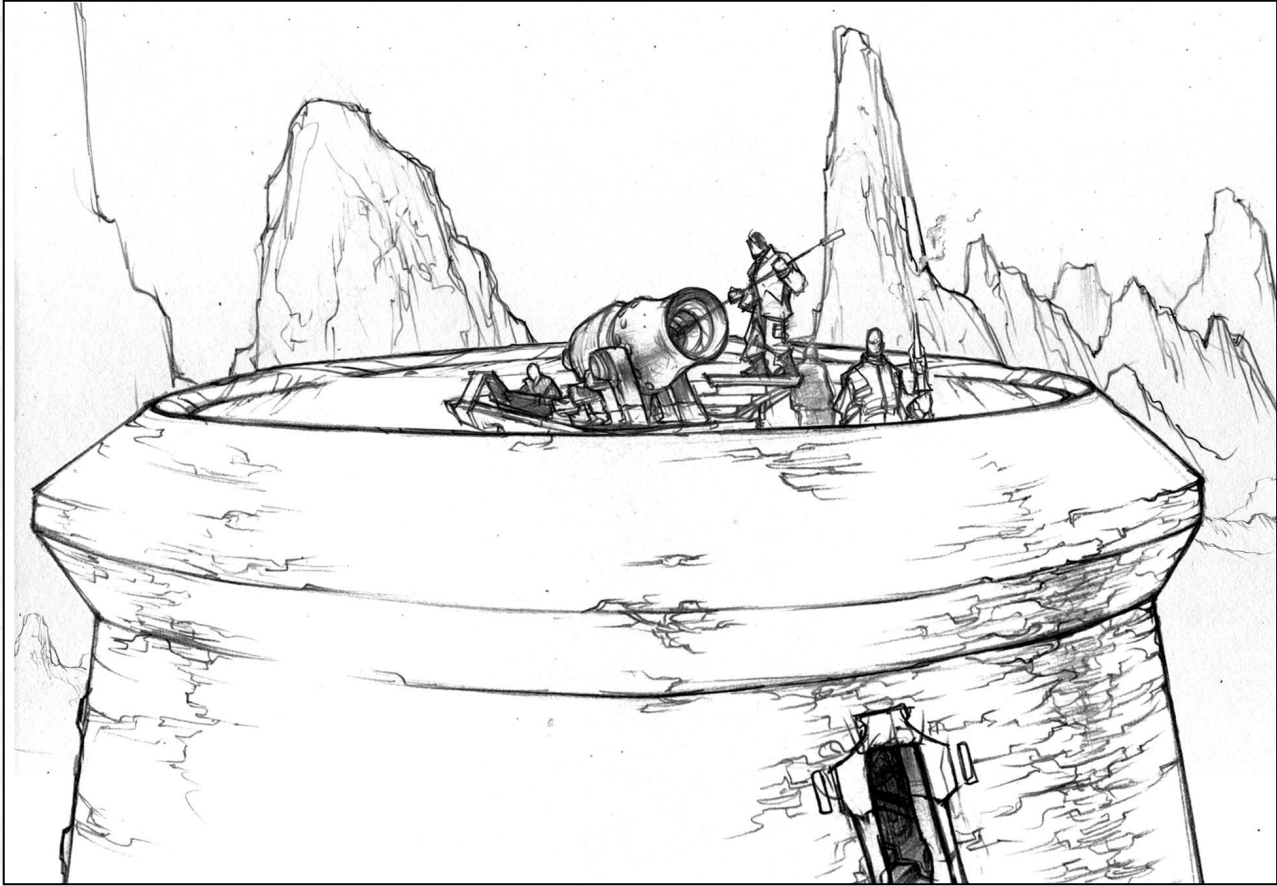
You name it, the Despot’s mercenaries probably have it. They use just about every mundane weapon ever devised, from clubs to catapults. Gem also has a small navy—a navy of sand-ships lodged at a hidden port beyond the mountains, ready to sail across the dune-sea in pursuit of raiders or other foes.

Such rich contracts attract Essence-wielding mercenaries who can use artifact weapons: several commanders carry daiklaves, powerbows and the like. The Despot even owns several implosion bows and other magitech weapons, operated by a scale of artillerists and a fang of sorcerer-engineers rented from Lookshy at vast expense. (See **Compass of Terrestrial Directions—The Scavenger Lands** for Lookshy’s artillerists and sorcerer-engineers, and **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** for magitech weapons.)

Naturally, the Despot makes abundant use of incendiary weapons. Several mercenary companies use firewands and flame pieces. Guard posts are equipped with flamethrowers, fire projectors and eruptors. The martello fortresses that ring the city each carry several fire cannons; so do many of the forts along the main roads to the city. A number of gigantic steam cannon are emplaced to bombard those roads from positions nearer the city. One small mercenary company even specializes in laying firedust minefields.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Gem has never sought conquest, only to guard what it has—and the Despot’s mercenaries have a lot to guard. They guard the miners from the dozens of bandit tribes that hope to



make their own fortunes at Gem, and they watch the miners to make sure no one tries to pilfer a stone. Mercenaries patrol the streets and markets, protecting the people from thieves and ruffians while showing them the folly of defying the Despot. Some troops escort caravans and occupy watchtowers along the roads. Other mercenaries garrison the small manses whose hearthstones power Essence weaponry. Mercenaries even patrol the city's network of cisterns and aqueducts, protecting them from sabotage or water-thieving desert tribes. Lately, mercenary companies have traveled further afield to stalk other mercenaries that the Perfect of Paragon hired to rob Gem's caravans and attack the Despot's most remote mines.

## DEFENSE

As an invader approaches Gem, stone forts appear along every path and ring the city. Many of these are *martellos*: round towers topped with some sort of cannon, with a swivel mount to increase their arc of fire. The city itself boasts a wall eight yards high and five yards thick, with bastions for firedust artillery and catapults.

## OTHER ASSETS

The diverse mercenaries of Gem include individuals with supernatural powers or artifacts. They certainly include sorcerers who can control at least minor elementals of the desert. However, Gem does not have any real allies, human or supernatural. This may cost the city dearly.

## THE MERCENARIES OF GEM

Gem's mercenary companies vary widely in size. The largest company is a mercenary legion organized and trained on the Realm's model. The smallest "companies" consist of single mercenaries, such as an enlightened mortal woman who owns a scout-class warstrider. Most companies range in size from talons to dragons. Some companies consist of just one mass combat unit; others contain several. Most mercenaries are human. A few soldiers are God-Blooded or outcaste Terrestrial Exalted (or at least that's the story they tell). One small company consists of scaly-skinned Wyld barbarians who thrive in Gem's noonday heat. No company, however, inspires more fear than the troop of scorpion-maiden hobgoblins who follow a Fair Folk noble—for she takes her payment in souls.

## ORGANIZATION

Each mercenary company has its own contract and its own chain of command. The companies receive their assignments from an office in the Despot's bureaucracy. Only this office could say just how many mercenaries the Despot employs, but they certainly exceed 10,000. The soldiers rarely operate in battle-groups larger than a wing, however, unless the Despot wants to exterminate an especially bothersome tribe of barbarians or brigands. The Despot's clerks and the Guild's factors prefer to use the Realm's terminology for

military units, so whatever companies call themselves, their contracts (and other mercenaries) refer to them as scales, talons, wings and so on.

In wartime, smaller companies serve under the commanders of larger companies. (Specialists might still operate independently.) The commanders of the five largest units become the Despot's generals and chiefs of staff. A Dragon-Blood called Irian Kalse shall become Rankar's field marshal. Kalse was a "lost egg"—a Terrestrial Exalt born outside the Scarlet Dynasty but adopted (or drafted) into the Realm's service. He trained at the military academy called Pasiap's Stair (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 55) and reached the rank of winglord in the Imperial Army. He does not speak of why he had to leave both the legions and the Realm to become a mercenary. Kalse's record as a mercenary shows he has lost none of his skill as a commander or an Exalted warrior.

### ETHNIC AND FAUX-ETHNIC MERCENARIES

Veteran soldiers sometimes leave their country's regular military to form mercenary companies that fight in the same way. (For instance, many unExalted soldiers from recently disbanded legions now seek second careers in the militaries of Realm satrapies... or whoever can pay.) In time, these companies recruit soldiers who were never part of the original military. Other mercenary companies simply imitate famous militaries, whether in their dress, their tactics or their training. Thus, one can hire legionnaires who never fought for the Realm, faux-Delzahn cavalry, mock-Varangian fusiliers and the like.

### THE GARDA'S BASTARDS (ARTILLERIST SCALE)

**Description:** This particular artillery unit mans a gatehouse in the walls of Gem. The gatehouse consists of two martellos, each topped with a heavy eruptor on a swivel mount, with a gallery between them. The soldiers carry firewands and hammers in case they must fight in close combat. Other scales of the Garda's Bastards man a number of martellos along the roads to Gem.

**Commanding Officer:** Scalegord Copper Gazelle

**Armor Color:** Bright yellow with stylized orange garda across the back

**Motto:** "Be careful, you idiot, I've got enough firedust here to blow us all to Yu-Shan!"

**General Makeup:** 20 infantry in buff jackets with hammers, firewands and two heavy eruptors

**Overall Quality:** Average

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 2 **Close Combat Damage:** 4

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 4 (firewand)/5 (eruptor)



**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** In addition to Scalegord Copper Gazelle, the unit has four "sorcerers"—the trained gunners who fire the eruptors while other soldiers reload and guard the gate. Since the unit doesn't move or divide into smaller units, it has no need of heroes or relays. In addition to the eruptors, the soldiers shoot firewands out of slits in the gatehouse walls and gates, and have four fire projectors in case an enemy breaks through the outer gate. If the soldiers must engage in close combat, they fight in relaxed formation.

### DESPOT'S SHIP *BLACK HURRICANE*

**Description:** This sand ship (a large yacht) carries a talon of mercenary marines as well as 10 noncombatant sailors. The ship itself is mounted with three flamethrowers, two mobile and one set to fire out the ship's snarling demon figurehead. The ship is carefully fireproofed, so it can sail over its own flaming discharge.

**Commanding Officer:** Captain Parch

**Armor Color:** White over-ropes and keffiyahs

**Motto:** "Blow them away!"

**General Makeup:** 100 light infantry armed with composite bows, broadhead arrows and short swords, wearing buff jackets

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 4

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 2 (4 for flamethrowers)

**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 3





**Formation:** While engaged in archery from the ship's deck, the marines stay in close formation. If they engage in close combat because the ship is boarded or they must leave it to engage an enemy, they prefer relaxed formation.

Captain Parch is the God-Blooded daughter of an ifrit, a desert elemental of fire. She is a literal sorcerer, knowing the spells Emerald Countermagic, Summon Elemental (see **Exalted**, pp. 253, 254), Calling the Wind's Kiss, Emerald Circle Banishment and the Ravenous Fire (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise**, pp. 39, 44, 56). She has a permanent Essence of 3 and an Essence pool of 30 motes, though, so she cannot cast many spells. Her crew also has three relays and three "sorcerers" who operate the flamethrowers.

## AN-TENG

The satrapy of An-Teng, between the Fire Mountains and the Great Western Ocean, seems like a model satrapy: prosperous, placid, utterly subservient to the Realm. Officially, An-Teng has no military and does not need one. It relies on the Realm instead. The country's only soldiers are the bodyguards of its nobles, who have no training at war—and why should they, with multiple Realm legions in residence, and dozens of Dynasts on junkets from the Blessed Isle?

But An-Teng holds many secrets that the Dragon-Blooded do not know. The Shore Prince of the coastal lowlands has the Shadow Puppeteers, thaumaturges who evoke assassin-spirits through ancient pacts and puppet-plays. The Prince of the Middle Lands can distribute powerful artifacts called ancestor sashes, which turn ordinary mortals into Elephant-Riding Ghost Generals empowered by heroic commanders of ages past. The Prince of the High Mountain Provinces owns a number of artifact masks that enable their wearer to raise and command armies of animals. In a crisis, the Masked Commanders of the Animals could raise legions of beasts; the Ghost Generals could lead elephant cavalry; and the Shadow Puppeteers could try to murder the enemy commanders. These potent magics will be described in detail in **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. IV—The South**.







## CHAPTER TWO

# BLOOD IN THE WATER

In the other Directions of Creation, people fight their wars on land. They build navies as adjuncts to their military power, but they rely on armies. Not so in the West: the island nations of that Direction, separated by vast expanses of glittering waves, have no choice but to develop their naval power. In no other Direction of Creation does one single fact of the environment exert such ineluctable influence over the conduct of war.

### THE ENVIRONMENT


The West of Creation consists of an island chain stretching more than 3,000 miles. Many islands are quite large—but they are tiny compared to many nations in the rest of Creation. The West also lies furthest from the fructifying Pole of Wood, rendering much of the land comparatively infertile. Thus, Western folk must take their living from the sea... or each other. And so, they go to war.

Well... piracy and extortion, really. Outright conquest rarely happens in the West. Would-be invaders can bring

armies only by transport ship, risking high seas destruction by enemy navies or unforeseen tempest. Although sufficiently daring sailors can reach any part of the ocean, sailing great distances increases the likelihood of mishap. A few ships with highly skilled crews may succeed where a huge armada of half-trained sailors would fail. Not that many Western countries have the resources to build huge armadas . . .

The nature of maritime travel also minimizes collateral damage and keeps two-party wars from dragging the rest of the Direction into violence. In most other parts of the Threshold, armies must often pass through many international borders to get to their actual destination. Consequently, commanders must either contend with the escalated tensions brought on by incursion (to say nothing of ongoing skirmishes with any militia that attempt to stop the invasion), or commanders must secure diplomatic passage for the force. In contrast, Western admirals may attack their enemies with impunity, completely bypassing the territorial waters of concerned neighbors. Western nations can assert neutrality far more





meaningfully, since invaders really have no excuse for not going around.

Of course, the downside to an all-maritime environment is that blockades must be very large or tightly packed around an island to be at all effective. In the South, East or North, a country may have just one or two ports. Western nations may have a dozen or more. Stationing a fleet in the deep water in hopes of intercepting an enemy navy is an exercise in futility unless either side knows the exact location of the other, leading to the terrifying possibility of two fleets inadvertently passing each other and devastating each other's civilian populations instead. For this reason, Western countries usually keep at least half their fleet assigned to homeland defense.

Even if the navies of the West threw caution to the wind and made all-out war on each other, the relatively low population of the region makes any long-term occupation impractical. The island countries may have enough troops to conquer their neighbors... but never to hold them. Any ongoing military hegemony would require extensive population expansion and/or depopulation of enemy settlements. Thus, warlike nations pillage their neighbors or try to bully them into offering tribute, but they have little chance of placing enough "boots on the ground" to occupy a conquered nation.

## WAR GODS OF THE WEST

The Scarlet Banner's office for the West includes war gods for every culture in that Direction, as well as gods for boarding actions, nautical tools used as weapons, maritime strategy and every other aspect of naval warfare. They never contradict their overseer Siakal, Western God of War and Sharks. They fear her too much. So do most of the gods who ever met Siakal. Few deities break the laws of Heaven so blatantly as the Queen of Slaughter, but few gods dare to call for her audit and punishment—not since she ate the last god who tried.

### SIAKAL

The Shark Goddess received the office of Western battle long before the Primordial War. The Incarnae did not remove Siakal from that office, and few other gods dared to try. Siakal's combat prowess does not surpass the other Directional war gods, but she is by far the most vicious and ruthless. Siakal's peripheral dominions color every aspect of her philosophy on warfare. As the incarnate ideal of shark, her hunger and bloodlust ignore the distinction of friend and foe. In the heat of the slaughter, she kills everyone.

### POLICIES

During the Primordial War, Siakal viciously urged the Chosen to exterminate the Lintha along with the rest of their enemies. Despite this, the thin-blooded descendents of the Lintha now venerate the Shark Goddess for this same brutality. Siakal accepts their sacrifices and often grants their

### OTHER WESTERN UNITS

**The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. II—The West** includes entries for the following Western military units:

- **The Gull's Talon:** A fast-attack flotilla crewing Wavecrest warships (p. 31).
- **Sea Raiders:** Neck tribesman sailing fast outrigger canoes to maraud neighbors (p. 37).
- **Shore Guard:** Archers who police the Neck and defend against external threats (p. 37).
- **The Wavedancer:** A lightweight Tya courier ship (p. 41).
- **The Iron Fist:** A small fleet of Coral pirates (p. 57).
- **Denzik Eight Defense:** Volunteer Denzik militia (p. 64).
- **Black Fleet Marines:** Skullstone war zombies (p. 84).
- **Sword Brotherhood Defense:** Elite Lintha swordmasters who defend Bluehaven (p. 105).
- **Militia Patrol:** Luthe's shark beastmen defenders (p. 123).

prayers. Even her enemies (and Siakal has no friends) concede that the Shark Goddess is at least genuinely impartial and free of hidden agendas: she does not care who prays or why, who lives or who dies.

In the debates of the Crimson Panoply and the Division of War, Siakal always advocates total war and maximum carnage. If she had her way, every fight would be to the death, and every war would last until one side exterminated or subjugated the other.

Siakal can claim no allies among the other Directional war gods. Ahlat has all but accused her of treason for dealing with the Lintha. Tachi-Kun has not forgiven her aid to the Dragon-Blooded in the massacres of the Solar Exalted and their creations. Sunipa offers rich rewards for any god in the Western Office who informs against Siakal (Sunipa has few takers). Nasamara calls her an honorless butcher. Siakal doesn't care.

### POWER AND WORSHIP

Given her reputation and philosophy, Siakal is not an easy or safe god to follow. On the other hand, she readily responds to any prayer accompanied by a proper sacrifice. Siakal prefers living sacrifices bloodied and thrown to her sharks, but may accept creative offerings if the carnage is especially succulent. The Slaughter Queen has no interest in conventional treasures, but places inestimable value on broken peace treaties, weapons of mass destruction and other offerings that resonate with her dominion. Devotees who wish to become her priests must offer sacrifices that erode their connection to human society and show disdain



Siakal


for life and peace. The more a follower makes himself into the image of Siakal, the more she favors him. Worshippers of sufficiently ruthless piety may eventually transcend humanity altogether and become one of her lesser god servants.

Most nations of the West ban veneration of Siakal for much the same reasons that they ban worship of demons, rakshas, Anathema and other dangerous and unpredictable entities. These bans don't actually stop her worship, but the censorship keeps her cult from nurturing local enmities into region-destabilizing wars. Perhaps more importantly, the bans allow ambitious states to play both sides: officially advocating diplomacy and trade while profiting from Siakal's worship by important military personnel. Such political games have backfired spectacularly, especially since Siakal is no fool and hates being used. Her cults technically violate Heaven's law, so the goddess can't usually retaliate too directly. That doesn't stop her from showing extra generosity in answering the prayers of the offending nation's enemies.

Of course, not all inhabitants of the West show such caution toward Siakal. Similar to the Lintha, many pirate and marauder bands feel predatory kinship with the Shark Goddess. Although these bands fly her flag to demoralize opponents, the sight of the crimson shark-tooth on a midnight blue field sometimes rallies heroic defenders who realize surrender is not an option.

Alone among civilized nations, the Coral Archipelago dares worship her openly and ordains numerous temple-coves along the coast to court her favor. Priests push sacrifices off cliffs to fall into waiting schools of sharks, feeding her prayers to bring them victories and protect them from invaders. The people of Coral have only just begun to feel the true cost of this patronage, as each sacrifice increases Siakal's hunger for the next. Coral's pirates must bring home more prisoners to feed the sharks. If history offers any guide, the cost of Siakal's demands eventually outweighs the profits her followers reap from their victories. The Sea Lord and other leaders quietly look for a way out of the national pact. Regardless of the eventual outcome, the predicament highlights why many warring tribes in the West refuse to invoke Siakal, no matter how fiercely they hate each other. No one wins. They name her only in curses—but even that is a form of prayer.





## SIAKAL AND THE CREATURES OF DARKNESS

Attitudes toward Siakal from true enemies of Creation remain nearly as complicated and cautious as those of mortal authorities.

The raksha courts know her as a deadly foe, but one whose urges flavor her followers' souls with a spicy mix of rage and hunger. Similar to the remoras, the Fair Folk follow in Siakal's wake, "cleaning" the crumbs of survivors her wars leave behind.

The Silver Prince uses the Shark Goddess in his propaganda, contrasting the destruction she wreaks with the apparent peace and stability of Skullstone. The Deathlord does not fear her patronage of Coral, as he has seen that story play out before. The inevitable outcome will only bring more ghosts to his shores. He wonders if he could draw her to the side of the Neverborn, for her insatiable hunger and love of carnage already flirt dangerously close to the ideology of Oblivion.

The Lintha ignore Siakal's complicity in their near-extinction during the Primordial War. A few Lintha leaders wonder if her cult compromises their race's devotion to the Yozi Kimberly; Dukantha reassures them that every atrocity committed in Siakal's name leads more humans to malign the righteousness of the gods. (Kimberly's own views are not for mere mortals to comprehend.) Junior members of the Lintha family know nothing of this, allowing their consecrated depredations to carry the added sting of sincere faith.

## PRAYERS

Siakal's taste for blood makes her, in some ways, far easier to invoke than most gods of comparable station. She makes only the feeblest pretense that the following rites are thaumaturgy; each ritual works only if Siakal permits it.

Furthermore, she provides aid to those who promise her sacrifices even if they do not have victims immediately on hand at the time of the prayer (reducing the difficulty of prayer rolls as normal); the petitioner must still make a token blood offering. Siakal also loves the blood of the Exalted above all else and doubles the value of such sacrifices or promises thereof. Enemy forces hurled overboard count as sacrifices in most situations, so a successful naval battle can handily pay off accrued debt.

Anyone who fails to deliver in full by the next sunrise, however, can expect Siakal's minions to come collecting, starting with the debtor's loved ones. Those who renege on promised offerings a second time rarely survive to do so again.

*Sublime Frenzy* (0, Charisma + Performance, [7-Resources], one action): This prayer suffuses an adherent with the dauntless ferocity of Siakal. For the rest of the scene, all Valor rolls for that character and the character ignores wound penalties. However, the character drops to Compas-

sion 1 and feels an unnatural mental influence compulsion preventing him from showing the slightest mercy to anyone: this cannot be resisted because the character asked for it. Each use of this prayer also counts as a scene weakening all Intimacies based on love, kindness or anything else that opposes Siakal's nature.

*Scent of Shark Within* (0, Charisma + Performance, [7-Resources], one action): This prayer begs Siakal to spare a worshipper from the jaws of her children. Although the Slaughter Goddess has no mercy, she recognizes that devout followers can wreak more carnage if they are not eaten. If the supplicant has not offended Siakal in any way, no shark, siaka or War Shark will attack him unless directly provoked or magically compelled. Even in the middle of a feeding frenzy, the character remains untouched. This immunity lasts one day per success rolled. A character has no way to know whether Siakal has given or revoked this blessing without testing it; cults sometimes use the prayer as a rite of passage to test the faith of new members.

*Host of Siakal* (1, Charisma + Performance, [7-Resources], 1 action): This prayer must be spoken by a priest of Siakal and requires sacrifices worth 100 dots of Essence (or the promise of such) in addition to any offerings used to lower the prayer difficulty. The ritual duplicates *Sublime Frenzy*, but also grants perfect morale to any unit led by the priest. However, the unit suffers the same compulsion against mercy, so members find themselves caught up in the red haze of battle and must desert or break away as a separate unit to regain their senses. Siakal often personally attends battles after granting this blessing, though usually only to observe the massacre.

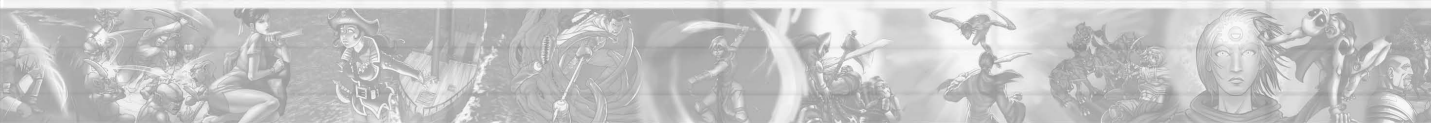
*Scarlet Current Summons* (1, Charisma + Performance, [7-Resources], one minute): If spoken on the open water, this prayer attracts a school of sharks (one per total success rolled) that arrive by the end of the scene (usually much sooner) and attack anything wounded in the water. See **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. II—The West**, page 160, for shark traits.

*Jaws of the Deep* (2, Charisma + Performance, [8-Resources], one minute): This prayer calls the attention of a single siaka (see **Exalted**, p. 349) instead of a group of sharks, and requires one more success, but otherwise duplicates *Scarlet Current Summons*.

*Sin Writ on Waves* (2, Charisma + Performance, [12-Resources], 1 hour): This prayer may be spoken only by a priest of Siakal, requiring him to dip his fingers in the offered blood and scribe the name of another in calligraphy upon the surface of the ocean. As the words fade to ruddy clouds, they call sharks to attack the named target the next time they get a chance. The death sentence stays active for one month, but Siakal grants only one attack during that time.

*Ravens Brood* (3, Charisma + Performance, [12-Resources], one minute): This prayer calls the attention of a single Child of Siakal (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. II—The West**, p. 131) instead of a school of sharks, but otherwise duplicates *Scarlet Current Summons*.





Siakal expects those who call upon her children to fight in a manner that glorifies her and will turn the summoned War Shark against those who fail to show utter bloodlust. The rite does not *compel* the War Shark in any way, but the small god usually agrees to join in a massacre.

*Endless Hunger Apotheosis* (3, Charisma + Performance, [12–Resources], one day): This prayer must be spoken by a mortal priest of Siakal and requires sacrifices worth 300 dots of Essence in addition to any offerings used to lower the prayer difficulty. Promises cannot lower this difficulty or count toward required sacrifices; Siakal demands actual sacrifices. After the slaughter, the priest spends the rest of the day reciting his accomplishments and devotion to the Shark Goddess and dares to name himself worthy of her divine host. When finished, he leaps into the ocean, and a War Shark snaps him up whole. The god carries the priest unharmed in its gullet and regurgitates him before Siakal, who judges the priest's worthiness in a single pitiless glance. If she finds him lacking, she eats him on the spot. If worthy, the priest suffers an agonizing transformation as attendant War Sharks shred his flesh to release the shark soul within. When the blood clears, the priest has become a War Shark, gaining the Motivation and all traits normal for such a god except where he already has higher ratings. Only his memories remain as vestigial reminders of mortality.

## WESTERN WARFARE

Fighting on the sea does not much resemble fighting on land. Most importantly, combat usually takes place between *ships*: at every moment, the combatants stay bunched on their vehicles, and attack each other's ships as much as they attack enemy sailors and marines.

Introducing naval combat into **Exalted** therefore requires a close look at how ships function under the rules of the game. The basic rules for vehicles from pages 31–33 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** focus on artifact transportation. The core concepts apply to mundane vehicles, too, but need a little tweaking in their application.

## TRAITS

Mundane vehicles are described by the same traits as artifact vehicles. They have Repair, Speed, Maneuverability, Endurance, Crew, Cargo, Armor, health levels and Weapons. For mundane vehicles, however, these traits do not always mean the same thing. The following clarifications do not limit themselves to ships: many comments apply to all vehicles, from dogsleds to parachutes. See Chapter Six for a wide selection of mundane vehicles.

## REPAIR

This trait represents the difficulty of maintaining a vehicle, or fixing it when it breaks. Second Age vehicles are usually made of wood, and so the relevant dice pool is (Wits + Craft [Wood]). Some vehicles may call for other Abilities: for example, Haslanti air boats need Craft (Air)

to perform delicate sewing of gas bags and other repairs more appropriate to the type of craft. A bronze chariot would call for Craft (Fire).

Storytellers can usually assume that routine maintenance happens without incident. The monthly Resource cost to keep a hard-working vehicle in working order equals one third the vehicle's own Resources cost, rounded upwards: it costs more to maintain a large yacht than a little sailboat.

Failure to perform maintenance means the wagon snaps an axle, the gasbag rips, a hull plank loosens or the vehicle otherwise loses functionality sometime during the coming month (undoubtedly at an inconvenient moment). Fixing a damaged vessel costs one Resources dot more than the maintenance cost, and always involves a dice roll.


Maintenance is particularly important for ships. Second Age ships are built of wooden planks joined with pegs and tarry caulk. Leaks happen daily and can widen and ultimately sink the boat if the crew does not fix them. Such leaks happen more often when the hull suffers extra stress, whether from acceleration, actual damage, heavy winds or extra cargo, but sometimes planks just warp for no discernible reason. The grace period before a thin trickle turns into a dangerous torrent (and standard **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** sinking rules go into effect) depends on the origin and size of the hole, ranging from an hour or more for the smallest dribbles to none at all in the wake of battle damage. Although carpenters obviously require lumber supplies to do their work, ships generally carry sufficient stockpiles to handle any leaks the carpenters have a realistic chance of stopping, and they can always cannibalize nonessential wooden objects in emergencies.

Ships also need daily inspection and tending of sails, rigging and bilges, plus weekly attention given to scouring decks and painting other surfaces, but such activities are assumed to occur if a vessel has enough seaworthy crew to set sail. Finally, saltwater ships also require seasonal work while beached or in dry dock to remove algae, barnacles and other parasites that otherwise inflict one level of unsoakable lethal damage to the hull per month that can't be patched at sea. While arduous, such repairs are comparatively simple and automatically succeed if the necessary facilities, labor and spare parts are available (Resources cost one dot less than the cost of the boat). Freshwater vessels need this treatment only every other season.

## SPEED

Most First Age artifact vehicles propel themselves using Essence impellers, motor-driven paddlewheels or some other form of engine. Second Age craft need some external motive force. This may be physical exertion (such as draft animals pulling a wagon) or some natural force (like a ship's sails catching the wind). Some vehicles need both: A glider rides natural winds and thermals, but controlling it is a strenuous activity.

These vehicles cannot move at all without their propulsion source, and may not be able to apply their full speed if the



Storyteller determines the source in question is substantially weaker than normal. For example, a skeleton-crewed galley cannot be rowed as fast as one with a full crew, while a sailing ship stuck in doldrums is dead in the water. A Haslanti hot-air balloon won't fly without fuel, and a sled won't move without something to pull it.

Sailing enthusiasts may also note that the direction and force of prevailing wind should limit a ship's own speed relative to that wind. In an effort to streamline play, however, these rules assume pilots can steer a ship where they want it to go as long as they have wind available, tacking as necessary. The Storyteller may treat instances where this is blatantly impossible, such as no wind or worse.

### MANEUVERABILITY

Controlling any vehicle involves a particular Ability—usually a (Dexterity + Ride) pool or (Wits + Sail). For mundane vehicles, routine maneuvers rarely call for a roll. Many vehicles, however, carry an internal penalty on the player's roll because they change direction slowly or are not very stable. A vehicle's Dodge Defense Value consists of half this modifier.

Some vehicles have special requirements for would-be drivers or pilots. This may be a minimum with the relevant Ability. Some personal vehicles call for a minimum Athletics rating. Other vehicles require special training that falls well beyond the normal Ability, and is represented by a specialty such as Aerial Vehicles. For every dot by which a character fails to meet these Ability minimums, subtract two from the vehicle's Maneuverability. Mortal characters *must* possess any specialty called for, or they cannot pilot the vehicle; the Exalted do not suffer this restriction.

### ENDURANCE

Ships and other wind-powered vehicles have no meaningful Endurance of their own. Other vehicles are limited by the fatigue of people or animals. A chariot or Guild fortress wagon, for instance, is limited by the fatigue of the animals that pull the vehicles. Driving a dogsled or piloting a glider is a somewhat strenuous activity, and so a character's fatigue may set a limit on daily travel. See **Exalted**, page 130.

Rowing a galley and pedaling a Haslanti air boat involve exertion by much of the crew. Individual rowers normally treat this onerous duty just as any other strenuous activity. In mass combat, however, a unit serving as a ship's crew checks for Endurance loss as if making or receiving an attack following each action in which rowing occurs. The rapid fatigue brought on by rowing is one of many reasons why tireless crews composed of walking dead or automata are so useful.

Artifact vehicles have their range of travel set by their Endurance. A few mundane vehicles can have their total range limited in this way, if (such as Haslanti air boats) the vehicles require some sort of fuel. A vehicle powered by muscles or wind, however, has no range limit. At most, the crew's fatigue (or a desire not to travel in the dark) limits the distance a vehicle travels per day.

### CREW

While smaller vehicles lose a dot of Maneuverability for each crew member they lack of their standard complement, this progression doesn't make sense for larger vessels such as imperial triremes that would otherwise be at -165 Maneuverability for a skeleton crew. Instead, divide the vehicle's maximum crew by 5 (rounded up). This is how many crew members must be missing to reduce Maneuverability by -1. Fractional losses below this number do not count toward Maneuverability reduction, and vehicles cannot operate at all with less than a skeleton crew.

### CARGO

When considering the Endurance of a vehicle (and thus its operating range), Storytellers should not forget the necessities of the vehicle's crew and the cargo space needed to accommodate these resources. Many short-range vessels lack even rudimentary living quarters, forcing their owners to stop in areas where the crew can disembark and rest. This might not pose much of a problem for a riverboat or wagon, but a sea voyage rapidly loses its luster when the only place to sleep is beneath the cold salt-spray and stars on deck. Just as importantly, water and (to a lesser extent) food are notably harder to come by at sea. Without access to some form of provisioning magic, ships must regularly make port to resupply—or carry tons of provisions for the crew.

### ARMOR

The statement in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** that “in addition, magical effects that do not damage objects made of the five magical materials have no effect on artifact hulls” is somewhat confusing. Specifically, this means that Charms and other magic that have greater effect on inanimate objects (e.g., Shattering Grasp) or that generate effects inimical to inanimate objects (e.g., Rain of Doom) cannot affect artifact vehicles unless the magic in question explicitly states it can destroy objects made of the magical materials or constructs of solid Essence.

Note that mundane vehicles take damage per inanimate objects, including the applicability of appropriate damage-enhancing Charms and automatic levels rather than rolled damage.

### HEALTH LEVELS

Although vehicles track their own structural integrity with health levels, vehicles do not always suffer damage the same way as characters. Vehicles are not units and do not receive the benefit of Magnitude to effectively multiply their health as an abstraction of greater size. Instead, whenever a craft's Hardness fails to absorb all damage from an attack, the Storyteller should analyze the nature of the attack to determine the threat level the attack poses:

- **Insignificant** threats have no way to hurt the vehicle, typically by dint of being too weak and/or localized to cause measurable structural damage. The Storyteller should be fair and consistent in determining what qualifies as an



insignificant threat, erring on the side of making them limited threats (see below) when the attacker uses magic or is so innately powerful/awesome that the very idea of his attacks impotently glancing off borders is insulting.

A simple litmus test for insignificance is a thought-experiment consideration of the attack versus a solid wall made of the hull's substance, assuming the attack achieved maximum possible effect. For instance, consider a wall of wooden planks, with 3L Armor. By the letter of the rules, if you rolled 50 archery attacks against a wooden wall, odds are good that the volley destroys the wall. But really, no one ever sank a ship by shooting its hull full of arrows. The arrows, therefore, are an insignificant attack. Axes and chopping swords are another matter entirely, as are flaming arrows whose insignificant impacts still have the potential to set the ship ablaze.

By comparison, descriptions of artifact vehicles always stress how they are so powerful compared to modern ships—wooden hulls might as well be rice paper compared to the nigh-indestructible alloys composing artifact hulls. A mortal attack has such little chance of penetrating the Hardness of such a ship as to make an insignificance test necessary. Any collision between a wooden ship and an artifact ship is an insignificant threat for the artifact and a deadly threat to the Second Age vessel.


To some extent, the Armor given for ships and other vehicles already reflects this understanding. Ships, fortress

wagons and some other vehicles have higher Armor ratings than the material they're made of would suggest, to reflect a sturdy internal structure or sheer bulk that makes them hard to damage in a meaningful way.

- **Limited** threats can and should meaningfully damage the substance of a vehicle's hull, but on such a localized scale as to cause little or no impairment to the vehicle's structure as a whole. Most successful attacks against large inanimate objects already use limited threat rules, as evidenced by the "destruction" of a wall translating into a large hole or broken segment rather than the collapse of the entire structure (see *Exalted*, p. 153).

Accordingly, a limited attack resolves normally against a vehicle's soak—but the levels of damage inflicted do not subtract from the vehicle's health track. Instead, the point of impact is considered a separate inanimate object with a damaged health value equal to one quarter of the vehicle's maximum number of health levels and a destroyed value of half its maximum health. If a hull segment is destroyed (i.e., breached), the vehicle as a whole loses health levels as determined by the proportional significance of the breach relative to the size of the craft (judged by the Storyteller). In most cases, this means inflicting levels of damage to the superstructure equal to the attack's minimum damage, but the point of assessing threat level is to give the Storyteller the freedom to trump the abstract mathematics of attack resolution with common sense.





Keep in mind that the placement of a successful limited threat attack can make all the difference in the world. Chopping into a wooden hull with an axe is a good example of a limited threat. Okay, you've made a hole in the hull. A small hole in the side of a ship might do little besides allow 90% cover potshots at the crew within. The same hole below the waterline means a gushing leak that will sink the ship without immediate emergency repairs. Similarly, a limited threat attack against rigging or mast can potentially cripple a vehicle's mobility with a successful called shot (see below), even if the entire vessel takes only a few levels of damage.

Artifact hulls treat most personal scale artifact weapons and Charm-augmented attacks as limited threats, along with exceptionally powerful mundane attacks such as firedust cannons.

- **Comparable** threats can plausibly threaten the integrity of a vehicle as a whole. These are the easiest to resolve, since they apply damage directly to the vehicle's health level track. Wooden vehicles treat ramming, collisions, catapult stones, most magical attacks and virtually any other source of trauma obviously larger than personal scale as comparable threats. In contrast, artifact hulls treat only powerful personal-scale magical attacks, damaging spells, Essence-based artillery and ramming impacts with other artifact hulls as comparable threats. Successful called shots against specific structures using comparable attacks simultaneously apply localized and structural damage levels, potentially obliterating the targeted point of impact while inflicting only modest damage to the hull itself.

Storytellers can also use threat assessment categories to resolve attacks against extremely large beasts such as tyrant lizards or whales, considering them roughly analogous to wooden vehicles. Sufficiently massive and resilient behemoths or spirits may be treated like artifact hulls.

## WEAPONS

A vehicle's integrated weaponry normally requires dedicated gunners assigned to fire them. If there are many such identical weapon emplacements on board, the gunners may be grouped together as a complementary unit for mass combat, allowing coordinated barrages for greater effect. However, most ships carry just a handful of these weapons, especially if the ships mount precious First Age Essence artillery. In such cases, turn the characters who operate the special weapons into sorcerer special characters while the crew's rank and file focus on operating the ship.

## NAVAL RULES

The following rules and considerations apply to naval combat—including bringing the ships to the battle.

### NAVIGATION

While the actual piloting of a vehicle depends on Ride or Sail competence, plotting a course over large distances is a mental exercise of (Intelligence + Lore). The Storyteller assigns a difficulty based on the distance and complexity of

the voyage. Success means the navigator plotted an efficient course toward the intended destination. The vehicle will arrive as long as it stays on this course; any significant detours void the calculations and require a new roll. Characters without the proper tools or maps (normally Resources ••) suffer a -3 internal penalty.

Navigation usually matters more for aquatic travel than other forms of conveyance, for ships on the open seas have no landmarks to guide them. Still, a caravan in unfamiliar territory could take the wrong path, or an air boat captain could find her vessel caught in a wind that blows the ship off course.

## ATTACKING VEHICLES

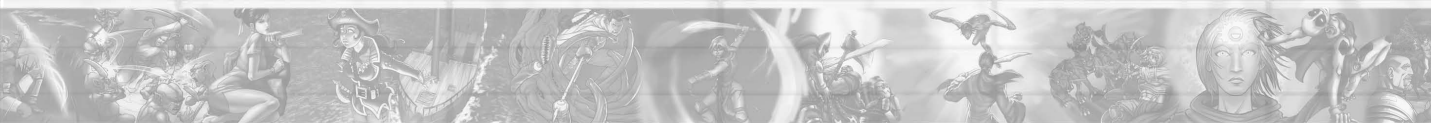
Depending on the configuration of a given vehicle, it may offer its crew and passengers anything from no cover to total cover. The Storyteller should assign the level of cover given to a unit based on its placement in the vessel. If half the crew is below-decks and the other half mans the rigging, the unit as a whole has 50% cover. Short of complete encasement, opponents can still attack the crew through this cover like any other unit on the battlefield, treating the vehicle as nothing more than a feature of the terrain.

As an alternative to targeting the crew, attackers can target a vehicle itself (and have no choice but to do so if the ship provides those aboard with full cover). Complementary unit attackers receive normal Close/Ranged Combat Attack and Might bonuses against vehicles, but do not receive any modifiers for formation or Magnitude. Given the low Defense Values most vehicle have (actually negative for most mundane vehicles), this means attackers usually hit. Of course, as explained previously, hitting isn't the same thing as damaging, so attackers must be sure to use a weapon that actually can harm the craft. If an attack damages the specific portion of a vehicle immediately adjacent to a specific crew member or passenger, that character soaks dice of damage equal to half the levels of damage inflicted by the assault. In mass combat, all units with personnel near the point of impact suffer this damage instead, but the value is not halved.

## TARGETING COMPONENTS

Attempting a called shot against a vehicle imposes an external penalty of -1 to -4 on the attack, depending on the size of the component. If the attack hits and has the potential to do limited or comparable damage (see pp. 41-42), then the point of impact determines the soak and results of any damage.

- **Specific Hull Segment (-2):** Without a called shot, a successful attack against a vehicle hits a random part of the hull. Choosing the point of impact sometimes can affect the resolution of the conflict: for instance, aiming near or below the waterline of a ship to force battle damage leaks. Furthermore, if one attack weakens a section of the hull without accumulating enough damage to tear a hole, further attacks against that same spot can finish the job.



- **Mast (-2):** A ship's mast has the same Armor rating as the rest of the boat, but destroying the mast automatically destroys all rigging and prevents the target from sailing until its carpenter can erect a (likely jury-rigged) replacement.

- **Rigging/Sails (-1):** The ropes and cloth that make up a sailing ship's propulsion systems are the most fragile component by far, with a fixed soak of 2L/4B. Damaged sails cut sailing speed in half and impose a -2 Maneuverability penalty while relying on wind power. Although easier to destroy than masts, rigging is also easier to repair, requiring the captain to successfully rally the crew to retie knots and string up new sails. Attacking a specific rope in the rigging takes a -4 penalty.

- **Weapon Emplacements (-3):** Second Age vehicles might hide ballistae or small Essence artillery behind the hull and pop open special shutters to attack other vessels. This arrangement gives the weapon and gunners 75% hard cover. Most other heavy weapons must be on deck, and receive little or no cover. A damaged result against an artillery emplacement renders it useless until it undergoes actual structural repairs. Successful called shots seldom destroy First Age weapons, even if they knock the weapons from their turrets, but no sane captain would risk firing an energy weapon that had the chance of backfiring and sinking his ship. The same goes for firedust artillery: a damaged cannon might as well be a bomb.

## CRASHING

The rules in *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age* imply that a crash always destroys a vehicle. This is not the case. Instead, the vehicle suffers dice of Lethal, Piercing damage equal to its maximum number of health levels, soaked normally. Threat assessment rules apply normally to this damage (pp. 41-42). Mundane vehicles usually treat crashes as comparable threats with full damage inflicted to individual crew members and any complementary units aboard. In the case of wooden ships, the slightest impact can spring leaks regardless of actual damage inflicted. Larger artifact vehicles can sometimes plow through mundane objects as limited or even insignificant threats (inflicting only 5B or 1B to all aboard for limited and negligible impacts, respectively).

## RAMMING

As *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age* explains (on p. 33), a ramming attack deals as many dice of damage as the vehicle's total number of health levels. If a ship equipped with a ram does not strike an unyielding or impervious object (such as a First Age hull), however, the ship does not take damage from the impact apart from springing a leak or two. However, if the ramming ship does not quickly disentangle its ram, the attacker risks getting dragged down with its opponent. Backing away from the rammed vehicle is a Miscellaneous action that takes a (Wits + Sail) roll at difficulty 3. Retries are possible, subject to the usual penalties for doing so. A botch means the attacker is

## CALLED SHOTS AND FIRST AGE HULLS

Intact and complete First Age ships are far outnumbered by First Age hulls retrofitted with Second Age masts and sails. Defeating such ships using Second Age weapons usually means targeting the Second Age components. Many First Age hulls also have holes in them from ancient battles, patched with modern materials to make the ship seaworthy again. Called shots on a patch have a better chance of opening a breach that might enable further attacks (or attackers) to reach the ship's interior.

stuck and cannot withdraw, though it might be possible for a bold hero to leap up onto the ram and chop it off as an emergency measure, especially with a good stunt.

Against ships with oars, a successful ram attack can shear off all the oars on one side rather than inflicting structural damage to the target. This temporarily immobilizes the attacked ship until its captain successfully rallies the crew to redistribute oars, allowing rowers to limp at half speed and -2 Maneuverability. Further shearing attacks against the same target cumulatively apply these penalties until it runs out of oars and can no longer attempt redistribution.

## BURNING


Artifact hulls are fireproof (at least against non-magical flames). The same cannot be said for wooden boats caulked with highly flammable pitch. Any mass combat attack incorporating fire automatically sets a wooden vehicle ablaze for 1L structural damage on its captain's next action. The damage cumulatively doubles with each successive action until the blaze entirely consumes the vessel or its captain successfully rallies the crew to put it out. Such attacks are especially effective against already-fragile sails.

## CREW AS UNITS

Outside of mass combat, it is generally sufficient to know the number of crew aboard a vehicle to determine any Maneuverability penalties. In a naval battle, however, crew members gather into complementary units.

- **Boarding and Deboarding:** While a single pilot might leap into a one-man craft and go at a moment's notice, transferring entire units presents a logistical challenge. Ordering a complementary unit to board or leave a vehicle requires the same roll as a Turn action. Moving directly from one vehicle to another is a single action.

- **Pilots and Passengers:** Once the unit is aboard, it can assume a passive role as passengers ferried about the battlefield, such as a unit of marines barracked in a ship's cargo hold. Depending on the size of a particular vehicle, the craft may accommodate many passenger units simultaneously. However, only one unit can control the vehicle, with its commander serving as captain (and pilot, unless he delegates that duty to a hero under his command).



If units aboard a vehicle cannot agree on who is in command (such as during a mutiny or boarding operation), they may have to fight it out within the enclosed space of the vehicle in an infantry-on-infantry battle. While command remains challenged, the incumbent retains control.

A clash on deck makes it significantly harder to retreat in an organized fashion, forcing a successful Disengage before disembarking becomes possible. Even in the absence of battle, however, orders to disembark must consider the location of the vehicle. Out on the middle of the ocean, this means abandoning ship, either dropping lifeboats or swimming together until the unit dies from fatigue. The inadvisability of leaving a skyship mid-flight is self-explanatory.

- **Rallies:** While rallying has extra importance aboard vehicles to perform emergency repairs, rallies cannot generally be used to attract reinforcements during a naval or sky battle, since units cannot really scatter or run away as they might on land. At most, a rally represents injured fighters tying a bandanna around a wound before staggering to their feet, or fighters rejoining a scrum that has moved beyond their immediate location.

## AQUATIC TERRAIN

Common sense should guide how units and battlefield conditions interact with a liquid environment. Objects sink or float according to their buoyancy, and most infantry and cavalry units cannot march across the surface of the water (barring appropriate magic, of course). An individual can fight and swim (see **Exalted**, p. 155), and a larger unit can do the same with the same rules. However, mass combat units lose Endurance per a charge (see **Exalted**, p. 164) for each action in which they swim. This does mean that well-armored infantry tend to sink like stones, one of many reasons marines seldom consider the added protection of armor worth the increased risk of drowning. Given these limitations, the only practical way to move around an aquatic battlefield is by ship.

Normal sea conditions do not provide any cover to speak of, which is part of why vigilant lookouts are so valuable to long-term tactical planning. However, sufficiently choppy seas may afford 25% or even 50% cover to all surface combatants. Likewise, strong winds or currents can assist or impede movement depending on their direction of travel, though seldom adjusting speed by more than +/-25% except in the most extreme cases. Either way, such conditions may function as Difficult terrain.

Most naval battles take place only on the surface of the water, but some combatants can move and fight underwater. Such mobility functions similar to flight, in that opponents on the surface can't attack a submerged character/unit with close combat attacks except on a tick when the target surfaces close enough to make that possible. In addition, the water's refractive distortions gives characters 25% cover against ranged attacks launched from the opposite side of the surface. The one critical difference between diving and flying is that a swimmer can always dive down and follow

## WATERSHOES (RESOURCES ••)

Long ago, Western savants invented a way to walk on water. Watershoes consist of yard-wide, bowl-shaped disks of zeelawood bark, coated with wax boiled from lion sharks. A person can strap the shoes to her feet and waddle slowly across calm water. This counts as strenuous activity, and a character can Move at only half her normal rate; Dash actions result in falling over. If the water is not utterly calm, keeping one's balance requires a successful (Dexterity + Athletics) roll for every dramatically significant action the character takes. Once a person tips over, regaining one's footing requires a (Dexterity + Athletics) roll at difficulty 5. Wearing the shoes on land wrecks them.

Every Lintha pirate ship carries several pairs of watershoes, and the demon pirates excel at their use (many Lintha have Athletics specialties in their use). The cost and difficulty of use of watershoes make them somewhat uncommon elsewhere. Outside the West, watershoes cost Resources •••.

to make a close combat attack, assuming he is able to hold his breath long enough to avoid drowning.

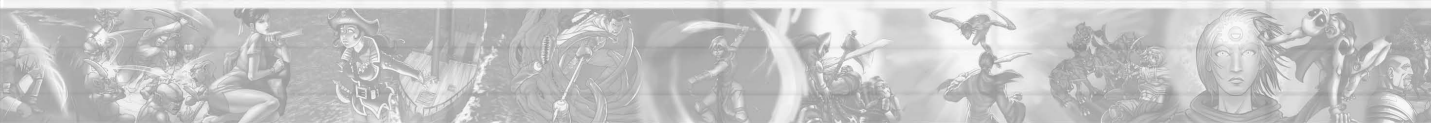
## SHIPBOARD WEAPONS

Navies throughout Creation use pretty much the same weapons and armor, because they know what works and what doesn't. Salt and damp quickly rust iron and steel, so navies use inexpensive weapons and maintain them as best they can. Sailors and marines also must fight in tight spaces, so they prefer shorter, heavier weapons such as axes, khatars, short swords, short spears, clubs and hammers. Such weapons are kept in a special armory to protect them from the elements except when they are needed. Almost every sailor also carries a heavy knife for work about ship. Sailors can also use marlinspikes, gaff hooks and other maritime tools as improvised knives, spears and clubs.

For ranged combat, sailors often carry throwing knives while marines favor javelins. Bows are hard to maintain at sea (and composite bows are almost impossible), but arrows are simply too economical and too effective not to use them. Most particularly, *flaming* arrows can cripple a ship by burning its sails; so military ships usually keep at least a few bows on hand.

Larger ships may carry artillery such as ballistae (including the sailcutter variant) and light onagers. The latter weapons are especially useful for launching firepots to burn ships or pelting the enemy crew with gravel or similar small missiles. Fire weapons, from flame projectors up to fire cannon, steam cannon and eruptors, cost a fair bit more—a single shot's worth of firedust can cost more than a ballista—but they inflict so much damage that wealthy navies buy as many as possible.





For ship-to-ship combat, however, the ram remains the dominant weapon. A fast-rowed trireme can sink any ship that lacks an artifact hull.

## CORAL ARCHIPELAGO

Among Western nations, Coral controls the largest actual fleet and the greatest wherewithal for military conquest. Coral's captains lack the raw magical power of Skullstone, the Realm or even the Lintha, but compensate for that deficit with Siakal's widespread worship and patronage. Although the Coral admiralty fears the hidden costs of this sponsorship, they have tabled the issue until after they conquer Wavecrest. The invasion won't come for another year at least, but most of the West recognizes it is only a matter of time. Coral cannot expand without a greater food supply. Just as importantly, the nation must grow out from under the Silver Prince's shadow or risk becoming a tributary. Wavecrest can feed Coral several times over and marks the first step toward cementing power throughout the West. To this end, Coral has carefully stepped up hostilities with diplomatic and economic pressure to garner regional support for annexation and to test the Realm's willingness to defend its satrapy.

## ARSENAL

At present, Coral's navy possesses more than 1,500 dedicated military vessels: 30% triremes, 40% biremes, 5% trireme tenders and the rest smaller patrol boats and troop carriers for marines. As an upward regional power, Coral devotes significant resources to its shipyards and has more than half again this number of ships in construction. The larger ships all carry ballistae, sailcutters or light onagers. They wouldn't last five minutes against a First Age ship.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Coral's strategies depend on the type of mission. Pirates prefer fast-attack vessels equipped with disabling weapons such as sailcutters and rudder chains, which allow the pirates to paralyze escorts or even entire convoys long enough to gather overwhelming forces. Ardent Siakal cultists sometimes take a more direct approach with their raids, pinning down a larger craft long enough to board and systematically massacre the crew. Virtually all Coral pirates prefer to send smaller boats against larger targets with the hope of seizing the ship itself as part of the prize. Privateers tend to be slightly more conventional in their approach, transferring cargo following a successful boarding.

When Coral goes to war instead of simply raiding shipping lanes, much of the battle gets decided before the fight itself. Diplomats work to destabilize the political situation for enemies and build alliances for Coral, falling back on assassination and sabotage if that plan fails. When the fleet attacks, its raiders close quickly to disgorge Siakal cultist marines onto enemy warships. Very little artillery goes toward sinking ships; that's the job of allied siaka or War Sharks. However, sailcutters, gravel shot from onagers and other

anti-personnel and crippling weapons see a fair bit of use to pick off stragglers. The cultists tend to execute prisoners regardless of their potential ransom value, so admirals consider piety when making duty assignments.

In emergencies, the Coral fleet can tap its reserves of privateers by offering generous freelance contracts ahead of specific battles. Privateers are notoriously difficult to coordinate: they view each other as competition and refuse to assist one another. On the other hand, some admirals can terrorize the privateers into short-term cooperation. Such commanders are in generous supply given Siakal's popularity . . .

## DEFENSE

Coral's precious shipyards are well defended by coastal patrols, garrisoned by marines and fortified with a few pieces of light First Age artillery. The Coral admirals understand that any successful attack against their shores would have to disable the shipyards first to prevent immediate rebuilding. Thus, they are very picky about the foreigners (even licensed privateers) who receive permission even to view the docks, to deter invasion plans and to avoid revealing the sheer scope of the construction efforts. The temple coves of Siakal also provide a key infrastructural asset, since any widespread desecration would force immediate rebuilding efforts to stave off the war god's wrath. Of course, attacking the temples carries its own risks, and no sane person wants to face Siakal after insulting her in so egregious a manner.

Unlike many of the nation's smaller settlements, the city of Azure is well fortified with defensive catapults and other siege weapons positioned to hit anything approaching the harbor—even a few gigantic steam cannons supplied with firedust at prodigious expense. While such weapons pose minimal risk to an artifact hull, they can devastate mundane ships. Besiegers might try to suppress the artillery ahead of the attack by landing strike teams on a less-defended stretch of coastline. The omnipresent schools of sharks that swim close to Coral's shores, however, provide a significant hazard to such operations.

## OTHER ASSETS

Coral lacks support and offensive magic compared to some of its rivals. The navy cannot field Anathema or undead crews, call up storms with sorcery or raise demonic horrors from the briny deep. The navy's few artifacts do not work reliably or well, though that doesn't stop captains lucky enough to receive such weapons from prominently displaying them on deck. After all, the distinctive emitter spire of a lightning ballista changes the course of a battle whether the ballista gets fired or not, as enemies wonder whether or not to call the bluff and risk annihilation if they guess wrong.

A few outcaste Dragon-Blooded fight for Coral, but since the Realm offers better opportunities, such heroes are as rare as they are precious. Coral's Terrestrials act as champions, primary artillery and living good-luck charms all at once. While these outcastes profit from their lack of competition,

they lack the training to develop cooperative Charms and group tactics, making the outcastes vastly inferior to the Realm's sworn brotherhoods.

The priests and worshippers of Siakal offer martial power to many ships, calling on her blessings to summon and control siaka or even War Sharks and fight without fear. These blessings come at a price, leaving troops more interested in blood than plunder. This shift has created an ideological schism in the military as to the ultimate purpose of warfare, though profit continues to win out for now.

## THE CORAL NAVY

Only men serve in the Coral navy, but the generous pension and opportunity for fame and fortune entice many locals and foreigners alike to join. As with many facets of Coral society, the navy functions as an aggressive and loosely plutocratic meritocracy. Money opens all levels of command for anyone interested in buying a commission; inept officers seldom live long enough to damage the command hierarchy. The navy values innovation, so captains who pull unthinkable stunts tend to shoot up to senior positions—unless they die first.

Coral's fleet reports to Admiral Tirak. He appoints captains as commodores to lead each naval battle group. These promotions last only for a single, designated mission, but some captains are appointed so many times that people tend to address them as "Commodore" at all times.

### CORAL SHIP OF THE LINE

**Description:** Although Coral is better known for its raiders, the archipelago's warships are among the finest examples of mortal construction currently afloat, crewed by career

soldiers eager to win loot and make a name for themselves. Only leaders of dominant personality can keep such soldiers in line in the face of the fierce rivalry for booty, but Coral has no lack of such captains. To hide the actual numbers of these vessels, the navy assigns them to piracy and commercial escort missions during peace, though this allocation will shift as soon as the Wavecrest invasion begins.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Varies

**Motto:** "Conquer and Plunder"

**General Makeup:** 180 marines wearing reinforced buff jackets and armed with straight swords

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 4

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 4    **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 2 (Mobility -2)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Always relaxed. The officers who man the artillery function as sorcerers. These units often enjoy the benefits of prayers to Siakal when participating in a premeditated major engagement.

### PIRATES AND PRIVATEERS

Coral has a *de facto* second navy through all the pirates and licensed privateers. These entrepreneurs enhance Coral's power by robbing everyone and anyone else. Pirate and privateer crews answer to the Admiralty Court—a government bureau separate from the navy—and pay a tithe of their loot to that office. Anywhere from 250 to 400 ships hunt through the West under Coral's letters of marque at any given time.



## SKULLSTONE ARCHIPELAGO

The Silver Prince tries to hide that he has the greatest naval force in the West. Should he ever tire of deception and make open war on his neighbors, he could crush any of them with ease. His chances against the combined forces of the West still favor him, but not with a wide enough margin of certainty to make him feel comfortable about doing so. His forces could not currently defeat the combined navies of the Realm in a high-seas engagement, but he could withstand their siege almost indefinitely. Uncertainty keeps him in check, such that he deliberately withholds many of his better weapons from his officers when equipping them for privateer missions to avoid provoking an arms race or alliances between rival powers.

### ARSENAL

As far as the rest of Creation knows, Skullstone's navy controls the same 48 warships that it did before the Silver Prince's return in RY 764: 15 triremes, 20 biremes, 10 fast



couriers and three marine assault biremes. They carry equally conventional weapons, from short swords to ballistae. The undead crews are somewhat less conventional.

The nation's admiralty also reserves the right to conscript civilian vessels in times of emergency for military use, possibly tripling the available number of ships; however, these transports cannot hope to match dedicated warships even if armed and refitted with undead crews. Of course, no one really believes the Deathlord has simply maintained his navy's status quo, but theories range from twice this figure to a thousand-strong spectral armada of refitted First Age derelicts scavenged from the ocean floor. The truth lies somewhere in between.

Skullstone's hidden battlegroup is composed of only 50 ships... 50 *First Age* ships built by a re-created factory-cathedral. To date, the Bodhisattva has 40 fully-armed *Swift Middy Brilliance*-class light warships supported by 10 *Glorious Dragonfly*-class patrol boats divided between fire lance and Essence cannon models. They could annihilate almost any fleet currently afloat. The Silver Prince intends to keep building in secret until he has at least 100 artifact warships—more than enough to annihilate the combined navies of the Realm, if it comes to that.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Skullstone's long-term military strategy centers on the hidden buildup of its artifact navy. Because the Silver Prince does not want to tip his hand prematurely, he never deploys his forces in a manner consistent with their true strength. This restraint sometimes frustrates those among his captains who know the navy's true strength.

When Skullstone's public fleet engages opponents, their commanders use their undead crew to outmaneuver and outlast opponents. A slow and open approach during a lull wind can sometimes trick an opponent into breaking out oars to escape: the Skullstone ships slowly and inexorably give chase until the human crew finally realizes the mistake and makes a weakened last stand. Against determined and deadly opponents, the Skullstone forces shamelessly cheat with their access to unholy power and Anathema leadership. Captain Moray Darktide is especially fond of leaping from his prow and running across the waves to cleave hulls with his daiklave. In one especially daring raid, the pirate captain used a well-timed Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique to land on the deck of a Lintha flagship and slaughter its whole crew while his own ship remained safely hidden just over the horizon.

Whenever Skullstone gets around to making war in earnest, tactics will change. The completed Black Fleet will have the firepower to destroy any high seas opposition or shoreline defenses that stand in the Deathlord's way. Behind his affable smile, the Silver Prince is a meticulously thorough and superhumanly intelligent tactician who leaves nothing to chance, refuses to limit himself with any rules of engagement or sense of fair play and feels no need to expose his forces to unnecessary risks just to show off. In short, he is an implacable

foe who will become nearly unstoppable unless opponents can discover and thwart his long-term ambitions.

## DEFENSE

The city of Onyx is home to the Silver Prince's Inauspicious Citadel, which the Neverborn created as a perfect coastal fortress and imbued with all manner of tactical enchantments to help the Deathlord remotely monitor and manage his naval forces. Even if the Deathlord were somehow absent, the fortress can intelligently defend itself; it would present a daunting obstacle to securing the city. The citadel's sprawling lower levels could serve as a fall-back shelter for much of the city's populace in an emergency (though any situation that made a bastion of the Neverborn into the "safe" alternative would be very dire indeed).

The mere fact that Skullstone is in a shadowland defends its citizens. Attacking under cover of darkness would not be prudent. Essence-wielding adversaries must also carefully conserve their motes, since shadowlands greatly reduce Essence recovery. Conversely, the local population of ghosts can mount counterattacks with uninhibited access to Essence and intimate familiarity with the terrain. In an absolute worst case situation, the semi-unreal Island Five offers Skullstone forces a secondary base from which to launch counterattacks against enemy forces that seize control of the main islands. Doing so would certainly reveal the island's existence and sinister purpose, forever ending any diplomacy between the Silver Prince and Creation.

## OTHER ASSETS

Skullstone has very little besides special assets. Since the Silver Prince is a Deathlord, his advanced Charms, mastery of Void Circle Necromancy and direct backing of the Neverborn arguably make him the most powerful individual residing in the West. However, the Bodhisattva refuses to leave Skullstone without an inordinately good reason. This caution severely limits his personal involvement in high seas naval battles, but dooms any siege against Onyx unless the attackers wield comparable might.

In addition to its liege, Skullstone fields more Abyssal captains (and one Solar) than any other nation in the world. Battle groups led by such commanders automatically outclass most of their opposition. Most other captains and senior officers are veteran nemissaries or war ghosts, with the former deployed in Creation and the latter normally restricted to Underworld operations. Only a handful of sufficiently talented and ruthless mortals receive commands of their own, and most of these are accomplished sailor-thaumaturges or had their Essence necromantically enlightened, giving them limited use of Charms, artifacts and hearthstones.

## THE BLACK FLEET

Skullstone's original 48 Second Age ships form one battlegroup divided between visible patrols of territorial waters and smaller fast-attack flotillas commanded by the





infamous Solar pirate Moray Darktide for missions throughout the West.

In keeping with Skullstone's necropolitan ethos, most crew members are the walking dead instead of the living. Such forces never mutiny, lose morale or suffer fatigue and can steadily row for an entire voyage, giving all ships the functional equivalent of lower-end First Age paddlewheel drives. Such crews also do not require sustenance, leaving more room for cargo and sharply increasing the maximum length of time they can remain at sea without making port. This is especially true of submersible craft that must normally consider limited air reserves. Finally, the undead deter defection and coups since the Silver Prince can usurp necromantic control at any time and turn the crew against a disloyal captain.

The newly recreated First Age vessels have no crews yet. The Silver Prince keeps the completed vessels safely drydocked in well-guarded berths on Island Five. Automated floodgate canals would allow him to deploy the entire fleet in less than 15 minutes.

This hidden fleet does not include the prototype submersible fighter the Silver Prince bestowed on the deathknight Ebon Siaka for testing. The Deathlord hopes it prevents her from getting dangerously bored until the time is right for her to assume command of the completed fleet.

In addition to ships, Skullstone's navy includes a significant number of undead sea monsters animated by the Silver Prince's necromancy. The creatures lair in secret caves and grottos below the waterline on Darkmist Isle, awaiting their master's command to surge out and support his fleets. He uses hollowed-out whales and other bulky creatures as submersible troop transports, ferrying packs of zombies or elite nemissary marines in the whales' putrid gullets to launch surprise attacks behind coastal patrols. The bodies of giant squid, sea dragons and other fast predators primarily serve as escort guardians for these transports, but can wreak havoc on enemy fleets by attacking from below, especially when intelligently possessed by a nemissary pilot or necromantic artifacts called defiler eels. So far, the Silver Prince has avoided including any sharks to avoid antagonizing Siakal, but may change his mind as his fleet grows past the need for such diplomacy.



## BLACK FLEET SPECTRE COMMANDOS

**Description:** These brutal Oblivion-tainted war ghosts excel at take-no-prisoners assaults on living ships, for which their master stores them in fragile bone talismans. By hurling these amulets at other ships with catapults, the ghosts can instantly deploy the moment their shells break open on deck. Such surprise attacks are especially devastating given that the Black Fleet uses mechanized artifact catapults that can launch to obscene ranges.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Black with bone trim

**Motto:** "Deeeaaathhhhh . . ."

**General Makeup:** 150 war ghosts armed with the monstrous claws and other unnatural weapons sculpted into their corpus, wearing spectral chain hauberks

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 1

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 2    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 8    **Might:** 2    **Armor:** 3 (-3 mobility)

**Morale:** Perfect (due to necromantic enchantments imbued by their master)

**Formation:** The war ghosts don't know how to fight in any formation except skirmish. Sometimes, an Abyssal acts as their commanding officer; other times, this role goes to an elite war ghost. Three other ghosts serve as relays; another

three ghosts specialize in weird and ghastly ranged attacks and function as sorcerers.

## RIPTIDE-CLASS SUBMERSIBLE MARAUDER (ARTIFACT ●●●●●)

**Repair:** 5

From a distance, this deadly vessel looks a bit like a *Resplendent Dolphin*-class undersea courier with its sleek fish-like design. The resemblance disappears up close, where the *Riptide*'s razor-edged maneuvering fins, soulsteel armor, overcharged turbine impellers and prominent bulges of integrated Essence weapons leave no doubt as to the ship's intended purpose. The vessel is faster and more maneuverable in the water than anything built since the Usurpation, while mounting firepower normally reserved for much larger hulls. The result is as lethal as it is elegant.

Ebon Siaka is extremely proud of her marauder and looks forward to making it her flagship when her master finally declares war on the West. Although she won't admit it, the deathknight lacks the enlightenment to pilot the ship to its full potential, but she is learning fast and expects to master its controls before her fleet is ready. She argues against the construction of additional prototypes, citing the need for proper testing to avoid wasting precious resources. In reality, she just can't stand the thought of Moray Darktide getting one of his own, not realizing her master shares her distrust toward the patriotic Solar captain and wouldn't dream of gifting him with such a prize.

**Speed:** 39/80 mph

**Maneuverability:** +5S (Lore 5, Sail 5, Essence 5)

**Endurance:** Requires a 15-mote commitment from an Exalted pilot to attune its controls, as well as an inset level 4+ hearthstone plugged into its command throne to power to its Essence-hungry systems. Every 25 hours of cumulative operation since the vehicle's last maintenance inflicts one level of unsoakable bashing damage to it.

**Crew:** 1/1

**Cargo:** Pilot's personal possessions only in a safe behind the command throne.

**Armor:** 20L/20B

**Health Levels:** Ux10/Mx10/Cx5/Ix4/D

**Weapons:**

**Entropic Pulse Cannon:** Speed 6, Accuracy +1 (uses Wits instead of Dexterity), Damage 20L (Piercing against organic targets, such as those composed of wood or flesh), Range 400, Rate 1 (powered by the ship's own hearthstone for unlimited ammunition)

**Overdrive Surge:** Activating this system boosts the craft's speed to 49/100 mph for one minute, but the added strain counts as an hour of operation for accrued maintenance. More importantly, the overdrive envelops the hull in a force-dampening membrane of shadows, preventing all damage from crashing or ramming.

**Other Notes:** The eerily-quiet engines and black armor of the *Riptide* add +2 to the difficulty of any roll to spot it, as





well as masking the ship's energy signature to all known forms of Essence sight.

As a fully submersible craft, the ship can move underwater as freely and quickly as above the waves, using alchemically-treated soulsteel hull plating to absorb the friction and drag imposed by the surrounding water and provide maneuverability comparable to flight. The pilot remains protected and fully covered within the cockpit, provided with pressurized air at a comfortable temperature no matter how deep or long the ship dives.

The advanced tactical sensor arrays built into the craft's fins generate real-time phantasmagoric displays superimposed on the interior of the cockpit windows. The pilot can make Awareness rolls to notice or study objects up to a mile away without penalties for darkness as if sensed objects were immediately adjacent to the craft, aided by Essence-analyzing algorithms duplicating the effects of All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight (see **Exalted**, p. 222). Furthermore, she automatically knows the location and outline of any object in this radius that is touching the water (unless the target is magically concealed in any way).

### DEFILER EEL (ARTIFACT •• OR •••)

Repair: 2

These repulsive soulsteel automata look like thin clockwork eels the length of a man's arm. Although they can swim or slither at their full movement speed, they are not especially useful on their own, with the following traits: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3; Soak: 10L/10B (Hardness 10L/10B); Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-4/I and Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy +0, Damage +1L, Defense —, Rate 1. Due to their small size, attacks against defiler eels suffer a -2 external penalty. The creatures also have a limited identity assembled from jagged remnants of personality and memory flayed from tortured ghosts, giving the creatures 10 dots of Abilities, none rated over 2. Finally, they treat any attempt to make them betray their Motivation as an unacceptable order, since the Motivation set at the time of their creation defines the parameters of their programming (such as "Obey the Silver Prince").

However, defiler eels are not prized as crude mechanical snakes, but rather as versatile necromantic war machines. The undead automata can crawl into any cadaver large enough to contain them (up to the size of a siaka or giant squid), requiring a dramatic dice-less action lasting one minute. Unless interrupted, the device automatically attunes the corpse around itself, magically arresting further decay as it takes control of the desecrated body. While possessing a corpse, the eel uses the higher of its own and the cadaver's Physical Attributes, soak, health levels and natural attacks. Intact bodies begin with full health levels. The destruction or incapacitation of the host does not harm the artifact, which can immediately crawl out to seek a new host. The devices and any bodies they currently inhabit are considered creatures of darkness.

Artifact ••• defiler eels have all the powers listed above, as well as Essence 2 and an Essence pool of 20 + (Willpower x 5) motes respired as a ghost. They use this Essence to fuel the Charms Measure the Wind, Principle of Motion and Intrusion Sensing Method (see **Exalted**, pp. 296–298), and can reflexively spend five motes per scene to know the location of all habitable corpses in the water out to a mile radius.



## WAVECREST

The Wavecrest Archipelago has more fertile land than anywhere else in the West, giving Wavecrest intrinsically greater wealth than other islands. This makes Wavecrest a favored target for buccaneers. As a satrapy of the Realm, Wavecrest officially receives the protection of the Imperial Navy's Water Fleet. Nevertheless, Wavecrest now spares no expense to expand its own navy. The Realm does not object, since Wavecrest's buildup presents no meaningful threat to Realm interests and decreases the force investment needed to secure the area.

## ARSENAL

Compared to Coral's armada, Wavecrest's 500 ships don't look like much. However, any comparison must consider that Coral sends its ships throughout the West,





## THE NECK

Although the Neck has some minor military forces, these islands do not receive treatment in this book. The sad fact is that the Neck really doesn't matter, at least not militarily speaking. The natives know this fact, though they don't like outsiders drawing attention to it. Of course, this reputation could well become an asset to a Lawgiver looking for an underestimated population to turn into tiger warriors, thereby shifting the regional balance of power.

while Wavecrest's navy stays close to home: only a fraction of Coral's fleet hunts through Wavecrest's waters. Matters would change if Coral decided to mass its forces against Wavecrest, but blatantly assaulting a satrapy would force the Realm to deploy its Western Fleet to protect the Realm's regional interests. Either way, a war would not end well for Coral. Should the Realm collapse before the satrapy builds a fleet large enough to repel an invasion, the nation could find itself forcibly turned into a breadbasket "protectorate" of Coral. Wavecrest's admirals see the urgency of their situation and build new ships as fast as they can.

Most of Wavecrest's ships follow conventional Second Age designs: 20% triremes, 60% biremes and the rest assorted small craft. The fleet also owns 10 First Age merchant ships refitted as warships armed with heavy fire cannons (no one will ever prove they came from Ahlat), which can smash through any pirate blockade that tarries too long in any one location or dares besiege Seahaven.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Wavecrest's leaders know that in any war, they will be the one attacked, not the attacker. They find the assumption liberating, as the navy always has the advantage of familiarity with the local waters. Thus, captains can lure enemies into hidden reefs with some measure of practiced guile rather than reckless heroism. Captains also trust in the friendliness of local spirits. This specialization from power-projecting navy into a heavily armed coast guard also shapes long-term tactical considerations toward a metaphorical weathering of storms. Each adversary passes in time; Wavecrest must hold on until the threat blows over.

Wavecrest's monarch, the Feathered One, resists the urge to send his First Age ships to Azure City in reprisal for Coral pirate raids. Such restraint comes from prudence, not cowardice. The Realm will not back its satrapy in a war of aggression revenge—but the feathered One cares more about Siakal's involvement. The Feathered One expects her demand for sacrifices to grow until Coral society self-destructs in an orgy of violence. Unfortunately, all signs point to a war with Coral as soon as the Realm's attention turns inward. His only real fear is seeing the Slaughter Goddess spread her influence to his own forces in a magical arms race that could drag most

of the West into an age of scarlet-foamed seas.

Wavecrest is less sure how to deal with the occult malevolence of Skullstone. The Silver Prince has yet to reveal any imperial ambitions, but the example of Thorns has Wavecrest's strategists fearing the worst. The idea that Wavecrest's navy could repel a determined assault from the shadowland is laughable; about the best they could really hope for is that their crushing defeat might terrify the Realm and Threshold powers into uniting and retaking the fertile islands before the Deathlord kills all of the civilians.

The fleet's tactics reflect the defensive ethos. The navy fights every engagement as if the survival of their nation depended on it. No quarter is asked and little given, though Wavecrest captains usually show mercy to defeated opponents who show a shred of humanity. The humanity of Coral's pirates is a matter of some debate, with atrocities committed on both sides, to Siakal's delight. Although retreat does not carry the same stigma in Wavecrest as in most places, captains intend to fall back and regroup, not run away. Since the fleet provides the only defense against foreign aggression, the navy cannot afford to fail just to satisfy the demands of honor.

## DEFENSE

Wavecrest's most unconventional defense is the inevitability of its attack. Tacticians need not pore over unfamiliar navigation charts to plot the coordinates of each battle; the admiralty can ponder how known waters provide their forces with advantages against specific adversaries. Additionally, the islanders never have to worry about being starved into surrender, as they produce enough food to accommodate their own population many times over. They worry more about the impact that blockades have on trading partners who depend on Wavecrest grain. Several times already, Coral has exploited minor delays in outbound shipments to gouge a desperate market and renegotiate trade deals, expanding Coral's influence.

The Wavecrest islands fortify large settlements behind walls manned with archers and catapults. Each island has at least one such fortified town to fall back within if an enemy army lands, though only Seahaven's defenses include any First Age weapons. More importantly, the populace understands its role in any level of siege, up to the grim possibility of destroying food stockpiles in a scorched-earth policy to keep them from enemy hands. In short, the islanders strive to deter occupation by making the islands harder to hold than they are worth. Only a truly unbeatable foe—such as the Realm—makes surrender a strategy worth considering rationally.

## OTHER ASSETS

In emergencies, Wavecrest can call upon the Western Trade Alliance for mutual defense and assistance with evacuations. Although the Alliance is technically an independent trade organization, its interests overlap so closely with Wavecrest's as to make the distinction between them irrelevant.



The Alliance controls fewer than 150 ships: 50 customized blue-water merchants, 30 triremes and the rest small, fast craft, but their captains are among the most skillful and courageous in the world. No other organization has a better track record of sneaking or rushing through blockades without a pitched naval battle, which makes the Alliance excellent scouts and couriers. Alliance ships also engage in counter-piracy operations: they sometimes sail into port with extra ships for sale after turning the tables on boarders. Coral's pirates view the Alliance as a direct affront to Coral's national and professional pride.

As a satrapy, Wavecrest can also call on the Water Fleet and other Realm military assets. The Feathered One is loathe to do so, not least because such requests increase the Dynasty's interest and interference in the islands. Only a supernatural foe such as Skullstone or an Anathema-led invasion could prompt Wavecrest's admirals to beg for the Realm's aid.

To call Wavecrest a bastion of gender equity would be pushing matters, but more Tya hold positions in the volcanic chain's navy than any other Western military. The sect began in Wavecrest—but the navy actually values its female sailors and quietly uses lucrative commissions to poach promising new Tya from across the West. Opposing commanders sometimes cannot conceive of an elite female fighting force and underestimate a ship crewed by Tya, turning these ships into a secret weapon that operates in plain sight.

Should an enemy threaten the existence of Wavecrest itself, the islands could call upon one final line of defense through prayers to the volcano gods. It cannot be stressed enough how dangerous these gods can be: consider that Wavecrest's entire judicial system is structured to placate the smoldering gods with regular sacrifices so they *will not act*. Actually rousing the gods can only result in a natural disaster, though one that likely begins with several million tons of molten rock falling on an invader's garrison. Regardless, the islanders know that the price in collateral damage would be very, very high.

## THE WAVECREST NAVY

Wavecrest has no centralized admiralty as such, merely particular captains with whom the Feathered One frequently confers. Instead, the Feathered One appoints an admiral in times of war or crisis, and then only for the duration of the emergency. Given that all signs point to a war with Coral in the near future, the most popular captains in the fleet politely vie with one another to show they are the best candidates for the job. The wise bet is on Captain Buruku, the God-Blooded son of the volcano god Hamoji who presently enjoys the favor of the Feathered One. Captain Buruku's position is by no means assured, however, leaving plenty of room for intrepid captains to dazzle their way to the top (or die trying). Unfortunately, the current power vacuum also deprives Wavecrest's navy of centralized tactics and organization, meaning the next admiral will have a lot of catching up to do.

## WAVECREST HOMESHORE GUARD

**Description:** This unit of bireme-deployed marines shows Wavecrest's mastery of its own waters and its inability to project power. It takes a courageous and inspiring commander to use them effectively outside their well-drilled home defense tactics.

**Commanding Officer:** Captain Omiru

**Armor Color:** Green feather hair-ornament

**Motto:** "Ride the Tide of Victory"

**General Makeup:** 50 marines manning a bireme, wearing chain shirts, armed with short swords and javelins



MOHRBACHER07

**Overall Quality:** Fair, Excellent in Wavecrest waters

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2 (4)

**Close Combat Attack:** 4 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 4 **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5 (7) **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 2 (4)

**Formation:** Relaxed. Captain Omiru's ship carries one sailcutter, and the highly-skilled marine who operates it functions as a sorcerer.

**Special:** The Homeshore Guard units stationed closest to the coast enjoy the superior ratings as indicated in parentheses.



## THE LINTHA

During the reign of the Primordials, the Lintha dominated the West and basked in the blessings of their Great Mother Kimberly. The betrayal of the gods and the onslaught of their Exalted shattered the Lintha empire along with their homeland. Their accursed and thin-blooded descendants survived as much from sheer luck as tenacity. After the Great Contagion, the Lintha assumed their modern incarnation as castrati cannibal raiders.

As far as they have fallen from their ancient grace, the Lintha remain among of the most enduring and deadly servants of the Yozis. Although other pirates consider themselves fierce marauders, the Lintha hold an undisputed bad eminence as the most feared pirates in all of Creation—and the family does not intend to relinquish that title.

### ARSENAL

The Lintha have not had a navy since the Primordial War, when their fleets met the armadas of the Chosen in glorious battle and lost. The Lintha's descendants now terrorize the seas aboard whatever they can steal or salvage. The Lintha family directly controls more than 500 dedicated pirate ships. They normally hunt in squadrons of four to five vessels.

Many Lintha ships look like any other merchant vessel in the shipping lanes, with the appropriate flags and legal documentation to back up the ruse. Some even conduct legitimate business while prowling for targets, only revealing themselves when they spot a prize. By the time victims notice the hoisted silver-and-black flags and the demons boiling up from the depths, it is generally too late to escape.

Less devious pirates sail openly, flaunting their unholy power as if to dare any navy to engage them. The coastal patrols of smaller nations rarely take that dare and carefully ignore any Lintha ships that cross their waters. Larger fleets have no such qualms, and generally go out of their way to intercept and destroy known Lintha pirates at every opportunity. This is one of the few policies Coral and Wavecrest agree upon. On a few occasions, their ships stopped fighting each other and joined forces to kill Lintha who sailed near.

The Lintha also engage in slave-taking. Their 300 or so slaver scows tend toward larger hulls than pirate ships. They avoid open water as much as possible since they cannot hide their nature as easily, hugging the coastline in convoys numbering at least 16 ships. Sometimes, a faster and better-armed pirate ship escorts the convoy, but the professional rivalry between slavers and pirates makes this uncommon. More often, slavers keep a single large monster swimming beneath the convoy, deterring slaves from jumping overboard and swimming to the nearby shore.

Most Lintha ships have ordinary Second Age hulls that blend in with civilian traffic. The family has captured only four First Age ships stripped of most of their original

weapons. However, Lintha pirates also have hoarded and repaired many fragments of First Age naval technology to upgrade Lintha flagships, resulting in bastardized hybrids somewhere between the power of exceptional mundane ships and weaker artifact vessels. Even though these hybrids wouldn't stand a chance against Shogunate warships (let alone High First Age vessels), they still outclass most ships afloat in the Time of Tumult.

The ancient Lintha re-forged Second Circle demons of their Great Mother into powerful living ships. The Lintha's descendants cannot duplicate this awful feat. Only their prophet Dukantha's dread flagship *Kimberly's Dawn* recalls this legacy, though even the vessel's infernal captain does not know the secret of her design. However, the Lintha still field useful demons and other monsters, whether to tow ships along faster than any rowers or spit tangible blasphemies to melt the flesh off enemy crews. The results are always as hideous as hideously dangerous, fueling the wild rumors and legends that surround the Lintha family. For purposes of mass combat, some demons function as special equipment that increases a unit's Might, while demons that fight directly count as combat units of their own.

In addition to the fleets the Lintha family controls directly, they can also call on associates across Creation, though such decentralized reserves could not assist in Bluehaven's defense. More commonly, these ships reinforce Lintha fleets ahead of large raids, helping squadrons to hit especially well-protected convoys. Additionally, even if Bluehaven fell and the core group of Lintha perished, their blight would linger in these family reserves, presumably recruiting until the family reemerged once more from the brink of extinction.

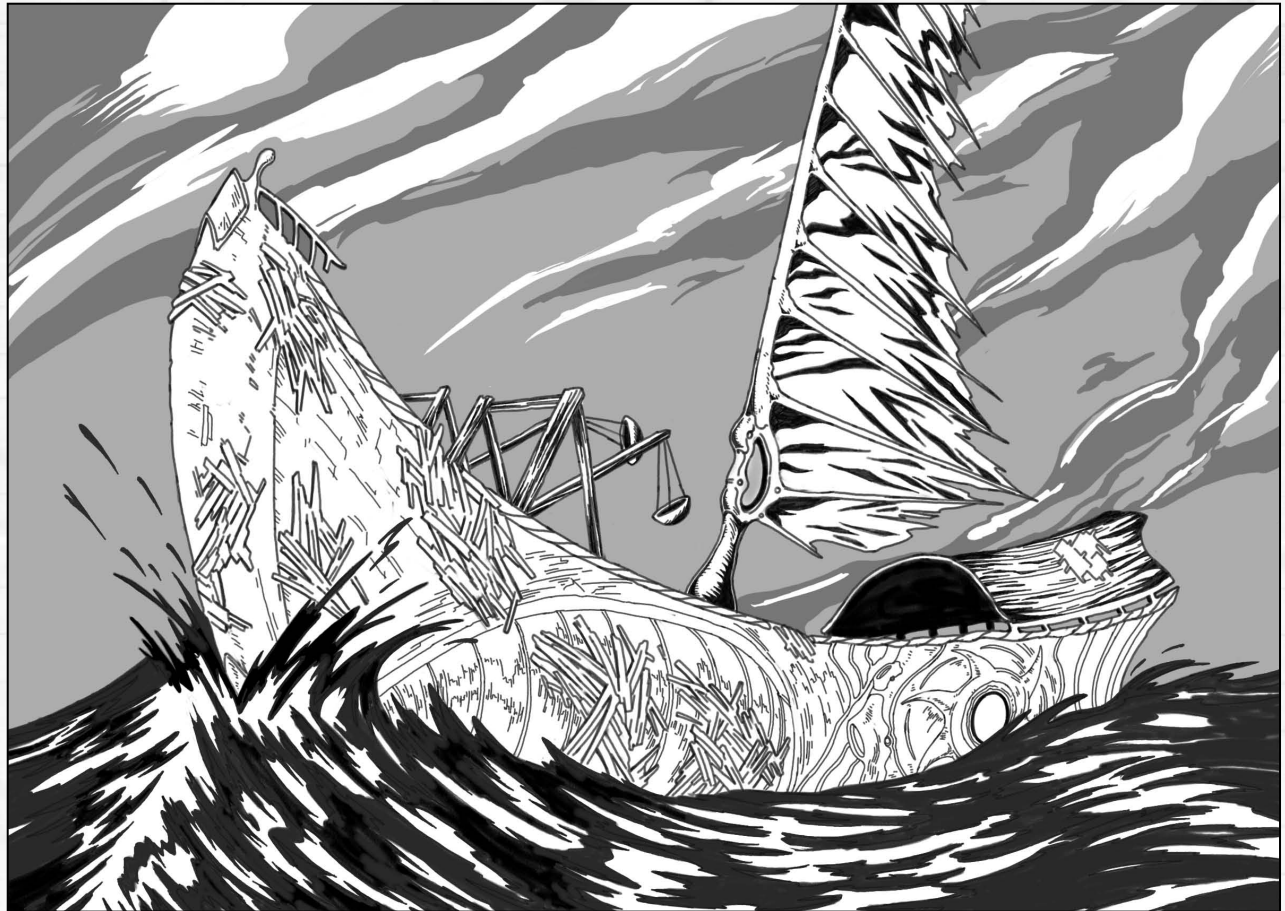
### STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Modern Lintha don't even think in military terms, but devote all resources and strategies to preying on weaker targets and seizing treasure or slaves. The Lintha do not attack obviously superior targets and flee whenever lookouts spot such forces on the horizon. In the Time of Tumult, Lintha ships encounter superior forces far less often than they used to. A well-armed squadron of Lintha raiders can probably defeat a comparable or even larger force of regional warships. Old habits die hard, though, and the family still doesn't seek out such battles if they can avoid them. Even the most arrogant and brutal captains do not wish to explain to Dukantha why they embroiled the family in a full-out war. Should the Scarlet Dynasty actually implode without a strong successor state emerging, the Lintha family will gradually ramp up aggression as much as they can get away with.

When engaged in piracy, the Lintha employ a variety of strategies. A strong show of force usually cows weaker targets into immediate surrender; some merchant captains actually have standing policies to move their cargo on deck as soon as they spot a Lintha ship, hoping







the demon pirates will take the loot and depart without killing or enslaving the crew. The demon pirates usually oblige, though a few especially bloodthirsty fleets take these opportunities to indulge their cannibalistic appetites. As long as no witnesses remain to connect the slaughter to the family, Lintha elders do not object. The ocean is a dangerous place, after all, and sometimes ships just go missing. However, the Lintha do not want to gain a reputation for refusing surrenders unless their prey already made the fatal mistake of fighting back: such a reputation would only increase the chance of victims fighting out of hopeless desperation.

When victims refuse to purchase their lives with their cargo, Lintha pirates generally do what they do best: cheat. Raiders equipped with watershoes run across the waves while their pelagotherpic brethren swim underneath the target and scale its hull with their hooked swords. By the time many defenders realize they have come under attack, they have already lost.

Of course, not all merchant vessels are slow and unwary, and sometimes real fighting is needed. This is where sea monsters, infernal magic and the other supernatural assets of the Lintha family come into play, effective as much for the terror such tactics sow as the actual damage inflicted. Often, the greatest challenge is not sinking an enemy ship,

but somehow preserving it through a pitched battle long enough to capture the ship's cargo or crew.

Slaver ships use most of the same tactics as pirates, but seldom have the advantage of surprise given their size and the distinctive stench of human blood and filth wafting from their holds. Most defenders fight back against enslavement; many prefer a quick (if bloody) death to the horrors of subjugation to the Lintha. Slavers therefore must move quickly to suppress resistance and assure profitable captures. Slavers love non-lethal First Age weapons such as panic projectors and Essence twisters. More often, slavers rely on cruder methods such as nets or darts tipped with soporific venom. They lose some of every catch, but make up the profits by dealing in bulk and staying close enough to shore to hit coastal villages.

## DEFENSE

Lintha Ng-Oroo, the injured island behemoth at the heart of Bluehaven, can no longer defend herself, but the makeshift city constructed around her more than makes up for her waning magic. Any attempt to besiege Bluehaven must first locate the city, which is not recorded on any maps and defies attempts to locate it by magic. Once found, Bluehaven's tangled morass of sargasso seaweed and maze of half-sunken derelicts presents a complicated obstacle

course for invaders, slowing or even snaring ships outright while the Lintha prepare a counterattack. Ships that press on without a clear sense of direction sometimes pass safely through the seaweed only to find themselves before the horrific Coffin Vurjawna, the crypt of the vengeful Lintha dead. If anything, these ghosts are even more bloodthirsty than their descendants and rarely leave enough scraps of intruders for a single delicious morsel. Matters do not improve for invaders who avoid the dead, since the living Lintha are all too happy to gorge themselves on the flesh of their enemies and possess a wide collection of First Age energy weapons with which to scatter that flesh in smoking gobbets on the water.

## OTHER ASSETS

The Lintha command more exotic naval forces than any other major military power. Most of these forces consist of demons or sea monsters, many distant kin to the Lintha themselves. However, the pirates are not picky and call upon useful First Circle demons without regard for their ancestry. Although the family boasts a high percentage of sorcerers among its few Terrestrial outcastes and many Demon-Blooded members, this is not the only or even most common way for demons to enter Lintha service. Instead, Lintha beckon the monsters out of Malfeas with thaumaturgy, trusting them to recognize the faint scent of Kimberly's blood. Most demons cooperate as soon as they realize they are among friends. Some cannot look past the urges of their nature long enough to behave, and these the Lintha cull as a lesson to others. The most common species in service to the Lintha are infernal worms and the fog-horrors known as eristrufa. The former pull warships like yoked oxen; the latter provide cover and can slaughter crews or drive them mad.

The Lintha do not deal with Second or Third Circle demons if they can help it, correctly recognizing that such powerful entities dominate the relationship. In the greatest emergencies, however, they may call dread Dukantha, Prophet of Kimberly, to break his geas and enter Creation outside of Calibration. With supernatural power comparable to a Celestial elder, the Infernal Exalt is extremely dangerous and utterly without mercy. Even his own cult fears to summon Dukantha; instead, his cultists provide most of the monsters and relics in the Lintha arsenal.

As if demons and Essence-users weren't enough, the Lintha dead extend the family's power into the Underworld. The Coffin Vurjawna is not merely a graveyard of mausoleum ships and a trap for invaders, but a shadowland leading to the island-city of Dis, where the ghosts of the ancient, pure-blooded Lintha still rule. Any attack on Bluehaven that spills into the Coffin Vurjawna, or that tries to reach Bluehaven through the Underworld, could draw in Dis, with repercussions and complications that even the Silver Prince prefers not to explore.

Finally, the Lintha have a remarkable assortment of allies, from malevolent sea-gods to a few Lunar Exalted pirates. None of these allies offer reliable aid, but might assist the Lintha when it suits them.

## INFERNAL RAIDER SHIP

**Description:** This is an example of the average nightmare of sailors and coastal villagers everywhere. These Lintha strike the shipping lanes without mercy, sometimes capturing or even eating their enemies.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Gaudy pirate clothing with ornaments of mummified ears, genitals and other trophies

**Motto:** "Your cargo or your lives!"

**General Makeup:** 50 Lintha armed with auhzian swords and composite bows

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 4    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 4    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 2    **Armor:** 0

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The raiders prefer to fight in relaxed formation. Demons or sea monsters function as special equipment; for instance, infernal worms can wreck a target ship's rudder or shear off oars. Amphibious Lintha also contribute to Might.





## THE GUILD

Although the Guild is based in the Scavenger Lands rather than the West, the organization's presence extends through the high seas as it does through the rest of the Threshold. Separating the military and economic dimensions of Guild presence is an exercise in futility. Wherever the organization trades, its escorts also travel. In all, the Guild's military assets rival or surpass the militaries of many nations. They facilitate commerce on the Guild's terms... protecting the merchants when necessary, extorting concessions when possible.

## ARSENAL

At best estimates, more than 3,000 Guild warships escort its 15,000-plus merchant vessels. If the Guild wanted to attack a nation or assault a fleet, the Guild could do so as a superpower—but the Guild does not engage in *war* (negotiation in force is another matter). After all, war is only good business when someone else does the fighting and dying. The Guild prefers to stay neutral and sell to both sides.

The world does not always leave the Guild alone. No other merchants have valuable cargo so reliably on hand, and no other merchants are as widespread or widely hated for their wealth and success. Guild ships are not prime targets for piracy; they are *the* prime target for piracy, whether motivated purely by profit, or some moral pretense such as championing the common man against slavers. Lintha ships raid the Guild. Coral ships raid the Guild. Virtually everyone who is anyone raids the Guild if he thinks he can get away with it. The escort warships try to make sure that no one gets away with it.

Of course, the Guild cannot mass all 3,000 warships at once. They have too many convoys to protect; and anything that looks like a large-scale military campaign could mobilize much of the Threshold and perhaps the Realm itself in retribution. Therefore, the basic convoy consists of 10 large merchant ships, 30 blue-water merchants, 8 triremes, 10 biremes and a few fast couriers to send word if the worst happens.

The Guild reserves its 51 light First Age warships for its greatest treasures. This normally means caches of artifacts or items of equal value, though especially valuable prisoners or passengers may qualify. An artifact ship signals the presence of just such cargo, which sometimes means the fleet must gather even more firepower to handle the increased attempts at piracy. Hierarch Chormund, the rotund supreme commander of Guild maritime shipping, refuses to put to sea aboard anything else, however, because his personage qualifies as priceless cargo. Given the importance and status of his position, he gets what he wants.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Guild is the largest non-government organization in Creation whose aggregate wealth exceeds most of the Threshold put together. Market share is not a problem, so captains can afford to retreat or surrender. On the other hand, cowardice didn't make the Guild so rich. Once an unknown vessel shows the slightest hint of hostile intent, Guild escorts quickly load catapults and move to intercept. They do not waste ammunition on warning shots: captains assume that anyone who approaches a Guild transport without immediate statement of authorization or friendly intent means harm. Although this aggressive vigilance sometimes leads to mishaps, collateral damage and embarrassing diplomatic incidents, the policy also preserves countless lives and untold fortunes of cargo.

If fighting seems hopeless, as is sometimes the case when dealing with behemoths, powerful spirits and artifact warships, the fleet's response depends on the circumstances. A negotiation is always better than surrender or retreat, especially since most enemies can be bribed in some fashion or another. Gods may demand sacrifices, pirates may settle for half the cargo, but virtually everyone wants something. Even directly malevolent powers often barter rather than risk a fight, though their demands for blood, souls and worse reflect their monstrosity.

Now and then, the Guild wants a particular vessel gone or otherwise wishes to mount a military attack. If the grievance is public, the Guild need only post a bounty in any port of call visited by privateers and mercenaries. The Guild has no shortage of money; so turning any conflict into a contest of cash always goes well for them. However, if the grievance cannot be dealt with publicly for political or personal reasons, the Guild might send a strike force of warships. Posing as mercenaries and flying false colors, such strike forces take great pains not to connect their actions back to their parent organization. Assuming the mission goes well, the ships return wealthier. If things go badly, the Guild can disavow all knowledge without losing face.

## DEFENSE

As an organization rather than a nation, the Guild has no borders to protect. This frees up all military assets that would otherwise go to civil defense. On the other hand, the Guild must trust to local governments for security or else fortify their trading posts in a non-threatening manner. In most places, the Guild does a little bit of both, cooperating closely with local authorities even as the Guild stores wares in armored depots policed by contracted mercenaries.

## OTHER ASSETS

What the Guild wants, it buys. Any asset of interest or worth might be acquired used in the name of profit.



This truth applies as much to naval warfare as anything else. The Guild didn't build or discover its small collection of First Age warships; the Guild purchased them outright for exorbitant sums. That the Guild could raise enough money to make a government or private collector give over such a priceless treasure, *dozens of times*, stands as a testament to the nearly limitless wealth and limitless avarice that defines the organization.

It is safe to assume that the Guild can deploy any mundane resources it wants in response to any threats. It can even hire the occasional Anathema or entities of comparable power. In practice, however, the organization shows restraint. The bottom line is the bottom line, so any expenditure must show a reasonable chance of return before Guild leaders even consider it. Sure, the Hierarchs can blow a business rival's ship out of the water with a single pulse of an implosion bow. It's cheaper and less trouble to pay a saboteur or simply let a Fair Folk court know the enemy's itinerary in advance. Ruthless prudence guides such decisions, allocating each asset as best serves Guild coffers.

#### GUILD MERCHANT MARINES

**Description:** This is an example of an average unit of marines deployed to protect large Guild transports from pirates and other would-be boarders.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Varies

**Motto:** "Time to earn your pay, gentlemen."

**General Makeup:** 50 marines wearing buff jackets and armed with chopping swords

**Overall Quality:** Fair

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 2    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 2    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)



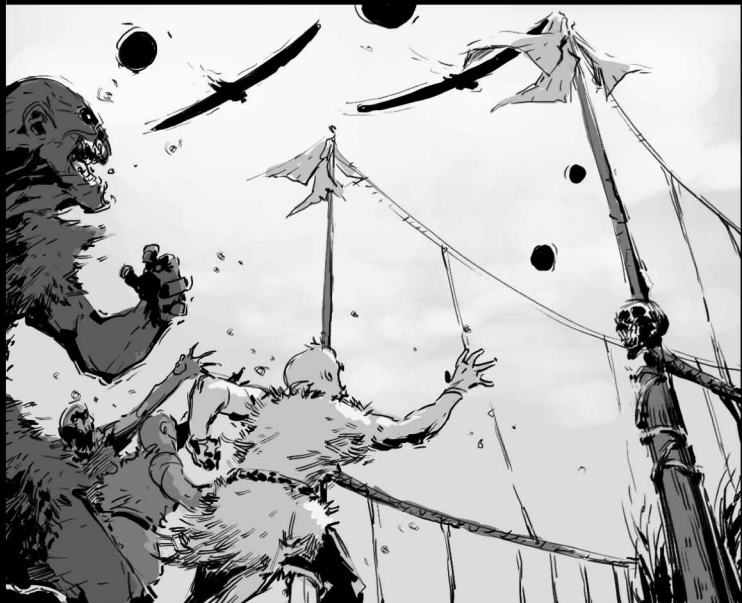
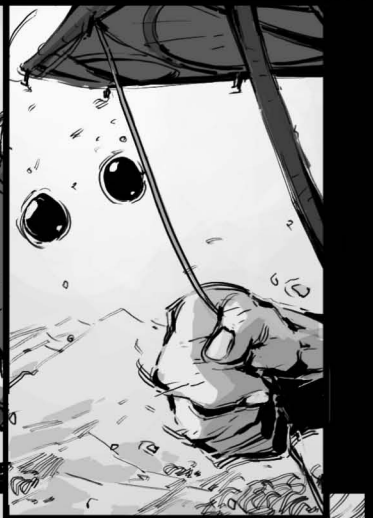
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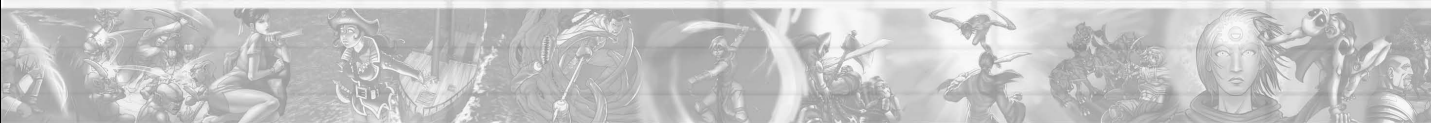
**Morale:** 2

**Formation:** Relaxed. Guild commanders usually rally their troops with monetary incentives.

#### THE IMPERIAL NAVY

It's worth remembering that the Realm remains a very big player in Western naval warfare. Even since the disappearance of the Empress, the Imperial Navy commands more and better ships than anyone else, with more than 7,000 warships total and almost 1,300 just in the West itself. See Chapter Five for more information.





## CHAPTER THREE

# GENERAL WINTER

In the Second Age, the Northlands hold few powerful states. That does not make the North peaceful, however. The chill power of the Elemental Pole of Air simply forces people to fight in different ways.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

The North is cold. No, more than that: for much of the year, the Northlands *freeze* beneath icy winds and drifted snow. The further North you go, the shorter the season of warmth when crops may grow. In the far North of Gethamane and the Haslanti League, winter lasts half the year and even high summer never really gets warm. In the months of thaw, people grow fodder for their cattle, plant cold-tolerant turnips, potatoes and rye, hunt, fish and gather berries as fast as they can. Then the wind blows colder, and the land freezes once more. No one travels in winter if he can help it, for snowdrifts cover the roads, wolves run free and the cold can kill as surely as any blade. Better to stay safe behind stout walls with a warm fire.

The long winter limits the scope of wars. People don't have the time or the manpower to fight a big, long war. In the winter, it's too cold to fight. In the summer, people are too busy gathering food for the winter. A country that wants to make war must wait for the thaw, finish the planting, then hurry off to battle and get the survivors back before the cloudberry ripen, the salmon swim upstream or whatever comes next in their food-production cycle. Or, they have to fit their war between the harvest and the first snowfall. If the attacker can't win quickly, she can't win. Northerners seek swift, decisive victories—or swift, decisive losses, because they'd rather swallow their pride than starve or freeze. The North sees no sieges.

One corollary is that Northerners usually fight for limited objectives. Threaten people with total conquest or destruction, and they dig in, fight to the last—and then winter comes and everybody dies. Demand a particular woodland, a salmon stream or a wheelbarrow-load of silver, and your enemy might decide that the loss is worth getting everyone





back to work. On the other hand, failing to extract a small concession doesn't throw a country into an existential crisis. They can try again next year.

The desire for a swift victory can lead to ruthlessness. Given a choice between slaughtering a village or leaving a garrison, a commander might decide to slaughter the village. The more troops she can bring to the final battle, the swifter and more certain her victory becomes.

## UNCANNY FOES

The sparse human population in the North leaves a lot of room for other creatures. The North is full of Wyld zones and shadowlands, of which Marama's Fell is only the largest and most notorious. The restless dead often stray from their shadowlands to stalk the long Northern nights. The Fair Folk maraud freely, seducing or snatching unwary mortals. Wyld barbarians rampage through the forests and tundra, and often live comfortably in even the bitterest cold.

Northern mortals therefore have multiple enemies no matter how well the mortals get along with their human neighbors. A strategist must ponder how many warriors she can take from home without leaving that home fatally vulnerable to inhuman attackers.

Northerners also sometimes try to strike first, or at least take advantage of every trick that can help them defend themselves. For instance, every Northern village stockpiles a supply of iron weapons—not steel or bronze, *iron*, the metal that Fair Folk find baneful. People living inland trade for salt to ward off ghosts. Thaumaturges developed Procedures to coat weapons with salt and so make them baneful to ghosts (see p. 141). For Wyld barbarians, fortunately, normal weapons usually suffice.

## INVENTION

The desire for swift, decisive victories makes Northerners unusually receptive to new technologies—anything, really, that gives them an edge. Northerners also need unusual weapons to fight their otherworldly foes. Most Northern societies lack the Exalted population or the wealth to produce magical armaments, however, so they rely on merely human artifice. The Haslanti League now leads the North in military research: the League builds vessels that skate across the ice and fly through the stormy skies. Other countries try to copy Haslanti technology as fast as they can.

## WAR GODS OF THE NORTH

By the laws of Heaven, each Direction of Creation has one divine overseer of every major concept. The North, however, has two coequal gods of war: Voharun, the Battle Crow, and his twin Nasamara, the Falcon of Glory. All the local war gods of the North report to this divine pair.

Northern wisdom, however, acknowledges that Nasamara, Voharun and their staff are not the only divine force that affects mortal wars. The powerful influence that the seasons exert on war-making in the North leads many

kings and commanders to propitiate gods in the Bureau of Seasons. The commanders pray for an early thaw so they can start their war as soon as possible, or for the snow to wait until they return home. The vagaries of weather decide many battles in the North, to such an extent that the twin gods have filed protests in Heaven against this trespass on their prerogatives.

## THE TWIN GODS

Nasamara and Voharun have overseen war in the North as long as anyone in Heaven can remember, perhaps even before the Primordials created humanity. No god has seriously challenged Nasamara and Voharun's position in centuries: Voharun is a master of bureaucratic infighting, while Nasamara matches the other Directions' war gods at open battle. Each oversees an aspect of Northern warfare, separate but interdependent. They always share their temples.

To their worshippers, Nasamara represents the desire for glory and victory that drives so many warriors, in the North and elsewhere. Soldiers who lust for fame play to the Falcon, that he might lift them above their fellows in the esteem of their people. Voharun, the Feaster on the Slain, represents the hardship of war and the grief that survivors feel for dead. Most soldiers would rather not pray to Voharun at all—but wise old warriors know that there is no victory without tragedy, and no deed in battle more worthy of fame than to sacrifice one's life for one's people and one's comrades. Those who would soar and strike like falcons must in time become food for crows.

The two gods take their duty seriously, to the extent that it affects their personalities. Falcon-masked (or at times, falcon-shaped) Nasamara is proud, swift to act and fierce in attack. Raven-masked Voharun has a dour and fatalistic demeanor, with flashes of gallows humor. They quarrel in a brotherly manner about who is older, and therefore has seniority as Northern God of War.

## POLICIES

The Twins of War play no favorites. They do not care who prays to them, only that the commanders show selfless courage in battle. On the rare occasions when the gods personally respond to prayers, the two gods visit the commanders on both sides of a war. The Twins send flocks of crows and falcons to scout the battlefield so that each leader makes plans with the most complete knowledge possible. Then, the two gods let the generals plan their own strategies: theirs the glory, or theirs the shame.

On the other hand, the two gods approve of battle against the Fair Folk, the dead and other creatures of darkness. The gods may advise generals who defend Creation from the uncanny and loan their birds as scouts. Since the Lunar Exalted became Creation's first line of defense against the Wyld, the Battle Crow and the Falcon of Glory have frequently suggested candidates for Lunar Exaltation, and the two gods enjoy Luna's patronage in Heaven's politics.



Nasamara despises Siakal's love of pointless sadism and slaughter. Voharun merely shrugs and says the Shark Goddess cannot help what she is. On the other hand, Voharun has a rivalry with Tachi-Kun, ever since they disagreed about the methods used in the Usurpation. Voharun's dislike of the Central War God deepened when the Empress and her Dynasty did little to help the North rebuild after the Great Contagion, or to fight the creatures of darkness infesting the North. The Battle Crow now does what he can to help Northerners defend themselves without Exalted aid. He sees potential in the Haslanti League's weapons research, and hopes to connect the Haslanti inventors with the master artisans and thaumaturges of Whitewall. Nasamara, however, admires the gallantry that Dynasts often display when they do fight Northern creatures of darkness. When the offices of Northern and Central War must work together, Nasamara liaises with Tachi-Kun.

### POWER AND WORSHIP

The divine twins offer tangible benefits to their worshippers, but demand extraordinary proof of a supplicant's dedication. The gods grant an enlightened Essence (using the Touch of Divinity Charm; see *Scroll of the Monk*, p. 17) if a mortal will pluck out his own eye and offer it to a sacred crow or falcon—and the player's prayer roll succeeds. One's own eye counts as a Resources 3 sacrifice.

The Twins of War also consent to lend their power through certain thaumaturgical Procedures that form part of the Art of Spirit Beckoning. Priests of Nasamara and Voharun often know these Procedures and can use them on themselves or on another person's behalf. Each blessing lasts one day, or until it's used up, whichever comes first.

*Brief Flight of Glory* (3, Charisma + Performance, 3, special): The recipient swears to Nasamara that he desires victory more than life itself. The character receives a pool of bonus successes equal to the number of successes on the (Charisma + Performance) roll. The recipient's player can assign these successes, as many as she wants, to whatever actions the character takes in her next battle. If a mortal, the character can also stunt like an Exalt.

Each time the player spends a success, however, the character loses a health level. The character does not suffer the normal penalties for the lost health level, but comes steadily closer to death. Represent the special losses through a little circle in the health level box; aggravated, lethal and bashing damage levels push these special losses further down the health level track. These "phantom" losses become real, lethal wounds under three circumstances: when the phantom losses reach the first Dying health level, one action after the player spends the last of the bonus successes or when the battle ends.

*Food for Crows* (3, Charisma + Performance, 3, special): The recipient pledges that if he dies in a coming battle, he leaves his eyes and tongue to Voharun's crows. The warrior's higher soul passes to the body of a crow that feeds upon him.

This turns the crow into a three-dot familiar; the crow can speak like a human (by themselves, crows can learn to mimic human speech) and retains the warrior's memories and personality, albeit filtered through the instincts of a crow.

Tampering with a soul's passage through death is *ridiculously* illegal. The Battle Crow gets away with it because, technically, the mortal performs the transmigration himself. Voharun has a cadre of such crows to carry his and Nasamara's messages to Creation. People who pray to the two gods (without attempting thaumaturgy) usually receive their response through a crow.

The new familiar may instead attach itself to another devotee of the Twins. A worshipper rewarded with such a familiar can use it for scouting and surveillance, stealing battle plans from an enemy commander's tent and other tasks that fall within the abilities of a bird with near-human intelligence.

Priests of the Twins also frequently know thaumaturgy that deals with warding against, exorcising or attacking creatures of darkness. These priests particularly specialize in the Art of the Dead (see *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. III—*Oadenol's Codex*, p. 133). Priests may know these Procedures: *Alarm Wards*, *Lesser Wards* and *Greater Wards* against ghosts, hungry ghosts and zombies; *Ward Maintenance* for the same; *Dishonest Ghost's Rebuke*, *Ghost Expulsion* and *Banish Ghost*; *Deathsight*; and *Speak with Corpse*. The two gods want their priests to lay the dead to rest, not rouse them to activity. Thaumaturge-priests also sometimes learn Procedures of Enchantment or Warding and Exorcism against the Fair Folk or the Wyld.

## NORTHERN WARFARE

The extreme cold of the Northern winter renders any attempt at war difficult, if not suicidal. Nevertheless, Northerners sometimes do not have a choice. Some enemies, such as the Varajtul barbarians or the restless dead, ignore the cold. They find winter an excellent time to attack. An exceptionally disciplined and well-equipped army might also manage to reach its intended battlefield despite the cold, the wind and the driving snow.

### COLD WARS

As explained in Chapter One, prolonged exposure to harsh environments can degrade the effectiveness of a military to the point where the military loses Magnitude. In the North, military units suffer damage from the bitter cold, with starvation and fatigue from slogging through the snow as further complications. A truly unfortunate military could even run into Wyld effects such as frozen fog or a supernatural ice storm. The natural hazards happen only in winter—but in the North, winter can last half the year.

### KILLING COLD

The steady, constant cold of the Northern winter can grind down an army just as surely as the heat and thirst of the South. Use the system from page 63 for the slow loss of Endurance and Magnitude due to hardship.



Whether the North kills quicker than the South is a toss-up. On the one hand, hypothermia can kill an unprotected person in minutes; on the other hand, thirst is rarely a problem in the North. In the South, armies can march by night to avoid the day's heat; in the North, soldiers can dress warmly and huddle together around campfires. As with the South, the Storyteller can increase or decrease the increment before Endurance loss begins, based on the severity of conditions: Crystal in midwinter is a lot worse than Whitewall at first snowfall. The base cost of supplies and survival gear to move an army through the cold stays the same: half the Magnitude of the total force, rounded up.

### BLIZZARDS AND OTHER CATASTROPHES

Some dangers of the North strike suddenly and kill quickly. Blizzards, for instance, can destroy an army in hours as soldiers get lost in the white-out and freeze 50 feet from safety. Winds from the Wyld and the Pole of Air can blow in eldritch freezing fog or even supernatural storms of gale-force winds and blade-sharp chips of ice. The most extreme cold, such as winter in Diamond Hearth, can kill far more quickly than normal chill and fatigue.

A modified system of environmental damage can represent such threats. Instead of bashing or lethal damage, combat units have Endurance and Magnitude. Relatively mild environmental hazards may reduce Endurance only if a resistance roll fails. Severe threats directly reduce a unit's Magnitude if the resistance roll fails, or reduce the unit's Endurance if the player succeeds at the roll—but just as in battle, a unit that loses all its Endurance loses a point of Magnitude. Then the Endurance score resets, and the cycle of loss can start over again.

Each environmental threat has a certain number of dice of Endurance or Magnitude loss, an interval between resistance rolls and a trauma rating that provides the difficulty for the roll. The roll for a unit to resist environmental damage, however, uses the average Stamina of the troops instead of the commander's Stamina, and the highest of either Resistance or Survival (depending on whether the troops are just damn tough or skilled at coping with natural hazards). If the unit's Drill exceeds its average Stamina, use that trait instead. Disciplined troops can cooperate to protect each other: for instance, the soldiers could quickly link hands so no one gets lost in a





blizzard, then huddle together like a herd of yaks to conserve body warmth. The roll for the commander's player therefore becomes ([unit's average Stamina or Drill] + [unit's average Resistance or Survival]).

The player can also roll the commander's own ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Survival) for a limited teamwork bonus, as the character tells her troops what to do to survive, and keeps them from panicking or scattering every-man-for-himself. Just as most dice pools for mass combat units, however, the commander's War rating caps all Abilities used to resist environmental damage. Perhaps the commander's soldiers know how to endure the rigors of the North... but if the character lacks the skills of command, the troops may decide that survival depends on abandoning her.

The right equipment easily counters some environmental hazards. For instance, frozen fog can turn an army into so many ice-coated corpses in 10 minutes—but sufficiently heavy clothing gives complete protection, at a cost of additional fatigue and reduced mobility. An army might carry special equipment to counter some environmental effects; quick action might minimize other hazards. For example, a windbreak (such as a nearby patch of forest) might reduce a blizzard from severe to mild, greatly reducing the threat to a unit that reaches such cover. At the Storyteller's option, a unit can protect itself from an environmental effect once the commander's player succeeds at a certain number of resistance rolls.

### SUPPLY LINES

The Northern winter means that food becomes scarce. A small force might hunt enough to feed itself; a large force could never achieve this. Hunting also takes time away from reaching the enemy. Therefore, an army that wants to attack in winter must bring its own supplies. For a journey that lasts more than a few days, that means pack animals to carry supplies, and the pack animals might need to carry their own fodder, which mean more pack animals slogging through the snow . . .

The monthly Resources cost for moving an army through the winter equals half the unit's Magnitude (round up), +1 for extreme weather. If the weather turns worse than the army prepared for, the combat unit suffers environmental effects.

### ICE SHIPS

Most of the special rules and considerations for naval warfare (described in Chapter Two) also apply to ice ships. The chief difference is that ice ships do not sink, unless someone has managed to break through the ice. They do, however, lose maneuverability: a "sinking" ice ship has damaged outrigger-blades. Targeting an ice ship's outrigger is a called shot with the same penalties as attacking any specified part of a ship's hull; the outrigger has the same Armor as the hull itself. Destroying an outrigger renders a ship motionless as surely as destroying a sailing ship's mast.

Similar to other sailing ships, an ice ship's Endurance comes from the wind, though such vessels also require regular upkeep by their crews to function at peak efficiency. Storytellers can assume that any ship with an adequate crew receives such maintenance.

### ICE TERRAIN

Just like normal land travel, the frozen terrain of the Northern winter can modify the speed of travel for ice ships. A ship must slow down to give lookouts time to spot hazards, and sailing around such obstacles further reduces an ice ship's speed.

**Open** terrain is smooth ice. Ships can sail at their full movement rate. Most parts of the frozen White Sea are open terrain, as are the surfaces of any large rivers that flow North into the sea.

**Difficult** terrain is not completely smooth, but an ice ship can still cross such terrain without much trouble. Any obstacles are small and easy to move around. Much of the Great Ice north of the White Sea is difficult terrain; so is the surface of the smaller rivers.



**Extreme** terrain has many obstacles that a ship must sail around. Examples include pressure ridges, skerries and bergs poking out of the ice, or crevasses and breaks in the ice. The frozen tundra south of the White Sea also counts as difficult terrain: an ice ship can manage it, but finding sufficiently flat and icy paths requires great care.

**Impassable** terrain cannot be sailed at all. Ships cannot sail through taiga, rocky ground or ground that lacks ice cover. Open water and pack ice present a special case: most

### ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS FOR COMBAT UNITS

Name	Damage/Interval	Trauma
Numbing Cold/Blistering Heat	1E/hour	1
Mild Sandstorm/Blizzard	1M/hour	2
Severe Sandstorm/Blizzard	1M/minute	2
Frozen Fog	2M/minute	5
Supernatural Ice Storm	2M/minute	2
Forest Fire	4M/minute	3

When translating environmental effects from individuals to combat units, lethal damage usually becomes Magnitude damage. The table also gives examples of environmental hazards from other parts of Creation.



ice ships are seaworthy, but the crew has no way to pull the ship out of the water and back onto the ice.

### THIN ICE

In the depth of winter, the White Sea freezes thickly enough to support the largest ice ships built by the Haslanti, and only tremendous force can break the ice. In the spring or autumn, however, the ice is not so thick and strong. Powerful attacks may break through the ice by accident... or on purpose, to “sink” an ice ship or create a barrier to an enemy’s progress.

At maximum thickness, the ice has 8L/8B soak and hardness. (Ice is actually quite tough, and hitting it with a hammer is about as effective as striking it with a blade.) Health levels are 20 damaged/25 destroyed. A “damaged” ice surface has cracks that could break open unless the player of an ice ship’s captain succeeds at a (Wits + Sail) roll at difficulty 3. A destroyed ice surface has a rift anywhere from five to 50 feet wide and 50 to 500 feet long—an ice ship could not possibly sail across without plunging into the water.

Earlier and later in the winter—especially along the Southern coast—the ice in the White Sea has less soak and fewer health levels. Ice ships distribute their weight, but ice less than a yard thick (6L/6B soak and hardness, 10/15 health levels) cannot reliably support “coaster” class ice ships. Cruisers and iceholts need ice two yards thick (7L/7B soak and hardness, 15/20 health levels). A successful (Perception + Sail) roll at difficulty 3 permits a character to assess the thickness and safety of ice.

### AIR WAR

The Realm, Lookshy and a few other countries possess magical flying vessels left over from the First Age. Such flying artifacts, however, act as appendages to an Essence-wielding aristocracy such as the Scarlet Dynasty. In the North, mere mortals fly... and use their flying machines in war.

Ironically, Northerners probably achieve more victories through air power with their gliders and hot-air balloons than Lookshy manages with its artifacts. Lookshy and the Realm barely manage to maintain their First Age flying machines, let alone repair or replace them. All too often, such devices are too valuable to risk in battle. Northerners, on the other hand, can afford to lose their flying machines: Northerners can build more. Even the icewalker barbarians, therefore, readily make air power part of their battle plans.

### AERIAL VEHICLES

The flying machines of the North follow most of the standard rules for vehicles, as described in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**. Damage to their structure reduces their movement rate; if they become too damaged, they fall from the sky and catastrophically crash. They vary, however, in how the Endurance trait applies. Gliders derive their motive power from their interaction with the air. Piloting a glider, however, is a strenuous activity: the vehicle’s “Endurance” depends on how long

the pilot takes to succumb to fatigue (see **Exalted**, p. 130). Haslanti air boats, on the other hand, keep flying as long as they have fuel to heat the air in their balloons and crew to pedal the propellers (assuming the air boat does not spread its sails to use the wind). Whatever the form and power source of aerial vehicles, however, they perform the same basic functions in war.

### ATTACK

First Age vehicles may have built-in weapons; Second Age aircraft do not. Gliders and air boats are both too fragile to use directly as weapons. Northerners can carry ranged weapons aloft, though, and use them to attack targets on the ground. Much less often, they can attack other flyers.

Air boats make great redoubts for ranged attacks. Some weapons used in air war are simply dropped from the air boat. (See Chapter Six for examples.) Air boats can even hold light artillery, such as siege crossbows or light catapults.

Gliders and parachutes do not work so well for attacks. The pilot needs both hands to control the glider: drawing a bow or throwing a javelin is simply out of the question. At most, the pilot can rig something to drop from her glider when she twitches a release cord—and she cannot carry very much. Nevertheless, a few firepots dropped from a glider can break an enemy’s lines, panic the horses and otherwise disrupt his battle plans. A paratrooper can draw a bow or attempt other ranged attacks, but every action spent on combat is an action ceded to the Northern winds, which can blow the character where they will.

A ranged weapon has the same horizontal range as always but gains indefinite range when aimed downward. (Of course, this does not apply to weapons that have a fixed range, such as firewands.) Everything past the weapon’s normal maximum range, however, has its attack pool drop to 0 before the character applies any Charms. This applies to mass combat as well as personal combat. Thus, people on an air boat 1,000 yards up can shoot arrows at people below; people on an air boat just have very little chance to hit any particular person.

On the other hand, firing *up* at an aerial foe does not work so well. Barring use of Charms, a muscle-powered weapon cannot fly upward more than its base Range. For example, a fellow who throws a knife straight upward cannot skewer a target located more than 15 yards straight up... not without using Charms, anyway. Again, this does not apply to *most* fixed-range weapons. Shooting a firewand straight up makes no difference. Shooting a flamethrower’s stream of burning oil straight up is a good way to incinerate yourself.

A combat unit that can fly qualifies as having special equipment. Increase the unit’s Might by 1 so long as it operates from air to ground.

### MOBILITY

Flight enables a military force to bypass most normal obstacles. Moats and walls don’t stop people who attack from above. Flying machines don’t slow down for swamps, dense forest or other difficult terrain. Even if an army has



no way to attack at range, flying transportation offers great strategic advantages.

Getting down is merely a tactical problem. Landing an air boat in the middle of an enemy camp or fortress is a bit suicidal, but troops can descend by glider, parachute or long ropes: the air boat just has to stay above the enemy's missile range.

### UNEXPECTED ATTACKS

Under the right circumstances, airborne troops might achieve an unexpected attack. This is not likely in personal combat, though fog, snow or darkness might enable a character to come within attack range without being seen. For mass combat, however, unexpected attacks from the air become quite plausible. For example, an air boat could hover above a camp at night and drop paratroopers, or gliders could approach a battle line from the enemy's rear.

Achieving an unexpected attack by air requires the usual resisted roll between the attacking player's (Dexterity + Stealth) against the defending player's (Wits + Awareness). Apply visibility modifiers (see **Exalted**, p. 135) to the defender's roll, based on where the attacker begins at the start of his attack action.

Also, keep in mind that successful surprise attacks can force a rout check (see **Exalted**, p. 169). Even if the defenders take little damage, most soldiers and commanders just don't *know* how to respond to aerial attack: the difficulty of the rout check increases by +1 if the commander does not have a War specialty in Aerial Tactics.

### INTELLIGENCE

Perhaps the least obvious benefit to air power consists of the ability to see a great distance. Aerial scouts can see enemy troops marching from a long way away: this helps a commander to pick the time and place when the two armies clash. By itself, this does not grant any bonus to the resisted roll for a commander to find an advantageous battlefield (as described in Chapter Five); it merely reduces the difficulty of the roll for the player of the commander who has aerial scouts. Such a difficulty modifier should not exceed -2.

A general in an air boat can watch a battle from above and see how each unit moves and adjust his battle plan accordingly, high above the fog of war... assuming he has some way to tell one unit from another. Relaying commands from a thousand feet up might present some problems, too. Such a general would certainly need special relay characters trained to notice and interpret commands from on high.

Assuming a solution to such technical problems, a commander who watches a battle from the air grants no more than a one-die bonus to the player's War rolls. On the other hand, the aerial view gives up to a +2 dice bonus to (Wits + Alertness) rolls to notice an attempt at an unexpected attack. The aerial view might also counter various penalties based on poor visibility, such as hilly terrain where a commander on the ground could not see all the soldiers of either side.

Such benefits, just as the penalties themselves, happen at the Storyteller's discretion.

### SUPPLY LINES REDUX

Air boats reduce or remove the difficulty of supplying an army in the field. If the enemy has no real chance of shooting them down, the air boats can move tons of food and other supplies to an army on the move, without the need to feed large numbers of pack animals or being slowed by difficult terrain. The air boat just hovers overhead and lowers the supplies using a winch or, perhaps, just letting it fall. In the Northern winter, this is an enormous benefit. The monthly Resources cost of the supplies stays the same—expenses just shift from pack animals to air boat fuel—but the army can receive continuous resupply from home instead of taking everything with it, or hoping that the caravans of food from home don't run into trouble.

## CHERAK

Cherak has an unusual political situation, not quite sovereign but not quite part of the Realm itself. The local Dragon-Blooded, House Ferem, send delegates to the Realm Deliberative. Realm legions occupy Cherak. The Air Fleet of the Realm's Imperial Navy frequently puts to port and uses the city-state as a supply depot. The city-state even holds an important base for the Wyld Hunt, the Pinnacle of the Eye. From a military point of view, Cherak seems much like a province of the Realm that just happens to be across the Inner Sea from the Blessed Isle.

And yet, it isn't. House Ferem rules as it pleases, with its own daimyo and council. Cherak's rulers also neglect to tell the Realm everything... such as the small arsenal of Shogunate-era artifacts the city-state's founders preserved through the Great Contagion. More than a few of Cherak's leaders, Exalted and otherwise, now consider a future without domination by the Realm—including their own military. Some Cherakites view the prospect of full independence as a chance to indulge their ambitions. Others look at the rising power of the Bull of the North, and fear that their little country cannot resist the destroyer of the Tepet legions. Cherak now trains its own legionnaires... officially as auxiliaries to the Realm's legions, but the officers are loyal to Cherak first, the Realm second—if at all.

### ARSENAL

Cherak's nascent legion (singular) uses the same weapons and armor as the Realm's legions, albeit of lower quality. The soldiers train with chopping swords, spears, long bows and slings. Cherak cannot afford reinforced breastplates except for officers, so most troops wear reinforced buff jackets.

Centuries ago, a hero of House Ferem won a great victory using the wheel-like weapon called a chakar. Ever since then, the weapon has been a favorite of Cherakites, to the extent that some people call it a "Cherak wheel." (The resemblance between "Cherak" and "chakar" is coincidence;



they have no linguistic connection.) A chakar requires great strength to use, as well as Martial Arts training and a touch of insanity. (See *Scroll of the Monk*, p. 156, for the chakar's description.)

Cherak has no way to build even the simplest artifact artillery and cannot afford to import firedust from the South. Cherak can build catapults, battering rams and other such squad and siege weapons, though, and do so. House Ferem now tries to acquire some way of constructing heavier weapons or some other strategic edge, such as Haslanti air boats.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Cherakite warriors use legionnaire tactics of close combat, shield walls and catapult support. So far, Cherakite soldiers operate only in talon-sized units used to pad out Realm units. The soldiers have gained some experience at fighting barbarians as well as hobgoblins, the restless dead and other dangers spawned by the North's abundant shadowlands and Wyld pockets.

## DEFENSE

So far, Cherak's walls have fended off the occasional incursions by bandits or far-roaming barbarian tribes. Its harbor forts—plural—make Cherak safe enough that no pirate has ever dared raid the city. Frontier villages usually have log palisades with a watchtower of a motte; each tower has a scale of legionnaires with a talon of local soldiers.

## OTHER ASSETS

Cherak's greatest strategic asset, of course, is House Ferem itself. This clan of interlocking extended families includes dozens of Terrestrial Exalted, who train as sworn brotherhoods as close to Realm standards as they can manage. (It helps that some members actually trained at Realm military academies.) Few petty states along the Northern coast would dare test their small, merely mortal armies against the Dragon-Blooded—especially considering that war with Cherak might drag in the Realm.

House Ferem's hidden Shogunate arsenal is now almost exhausted. At best, Cherak could mobilize a suit of artifact armor and one or two pieces of magitech artillery. The storage caves hold more than a dozen broken or worn-out artifacts that could be repaired, though, if one had sufficient skills and a good workshop.

## BASHI-BAZOUKS

House Ferem sponsors dojos that train Cherakites in the use of the chakar. Practitioners are locally called bashi-bazouks, from an old word for a violent lunatic. Bashi-bazouks serve as honor guards for House Ferem members, elite town guards who suppress the armed and unruly and special militias. House Ferem often sends bashi-bazouks to deal with bandits, since the chakars often leave defeated foes alive to be enslaved or hanged. Three years ago, Cherak's daimyo ordered the creation of heavy infantry units of bashi-bazouks as part of Cherak's legion. So far, Cherak cannot mobilize more than

a scale of bashi-bazouks for each unit: the training is simply too difficult to gather large groups of these warriors. They are most useful as shock troops to break the lines (and with luck, the morale) of enemy troops, or other special uses.

## ORGANIZATION

Each scale of bashi-bazouks acts on its own. A scale often works in conjunction with a Dragon-Blooded commander. In Cherak's nascent army, all heavy infantry undergo training to support Dragon-Blooded fighters.

## BASHI-BAZOUK SCALE: THE SMITING IRONS

**Description:** The Smiting Irons specialize in battling the Fair Folk and the dead. The Smiting Irons' chakars are bound in iron, not steel or bronze, so they inflict aggravated damage on raksha. The heavy chakar deals more than enough damage to penetrate gossamer armor. A local thaumaturge knows the *Ghost-Smiting Salt Weapon* ritual (see p. 141), so the bashi-bazouks can also hunt ghosts. The Smiting Irons feel great pride in their duty. They are also proud to have a Dragon-Blooded commander. All members have at least Strength 4 but are otherwise regular troops.

**Commanding Officer:** Scalelord Ferem Taleki Varsune

**Armor Color:** Fur-lined coat, leather trousers and high, fur-lined boots

**Motto:** "Smash 'em good!"

**General Makeup:** 30 hulking medium infantry with chakars, breastplates and pot helmets

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3



**Close Combat Attack:** 2   **Close Combat Damage:** 5  
**Ranged Attack:** —   **Ranged Damage:** —  
**Endurance:** 6   **Might:** 0(1)   **Armor:** 2 (-1 mobility)  
**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The Smiting Irons fight in close formation whenever possible, to maximize their chance of striking their foes. None are extras, but Scalegord Varsune is the only special character. These soldiers have minor talismans to protect them from Fair Folk glamours, but the soldiers' Might is relative; it only applies when they fight ghosts or Fae, to counter the supernatural enemy's own Might. The Smiting Irons try to encircle a raksha with their deadly spinning chakars, confining them for Varsune to carve apart with her reaper daiklave.

## WHITEWALL

The city-state of Whitewall maintains a delicate strategic balance between enemies and potential enemies. To the East lies the enormous shadowland called Marama's Fell. In the West, the Fair Folk lurk in the Wyld zones of dark forests and rugged mountains. The Realm presses for Whitewall to accept a closer and more subservient relationship. Icewalker tribes often pass by the city to trade their furs and extort a little tribute. The city's three divine rulers, the Syndics, negotiated treaties with all sides that leave Whitewall neutral.

Nevertheless, the Syndics do not rely on diplomacy alone to protect their city. Whitewall also has a formidable military. Every adult citizen who can bear arms undergoes basic military training. In an emergency, therefore, this city of 700,000 could field a remarkably large militia. What's more, Whitewall also has a cadre of professional warriors, the Guardians, who battle incursions by the Fair Folk, barbarians, bandits or the dead that take place despite the treaties. Not only are the Guardians all highly trained soldiers, but they include a higher percentage of Essence-wielders than can be found in any other military of the North... at least among humans. If war comes, the Syndics intend to field the largest, best-equipped and best-trained army in the North, with the best magical support their side of the Realm.

## ARSENAL

Whitewall's territory includes mines of white and blue jade as well as iron, coal and many unusual ores. Whitewall's extensive arms industry produces all manner of weapons, whose quality few nations can match. Every soldier in the Guardians carries a superior weapon of *Fine* quality, while their officers wield *Exceptional* weapons bearing minor Enchantments, or actual artifacts made in Whitewall itself.

Whitewall armor boasts similarly high quality. Every citizen in the active militia owns at least a breastplate and a pot helm, and many of them own a target shield. Guardians routinely wear lamellar armor or reinforced breastplates, possibly of *Fine* quality. They eschew slotted or masked helms, to make it harder for a creature of darkness to pose as a Guardian. Officers wear articulated plate or even superheavy plate—or, again, perhaps an artifact.

Militia members favor simple weapons such as straight swords, pickaxes, hammers and spears. For ranged combat, they prefer javelins, long bows and self bows. Rank-and-file Guardians carry the same weapons as ordinary citizens, but their officers often wield unusual signature weapons (reflected by Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown specialties). The Syndics actually discourage standardization among the Guardians: diverse threats call for diverse weapons used in response. Both militia members and Guardians wear bronzed armor and some sort of crow-and-falcon feather token to show they are city protectors on duty, not just some guys clanking around armed.

Frequent clashes with the Fair Folk prompt Whitewall's warriors to maintain a supply of iron weapons. These cannot be exceptional weapons: the special alloys used in Whitewall's superior weapons lack the special, baneful power against the Fae that pure iron possesses.

Naturally, Whitewall produces a broad line of tactical and strategic artillery. The expense of firedust prevents the use of cannon, but the city's artisans build a variety of ballistae, onagers and other sorts of catapults. Whitewall's weapon-smiths incidentally craft special catapult ammunition for use against the Fair Folk and the dead: most notably, shells filled with salt or iron pellets (see Chapter Six for details).

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS


Whitewall follows a defensive strategy with occasional forays to punish groups that break the various non-aggression pacts. Such forays are small, brief and carefully targeted to prevent any faction, mortal or supernatural, from feeling as if the city has declared a general war against them. So far, it works; it helps that the Fair Folk, the dead and the barbarians are all highly factionalized themselves. Indeed, all three groups see Whitewall's punishment-attacks as opportunities to gain advantages over their immediate rivals. When the Guardians seek a band of marauding raksha or a gang of ghost brigands, the Guardians often find other Fair Folk or ghosts coming forward to volunteer information. Sometimes the tips even turn out to be true.

The militia can move quickly to any place in Whitewall's territory. Any mission into the wilderness, however, goes to the elite Guardians. Whitewall seldom musters more than a talon of Guardians for such a raid. The Guardians try to exterminate minor foes in one pitched battle. If an enemy's power or numbers make that course impractical, the Guardians merely try to inflict enough damage to make the enemy think twice before attacking Whitewall again. They seek every advantage they can find, including setting traps and ambushes: Whitewall's position, surrounded by enemies, turns notions of fair play into a luxury the city cannot afford.

## DEFENSE

The city's famous walls form its most obvious defense. These massive walls of white granite would present a formidable obstacle even to the largest cannon or trebuchet





(14L/20B soak, 50/100 health levels). What's more, a mighty Zenith Caste hallowed each stone as it was laid, rendering the walls proof against the powers of demons, ghosts, raksha or other creatures of darkness. Sorcery or mundane force could destroy the walls, but not the supernatural powers of these entities. Nor can creatures of darkness pass the walls unless a citizen invites them in.

Ironically, Whitewall's hostile neighbors become an outer layer of defense against attacks from further afield. No mortal general would dare march an army through Marama's Fell. The Fair Folk would likewise view any army marching toward Whitewall as intruding on their territory. Safety lies only on the god-blessed Traveler's Road that connects Whitewall to the Inner Sea... a narrow conduit indeed.

## OTHER ASSETS

Whitewall already has a school of thaumaturgy, the Lotus Mind College of Thaumaturgical Sciences. When the Guardians know they must soon fight a ghost, raksha or other supernatural creature, local thaumaturges enchant their weapons for extra efficacy against that sort of foe. The Guardians can also call upon a variety of alchemical drugs, warding talismans and other products of thaumaturgy. These elite warriors also keep a sorcerer or two on retainer: service to the Guardians is a precondition to practice any sort of magic legally in Whitewall. The Syndics seek additional supernatural resources, such as more sorcerers or a dojo that teaches supernatural martial arts.

Behind the shared masquerade, the three Syndics are all powerful members of the Celestial Bureaucracy. Any human force that tried to conquer Whitewall could suffer grave misfortune. The three gods would face censure and heavy fines for stepping outside their official duties, but a sufficiently grave threat could push them to act despite the personal loss.

Perhaps more importantly, Whitewall began in the First Age as a monastery-city dedicated to the Unconquered Sun, and the King of Heaven still counts as the "city father" or presiding deity. (The Syndics are gods *in* Whitewall, but they are not the gods *of* Whitewall—a distinction the Syndics insist that every citizen learn and observe in even the most casual speech.) The Unconquered Sun pays little attention to Creation these days, but wrecking his city might prompt awesome retribution. The return of Solars to Creation gives him a less drastic option: instead of acting personally, he might task any nearby Lawgivers to defend the city. People who pay attention to such things believe the Syndics have already recruited one Solar to defend the city—maybe more.

## THE WHITEWALL MILITIA

From ages 17 to 37, every able-bodied citizen becomes part of the active militia. Every day from Descending Earth through Ascending Air, except for Calibration, 1/28th of

### MILITIA COSTS

By order of the Syndics, the city government subsidizes the cost of weapons and armor. Any active member of the militia, no matter how poor, can afford a Resources 1 weapon and receives the loan of a breastplate and helm for his period of service. Guardians receive the use of weapons and armor worth up to Resources 4, or Resources 5 for officers. Such weapons are city property, though Guardians can buy their weapons on an installment plan that takes years. Artifact weapons and armor are *always* city property, merely on loan to a Guardian, unless the Guardian somehow supplies them herself.

the active militia drills at dedicated practice-fields. Militia members can go years without seeing real combat, though. The most frequent reason to mobilize the militia is that some creature of darkness has tricked its way into the city and the Guardians cannot quickly stop its rampage. In that case, the city shuts down while the active militia arms to search for the intruder, room by room, house by house and block by block. No one expects the militia to fight such a dangerous intruder—merely to flush it out and leave no place to hide. All the older citizens arm themselves as well, but only to guard their homes and families.

### ORGANIZATION

Militia members train in squads of five. Ten squads make a maniple, with a Guardian as its captain (locally called a lochagos) and drill instructor. Twenty maniples, in turn, form a cohort, under the command of a junior Guardian officer. In this manner, the Guardians serve as the officer corps for the militia, and the militia acts as a force multiplier for the Guardians.

Every member of a maniple carries the same weapons. For instance, everyone in an infantry maniple might carry three javelins, a chopping sword and a target shield, while members of an archery maniple might carry a longbow with a hammer as a backup weapon. A cohort, however, always includes several kinds of maniple.

A maniple usually includes citizens from several neighborhoods. Cohorts draw their members from throughout the city. Shared loyalty to a cohort helps somewhat to counter class differences and bind the population together.

When the Guardians need the militia as backup for a raid, the Guardians usually draft just a few maniples with whatever equipment the commanders think might become useful. In a full mobilization to search the city, each cohort has an assigned neighborhood. One or more maniples surround a building while squads led by Guardians search it for an intruder. Once a building (or area of Whitewall's Underton of caverns and tunnels) is certified as clear, the cohort leaves a squad behind to stand watch.



### SAMPLE MILITIA MANIPLE: MIDTOWN LANCERS

**Description:** This maniple's members come from some of the lower-income neighborhoods in Whitewall. Although they are poor, they have considerable esprit and pride in their maniple: six years ago, the maniple helped a squad of Guardians corner and kill a rampaging nemissary, and the soldiers want to regain the fame they briefly enjoyed for that feat. They are more than willing to take on any threat.

**Commanding Officer:** Simla of Jadebrook

**Armor Color:** Bronzed steel breastplate over warm wool clothing, pot helm with a raven feather

**Motto:** "City, Syndics and Scrip."

**General Makeup:** 50 light infantry with spears and self bows

**Overall Quality:** Average

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 2 **Close Combat Damage:** 3 (4 against charge)

**Ranged Attack:** 1

**Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 4 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 2 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 2

**Formation:** The Midtown Lancers usually engage their foes in relaxed formation, but Guardian Simla can order them into close formation. She certainly does this when she wants the militia to block streets and so prevent an enemy's escape.



Despite their enthusiasm, the Lancers are merely extras, and they cannot act effectively without Guardian Simla's command. She is their only special character. Simla herself wears a reinforced breastplate and pot helm, and carries an *Exceptional* mace. Since their adventure with the nemissary, all the soldiers carry bags of salt with which to draw lines against the dead.

### THE WHITEWALL GUARDIANS

Whitewall has some 6,000 Guardians, operating from 28 precinct houses scattered throughout the city (including four in Underton). Most of the time, they keep the peace as... well, not *ordinary* city guards. Not only do the Guardians' combat skills and weaponry surpass those of most city guards, every Guardian also receives basic training in questioning witnesses and gathering evidence (represented by Investigation). Guardians also know how to follow trails, in town or outside the walls (Survival).

Guardians enjoy many perks, but the Syndics expect a great deal from the Guardians in return. The militia might deal with barbarians and other mundane foes, but Guardians must find and fight everything from a runaway spine chain to ravager-gangs that kidnap citizens for their raksha master. Even though the Guardians receive every advantage the Syndics can provide, the Guardians often battle creatures that are far more powerful.

### ORGANIZATION

Similar to the Whitewall militia, the Guardians operate in squads of five and maniples of 50. Guardian cohorts, however, are *ad-hoc* groupings of maniples placed under the command of a senior officer. Each squad includes a corporal who leads the team, while a lochagos commands each maniple with the help of four sergeants. Senior officers—centurions, tetrarchs or dekarches, depending on whether they may command two, four or 10 maniples—form the Guardians' command staff.

The city government offers signing bonuses and a fast track into command for citizens (or potential citizens) who can channel Essence. Not only do the Guardians boast a few dozen outcaste Terrestrial Exalted, but the officer corps also includes numerous small gods and God-Blooded, Ghost-Blooded and Fae-Blooded mortals (who are exceptionally useful in dealing with the dead and the Fair Folk). A merely mortal parentage is no impediment to command, though: any mortal soldier who shows enough skill to become a lochagos has her Essence activated by the Syndics, becoming an enlightened mortal.

Not every lochagos commands a maniple, though. The Guardians include special squads in which every member can wield Essence. Such elite teams train to use their Charms, artifacts or other powers together in combat, much as a sworn brotherhood of Dragon-Blooded. An elite squad may consist of individuals with diverse combat abilities, or members might follow a theme. For example, one team might specialize in fighting the dead using enchanted weapons and the Arcanoi

of Ghost-Blooded members. Another team might all practice the same Terrestrial martial art.

### SAMPLE GUARDIAN MANIPLE: FIFTH PRECINCT SNOWCATS

**Description:** The Guardians of this maniple carry about equal numbers of straight swords, axes, hammers and short spears, with a scattering of tridents and other weapons. They also carry long bows with iron-tipped target arrows and salt-tipped fowling arrows. All Guardians are elite soldiers (see *Exalted*, p. 280), and none are extras. Their Drill, however, is limited by the diversity of their weapons.

**Commanding Officer:** Lochagos Iselsi Ruvan

**Armor Color:** Bronzed steel enameled with a snowcat

**Motto:** "Safety, Peace and Order."

**General Makeup:** 40 heavy infantry, variously armed, with pot helm, target shield and reinforced breastplates or lamellar armor; five uniquely-armed champions

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 4   **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 3   **Ranged Damage:** 1

**Endurance:** 5   **Might:** 1   **Armor:** 3 (-3 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** The Snowcats move between relaxed and close formation, as needed. Iselsi Ruvan is an outcaste Water Aspect who knows he'd better stay outcaste if he wants to live; the Syndics trust him with a short jade powerbow. His fighting chain and the weapons of his four sergeants are all *Fine* and carry an elemental benediction (see *The Books of*

*Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise*, p. 57). The sergeants are heroes who can command double squads if necessary. Every component squad has at least one thaumaturgically-enchanted weapon and one talisman or potion.

## GETHAMANE

The people of Gethamane, the City Under the Mountain, do not fear invasion from outside. Neither barbarians, Fair Folk, Wyld mutants nor the dead have ever forced their way through the city's mighty gates. No, Gethamanians fear invasion from *inside*. Not a year goes by without hideous, murderous monsters breaking into the city from the endless dark Underways beneath. Therefore, Gethamane's army, the Guard, stays forever mobilized to protect the populace from the terror beneath their feet.

The leaders of Gethamane now wonder, however, if they can remain so blasé about the outer world. The Bull of the North destroyed the hitherto-invincible legions of the Realm. They wonder if their mountain would remain inviolate if the Solar warlord attacked. Gethamane may need to rethink its military posture to deal with the Time of Tumult.

## ARMORY

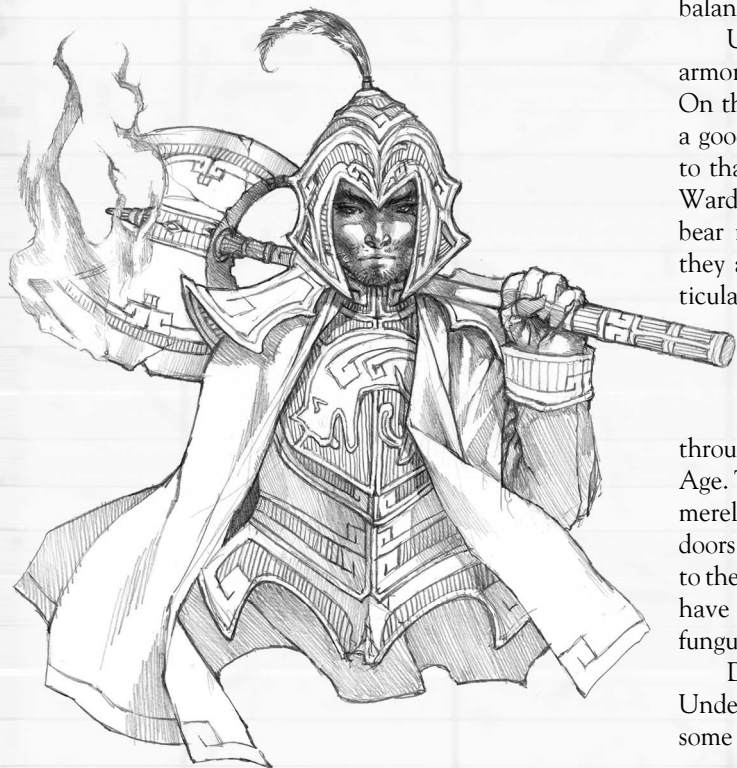
Guards select weapons they can use in confined spaces, and that deal a lot of damage. They favor great axes for hacking eldritch horrors to bits, and pickaxes (see *Scroll of the Monk*, p. 157) for penetrating thick chitin or armor plates. The Guard also keeps sledges in its armory in case a monster should resist hacking but prove vulnerable to smashing. Civilian families usually keep a chopping sword or two on hand, just in case. The Guard wears lamellar armor, for the best balance between defense, mobility, fatigue and cost.

Unfortunately, the Guard has few artifact weapons or armor, and few soldiers who could wield them in any case. On the other hand, Gethamane offers a good living (well, a good share in the dole of food from the fungus gardens) to thaumaturges who know the Arts of Enchantment and Warding. As many Guards on the Underways as possible bear minor Enchantments on their weapons. Sometimes they are even the right Enchantment to deal with a particular monster.

## DEFENSE

Anyone who wants to force her way into Gethamane must dig through dozens of yards of stone or batter through jade-steel main gates fashioned in the High First Age. The lesser gates used by hunters and food-gatherers are merely heavy cast iron, leading to tunnels with more cast-iron doors and an amusing variety of death-traps. Every entrance to the city can be collapsed from within, so an invader would have to dig through hundreds of tons of rubble. The city's fungus-gardens could sustain the populace for years.

Doors of heavy iron bars block the entrances to the Underways. Unfortunately, they are not enough to stop some creatures.



## OTHER ASSETS

Gethamane has no allies at all, though the leaders hope they have no enemies except the horrors of the Underways. The city also has no population of outcaste Terrestrial Exalted or gods in search of alternate employment: the priests say it isn't healthy for such folk to live in Gethamane, and any god or Dragon-Blood who tries soon agrees with them. The people are on their own.

The city does have a small trove of artifacts salvaged from the Underways. Some might carry incredible power, if anyone knew how to use them. So far, the city hasn't found sufficiently ingenious savants. The current Mistress of Gethamane now seeks ways to enhance the city's defenses; Celestial Exalted might consider that the folk of Gethamane have no prejudice against "Anathema," only a sensible caution about powerful and possibly erratic individuals.

## THE GUARD

Gethamane's Guard consists of some 5,000 soldiers, about three-quarters male. At any given time, a third are on duty. Of those, a third guard the entrances to the city and to the Underways, a third patrol the city and the rest wait in the precinct chambers for emergencies. Gethamanians admire their Guards. Everyone knows the Guards are the bravest people in Gethamane, because they have to run toward the monsters.

The Guard also functions as Gethamane's police force. Now and then, they have to quell a scuffle or even a small riot. On these occasions, they try not to kill anyone, especially fellow citizens. Most people stop whatever fuss they've made when more than a dozen large, armored men with axes advance on them.

## ORGANIZATION

The Guard operates in platoons of 20, each with a sergeant in charge. Above them is a short chain of command, of district and shift lieutenants and three captains: the North Gate Captain, the South Gate Captain and the overall Captain of the Guard.

About equal numbers of Guards in a platoon carry great axes and pickaxes. Every guard post also has a drum. When ravaging monsters break out of the Underways, most of the Guards attack, but at least one guard beats an alarm on the drum. Every guard who hears comes running, but one waits long enough to repeat the alarm, passing it on. The coded drumbeats let other Guards know where the trouble lies.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Only the larger tunnels and chambers of Gethamane have room for more than a single platoon of Guards to fight, so they lack training at fighting in any larger unit. Most of the time, though, a Guard squad fights a single monster, or a small number of monsters. Guards try to encircle a monster, so at least one Guard can attack from behind. When Guards fall, new Guards close in to take the fallen's place. Encircle-

ment also works pretty well against drunk-and-disorderlies, too, though then the Guards just press in until a Guard can grab the ruffian from behind. If the Guards are treated as a group of individuals, the normal rule for multiple attackers, unexpected attacks from behind and coordinated attacks apply (see **Exalted**, pp. 114 and 155). For mass combat, represent this as War and Melee specialties in Encirclement Tactics that the commanding character's player can apply when the platoon fights a solo unit.

## SAMPLE GUARD PLATOON

**Description:** Whether this platoon watches a gate out of the mountain, an Underways portal or just a subterranean bazaar, the platoon stands ready to deal with any trouble and protect their city.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Red; target shield bears a white mountain on a red field

**Motto:** "Don't let it escape!"

**General Makeup:** 20 infantry with lamellar armor and slotted helm, 10 with great axes, 10 with pickaxes and target shields

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3





Close Combat Attack: 4 Close Combat Damage: 3  
Ranged Attack: — Ranged Damage: —  
Endurance: 7 Might: 1 Armor: 2 (-3 mobility)  
Morale: 4

**Formation:** In addition to the sergeant in command, the platoon has a relay who signals other Guard squads with a drum. Three other sergeants-in-training can take command as heroes. All the soldiers are heroic mortals. The unit's Might comes from a variety of talismans and thaumaturgical Enchantments on their weapons.

## HASLANTI LEAGUE

Whereas Gethamane and Whitewall seem content to remain city-states, the Haslanti League expands. It fought Gethamane in the past, and bumps up against various barbarian tribes to the East, West and South. Eventually, the League must fight one of the other powerful Northern states—perhaps Gethamane again, perhaps the Bull of the North. No one knows how such a war might end, for the Haslanti have developed several technologies they have not yet tested in a major war.

The Haslanti League has three or four militaries, depending on how you count them. Each district of the League has its own local militia that contributes troops to an all-League army—the militia. The League does not have the population or the wealth to support large numbers of professional soldiers, though. The Haslanti place more reliance on the Wind Fleet of air boats and the Ice Squadron of ice ships.

## ARSENAL

Haslanti soldiers carry the same weapons found in the rest of the North (and indeed, the rest of Creation). They favor spears, axes and swords—especially great swords. For ranged combat, they prefer long bows. While most warriors wear buff jackets (or their equivalent in layers of wool and leather), professional soldiers may wear chain shirts or hauberks.

Technology, however, has revolutionized Haslanti warfare. The League outfits its soldiers with crossbows as fast as it can make them. The Haslanti also build squad artillery such as siege crossbows and sailcutters, and strategic weapons such as catapults, though these hurl masses of small stones or caltrops rather than large stones; the League has not engaged in many sieges, but often fights masses of barbarians.

Most of all, the Haslanti lead Creation in their transport innovations. They already own a larger air force than Lookshy and the Realm combined. Haslanti air boats are feeble compared to First Age flying artifacts, but the League itself builds them. It can afford to suffer losses in a way that a magitech air force cannot. The League also makes extensive use of gliders and parachutes. Meanwhile, Haslanti ice ships turn the White Sea into the League's private boulevard across the North, with the larger rivers as side roads leading deep inland.





## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Haslanti combine barbarian attitudes with civilized command and control for quintessentially Northern battle plans. Most of the population stays tied to the land, farming, herding, hunting and fishing to keep winter famine at bay, so the League cannot mobilize large armies or fight long wars. So, the League sends small military forces that seek quick victories through swift attacks and the valor and prowess of the troops. They cannot move large armies by air boat or even by ice ship... but they can move small armies *fast*, and attack from the air. The Haslanti have not yet fought anyone who could meet the League in the air. The League might expand much more quickly, except it lacks the manpower to occupy territory.

Some troops attack from the ground; they use the Wind Fleet and Ice Squadron only to reach the battle. Ice ships provide artillery support if they can sail near a target. Air boats go anywhere, of course, and disgorge anything from commandos to caltrops. Air ships also serve as high ground for archers and more artillery. If the air boat itself cannot land, soldiers descend using parachutes or long ropes. Gliders scout for the main force, or drop firepots or more commandos. The Haslanti place troops anywhere they want, any time they want . . .

... including winter. Air boats and ice ships enable the League to move troops when most Northerners stay close to their home-fires. Skilled air boat pilots can ride all but the fiercest blasts from the Pole of Air. Ice ships work *best* in the depths of winter, when the Northern rivers freeze and the ice is thickest. Air boats and ice ships thereby turn Northern seasonal strategy upside-down. The Haslanti *prefer* to fight in winter: they enjoy the greatest advantage in transportation, the enemy can't move and farming is done for the year, freeing more Haslanti to fight.

## DEFENSE

East, South and West, the Haslanti League has no naturally defensible borders. The small and scattered border forts offer no significant obstacle. Any invader, however, must pass through a screen of Haslanti herding and hunting tribes who provide early warning to the rest of the League. The greenfields—steep-walled valleys carved from bedrock in the First Age, where much of the League's population lives—are naturally defensible, though. An invader would have to take a greenfield's port or descend narrow paths down high, steep cliffs.

Haslanti farmers can't just pack up and leave, but the Haslanti military can retreat to the White Sea. A significant fraction of the League's population lives in barge-like iceholts that could become small, mobile fortresses. Beyond that lies the Great Ice, an endless waste dotted with Haslanti mining camps and patches of soil blown in from the south. The Haslanti believe that the Great Ice gives them an inviolate hinterland from which to retake their homeland, and they are probably right.

## OTHER ASSETS

The League has no powerful artifacts in its arsenal (that anybody knows about), and doesn't seem to miss them. Still, no one can say what the League might excavate from the ruined First Age cities in the depths of the Great Ice. Neither does the League have a significant population of outcaste Terrestrials or notably powerful God-Blooded or other Essence-wielders.

The League does have the best (or perhaps only) secret service in their sector of Creation, called the Ears of the North. The Ears include many skillful spies and assassins, armed with clever Haslanti gadgets such as folding gliders and miniature crossbows. The rest of Creation doesn't know it—well, the Sidereals do—but one agent recently Exalted as a Lawgiver.

Indeed, the Haslanti have a most amicable history with those the Immaculate Order deems Anathema. Lunar Exalted helped found the League (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars** for details) and defended it in a period of assault by the Wyld. The Haslanti never accepted the Immaculate faith or submitted to the Realm, so they don't care what the Realm says about the Exalted or much of anything else. If any Celestial Exalted wants to offer their loyalty to the League, the Haslanti is willing to accept it.

## THE FYRD

Most Haslanti, male or female, learn basic competence with hand-to-hand combat and archery. After all, when a gang of hobgoblins attacks your homestead, you have to fight them yourself. Every significant village or nomadic tribe has a militia that rarely numbers more than 100 reindeer or elk riders who patrol the area part-time and defend against minor raids. Such a militia might include a dozen young, adventurous glider pilots as scouts. Between the ages of 16 and 25, men and women serve in the militia for at least two months a year over four years. Older but still able-bodied adults drill four days a month.

The populous greenfields can support more soldiers. Each greenfield might boast as many as 1,000 full-time soldiers and four or five times that many part-timers, with several ice ships to secure the harbor and several dozen gliders. At the other extreme, a solitary iceholt or mining camp might muster only a few dozen people with pikes or pickaxes to repel pirates or bandits. They follow the same schedule of service, though.

Each of the League's nine city-states contributes money and militia troops to form the militia. On average, each city-state contributes 1,000 infantry that serve two-year tours of duty. An additional 1,000 or so professional soldiers supply an officer corps. The militia does police work in the greenfields and chases bandits; now and then, it musters for a real battle against barbarians or the Fair Folk. In a crisis, though, the Militia can call up the militias of whatever district in which they operate.

## ORGANIZATION

When the Haslanti League decided to create a professional army, the League tried to copy the Realm by grouping soldiers into 500-man dragons, 250-man wings and 125-man talons. The League doesn't bother with legions any more, even as administrative fictions. Of course, the League can't afford to equip its troops the way the Realm does, but basic infantry tactics and training still apply.

Village militias have a local captain with a few lieutenants. These are most likely retired professional soldiers. Greenfield militias organize in 125-man talons, likewise with retired soldiers as officers. The talons take turns manning the city-state's border forts as well as working on civil engineering projects such as building wind-walls.

As part-time soldiers, militia members never develop great combat skill. (Base them on the Green Troops on p. 279 of *Exalted*; most are extras.) Every soldier from a herding tribe knows how to ride, though, and everyone from an iceholt can sail. Skiing and snowshoeing are common skills, too. Militia professionals are otherwise Regular Troops (see *Exalted*, p. 279). The Council of Oligarchs hopes to train the entire Militia in glider piloting and parachute jumping someday, but for now, these skills are limited to special scales grouped into dragons of their own. (See the Wind Fleet for a sample scale of these airborne commandos.)

### OTHER MILITARY UNITS

Storytellers can use the sample Icewalker Glider Commandos (see p. 79) to represent a Haslanti glider fang. The Whitewall militia unit (see p. 69) can substitute for a Haslanti militia unit, with suitable changes to weapons and buff jackets instead of breastplates.

### MILITIA WING: THE STEEL RAVENS

**Description:** This is an example of a heavy infantry wing in the League Army. This wing is usually paired with an archery wing that stays behind it to provide fire support. The soldiers wear chain hauberks and carry great swords. Their commander is a devotee of Voharun who cut out his own eye to gain an enlightened Essence, and the god further gifted the commander with a crow familiar that scouts for him. The wing chose its name in honor of him and the god he reveres.

**Commanding Officer:** Winglord Leaping Orca

**Armor Color:** Black surcoat with gray raven over chain hauberk and slotted helm

**Motto:** "Feed the Crows."

**General Makeup:** 250 heavy infantry with great swords

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 4

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 4

**Ranged Attack:** —    **Ranged Damage:** —



**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 2 (-3 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The wide arcs of their blades make close formation impractical for the Steel Ravens. Instead, they usually advance in relaxed formation. Leaping Orca has four relays who send messages to his dragonlord and his two talonlord heroes using colored flags. Two artilleryists, each leading fang-sized catapult crews, function as sorcerers. The catapults typically throw firepots or caltrop shells.

### THE ICE SQUADRON

Since the White Sea is frozen most of the year, the Haslanti navy necessarily consists of ice ships. Every ship can enter the water during the thaw, but pulling them out again is such a chore that the Ice Squadron prefers to avoid this. Besides, saltwater rusts the steel blades of the ships' outriggers.

The greatest strength of the Ice Squadron rests in its nine cruisers. Two of these large ships carry a dragon of soldiers each. The other seven carry masses of ballistae and other siege weapons, including a few pieces of Essence artillery. Nine coasters—smaller ships—carry a talon each, with all their supplies. Another 27 coasters patrol the White Sea and sail up frozen rivers to "show the flag" to barbarian tribes and petty



states. Each patrol ship carries a pair of heavy catapults. In an emergency, though, the League's Council of Oligarchs can commandeer dozens more ice ships to use as troop transports. (See Chapter Six for descriptions of Haslanti ice ships.)

The Ice Squadron has little competition on the White Sea and the Great Ice, so the Squadron rarely sees full naval engagements. (Still, the Fair Folk can't resist glamour-crafting a characteristically crazed navy now and then.) Most of the time, the Ice Squadron carries troops to battlefields or chases pirates who sail small, stolen Haslanti iceboats.

## ORGANIZATION

Every sailor in the Ice Squadron is a volunteer. The city-states have no separate naval forces (though the nine cruisers are named after the nine city-states): the Ice Squadron serves the Council of Oligarchs alone. The Squadron doesn't have enough ships to justify division into separate fleets and battle groups: each captain has an independent command, subject only to Fleet Admiral Blue Dragonfish, his staff of vice-admirals and the Oligarchs above them. When Squadron Command wants captains to join forces, it tells them to. Any taskforce larger than three ships receives a vice-admiral as overall commander, or quite probably Blue Dragonfish himself. The Fleet Admiral, a Haslanti-born outcaste Terrestrial, has unwittingly limited the fleet's growth through his enthusiasm for field command and dislike of the paperwork and lobbying needed to increase the ice fleet's budget.

Ice Squadron crews need to sail more than they need to fight. (Treat most crew members as Green Troops with at least one dot in Sail, with a specialty in Ice Ships. They are extras.) Every crew, however, includes a number of artillerists. Sailors also learn basic archery.

## ARTILLERISTS SCALE, ISS *WINDCRECHE*

**Description:** Ice Squadron Ship *Windcreche* is a heavy cruiser. Like all the Ice Squadron's heavy cruisers, it carries eight heavy ballistae on its lower decks (four on each side). It also has a pair of sailcutters mounted on the foredeck and a heavy onager on the aft deck. The catapult can hurl stones, firepots, pebble shells and caltrop shells; the ship carries 20 stones and five each of the other payloads. The sailors can fight if they must, but the *Windcreche*'s striking power comes from the 20 artillerists who work the siege engines. The ship's captain also commands them. The artillerists are regular troops, but have two Archery specialties in Artillery.

**Commanding Officer:** Captain Ianka Larchdottir

**Armor Color:** Gray leather, white fur trim

**Motto:** "Steel on the Wind"

**General Makeup:** 20 artillerists in hooded buff jackets, with short swords as backup weapons

**Overall Quality:** Average

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3    **Ranged Damage:** 4



**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Whether manning their ballistae or fighting hand-to-hand as part of the crew, the artillerists stay in skirmish formation. Two "sorcerers" among their number are responsible for firing the firepots and other special shells from the onager.

## THE WIND FLEET

The militia has the manpower and the Ice Squadron commands the winter, but the celebrated Wind Fleet forms the core of Haslanti military power and strategy. The Wind Fleet has 150 air boats of the second class and 112 gigantic air boats of the first class, with more under construction. These, in turn, carry gliders, paratroopers and a variety of weapons designed for dropping from above—and the clever Haslanti artisans design more every decade.

So far, the Wind Fleet claims all the Haslanti air boats. Most times, however, a third of the fleet carries cargo between Icehome and Crystal, another third shuttles between Icehome and Diamond Hearth and the final third is in maintenance. The fleet is stretched to its limits, and the League can spare few ships for war because its two most frigid cities would starve without the supply runs. Wind Admiral Twenty-One Kestrels lobbies for more and larger air boats devoted exclusively to cargo, so her warships can actually stay available for war.

The fragility of the air boats matters little when they fly higher than any arrow can reach. They enable the Haslanti to strike an advancing army whenever they choose.

Second-class air boats rush over the enemy and drop fire pots, caltrops and other devices to panic, divert or otherwise disorder the troops. Indeed, flaming death from above often routs barbarians all by itself, even though comparatively few people die.

Next, first-class air boats drop off 25-man scales by glider or parachute. These may lob more grenades to clear a landing place. The paratroopers and glider commandos occupy whatever location seems most advantageous for halting the invaders. Both the commandos and the bombardiers pay special attention to banners, standards or other clues to command groups, or the enemy's fortified strongpoints. For example, firepots can ignite a wooden stockade, and in the confusion, a commando scale can drop in to open the gates and let in the militia.

## ORGANIZATION

Everyone in the Wind Fleet is a volunteer and a professional soldier. Each air boat's crew includes a captain with a small staff of officers. Most of the wind-sailors are Green Troops aside from their extra dot of Stamina (from hours spent pedaling the boat's propellers), a dot of Sail and a specialty in Air Boats; most are extras.

Paratroopers and glider commandos, however, come from the militia. These well-trained soldiers have at least one Athletics specialty in Skis or Snowshoes, one Ride specialty in Gliders and one Sail specialty in Parachutes or Air Boats, with at least two dots in each base Ability. They usually have Thrown instead of Archery. Otherwise, treat them as Regular Troops.

Even the largest air boat can carry no more than a single talon of troops, so Wind Fleet soldiers operate in 25-man scales. Each scale has its own scalelord, with a talonlord in command of all the scales on an air boat. The talonlord outranks the air boat's captain, but the captain can refuse to sail the boat into severe storms or other conditions that she deems suicidal.

In the League's capital of Icehome, the Wind Admiralty consists of the Wind Admiral herself, eight Vice-Admirals and their assorted clerks and personal staffs. By tradition, one admiral comes from every city-state. That admiral oversees any battle in (or rather, over) her city-state's territory. If the Wind Fleet fights outside the League's ill-defined borders, the Wind Admiral picks an overall commander for the battle group.

## PARATROOPER SCALE

**Description:** Wind Fleet Boat *Ferret*, a first-class air boat, carries a crew of 20 and up to five scales of paratroopers and glider commandos. Common strategy is to drop separate scales of commandos or paratroopers, but they may merge units once they land. On the other hand, the talonlord may judge that multiple units can inflict more damage by acting independently. The Wind Fleet seldom worries about coordination between units: air boats signal each other using brightly-colored flags,



but the scales on the ground are expected to judge the local tactical situation for themselves.

Each paratrooper in this scale carries two firepots he can throw on the way down, plus a straight sword to use when he lands. The paratrooper's job is not to kill lots of people; it's to move quickly and achieve some strategic objective that lets the regular army win.

For a glider scale, use the Icewalker Glider Commandoes on page 79, but raise the unit Magnitude to 2.

**Commanding Officer:** Scalelord Rimewald Chandlersson

**Armor Color:** Mottled blue and light gray surcoat

**Motto:** "Look After You Leap"

**General Makeup:** 25 light infantry with straight swords, wearing chain shirts and pot helmets

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 2 **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 1 (-0 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** Paratroopers necessarily drop in unordered formation. When they land, they usually fight in skirmish formation



for the sake of greater mobility. At least two paratroopers are heroes who can take command if the scalelord dies. If the scale carries some infernal device, such as a siege crossbow they can put together on the roof of an enemy's fortress, the paratroopers who carry and run the special weapon can be treated as sorcerers.

## ICEWALKER BARBARIANS

Not every army in the North was fielded by a state. Many barbarian tribes also dwell in the North and fight civilized folk and each other. Of these, the icewalkers recently became the most notorious because of the Bull of the North. In the North, however, people often use "icewalker" as a generic term for all barbarian nomads. Many "icewalkers" have never even heard of the Solar warlord.

### ARSENAL

Unlike some barbarians, icewalkers know the use of metal. Tribes often camp long enough to build forges and smelt metal, before they must move to follow the animals they hunt or herd. Icewalkers wield swords, spears, axes, cudgel-like weapons and long bows. The slow-growing Northern yew produces a dense, springy wood that makes excellent bowstaves; the icewalkers are one of the few cultures to produce superior long bows, including the occasional *Perfect* bow. The walrus-hunting tribes favor the harpoon (functionally identical to an ordinary spear). Armor made entirely of metal exceeds their resources, but some icewalkers reinforce their mammoth-hide buff jackets with strips of horn and bone.

Icewalkers stand out for their use of gliders. For centuries, they have built gliders from thin-scraped animal hides, animal bone and flexible willow. Icewalkers use these gliders to watch over their herds and flaunt their courage—but also to launch surprise attacks into a community they want to raid. Other Northerners sometimes hire icewalker glider-scouts for their wars.

Icewalkers also know the use of snowshoes and skis. If they must fight in snow, they certainly have snowshoes ready. Especially daring warriors might try to slash at enemies while slaloming downhill. The ski-soldier cannot go back up the hill, but it looks impressive and always gets a cheer from the other barbarians. A ski attack usually involves one special character trying to kill another in a flashy way.


### STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Icewalkers practice the same small-scale raiding as barbarian tribes throughout Creation. Unlike other tribes, however, they begin each raid with an attack by glider-borne commandos. Glider-borne scouts and commando raids are established tactics for icewalkers but came as a nasty surprise for the Tepet legions.

Some tribes that herd reindeer or elk know how to ride their beasts to battle, but dismount to fight. Tribes that







follow mammoth herds have not tamed their animals and do not ride them, but sometimes persuade mammoths to stampede through an enemy's camp. Other tribes, such as the walrus-hunters, may have no animal assistance at all.

### DEFENSE

All the Northern barbarians share a paradoxical defense: they have nothing to defend. When an enemy presses too hard, these barbarians just pack up and leave. Most regions have water, wild game and forage for herds, so barbarians can afford to abandon territory. They don't like abandoning the graves of their ancestors, the small gods who helped them in the past and the songlines that guide them between natural landmarks—but they can.

### OTHER ASSETS

Most icewalker tribes have no special assets. The tribes that follow the Bull of the North form a notable exception.

### ICEWALKERS AT WAR

This section discusses the icewalkers who still follow the old ways, for many such barbarians still live and fight in the North.

#### THE BULL OF THE NORTH

The tribes that follow the Bull of the North adapted their hunting and herding skills to war and now can fight in large armies. They still rely on high mobility and the surprise attack. Now, however, they follow the commands of a First Age general—the sort of war leader that Creation has not seen in 15 centuries, whose Essence-enhanced skills make him quite possibly the greatest battlefield strategist in the world. Yurgen Kaneko invents new tactics with every battle, from mammoths fitted with snowplows to geomantically-detonated demesnes.

On top of this, these icewalkers follow a complete Solar circle. Not only does the Bull of the North bring his own prowess to the battlefield, his circle includes a powerful sorceress, Samea of the Blackwater Mammoth tribe. Kaneko also recruited dozens of outcaste Terrestrials and unknown numbers of God-Blooded and other powerful individuals.

Yurgen Kaneko has revolutionized warfare among the icewalkers so much that his followers no longer offer a good example of barbarian warfare. They are also so closely tied to Kaneko himself and his circle that any description would necessarily go far beyond the SCOPE of this book. Examples of his military units will appear in **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. V—The North.**

### ORGANIZATION

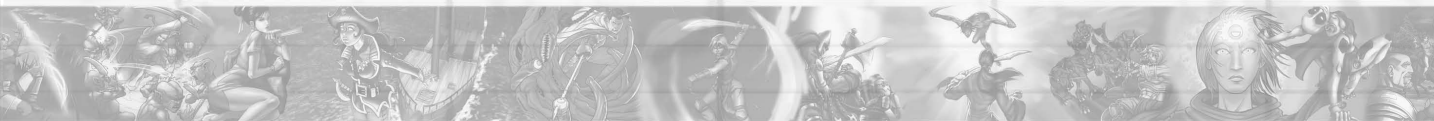
An icewalker tribe has a headman who leads the tribe in peace and at least one shaman who deals with religious affairs. In war, an experienced fighter takes charge as war chief. The war chief in turn has a number of understudies as his officers, but the tribe has nothing so formal as a chain of command. The war chief may assign sub-chiefs to lead separate bands according to some pre-selected strategy, such as a band of glider commandos attacking the enemy from the rear. When war chiefs need to signal such bands, they do so using animal-horn trumpets and a standard that represents the tribe's totem animal. Every able-bodied man in the tribe is a warrior, and quite a few of the women fight, too, if the tribe faces danger.

Until the coming of Yurgen Kaneko, tribes never followed a shared chain of command. On the rare occasions when tribes allied (usually to massacre Tear Eaters, Wyld barbarians or hobgoblins), each tribe followed its own war chiefs and its own strategies.

### ICEWALKER TRIBE MILITIA

**Description:** This military unit represents an entire tribe mobilized for war: in this case, a tribe of reindeer herders who have learned to ride their beasts but not yet to fight while mounted. They ride reindeer to battle, but dismount to fight. Elk-herding tribes use the same technique. Tribes that follow mammoth herds have not tamed their animals, and do not ride them, but occasionally persuade them to stampede through an enemy's camp. Other tribes, such as the walrus-hunters, have no animal assistance at all. Most of the tribal members are extras, though their combat experience makes them comparable to regular troops (see **Exalted**, p. 279).





**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Buff jackets with bone or horn reinforcement

**Motto:** "Master Elk carry me to victory!"

**General Makeup:** 400 men and women with a variety of melee weapons, plus long bows and broadhead arrows

**Overall Quality:** Average

**Magnitude:** 5

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 2            **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The war chief has five relays to carry his commands to the rest of the tribe, and up to four sub-chief heroes who can command smaller units split off from the tribe. A single shaman has thaumaturgical powers that enable her to act as a military sorcerer, such as a procedure to cast a distracting beguilement on the enemy commander or a bird familiar that can attack with poisoned claws.

### ICEWALKER GLIDER COMMANDOS

**Description:** These eight warriors volunteered to fly into an enemy's camp or behind enemy lines, to attack from surprise and, they hope, instigate a rout. Each commando has one firepot to drop from his glider; then they land and cause whatever damage they can before escaping or dying gloriously. They are experienced fighters, if a bit undisciplined, and ridiculously brave.



**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Mammoth-wool clothing

**Motto:** "Master Hawk, lift my wings!"

**General Makeup:** Eight barbarians with buff jackets, straight swords, firepots and gliders

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 1

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 2            **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** The commandoes are necessarily Unordered while in the air, but dash about in Skirmish formation while they are on the ground. A sub-chief leads them, with two heroes to take command in the event of his death.

### OTHER NORTHERN BARBARIANS

North and East of the Haslanti League, the Tear Eater tribes roam the tundra. They worship the freeze-dried cadavers of their ancestors. Necromancer-shamans and ancestral ghosts call up platoons of zombies to assist them in war.

To the West, the savage Varajtul stalk the taiga, clad only in their own fur. These Wyld-twisted barbarians usually hunt and gather food far away from civilized folk, but they sometimes gather in hordes to assault the silverholds of the Dehennen Mountains or the little towns along the Inner Sea coast; they have even reached as far as Whitewall. The Varajtul attack when game becomes scarce or at the behest of their mad shamans... and their favorite food is human flesh. They make their weapons from wood, stone and bone, or simply attack with their own claws and fangs.







## CHAPTER FOUR

# SEEDS OF CONFLICT

The East of Creation sees a seemingly never-ending series of battles, revolts, conquests and skirmishes. While the legions of the Blessed Isle conquer and subjugate, the navies of the West plunder and pillage and the forces of the North and South battle for simple survival, the armies of the East fight for every reason there is—and simply because they can.

Eastern people fight for many reasons. Some are easily comprehended. Kingdoms fight for water rights, mineral deposits or taxable territory. Partisans of the Immaculate Order and the Hundred Gods Heresy can lead their homelands into war. Imperial ambition and megalomania drive other wars. When armies of the dead or the Fair Folk march, nations fight for simple survival.

Other wars have causes that seem less clear. The diplomatic ties that bind various kingdoms, diktats, republics, fledgling empires, baronies and other governments in the Hundred Kingdoms sometimes tangle and clash beyond any possibility of settlement with various dueling protocols, and they must fight. The war between Halta and the Linowan owes much to the rivalry between their respective forest

gods, Caltia and Jorst, though the war has taken on a life of its own.

Put together all the wars and their causes, and it looks like chaos. Actually, the chaos is the pattern. People in the East just can't see the forest for the trees.

## ENVIRONMENT

The verdant fields of the East give plenty of space for armies to square off in open battle, and so, very often, they do. And yet, the Pole of Wood shapes Eastern warfare in ways both obvious and subtle.

For one thing, basic survival rarely presents much challenge in the East. From primeval forest to cultivated river bottoms, food is available for anyone with the sense to look for it. Most countries are well watered by rivers and rain. The East does not suffer the sweltering heat of the South or the killing cold of the North, so Easterners shelter themselves without much effort. People often want more than they have, but they rarely believe they must fight just to survive.



Forests, hills and rivers also provide a soft partition of living space. They inhibit travel, but to a lesser degree than a desert or a high mountain range. Then again, the natural abundance of the East makes travel optional. Brave people may travel hundreds of miles through the woodlands or along the rivers in search of costly furs, medicinal herbs or rare jungle spices, but most people can live comfortably without traveling more than a few miles in their entire lives... if that's what they want.

You can't see very far in forests. They have no horizon, and the treetops hide the sky. Woodlands abound in micro-environments—edible mushrooms on this tree's roots, a bear feeding at that berry-bush—that you don't see until you're right on top of them. Or climb up to them, as the case may be.

These factors make forests a good place to hide. In the further reaches of the East live tribes that missed the wars of empire, the battles of the Usurpation, maybe even the Primordial War. Pockets of forest offer a haven to primitive "hill tribes" in the very heart of the more-or-less settled and civilized Scavenger Lands.

Perhaps more importantly, the Eastern woodlands provide ample hideouts for the unlawful, the rebellious and the mischievous. Even during the Shogunate, the region was known almost as much for its rebels and bandits as for its wealth and beauty. No one in the Age of Sorrows ever brought even a significant fraction of the East under his rule. The land is too divided—not just by forests, hills and rivers,

but subtler divisions of language, religion and culture. New societies and ideologies sprout like weeds and grow in the gaps between established centers of power, giving new reasons for war. The East is perpetually complicated, evolving, alive.

## WAR GODS OF THE EAST

The Office of Eastern Warfare is the largest Directional office in the Division of War, for one simple reason: the East has more nations than any other Direction, and therefore more possibilities for war. Sunipa, Goddess of Dutiful Soldiers and the Rules of War, oversees her sprawling office with rare efficiency.

Numerous other war gods make their home in the East, although they are not necessarily directly associated with Sunipa's directorate. These range from important—if not exactly filial—war gods such as Tahn Jo, the God of Righteous Revolts and Uprisings, to a plethora of minor tribal war gods. Tien Yu, Goddess of the Seventh Legion, and Dayshield of Great Forks (see chapter eight of *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*) are close allies of Sunipa, as well as her subordinates. The East, a land deep in the grip of the Hundred Gods Heresy and well acquainted with strife, has a war god for nearly every occasion.

## SUNIPA

Sunipa obtained her position shortly after the disappearance (still officially unexplained) of Darunla the Wolf



Goddess, the former deity of Eastern War and ally of the Solars during the Usurpation. Sunipa had spent centuries as patron of the Terrestrial Exalted in their roles as the soldiers and adjutants of the Celestial Exalted: she backed the Dragon-Blooded in the Usurpation, and received a promotion as her reward.

The Eastern War Goddess influences leaders away from wholesale war whenever possible. In her aspect of the Dutiful Soldier, she directs officers to heed their responsibilities to their troops, to their nation and their own honor. She pushes soldiers to heed their position, their duties to their leaders and country and to *their* own honor. In her aspect as the patron of measured retribution and the rules of war, Sunipa encourages officers to use only the force they need to obtain their objectives. Sunipa thinks that soldiers should be gracious in victory and accepting in defeat, offering quarter when possible, and accepting surrender when necessary.

Sunipa does not object when leaders seek war for their nation's advantage—only when they lack clear objectives and a strategy for victory. She has no truck with “Short, Glorious Wars” conducted for reasons of internal politics or a ruler's lust for glory, and is disgusted by wars that seek to enrich a handful at the expense of their own nation.

As Sunipa influences the East, the East influences her. Over the centuries, Sunipa has shifted her interest from the strategies of large armies to the actions of small units—especially guerrilla forces and special forces. She justifies this by suggesting that small groups of highly trained and motivated forces, well equipped and given detailed objectives but broad latitude in terms of rules of engagement, can accomplish more—at a lower cost in casualties on both sides—than massed units of poorly trained soldiers.

Some of the younger and more impetuous local war gods think that Sunipa must be weak because she cares more about rules and discipline than combat and glory. Perhaps she wields less raw power in combat than the others... but her tactical sense and logistical skill have few equals in Heaven. Sunipa cares about *winning*, whether or not she strikes the final blow herself. Most importantly, the sort of limited, rule-constrained war that Sunipa advocates leaves comparatively few hard feelings afterward. Most nations in the East (with a few notable exceptions) recognize that yesterday's enemy can become tomorrow's ally of convenience. Many times in the Age of Sorrows, different Eastern nations have pooled their armies to fight a common foe who was clearly too powerful for any single country to oppose. Sunipa oversees such coalitions (with the assistance of Shield of a Different Day, the patron of military diplomacy and wars of maneuver).

## POLICIES

Sunipa's comparatively recent promotion does not sit well with everyone in Heaven. Tachi-Kun, Central God of Exalted Battle, sees Sunipa's promotion as an affront to his role as patron of champions and Exalted warfare. Tachi-Kun seeks to reduce Sunipa's influence and usually opposes her in

the Division of War's policy debates. Whether Tachi-Kun's influence perpetuates the continuing strife between the Realm and the Scavenger Lands, or that strife feeds their personal animosity, is perhaps merely an academic question.

For her part, Sunipa tries—with some success—to turn Tachi-Kun's successes in the East into her own. She pulled the Exalted duelist-champions of the Hundred Kingdoms into her official portfolio, using the argument that they fall within her purview not only as patron of the Terrestrials as small-unit commanders but as a successful example of military actions fought according to agreed-upon rules.

Sunipa's duties as patron of war constrained by rules naturally places her at odds with Siakal in the latter deity's role as patron of battlefield slaughter. Then again, *all* the other war gods dislike (and fear) Siakal. In return, the Shark Goddess loathes Sunipa: Sunipa's advocacy of dutiful soldiers and righteous leadership directly opposes Siakal's passion for unbridled massacre. Only the distance between East and West prevents all-out, divinely sponsored war between their Directions. In Heaven, meanwhile, the two goddesses scheme constantly to weaken, discredit and ultimately destroy each other.

The Southern god Ahlat, on the other hand, frequently sides with Sunipa in Heaven's conferences, even when Southeastern nations fight his Harborhead favorites. Ahlat respects the personal bravery and skill of Eastern soldiers—and if they occasionally cause setbacks for his Brides, so much the better, as they can learn from the experience. Sunipa also enjoys cordial relations with the Northern warrior-twins Voharun and Nasamara. The two share her preference for duty and efficient strategy, even if their view of war is a bit more tragic-heroic and fatalistic than hers.

## POWER AND WORSHIP

Sipunla receives worship from soldiers and officers throughout the East, particularly in the Scavenger Lands. She refuses to help any mortal army; that would be against the law of Heaven, and her own nature. She does not sanction any thaumaturgies that call on her power, either: Sipunla respects the spirit of the law as well as the letter. Mortal commanders and heads of state can petition her, however, to make sure their enemies do not receive help from other gods.


## SUNIPA'S STAFF TENT

Just as any banner officer, Sunipa maintains a complete staff—the war gods under her dominion responsible for maintaining her forces in good order and overseeing the day-to-day operations under her purview. At present, her full-time staff consists of the following gods:

- **Leopard Tooth Scholar**, God of Reconnaissance-in-Force Operations, runs her intelligence division.
- **Wandering Star**, Goddess of Guerilla Warfare, is Sunipa's chief of operations.
- **Ivory Shadow Smith**, God of Secret Arsenals, handles her logistics.

Additional desks in Sunipa's extended staff include Tactics, Sieges, Essence Users, Horrors and units devoted to





First Age warfare, weapons and tactics. The naval combat division of her staff tent concentrates on coastal and river combat—a notable weakness in an otherwise strong Directional war staff.

Sunipa's junior officers consist of a varied mix of minor war gods, her own God-Blooded children and God-Bloods hired away from the hosts of other Directional managers (or fostered, in some cases, just as some of her scions currently serve in the armies of other Directional war gods). Her troops include the remnants of the Unconquered Sun's fabulous Sun Guard, automaton warriors of the finest quality, as well as more conventional (for a Heavenly host) units that concentrate on fast attack, reconnaissance, and strike units. Just as her office must deal with every sort of war, Sunipa offers Heaven's military a wide range of auxiliary forces.

## TAHN JO, THE HIDDEN WAR GOD

One Eastern war god does not report to Sunipa, or to any member of the Crimson Banner or any other office of Heaven, save perhaps the Maiden of Battles. His name is Tahn Jo, the God of Righteous Revolts and Uprisings. This mortal revolutionary from the Hundred Kingdoms area received godhood by accident a little over a century and a half ago. Tahn Jo quickly realized that his position in the Celestial Bureaucracy was a sham. Revolution and revolt, no matter how justified, did not agree with the attitudes of the Celestial Bureaucracy. So Tahn Jo did the only thing he felt he could do: he looted his department and Celestial manse of everything he could move, and disappeared to Creation.

Today, Tahn Jo carries the fight to wherever he thinks his power would be most useful. He prefers not to lead revolts himself, seeing that as inflicting his desires on the people he supports. Instead, his is the voice that tips the crowd into the mob, the chant that stirs the blood, the faceless revolutionary who takes a sniper's arrow so a charismatic leader can live, the first casualty whose name becomes legend but whose face is forgotten. He sees his mission in Creation as one of support, not leadership.

Tahn Jo's Charms allow him to assume many faces. He takes the form of the miner who seeks only a fair day's wages for back-breaking labor, the learned savant who seeks freedom for his country from a brutal oppressor, the young rioter and the merchant questing for an end to the Guild's economic tyranny. Tahn Jo's inherent form is the one he wore when mortal—that of a poorly educated but obviously intelligent farmer in his late 30s, plain-spoken and hard-bitten in appearance, leaning on a stout staff or hunting spear.

## EASTERN WARFARE

Nearly every type of warfare occurs in the East. The folk of the Southeast savannahs use fire to destroy enemy kraals. Swift biremes and ponderous war barges sail the wide rivers of the Yanaze. The Sky Guard of the Seventh Legion and the Metagalapan hawkriders drop from the sky to destroy their enemies from above. Two strands of warfare intertwine,

however, as most distinctively Eastern: battle in forests and guerilla struggles.

## FOREST FIGHTING

War in the East often means fighting in forests, from domesticated orchards to dense jungles. Most forests are not intrinsically dangerous (though there are exceptions). Fighting in an environment crowded with vegetation, however, is not like fighting in an open field.

Most simply, all forests count as Difficult terrain for purposes of complex movement (see **Exalted**, p. 266) or mass combat movement (**Exalted**, p. 163). Some forests (such as jungles) can even qualify as Extreme terrain.

## VISIBILITY LIMITATIONS

You can't see very far in a forest, and the environment provides a lot of cover. Stealth rolls to hide traps, supply dumps, you or other things may receive up to a +3 bonus. On the other hand, the denser the vegetation, the harder it becomes to move quietly: Stealth rolls for silent movement take an internal penalty up to -3. For simplicity, Storytellers can usually assume the bonus and penalty match, so the environment that gives a +2 bonus to hiding gives a -2 die penalty to silent movement.

Vegetation also limits basic visibility, as defined in **Exalted**, p. 135. Clear vision can end at any distance from one to 100 yards, depending on local conditions, with murky vision ending anywhere from one yard to 100 yards beyond that. In a primeval forest of huge but widely spaced trees, for instance, characters might see clearly out to 100 yards and murkily 100 yards beyond that. In a dense patch of jungle undergrowth, however, everything beyond the character's nose might be hidden behind stalks and leaves.

## RANGE LIMITATIONS

Even if you can see an enemy, trees and undergrowth may get in the way of ranged attacks. A weapon's base range cannot exceed the limit of clear visibility for a forest location. For instance, if a woodland's limit for clear visibility is 20 yards, it doesn't matter that your composite bow has a normal range of 250 yards. Any target beyond 20 yards imposes a -1 external penalty to attacks, a target beyond 40 yards imposes a -2 external penalty and a target beyond 60 yards becomes impossible to hit without using magic. There's just too much in the way to deflect a missile.

## MAGNITUDE LIMITATIONS

Sometimes, it doesn't matter how many soldiers you have if only a very small number can effectively fight at one time. This could be a close mountain pass, a bridge, a restrictive gap in a curtain wall or the like. In particular, dense forest splits up troops and reduces the effectiveness of large numbers: if two armies clash in a forest, they break into small squads that cannot act in unison. One squad finds another squad, fights and everyone else might as well not exist.

In these cases, a unit's effective Magnitude can drop—maybe all the way to 1—for the purposes of dice bonuses or penalties to attacks for differences in size. Use the unit's entire Magnitude when determining if a unit routs or how much damage it can take.

This rule means that one hero—maybe even a mortal hero—actually can hold a bridge against an army, or a few squads of guerillas could stalk through a jungle and pin down a legion. They might not be able to win, but they can hold out a lot longer than they could in a simple battle.

## STANDARD FORESTS

Forests come in three basic stages of development. Storytellers can start with these three standard types, and customize them for particular scenes.

### REGROWTH

Forests that recover from some major disturbance—fire, clear-cutting or the like—feature closely spaced trees, significant undergrowth (thinning out as the forest ages) and a single canopy layer. Such forests often appear where civilization has departed, or local rulers ordain these forests to ensure their supply of wood for construction and woodland for hunting. When a great tree falls in an older forest, it results in a small patch of regrowth.

The Stealth bonus/penalty for regrowth forests ranges from 1 to 3. In extreme circumstances, thorns and briars could form a minor environmental hazard, or dense underbrush could inflict a penalty in Melee and martial arts combat. Certainly, there are plenty of tree limbs and trunks to use for stunting. Mass combat units can maintain no better Formation than skirmishing, are limited in effective Magnitude to 1. Regrowth forests are frequently Extreme terrain, unless the regrowth is quite recent or trails are abundant. Clear visibility usually ends from five to 20 yards away, and murky visibility ends from 15 to 50 yards away—maybe less in some cases.



### OLD GROWTH

After undisturbed centuries, undergrowth thins out, and trees grow further apart. The forest develops a second canopy of younger, smaller trees that help block out what sunlight escapes the leaves of the older, larger, more widely separated trees. Most forests in the further East are old growth, thanks to the efforts of forest gods, elementals and a low population density.

Some jungles of the Southeast never reach this stage, despite their antiquity. They are so fecund that undergrowth persists at ground level, no matter what. Conversely, orchards and other man-made forests may be treated as old growth because their keepers clear out underbrush.

Old growth forests are easier to maneuver in than regrowth woodlands, but harder to hide in unless you go up—which can be more difficult, as there are few low-lying tree branches. The Stealth bonus/penalty rarely exceeds 2. Mass combat units cannot maintain a Formation tighter than Relaxed, their effective Magnitude cannot exceed 2.





Limits to clear visibility range from 20 to 80 yards, and murky vision ends at 50 to 150 yards.

### PRIMEVAL

Truly ancient forests may have active defenders (such as elementals or dogs of the unbroken earth), or simply be so remote that no human has managed to log them. Trees can grow to immense sizes in primeval forests—more than 100 feet wide and thousands of feet tall in the furthest East, at the edge of the Wyld. Relatively little undergrowth occurs in such forests; not much light reaches the ground through the multiple canopies. This, combined with the wide separation of the trees, makes the going relatively easy on the ground. On the other hand, other plants grow high in the canopy as parasites or simply lodge in the bark. The upper forest is as dense as regrowth and a realm of its own. Many creatures never touch the ground.

Primeval forests remain Difficult terrain but often have wide trails. Mass combat units cannot maintain a Formation tighter than Relaxed, but their effective Magnitude can reach 3. The Stealth bonus/penalty drops to 1; hiding becomes largely a matter of staying on the other side of a tree, which is only “hiding” in the same sense as being on a different street than someone who looks for you. Clear visibility extends out to 100 yards, and murky visibility out to 200 yards.

### JUNGLE FIGHTING

Soldiers complain about whatever terrain they fight in, but military lore throughout Creation says that jungle is worst of all. The cold North and the searing South offer danger, but the jungle... the jungle brings horror. Jungle diseases wrack soldiers with fever and turn their guts to blood. A fly lays its eggs in the nose of a sleeping soldier, and the maggots bore from his sinuses into his brain. Deadly beasts and deadlier natives attack without warning. Old legionnaires say that once you’ve fought a jungle campaign, you know why the hell of Malfestas is green.

Even a small group has trouble moving through the jungles of the Southeast and the Silent Crescent of the Southwest. The logistics of moving an army through jungle tax even the Realm’s quartermasters. As a result, most fighting in jungles is done by small units, carefully equipped, and highly trained—or by native forces, inured to the conditions in which they fight. Beyond the simple problems caused by tight undergrowth and various fauna that want to find out if soldiers taste good, combat operations face the following additional difficulties:

- **Heat:** Jungles are hot and humid. Armor is hell to wear in such conditions: assess fatigue rolls every *hour* spent in a jungle in armor, and this rises to every half-hour when fighting or during other strenuous activity. Seasoned jungle fighters who cannot protect themselves using Charms or alchemical preparations try to wear as little armor as they can get away with, and wear it as little as possible.
- **Rot:** The combination of perpetually damp, heat and ever-present insects and fungi produces rapid decay of most

organic matter. Leather, wood, paper and cloth all start to rot within days of entering the jungle, unless carefully treated and protected. Superior equipment is less subject to these problems, but even *Perfect* gear can eventually feel the hand of the jungle. Food spoils in days unless it is carefully preserved, salted or fermented. Even metal rusts and becomes useless unless carefully maintained, although it lasts for weeks rather than days. Artifacts and equipment made of the Five Magical Materials do not suffer these problems, and various alchemical formulas and thaumaturgical enchantments can protect equipment from decay, at least for a time.

- **Disease:** Disease is everywhere in the jungle. Nearly all water carries dysentery or cholera, unless travelers boil and filter it. Insects carry yellow fever, malaria and weird plagues and fevers unknown to the rest of Creation. Open wounds fester unless treated with care (see **Exalted**, p. 151). The Virulence of wound infections is 4 in tropical conditions (and may range higher), and the Morbidity ratings are likewise 1 higher (2 to begin with, then +1 per successive day until treated).

- **Beasts:** A wide variety of creatures live in the jungle. Many are carnivorous or merely irascible. Tree-cats roam the high branches, tyrant lizards the floor and a variety of larger insects and smaller predators seek their fortunes between and around them. Finding food is rarely a problem (if you don’t mind grubs and beetles), but it can make life difficult for military commanders when tyrant lizards regard their troops as a handy source of meals.

Travel among the high branches instead of the wet floor can ameliorate some of these problems. The insects and fungi that destroy materials are less prevalent, doubling or tripling the time equipment takes to rot. Many of the predators that dwell in the jungle do not climb. Perhaps most importantly, many sources of infection are not present in the canopy: stinging and biting insects prefer the lower reaches, while rainwater caught in leaves is usually pure. Of course, few troops outside Halta can move through treetops. Most armies simply must suffer.

### GUERRILLA WARFARE

Even during the Shogunate, the East was known for revolts, uprisings and banditry. Legions posted there gained experience in riot control, subjugation tactics and urban warfare. When the Seventh Legion prepared the survivors of the River Province for war against the nascent Realm, the legion used their experience to train partisans throughout the East. It worked. Between natural evolution based on the terrain, historical predilections and the coldly pragmatic training of a military force that knew it faced a more numerous, better-equipped foe, guerrilla warfare is so common in the East that strategists often call it “fighting in the Eastern style.”

### OBJECTIVES

The main goal of irregular combatants is not so much winning as *not losing*. Very often, they cannot really defeat the enemy. Instead, they subject the enemies’ troops to a



## DYSENTERY

**Virulence:** 2      **Difficulty to Treat:** 2

**Morbidity:** 2      **Treated Morbidity:** 1

**Symptoms:** Dysentery, similar to its more powerful cousin cholera (see **Exalted**, p. 352) kills through the dehydration caused by frequent, often bloody, diarrhea. The disease seldom kills when properly treated, but victims who do not seek medical attention (and plenty of clean fluids to replace those lost) often die. Survivors of this disease sometimes can no longer digest milk or dairy products without suffering lesser after-effects. This debility may wear off after months, or sometimes years, but other victims carry the mark of dysentery for the rest of their lives.

**Duration:** The disease manifests within hours of drinking contaminated water, and lasts a week. Unless aggressive measures are taken to prevent its spread, however, dysentery spreads quickly through a community or military encampment.

**Vector:** Dysentery comes from the gods of travelers and encampments, as punishment for those who do not keep their campsites and bivouacs in good hygienic order. Local home and city spirits may also inflict dysentery upon strangers or travelers as a nasty joke or as a warning to show proper respect for the natives and their medical lore. In this case, reduce all morbidity ratings by 1—the gods mean to humiliate, not kill.

**Treatment:** Fluids and mineral salts keep the victim hydrated, while various herbs relieve the symptoms. More important, from a military standpoint, is preventing the disease's spread through an aggressive regimen of purification rituals on anything that contacts the afflicted. Sheets and bedding must be boiled or burned, skin sanitized, all water boiled and victims' effluvia isolated and treated with alchemical reagents, or the disease can spread to an entire campsite. These same rituals prevent the spread of cholera.

series of costly, time-consuming and demoralizing ambushes, skirmishes and general harassment.

When one side attempts a "stand-up fight" and the other side engages in guerrilla action, this can quickly produce a quagmire... as long as the irregulars receive some popular support, anyway. Guerrilla campaigns persist as long as they can recruit enough new partisans to replace those too tired, too injured or too dead to fight. The conflict ends up as a continuing drain on the side using conventional tactics.

A sufficiently large, well-equipped and well-organized military has one certain way to defeat an insurgency that has unbreakable popular support: Kill everyone. No population, no popular support. This doesn't work so well when the population is your own country's, or other political,

economic or non-military factors intervene. It rarely happens in the East.

When both sides fight in the Eastern style, it can result in an endless brushfire conflict, without any resolution. The endless border war between the Haltans and Linowan form the quintessential example, which might be resolved only through the intercession of an outside force—for instance, if the Bull of the North conquers them both.

In some cases, armies that use guerrilla tactics have other objectives. A squad of Seventh Legion Rangers or other special forces might use Eastern tactics for ultimately conventional military goals; for example, killing an enemy general to delay her army's movement. Bandits operate through ambush and quick raids for mere plunder.

## ORGANIZATION

Organization of irregular forces depends on their purpose and sponsor. Conventional forces that fight in the "Eastern style" tend to use the familiar fang - scale - talon - wing force structure, though typically each fighting force does not exceed a scale in size. Only rarely do talon or wing-sized units engage in guerrilla warfare as a single unit. The Haltans and Linowans form a notable exception: they frequently send talon-sized groups raiding across their border.


Bandit and brigand forces, which perforce use the Eastern style almost by default, seldom have more organization than a tough, charismatic boss, his circle of cronies and everyone else. They rarely number more than a talon. Successful bandit companies, however, often grow larger and more organized. The largest companies sometimes end up taking over a local kingdom, or evolving into a formal mercenary unit (as opposed to the informal arrangements sometimes entered into).

Partisan forces act in smaller number, but with greater organization. Infiltration and subornment threaten any group of rebels that does not forswear home and hearth altogether. Partisan groups often operate in cells, with limited communication so a compromised cell cannot squeal on too many others. Each cell is usually the size of a fang or at most a scale, and missions frequently involve several cells working together.

## METHODS

Sabotage, assassination, ambush, misdirection and subversion are all necessary arrows in the quiver of the successful guerrilla leader. By necessity, guerrilla units become experts in every kind of dirty, underhanded, sneaky and just plain mean tactic there is. Guerrilla units are usually outnumbered (if they weren't, they could deploy standard formations of fighters), frequently out-trained (at least at first), and often use poorer equipment. In conventional warfare, they would get annihilated... so they cheat.

Partisans, insurgents and ordinary bandits prefer to hit and run. They also look for soft targets: for instance, fighting an encamped Realm legion is suicide, so attack the wagons that bring their provisions. Better still (or at least safer), murder the sutler that sold the provisions, to make an example of



him to other potential suppliers. If the legion has to forage—most likely taking food, rather than buying it—that’s a whole bunch of people who learn to hate the legion.

### TOOLS OF INSURGENCY

Partisans, guerillas and other irregular forces prefer light weapons and armor. Guerrilla warfare is highly mobile, and heavy armor, clumsy weapons and bulky equipment slow a warrior down. Then again, heavy weapons and armor tend to cost a lot, and irregular soldiers usually fight on the cheap.

Many guerrilla units use bows, slings and other missile weapons as their primary weapons. The units rely on short swords, short spears and other lightweight melee weapons when the guerillas cannot keep their distance. In many cases, partisan or revolutionary forces use weapons that not long ago were tools—wood axes, sledge hammers, hunting bows—at least until they can acquire proper military weapons (possibly from their dead foes). Knives, however, hold a special place as the near-ideal, concealable weapon for assassination.

In similar fashion, partisans and guerillas seldom have access to any armor heavier or more expensive than buff jackets.

Whether an irregular combat unit keeps horses or other steeds depends on their environment and goals. Rabble-rousers and dagger-men on city streets have no need of mounts; revolutionary bandits who plan to loot a town and move on have every need of them.

#### *THE FIVEFOLD WAYS OF THE ENLIGHTENED REVOLUTIONARY*

Four centuries before the Great Contagion struck, the Taimyo Tatosi Omeri wrote the definitive book about guerilla warfare and insurgency. By showing how to organize and win such struggles, he sought to teach Shogunate officer how to suppress them—but plenty of rebels have found his book useful, too. *The Fivefold Ways* is, of course, widely suppressed; in the Realm and its satrapies, owning a copy requires a special license. This does not make the book actually difficult to find.

### COVERT COMMUNICATION IN THE AGE OF SORROWS

Partisans face the problem of letting each other know when to meet or how to attack. Militaries that hunt partisans face the problem of hiding their plans from their enemies. Still, both sides manage. Methods include hand signals, coded phrases, systems based on clothing (color, presence or absence of various articles or accessories, or even how a piece of clothing is folded or worn) and such esoterica as the placement of a red pebble on a fence post. Militaries may develop complex codes or ciphers.

None of these methods are truly anonymous or foolproof. A person has to wear the cloths, speak the code phrase, make the gesture or moves the pebble. An observant spy or informer

can often tell that someone sends a message to someone else, even if she doesn’t know exactly what the message is. Only the use of Charms, sorcery or artifacts can allow truly secret communication in the Age of Sorrows.

### POISON AND DISEASE

Poisons and plagues can become powerful weapons. They can eliminate or at least debilitate an army with one strike.

Large-scale poisoning is difficult to arrange. A poisoner usually cannot taint more than a few wells, cellars of wine or ale or wagon-loads of food. Uses that are more exotic include burning poisonous plants or materials upwind of an encampment (risky if the wind changes direction.) Such methods can weaken an army but total elimination is not likely. The damage to morale can matter more than the number of people poisoned.

Neither guerilla fighters nor regular soldiers use poisoned arrows, darts and weapons very often. Poisoned weapons endanger the wielder, too. Insurgents reserve poisoned weapons for planned assassinations. The Southeastern jungles form a notable exception to this caution: native warriors there make frequent use of poisons, to make up for the relatively poor nature of their weapons.

Disease also finds use in war. An army can use catapults to launch plague-ridden carcasses into besieged towns or fortresses. Subtler methods include selling disease-contaminated clothes, bedding or other supplies to an army, or letting an enemy capture infected partisans, in hopes that the disease spreads to the enemy. Covert warriors can find even less savory methods of distributing some diseases, such as syphilis.

Professional military units typically scorn the use of poison and disease, in large part because they fear blowback or getting tangled up in their own toxins. This does not mean that formal militaries *never* use such methods—merely that they are used cautiously and narrowly, against foes who seem difficult to attack in any other way.

Wise guerrilla commanders do not use these tactics often or widely, either. Hardly anyone likes a poisoner, even one who says he’s on their side. A poisoned well might remain fouled for years, making a permanent enemy of its owner. Some biological weapons are considered utterly beyond the pale: anyone caught deploying captured Heart Wasp larvae or Chakra Orchid cuttings (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol’s Codex**, pp. 146–150) would find himself hunted by every country in a thousand miles, even though these organisms could disrupt or destroy armies wholesale. Rabble-rousers often compare invaders to plagues, but these are cases where the cure really is worse than the disease . . .

### COVERT OPERATIONS

When skilled soldiers conduct guerrilla warfare, the results can terrify people who have not seen it before. Sentries disappear without a trace, false orders replace real ones, siege engines are mysteriously wrecked in the night, supply trains are looted and supposedly secret outposts are destroyed.



Teams of dedicated and skilled operators can appear anywhere—yet seem nowhere until they strike.

When such warriors can channel Essence and wield artifacts, they become even more elusive and dangerous, beyond the obvious magical power on the battlefield. Social Charms transform informants into turncoats; Stealth Charms render their users all but invisible. Alchemical draughts, enchanted gear, thaumaturgical rituals or selected artifacts enable mortals to emulate these effects as well, at least for a time.

In the East, at least, commanders and heads of state fear Terrestrials at least as much for when they cannot be seen but are suspected, as for when they appear in open battle. Easterners hear tales of Seventh Legion Rangers, Immaculate monks on secret Wyld Hunts or Realm covert operations teams. More tales speak of battles won because of small bands of mercenaries led by Dragon-Blooded or God-Blooded champions—or lost because a ruler offended a similar team, and they either left the field in disgust or changed sides to punish betrayal. In the Time of Tumult, war leaders hear new stories of Solars reborn, Lunars emerging from the Wyld and terrible Abyssals stalking the night, and they wonder what battles these powerful new champions shall decide.

## HALTA

Halta's military appears massive on paper. The military outnumbers most other militaries in Creation, well appointed in terms of weapons and defenses, and reasonably well trained. It ought to be feared throughout the East. Instead, most Eastern strategists view it as a paper tiger—effective within its own woods, but largely useless beyond them.

This is largely true. The Haltan military is indeed highly specialized. Most of its members engage in law enforcement, disaster readiness and recovery duties rather than combat. The nature of Haltan conscription guarantees that just as soldiers become truly useful soldiers, many of them rotate out of active service and into the reserves. Only the (volunteer) commando units are truly “battle ready” and able to take a fight to the enemy.

Most outsiders fail to understand that Halta's military is the way it is specifically because the Haltan government wants it that way. Defense of the Haltan homelands depends not upon a military capable of taking the fight to the enemy but on a defense-in-depth arrangement that makes conquering Halta a fool's errand.

Within their great redwood forests, the Haltan military is a terrible foe. Neither their Linowan enemies nor anyone else has survived a long or deep incursion. But while commando raids into Linowan territory often succeed, extended missions into their neighbor's holdings never succeed, either—and always result in terrible casualties. Nor has Halta ever managed to project much force against the smaller countries on its borders. Haltans just don't know how to fight outside a forest. Haltans' shortage of Exalted or other Essence-using champions also leaves them unprepared to fight against or alongside Essence-intensive combatants—as was proved dur-

ing their brief alliance with the Bull of the North against the Linowans and their allies in the Realm. Technically, Halta found itself on the winning side. Actually, they found the war a fiasco: troops slaughtered, an ally's capital exterminated and absolutely nothing gained for them.

## ARSENAL

Life in a forest of giant redwoods dictates most of the Haltan arsenal. Haltan regulars wield javelins and atlatls—common weapons throughout the nation. Axes, chopping swords, short swords and short spears form the bulk of their melee weapons. Haltans also occasionally wield boomerangs. Many combat groups have at least one member who carries lassos, bolas or both, to facilitate capture of prisoners or rescue a compatriot who fell to the surface but still lives. Longer weapons, such as great swords or polearms, are almost useless on the tree branches and rope bridges from which Haltans usually fight.

For similar reasons, Haltans stick to lightweight armor. The usual Haltan soldier wears a reinforced buff jacket of leather, compacted plant fiber and small wooden plates. Officers, however, often wear gossamer armor purchased from the Fair Folk.

Halta limits its siege artillery to ballistae and sailcutters. Every border fort has at least one light ballistae, and forts that overlook major roads and rivers have sailcutters—not to cut sails but to slice up groups of invaders or other people the Guard doesn't want entering the country.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

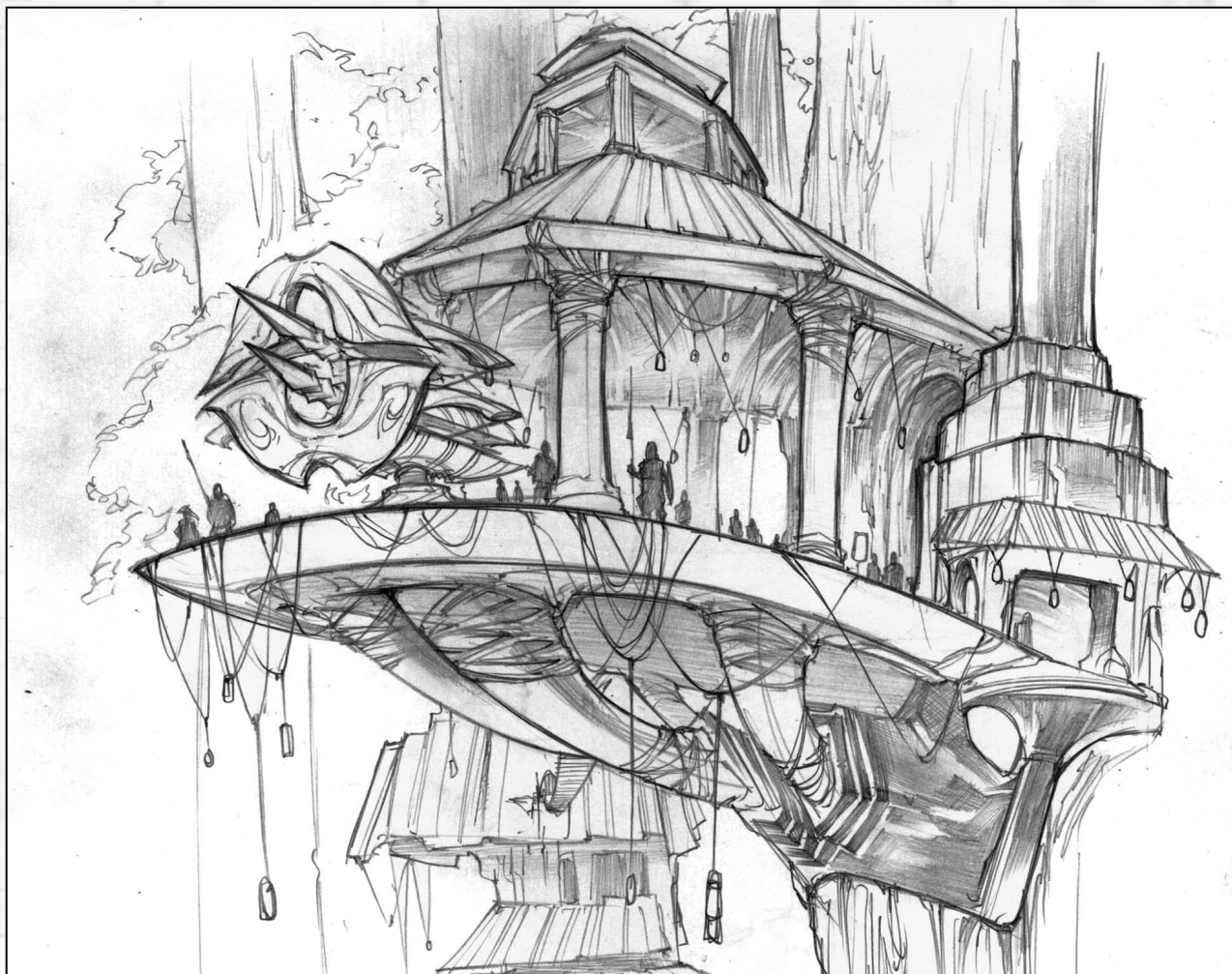
Haltans prefer to fight within their trees—specifically, operating from wide branches and the various pathways they create. Most Haltans have a (quite reasonable) fear of dropping to the forest surface. As a result, units rarely descend to engage hostiles unless given no choice.

The Haltan military has two doctrines, one for the Linowan and one for everyone else. The kingdom suffers occasional incursions by unorganized barbarian tribes or other small bands: the Haltan Guard harries these invaders but lets them flee Haltan territory. Against the Linowan, however, the Guard's elite commandos meet every raid with a raid in return, and they try to pick off the invaders so that none return. Haltans consider it completely fair to cut the throats of sleeping Linowan warriors. Sometimes the commandos even sneak into Linowan territory to massacre entire villages that settle too close to the frontier, poison their wells or commit other atrocities. Such tactics trouble some Haltans, but the Linowan do the same thing.

## DEFENSE

Fortified tree-towns and military encampments render Halta's borders difficult to invade. An army could easily bypass these bastions, but that frees the Haltans to attack from the rear and attack enemy supply convoys. Besieging each and every one of them quickly proves costly in troops and supplies.





Most importantly, Halta is big, with no real Eastern limit. The Haltans can mount a fighting retreat next to forever. Oh, and everything important is high in a tree, including all the forts.

## OTHER ASSETS

Halta's ata- and san-beasts form the most obvious special asset of its military. Ata-beasts possess near-human intelligence and receive citizenship. Many serve with pride in the Haltan military, and their natural abilities provide significant advantages to their units. Ata-strix perform reconnaissance and carry messages, while larger hunters such as ata-pards act as heavy strikers. San-beasts have less intelligence but can still be trained and organized far beyond the capacity of ordinary animals. An enemy cannot know if a monkey nibbling berries is just a monkey or a Haltan forward observer.

Halta also has beastmen citizens, chiefly hawkmen and snakemen. They, too, join the Haltan Guard. Beastmen, however, hold a special and segregated place in Haltan society. They serve in small units of their own, or in special support roles: snakemen, for instance, often become doctors in Halta and serve the Guard as medics.

Most outsiders know about Halta's "pets" and animal citizens. Fewer know about or appreciate the nation's pacts with the Fair Folk. The raksha are not true allies: they claim the right to prey on any Haltan who touches ground. Still, the Fair Folk aid Halta in many ways. The Haltans trade Linowan prisoners for gossamer weapons and armor. Sometimes it amuses the Fae to coordinate with Haltan commandos... and sometimes Haltans trick enemies into blundering into Fair Folk haunts and encampments.

Halta possesses a surprisingly large arsenal of First Age weapons. The Haltan Guard has more than 50 light implosion bows (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the First Age*, p. 130), at least 30 of which can use alchemical fuel or hearthstones for power. These are sufficiently mobile that soldiers can ship them from post to post, though moving them in battle is not practical. The Haltans also have 19 lightning ballistae stationed in Chanta and other important cities.

Nobody outside the Silver Pact knows Halta's most secret asset—not even the Haltans themselves. Long ago, a pair of ancient Lunar Exalted called Rain Deathflyer and Silver Python planted Haltan civilization, and they guide its growth

with a master gardener's care. (See **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars** for the full story.) Although they are almost convinced that Halta is ready to stand on its own, they reserve the right to meddle. The two Lunars, in turn, arranged Halta's pacts with its gods, including its special patron Caltia. In a crisis, these gods might themselves intervene to help their most devoted (and numerous) worshippers.

## THE HALTAN GUARD

Every citizen joins the Haltan Guard when she attains maturity (age 18 for humans). The Guard thus numbers about one and a half million humans, ata-beasts and beast-men. These conscripts serve four years. Most of the Guard members never leave their hometowns and villages. They keep the peace and labor in public works projects while they train. After their conscription ends, many keep up desultory training as the nation's reserves.

About one in 20 conscripts volunteers to serve in the border forts. Here they meet people from throughout Halta and stand a good chance of seeing real combat, chiefly against the Linowan. They have plenty of enthusiasm, but still should be treated as green troops (pardon the pun).

Border fort veterans can volunteer to join the Haltan Commandos. Two in three of the recruits wash out of the grueling year of training, but one in three emerge as highly skilled warriors. Commandos serve 10-year tours of duty. Still, few commandos can match super-elite troops such as the Seventh Legion Rangers or the Brides of Ahlat. Commandos perform most of the raids into Linowan territory and have to fight any supernatural intruders. Halta has 12 trees of commandos.

Within the commando units, a small subset of forces are truly elite. These are hardened units, survivors of many battles against Linowan war bands or stranger foes, and armed with gossamer weapons. These units—especially when combined with ata-beast reinforcements—give the Haltan Commandos their fearsome reputation as the invisible, unstoppable killers of the forest.

This system has its problems. The Guard is thinly spread through Halta's vast territory, and cannot concentrate its forces quickly or easily. Just as soldiers develop some real training, they retire back to the civilian population. The border troops and commandos barely manage to guard the long Linowan frontier, with no real chance for significant victories. However, some Haltan strategists (including their secret Lunar patrons) believe that's the point: the Guard can defend Halta and strike at any concentration of enemy forces on its border, but the nation cannot expand beyond its existing borders faster than it can assimilate new populations.

## ORGANIZATION

Similar to many cultures in Creation, Halta's military structure echoes Shogunate models. Instead of fangs, scales, talons, wings, dragons and legions, however, the Haltans call

their army units cones, leaves, twigs, branches, trunks and trees. A Guard leaf usually has 25 soldiers while a tree has 2,000 troops or so. A border fort rarely boasts more than a 200-soldier branch of troops; an entire tree can occupy forts spread over 20 miles.


In commando units, ata-beasts are considered outside the normal organizational structure. They join commando units as needed. Most commando twigs have a mix of ata-beasts assigned to them, to allow leaves to tailor their contingents for reconnaissance, raiding, assassination or other missions.

## HALTAN COMMANDO LEAF

**Description:** As the offensive arm of the Haltan military, the commandos master strike-and-fade tactics. Within their forests, they are terrible foes; outside, they are merely excellent troops. Represent this by giving commandos abundant forest-oriented specialties in their Abilities, such as "Moving in Treetops" for Athletics or "Hidden In Vegetation" for Stealth.

The unit's Might comes from the various ata-beasts and san-beasts that fight alongside the unit. These animal partners





transmit messages between members (using monkeys or strix as runners), add striking power (from various predator species) and confer other advantages denied to exclusively human combatants. On the other hand, the animals slightly decrease the unit's Drill and Morale: their instincts sometimes do not accord with disciplined, coordinated combat.

Commandos sometimes team up with Fair Folk cataphracts and know the tactics of the Fae. In mass combat, these raksha warriors act as individual units or lead their own units of hobgoblins. Commandos who themselves possess gossamer armor and weapons can have a Might of 2. Such super-elite units would also have Morale and Drill one higher.

This unit could also represent skilled forest warriors from other Eastern cultures, though of course these soldiers would not have the Might from animal allies or raksha gear.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Gray and dark green camouflage pattern

**Motto:** "Caltia, Queen and Country."

**General Makeup:** 25 commandos armed with spears, chopping swords and four war boomerangs each, armored in reinforced buff jackets, accompanied by 12 to 15 ata-beast or san-beast partners

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3/4\* **Close Combat Damage:** 3/4\*

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 3

**Endurance:** 8 **Might:** 1 **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** \*Asterisked values represent the commandos' skill in Haltan forests. Commandos usually fight in skirmish formation, and preferably 20 yards above the ground. The unit certainly has two heroes ready to take command if the leader falls. Two commandos also act as sorcerers: these may be exceptional ata-beasts, such as a forest baboon who races through the branches to strike at an enemy commander with poisoned darts, or a commando with a minor Fair Folk artifact that lets him make some unusual ranged attack. None of the commandos are extras.

## THE LINOWAN

The Linowan military is almost a misnomer. Until recently, the Linowan throne made little effort to organize or regulate the various war bands and prides ostensibly under its rule. Chieftains and war leaders could gather forces and arrange them as they saw fit. Even now, most Linowan units are bands of warriors and champions, rather than organized forces of soldiers. They fight as a unit, but typically are neither well coordinated nor well drilled. Seasoned units often become quite disciplined, however—at least until battle is joined—and most are extremely skilled.

Until recently, the dispersed and informal organization of forces well suited the skirmishing war between the Linowan and their Haltan neighbors. The victories of the Bull of the North, however, have shaken Linowan war leaders. The

Linowans never won a single pitched battle against the icewalkers. Although even the trained might of the Tepet legions fell before the Bull's vast army and supernatural power, this consistent defeat causes many to re-evaluate their fundamental strategies.

## ARSENAL

Linowan warriors make extensive use of bows: a warrior who cannot draw a composite bow is hardly a warrior at all, no matter what his skill in other endeavors. Linowans regard infantry as merely archers who have run out of arrows and picked up spears or war clubs. They also use atlatls, but consider these weapons less worthy of a true warrior. Despite experience with Realm slingers, Linowans think of slings as tools for hunting, not serious weapons.

Linowans make little use of swords, other than long knives. Their warriors prefer spears, axes and war clubs with stone heads (treat as maces). They also favor light armor made from cured and stiffened hides, sometimes reinforced with plaquets of bone or layered horn (equal to buff jackets or reinforced buff jackets). A few champions and war leaders wear heavier armor obtained through trade. Linowans often carry shields of wood and leather, reinforced with metal bosses.

More organized and formal assemblages of Linowan soldiers—such as the Queen's personal war bands—may be equipped similar to Realm medium infantry... with the addition of composite bows. Stolen Haltan weapons and armor—particularly ironwood blades and most especially gossamer weapons—carry high value, both for their practical advantages and for the prestige in owning the weapons of the enemy.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Linowan war bands prefer hit-and-run raids and swarm tactics to fixed battles. They go to great lengths to avoid what civilized militaries would call a "stand-up fight." They fight from the tree line and from ambush, or use stealth and surprise to overwhelm an enemy position before the enemy soldiers have a chance to form up into ranks. Flanking maneuvers, skirmishing and feints are Linowan stock in trade. Their idea of siegecraft is to set war parties on every available path into or out of a settlement and try to kill anyone who tries to enter or leave. Horses would seem like a perfect match for the Linowans' fighting style—except that mounted combat doesn't work so well in forests. The Linowan never developed horse archery.

## DEFENSE

The Linowan's greatest defense is their kingdom's disjointed and disorganized nature. They have few strongholds of any importance. Enemy forces can disrupt trade routes and destroy villages... but trade routes can shift, villages seldom last more than a generation anyway and few Linowans treasure much besides their family and what they can carry. The kingdom's few cities exist as ceremonial centers and trading posts rather than real centers of government and population.



## OTHER ASSETS

The Linowan military makes relatively little use of Exalted champions or other powerful Essence-users, although many war bands travel with one or more shamans. When the military encountered dangers too great for mortal valor and their shamans' thaumaturgy—such as the Bull of the North—they called on the Realm. Since the disappearance of the Empress, and the fall of the Tepet legions, that support has been thin and begrudgingly provided.

## LINOWAN ARMY

The Linowan "Army" is more an assemblage of war bands. Although decades of Realm influence brought the ideas of combined arms, coherent formation and repetitive drilled maneuvers to the Linowans, most of their war bands are governed by individual prowess and personal charisma rather than strict discipline and adherence to a chain of command. They have exceptions—Queen Akra's personal war bands are organized around Realm lines and fight and drill as their Realm "advisors" direct—but they make up a small fraction of the Linowans' total might.

### ORGANIZATION

Linowan warriors are all volunteers, and make up a good deal of the population. Most Linowan warbands, however, have just 15 to 45 members, with only the largest surpassing 100 warriors. Larger units appear when great chieftains weld together as many as 20 smaller war bands. These hordes can reach the size of a legion, but never last for longer than a single battle.

### LINOWAN WAR BAND

**Description:** A typical Linowan raiding party. These warriors might attack a riverboat at night, raid into the Haltan forests to cut down a giant redwood, patrol the forests of their own country or serve as scouts and skirmishers for the Realm.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Motley

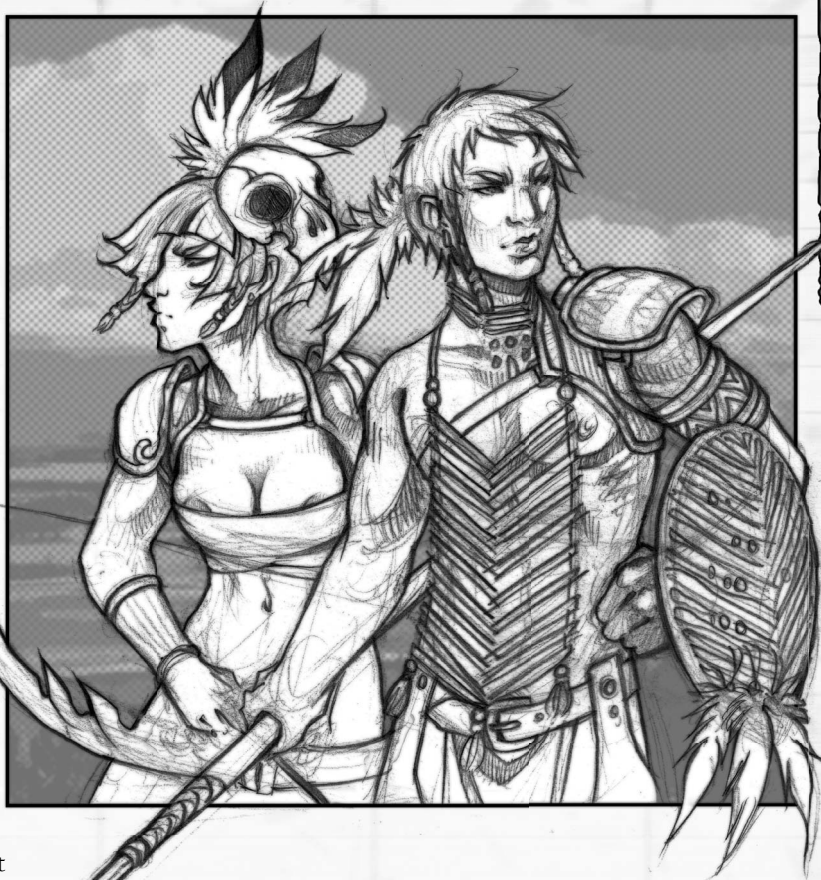
**Motto:** War cry

**General Makeup:** 50-some warriors in fighting leathers (treat as a buff jacket), armed with composite bows with broadhead arrows, two throwing axes or javelins each, a spear or war club (treat as a mace), and a knife

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 2



**Close Combat Attack:** 4    **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 4    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 4


**Formation:** Linowan always fight in skirmishing or unordered formation. The war band includes a "sorcerer"—actually a shaman who might provide a few tricks through thaumaturgy or negotiation with local spirits. Most members are extras.

### THE LINOWAN NAVY

There is no actual Linowan navy, but many warriors prowl the streams and rivers of their homeland in wooden and leather canoes. Linowan pirates sneak aboard anchored riverboats at night. A few bands build great war canoes that rival a bireme in size, to fight enemies upstream and down.

## PORT CALIN

Calin's military might flows with its shogun... and the noble family to which he assigns its patronage. In the hands of a mighty family that sees the advantages of a strong army, the soldiers of Calin are well paid, well armed, well drilled and treated with respect. The army declines when its patron aristocrats see it as an expensive and unprofitable "honor" they would rather do without.



Calin's navy receives backing that is more reliable. The ability to attach "inspection stipends" and "escort fees" upon local shipping brings at least some funds into a family's coffers. Calin's fleet captains feel more than a little resentment towards the Wood Fleet of the Realm, whose battle groups now cut into the fleet captains' racket: the Calinti dare not levy more than a pittance lest they drive trade to other ports. Still, the patron family can harass the shipping of political or trade rivals. The Great Families also value the prestige of maintaining one of Creation's few fleets that retain ships of First Age manufacture. Most of all, though, the Great Families value the mandatory funds that flow from the Shogun's purse to aid in the upkeep of those ancient hulls.

At times, the law enforcement arms of Calin and Marin Bay, called the Shogun's Bailiffs, have become nearly an army in their own right. Certainly, they can be the most profitable combat force in Calin, given the proper (if not always truthful) interpretation of various laws regarding asset forfeiture, import duties and the like.

Because Calin's shogun can change patronages nearly at whim, a crack military force can find itself all but disbanded in the course of a few short months—and hired back nearly to full fighting strength a year or two later.

## ARSENAL

Calinti military doctrine emphasizes siege warfare and troops are equipped accordingly. Standard issue arms include poleaxes and lances, short swords, heavy armor and shields. The army includes several specialized units. For instance, talons designed to smash enemy phalanxes wear articulated plate armor and wield great swords or sledges. Calinti artillerymen are also familiar with every form of siege engine known.

Two generations of neglect leave the Calinti with little training at archery. Missile troops are hired mercenaries, slingers or members of scale-sized units of scouts and skirmishers kept for reconnaissance and special operations.

Naval forces rely mostly on a mix of chopping swords, axes, spears and javelins for boarding actions. The bailiff battalions favor a combination of heavy armor (for those soldiers who haven't sold it, at least), slings and throwing batons for ranged work and something called a law baton for close combat.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Calin is famous for its fortifications, which rival those of Lookshy and Great Forks in their magnitude, though Calin doesn't back them up with Lookshy's firepower. Even in times when Calin neglects its army, strategists regard it as a difficult country to conquer. Calin responds to invaders by harvesting what crops are available, bringing citizens from outlying areas into the fortified towns, buttoning up the defenses and waiting for the enemy to get bored—or to lose so many soldiers from disease and counter-offenses that the invaders can no longer maintain the siege.

### LAW BATON

The law baton is short sword that can be locked into its leather-wrapped wooden scabbard by a set of pins. When locked in this fashion, the weapon acts like a club. With a Ready action, however, the wielder can draw it as a normal short sword. The Calinti treat law batons as much as a badge of office as a weapon, and do not sell them on the open market. Carrying a law baton when you are not a bailiff brings several weeks of impressment in a work gang, as well as a hefty fine (which can lead to more time in the work gang to pay off the fine).

On the offense, Calin again prefers the siege. Artillerists and combat engineers not only form an integral part of every Calinti legion, they know the prayers and thaumaturgies necessary to maintain a safe—and disease-free—encampment.

If caught in open battle, Calinti units are brutally hard to grind down, but their heavy armor and reliance on close formations means they move slowly. Still, they keep moving, slowly and nigh-unstoppably, to plow through the enemy lines.

## DEFENSE

Even small towns in Calin can boast of high, thick walls and extensive outworks, and the cities are nigh-impenetrable fortresses. This massive over-construction comes from generations of negotiation and favor-mongering between Great Families who seek to line their pockets by embezzling from massive public works projects. It's hard to argue with the results, though—a level of heavy fortification around each city of any size that is hard to compare.

## OTHER ASSETS

Calin's fleets include some of the only functional First Age warships outside of the fleets of the Realm and the Seventh Legion. Although Calin has only a handful of lighter vessels and one *Swift Midday Brilliance*-class light warship that lacks only its Essence weaponry, this little fleet is more than a match—when gathered—for almost anything other than a Realm battle group. When backed by the fearsome ranks of trebuchets and fortified moles arrayed around Calin's ports, the fleet might give even a Realm admiral reason for concern.

Calin has not so many Dragon-Blooded as Lookshy or Great Forks' profusion of other Essence-users. The country has enough to operate its small supply of Essence artillery and First Age ships, though. The Shogun feels sure he can counter most supernatural threats common to the Age of Sorrows, at least long enough for the army to deal with those supernaturals' mortal or near-mortal minions.

## CALIN'S ARMY

Calin calls its army the Invincible Steel Legions. Its current patron family is militarily powerful in its own right,

## CALIN'S NAVY

The Calinti navy continues much as it has. While little new construction has begun, the navy's patrons keep existing vessels in good repair. Crews are well paid and motivated—especially in their duties against pirates and smugglers, since the navy's patrons pay bounties for every pirate ship captured, and on the value of any contraband discovered.

## THE BAILIFFS

Calin's bailiffs face the opposite situation to their army counterparts. Their recent patrons have little use for the rule of law, and seek to choke the force of any legitimacy by not funding them. Most bailiffs are well trained and disciplined, but declining morale takes its toll. Increasing numbers of bailiffs sell the heavy armor and weapons provided by their former patrons, simply to keep themselves fed.

with a substantial house guard. They favor military might as an expression of national pride. They make sure that the "Invincibles" stay well equipped, but the army still rebuilds itself from an extended period of neglect.

Patriotism, however, does not obscure profit. The family rents out the Invincibles' artilleryists by the scale and by the month. They have traveled through half the East in the last five years, fighting for jade and silver in other peoples' wars... and incidentally gaining a good deal of military intelligence.

## ORGANIZATION

The Invincibles base their titles of ranks on the Shogunate military, but simplify it so the result looks much like the Realm's legions; the Invincibles don't use wing-sized units. Calin presently fields just four legions, mostly of heavy infantry, but each dragon has its own scale of artilleryists and each legion includes a separate dragon of combat engineers. Auxiliaries (often mercenaries) supply scouting, archery and other combat specialties. Conversely, Calinti artilleryists have built a reputation as the finest experts in siege warfare available (at a reasonable price, anyways).

### CALINTI RANK EQUIVALENTS

Realm Rank	Calinti Rank
Fanglord	Gochei
Scalelord	Chuzei
Talonlord	Taizei
Dragonlord	Kazei
Strategos	Taimyo

## CALIN HEAVY INFANTRY TALON

**Description:** Slow moving and nigh unstoppable except with massed artillery fire or Exalted interference, a heavy in-



fantry block like this may take forever to reach the battle—but when this talon does, it smashes anything more lightly armed and armored than itself. These soldiers are not as experienced or motivated as those found in other nations, or yet as skilled, but they are ready to risk much in defense of their homeland.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Silver and blue

**Motto:** "Invincible Calin"

**General Makeup:** 125 heavy infantry in plate-and-chain armor with tower shields, armed with polearms and chopping swords

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 3


**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** — **Ranged Damage:** —

**Endurance:** 6 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 3 (-4 mobility)

**Morale:** 3





**Formation:** A typical infantry unit in Calin—units like this are reinforced with pike blocks to either flank (to repel cavalry), and supported to the rear by slingers or (at a greater distance), artillery groups. Each talon has two relays and two junior officers as heroes. All but the commander and heroes are extras.

## SIJAN

To the casual observer in Creation, Sijan has no military force to speak of. Troops hired from the Seventh Legion patrol Sijan's borders, but they spend most of their time pursuing bandits and escorting funerary trains. A small garrison of Lookshy's Foreign Legion trains with the city-state's own Guard in a form of military diplomacy.

Few—within Sijan or without—see any reason for the city to maintain great units of troops. In all the Second Age, invaders garrisoned the funereal city only once. When the Morticians' Order grew tired of these troops from the Realm, the invaders were never seen again.

The city has a few visible defenses. The Black Watch forms the elite arm of the city's guard. Behind their dark-enameled plate armor, most are ghosts of ancient warriors. A wise general would count each of these dark warriors as the equal of 10 mortal men, but the city seems to have few of these grim champions.

Appearances are deceiving. In Creation, Sijan is a quiet city with relatively few living inhabitants. In the Underworld, Sijan is one of the great powers, with a population swollen with the dead from the Contagion and the Age of Sorrows. Sijan's great population and ghostly armies—second only to those of Stygia itself—leave the city still a desperate underdog in any battle against a Deathlord, but the Underworld's strategists afford Sijan better odds than almost anyone else.

Should it become necessary, Sijan could bring these forces to Creation. The city holds many small shadowlands through which the dead could enter Creation, not to mention the huge Black Chase nearby. The Mortician's Order sees no need to trouble anyone else with this information.

## ARSENAL

Sijan's forces in Creation exist for law enforcement, not war. While on patrol, Guard members wear reinforced buff jackets and carry staves and slashing swords. If girding themselves for conflict, they wear lamellar armor and carry spears and bucklers.

The nemissaries, Ghost-Blooded and thaumaturges of the Black Watch wear heavy armor of ancient make—typically articulated plate, plate-and-chain or superheavy plate armor, and often of superior construction. Some in the Watch carry artifact weapons such as daiklaves, dire lances or wrackstaves (see *Scroll of the Monk*, p. 160) of jade or (rarely) soulsteel. Most use *Exceptional* but conventional great swords, spears, polearms and black steel staves equal to tetsubos.

Sijan's underworld armies wield reliquary weapons and remembrances—those that have not equipped themselves with fangs, claws and other weapons through the art of Molation. Units are organized by era and type, and span the history of mortal warfare. Sijan can claim a few talons of soldiers trained in the Old Realm who carry grave-good versions of First Age weapons.

Such units cannot venture into Creation because their panoplies—mere shadows of reality—would crumble to dust with the dawn. Unlike the armies of the First and Forsaken Lion or the Mask of Winters, Sijan has not built up great stockpiles of mortal weapons for its ghostly armies.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Guard tries to break up violent quarrels, apprehend thieves and maintain the peace—preferably without creating any more clients for the Morticians' Order until the perpetrators are properly tried and convicted. The Guard members use their staves whenever possible, and draw swords only when they see no chance of negotiation, surrender or subdual.

The Black Watch, on the other hand, appears only when the situation has devolved into a hostage crisis or battle in the streets. Their great swords and crushing staves tend to end any conflict with distressing finality.

On the battlefield, the Black Watch act as (very) heavy infantry, using their Arcanoi and various thaumaturgical tricks to supplement their armor and weapons. The Black Watch is well suited to urban combat, but lack field support. Sijan has few troops trained and drilled in missile weapons (individuals may carry slings or bows, but there are no organized units). The city has few trained siege engineers or artilleryists. The city's forces in Creation are simply too small for combined infantry tactics. The Black Watch simply trusts in its heavy armor and supernatural nature to force its way to an enemy commander and rather literally decapitate the army.

## DEFENSE

Sijan has walls, if low ones, and towers, if minor ones. It relies more on its reputation and its location. Most would argue Sijan needs little else.

Much of the terrain around the City of the Dead consists of marshlands and moors, ill suited for military maneuvers and worse for encampments. The Plains of the Dead, south of the Avarice River, offer solid ground—and nobody with any military sense would bivouac there. To the north lies the Black Chase forest... a large shadowland where no one with basic sanity would go. All in all, Sijan's surroundings create a formidable challenge for any army that would besiege the city.

Sijan's reputation is, if anything, even more fearsome than its environs. Everyone in the East—possibly everyone in Creation—knows tales of people who crossed the will of the Morticians' Order, and then disappeared without a trace—or, in the case of tomb robbers, was left as a grisly reminder the living should not trouble the dead. Between

this, and the fate of those Realm forces that occupied Sijan during the wars for the Scavenger Lands, trying to conquer Sijan is largely seen as futile.

## OTHER ASSETS

Sijan's populace holds many thaumaturges, alchemists and other magicians—even a few sorcerers and necromancers. Its walls, if low, carry potent wards against intrusion of all sorts. After Great Forks, Sijan is probably the most magically potent city in the East, eclipsing even Lookshy in all matters other than military artifacts, but this knowledge is haphazard and scattered through many libraries, private collections and mortuary archives.

Sijan's relationship with Lookshy is a study in cool not-quite neutrality, but is solid despite—or perhaps because—of this. Sijan cannot count on Seventh Legion forces to come at the city's call—and certainly not for free—but the mortuary city receives a level of respect that does not appear in all Legion contracts. This has a great deal to do with Sijan's relationship to the Fallen Legion of Dehelesh.

### THE FALLEN LEGION

The Seventh Legion looks after its own, in death as in life. While the Immaculate Philosophy restricts the types and quantity of grave goods, the Legion does not send its soldiers destitute to the Underworld. Whenever possible, the Legion buries each soldier with basic arms, provisions and goods appropriate to her rank and station, in case she becomes a ghost.

The dead of Lookshy—called the Fallen Legion of Dehelesh in the Underworld—can expect little reverence from their still-living comrades in arms. Immaculate doctrine forbids any real ancestor cult. Families and regiments keep tombs clean and in good shape, and burn incense on the appropriate days, but few Lookshyans perform any greater observances.

This may change. As the General Staff seeks weapons to use against the Mask of Winters, their thoughts turn to their honored—if not revered—ancestors. They don't know how many of their dead serve in Dehelesh's military, but they don't doubt their skill and determination either. The General Staff makes inquiries through the Morticians' Order. While negotiations with those proud warrior-ghosts proceed slowly, neither side doubts that the Fallen Legion will rise in defense of Lookshy, should it become necessary. Even in death, their duty is clear. It merely remains to be seen how much it will cost the General Staff.

## THE BLACK WATCH

The Black Watch chiefly consists of nemissaries—war ghosts trained to possess cadavers. Sijan's necrosurgeons create powerful bodies for ghosts that have refined their

combat skills for centuries. The nemissaries are strong, fast and utterly fearless, for their bodies are merely garments they discard at will.

Other members of the Black Watch are either powerful thaumaturges—usually trained in the Art of the Dead—or Ghost-Blooded warriors. While these members seldom equal the physical or preternatural power of their nemissary comrades, their understanding of mortal society and their magical prowess (more potent in Creation than most Arcanoi of the Dead) make them valued comrades in arms. Living Watchmen often wield artifact weapons and armor to aid them in battle.

### BLACK WATCH FANG

**Description:** This fang of Black Watch guardsmen forms a typical response force for a major disturbance, an escort unit for a highly regarded funereal train or guards for a valued guest or important prisoner. A unit like this might also accompany a Seventh Legion border patrol to act as oversight and liaison, or watch over a special forces unit that enters the Black Chase on some mission—with or without the unit's foreknowledge.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Black and black

**Motto:** "Surrender."

**General Makeup:** Five nemissary fighters, in superheavy plate, carrying great swords

**Overall Quality:** Super-Elite

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 5

**Close Combat Attack:** 5    **Close Combat Damage:** 5

**Ranged Attack:** —    **Ranged Damage:** —





**Endurance:** 10 **Might:** 3 **Armor:** 5 (-4 mobility)

**Morale:** 5

**Formation:** Nemissaries of this caliber are never extras. The five warriors move between formations as needed, and support each other in battle. They often coordinate attacks or move to surround an individual foe.

## MOUNT METAGALAPA

The military—such as it is—of Mount Metagalapa consists of two units, the hawkriders and the Guard. Hawkriders and their hawkmen allies form the striking arm of the Mount's military force, while the Guard defends the mountain itself. Neither force is particularly large: the hawkriders number slightly over 100, with each commanding a small scale of hawkmen soldiers; and the active Guard has about 700 soldiers. The mount's entire populace trains for combat, though. Everyone fit to fight forms a reserve cadre. It remains a tiny militia for a tiny nation; Mount Metagalapa's human population is only 4,600, with perhaps twice as many hawkpeople. Only the hawkriders can project power beyond the mountain itself.

Mount Metagalapa's unique situation dictates this structure. The number of hawks available and the number of people small enough to ride them limit the number of hawkriders. The Guard exists to defend against wild hawkmen and exiled rogues. In similar fashion, the populace is armed and drills in combat to defend themselves against attack, or to uphold their position in a dueling society, not (primarily) because they fear invasion.

The hawkriders raid the surrounding lands because Mount Metagalapa has a resource problem: the Metagalapans cannot produce everything they need to maintain themselves on a single mountain that hovers several hundred feet in the air. Most Metagalapans prefer to trade their metalwork for vegetables, cloth and other products, but what they cannot bargain for, they take, and with a (mostly) clean conscience. After all, they have a right to survive.

## ARSENAL

Hawkriders use lightweight weapons and armor. With one hand on a weapon and one hand on a riding-hawk's reins, they cannot carry shields. A typical hawkrider's panoply consists of a buff jacket, a pair of lances (one as a backup), a composite bow with two or three quivers of arrows (with arrowheads selected based on the threat they expect to face) and a short or slashing sword with a long dagger as backup weapon.

Hawkmen also favor lightweight weapons. They prefer javelins and often carry half a dozen in a chest scabbard. Hawkmen also frequently carry throwing darts (equal to a thrown dagger, but not usable in melee) as a backup weapon when they run out of javelins. They do not wear armor at all.

Conversely, the Guard wears heavy armor. Even field skirmishers wear reinforced breastplates, while the heaviest forces wear articulated or even superheavy plate. They choose weapons suited for combat in the confines of buildings and tunnels, such as chopping swords, axes and spears. The





Metagalapans have obtained a small number of firewands and flame pieces (and duplicated them), but firedust is precious so they are held in reserve. Metagalapan weapons and armor are often *Superior* (Fine and occasionally *Exceptional*), owing to the excellent quality alloys available, and the advanced knowledge and workmanship of Metagalapan blacksmiths.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The typical hawkrider attack begins with screaming hawkmen tossing javelins at their selected targets while hawkriders pick off leaders, runners and other important targets with arrow fire. Both elements avoid closing to melee range—or even to a range where ground targets can make accurate strikes at aerial targets—for as long as possible. If the hawkriders cannot drive off or destroy all resistance before landing, they swoop down to charge with their lances while the hawkmen pick up rocks from nearby and drop them on targets, or swoop down and try to pick up enemy soldiers and drop them.

Only once all resistance is crushed or fled do the Metagalapans call in the great rocs to load cargo. These giant condors are too precious to risk in combat, but too useful to leave in their aeries. Their loadmasters and riders have

orders to lift off at the first sign of trouble—even if it means leaving loaders or raiders on the ground.

Hawkrider raids take *everything*. Just as the shepherd knows not to shear his flock too closely, the Metagalapans make sure they do not leave villages and merchants so destitute that they starve or relocate. Better, the Metagalapans think, to take only what their victims can afford to lose—or close to it, anyway—than to risk losing another source of resources.

## DEFENSE

Mount Metagalapa floats several hundred feet from the ground. Most plans to attack the mountain founder on that salient fact.

Assuming an army has First Age flying vehicles, Haslanti airboats or other aerial transport, Metagalapa's terrain consists of a central peak and several sub-peaks and valleys. Conventional forces are of little use on this rugged ground: the largest valley is but a few hundred yards wide at its flattest point, and the peaks are more suited to mountain goats than maneuvering soldiers. Faced with attack, the Metagalapans can retreat to the extensive mines, forcing the invader to engage in tunnel fighting, pushing through every deadfall trap the Metagalapan engineers have time to improvise.

## OTHER ASSETS

Beyond the giant hawks and rocs of their air force, Metagalapa has few extraordinary resources. Many human Metagalapans study thaumaturgy, but they concentrate on the art of Husbandry (for breeding their birds). Some lines of God-Blooded and Terrestrial heritage run through their veins, but they do not run thick—only a dozen or so Terrestrials live on the Mount, and half of them are Scavenger Lands outcastes or retired Seventh Legion officers. Perhaps twice as many God-Blooded have taken up residence or were born on Metagalapa.

The Seventh Legion is Mount Metagalapa's truly extraordinary resource, but it is a remote one. Although small units of reconnaissance teams or Rangers frequently visit the Mount on training exercises, reinforcements or relief forces from Lookshy would take a week to arrive by skyship, unless diverted from a closer Redoubt.

## HAWKRIDERS

The hawkriders of Metagalapa train from a young age in the use of weapons and the art of handling their tremendous mounts. War hawks have limited carrying capacity, and so their riders must be small and tough. They are excellent archers, but lack the close combat skills common in "Earthward" forces, other than with their lances—close combat is for dueling or desperate circumstances, not something for which the riders practice intensively.

Their hawkmen "infantry," while instinctive warriors, are not great soldiers. They are somewhat distractible, and easily (if not reliably) intimidated or frightened by things they don't understand. Hawkmen are brave, however, and more likely

### AERIAL COMBAT: THE DIVING THROW

See Chapter Three for how aerial combat affects weapon ranges. A combatant who himself flies (or rides an agile flying creature) can use a special maneuver: the diving throw.

A Diving Throw takes time to perform. First, the character must fly downward at top speed, in the aerial equivalent of a Dash action. On the character's next action, she can hurl a Thrown weapon (or a flurry of such weapons). This uses a normal attack roll, but all ranges increase by 50% and damage increases by +2 dice (bashing or lethal, as appropriate to the weapon). The character can perform more than one Diving Throw, still descending at Dash speed all the while. At the end, however, her player rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) for the character to break out of the barely-controlled plummet. Success means the character takes a Dash action while regaining control of her flight. Failure means the character falls for a Miscellaneous action (still at Dash speed) before she can try again to regain control. The difficulty equals the number of consecutive Diving Throws the character performed, plus the number of previously failed rolls to regain control. If the worst happens, see **Exalted**, pages 126–127, for the effects of falling and hitting.

A character cannot use a Diving Throw with slings (which work differently enough to be invalid), boomerangs, nets or needles. This maneuver does not work with gliders.

to retreat to evaluate an unusual or unknown situation—especially if forcefully lead—than to flee altogether.

### HAWKRIDER RAIDING SCALE

**Description:** A typical raiding party consists of five to 10 scales of hawkmen, each led by three hawkriders. The unit's Might represents its capacity to attack from the air.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Blue and white

**Motto:** "DIIIVVE!"

**General Makeup:** 22 hawkmen armed with javelins and darts, led by three hawkriders on war hawks, wearing breastplates and armed with composite bows (mix of arrows), a pair of lances, slashing swords and daggers

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 2 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3

**Ranged Damage:** 2 (3 on a Diving Throw)

**Endurance:** 5 **Might:** 1 **Armor:** 0 (-0 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** Hawkmen are skittish and easily flustered in combat—bold displays of heavy force can cause the unit to disperse, but rarely will they actually flee combat, instead rising up into the clouds to regroup. Hawkmen are frequently extras—hawkriders almost never are. Humans and hawkmen prefer skirmishing formation.

Two of the hawkriders are treated as sorcerers for purposes of mass combat, using their bows to attack special targets. If the human hawkriders break from their hawkman troops and regroup into a small scale for a lance charge, their Close Combat Attack rating is 3, and Damage is 5. This tactic is seldom used more than once per engagement.

## THE HUNDRED KINGDOMS

The Hundred Kingdoms have armies as patchwork as the region itself. They range from feudal structures in which each minor lordling owes a tithe of soldiers to the daimyo he serves to "democracies" with universal service to every sort of hired mercenaries.

Many of the Hundred Kingdoms settle disputes through duels between mercenary champions. The system often suffices when the nations' conflicts arise from wounded pride or resource disputes: what country claims a particular farm or a monarch's broken promise to marry her son to another monarch's daughter. Dueling also lets many of these little nations reduce their armies to personal guards and local law enforcement. If the city-state suddenly needs an army, it raises citizen levies (often ill-trained and ill-equipped) or it hires mercenaries.

Other kingdoms in the region raise levies of a wholly different order. These little countries hire Seventh Legion instructors or other mercenaries to train their yeomanry in partisan warfare, guerrilla tactics and battlefield drill. The citizen-soldiers attend monthly drill assemblies or regular mandatory archery shoots. In some of the wealthier and stabler kingdoms, the citizenry even a small stipend for drill attendance. A handful of countries even allow—or encourage—their citizenry to keep arms and armor in the home, to allow a quick mustering of the militia in case of sudden attack.

The Hundred Kingdoms are so diverse that prudent strategists never assume that the city-states of the central East are easy targets. While some impoverished countries can barely muster a wing of troops deserving of the name, others can turn out military units that are of good order, decently equipped and willing to lay down their lives in defense of their homeland.

No sample militaries are provided for the Hundred Kingdoms. Instead, use military units from other countries, from **The Compass of Celestial Directions—The Blessed Isle** or the various **Compass of Terrestrial Directions** books.





## CHAYA

The quiet Republic of Chaya has no military and needs none, for much the same reason as Sijan: only a raving lunatic would try to conquer this little country. Unlike Sijan, the conquering would be easy. Chaya has no border fortresses, only a few customs-houses on the main roads. The placid people would barely resist an invader. But then an invader would have to *occupy* Chaya . . .

A century and a half ago, the God-Blooded warlord Erushon of Cho-Holuth conquered Chaya and made it part of his short-lived empire. He garrisoned it with 10,000 troops. When the Chayan flame-trees next bloomed, the entire population rose up and tore his soldiers apart. Erushon waited for Resplendent Fire to end, then led another 20,000 soldiers to punish the Chayans. Perhaps the flame-trees bloomed long that year, for the Chayans remained in frenzy. Erushon did not return from Cho-Holuth, and neither did many of his soldiers.

Since then, military historians have pointed to Chaya as exemplifying the ultimate power of the popular uprising. No one since has tried to conquer the land with no soldiers.

## FOREST TRIBES

The forest tribes of the Eastern reaches and the South-eastern jungles rarely have anything like a formal military structure—but they rarely need one. Tribes finish their battles quickly... or string them out into generations-long series of raids and counter-raids. Few outsiders care to conquer distant tribes whose greatest wealth lies in the alchemically useful plants and animals that surround them. Beyond the actions of predators, spirits and the Fair Folk present the major threats to most forest tribes, and the tribes often can propitiate these predators through sacrifice and obeisance, or avoid them by going somewhere else. Nevertheless, Eastern tribes sometimes fight each other on a scale one could describe as war.

## ARSENAL

Many tribes favor javelins, atlatl, darts and the occasional bow for ranged weapons, and a variety of clubs, axes and stabbing spears for melee. Some tribes have limited access to metals and can replace flint spear points or arrowheads with bronze or steel. Others trade for steel axe heads, spear tips, knives and swords. On the other hand, some tribes lack access even to workable stone: their spears and javelins end in points of fire-hardened wood, bone, large thorns or spines taken from various beasts. Armor—when worn at all—consists of leather, possibly reinforced with wood, bone, horn or bits of traded metal.

Southeastern tribes in particular are notorious for using blowguns and the deadly toxins that their jungles supply in such abundance. Metal weapons would be little use, even if they were available, because they corrode so quickly. Weapons impervious to rust and rot, made from First Age alloys, Chiaroscuran glass and the like, are highly prized.

When available, they are held by the tribe's toughest and most favored warriors.

Many Eastern tribes know some degree of thaumaturgy. They possess a blend of natural lore, wisdom gleaned from spirits, and the wide variety of alchemical resources available so close to the Pole of Wood. Leading warriors often carry a walkaway or other talisman, and have access to a variety of alchemical brews and poisons to enhance themselves and cripple their enemies.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Forest tribes make no formal study of strategy or tactics; they learn from their environment, and learn well. Tribal warriors tend to attack suddenly, from ambush, and then vanish into deep undergrowth to attack again moments or hours later. Pursuing them leads to a series of traps, predator's lairs and other hazards designed to wear the chaser down, disable them—or kill.

How tribes war against each other depends on the enemy's nature. They treat battles against strangers as wars of survival. If one side does not run away, they fight to the last man, woman and child. They prefer ranged combat if possible, so they can take advantage of cover and concealment, especially if they face greater numbers or better weapons.

On the other hand, battles against neighbors are usually about dominance and submission. Displays of prowess and courage matter more than killing anyone. A "battle" may be a series of duels while the two tribes yell insults at each other, or the warriors carry colorful coup-sticks instead of real weapons. One tribe might leap out from ambush to beat a rival tribe's members black and blue. Few actions receive more honor than counting coup against a sleeping foe in the middle of his encampment—and getting out without being beaten. When the warriors do fight for real, typically just a few people die on both sides. Everyone has proven his courage, and both sides have a grievance with which to justify the next battle.

## DEFENSE

Most forest tribes rely on security through obscurity. Only their closest neighbors have even heard of them. Forest tribes also tend to disguise their settlements. Outsiders can march right past a forest tribe encampment, and never know they were close.

## OTHER ASSETS

Depending on a tribe's proximity to the Wyld, forest tribes may acquire potent supernatural plants and animals, thaumaturgical aids or useful mutations. Very often, they know of especially dangerous locations—Wyld pockets, uncapped demesnes, lairs of horrendous beasts and the like—to which they can lure enemies with fair certainty they will not return. Remote tribes also may enjoy uncommonly close relations with patron gods, elementals or Lunar Exalted, or serve Fair Folk nobles.



## TRIBAL HUNTERS

Quiet as ghosts until—or even as—they strike, the hunters of the forest tribes are masters of stealth and tracking. They move as quietly in the treetops as on the ground. Often the first hint of their presence is when blowgun darts come hissing out of the canopy. Most hunting parties avoid direct conflict if they can help it. By the standards of civilized militias, their fighting style is rough and chaotic. This hit-and-run, disorganized style suits their home terrain, however, and hunters can inflict substantial damage on interlopers.

### ORGANIZATION

Tribal war bands often consist of teams of hunters who work well together, led by a hunt-master or war chief. These bands form a tribe's main defense against its enemies, as well as its scouts, hunters and enforcers of the tribal will and rule. Each band operates independently, but can cooperate with other bands when the tribe faces invasion.

### TRIBAL HUNTING PARTY

**Description:** Seven hunters of a Southeastern jungle tribe. They paint their bodies in camouflage designs and wear a variety of small ornaments of bone and feathers. Each one carries a walkaway.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** None (body paint)

**Motto:** Bird calls used as signals

**General Makeup:** Seven hunters in loincloths, armed with spears, clubs, blowguns and darts envenomed with arrow-frog toxin

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 1

**Drill:** 2

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 4    **Ranged Damage:** 1

**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 1    **Armor:** 0

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** A typical forest tribe might be able to gather three to five units of this type, while larger tribes might have dozens (and larger war parties, akin to those of the Linowan). They fight in skirmish formation in melee, or unordered formation as they shoot darts from hiding.

## THE SCAVENGER LANDS

The old River Province is really its own sector of Creation. Even more than the rest of the East, the River Province sees every sort of fighting from guerilla uprisings to Essence artillery barrages. **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands** already describes the militaries of this region's principal states in detail. However, readers may find this summary useful.

### LOOKSHY

Lookshy is famous throughout Creation for its Dragon-Blooded soldier-savants and its magitech arsenal—the city-state that spits in the eye of the mighty Realm. Lookshy suffers defeats... but not many. Devoting its entire society and population to war seems to have paid off, militarily and economically, for Seventh Legion units fight for pay throughout the East.

Notable classes of soldiers (and sample units) from Lookshy include the following:

- **Second Field Force Heavy Infantry Talon:** Typically wear lamellar armor and carry slashing swords and shields (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, pp. 58-59).

- **Second Field Force Archer Scale:** Wear lamellar armor and carry strongbows (see p. 133) and short swords (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, p. 59).

- **Seventh Legion Ashigaru:** Elite mortal troops equipped with artifact armor and weapons. Each Seventh Legion wing includes one talon of ashigaru (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, p. 59).

- **Seventh Legion Gunzosha:** Mortal soldiers magically and surgically bonded to artifact armor of astounding power (see **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands**, pp. 59-60).



- **First Field Force Ranger Fang:** Highly trained specialists in infiltration, reconnaissance, assassination and other covert activities (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 60).

- **Seventh Legion Artillerist Talon:** Soldier-technicians, often Dragon-Blooded, who operate artifact siege weapons. Each Seventh Legion dragon includes one artillerist talon (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 60).

- **Seventh Legion Justicar Scale:** Civilian and military police with lamellar armor and slashing swords (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, pp. 60-61).

- **Seventh Legion Warstrider Fang:** The heaviest of all heavy infantry, backed with rangers, ashigaru or gunzoshu, and sorcerer-technicians. Each dragon includes two warstrider fangs with support personnel (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 61).

- **Wai-Tan Junai and Shugan-Junai:** Sorcerer-engineers and sorcerer-technicians who maintain Lookshy's artifact arsenal and perform battlefield sorcery (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 61).

The Seventh Legion excels at fast attack, guerrilla warfare, out-maneuvering and destroying larger, slower forces. The legion can quickly slow and halt enemy advances. The small, thin-spread companies are not so good at holding ground, outside Lookshy's own borders. Lookshy's soldiers prefer to avoid such missions.

Tactically, Seventh Legion officers prefer to fight inside their opponent's decision loop. They begin the next operation before the enemy commander knows about the first one. This often leaves stodgier enemies several steps behind, confused and shaken, until Lookshy strikes the killing blow. Lookshy officers try to take the long view of a campaign: they can lose skirmishes, even battles, so long as they win the war. On the other hand, training elite soldiers and equipping them with magitech weapons costs a great deal. Lookshy literally cannot afford to lose many soldiers... which means that Seventh Legion commanders are willing to lose battles so long as their allies do the dying.

Super-elite units such as the Rangers and dragon warriors often perform sabotage and assassination missions as a way to end a conflict quickly. More than one would-be daimyo has woken to find the head of his former general on the pillow beside him, and a Seventh Legion Ranger telling him that further action would be... unwise.

## MARUKAN

Marukan's military is strong and mobile. Only the Guard units, devoted to defense and local operations, are infantry. Marukan's other forces all operate from horseback. The country's ability to muster highly trained and motivated levies at a moment's notice makes the Marukani clans exceptionally hard to conquer. Marukan allies with Lookshy.

On the other hand, the Council of Elders has trouble calling up effective levies when the range towns do not face immediate threat. Marukan enjoys a militia that surpasses those of most nations, but it soon disperses when a threat subsides. Gathering the militia becomes especially difficult when a clan's riders believe their own territory faces danger—without the promise of substantial payment, anyway. Mercenary companies of Marukani cavalry, however, ride the length and breadth of the East.

The four classes of Marukani warriors (and sample units) are as follows:

- **Arrows Scale:** Mounted archers in lamellar armor with composite bows or, less often, firewands (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 79).

- **Guard Scale:** Medium infantry in lamellar armor, carrying spears, chopping swords and bucklers (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 78).

- **Hammer Scale:** Heavy cavalry wearing lamellar armor and wielding lances and maces (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 79).


- **Lancer Scale:** Fast skirmishers in lamellar armor, dismounting to fight with swords, maces, short spears or other weapons (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, pp. 78-79).

The lighter Lancers and Arrows chivvy and drive enemy units into traps, often between bogs or badlands and the heavier (and slower) Hammer units, or conduct slashing surprise attacks into enemy encampments. Invaders who attack range towns often find that while they square off against the Guards, the local cavalry strikes from the rear. Circuit riders can gather into fast-moving units of saboteurs and guerrilla fighters—and they know every detail of a wide swath of terrain. The quality of Marukani horses, the close relationship between the horselords and their steeds, and their familiarity with their lands make the Marukani cavalry one of the most feared—and most respected—in Creation.

## NEXUS

Mercenary brigades form the basis of this city-state's defense—after the fearsome reputation of the city's Emissary, a mystical power whose limits no man knows. As a result, the power and effectiveness of the city's military depends on how much the Council of Entities wants to spend on any given altercation. If the Council of Entities feels sufficiently threatened, an enemy could face... anything.

This makes it difficult to grant any common tactics or quality to the soldiers of Nexus. Truly wretched mercenary companies do not survive long. On the other hand, the greatest mercenary companies tend to make camp in the Hundred Kingdoms, Calin or Lookshy itself, in the famous Hexagon district. Still, 15 major companies operate in and from Nexus, and only the Guild and the Emissary know how



many minor companies call it their home base. Notable major companies include the following:

- **Bronze Pioneers:** Mixed light and heavy infantry in bronze lamellar armor, with auxiliary archers and cavalry; specialists in urban combat and riot control (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, pp. 36-37).

- **Hooded Executioners:** Diverse mix of light and heavy infantry, along with slingers, archers and medium cavalry; frequently hired for police work (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 36).

- **Iron Brotherhood:** A bit of everything, from siege engineers to martial artists, all highly trained (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 37).

- **Nightarrows:** Medium infantry, foot archers, horse archers, slingers and javelineers; guards the city's parks and performs executions/assassinations for the Council of Entities (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 37).

- **Nighthammer Iron League:** Light infantry armed with clubs, knives, staves and spears; budget security for neighborhoods (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 37).

## GREAT FORKS

The battle of Mishaka destroyed the City of Festivals' mortal military, and it still hasn't fully rebuilt. Great Forks is all but incapable of conducting conventional warfare beyond its borders. On the other hand, gods make up a major fraction of the city's population, and many would fight to protect their city. Great Forks also boasts many God-Blooded masters of sorcery, thaumaturgy, supernatural martial arts and miscellaneous godly battle Charms. Add in some resident Fair Folk, outcaste Terrestrial Exalted, Wyld mutants (in this city, who can tell?) and other odd folk with strange powers.

As a result, while Great Forks has little ordered military might, a wide variety of champions might come to the city's aid in war. Should civic loyalty fail, the city's divine rulers, the Three, know how to hire, blackmail or bribe those champions into performing needed operations beyond the city walls.

Great Forks is left with the following forces (and sample units):

- **Great Forks Irregulars:** 2,000 half-trained soldiers with chopping swords, buff jackets, target shields and healing potions (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 92).

- **City Archers:** A dragon of half-trained archers with buff jackets and targeting talismans (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 92)

## GREYFALLS

This city-state, one of the furthest East in the Scavenger Lands, is one of the Realm's most isolated satrapies. The city has long relied on the Realm for protection. As the Realm

pulls back its own forces, the local commander has trained a whole legion of locals to Realm standards, supplementing the legion of Realm troops and house troops left to him. If the Realm cuts Greyfalls loose entirely, the commander might become a local warlord.

- **23rd Legion, Fifth Dragon:** Medium infantry in lamellar armor with spears or swords (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 124).

- **4th Cathak Lion Talon:** House troops; light infantry with buff jackets, javelins and slashing swords, plus auxiliary slingers, archers and cavalry scouts (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 124).

## THORNS

Every general fears fighting necromancers and the armies of the Deathlords. Neither conventional warfare nor guerilla tactics work well against the dead. The dead need little or no supply train. Shows of force do not cow them. Terror tactics do not frighten them. They do not hesitate in the face of suddenly overwhelming numbers. The only path to their hearts is through those of their leaders—and in the case of the Deathlords and their Abyssal field commanders, they apparently have none.

Ever since the Mask of Winters conquered Thorns, commanders throughout the East have pondered how to fight his armies of ghosts and zombies. Most reach the conclusion that they can't. Even the high command of the Seventh Legion isn't sure that their magitech arsenal could stop the Mask of Winters' armies, at least without using up the entire arsenal.

Aside from the corpse-behemoth Juggernaut, who's worth an army in its own right, the Mask of Winters has the following forces:

- **The Shambling Dead:** Mindless zombie hordes led by nemissaries or specially-created intelligent zombies (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, pp. 109-110).

- **The Pale Hosts:** War ghosts with axes, target shields and lamellar armor, limited chiefly by the difficulties of manifesting in Creation (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, pp. 110-111).

- **The Thorns Army:** Infantry with chain hauberks and chopping swords, and archers in buff jackets; these poor bastards know their job is to die in battle so the Mask of Winters can make ghosts and zombies from them (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, pp. 111-112).

- **The Thornguard:** Armed and armored like the regular army and integrated within it, but brainwashed into fanatic loyalty to the Mask of Winters.

- **Walking War Machines:** Juggernaut is only the most spectacular of the Mask of Winters' necromantic creations. Many other horrors await revelation (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*, p. 112).



CONCUSSION  
TEAMS, STAND  
READY!



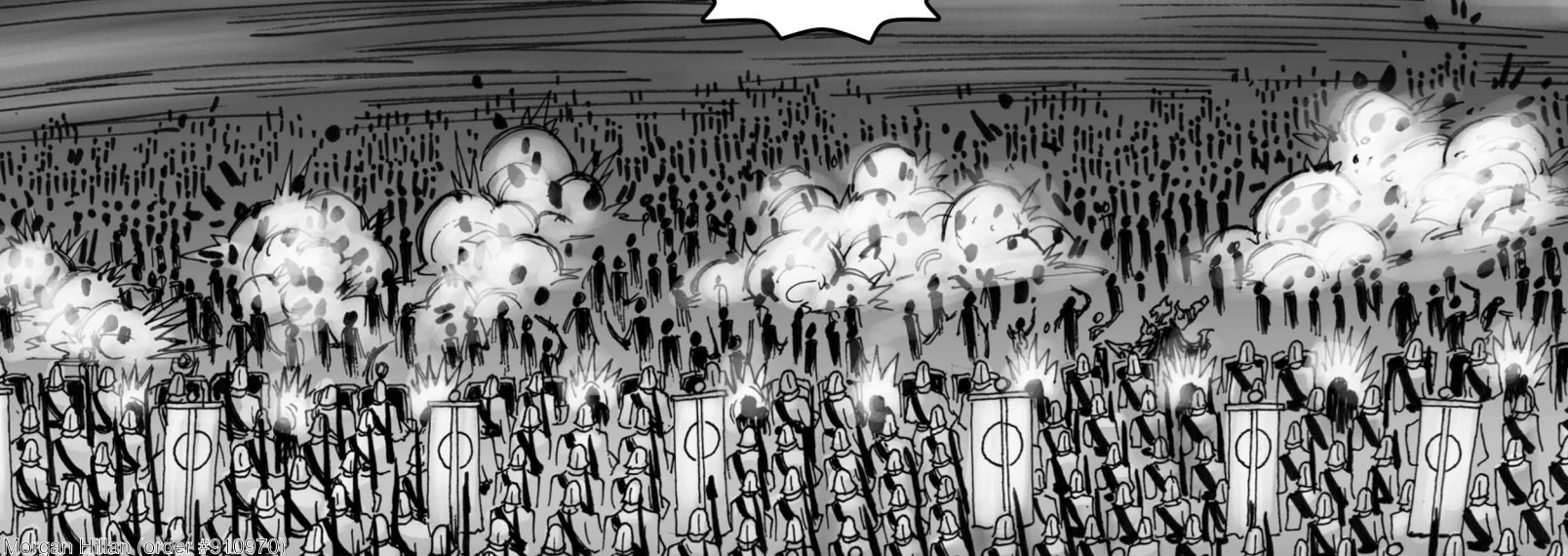
FRONT LINE,  
OPEN RANKS!  
CONCUSSION TEAMS  
IN POSITION!



TAKE AIM!



FIRE!





## CHAPTER FIVE

# THE FAILING CENTER


Creation's fifth Direction, the Center, holds only one nation: the Realm, mightiest empire of the Second Age. For seven centuries, the Realm dominated the world. If the Realm did not win every battle or every war, opposing commanders knew this was only because the Empress did not believe that victory was worth the cost to her own people. If she had wanted, she could have entered the Imperial Manse, activated the Realm Defense Grid and destroyed any army, city or nation that stood against her. Casting the Grid's power so far from the Realm, however, would cause earthquakes throughout the Blessed Isle. And so, for seven centuries the nations of the Threshold knew that any hope of freedom lay only with the forbearance of the distant Empress—that she would not harm her own country to destroy theirs. Some people felt gratitude for her mercy. Others hated her for it. All their warriors' strength, courage and sacrifice meant nothing: they won only because the Empress *let* them win.

The populations trampled beneath the boots of the Realm's legions might express a different view. The Realm

can point to countless victories achieved without the Realm Defense Grid or other fantastical superweapons. The Realm had more than the Grid: the Realm had the Scarlet Dynasty of Exalted demigods, each armed with magic and a legend in her own right. Under the Dynasty's command, the Realm's legions marched through lands in every Direction and its navies dominated the sea. The Empress didn't need the Grid to rule half the world.

But then the Empress disappeared. A Deathlord rose in the West to rule the shadowed isles of Skullstone. Another Deathlord marched from the East to conquer the city of Thorns, right across the Inner Sea from the Realm. An Anathema warlord gathered a barbarian horde and destroyed the legions of the Great House of Tepet. And one by one, the Realm began calling its legions home to the Blessed Isle—not to protect it, but for the Great Houses to keep near as they prepare to battle each other for the throne.

Perhaps the Realm could defeat the Silver Prince, the Mask of Winters or the Bull of the North, if it really tried.



Perhaps it could destroy them all. Now it seems more likely that the Realm may destroy itself.

Until that civil war begins, however, the Realm remains mighty despite the confusion and dissention that unravel the government. Many legions still occupy the Threshold, the naval fleets still sail and many Dynasts still lead them. Mere fragments of the Realm's power remain more than a match for most militaries in Creation.

### OTHER REALM UNITS

Just as **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Blessed Isle** describes the Realm's legions in some detail, the book also provides Storytellers with several other mass combat units.

- **Guardians of the Realm Scale:** Mortal police of the Blessed Isle's cities.

- **Imperial Force Scale:** Elite police led by Dynasts and equipped with artifacts.

- **Imperial Legion Heavy Infantry Scale:** Legionnaires in reinforced breastplates, with target shields and spears.

- **Imperial Legion Medium Infantry Talon:** Legionnaires in lamellar armor with pot helms and slashing swords.

- **Imperial Ranged Skirmishers Dragon:** Auxiliary archers and slingers in reinforced buff jackets.

- **Imperial Warstrider Fang:** Five Dragon-Bloods in common warstriders.

- **Silent Scale:** Magically enhanced, voiceless guards from the Empress's special Legion of Silence.

- **Vermilion Legion Wing:** Heavy infantry from the Red Piss Legion.

## ENVIRONMENT

The Blessed Isle occupies the Center of Creation. The Blessed Isle's area exceeds that of any other nation in the world. The balanced influences of the Elemental Poles make the Blessed Isle a temperate and fertile land. The Realm's population surpasses that of any other Direction's nations put together—perhaps any *two* directions. They are not mere peasants, either: the Realm has countless artisans who manufacture anything the human mind can imagine, and in vast quantities.

### BIG POPULATION, BIG MILITARY

The Realm's enormous population and industrial base are the principal influences on how the Realm makes war. The Realm can recruit huge armies without half trying, and set its standards high. Only the need to send armies by ship limits the size of the armies the Realm sends into the Threshold—and the Realm can build a lot of ships. What's more, the Realm can spend much more on armor, weapons and other equipment than most other countries can afford.

Realm military strategy starts with the assumption of a large, highly trained army of soldiers who are stronger, quicker and tougher than any likely opposition, with better weapons and armor.

## THE SCARLET DYNASTY

To this magnificent army, the Realm adds a superhuman officers' corps. At least a large fraction of all Dynasts spend a tour of duty in the military. Many go to the elite military academy called the House of Bells. Terrestrial Exalted born outside the Scarlet Dynasty go to another academy called Pasiap's Stair. Graduates learn the arts of command as well as combat. The Charms of the Dragon-Blooded make them greater warriors than any mortal could hope to be... but their command training matters far more for the Realm's military. Exalted commanders can use their Essence to reinforce their tactical sense and their command over their troops, making them better *generals* than any mortal could hope to be.

Or at least, the best Dragon-Blooded commanders so surpass the best mortal commanders. Not every officer in the legions or the navy graduated from an elite academy. Some officers receive their commissions through family connections instead. It rarely happens that a genuine idiot or ignoramus receives any rank over scalelord. Still, the best mortal commanders may surpass second-or-third-best Dynastic officers. Nevertheless, Dragon-Blooded commanders usually assume that they know more about leading troops and winning battles than their opponent does, and they are usually right.

## ARTIFACTS AND SORCERY

The Realm's profusion of artifact weapons comes from the combination of thousands of Exalted to make and wield them, and a population large and rich enough to support a system of higher education. Alas, the Realm cannot duplicate the mighty magitech of the First Age—lesser wonders such as implosion bows and fuel bolt launchers are about the Realm's limit. The Realm even has trouble keeping its precious warstriders in working order.

The Realm has more than enough jade, however, while samples of frozen lightning, behemoth blood and other magically-potent ingredients flow to the Realm every year. Dragon-Blooded wonder-smiths forge dozens of artifacts every year. After several centuries, the Realm has accumulated enough artifacts to arm and armor most Dynasts who choose a military career.

The Dynasty also produces sorcerers. The Realm does not treat sorcery as an entirely respectable profession, but no commander denies its usefulness. The academy called the Heptagram produces the majority of the Realm's sorcerers, but the House of Bells also trains a limited number of military sorcerers. These sorcerer-officers lack the theoretical grounding of Heptagram initiates, but know a great deal more about the practical use of magic in warfare. Every legion *could* include at least one sorcerer, if its commander makes this a priority. Not every commander does so.







On the other hand, every legion *definitely* keeps several thaumaturges on staff. Practicing the Arts requires a special license, but thaumaturgy is too useful for the military to eschew its use. Military thaumaturges influence the weather for the navies, while medical thaumaturges prepare arcane salves to heal wounded legionnaires. Most importantly, military thaumaturges enchant soldiers' weapons for special efficacy against specific supernatural foes. A legion can do little against, say, a squad of malevolent war-ghosts—unless its thaumaturge knows how to bestow the *Ghost-Smiting Salt Weapon* Enchantment.

Unfortunately, the Dynasty's own pride limits the number of thaumaturges available. Every legion has thaumaturges, but no legion has enough thaumaturges to supply it with every possible benefit. Weak as thaumaturgy is, it still treads too close to the powers of the Dragon-Blooded for the comfort of some Dynasts and Immaculate zealots. The Realm could train 10 times as many military thaumaturges as it does—but the government and Immaculate Order both demand that would-be thaumaturges jump through so many hoops that only the most dedicated (and well-heeled) can obtain licenses. What's more, Realm law demands that military thaumaturges have an Immaculate or Dragon-Blooded thaumaturge overseeing their efforts.

Most of the time, the thaumaturge shortage doesn't seriously affect a legion or a ship's crew... or at least it doesn't


affect the Dragon-Blooded officers, the focus of military priorities. Most of the time, Dragon-Blooded Charms make up for any deficiency: the Dragon-Blooded personally rout the war-ghosts or kill the demons. As otherworldly threats multiply in Creation, however, the Realm's leaders may need to choose whether they prefer to flatter Dynastic egos or build the most effective military that they can.

## CENTRAL WAR GODS

One nation rules all the Blessed Isle, and so all the Central war gods are gods of the Realm as well. This does not prevent conflict between them. Just as the people of the Realm hold different opinions about military matters, the Realm's war gods hold different priorities.

### TACHI-KUN

In the Division of War, the Center is the purview of Tachi-Kun, God of Exalted Warfare. This god looks almost like a caricature of the invincible Exalted warrior, all massive muscles and superheavy plate armor of starmetal and jade. Once he watched with pride as Solar, Lunar and Sidereal heroes challenged demon princes, raksha lords and each other to single combat, led armies to glorious victory and fielded artifact weapons of awesome, shattering power. The Usurpation put a stop to all that. The Solars died, the Lunars skulked at the fringe of Creation and the treacherous



Sidereals hid themselves in the Bureau of Destiny. Only the Dragon-Blooded were left, and Tachi-Kun found their battles inadequate.

Nevertheless, Tachi-Kun refuses to cede his post as Central God of War. Considering his personal prowess, no one is likely to force him out. The Immaculate Order makes sure he receives enough prayer to support him in the style to which he became accustomed in the High First Age, but the Bronze Faction makes clear that his continued prosperity depends on his cooperation. Tachi-Kun is not a happy god.

## POLICIES

Tachi-Kun has backed the Realm since the Second Age began, albeit without much enthusiasm. On the high holy day the Immaculate Order gives him, he appears in his temple in the Imperial City to laud the martial deeds of the Scarlet Dynasty and share a toast of Celestial wine with the year's greatest heroes. He offers another toast to the Empress as the greatest Exalted hero of all time. He selects the finest daiklave, goremaul or other artifact weapon crafted that year, and shares a third glass of wine with its creator. Privately, he refers to the artifacts he judges as "feeble rubbish."

Behind his dour and dutiful façade, Tachi-Kun rejoices at the return of the Solar Exalted. New militancy among the Lunar Exalted and Gold Faction pleases him almost as much. He cannot let the Bronze Faction see him showing favor to the new Lawgivers, though, and his position as Central God of War does not let him seek the Realm's defeat. Instead, he covertly uses his influence to draw Lawgivers and Stewards into battles that win them powerful artifacts and command of armies. He also tells prominent Dynasts how to find "Anathema" in hiding, especially those who seem to have found some peace. If the Celestial Exalted become warlords who hate the Scarlet Dynasty that hunts them, why, who could blame it on Tachi-Kun?

The deathknights present Tachi-Kun with a conundrum. He cannot deny that they are Exalted warriors of great power. He also cannot deny that they serve Creation's deadly foes. As Tachi-Kun becomes more accustomed to secrecy and doublethink, he fancies that he can use the Abyssal Exalted in his plans. It remains to be seen whether the Central God of War can learn subtlety enough to manipulate the Deathlords' champions or is manipulated himself.

## POWER AND WORSHIP

The Immaculate Order mandates a regular schedule of prayer to Tachi-Kun, particularly from Dynasts. No one asks for any specific benefit; the prayers merely offer a vague respect and request an equally vague blessing. Tachi-Kun gives no material aid to the Realm or any of its Dynastic champions.

Then again, Tachi-Kun never offered much assistance to the Exalted warriors who form his purview. After all, they are *Exalted*. He thinks they should win glorious victories through their own Essence-fueled prowess, not the help of a god like him. When the Exalted pray to Tachi-Kun, he seldom responds with anything more than a pep talk.

On the other hand, Tachi-Kun pays attention when mortal soldiers pray that their Exalted champions duel to decide a battle, without the need for the soldiers themselves to fight. If two Exalted commanders agree to resolve a battle through a personal duel, they place themselves within Tachi-Kun's sphere of influence, no matter where in Creation they may be. The God of Exalted Warfare might respond to their soldiers' prayers and manifest to referee the duel and make sure the armies abide by the result.

## TEN THOUSAND SPEARS

Centuries ago, the Empress personally asked Tachi-Kun to become the divine patron of her legions, as he had patronized the legions of Old Realm. In the High First Age, however, Tachi-Kun oversaw whole legions of Terrestrial Exalted with Celestial Exalted commanders. He disdained to become the god of merely human troops. He foisted the job onto Ten Thousand Spears, the God of Large Armies (and quite unemployed at the time), who leaped at the chance to become the god of *anything*.

Ten Thousand Spears now heads the Office of the Realm's Legions. He openly defies his superior and lobbies to replace Tachi-Kun as Central God of War. Legionnaires pray to Ten Thousand Spears far more than the Immaculate Order directs, which gives him the wealth of ambrosia to bribe and lobby other gods. The rivalry cannot continue: if Tachi-Kun does not defend the primacy of Exalted warriors in Creation's Center—even if they are only Dragon-Blooded—Ten Thousand Spears may well get his wish.



## POLICIES

Ten Thousand Spears identifies with his sphere of influence to a degree that most gods find strange and unhealthy. He knows what it's like to be a god without purpose, however, and so he promotes the Realm's legions every way he can. Ten Thousand Spears lobbies the Bureau of Destiny to nudge battles in the legions' favor. He reminds the Realm Deliberative about the need to continue funding the legions and ensure that soldiers receive the best equipment and training. Lately, he has gone outside the Immaculates' schedule of prayers, holidays and theophanies to harangue the Deliberative about the folly of disbanding legions or withdrawing them from the Threshold.

Unlike his boss, Ten Thousand Spears is a Realm patriot through and through. Nothing fills him with greater pride than watching soldiers of the Realm march throughout Creation, asserting the empire's dominance. Despite his own mutiny against Tachi-Kun, the growing insubordination Ten Thousand Spears sees among Realm satrapies fills him with humiliated rage.

Ten Thousand Spears supports the Sidereal Bronze Faction, to the extent that it supports the Realm and the legions. He likes the Scarlet Dynasty because it supplies powerful commanders. By the same token, the god loathes other Exalted because they oppose the Realm and its legions.





Ten Thousand Spears doesn't like the Seventh Legion of Lookshy one bit—and he hates the Bull of the North with a fury that few gods can comprehend. The god's lust to avenge the loss of the Tepet legions may lead him into serious violations of Heavenly laws. One sufficiently bad choice could give Tachi-Kun the means to destroy Ten Thousand Spears through audit and censure.

### POWER AND WORSHIP

Tachi-Kun made sure that his ambitious lieutenant had no legal ways to benefit his beloved legions through his godly powers. Nevertheless, Ten Thousand Spears readily breaks the rules if he sees another god try to harm a Realm legion or keep it from victory. Ten Thousand Spears also makes unauthorized visits to commend legion officers on their victories or recriminate them for their failures.

### BLOOD IN THE EYE

Each legion has its own patron god, who answers to Ten Thousand Spears. Blood in the Eye, god of the Vermilion Legion, has accumulated more demerits than any other legion-god in history. He survives only because his legion has accumulated so many victories. God and legion are well-matched: Blood in the Eye looks like a slovenly legionnaire with bloodshot eyes, the stench of sweat and cheap liquor and someone else's blood dried on his armor. He joins his legion when it celebrates a victory, to drink and whore and brawl until he passes out and Ten Thousand Spears must send a servant to drag him back to Heaven. Blood in the Eye also has a string of ears he cut from demons, Fair Folk nobles and a few other gods. He's a mean drunk and a slob, but a hell of a fighter.

### WAR IN THE CENTER

On land or sea, the Realm deploys large numbers of disciplined warriors and places them under highly trained commanders. The Realm's militaries disdain the barbarian's mad bloodlust or scramble for personal glory. The Realm treats war as an art and a science, with *The Thousand Correct Actions of the Upright Soldier* as its handbook. The legions in particular exploit the advantages offered by large numbers of people trained to work together. Not only can Dragon-Blooded leaders confidently shape a battle as they move their troops about the field, but they can shape the battlefield in advance through combat engineering. The relentless, massed power of the legions, however, ultimately becomes a mere backdrop to the power of the Dragon-Blooded themselves, when Essence and artifacts take the art of war to levels mere mortals cannot equal.

### NEW MASS COMBAT ACTIONS

**Exalted** already provides many possible actions and maneuvers for mass combat units. Expert commanders, however, may attempt various actions that give them a strategic edge over their foes.

### READ STRATEGY (5/-0)

In addition to capping other Abilities in mass combat and coordinating attacks, characters can use the War Ability to glean useful tactical information, locate advantageous battlefields and otherwise know what they're doing as commanders. This aspect of the Ability functions on personal and mass combat scales.

In personal combat (or fighting against a solo unit), tactical analysis functions as the combat analog to Reading Motivation (see **Exalted**, p. 131). The commander tries to gauge the strategic intent and likely tactics. This requires a roll of (Perception + War), at a difficulty of half the opponent's (Manipulation + War), rounded up. This does not reveal the precise details of every action an enemy plans, but it reveals whether an opponent means to wound, capture or kill. It also indicates the sort of tactics she is likely to use; for instance, "She'll try to flank you sometimes soon" or "This is a setup for someone to attack you from behind."

In mass combat, the roll to extract tactical information from an ever-changing battlefield is (Wits + War), at a difficulty of half the enemy commander's (Manipulation + War). Knowing the enemy's strategic goals and methods, a character can make an informed choice about how to direct her own troops. A general usually reads strategy while standing apart from a battle, and then sends appropriate commands to front-line commanders.

However, this roll receives a bonus of the enemy unit's (Magnitude – Drill): it's easier to discern the reasons behind a large army's actions. If the unit's Magnitude is small and its Drill is high, though, this bonus can become an internal penalty.

The Storyteller may apply other modifiers or penalties based on the obscurity or generality of the desired information. For instance, recognizing that besiegers are chopping down trees because they intend to build a bridge across your moat is quite easy to recognize, for perhaps a +2 bonus. Recognizing the exact dueling academy that trained an opponent in the sword might give a -2 penalty. Many rolls, however, will not need any special modifier.

Keep in mind that a tactical analysis is similar to any other knowledge check, a chance for a player to learn information that the character already knows. There is no precognition involved, merely educated guesswork based on precedents and available evidence. No battle plan, it is said, survives contact with the enemy. That applies to a character's enemies, too.

### COORDINATING UNITS (5/-0)

A general can try to coordinate two or more combat units to attack a single unit at once, for a greater chance at damaging or routing the foe. The general takes five long ticks to assess the battlefield and send messages to the subordinate commanders she wants to coordinate. The general's player then rolls (Charisma + War). For solo units, the difficulty is exactly the same as in personal combat: half the number





of units the general wants to coordinate, rounded down—including any unit the general herself commands, or herself if she acts as a solo unit. If the general tries to coordinate complementary units, the difficulty becomes half the total number of units, plus the Magnitude of the largest unit, minus the lowest Drill of any unit. However, these additions and subtractions cannot reduce the difficulty below the base of half the number of units. For example, if a general tried to coordinate six combat units, the base difficulty would be 3. If the largest unit was Magnitude 4 and the lowest Drill of any unit was 2, the net difficulty would rise to 5.

If the roll fails, the subordinate units can mount their normal attacks, with their normal chance of success. If the roll succeeds, however, the target unit has trouble responding effectively to the simultaneous attacks. The target unit's Defense Value is reduced by the number of successes rolled—but *only* for the units whom the general coordinated, and *only* if those units attack on the same tick as the general's next action. Some units might need to take Guard or Position Troops actions so they can abort and attack on the appropriate tick.

This Defense Value reduction also cannot exceed the number of units involved in the attack. For instance, if a Realm navarch coordinates four triremes (Magnitude 4, Drill 3) to attack a Lintha pirate ship at once, her player rolls (Charisma + War) at difficulty 3. If the player rolls at least three successes, the Lintha ship suffers a -3 Defense Value penalty against each of the four attacks. With four successes, the pirate ship would be at -4 Defense Value. Rolling more successes, however, would not penalize the pirates' Defense Value any further.

Merely mortal generals rarely coordinate many combat units at once. It's just too chancy. An Exalted general, however, can apply War Excellencies to the coordination attempt. For instance, a Dragon-Blood with War 4 and the Second Excellency can spend four motes, add two successes to the player's (Charisma + War) roll, and *absolutely guarantee* the successful coordination of up to five talons of Imperial medium infantry, with *at least* -2 to the target unit's Defense Value, and up to -5 Defense Value. And that's one reason why the Realm is used to winning its battles.

### FEINT (5/-1)

A feint is a fake action in combat. A feint may look like an attack, a regrouping or even a strategic retreat, but its real purpose is to deceive the enemy into moving her troops a certain way—usually, into some sort of trap or ambush. If a commander orders her unit to attempt a feint, her player rolls (Manipulation + War), at a difficulty of half the opponent's (Perception + War), rounded up. If the roll succeeds, the character can dictate the enemy unit's next Move action or force an attempt to change formation (but not to unordered formation)... assuming the enemy commander did not attempt to Read Strategy. When one commander attempts a

feint and the other commander attempts to Read Strategy, the rolls are resisted.

The infamous Delzahn Enclosure is one example of a feint. An enemy thinks he can achieve an easy victory over a small force of light troops, and pursues them into an ambush set by three larger forces. Wavecrest's navy tries to lure enemy ships into reefs, shallows or the lairs of bad-tempered elementals. The *Thousand Correct Actions of the Upright Soldier* outlines numerous feints that legion strategoi can use to steer an enemy or trick him into breaking his formation.

### POSITION TROOPS (3/-1)

The mass combat analogue to the Aim action involves arranging troops for the greatest effectiveness in an attack. For instance, a commander might form up troops in a wedge angled to punch through a line of enemy troops. On the other hand, the troops are a bit more vulnerable to attack while they form up for their own attack.

Similar to the Aim action, each long tick spent on Position Troops adds one die to the coming attack, to a maximum of +3. The commander can abort the Aim at any time to launch the attack. The attack does not refresh the unit's Defense Value after the Aim action. Instead, the unit's Defense Value refreshes after the attack action concludes and the unit takes its next action. If the commander aborts the Position Troops to take any other action, his player suffers a two-dice penalty to the action for the character's divided attention. The player also must roll for unit hesitation (see *Exalted*, p. 169).

### KNOCKDOWN

Some spells could conceivably knock most of the soldiers in a combat unit off their feet, as if they made the ground briefly unstable. For example, the Emerald Circle spell called Unstoppable Fountain of the Depths (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise*, p. 67) creates a powerful blast of water that can wash people away. Even if not *everyone* is knocked down, forcing prone a significant fraction of a combat unit can greatly inhibit its ability to fight. Other effects can force particular enemies off their feet or shove them around. For instance, ghosts cannot cross salt, so bombing a group of ghosts with salt can immobilize some or knock others aside.

If the magical effect keeps its victims held down, washed away or otherwise unable to act for minutes at a time, the whole unit may be rendered Inactive. More likely, though, a magical effect acts nigh-instantaneously, and then people get back to their feet. In that case, the knocked-down troops suffer two effects: First, they immediately become unordered. Second, their next action must be part of a flurry, with the unit's first action consisting of everyone rising to their feet, recovering weapons, and otherwise returning to the fight. The unit suffers penalties to its attack and to its Defense Value for the flurry and the Miscellaneous action of recovering from being knocked down.



## COMBAT ENGINEERING

Lucky commanders maneuver the enemy onto a battleground that disadvantages them. For instance, a general might place her troops so the enemy must charge across a muddy field or up a bramble-covered hillside. Many generals, however, do not depend on luck. They *build* their battlefields, with obstacles and fortifications to favor their own troops.

The Realm excels at such combat engineering. The *Thousand Correct Actions of the Upright Soldier* advises that battles are won by the spade as well as the sword and spear. Legionnaires dig trenches, pile berms, place fields of stakes and set other obstacles. Combat engineering takes a lot of work; a legion provides a lot of workers.

### FIELD FORTIFICATIONS

An army that has hard cover has advantages over an army that doesn't. Chapter One describes how a fortress provides hard cover and thereby raises the Defense Value of a combat unit. When a general lacks a convenient fortress, however, her troops can still build barriers that shield them somewhat from the enemy.

Earthworks form the easiest field fortification. Troops dig a ditch and pile the earth into a berm behind it. Enemies must cross the ditch and then climb up the berm. This arrangement gives the defenders +2 Defense Value in hand-to-hand combat for their higher position (see *Exalted*, p. 147). Adding a palisade of bags of earth, tree branches and timber can provide 25% to 50% hard cover, protecting the troops from ranged attacks and giving a little extra Defense Value in close combat.

Gabions are another way to gain limited hard cover. A gabion consists of a wickerwork tube filled with earth; a legion can squeeze hundreds in a wagon, then stretch them out and fill them with dirt. A few gabions can protect only a few soldiers, but hundreds can form a wall. Archers, in particular, can step out from behind gabions, loose their arrows and duck back. Gabions can provide no more than 25% hard cover to a unit. Massed gabions might provide as much as 50% hard cover to special crews that operate catapults or other artillery.

### WATER, MUCK OR UNSTABLE FOOTING

Soldiers do not always fight on solid ground. In the North, they may have to fight on ice or in snowdrifts. At sea, they fight on the swaying decks of ships. In Creation's Southeast or Southwest, soldiers may have to fight in bogs and swamps. Just about anywhere, a day of heavy rain could turn a farmer's nice open field into a lake of mud. Brush and brambles can catch at a soldier's legs. Just as with individuals, such unstable footing can hinder a military unit, or even prevent some combatants from passing entirely.

**Terrain Classes:** Any form of difficult terrain receives a general rating of Open, Difficult or Extreme. This indicates the ease of movement through the terrain. It also limits the potential cover the terrain affords—but many forms of

## THE CASTRUM

Realm legions make camp in a specific earthwork formation called a castrum. This consists of a square of berms with a ditch outside, and one or more openings for entry and exit. If the legion has woodland nearby, they top the berms with a low palisade. Inside, the legionnaires pitch their tents in a tidy grid, with two streets dividing the square into quarters. The legion's strategos pitches her tent in a small central plaza where the streets cross. This makes the strategos easy for an enemy to find, but the *Thousand Correct Actions* insists that replicating the structure of Creation, with the strategos standing for the Blessed Isle, has metaphysical benefits for the Realm's army.

A legion can build a castrum in three to four hours, and legions have done this while under attack. If the legion has time, it might add stakes in the berm, catapult nests protected by gabions at the corners and other defensive and offensive embellishments.

unstable terrain offer no cover at all. For example, a swamp may provide cover in the form of trees and bushes, but a frozen lake offers no cover at all.

**Open:** Terrain of this class cannot grant more than 25% cover. Infantry, horses and other beasts, and vehicles can all maneuver in combat, but may need to reduce their speed. Examples of open but unstable terrain include shallow water, ice and ground covered with knee-high brush and brambles.

**Difficult:** Terrain of this class cannot grant more than 50% cover. Infantry can move at normal speed if the troops' average Athletics equals or exceeds the terrain's Instability rating, but individuals and complementary units still suffer a penalty subtracted directly from Dodge Defense Value. Riding animals move at the indicated reduced speed. Vehicles might be able to move through the terrain, but at reduced speed, and they cannot maneuver for combat at all. Examples of difficult terrain include ground covered with small, loose rocks and pebbles, knee-deep mud or any slope of about 45 degrees.

**Extreme:** Terrain of this class may grant up to 75% cover, but infantry speed is definitely reduced to one-fourth normal. Riding beasts and vehicles cannot move through such areas at all. Examples of extreme terrain include wet, slippery ice or rocks, the deck of a ship pitching in a severe storm or a steep slope with stakes.

**Instability Ratings:** Every sort of unstable terrain further receives a more precise trait that measures the difficulty of keeping one's footing during strenuous activity such as combat. See the sidebar nearby for sample ratings, as well as *Exalted*, page 155, for suggestions about creating instability ratings for other surfaces.

If a character's Athletics score equals or exceeds the terrain's instability rating, the character *may* be able to move at normal speed, and can perform whatever other actions she wants. If the instability rating exceeds the character's Athletics score, any action must be made part of a flurry. The character's first action is a Miscellaneous action spent keeping her balance or otherwise avoiding obstacles. The character's player rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) at a difficulty of the terrain's instability rating. If the roll fails, the character cannot take the other actions she intended, though only on a botch does she actually fall.

For complementary units, consider the average Athletics rating of the troops. (See the sample soldiers from pp. 279–280 of *Exalted* for examples.) Once again, every action must be part of a flurry unless the soldiers' average Athletics score equals or exceeds the terrain's instability rating. The player of the unit's commander must roll (Dexterity + Athletics), using the soldiers' average Dexterity and Athletics, at a difficulty set by the surface's instability rating.

If the roll botches, the entire unit considered Inactive for their next Miscellaneous action—sitting ducks for any attackers.

If the roll merely fails, the unit's movement rate drops as the soldiers slip and fall, get hung up on briars or otherwise struggle to move on. The unit cannot perform the other actions in the flurry.

If the roll succeeds, the unit *might* move at normal speed, and can perform the other actions in the flurry.

**Defense Value Penalties:** On page 147, *Exalted* notes that difficult footing such as marsh muck or loose pebbles can penalize a character's Dodge Defense Value. These penalties also apply to the Defense Value of a complementary unit that fights in such terrain. The Defense Value penalty applies no matter how high an Athletics score a character or complementary unit possesses—the penalty is intrinsic to the terrain, because characters must devote at least a little attention to their footing instead of their fighting.

The Storyteller may also apply this external penalty to Dexterity-based or movement-related actions other than attacks, such as an attempt to jump over a wall of sandbags to reach the artilleryists beyond it.

**Movement:** Unstable terrain sometimes reduces the speed with which characters or groups move through it. Some terrain reduces movement only if characters fail their (Dexterity + Athletics) rolls: in these cases, the table shows the adjustment to movement rates in parentheses. Extreme terrain *always* reduces characters to 25% of their normal speed. Water, mud and snow always slow down movement by the indicated amount. It doesn't matter how agile you are: slogging through mud is slow.

Characters or complementary units whose Athletics score is less than the terrain's instability rating can voluntarily reduce their speed to the indicated amount. This removes the need for (Dexterity + Athletics) rolls, but also forbids the characters from taking any action except movement.





**Cavalry:** Mounted soldiers use Ride instead of Athletics, and the difficulty rating becomes either the instability rating or the mount's (control rating +1), whichever is greater. Note, however, that some mounts can ignore some terrains. For instance, an elephant might just stomp its way through low brambles.

**Special Training:** Some combatants may have Athletics specialties just for dealing with an unstable surface. For example, sailors could plausibly have specialties for fighting on the pitching decks of ships; the Haslanti and other Northern people can fight on ice and in snow; swamp tribes might be used to fighting on muddy ground.

**Special Equipment** can compensate for some kinds of unstable terrain, such as snowshoes for fighting in snow, analogous mud-shoes for crossing bogs, or cleated boots for gripping ice. Such equipment reduces the terrain's instability penalty by 1 for mere mortals, and cancels it completely for the Exalted or for mortals who also have an Athletics specialty with that specific terrain.

## ENGINEERED UNSTABLE TERRAIN

As described in Chapter Three and **Exalted**, page 147, unstable ground such as snow, ice, mud or brambles can slow an army's movement and penalize its Defense Value. Combat engineers can force an enemy to attack across an artificial zone of unstable terrain. For instance, a moat forces enemy

troops to cross through water; a ditch filled with brushwood provides a swaying, foot-trapping obstacle.

To be effective, the width of such obstacles, in yards, must equal at least half the Move of the combat unit that tries to cross. This means that a unit might cross an obstacle by changing its formation. For example, soldiers marching in Close order could break ranks, assume skirmish formation and splash and jump across a water-filled ditch. Of course, they've also lost the benefits of being in Close formation, which may have been the combat engineer's intention in the first place.

## MAGNITUDE REDUCTION

Chapter Four points out that dense forest and some other terrains can negate an army's Magnitude simply because a limited number of troops can engage the enemy at one time. Given time, combat engineers can create such zones of constrained movement. For instance, only a few troops at a time can cross a drawbridge over a large moat.

Very often, combat engineers cannot truly force an enemy to move only through one constrained area. Instead, the engineers place obstacles and hazards so accepting the reduction in effective Magnitude seems better than plowing through other paths. For example, an army might try to force an enemy to attack across a narrow meadow instead of through the loose forest to either side. Combat engineers could do this by filling the woods with obstacles of tree

### SAMPLE TERRAIN INSTABILITY RATINGS

Terrain	Terrain Class	Instability	DV Penalty	Speed
Mud/slime (up to mid-calf)	Open	1	-1	1/2
Water/snow (up to knees)	Open	1	-1	1/2
Mud/slime (up to knees)	Difficult	2	-2	1/4
Water/snow (up to waist)	Difficult	2	-2	1/4
Ice	Open	1	-1	(1/2)
Wet ice	Extreme	3	-3	1/4
Dry rocky/broken ground	Difficult	2	-1	(1/2)
Wet rocky/broken ground	Difficult	3	-2	(1/2)
Slime-coated rocky/broken ground	Extreme	4	-3	1/4
Low but dense brush/brambles	Open	1	-1	(1/2)
Ship's deck, heavy wind	Difficult	2	-2	(1/2)
Ship's deck, severe storm	Extreme	4	-3	1/4
Steep slope (45 degrees)	Difficult	1	-2	(1/2)
Steep slope with stakes	Extreme	2	-2	1/4

### SAMPLE OBSTACLES

Obstacle	Terrain Class	Instability	DV Penalty	Speed
Field of stakes	Difficult	1	-1	(1/2)
Steep slope with stakes	Extreme	2	-2	1/4
Dry ditch and berm	Difficult	1	-1	(1/2)
Water-filled moat	Extreme	2	-2	1/4
Brushwood-filled moat	Extreme	3	-2	1/4
Ropes between trees	Difficult	2	-2	(1/2)



branches, trenches or just stretching lots of ropes between the trees. The opposing commander has a choice between attacking across the meadow, limiting their effective Magnitude to 3 (at least for close combat) or chopping through the Difficult terrain of the forest, and exposing themselves to snipers stationed in the trees.

### ENGINEERED TRAPS

Cunning engineers can build traps in such numbers that they can harm an entire army. Most of the traps described in Chapter Six are too elaborate to use against large units, but one army might fill an area with some of the simpler traps, such as stake traps. One of the simplest stratagems is to hide a trap within unstable terrain, such as lining a flooded ditch with stakes to cripple soldiers who try to splash across.

Actually, it's almost impossible to deal enough damage through traps to harm a combat unit. The first soldier who encounters a trap alerts the rest. The troops must take time to avoid the traps, though, so the traps turn the area into Difficult or even Extreme terrain. Many traps, indeed, have no function except to be seen and slow an enemy. Caltrops, for instance, force an advancing enemy to advance slowly. Bands of sharpened stakes have the same effect; so does the abatis, a line of felled trees with the jutting branches sharpened (though this also supplies a hard barrier that an army must chop through before engaging their enemy hand-to-hand). A zone of traps therefore has a terrain class and speed reduction trait, as well as a detection difficulty and damage rating.

A commander might decide that she doesn't care about the traps, and order her troops to march on through. In that case, the unit loses Endurance and health levels equal to one-third of the trap's damage, rounded up. There's no need to roll anything. For example, an army that charges across a field of caltrops loses one Endurance and one health level. Other effects, such as disabling limbs, do not affect complementary units.

### ENGINEERING TIMES

Many factors could influence the time required for combat engineering—too many for any sort of hard-and-fast formula. Instead, treat combat engineering as a dramatic action that takes hours or days. Use the castrum as a baseline: in four hours, a complementary unit can build one fortification or obstacle that could hinder an enemy unit of comparable

Magnitude. Obviously, a small unit would have to work longer than a large unit to build fortifications of equal extent, but might get by with less extensive fortifications or obstacles if it faced an enemy no larger than itself.

If combat engineering ever comes under dramatic time pressure, such as one unit hurrying to complete fortifications before another unit arrives and attacks, resolve this as a resisted (Wits + War) roll between the players of the two commanders. The player whose character commands the larger unit receives bonus successes equal to the Magnitude difference, to a maximum of +3. On the other hand, combat engineering also presents an opportunity for mass combat stunts, based on coming up with a surprising way to channel, hinder or damage an enemy unit.

### EXALTED WARFARE

Despite the prowess of the Realm's mortal warriors, Creation's people pay more attention to their Exalted commanders. Only a few other militaries in Creation routinely enjoy the benefits of Exalted leadership in the field—and those benefits can be great. When the Exalted battle with their full power, however, they slaughter merely mortal armies with ease. Following an Exalt into battle can bring intoxicating awe... or very short-lived terror.

### EXALTED COMMAND

Exalted characters have several ways to apply their Essence to mass combat, in addition to direct attacks. In Creation, a commander's prowess and inspiring example have a powerful effect on her troops. For instance, a unit of archers doesn't just gain confidence from an officer who's good with a bow. Their Essence joins, so the officer actually makes her troops into better archers. They aim as she aims, fire when she fires. Commanders who channel Essence have many ways to extend their supernatural prowess to their troops.

Most simply, they can apply Excellencies to attacks. As an Exalted commander swings his sword or fires his bow, his troops absorb some of his Essence-enhanced skill, and his example lends them confidence.

Remember, however, that a character's War rating limits her effective rating in other combat Abilities. If a Dragon-Blooded officer has only War 3, it doesn't matter if she has Melee 5: her *effective* Melee rating is 3 for mass combat, and her player can add only 3 dice through the First Melee Excellency.

#### SAMPLE TRAP AREAS

Trap	Detection	Damage	Terrain Class	Speed
Caltrops	1	1	Difficult	1/2
Stake traps	3	1	Difficult	1/2
Stake traps, underwater/mud	5	1	Extreme	1/4
Abatis/Kraal*	0	1	Extreme	1/4
Southern Fire Mine Field	3	3	Difficult	1/2
Haslanti Fire Mine Field	3	2	Difficult	1/2

\* Also offers 25% hard cover; only attack through the barrier if weapon has Reach.



Her training at leadership limits how well she can impart her own prowess to the soldiers who fight beside her.

A character can use War Excellencies to increase that limit. In this case, the character's War rating acts as a static value, and is raised like any other static value. The character's effective War rating rises by one for every two dice of the First War Excellency or every success bought through the Second War Excellency. The Third Excellency raises the character's effective War rating by half again (round upward). Use of Excellencies in this manner can also benefit the character's (Attribute + War) pools rolled for other purposes, but the character must expend the Charm's Essence for each purpose—just like using a Melee Excellency to augment both an attack dice pool and the character's Parry Defense Value.

An Exalted commander has many other uses for a War Excellency, too. When combat units split and recombine, turn, change formation and perform many other actions, the commander's player must roll (Charisma + War) in order to prevent the unit from hesitating or becoming unordered. War Excellencies increase the chance of performing such maneuvers successfully.

Other Abilities offer further chances to apply Essence to war. For instance, concealing a unit for an ambush calls for a roll of ((Dexterity + Stealth) – Magnitude): If the commanding

character has a Stealth Excellency, an ambush becomes more likely to succeed. Conversely, a commander who suspects the possibility of ambush has a better chance to spot the hidden soldiers if she has an Awareness Excellency.


### SPECIFIC CHARMS

All the Exalted have various sorts of Excellencies and can use them for mass combat in pretty much the same way. Many other Charms offer specific benefits in mass combat—too many to describe them all. A number of Dragon-Blooded Charms hold particular importance for the Realm's military, however, and so merit special discussion. See the **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded** for descriptions of these Charms.

### COMMUNICATION AND INTELLIGENCE

Various Charms enable Dragon-Blooded officers to spy on enemy commanders. Sense-Riding Technique (Awareness) lets an Exalt see and hear through another person's eyes and ears; the trick is to find a mortal who associates with the right people. Voices on the Wind (Linguistics) lets an Exalt hear whatever a specific other person says... such as an opposing general, briefing his officers on the battle plan. Opponents *might* find non-magical ways to counter such Charms, such as keeping secret the names of officers, but few of the Realm's





opponents understand the need for such tricks; or they use spells such as Private Plaza of Downcast Eyes (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise**, p. 55).

On a larger, strategic scale, the Realm has faster and more accurate communication than its enemies. Wind-Carried Words (Linguistics) enables an officer to report to the Blessed Isle and receive orders in return. These must be brief, such as, “I am Dragonlord Cathak Faris. Fair Folk aiding Haltans at Sourwood Ford,” but that’s more than most armies can manage. Legions and fleets can respond to new situations with speed that seems uncanny to mere mortals.

#### CONTROLLING THE BATTLEFIELD

The Realm excels at engineering battlefields to its advantage, and Dragon-Blooded Charms can assist in this. Ramparts of Obedient Earth (a War Charm) produces small pits and barriers at the spur of the moment. The Terrestrial Circle spell called Raising the Earth’s Bones (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise**, p. 56) shapes complete buildings and systems of earthworks, but takes more time. Some Charms can compensate for environmental hazards, enabling Realm forces to fight under conditions that opponents find difficult. For example, Deck-Striding Technique (Sail) protects an entire ship’s crew from environmental penalties caused by ice, snow, water or motion: a crew thus protected fights as well on an icy, pitching deck as it would on a grassy field. Their opponents likely cannot—an advantage the Air Fleet exploits whenever possible.

Aiding an army’s movement provides a subtler battlefield control, by enabling the commander to fight when and where she chooses. Using Tireless Footfalls Cadence (War), Realm officers can move their troops more quickly, and the soldiers arrive still fresh and ready to fight. A Terrestrial could also use Dancing Ember Stride or Virtuous Negation Defense (both Athletics) to move a small number of soldiers past obstacles or evacuate them from danger. These would be examples of extending a Charm that normally affects oneself to a unit under one’s command.

The Realm’s navy has a number of methods to speed the travel of ships. Harmonious Wind-Luring Song (Occult), or its Sail-based analogue Seven Seas Wind-Luring Chanty call wind to a ship’s sails. The spell called Calling the Wind’s Kiss (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise**, p. 39) has the same result, or can be used to slow an enemy ship. Storm-Outrunning Technique (Sail) helps a ship take better advantage of whatever wind exists.

Charms that directly influence the enemy’s choices offer an obvious advantage to a Dragon-Blooded commander. Glowing Coal Radiance (Presence) can intimidate an opposing force to a degree that hinders their attacks. Unbearable Taunt Technique (Presence) has trickier uses, such as drawing all of an enemy force’s attacks onto oneself. If a defensive Charm then renders the attack futile, the Dynast has made the enemy waste an action while the Realm’s own troops attack.

#### COMMANDO TEAMS

The Dragon-Blooded excel at sharing the effects of their Charms. Sworn brotherhoods achieve the greatest synergy between the members’ Charms, but the Terrestrial Exalted also know many Charms whose effects extend to mortals. For example, Strength of Stone Technique (Resistance) increases the Strength and Stamina of multiple people. Enfolded in the Dragon’s Wings (War) protects a group of mortals from the Exalt’s anima effects or related elemental Charms.

Such shared-effect Charms turn mortals into valuable force-multipliers for a single Dragon-Blood. Instead of gathering Dynasts into a fang, it may be more effective to partner each one with a number of highly trained mortals to form an elite, Charm-augmented commando team under the Dynast’s leadership. For example, a single Dynast using Dragon-Seared Battlefield (War) can hinder a large number of enemy troops, but hinders her own forces just as much. A team of mortals Enfolded in the Dragon’s Wings, however, can accompany their leader to protect her, cut down enemies affected by the elemental maelstrom... and perhaps give the illusion of many more Dynasts than there really are.

A few Charms extend to small combat units. For instance, Charge of One Hundred Generals and Irresistible Penetrating Charge (both Ride) can augment entire scales of cavalry under specific conditions.

#### BATTLEFIELD ORATORY



The Realm takes full advantage of the awe in which mere mortals hold the Exalted. Graduates of the House of Bells learn oratory as well as strategy, to hearten their own troops and to terrify the foe. A Dynast with great skill at Presence and Performance (and suitable Charms) can attempt social combat against an opposing leader—or even his entire army. Even if the Dynast cannot intimidate the army into surrender or retreat, she can at least force her opponent into spending Willpower to resist her powerful words, leaving less available for the battle to come.

#### MASS COMBAT STUNTS

Exalted characters have three ways to use stunts in mass combat. As solo units, Exalted characters can pull stunts the same way they can in personal combat. For instance, a lone Dynast fighting a troop of desert raiders could sweep his daiklave through the sand to kick up a blinding spray of

#### A TYPICAL CHALLENGE

*Hear me, soldiers of Halta! I am Faris, of the Great House of Cathak, Dragonlord of the Realm. Know that the blood of the Empress flows in my veins and the power of Hesiesh burns in my soul. Mine are the inferno that destroys cities, and the candle-flame that comforts children in the night. I do not desire your death and the lamentations of your kin. Bring forth your commander, that he might name himself, and explain why he refuses the mercy and majesty of the Realm.*



grit, blinding them so he has a better chance to hit when he leaps among them like a whirlwind of death.

Stunting also offers a way to extend the benefits of a personal Charm to a complementary unit under the character's command. As described on page 162 of *Exalted*, a commander can extend the effects of reflexive or supplemental Charms to a unit under her command, if the player can think of a way that the Exalt's use of the Charm could inspire her troops to greater effort or that repeated use of the Charm could translate into a net benefit for the combat unit as a whole. Such extraordinary actions fall outside the normal rules that govern Charms or combat, but such actions *do* constitute a cool and dramatically appropriate use of the character's powers and surroundings—the very definition of a stunt.

In this case, however, the character gains no Essence or Willpower from the stunt: these benefits are all plowed back into the Charm use. To use the example provided, of a Lawgiver using Adamant Skin Technique to protect his troops by jumping in front of attacks and rallying their will to fight through this display of invulnerability, the character would actually have to use the Charm dozens of times in the minutes that make up a single mass combat attack. Even Solars don't have *that* much Essence to throw around! Instead, the player and Storyteller can presume that within the span of time and combat represented by the single mass combat attack, the character performs many individual acts of spectacular combat and defense, recovering Essence from these mini-stunts and from the reverent enthusiasm of his troops at being led and defended by an invincible living god.

Just as for any stunt, however, Storytellers should not offer this benefit casually. Excellencies are so basic a use of Essence that the Exalted can routinely extend the effects of Excellencies to their soldiers. Extending other Charms in this manner renders them vastly more powerful, and vitiates the importance of Charms that are specifically designated as benefiting groups. Insist that the player describe how the character uses the Charm to assist the combat unit, to keep this a special event in mass combat that establishes the character as a superhuman hero.

Finally, a commander can perform a stunt using the combat unit itself. Just as for personal combat, the player describes some cool, spectacular action in which the character leads her troops. The Realm commandoes doesn't just hide among the trees to ambush enemy troops marching past; led by their Wood Aspect commander, the commandoes hide in the treetops and swing down on ropes while frightening their enemy with fierce war-cries! Like any stunt, the Storyteller awards bonus dice based on the coolness of the description and how well it uses the environment.

Stunts performed by the entire combat unit incidentally provide a way to represent gambits that fall outside the normal rules of mass combat. For example, a commander might begin a night attack by harnessing cattle to bundles of oil-soaked

brushwood, pointing them at the enemy camp and setting the brushwood on fire. Even if the panicking, stampeding cattle fail to trample any soldiers, they certainly throw the enemy camp into confusion. This could be a stunt applied either to the initial Join War roll or the initial attack.

## THE EXALTED COMBAT UNIT

The ordinary soldier or civilian does not see the Essence-enhanced strategic instincts that guide the Realm's officers, and so they underestimate this aspect of Exalted command. Instead, they see dragonlords striding out with their animas glowing about their jade-steel arms and armor, the mighty warstriders, and the rest of the Dynastic panoply of power. And it's true: the Dragon-Blooded are indeed mighty warriors, far mightier than any mortal can become. They become even mightier when they join in groups and learn Charms to aid each other in battle. Mortal soldiers fear to oppose the Exalted (as represented by the +1 difficulty to rout checks for armies that face a foe with supernatural leaders: see *Exalted*, p. 169).

## THE MEANING OF MIGHT

Neither the House of Bells nor Pasiap's Stair, however, teach officers to expect victory as their Exalted birthright, whether gained through words, Charms or artifacts. *The Thousand Correct Actions* bluntly reminds officers that many weaker foes can slay a single mighty warrior, as the Dragon-Blooded themselves slew the Anathema in the Great Uprising.

The rules for mass combat reflect this truth. When a player rolls the attack for her character's combat unit, she adds automatic successes for the unit's attack rating and any modifier for differences in Magnitude, as well as the unit's Might and any Charms. Any of these factors might counterbalance the Might of a combat unit composed entirely of Exalted. It won't be easy: an all-Terrestrial combat unit has a basic Might ranging from 2 to 4, which artifacts can raise further. Going just by bonus successes, it would take an entire dragon of elite mortal troops (Magnitude 5, Might 0) to equal a single fang of young Dynasts armed with basic artifact weapons and armor (Magnitude 1, Might 4). If the mortal troops have thaumaturgical talismans and potions, or a First Age artifact or two, the tactical balance becomes even more ambiguous.

In RY 754 at the Battle of Mishaka, the Dragon-Blooded received a graphic lesson that they were not invincible. More than a dozen Dynasts and outcaste Dragon-Blooded, along with the mortal army from Thorns, confronted an army from Lookshy, Nexus, Great Forks and other states in the Confederation of Rivers (as described in *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. I—The Scavenger Lands*). The allies suffered terrible losses... but the Dragon-Blooded all died. The Realm's military academies insist that cadets study the Battle of Mishaka to see how they could die, too. Five Dragon-Blooded may be tactically equal to 500 mortals—but there are an awful lot of mortals, and sometimes they dare to fight the Princes of the Earth.



## MASS DESTRUCTION

Now and then, Creation's battlefields see forces unleashed that surpass Dragon-Blooded Charms as completely as the Dragon-Blooded surpass mortal warriors.

The mightiest First Age Weapons dominate any battlefield on which they appear. In RY 76, for instance, Lookshy stopped a Realm invasion and destroyed most of a legion using a dreadful First Age artifact called a soulbreaker orb (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 135). The Realm owns at least one of the demesne-consuming automata called thousand-forged dragons (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 113), though no one yet has dared to use it. And of course, the Realm Defense Grid provides the ultimate example.

Anathema sorcerers sometimes cast spells that the greatest sorcerers of the Realm cannot match, spells that destroy legions or entire cities. In the battle between the Tepet legions and the Bull of the North, parties unknown to the Realm (actually Sidereal Exalted) cast a spell called the Cantata of Empty Voices (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise*, p. 69) and exterminated the entire city of Fallen Lapis for its alliance to the Bull. Other spells, cast by Lunar Anathema, have evoked mighty tentacles of lava from the ground, trapped legions in huge, pitch-black



zones of blind terror or raised tsunamis from rivers, lakes and seas. More recently, the Deathlords and their new Abyssal servants have revealed horrific powers of necromancy. The Realm's sorcerers shudder as ancient books tell them of even greater and more dreadful spells wielded by the Solar Anathema: of rains of death, annihilating bursts of green light and curses that turn the entire living world against a targeted people.

Very few people in the Realm know it, but the long-hidden and forgotten Sidereal Exalted wield similarly apocalyptic powers. The most potent Martial Arts Charms known to the Viziers can strike areas miles across with waves of death.

The mass combat rules do not cover such eventualities. A good rule of thumb is: all in the targeted area die, if they lack powerful defensive artifacts or Charms. Mass combat ends. Any surviving Exalted may then attempt whatever counterstrike they can manage. If both sides have such weapons, the battle quickly reduces to a few Exalts (or creatures of similar power), who may then resolve their differences through personal combat.

Dynastic warriors regard such powers with something of the same awe and fear with which mere mortals view Exalted combat. They wish they had more of such weapons and powers





themselves, to protect the Realm and defeat its foes. On the other hand, some commanders see how such powers would make them irrelevant. What do courage, command skill and combat prowess matter when a sorcerer a mile away can slaughter your entire legion? And what honor does a warrior find in killing a city whose people have not the slightest chance to fight back? What is the correct action for the upright soldier, when a war fought with such weapons and such powers might leave no one alive to claim the victory?

The academies of the Realm do not raise such questions in a young officer's training. Aging navarchs and dragonlords sometimes discuss them late at night, when the wine flows too freely. Most officers take some comfort in the fact that they do not have to answer such questions. As the Time of Tumult builds, however, the Exalted warriors of the Realm may need to ponder the strategies and moralities of mass destruction, and consider allies they would never have imagined before. Creation's survival may depend on their choices.

## THE REALM

The Imperial Army forms the Realm's chief tool for dominion. The Imperial Navy is also mighty, but the Realm needs the legions to occupy territory and slap people around until they realize who they must obey. Together, they still hold much of the Threshold in sullen subjection. A wise commander does not underestimate their power.

## MILITARY POLICIES

The Realm's current troubles do not mean it has given up military activity throughout the Threshold. In each direction, the Realm has certain traditional goals and interests. It still pursues those objectives; the Realm merely expects fewer and fewer troops to maintain its power.

Sometimes, cunning alliances compensate for a lack of boots on the ground. An old Realm proverb says, "Use the barbarians to fight the barbarians." Whenever possible, the Realm gets one Threshold population to fight another. It is debatable how much the Dynasty cares for the lives of Realm soldiers—but legionnaires cost money to train, and more money to ship from the Blessed Isle. If foreign troops do the fighting and dying, so much the better for the Realm.

## THE SOUTH

The Realm's position in the South is almost ideal. Every major state along the Southern coast pays tribute as a satrapy and hosts a garrison of Realm troops. Only Gem, in the far South, makes a real show of independence. Now, maybe the Southern states don't all obey the Realm as completely as they might, but their wealth still flows to the Blessed Isle.

The Realm seeks to maintain this satisfactory status quo. As long as the Southern states nurse their grudges and fears, the Realm can present itself as the powerful, impartial overlord who protects them from each other, and whom they dare not challenge. Therefore, the Realm stations troops in every capital, and the Fire Fleet stops frequently at every port.

Now and then, the Realm crushes some pirates, bandits or tribal marauders. The show of power reminds all what a good friend they have in the Realm... and that they had better keep the Realm friendly.

Of all the Southern satrapies, the Lap holds the greatest value for the Realm. The Lap lacks the commerce of Chiaroscuro or the arms industry of Varang—but the Lap feeds the troops. If the Realm had to import or buy its provisions, Southern wars would cost a great deal more. The Lap also gives the Realm a nigh-impregnable base from which to operate in the South. As long as the Realm keeps the Lap docile, the Realm can conquer any other state that turns restive.

The Lap incidentally siphons out a good deal of wealth and firedust from Gem. For centuries, the Realm has sought a grip on Gem, without much success. Fortunately for the Realm, the Perfect of Paragon seems eager to do the job for them. The Realm approves of Paragon's campaign to squeeze Gem and wrest away its more northerly jewel-mines. Use the barbarians to fight the barbarians... No one in the Realm, military or civilian, ponders the consequences if Gem should win this little war and find a way to strike back.

## WEST

Of all the Western island nations, only Wavecrest ever generated real wealth for the Realm. The rest of the West looked like nothing but pirates and primitives. What, the Realm should exert itself over people who paid tribute in cowrie shells?

The rise of the Silver Prince presents the Realm with a foe both powerful and uncanny. Realm strategists do not yet realize just how much power this Deathlord commands. Naval strategists ponder how to attack Skullstone, but they've never fought a nation that's half shadowland, where the borders between Creation and the Underworld shift with the winds and the tides. Some armchair admirals think the Realm could arrange a war between Skullstone and Coral that would reveal the Silver Prince's capabilities and, they hope, weaken both sides. No one yet has a better plan.

Most of the Deliberative thinks that holding onto the West is a waste of money anyway—except for Wavecrest, of course. If the Realm does need to mount a war in the West, the Realm will use Wavecrest as the Realm's forward base and supply depot. Similar to the Lap in the South, Wavecrest's food surplus makes it critical for any large-scale military strategy. The Neck seems loyal enough, or at least cowed enough, but it lacks the facilities to service or supply a fleet of battleships. The same strategists who ponder campaigns against Skullstone, however, recognize that any long war needs the Neck as a stepping-stone to the deathly archipelago.

In contrast to Skullstone, the Lintha pirates seem uncanny but merely irritating. Once again, the Realm's strategists don't realize just how much power the Lintha wield through their demonic connections. Fortunately, neither do the Lintha; they still think like robbers instead of conquerors. But that may change.



## NORTH

A string of satrapies lines the northern shore of the Inner Sea, and the Realm finds them almost worthless. Not only are these barbarian petty states all small and poor, they seem to attack each other every time the wind changes. The legions or the Air Fleet could crush any of them with ease, but it's never been worth the expense. They are all too weak to threaten the Realm. Unfortunately, the satrapies are also too weak to fight the Fair Folk, the dead, the Wyld barbarians and the other uncanny threats that make the North so hard to exploit. The Realm posts token garrisons and the Air Fleet interdicts Northern sea-raiders when possible.

So far, the Realm has failed to dominate the three Northern states with real power. Whitewall shows no interest in expansion, though, and Gethamane and the Haslanti League are too distant to attack the Realm in any case. Realm strategists see no reason to attempt conquest at this time.

The rise of the Bull of the North means that the Realm can no longer ignore the North. His nascent empire proved the North *can* threaten the Realm, or at least it can threaten the Realm's satrapies and destroy the legions sent to protect them. Strategically-minded Dynasts now ponder what campaign the Realm can mount to destroy this nest of deadly Anathema... if not directly, then by proxy.

## EAST

In the East, the Realm suffers an unfortunate fixation on the Scavenger Lands. For centuries, the Empress sought satrapies in the East as bases from which to encircle and penetrate the rich River Province. Most of all, she coveted the magitech arsenal of Lookshy.

The Realm managed to acquire a few vassals and allies—Greyfalls, the Linowan, a few towns in the Southeast—but these outposts never generated much profit or strategic advantage. Greyfalls was at the edge of nowhere, while the Linowan remained fixated on their endless, stalemated war against Halta. Much of the East was just too far away to hold, with no obvious prizes to gain.

Once again, recent events force a strategic re-evaluation. The Realm lost the Tepet Legions because they marched to aid the Linowan against the Bull of the North. In this, commander Tepet Arada forgot the great law: don't fight barbarians for the sake of *other* barbarians. (Though the Immaculate Order blessed his venture as a campaign against Anathema.) He paid the price, and the Dynasty now ponders the value of continuing the Linowan alliance—especially with another grave threat just across the Inner Sea.

If the destruction of the Tepet Legions shocked the Realm's leaders, the fall of Thorns sent them into terror. It was bad enough that the Mask of Winters' deathknights slew the city's Dragon-Blooded with ease. How are the legions supposed to fight a zombie behemoth?

## DEFENSE

Anyone who would attack the Realm itself must be very powerful or very foolish. The Realm deals easily with the fools. An attacker must first cross an ocean without alerting the Imperial Navy. That done, the Realm's heliograph system quickly alerts the central government and provincial authorities: legions march within days of the enemy's first attack. Prefects muster their guards and town militias, while teams of local Dynasts vie for the honor of destroying the invaders themselves. The Earth Fleet moves to cut off any escape back to the sea. A real idiot attacks near a war manse, whose Essence weaponry can obliterate the invaders with storms of elemental force. In seven centuries, only a few armies worthy of the name landed on the Blessed Isle, and the Realm crushed them all within a week of their first attack.

## OTHER ASSETS

As everyone in Creation knows, the Realm has the two greatest military assets in the world: the Realm Defense Grid and the Scarlet Dynasty. Too bad that with the Empress gone, nobody knows how to activate the Realm Defense Grid, and the Scarlet Dynasty seems busy preparing to tear itself apart. All the Realm's other artifact weapons, from implosion bows to at least one Thousand-Forged Dragon, depend on the Scarlet Dynasty to use them. Some weapons draw their power from hearthstones so unExalted mortals could use them... but who in the Realm would dare?

Without the Empress, the Dynasty falls apart into faction. The Great Houses seek ever-tighter control of the legions, turning them into private militias they can turn against each other. Unless someone seizes power quickly and completely, the Realm may fall apart into civil war the likes of which Creation hasn't seen since the Usurpation. And if Creation's Center does not hold... what then?

## THE IMPERIAL ARMY

The Imperial Army is the Realm's chief instrument of military power in the Threshold. **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Blessed Isle** describes the command structure and equipment of the legions in detail, with several sample combat units. Herewith is a summary, with a few examples of special combat units.

## ARMORY

A legionnaire's armor and weapons depend on her combat role and where she's stationed. Heavy infantry typically wear reinforced breastplates and masked helms. They carry target shields and carry chopping swords, axes, short spears or other heavy weapons. Some heavy infantry go without the shield so they can wield heavier, two-handed weapons such as polearms or great axes. Medium infantry wear lamellar armor and pot helms. They often carry bucklers. Medium infantry wield anything from simple maces to fine slashing swords, but always the same weapons within a talon-sized or smaller unit. Some talons also carry javelins, so they can

make at least a few short-range attacks before closing with the enemy. Archers, slingers, cavalry and other auxiliaries wear reinforced buff jackets and pot helmets; shields are not usually practical. Soldiers may receive other weapons and equipment if that seems more useful: for instance, a legion that must fight in the Southeast might instead carry chopping swords for hacking through the jungle.

The Realm's military engineers excel at all forms of siege weapons. Any legion with a few days to prepare for battle can count on artillery support from a variety of siege slings, onagers, ballistae or even trebuchets. The engineers also build siege towers and battering rams. They direct the troops in constructing field fortifications, which the legions regard as an important part of their arsenal.

Firedust artillery is not so common. A legion that stays in one place for long often possesses a selection of cannon as well as fire projectors. The Realm also allocates cannon to legions sent specifically to destroy fortresses. Even if a legion doesn't carry the heavy, slow-moving and expensive cannon, however, the legion certainly carries firedust for firewands and grenades.

The Dragon-Blooded officers, of course, bring a wide selection of artifact weapons and armor to their legion. A legion with an important satrapy also may possess a few magitech artifacts such as wall eaters, fire lances, lightning ballistae or Yoroi rapid-response armor. Only special missions, however, result in a legion receiving use of greater artifacts such as siege striders or panic projectors. Every legion has a fang of warstriders—which they guard jealously, because no officer wants to explain to the high command how she managed to damage artifacts that are each worth more than a town.

## ORGANIZATION

The Realm currently supports 31 legions. A full-strength legion consists of 5,000 soldiers, both men and women, divided into 10 "dragons" of 500. These dragons break down in turn into wings, talons, scales and fangs, each with their own commanding officer. Exceptionally talented mortals can rise as high as winglord, but most officers are Dragon-Blooded.

In addition, each legion is accompanied by 2,000 to 3,000 auxiliary troops of various sorts, such as archers, slingers, sappers, engineers or cavalry. Some of these auxiliaries come from the Blessed Isle as support troops for the legion. Others are recruited locally. In particular, the Realm relies on local cavalry: it costs less than shipping thousands of horses across the Inner Sea. Just about any local military unit could appear among a legion's auxiliaries, though. Another thousand or so armorers, fletchers, smiths, cooks, drovers, slaves and other support personnel make up the legion's baggage and supply train.

Legions often fight in groupings called flights. A flight typically includes three dragons of heavy infantry, two dragons of medium infantry and one dragon's worth of archers, cavalry, skirmishers or other auxiliaries, all under the command of the

## LEGION TITLES

Legion officers can be known either by High Realm or Low Realm titles. Despite the use of "lord," all titles are gender-neutral. Mortal officers are usually addressed using the Low Realm titles—they're never *really* equal to Exalted officers. On the other hand, not many Dragon-Blooded deign to serve as mere fanglords.

High Realm	Low Realm
Strategos	General
Dragonlord	Colonel
Winglord	Major
Talonlord	Captain
Scalelord	Lieutenant
Fanglord	Sergeant (non-commissioned)

senior dragonlord. An entire legion is under the command of an officer called a strategos, or general.

The Dragon-Blooded officers at a given level of command often form a sworn brotherhood. For instance, a sworn brotherhood might consist of the scalelords under a particular talonlord's command. A military sworn brotherhood typically comes together as a distinct fighting force only when their units are merged under a higher officer's command; otherwise, each officer leads her own unit, with her junior officers as the unit's sorcerers and heroes.

Under the Empress, the Great Houses received the "honor" of helping to pay for legions out of their own revenues and appoint their strategoi. Nevertheless, the "Tepet legions" or "Cathak legions" held many officers from other Houses (as well as non-Dynastic graduates of Pasiap's Stair). They gave their first loyalty to the Empress and the Realm. In the Empress's absence, the Houses try to pack their legions with their own blood, regardless of training and talent, and treat them more and more as instruments of the House's ambitions instead of the Realm's interests.

## LEGION FORMATIONS AND TACTICS

Legion strategoi know that every Realm troop is worth two or three of most country's soldiers, just because of their better training and leadership. Just by applying Excellencies, Dragon-Blooded officers greatly increase the odds that a combat unit attacks successfully and inflicts damage, and they can attempt coordinated attacks and other tactics that mortal commanders would find too difficult. Movement-enhancing Charms and good communications mean that a legion has a good odds of finding a good battle-site and making it better through combat engineering, giving the troops another edge.

Therefore, a strategos does not commit the entire legion at once to a battle. Instead, the strategos sends out a "flight" consisting of three dragons of heavy infantry, two dragons of medium infantry and a dragon's worth of auxiliaries. The remaining dragons of troops hang back as reserves. The strategos lets the enemy tire himself fighting half or less of the legion.





Then she sends in the fresh troops—perhaps marching them around to attack from the flank or rear, to maximize the shock. If that doesn't crush the enemy, the first flight can withdraw, rest and regroup before entering the battle again.

Legionnaires prefer to fight in close formation, to gain maximum benefit from their shields and any field fortifications. If the enemy obliges by running forward to attack, the legionnaires are quite content to stand behind the parapet of a berm and wait for them, ready to cut them down. If they come under significant missile fire, though, the legionnaires spread out into relaxed formation, so they gain extra defense against ranged attacks but the enemy does not gain a bonus to his effective Magnitude. Archers and slingers usually stay in skirmishing formation for their own defense against the enemy's archers and other ranged combatants, and move away from anyone who tries to engage them in close combat. If the legion recruits any local cavalry as auxiliary, the strategos usually lets them do whatever they do best, and integrates it into her own battle plan.

### PARTICULAR FOES

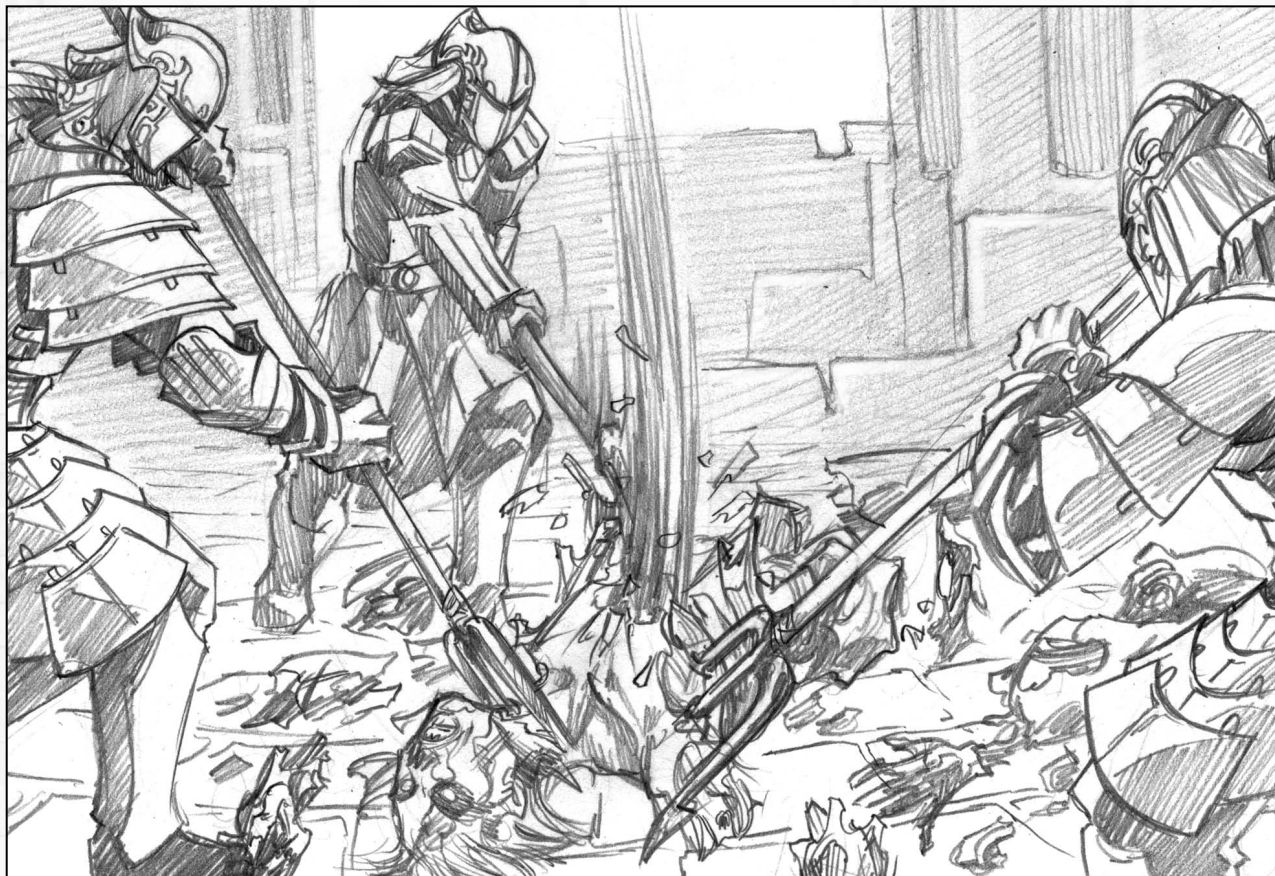
The *Thousand Correct Actions* tells how to war against other armies, bandits and most other mundane foes. Over the centuries, the legions evolved their own tactics against some of the stranger enemies they face.

The dead offer three challenges: ghosts, zombies and necromantic war machines. Zombies are the easiest. A few

legionnaires pin a zombie to the ground with spears or tridents, and then other soldiers hack the zombie apart with axes. Ghosts present little greater challenge once they materialize. Materialized or not, ghosts cannot cross lines of salt; and so, legions that must fight ghosts issue bags of salt to soldiers to protect fallen comrades or constrain the ghosts' movement. Soldiers may even dash across the battlefield pushing little carts that drizzle trails of salt behind them. Thaumaturges can also enchant enough weapons so at least a few fangs can fight dematerialized ghosts. Dragon-Blooded officers deal with spine chains and other war machines, but sometimes well-commanded legionnaires have destroyed these horrors themselves. For instance, two columns of legionnaires might jump aside so a charging spine chain scuttles between them, and then close to dismember the horrid thing.

The Fair Folk suffer terrible harm from iron, and so every legion armory contains enough iron weapons to equip at least a few talons of troops. Even without these weapons, legionnaires can usually kill hobgoblins if the legionnaires outnumber these Fae minions. Mortal legionnaires engage the hobgoblins and lesser raksha while their Dragon-Blooded commanders go after the Fair Folk nobles and beasts of greater power.

Legionnaires rarely need to fight demons; strategic doctrine assigns that task to the Dragon-Blooded. Nevertheless, sometimes mere mortals must do the job. Many legion



thaumaturges know a ritual to enchant weapons plated in silver or gold to make them baneful to demons. A legion might carry a dozen or so of these weapons, so that a Dragon-Blooded commander can fight with a fang or two of brave mortals as backup.

### JUNIOR OFFICERS' SWORN BROTHERHOOD

**Description:** The members of this sworn brotherhood know Charms to support and enhance each other in battle, and carry artifact weapons and armor (with daiklaves and lamellar armor taken as their average). The officer with the most seniority takes command.

Against a single foe or a small group, the members would best be treated as distinct characters; but in a large-scale battle, it may be more appropriate to treat them as a combat unit.



Their Attributes and Abilities are based on Tepet Lisara (see *Exalted*, p. 326).

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Jade-steel, variously ornamented

**Motto:** "For Realm and Empress!"

**General Makeup:** Five Dragon-Blooded junior officers with daiklaves, artifact lamellar armor, target shields and masked helms

**Overall Quality:** Elite

**Magnitude:** 1

**Drill:** 4

**Close Combat Attack:** 5 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** — **Ranged Damage:** —

**Endurance:** 7 **Might:** 4 **Armor:** 3 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 4

**Formation:** The five Terrestrials normally fight in relaxed formation so they have room to swing their artifact weapons freely. They can assume close formation, though, for extra defense or to raise their Close Combat rating. They are all "special characters," but if three of the five fall, the remaining two become unordered as if they had lost a commanding officer and two heroes. Assume Dodge and Parry Defense Values of 6, counting the shields.

### ENGINEERING AND ARTILLERY SCALE

**Description:** The 30-some mortals in this auxiliary scale build and operate catapults, battering rams and other siege engines for their legion. They also oversee the troops in digging earthworks, laying fields of stakes, and other field fortifications. In battle, catapults supply their Ranged Combat; they pull out their short swords only if something goes wrong and the battle comes to them.

**Commanding Officer:** Lieutenant Tawyer Binoro

**Armor Color:** Gray, with red and gold trim

**Motto:** "No wall too high" (official); "Mine is bigger." (unofficial)

**General Makeup:** 30 light infantry in reinforced buff jackets and pot helms, with short swords and six heavy catapults

**Overall Quality:** Fair

**Magnitude:** 2

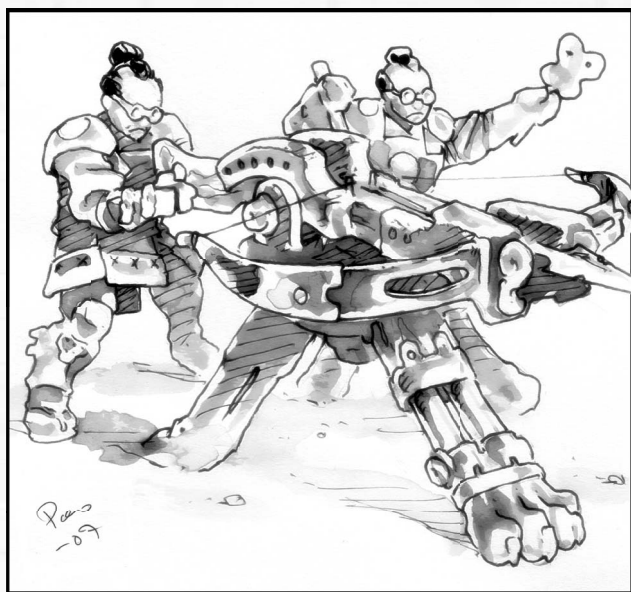
**Drill:** 3


**Close Combat Attack:** 2 **Close Combat Damage:** 2

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 9

**Endurance:** 5 **Might:** 0 **Armor:** 2 (-2 mobility)

**Morale:** 3





**Formation:** The engineers always fight in skirmish formation. Tawyer Binoro has one assistant who can take command as a hero if he falls, and three “sorcerers” who handle special catapult payloads such as caltrops and firepots.

## HER MAJESTY’S IMPERIAL NAVY

The Realm certainly has the most powerful naval force in Creation. In number of ships, the Imperial Navy might even surpass the fleets of the Shogunate: with few surviving air vehicles, the Realm must rely on the sea to move troops to and from the Blessed Isle. The six fleets of the Realm patrolled the seas around the Blessed Isle for centuries, suppressing piracy and keeping the Threshold navies in check. Just as with the legions, however, the Imperial Navy has become another arena for Dynastic power-grabs. The Great Houses scheme to recruit admirals and even mere captains as their partisans; House Peleps is far in the lead. More ships and commanders spend more time at the Blessed Isle, leaving the seas open for the ambitions of other powers.

## ARSENAL

The Realm’s navy has a full spectrum of vessels, from small, fast sailboats to massive trireme tenders. Most of the ships, though, are biremes and triremes identical to those found in other navies. In every fleet except the Earth Fleet, about 30% of the ships are triremes, 40% are biremes, 5% are trireme tenders and the rest are miscellaneous craft. All the triremes carry rams.

The Realm also has more than 100 First Age ships, including several dozen warships in various states of repair. For instance, the Realm has a half-dozen *Dawning Sun Indomitable*-class heavy battle-cruisers (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the First Age**, p. 46), all somewhat damaged and beyond the Realm’s capacity to repair. The navy also has dozens of *Swift Midday Brilliance*-class light warships and several *Whirligig*-class couriers and *Glorious Dragonfly*-class patrol boats (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the First Age**, pp. 39, 40 and 41). Other vessels are First Age cargo vessels or pleasure-yachts converted for war: Just having an Old Realm hull can make a yacht the equal of any Second Age battleship, once suitable weapons are added.

The powerful Essence weapons left over from the First Age go on the largest and strongest First Age craft. Most battle groups have at least a light implosion bow, concussive Essence cannon or lightning ballista (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the First Age**, pp. 130, 131 and 132). No battleship carries a weapon rated higher than Artifact 3, though: artifacts of such power are irreplaceable. Being too valuable to lose, they are too valuable to use except in extraordinary circumstances. The Realm has not faced a sufficiently extraordinary circumstance in decades.

Most ships, however, carry mundane catapults or light cannon (see Chapter Six), and at least one fire projector for

repelling boarders. The most recent addition to the naval arsenal, the steam cannon, has already proved its worth at shooting holes in enemy hulls and harbor fortifications. The expense of firedust limits the use of cannon, but the fleet has three cannon for every Essence weapon. Every bireme or trireme mounts at least a couple ballista or light onagers, while trireme tenders carry six heavy ballistae and four heavy onagers. A few battle groups include a large merchant vessel rebuilt to carry a heavy fire cannon or steam cannon. (See p. 140 for mounting cannon on ships.)

Of course, most sailors and marines wield ordinary hand weapons. They use the same selection of weapons as the navies and pirates of the West, and for the same reason: these are simply the best weapons for fighting on ships. See page 44 for details.

Unlike Western navies, however, each battle group’s marines also carry a small number of firewands. Apart from igniting an enemy’s sails and rigging, the firewands work very well at clearing the way for boarding parties.

## ORGANIZATION

The Realm’s navy has five fleets. One fleet operates all around the Blessed Isle; the other four patrol the Threshold. In an emergency, though, ships move wherever the Realm needs them... or at least they should. Commanders increasingly find themselves operating without any assurance of reinforcements.

Each fleet consists of numerous battle groups consisting of a trireme tender, two to three dozen biremes and triremes and several smaller support craft. Each of the navy’s component fleets has an Old Realm battleship as its flagship. Most battle groups include at least one First Age ship, even if it’s only a courier boat fitted with a light ballista; they often serve as the command ship.

As a whole, the Imperial Navy answers to the Lord High Admiral, Peleps Sorugan. An admiral commands each component fleet. A navarch directs each battle group, and the Realm’s navy calls a captain a trierarch.

## THE AIR FLEET



**Home Port:** Chanos

This fleet of about 1,400 ships patrols the Inner Sea north of the Blessed Isle. The Air Fleet gets a lot of practice fighting the raiders of the North, and every sailor keeps an eye out for the characteristic silhouette of a Northern longship. They usually win their boarding actions, and the drunken barbarians who thought to loot some helpless coastal village end up in chains and bound for slavery in the Realm. Most of the fleet’s miscellaneous craft are captured longships, used to take marines to shore because of their shallow draft.

Of late, however, the Air Fleet has moved several battle groups to the Northwest. A new wave of pirates has appeared: Wyld barbarians, who use magically-directed icebergs as their ships. So far, the berg-riders seem more interested in attacking







the Northern archipelagoes, but the fleet's admiral knows it's only a matter of time before they attack the Blessed Isle. (See **The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. II—The West**, pp. 153–154 for information about these Wyld raiders.)

## THE EARTH FLEET

**Home Port:** Dragonsmouth

The Earth Fleet guards the Blessed Isle from attack. Since no one has attacked the Blessed Isle in centuries, the Earth Fleet functions as a coast guard that hunts smugglers and rescues ships in distress. The Earth Fleet also attacks any pirates it may encounter, though this is more the duty of the Merchant Fleet. The Earth Fleet has the laxest discipline of any fleet, with notoriously ragged uniforms; everyone knows it's the lowest tier in the Realm's navy, either a cushy job or a career dead end (depending on your point of view).

This fleet has almost 750 ships, including 22 light warships and other medium-sized craft from the First Age, and one First Age battleship. None carry First Age weapons heavier than a light concussive Essence cannon, and the battleship is so severely damaged and repaired that it could never survive a battle against Essence weapons or firedust artillery. It still looks impressive, though, when it meets the ships of ambassadors to the Blessed Isle. The other First Age vessels lead the patrol groups, no more than one per sector of the Blessed Isle's coast. The rest of the fleet consists of biremes and triremes. The fleet also has more than a thousand small craft that belong to the local auxiliaries based in numerous coastal towns, where the local sailors serve in shifts, one week out of each month.

The designation of Dragonsmouth, the port that serves the Imperial City, as the Earth Fleet's home port is mere administrative convenience. The patrol groups operate out of small coastal towns around the Blessed Isle; the Earth Fleet has never gathered in centuries.

## THE FIRE FLEET

**Home Port:** Noble

Almost 1,400 ships of the Fire Fleet protect the Realm's interests in the southern Inner Sea. This is a popular tour of duty, thanks to the warm waters, docile satrapies and exotic ports—nothing beats Chiaroscuro for a *fantastic* shore leave. The local monsters and spirits aren't too bad. The local pirates are no stronger than the Northern raiders, which makes catching them a rather pleasant military exercise. Every battle group can count on catching at least one shipload of scruffy pirates every season. Now and then, though, the Lintha slip past the Water Fleet, and a battle group has a real fight.

Commanders know the Fire Fleet's real purpose, though, is to make sure the local satrapies *stay* docile. Some Southern countries have impressive navies of their own, with abundant firedust artillery. In response, the Fire Fleet installs firedust artillery on a higher percentage of its ships

than any other two fleets combined. Alone among the fleets, the Fire Fleet has *two* First Age warships—though one is really a huge, Shogunate cargo ship—each armed with a heavy steam cannon, so the fleet can shoot back at the heavy shore guns of Chiaroscuro, Yane and Paragon.

## THE MERCHANT FLEET

**Home Port:** Arjuf

The Empress ordained a second fleet for the Blessed Isle as part of her usual plan to divide power: no admiral would have exclusive control over the Realm's waters. The Merchant Fleet has about 900 ships. In the last century, the fleet has taken over many functions that the Earth Fleet used to perform.

Thanks to the Merchant Fleet, neither home-grown nor foreign pirates operate very long in the Blessed Isle's waters. So far, the Realm's bureaucracy still delivers more-or-less timely reports of pirate attacks on ships or coastal villages, and the Merchant Fleet responds promptly.

The Merchant Fleet also escorts convoys of cargo ships bound to or from the Blessed Isle. Every scheduled convoy to the Realm meets a Merchant Fleet battle group about 100 miles out from port. Fleet officers board the ships, inspect the cargoes to make sure they match the manifests, and guide them into port. The fleet also intercepts any ship it finds in the Realm's territorial water, boards, and searches for contraband.

## THE WATER FLEET

**Home Port:** Port Wavehold, Tongma Island

The Water Fleet used to be the largest division of Her Majesty's Navy, since the fleet faced constant battle against the most diverse, numerous and powerful pirates in Creation. The Water Fleet also suffered the highest losses of any fleet. In the last five years, however, the Deliberative has cut funding and ship strength. The 1,272 ships of the Water Fleet now simply try to protect convoys to and from Wavecrest and An-Teng, and keep the Lintha pirates and Coral's privateers away from the Blessed Isle and the Inner Sea. On top of that, the Water Fleet deals with the sea monsters and sea-spirits of the Great Western Ocean, which far exceed the creatures of the Inner Sea in their power and truculence.

On top of the ships reassigned to other commands, the Water Fleet has lost dozens of ships per year since the Empress's disappearance. They used to have 26 First Age ships; now they're down to 18, including their flagship. Monies from House Peleps do not fully make up for lost state funding, though it makes the fleet far more loyal to that House—even its admiral, Ledaal Calin. Commanders and common sailors both know they are losing a war of attrition, and their morale stinks. Captains, navarchs and the fleet admiral himself are ready to accept help from any source that would not compromise the safety of the Realm.

### THE DRUG PROBLEM

The Southern seas offer the Fire Fleet one special problem. Qat, opium and hashish are readily available in the South; so are stronger, stranger drugs such as bright morning (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 155). Drug addiction has become a significant disciplinary problem.

The latest and most dangerous drug, called bliss, surely must be the product of foul magic. Not only does it addict almost instantly, withdrawal is so severe that mortal addicts usually die. Despite the best efforts of fleet commanders, the drug addicts entire crews. But then, a few captains and commanders have become addicted themselves. The leading theories about the drug's origin suggest it is a scheme to take over the Fire Fleet, either by a demon cult, a Deathlord or (the most popular theory) House Cynis.

### THE WOOD FLEET

**Home Port:** Sdoia

The 1,555 ships of the Wood Fleet make it the largest division of the Imperial Navy. The Empress wanted a strong force between the Realm and the Scavenger Lands, whether to defend against attack or to launch an assault. Of late, the Wood Fleet has pushed into the lower Yanaze river system and Fleet Admiral Peleps Polin uses the navy to shake down merchants for his House's benefit. (As it happens, most of the money that House Peleps extracts from the Scavenger Lands goes out again to support the Water Fleet. The House leaders who planned this scheme want to consolidate control over the Imperial Navy, yes, but they also sincerely believe they act in the Realm's best interest.)

The Wood Fleet has no less than 24 First Age ships, including one battleship, all more or less functional and armed with Essence weapons as well as firedust and conventional artillery. The Wood Fleet forms the first line of defense should Lookshy—or now, Thorns—attack the Realm, and the Deliberative never cuts the fleet's funding.

### STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Imperial Navy spends most of its time suppressing piracy and protecting the Realm's shipping. A battle group typically escorts a merchant convoy the first 100 miles from a Threshold port. A navarch who decides to hunt pirates must collect information about where and when the sea-robbers attack, cultivate informants and otherwise try to figure out where she can find them. Once the battle group engages the pirates, artillerists and archers with flaming arrows try to destroy rigging before biremes close and Imperial marines board the vessels. Dragon-Blooded officers often join boarding actions to kill the pirates' leaders. The navy saves ramming as a last resort, since captured ships can be sold to supplement the fleet's budget. Captured pirates can expect

### THE CRYING GAME

Even though the Wood Fleet's extortion challenges the sovereignty of Lookshy, Nexus, Great Forks and other city-states, nobody strikes back. The reason? The Wood Fleet's intensified presence in the Yanaze drastically curbs the river pirates. Merchants lose less cargo and pay lower bonding fees. The Wood Fleet's extortion *reduces* their costs. Intercepted merchants wail and weep at the protection money demanded by the Realm, but do not resist.

Many of the Wood Fleet's pursers figured this out as well and told their captains. It's become a big game among the merchants and captains in the know, with winks amid the bluster and complaints.

What's more, the leading shipping companies tell the river governments that there will be *consequences* should they interfere with the Wood Fleet. And so, the river patrols of Nexus, Lookshy and others scowl at Wood Fleet ships, but obey their orders and let them pass.

The only people who don't know the real score are Admiral Polin and his navarchs. They think they have the Scavenger Lands thoroughly cowed by the new show of the Realm's power.

slavery, while any surviving officers are hanged... or worse, to set an educational example to other pirates.

In war against another navy, battle groups show less restraint. Artillerists still try to cripple enemy ships, while Imperial triremes try to ram enemy triremes and other ships that seem like they could harm the battle group. Boarding is usually reserved for enemy flagships, First Age vessels or ships that carry Essence weapons—the Realm, like everybody else, wants to seize artifacts for itself.

The Imperial Navy also mounts shore assaults. Triremes and other artillery-bearing vessels come as close to shore as they can to cover landings by biremes full of Imperial marines. Once the marines secure a landing site, transport ships can land with legionnaires.

### DEFENSE

The Imperial Navy calls itself the wooden walls that guard the Realm. The navy needs no defense; it does the defending. Nevertheless, a navy cannot sail forever. It needs home ports, supply depots and dry docks where ships can undergo maintenance. For instance, the trireme tenders suffice for small repairs and scraping barnacles off the hull, but how do you fix the trireme tenders?

Each of the home ports listed for the six fleets boasts extensive naval shipyard and dry-dock facilities. Navarchs also have the right to commandeer civilian shipyards in any of the Realm's other port cities, and tell the owners to send the bill to the Imperial Navy. Maybe the naval bursars pay the bill in a timely fashion, maybe not.



The Earth Fleet and Merchant Fleet never sail far from the Blessed Isle, but the battle groups of the other four fleets take long voyages through the Threshold. Each fleet has a number of Threshold ports its admiral considers safe enough that ships can dock there for repairs. The quality of the facilities range from the shipyards of Chiaroscuro (which built the fantastic Denzik ship-city) to Northern towns where the locals offer little more than a safe harbor and all the trees you can chop.

The Air, Fire, Water and Wood Fleets also own a number of small islands that they use as emergency ports and supply depots. Some of these islands are conveniently off the coast of satrapies. For example, the Fire Fleet fortified a small island two days' sail Southwest of Kirighast, as a mustering point should Kirighast's own port become unavailable—say, though a rebellion in Harborhead. Other islands serve as way-stations on long journeys, such as Black Gannet Rock about two-thirds of the way between the Blessed Isle and Abalone. The Navy cannot hide the existence of these remote islands, but the navigational courses to reach them are not widely known outside the Navy itself.

Sailors also tell stories about secret ports, such as harbor-caverns hollowed by Earth Aspects and sorcerers. If such havens exist, the Imperial Navy hides them well.

### REALM NAVY TRIREME

**Description:** The backbone of Realm naval strategy has a crew of 200, mostly rowers, and carries 25 Imperial marines. The crew can fight in a pinch, but their real place in naval warfare is to ram enemy ships.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Ordinary clothing

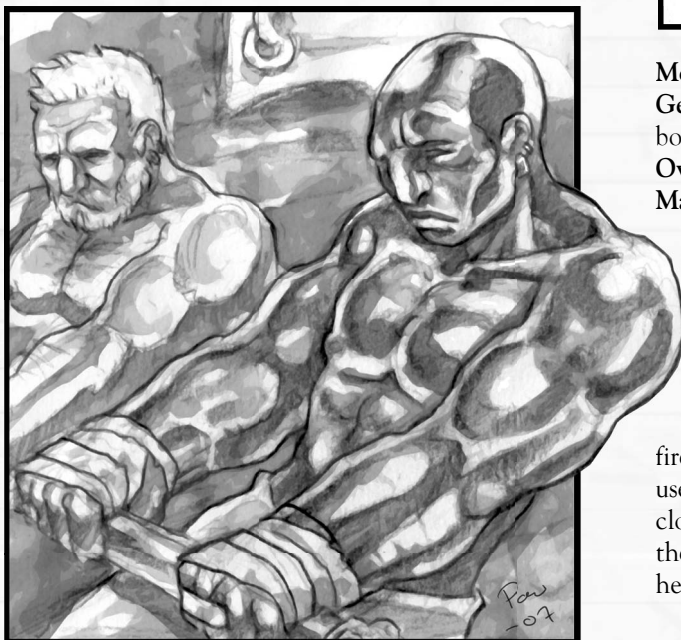
**Motto:** "Stroke!"

**General Makeup:** 200 unarmored sailors with clubs and knives

**Overall Quality:** Green

**Magnitude:** 4

**Drill:** 2



**Close Combat Attack:** 2    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** —    **Ranged Damage:** —

**Endurance:** 5    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 0 (-0 mobility)

**Morale:** 2

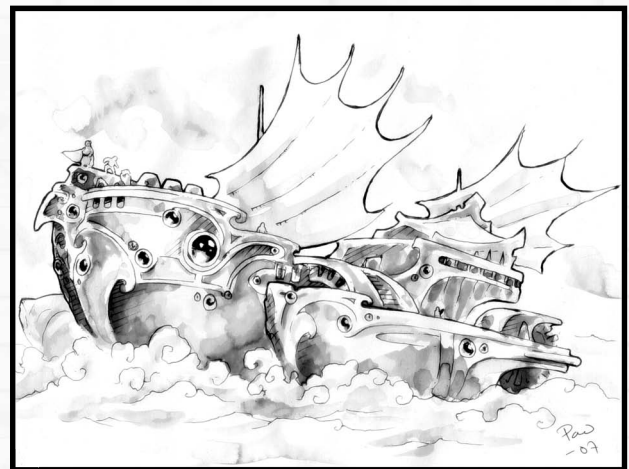
**Formation:** Only skirmish. Everyone in the crew is mortal, though the trierarch and officers are heroic mortals. Four junior officers serve as relays to keep the sailors in some semblance of order. Another two officers act as heroes, and two can man the artillery as sorcerers. Aside from the officers, the crew consists of extras.

### REALM NAVY FLAGSHIP MARINES

**Description:** This *Dawning Sun Indomitable*-class warship (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 46) serves as the flagship for the Wood Fleet. The warship carries 200 marines who double as archers. Other units on board include one scale of sailors, a smaller scale of artilleryists and the Dragon-Blooded officers, who can gather in a sworn brotherhood.

**Commanding Officer:** Winglord V'Neef Serata

**Armor Color:** Green and brown



**Motto:** "East for the Empress"

**General Makeup:** 200 light infantry in buff jackets with self bows, broadhead arrows and short swords

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 4

**Drill:** 3

**Close Combat Attack:** 3    **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 2    **Ranged Damage:** 2

**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 0    **Armor:** 1 (-1 mobility)

**Morale:** 3

**Formation:** While the marines shoot, they stay in relaxed formation for maximum defense against return fire; the ship's deck gives them 25% hard cover. They may use fire arrows. If they board another ship, the marines enter close formation as soon as possible. The marines' winglord is their only Dragon-Blooded officer. Two captains function as heroes, while the four lieutenants act as relays.







## CHAPTER SIX

# PANOPLY OF WAR

The previous chapter mentioned many diverse weapons, vehicles and other tools of war. Here they—and many others—receive traits, greatly expanding the options available to Creation's warriors.

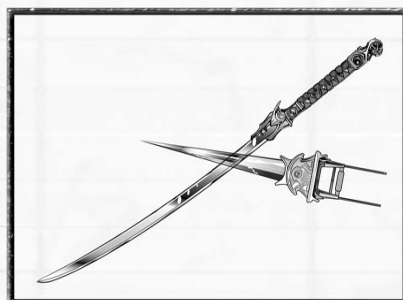
### NEW WEAPONS

These weapons supplement the selection from Chapter Eight of *Exalted*. See also the Appendix to *Scroll of the Monk*.

## MELEE WEAPONS

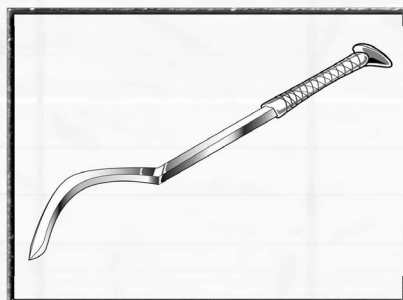
Some of these weapons are quite obscure, and might be available only in limited areas of Creation.

### BLADES



#### CHIAROSCURAN GLASS BLADES

The ruins of Chiaroscuro constitute an enormous supply of hard yet resilient glass... but only a small fraction of the glass comes in shards large enough to grind into swords. Glass, however, can hold a sharper edge than steel. Blades of Chiaroscuran glass have the same statistics as their metal counterparts, except the glass blades gain the Piercing tag. Glass weapons also have Strength Minimums one dot lower than a metal weapon, since glass is lighter than steel or bronze.

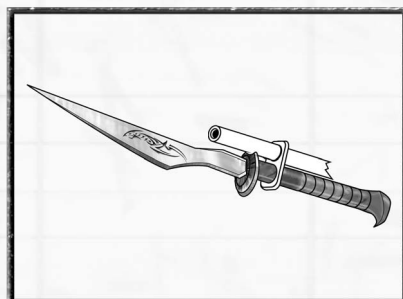


#### KHOPESH

The blade of this sword has a curve in half its length, making it look a bit like an oversized sickle. The curve gives the blade unusual cutting power and helps in catching an enemy's weapon, at a cost of lower Accuracy. These swords are not widely available, so the Resources cost may be greater in some areas.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	+0	+4L	+2	2	Str ••	••	—

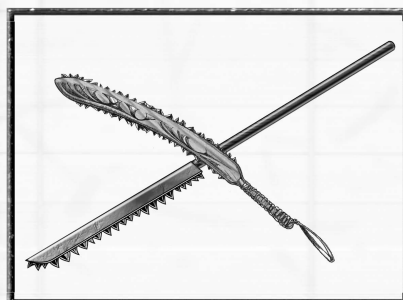
### OTHER MELEE WEAPONS



#### BAYONET

A bayonet consists of a narrow but sturdy blade, one to two feet long, on a loop that slides over the muzzle of a firewand. The bayonet turns the firewand into a serviceable short spear for close combat. The bayonet, by itself, could be used as a knife.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	+2	+4L	+1	2	Str •	•	R



#### SWORD-CLUB

Only tribes that have not yet learned the use of metal use the sword-club. It consists of a truncheon with shards of flint or obsidian set into the opposite edges. The shards are very sharp, but brittle, and so require frequent replacement. The sword-club has the slight advantage in that a user can inflict bashing damage without using the "Pulling Blows" rule (see *Exalted*, p. 158). The sword-club is also called a maquahuitl. A variation called a thorn staff or mourn staff has a hilt like a sword and a truncheon-like metal "blade" edged with small, ripping teeth.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	+0	+3L/B	+0	2	Str ••	••	—

## ARCHERY WEAPONS

Most archers use ordinary self bows, long bows and composite bows, with the standard types of arrows described on page 372 of *Exalted*. Nevertheless, Creation sees a few unusual variations on the basic archer.

### FLAMING ARROWS

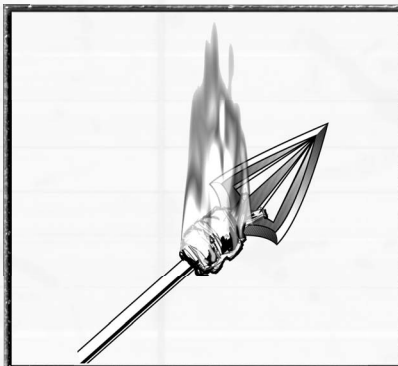
Setting things on fire is often an excellent tactic in war. Unfortunately, soldiers object to enemies running around holding torches to their homes, encampments and supply trains. The solution? Send the fire long distance, using an arrow.

Fire arrows are not primarily meant for use against enemy soldiers. Rather, an army shoots fire arrows at the enemy's town in hopes of setting it aflame. The odds that a volley of arrows starts a blaze may be low—but the defenders cannot



take the chance of their town burning down. People have to search the town for every arrow, just to make sure... which means fewer people to watch and guard against other attacks. For their part, the defenders shoot fire arrows back in hopes of burning an army's tents and other supplies. Sails, ropes and hulls sealed with pitch or bitumen also burn very well, so mariners also use fire arrows.

In the South, however, fire arrows become especially important. Elite, mounted commando-archers charge into an enemy encampment with a quiver of fire arrows for one purpose: to find the enemy's supply of firedust and set it off.



### FIRE ARROWS

A typical fire arrow is nothing more than an ordinary broadhead arrow with a bit of oily rag tied around the head. Light the rag, let fly and pray: the rag reduces the accuracy and range of the arrow. A flame arrow deals a little extra damage when it hits, due to the flame, and continues to deal that die of flame damage every Miscellaneous action thereafter, as an environmental effect (1L/action, Trauma 1)—but the arrow is easy to put out, if someone can keep his head and remove the flaming rag. A single successful resistance roll ends the continuing damage completely. In any case, the fire lasts only one Miscellaneous action per threshold success rolled by the archer's player (maximum 5).

Bow	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
Composite	6	-1	+3L/1L†	3	200	•••••	•••/-	2,B,F
Long	6	+0	+3L/1L†	3	150	••••	••/-	2,B,F
Self	6	-1	+3L/1L†	2	100	•••	•/-	2,B,F

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.

† Damage after slash is for environmental damage.



### INCENDIARY ARROW

Centuries ago, a Chiaroscuro thaumaturge developed an expensive but highly effective version of the fire arrow. The head of the arrow consists of a fragile glass bulb shaped like the head of a fowling arrow, filled with an alchemical mixture now called Ardent Embrace Resin, or Southern Fire. The arrow's impact breaks the bulb to splash the target with the sticky mixture, which ignites on contact with air. The adhesive flames give a much better chance of setting fire to ships or buildings.

The arrow itself deals bashing damage as a fowling arrow. The burning resin deals lethal damage every Miscellaneous action thereafter (Damage 2L/action, Trauma 2). The resin burns for two Miscellaneous actions per success rolled in the attack (maximum 10 actions). Ending the damage early also calls for two successful resistance rolls, to represent smothering or scraping off the flaming pitch.

Incendiary arrows require a thaumaturge to create the resin inside them, plus a glassblower to make the bulbs, which increases the cost. Outside the South, an arsonist-archer probably has to commission their production herself. A pack of 12 arrows costs Resources •• in the South, Resources ••• elsewhere.

These arrows are also fragile by necessity. Owners normally keep them in a metal-lined case of 12 arrows each, which weighs 10 pounds when fully loaded.

Incendiary arrow-points can also be fired using a sling or pellet bow. The lightweight missile deals one die less initial damage, but the fire damage is the same.

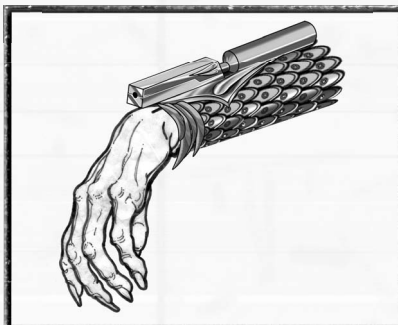
Bow	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
Composite	6	+0	+2B/2L†	3	200	•••••	•••/••	2,B,F
Long	6	+1	+2B/2L†	3	150	••••	••/••	2,B,F
Self	6	+0	+2B/2L†	2	100	•••	•/••	2,B,F

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.

† Damage after slash is for environmental damage.

## CROSSBOWS

**Exalted**, page 372, describes the basic crossbow used by the Haslanti League (and a few other groups in Creation). The Haslanti also produce two other mechanically-enhanced bows: a smaller, folding version for assassins and a larger version for sieges. The enigmatic Mountain Folk use a repeating crossbow. The Haslanti experiment with this refinement, but no models have entered general production.

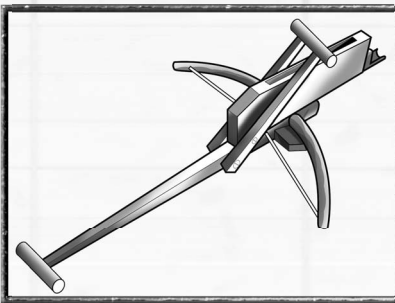


### MINI-CROSSBOW

This miniature crossbow is made entirely of feathersteel. The crossbow extends no longer than a large man's hand. The wielder typically straps it to her forearm. The bow arms can twist and fold back so the whole weapon can hide under bulky sleeves. The miniature bolts inflict little damage themselves, but the archer usually poisons them: this is very much an assassin's weapon.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
5	+0	3L	1	75	—	•••	B

\*Not generally available outside certain areas.

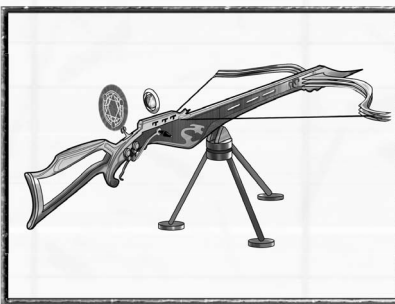


### REPEATING CROSSBOW

One strategic weakness of the crossbow is its low Rate: it takes time to crank the lever and fit a new bolt to the string. The repeating crossbow solves this problem with a box-shaped wooden magazine that holds 10 bolts. The same lever that pulls the bowstring taut also moves the magazine so a bolt drops into place. An archer in a rush can crank, aim and fire at twice the Speed of the basic crossbow. The repeating crossbow uses the same ammunition as the basic crossbow.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
5	+0	5L	2	125	—	•••	2,B

\*Not available at all outside certain areas.



### SIEGE CROSSBOW

The largest Haslanti crossbow has spring-steel arms, a brass stock and a lever the archer must work several times to draw back the steel bowstring. The weapon is more than a yard long and wide. It's too cumbersome for most soldiers to carry; instead, the Haslanti mount it on iceboats, air boats and city walls. For battlefield use, a siege crossbow can be mounted on a bipod or tripod. Cranking the siege crossbow takes a Miscellaneous action.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
5	+0	8L	1	250	—	•••	2,B,S

\*Not generally available outside certain areas.

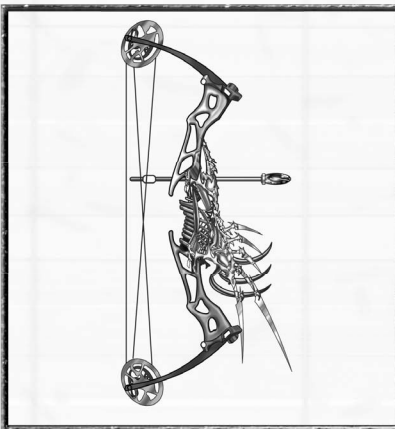
## THE BIG SECRET

A crossbow resembles a normal bow mounted on a stock, with a groove to hold the bolt. A lever draws back the string, and a trigger releases it: this renders the archer's strength irrelevant. A soldier of average strength can do as much damage with a crossbow as a somewhat stronger-than-average archer can do with a self bow and broadhead arrows, at the cost of a shorter range and a lower rate of fire.

What's more, you can mount sights on the stock to assist the unskilled user. As a result, anyone can learn to shoot a crossbow in a few days. They won't be very good at it, but so what? In the time it takes to train a company of archers, you can train 10 times as many crossbowmen and win your battles through sheer numbers.

In game terms, this means that a mortal character who lacks the Archery Ability does *not* suffer a two-dice penalty when trying to shoot a crossbow. *That* is the secret kept by the Haslanti, the Mountain Folk and the few other groups that use these weapons. The Haslanti build their crossbows with a special pin. Pulling out that pin makes the whole mechanism fall apart, leaving a jumble of wood and metal.

Any product of mortal artifice can be duplicated, though. A few mercenary companies already copy the Haslanti crossbow. The secret must inevitably spread further. When it does, it could revolutionize war throughout Creation as armies get bigger and depend more on the direction of massive combat units instead of the quality of individual soldiers and their arms.



### OTHER ARCHERY WEAPONS

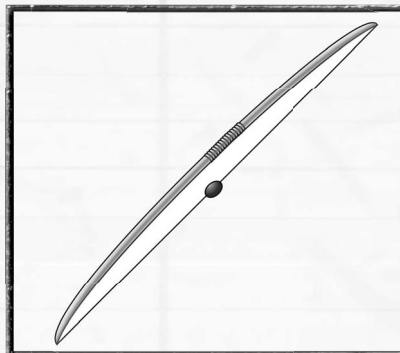
#### LOOKSHY STRONGBOW

The Lookshy strongbow, or wheelbow, adds a series of cables and pulleys to the stave of a composite bow. This enables a user to pull a stronger bow than she could draw otherwise. Wheelbows are not commonly sold on the open market, and Lookshy soldiers try to retrieve these bows from fallen comrades. Still, enough of these weapons are lost (or are reverse-engineered by clever savants) that Scavenger Lands folk do not generally assume that someone with a strongbow must necessarily work for Lookshy.

For starting characters, wheelbows count as superior equipment. The given Resources cost indicates a strongbow's price—if available at all—outside Lookshy. Seventh Legion characters (or those with the right contacts) can acquire a strongbow for Resources •••.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	+1	+1L	3	275	•••••	••••	2, B

\* Wheelbows do additional damage as noted because of the extra strength added by the pulley mechanism.



## PELLET BOWS

A pellet bow, or sling bow, looks like a regular bow but the middle of the bowstring spreads into a shallow little leather pouch like that of a sling. The archer draws the pellet bow just like a regular bow, but pinches a stone or bullet in the leather pouch. Pellet bows are not as accurate as regular arrows, but they have a greater range than regular slings. These bows can be built in self bow, long bow or composite bow forms. These weapons could also be used to fire very small grenades, such as the arrowheads of Southern incendiary arrows.

Name	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
Composite	6	-1	+2L	3	250	•••••	•••/-	2,B
Long	6	-1	+2L	3	200	••••	••/-	2,B
Self	6	-1	+2L	2	150	•••	•/-	2,B

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.

nisms. Add one die to whatever damage the arrow normally inflicts (make it bashing damage for fowling arrows).

## THROWN WEAPONS

### GRENADES

Grenades are pottery (rarely glass or other materials) bombs, spherical or egg-shaped and sized for throwing. A grenade is designed to burst on impact and scatter some damaging payload. Regardless of their contents, grenades follow a few special rules:

- All grenade weapons carry the new 'G' tag (see sidebar). This indicates that the weapon bursts to affect every target within an area. See the weapon's description for the size and shape of that area.
- If attacking an area rather than a specific person, a one-yard radius area has a Defense Value of 0.
- Normal grenades are too large to throw using slings or staff slings, but their range can be extended using a special device that resembles an atlatl.
- A character whose player botches an attack roll typically smashes the grenade at their feet, setting it off and suffering the full effect herself.
- Grenades are fragile. An unprotected grenade goes off if its bearer suffers knockback or knockdown, or falls 10 feet or more. An enemy can also target a visible grenade with a called shot: treat this as a disarming attack (see **Exalted**, p. 158). Prudent people carry grenades in well-padded wooden cases. Grenades in such cases cannot detonate accidentally (unless the wearer is smashed flat, anyway). On the other hand, the character must perform a Ready Weapon action to withdraw grenades.
- Thrown Excellencies and Charms that extend a thrown weapon's Range or Rate (including multiple actions) work with grenades. Charms that multiply or create thrown weapons do not. Storytellers must evaluate other Charms individually.

Some grenades are fashioned by mundane craft. Others require the thaumaturgical Path of Alchemy; see the description for each type of grenade.



## SLEEP GRENADE

Alchemical sleep grenades are made with various pollens and soporifics distilled from plants found in the East. They are popular with troops engaged in subjugation and riot control, but costly. Indoors or in completely still air, a sleep grenade's soporific burst has a three-yard radius. The slightest breeze reduces the area of efficacy to one-yard radius, and a stiff wind limits the grenade's effect to a person it hits directly. Damage is to fall asleep; check every action for two Miscellaneous Actions per success rolled on the attack; Toxicity 2; Tolerance —/-; Penalty -2 (only applicable if a victim resists the poison on an action, and then halved to -1), Resources cost 2. A person who succumbs sleeps for (30 - [Stamina + Resistance]) minutes, or Miscellaneous Actions for Exalts and other supernatural creatures.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost*	Tags
6	+0	(special)	3	10	Str••	••	G

\* Cost is for a pack of five grenades; increase to ••• outside the East.



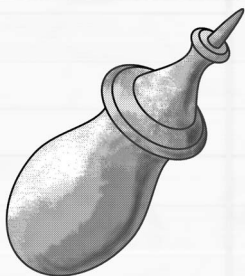
## SMOKE GRENADE

When triggered, this alchemical grenade ignites and spews a dense, acrid smoke. The cloud expands one yard per tick for seven ticks; indoors, a smoke grenade can fill a number of small rooms and interconnecting hallways. The smoke cloud remains in place for one long tick (less in windy conditions, indefinitely indoors without ventilation). Within this area, visibility is equal to a foggy night (see **Exalted**, p. 135). The thick smoke also presents a choking hazard: Treat it as a toxin (Damage 2B/action, Toxicity 2M, Tolerance Stamina + Resistance/action, Penalty -2). The grenade incidentally may ignite easily combustible materials that it touches, such as paper, dry grass and leaves, or cloth.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost*	Tags
6	+0	(special)	3	10	Str••	••	G

\* Cost is for a pack of five grenades.





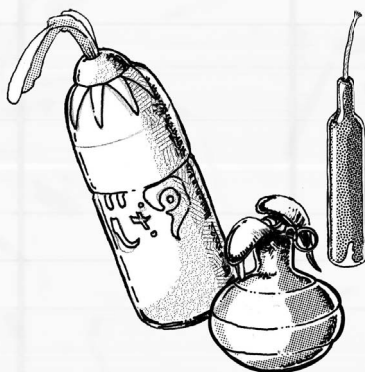
### FIREPOT

A basic firepot consists of a glass or pottery vessel filled with inflammable oil, with an oil-soaked rag stuffed in the neck; a firepot does not require any Craft facility at all to make. Light the oil, throw the vessel (directly or using a siege engine) and hope the vessel breaks on impact. The oil splashes, and the burning rag sets it on fire. The oil inflicts 2L damage per Miscellaneous action as an environmental effect. Two successful resistance rolls are needed to extinguish the oil (or at least remove it from one's person), but the oil burns for only two Miscellaneous actions per success rolled.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost*	Tags
6	+0	2L/2	1	10	Str••	•	F,G

\* Number after slash is Trauma.

† Cost is for five firepots.



### FIREDUST GRENADES

A small jar or gourd filled with firedust becomes a grenade with the addition of a bit of burning, oil-soaked rag or a flint-and-steel detonator mechanism. A person who suffers the direct impact of the grenade takes full damage, like any other attack; but the burst of fire extends two yards from impact. In this region, the grenade inflicts half the listed damage (round down) as an environmental effect that lasts a single tick. Producing firedust grenades is a Craft (Fire) task, difficulty 3.

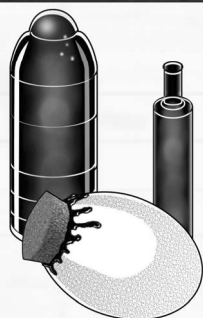
Clever artisans can make miniature grenades, containing no more firedust than a single shot of a flame piece. These deal less damage than a flame piece, however, because the fire expands in all directions instead of being concentrated into a narrow jet. A miniature grenade has a one-yard burst. It is small enough to throw using a sling or staff sling.

Not-so-clever artisans make oversized grenades, called *petards*, loaded with a full pound of firedust. The petard's burst has a four-yard radius. The weapon is notoriously dangerous, since any mistake with a petard can kill its wielder and everyone else nearby. Artillerists sometimes load petards into catapults.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage*	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost†	Tags
Miniature	6	+0	4L/2	3	10	Dexterity ••	••	F,G
Standard	6	+0	9L/3	2	10	Dexterity ••	••	F,G
Petard	6	-1	14L/5	1	5	Str ••, Dex •••	•••	F,G

\* Number after slash is Trauma for burst area.

† Cost is for 10 miniature grenades, five standard, or one petard; increase by one dot outside the South.



### GARDA EGG

The Ardent Embrace Resin used in incendiary arrows (see p. 132) can go in a sealed glass bottle. The Haslanti make their own version, using their own version of the formula. When the vessel breaks, the pitchy contents catch fire and burn for three Miscellaneous actions per success rolled in the attack (maximum 15), dealing 4L damage per action as an environmental effect. Three successful resistance rolls are needed to isolate the flaming resin from air, or scrape it off a victim's body. Smaller grenades (very often made from actual eggshells sealed with wax) deal less damage, and burn for only two Miscellaneous actions per success (maximum 10).

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage*	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost†	Tags
Small	6	+0	2L/2	1	10	—	•••	F,G
Large	6	+0	4L/3	1	10	Str••	•••	F,G

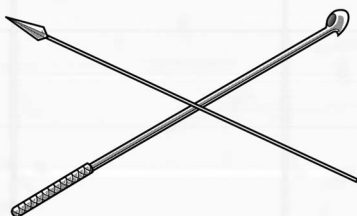
\* Number after slash is Trauma.

† Cost is for 10 miniature garda eggs or five standard garda eggs; increase by one dot outside the South.

## CONTINUING DAMAGE IN MASS COMBAT

Fire and magic may all inflict damage that continues beyond a single action. This does not alter the attack's damage rating in mass combat, unless this is specifically noted in a weapon or magical effect's description. Instead, the greater lethality of such attacks is represented by their greater likelihood of causing a rout, which can suddenly reduce a complementary unit's Magnitude (see **Exalted**, p. 169). Poison similarly causes continuing damage and inspires fear, so add poison to the list of ranged attacks that raise the difficulty of rolls to resist hesitation and rout.

## OTHER THROWN WEAPONS



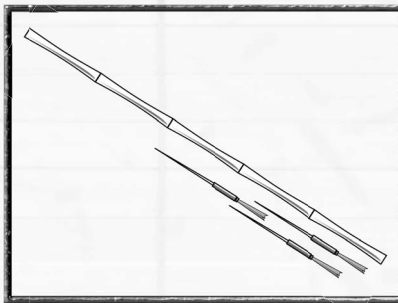
### ATLATL

The atlatl, or throwing stick, consists of a rod the length of a man's arm, with a cup or hook at one end. The wielder places a dart or javelin in the cup so it lies against the atlatl. He draws back his arm, and then whips the atlatl forward and down. A throwing stick with a larger cup could throw grenades.

A basic throwing stick merely extends the range of a missile. Giving the atlatl a thong that loops around the wielder's fingers, a carefully-placed weight along the shaft and the use of special, flexible darts turns the atlatl into a far more potent weapon. A "refined" atlatl used to throw ordinary darts or javelins reverts to the traits for the "basic" throwing stick. Either way, the atlatl demands a fair bit of practice to use well.

Type	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost*	Tags
Basic	6	+0	as missile	1	as missile x3	Str••, Thrown ••	•/-	—
Refined	6	+1	+4L	1	100	Str ••, Thrown ••	•/-	P

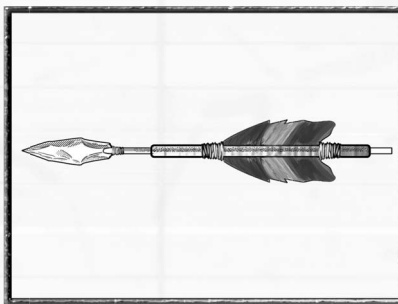
\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.



### BLOWGUN

A blowgun is a hollow tube up to three yards long, firing small darts that resemble throwing needles. The weapon uses Thrown for targeting. The darts themselves do little damage, but users generally poison them: Arrow Frog Venom (see *Exalted*, p. 131) is typical. A dart that deals even a single level of (post-soak) damage poisons the target. Metal darts do Piercing damage.

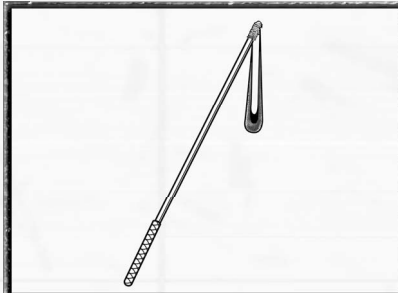
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost	Tags
5	+1	1L	2	20	–	•	2



### DART

A throwing dart looks much like a larger and heavier version of a target arrow. They are much larger than the needle-tipped darts used in blowguns. Primitive tribes sometimes use darts for hunting and war, and poison them.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost	Tags
5	+1	+2L	3	15	Str •	–	–



### STAFF SLING

This weapon consists of a sling on the end of a pole. The pole extends the sling's acceleration arc, improving the weapon's striking power at cost of some range and accuracy. Instead of bullets, a staff slinger throws cobbles or, perhaps, grenades. A staff sling requires two hands to use effectively, however, preventing the wielder from using a shield or other weapon.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost	Tags
6	-2	+4L	1	50	Str ••	•	2

## ARTILLERY

Not every weapon can be wielded by one soldier. Some weapons are so large that they require several people to operate them. Most of these weapons throw some sort of attack at range, and are described as artillery.

Artillery weapons all carry a special 'A' tag. Such a weapon can fire in the Speed indicated, but can take considerably longer to reload. The weapon also requires a crew to operate. See the weapon's descriptive text for the reloading time and crew size.

Except for Excellencies, standard Thrown and Archery Charms do not work with artillery. Fear the Exalt who invents Thrown or Archery Charms *just* for artillery.

### ARTILLERY IN MASS COMBAT

In many circumstances, a few artillerists within a complementary unit fire catapults or cannon at the enemy. In this case, treat the artillerist as a sorcerer making a solo attack. Some militaries, however, deploy entire combat units of artillerists. In this case, the total number of artillerists may exceed the number of weapons, for such weapons often need several people to operate them. Nevertheless, do *not* divide the Ranged Damage of the artillery by the proportion of artillerists who do not personally make attacks. (For instance, if each catapult needs four soldiers to operate it, do not divide the unit's Ranged Damage by four.) Everyone contributes to the artillery attack, even if he doesn't personally fire it off.

## CATAPULTS

Creation's engineers know of two kinds of catapult. One type uses a bowstring to fire missiles, but the tension to propel the missile comes from twisted skeins of rope instead of a bowstave. The other sort consists of a lever arm with a sling or cup at one end, and a mechanism to move the arm at the other: a counterweight, a twisted skein of rope or just a lot of people pulling on a line. The first sort uses the Archery Ability; the second uses Thrown for targeting. In most catapults, the artillery crew cranks back the bowstring or lever arm, loads the ammunition and then pulls a trigger to fire the machine.

Archery-based catapults fire stone balls or oversized arrows in low, flat arcs. These missiles often shoot through multiple rows of soldiers. Thrown-based catapults send missiles on high arcs that sail over the highest walls, but reduce the weapon's range. Since the missiles come down at a high angle, they tend not to bounce or roll much. On the other hand, these weapons are excellent for firing various sorts of grenades, and can hurl much heavier projectiles than can Archery-based catapults.

Catapults are hard to aim (especially the high-arc sorts). Once an artillerist gets the range to a fixed target, however, she can lock the machine in place and shoot again and again. In game terms, once the artillerist hits a specific location, her player can continue to hit that spot without the need to roll each time. However, each attack is treated as having 0 threshold successes to add to damage. This is only possible with ammunition of reliably standardized weight. As soon as the artillerist moves the catapult to aim at a different target, she loses the lock.

Catapult nomenclature is not consistent through Creation. The indicated names are those used by the Realm military; other people use other names, or just speak of "catapults" without being more precise.

## CATAPULT PAYLOADS

Any siege engine capable of indirect fire (siege slings, onagers and trebuchets) can use any of the following payloads.

**Stone Ball:** The standard ammunition for catapults is just a ball chipped from hard stone. The only cost for such ammunition is the labor of making the standard-weight balls.

**Iron Ball:** These pack the same energy as a stone ball into a smaller volume. Damage becomes Piercing (if it wasn't already). Iron balls also cost a good deal more: Resources 2 for each ball.

**Arrow:** Archery-based catapults can fire oversized arrows. Heavy catapult arrows are the size of javelins or harpoons.

**Shrapnel:** A shrapnel shot could be a bucket of small stones, caltrops or a mass of sling stones baked into a clay sphere that shatters when it hits something solid. In any case, the impact scatters projectiles in a five-yard diameter, attacking everyone in that area: compare the Dodge Defense Value of anyone caught in the radius against a single attack roll. Those hit suffer half the weapon's listed damage as a conventional attack: normal shrapnel is neither Piercing nor Overwhelming. A shell of iron shot, however, would deal aggravated damage to Fair Folk.

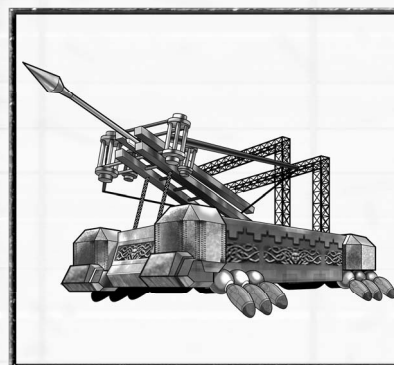
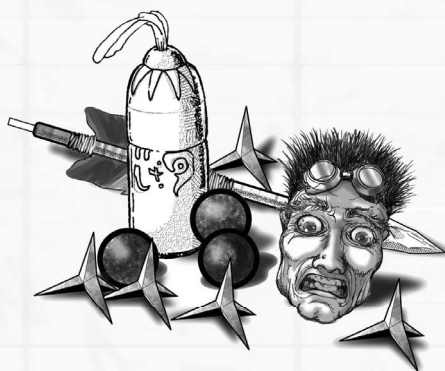
**Salt:** Used against the dead. The impact scatters salt in a five-yard diameter.

This does not harm ghosts or zombies, but it expels ghosts from the small area and forces them to resist knockdown (see *Exalted*, p. 153). This could break up a close formation of ghosts.

**Grenades:** See the section on these weapons, starting on page 134. Firepots are the most common ammunition, but petards and other missiles are possible. In this case, the catapult simply acts as a delivery device, and the grenade has its normal effect. A catapult can fire a cluster of five standard grenades, which scatter in flight over the battlefield.

**Biologicals:** Rotting corpses, disease-infested animals, buckets of dung, the severed heads of negotiators, and the like. While these rarely inflict significant damage (unless they land on someone), they increase the chances of disease and decrease morale in a besieged fortress or walled town. A trebuchet can launch a person (living or dead)—although how they land is another question.

A living person fired from a trebuchet takes terminal velocity falling damage (25B Piercing). If she lives, she is considered knocked down, and have to perform a Rising from Prone action, unless she stunts the landing.



## BALLISTA

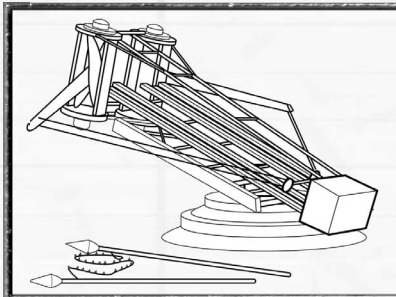
This Archery-based catapult works like a giant bow, except instead of a wooden stave the bowstring connects to arms powered by a pair of torsion skeins. Light ballistae with cast-iron frames are small enough to mount atop fortress wagons or wheel about city walls or the decks of ships. A ballista normally fires large, heavy arrows but can also fire stone balls or grenades; the balls deal the same damage. Arrows are generally used against soldiers, stone balls against walls and fortifications.

A swivel mount lets a ballista turn quickly in any direction, as well as tilting up to 75 degrees upward and 20 degrees downward, so they can be used against flying or swimming foes.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
Light	6	-0	7L	1	300	-	●●/●●	2,A,P
Heavy	6	-1	11L	1	400	-	●●/●●	2,A,P

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition (10 bolts).



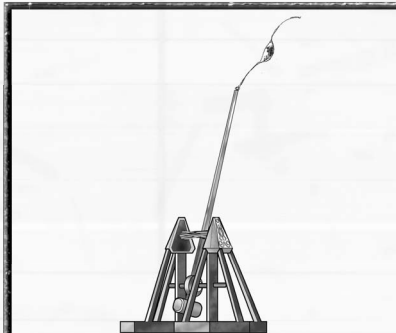


### SAILCUTTER

A sailcutter consists of two light ballistae on a common swivel mount, but at a slightly different angle. The two ballistae fire at once. A 10-foot chain connects their two javelins, with blades attached every foot or so. The javelins, chain and blades cut a swath through a ship's sails, rigging and unlucky crew members. A sailcutter aimed at sails and rigging has its base damage doubled, before adding dice for successes or Charms. Against people, the sailcutter's chain deals the listed damage in an area three yards wide, and up to 10 yards deep.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	-2	6L	1	80	—	●●●/●●	2,A

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition (1 chain).

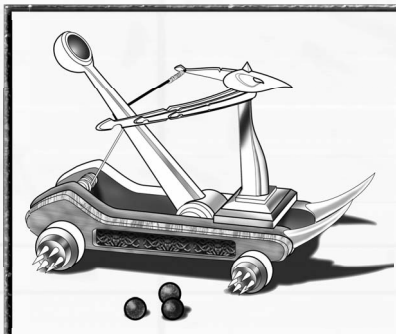


### SIEGE SLING

The lightest form of Thrown-based catapult acts like a larger version of a staff sling. The weapon consists of just a long arm with a rope on one end and a payload sling on the other, mounted on an axle between two bamboo A-frames. The siege sling throws a 10-pound rock or missiles of comparable weight. A siege sling needs a team of at least five to fire effectively: one artilleryist to load and aim, and four people to haul on the rope attached to one end of the arm. It's a cheap weapon, but intrinsically inaccurate: the siege sling cannot "lock on" to a target like other catapults. Artilleryists often use any available small boulders, and don't even try to hit particular targets—they just rain as many rocks as they can on an opposing army. Changing aim takes five long ticks, for what it's worth. A siege sling takes three Miscellaneous actions to reload.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	-4	10L	1	125	—	●/●	2,A

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition (10 standardized stones; otherwise free).



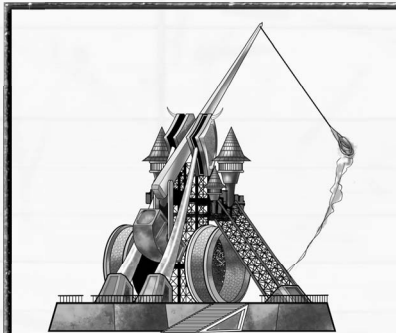
### ONAGER

The onager is a torsion-skein catapult that uses Thrown for attacks. Light versions need a crew of at least three to fire effectively, while a heavy version needs a crew of four. The weapon takes a complete long tick to prepare, load and fire. An artilleryist can adjust the torsion skein to alter the weapon's range, but it has no traverse: changing the direction it fires involves five long ticks spent manhandling the entire weapon.

The heavy version represents the limit to torsion-skein technology. Any attempt to build a larger onager results in self-destructing catapults and dead artilleryists.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
Light	6	-2	15L/5	1	175	-	●●/●	2,A,O
Heavy	6	-3	25L/8	1	200	-	●●/●	2,A,O

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition (5 stones).



### TREBUCHET

The largest Thrown-based catapults attach a huge counterweight to the end of the lever arm. The counterweight is usually just a big timber box full of dirt and rocks. A rope and capstan pulls down the massive lever of the catapult, lifting up the counterweight. The artilleryists load the ammunition and pull a rope to release the trigger. The counterweight swings down, the payload arm swings up and the projectile flies a long, long way.

A trebuchet needs at least ten soldiers to operate. It takes a full six minutes just to cock, load and fire. Altering a trebuchet's range involves shoveling dirt into or out of the counterweight; altering its direction means wheeling the multi-ton machine to face a different direction. The process takes at least 10 long ticks.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	-5	30L/10	1	500	—	●●●/●●	2,A,O

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition (five stones).

## NAVAL CATAPULTS

Large yachts, biremes, triremes and the larger merchant vessels can carry onagers, sailcutters or basic ballistae. Smaller merchant vessels can manage only a single light onager or a few light ballistae or sailcutters. Siege slings are too inaccurate to mount on ships, and trebuchets are too big for any Second Age ship. A ship's motion prevents the "lock on" targeting of catapults.

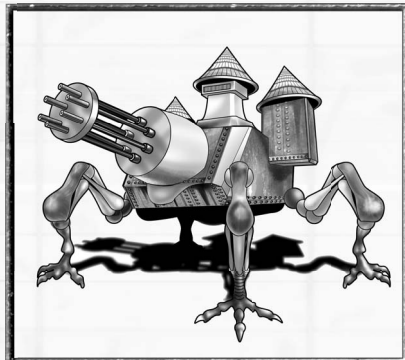
For ammunition, both bolts and stones can damage hulls and decks as well as killing enemy sailors. Firepots can destroy an enemy ship: artilleryists may launch an unlit firepot, as a threat to surrender or die. Ship-borne onagers often fire loads of gravel or other shrapnel-like payloads to wreck sails or wound the crew before a Boarding action.

## FLAME ARTILLERY

Armies that can't afford the alchemically-fueled Essence weapons developed in the First Age can somewhat approximate their effects through massive use of firedust and petroleum distillates. Most flame weapons use firedust, as larger versions of the firewand. The quantity of firedust such a weapon consumes in each shot is described in terms of charges, with each charge sufficient for one shot from a firewand. As always, the listed cost for ammunition increases by one dot outside the South. Most forms of flame artillery have no extended range: they fire out to the listed range with no penalty, but no further.

### SEMIPORTABLE WEAPONS

Although a single person can operate each of these weapons, they are too bulky for a single man to carry. If they are not fixed in place, they might have a tripod mount or be mounted on a cart for a group of soldiers to trundle about. Squad weapons can change their direction at most 60 degrees in a Miscellaneous action.



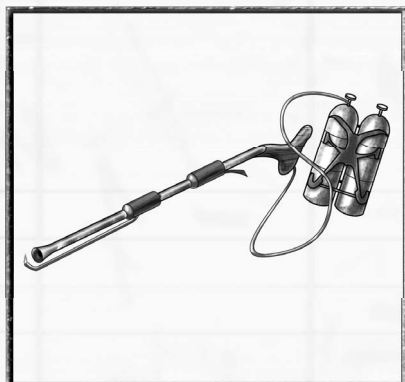
#### FIRE PROJECTOR

The fire projector consists of a battery of oversized firewands. Each firewand tube fires once. The simplest fire projectors have a separate trigger for each barrel. Superior versions have a firing mechanism that slides along a rack of barrels, or a ring of barrels that spins to bring each barrel to the mechanism. Either way, the operator can fire one barrel per action. (Firing more than one barrel at once overstresses the weapon so it explodes.) Fire projectors range from four to eight barrels; firing more than eight barrels in a row overheats the weapon and cooks off the remaining firedust charges.

Each shot of a fire projector consumes three charges of firedust. After use, a fire projector requires 10 ticks to cool and reload a barrel. A single person can operate a fire projector, but it's best to have a crew on hand for reloading. A fire projector cannot be reloaded while it's being fired. The plate that holds the barrels and protects the operator from possible backwash also gives the operator 50% hard cover.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	+0	12L	1	15	—	••••/••	2,A,F

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.



#### FLAMETHROWER

This weapon resembles the fire projector but uses petroleum distillates instead of firedust. One soldier aims the snout of the weapon, while another soldier works a pump attached to a tank of the inflammable liquid. A pilot light at the end of the barrel ignites the liquid, creating a jet of flame. The flamethrower typically carries enough liquid for a dozen shots.

The flaming oil sticks to a target and keeps burning. The oil inflicts 4L/action for one Miscellaneous action per success rolled in the attack unless the victim immediately drops and rolls, strips off his clothing, or otherwise takes action to put out the flames. In this case, the continuing damage becomes an environmental effect equal to a bonfire: two successful rolls to resist the effect mean the fire is out.

Flamethrowers are quite dangerous to use, because any leak can set the whole contraption ablaze. Any botched attack roll ruins the device, with the effect that the two operators suffer their own intended attack. Any damage to the flamethrower causes a leak that makes the next attack an automatic botch.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	+0	8L+4L/action	1	1	20	••••/••	2,A,F

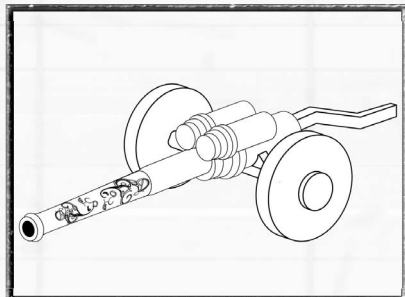
\* Cost after slash is for ammunition (one tank of kerosene)

### CANNON

Cannon, the largest (and costliest) of incendiary weapons, are usually mounted on a heavy, wheeled frame. A cannon needs an elephant, yeddin or a team of horses, oxen or slaves to move it about, and only the smaller weapons can move during the course of battle. All forms of cannon use the Archery Ability for targeting.

A cannon's mass and frame make it difficult to re-aim. Smaller cannon can move up to 10 degrees left or right (its *traverse*), or 15 degrees up or five degrees down (its *elevation*). Changing aim takes a full action of five long ticks. Any further change in the weapon's orientation or position involves moving the frame, a process that takes at least 15 long ticks.

All these weapons consume large amounts of firedust: 20 charges for a light cannon, 30 for a heavy cannon and 45 for a gigantic cannon. A light cannon needs a crew of four, a heavy weapon needs six men to operate and a gigantic cannon needs its own dedicated military unit of Magnitude 2 to operate and maintain it.

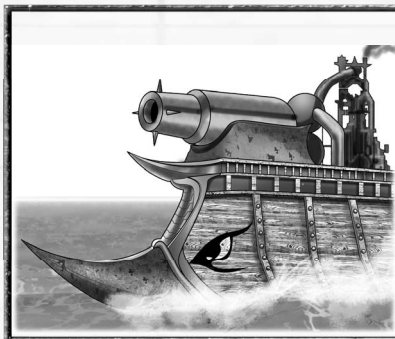


#### FIRE CANNON

A fire cannon consists of a thick bronze or cast iron tube, often ornately decorated. This weapon fires an immense blast of flame that kills any mere mortal, and sets any wooden structure aflame. All such cannon can be fired in a few seconds, but take 10 long ticks to clean, cool and reload with firedust. As usual with flame weapons, these devices have no extended range: they fire out to the listed range with no penalty, but no further.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Str.	Cost*	Tags
Light	6	-3	20L	1	50	—	••••/•••	2,A,F,S
Heavy	6	-4	25L	1	65	—	•••••/•••	2,A,F,S
Gigantic	6	-5	30L	1	80	—	••••••/••••	2,A,F,S

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.



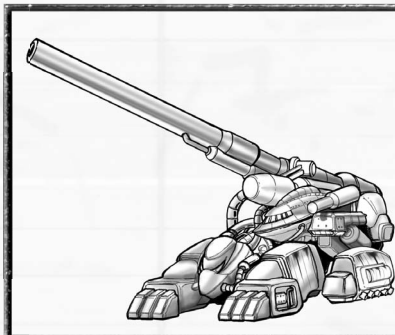
### STEAM CANNON

Two centuries ago, the mortal savant remembered as Ardent Bronze observed that steam exerted pressure, and put this together with his knowledge of fire cannon to invent a new weapon. A steam cannon uses firedust to heat a pressure chamber very hot, boiling a quantity of water. A stone or iron ball fits tightly into the barrel to keep the steam from escaping, and a bar keeps the ball in place. When the cannon builds up sufficient pressure, the artillerist releases the bar and the steam pressure shoots the ball a long way.

Steam cannon take 15 long ticks to prepare for firing. The artillerist can adjust the range of the projectile by adding more or less water to the cannon, so the range increment is treated normally. Steam cannon all require crews to operate.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Str.	Cost*	Tags
Light	6	-2	20L/7	1	150	—	●●●/●●	2,A,S
Heavy	6	-3	25L/8	1	300	—	●●●●/●●	2,A,S

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.



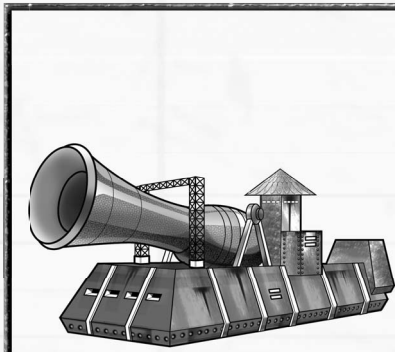
### GIGANTIC STEAM CANNON

The very largest steam cannon require special treatment. Such weapons shoot a ball with a maximum range of about a mile. These cannon take hours to change their orientation and days to change their position. More often than not, artillerists simply place the cannon to fire at a single spot on a city wall, and just keep blasting away.

You can mount the cannon on a special frame so that it can traverse 30 degrees right or left, and can elevate or depress by 15 degrees. This heavy, cast iron mount costs as much as the cannon itself and the mounting itself cannot move. Such emplaced weapons defend the strategic approaches to cities, whether by land or sea. Changing orientation takes 10 long ticks.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Strength	Cost*	Tags
6	-4	30L/10	1	600	—	●●●●/●●●	2,A,S

\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.



### ERUPTOR

A variation on the fire cannon packs the barrel with pebbles, nails and other small projectiles. The force of the firedust's combustion expels the detritus in a deadly spray, dealing less damage but affecting everyone in an area. The eruptor needs a shorter, wider barrel than a fire cannon, though, so one cannot use this trick with an ordinary fire cannon.

An eruptor creates a spray of damage through a 60-degree arc, with the damage reducing by 1L per three yards away from the cannon; the range is the distance at which the eruptor deals no damage at all. Treat this as an environmental effect that lasts just an instant; also, Hardness applies. Reloading an eruptor takes the same amount of time as for a fire cannon.

A gigantic eruptor deals a great deal of damage over a wide area, but is completely impossible to move. Someone might place such an unwieldy device to guard a gate or narrow path, so that at least the first batch of soldiers who come through gets killed.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Rate	Range	Max Str.	Cost*	Tags
Light	6	—	10L/3	1	30	—	●●●/●●	2,A,F,S
Heavy	6	—	15L/4	1	45	—	●●●/●●	2,A,F,S
Gigantic	6	—	20L/5	1	60	—	●●●●/●●●	2,A,F,S

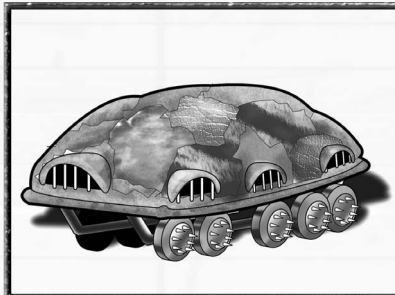
\* Cost after slash is for ammunition.

† Number after slash is Trauma.

### NAVAL CANNON

No ship smaller than a trireme can hold firedust cannon. An Imperial trireme or a large yacht can mount one light cannon along its keel, pointing out the bow. The largest naval vessels of the Second Age can carry two light cannon, mounted on either side of the keel, or a single heavy cannon with no traverse or elevation. Even the largest First Age ships cannot carry a gigantic steam cannon.

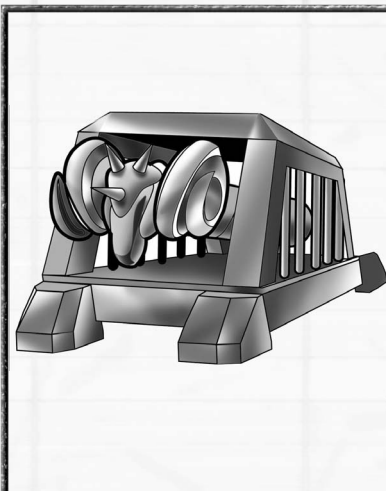
## SPECIAL EQUIPMENT



### TURTLE

A "turtle" is not itself a weapon. Rather, it's simply a covering to protect besiegers while they attack a fortress wall. A typical turtle is built of heavy planks, perhaps with a metal frame for extra strength or covered in wet rawhide to protect it from fire. A basic turtle offers 3L/5B armor and 100% hard cover against attacks from above. Metal bars can add +2 bashing soak, while wet rawhide adds +5L soak against fire. A turtle rarely costs more than Resources 2, for the timber and the labor to build it.





### BATTERING RAM

The simplest yet most effective of all siege weapons consists of a huge weight slammed against a fortress wall. This may consist of a tree trunk capped and bound with metal, or a huge wedge or wrecking bar of iron. A mass of soldiers could carry a small battering ram, but these weapons are usually hung from a sturdy frame. Soldiers (or expendable slaves or conscripts) heave on ropes to pull back the battering ram, and then release it to swing forward and crash against a gate or wall. A (relatively) small battering ram needs just 50 or so people hauling on the ropes, a large battering ram employs hundreds and a gigantic battering ram may need more than a thousand people to swing it.

The weapon is of course too unwieldy to use against any target smaller than a fortress gate or wall. A battering ram deals a fixed amount of damage. Swinging a battering ram requires two actions: a Miscellaneous action to pull it back, and another action for the attack itself. A single character could wield a battering ram as a feat of strength needing a (Strength + Athletics) total equal to the weapon's damage.

While the battering ram does its job, the defenders on the walls try to kill the people pulling on the ropes. Any commander who goes to the trouble of building a battering ram might as well take the time to cover it with a turtle.

Size	Speed	Acc.	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
Small	6	—	20B/7	—	1	—	•••	A,O
Large	6	—	30B/10	—	1	—	••••	A,O
Gigantic	6	—	40B/13	—	1	—	•••••	A,O

## THAUMATURGY AND SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

In addition to the thaumaturgical prayers ordained by the Directional war gods, a number of other thaumaturgical rites have special relevance to war. These Procedures create weapons, or make weapons more effective against supernatural foes. See also these sources for more military thaumaturgy:

- Make weapons and armor exceptional or perfect: **Exalted**, page 139;
- Walkaways, warding charms and other talismans: **Exalted**, page 379;
- Military drugs and alchemical weapon fuel: **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, pages 74–75;
- Diverse talismans, alchemical drugs, wards and weapon-enhancing Procedures: **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, Chapter Three.

### ALCHEMICAL GRENADES

The formulas for sleep grenades, smoke grenades and the gooey incendiary called "Southern Fire" are all part of the Art of Alchemy.

**Ardent Embrace Resin** (2, Intelligence, 2, one hour): The ingredients do not cost more than Resources 1 in the South, Resources 2 elsewhere. The Southern version uses firedust, pine pitch, petroleum distillates and other substances. The Haslanti version uses pine pitch, quicklime, whale oil and specially refined salts. Brewing the mixture is easy; preventing it from catching fire before it is sealed in airtight glass is not. The formula produces a single normal-sized garga egg, three small garga eggs or a dozen incendiary arrowheads. Ardent Embrace Resin burns on contact with water, too, so washing it off doesn't help. (Also appears in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 131; repeated here for the reader's convenience.)

**Craft Sleep Grenade** (1, Intelligence, 2, 6 hours): The alchemist must obtain various rare pollens and leaves. These cost Resources •• in the East. Without magic, these grenades

cannot be kept fresh long enough for transport to other Directions of Creation. These grenades retain their potency for a year. The formula produces five grenades.

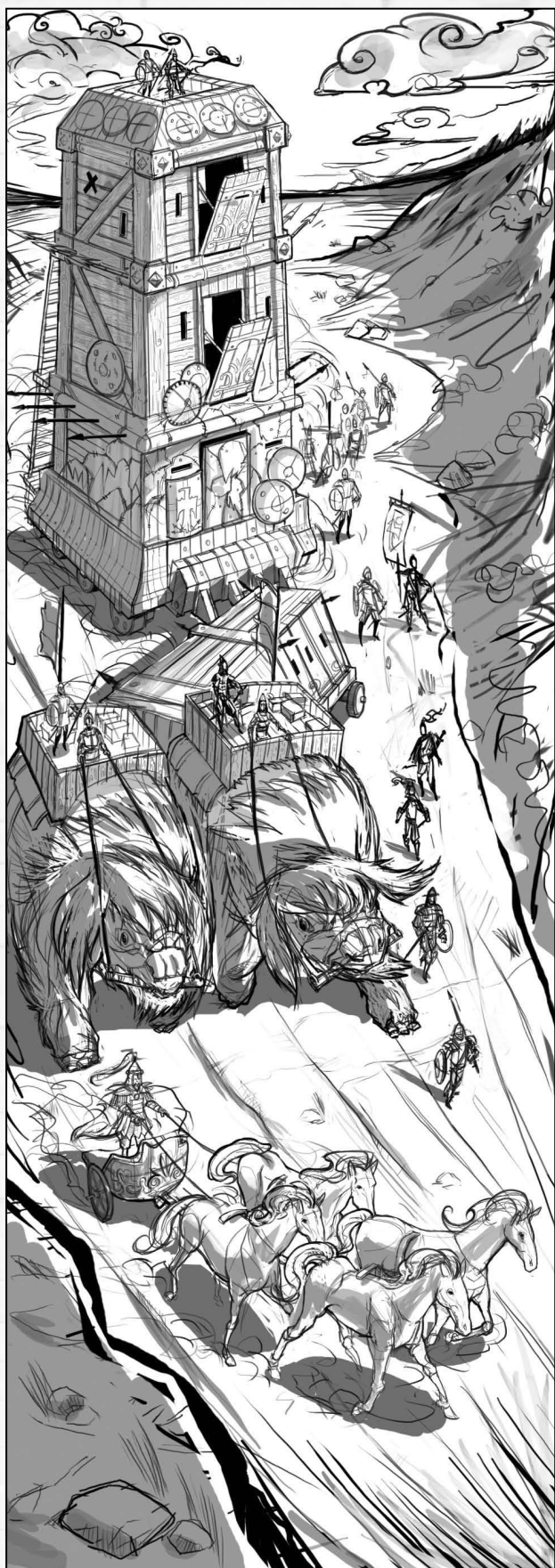
**Craft Smoke Grenade** (2, Intelligence, 3, 12 hours) or (1, Intelligence, 2, 8 hours): Two versions of this formula exist. The first formula requires commonly available materials (Resources 1), but is harder to master and takes more time. The second requires Southern firedust and is easier, faster and more reliable. Once crafted, smoke grenades maintain their efficacy as long as they stay dry. Both formulas produce five grenades.

### WEAPON TREATMENTS

Procedures to make weapons baneful to classes of supernatural creatures all fall within the Art of Enchantment. Thaumaturges usually perform these rituals on hand-to-hand weapons, but they also work on thrown weapons and missiles: For this purpose, 10 arrows, sling bullets, throwing needles or blowgun darts count as one melee weapon, as do five shuriken or chakrams.

**Ghost-Smiting Salt Weapon** (0, Intelligence, 1, five minutes): The thaumaturge coats the weapon in a mixture of salt and gum and fumigates it with incense while invoking one of the Directional war gods. That weapon strikes ghosts as if they were solid. For every mote of Essence spent on the ritual, the thaumaturge can enchant one additional weapon. The effect lasts through the next battle, but no more than a week from the time of enchantment. Of course, the salt used in the enchantments quickly corrodes metal weapons, so ghost-fighters often employ wooden weapons with lead cores for extra heft.

**Ghost-Cleaving Salt Weapon** (3, Intelligence, 3, 10 minutes): This Procedure resembles *Ghost-Smiting Salt Weapon*, but the thaumaturge must also anoint the weapon with her own blood (inflicting one level of lethal damage on herself in the process). The enchanted weapon inflicts aggravated damage to ghosts. For each threshold success, the thaumaturge can enchant one additional weapon at a cost of three motes each.



*Demon-Scorching Celestial Weapon* (3, Intelligence, 3, five minutes): For the next battle (but no more than a week in the future), the enchanted weapon deals aggravated damage to demons. The ritual only works, however, on weapons plated with gold (for the Unconquered Sun) or silver (for Luna). This raises the weapon's Resources cost by one dot.

The Immaculate Order deems this Procedure heretical. The Realm's non-Immaculate military thaumaturges use it anyway. The Heptagram, the House of Bells and Pasiap's Stair all teach the Procedure in their thaumaturgy curricula.

## GOSSAMER EQUIPMENT

A few cultures have access to the dream-forged weapons and armor of the raksha (including, of course, the Fair Folk themselves). Gossamer weapons are all *perfect* equipment, as described on page 366 of **Exalted**. It is also immune to corrosion or other natural wear and tear. Gossamer armor offers the same defense as the mundane armor the gossamer armor imitates, but it has no fatigue or mobility penalties at all.

## VEHICLES

Military forces often employ a variety of vehicles. Some vehicles simply move troops where they are needed. Other vehicles serve as weapons platforms or can become weapons in their own right.

### WHEELED VEHICLES

A simple cart or wagon can become a military vehicle if it becomes part of an army's baggage train or carries a catapult about the battlefield. Such crude and slow vehicles need no game traits. A number of other wheeled vehicles, however, are designed specifically for use in battle.

#### CHARIOT (RESOURCES ●●●)

**Repair:** 2

A chariot is an open carriage pulled by one or more horses. The chariot usually has an open back. The front and side walls of a chariot offer 50% hard cover to the riders.

One person drives the chariot while other people fight—usually an archer and a shield-bearer, but a chariot-mounted warrior could also ride by enemy soldiers and attack them with any weapon that has reach (the 'R' tag)... or the chariot team could just try to run them over and trample them. A large chariot might hold four soldiers, but these vehicles depend on speed so they cannot be very heavy.

Chariots are not intrinsically difficult to drive... but combat involves many sharp turns at high speed and other maneuvers that call for (Dexterity + Ride) rolls. What's more, just about any successful attack on a chariot—including the horses and the driver—can result in a spectacular crash.

The chariot's speed, danger and expense (trained horses aren't cheap) make it a glamorous and aristocratic vehicle. What's more, the Unconquered Sun himself invented the chariot (though the Immaculate Order attributes its invention to the Immaculate Dragon Sextes Jylis). Noble warriors may duel in chariots, driving past each other at top speed while

trying to shoot each other or strike each other with their spears. Even in countries where chariots fall out of favor in war, chariot-racing may survive as a popular spectator sport.

**Speed:** 5/10 mph

**Maneuverability:** -2R

**Endurance:** Endurance of the horses drawing the chariot

**Crew:** 2/1

**Cargo:** Up to two additional passengers

**Armor:** 3L/4B

**Health Levels:** U/M/C/I/D

**Weapons:** Whatever the riders carry

**Other Notes:** The Speed applies only on the battlefield, with the driver whipping the horse to gallop at full speed. Other times, a chariot travels no faster than a drawn carriage (see *Exalted*, p. 264).

Chariots cannot safely come closer than relaxed formation. In close formation, the crash of one chariot forces the players of the drivers of the adjacent chariots to roll (Dexterity + Ride) to avoid crashing themselves, and so on.

### FORTRESS WAGON (RESOURCES ●●●●)

**Repair:** 1

These wagons are indeed mobile fortresses. They stand five yards tall, 10 yards long and five yards wide, with four-inch-thick walls of steel-reinforced hardwood—plus arrow slits, battlements on the roof. Fortress wagons also frequently mount ballistae, light onagers, flame projectors or other light siege weapons. In the South and other places where people often use flame weapons, the Guild fireproofs its fortress wagons by covering at least one side with uncured hides that are soaked with water before combat. (The hides themselves provide an additional 3L soak against fire weapons. Wetting them raises this to 5L, for a total of 15L soak versus flame attacks.)

Inside, the fortress wagon has bunks and supplies for a scale of archers. A single fortress wagon can resist poorly armed bandits or barbarians. A group of wagons drop their draw train and link up with wall wagons to form a defensive perimeter around dray beasts and unarmored cargo wagons.

Draft animals are a separate expenditure. Fortress wagons require a pair of yeddim, elephants or mammoths to haul them. A dozen draft horses can move a fortress wagon if necessary, but can travel no more than six hours a day. Any attempt to move the wagon faster or longer simply kills a horse a day.

Despite the wagons' formidable defenses, they are seldom used by militaries on the march. The massive wagons move too slowly, and they cost a lot to build and maintain: They are a specialized response to a specific need. They rarely occur outside of Guild caravans, or the rare independent trader or alliance that can afford them.

**Speed:** 1/2 mph

**Maneuverability:** -3R

**Endurance:** Endurance of the creatures drawing the wagon

**Crew:** 4/2

**Cargo:** 36 archers, plus supplies and munitions for two weeks

**Armor:** 10L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux6/Mx5/Cx10/Ix2/D

**Weapons:** Arrow slits, up to two weapon mounts

**Other Notes:** Ironwood versions add +2L/+1B to their armor. Outside of the East, such wagons are Resources 5 to purchase. Within the East, they raise the total purchase cost (dray beasts, fodder for a month and wagon) to Resources 5, but still cost Resources 4 if purchased alone. Archers firing from the arrow slits have 90% hard cover.

### WALL WAGON (RESOURCES ●●●)

**Repair:** 1

Wall wagons are only six yards long and three yards wide and high. Only one side has full armor, battlements and arrow-slits, greatly reducing the wagon's mass. The large doors on the opposite side drop down to form ramps into the wagon. A wall wagon also carries cargo instead of troops. When the caravan comes under attack, the wall wagons link up with each other and the fortress wagons, armored sides outward, to form a temporary citadel around the rest of the caravan. The defenders take positions amidst the crates and barrels of cargo.

Not only do wall wagons cost less to build than fortress wagons, but wall wagons require fewer draft animals (an additional cost) because of their lighter weight. A single yeddim, elephant or mammoth, or a team of eight draft horses can pull a wall wagon. Some independent caravan masters use just wall wagons as an outer perimeter, trading defense for thrift. Their unbalanced weight makes them unsuitable for any sort of banked terrain—they tip over easily. On a wide road, though, caravan-masters can lash two wall wagons side by side to equalize the weight again.

When the Guild moves goods through moderately hazardous territory, typically one wagon in four is a wall wagon, with a quarter as many fortress wagons as wall wagons. When caravans move through very dangerous terrain, half of the wagons are wall wagons. Very large caravans may build concentric rings of wagons linked together. The most valuable wagons, cargos and passengers (including the caravan master, of course) hide safely within the innermost ring.

**Speed:** 2/3 mph

**Maneuverability:** -2R

**Endurance:** Endurance of the creatures drawing the wagon

**Crew:** 2/1

**Cargo:** Up to 8 tons of cargo, or combination of cargo and passengers

**Armor:** 10L/12B on one (outer) wall, 6L/8B on other walls)

**Health Levels:** Ux4/Mx3/Cx6/Ix2/D

**Weapons:** Arrow slits

**Other Notes:** Ironwood versions of the fortress wagon are highly sought after, and add +2L/+1B to their armor. Outside of the East, they are Resources 4 to purchase. Within the East, they raise the total purchase cost (dray beasts, fodder for a month, and wagon) to Resources 4, but still cost Resources 3 if purchased alone. Archers firing from the arrow slits have 90% hard cover.







## SIEGE TOWER (RESOURCES: ●●● TO ●●●●●)

### Repair: 1

The siege tower is only technically a vehicle, in that it moves... very slowly. It consists of a wheeled timber frame covered in wooden planks, with an outer layer of metal plates or wet rawhide. Arrow slits make the tower a barely-mobile strongpoint for archers. Most importantly, an army can push the tower up to a fortress and swing a drawbridge over to the walls, so besiegers can cross to fight the defenders. The higher the fortress walls, the higher the siege tower must become, and the wider its base to keep it from tipping over.

A siege tower needs whole teams of oxen to haul it across the battlefield, at a rate of less than a mile per day. Even if the oxen stay inside the tower, they are quite vulnerable if the enemy can hack a breach in the tower and shoot a few, or throw in a firepot. Very large siege towers may need elephants or other huge beasts to push them.

The smallest siege tower carries at least a scale of archers, and the largest can carry a full wing of troops. A tower can also carry light artillery such as ballistae or flamethrowers. Despite differences in size, siege towers functionally all have the same traits: whether a tower is 20 feet high or 50, a few broken wheels or setting the tower on fire renders it impossible to move (though an immobile tower could still serve as a field fortification). The chief difference lies in the outer

covering. Wet rawhide gives +5L armor against fire. Metal plates give better defense overall, but costs more. A basic siege tower costs Resources 3; a metal-plated tower costs Resources 4 or even 5, for an especially large tower.

**Speed:** Negligible

**Maneuverability:** -5R

**Endurance:** Endurance of the creatures drawing the tower

**Crew:** 12/6 (or more)

**Cargo:** Variable number of soldiers

**Armor:** 4L/6B (rawhide) or 8L/10B (metal plating)

**Health Levels:** Ux2/Mx2/Cx4/Ix12/D

**Weapons:** Arrow slits, possibly up to a dozen light ballistae or half that many heavy ballistae

**Other Notes:** Treat the siege tower as a Heavy Wooden Door or an Iron-Shod Door for purposes of feats of strength (see *Exalted*, p. 127). An entire siege tower weighs several tons—up to 20 tons for especially large and metal-plated towers.

## MODERN SHIPS

These boats represent the most common aquatic craft used in Creation. Most ships are designed for civilian trade and transportation... but they all see use in war, whether as oceanic scouts, troop transports or vessels for pirates, who use whatever ships they can get.

The Vehicle traits follow the same system as in *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, with



Exotic

the necessary modifications for non-artifact vehicles laid out in Chapter Five. The Measures listing (in the Other Notes area) provides the maximum length, beam (width), height (from deck to keel) and draft (minimum depth of water in which it can operate) in yards to provide a sense of relative scale.

#### FAST COURIER (RESOURCES ••••)

These sailboats can travel quickly with a good wind, with oversized sails and an outrigger and daggerboard for stability. They are barely large enough to sustain a crew in a crossing of the Inner Sea. Common rolls are military, diplomatic or civilian courier, pirate scout or fast-attack craft.

**Speed:** 20/40 mph

**Maneuverability:** -2S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents

**Crew:** 5/3

**Cargo:** Virtually none. What provisions are kept aboard are all cold or precooked, while sleepers must strap themselves into two small cots. The courier offers a yard-wide storage area for mail or other small items.

**Armor:** 4L/8B

**Health Levels:** Ux4/Mx2/Cx1/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** Measures 12x12x2/2

#### SMALL YACHT (RESOURCES ••••)

Yachts often serve as pleasure craft for the wealthy, but this single-masted sailing ship can also represent vessels used for coastal or river transportation.

**Speed:** 3/6 mph

**Maneuverability:** -4S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents

**Crew:** 4/1

**Cargo:** Provides two comfortable cabins for up to four passengers, with modest accommodations for one servant and the crew; designed for long-term living

**Armor:** 6L/10B

**Health Levels:** Ux10/Mx5/Cx4/I/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** Measures 18x5x3/1

#### LARGE YACHT (RESOURCES •••••)

A deep keel balances one or two masts with extensive sails, while a sleek hull permits considerable speed. These large, fast ships serve as pleasure craft for the very rich, but also blue-water transport for valuable cargo or passengers. Pirates also value these ships for their speed.

**Speed:** 15/30 mph

**Maneuverability:** -3S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents



## PADDLEWHEEL SHIPS

Some ships are driven by paddlewheels powered by people who jog inside large wooden wheels. These people are usually slaves. Small coasters and coastal traders are the most common examples, but blue-water merchants sometimes use paddlewheels. Imperial trireme tenders always have paddlewheels as a supplemental power source for when the wind dies; the trireme rowers can run for a while instead. For simplicity, assume that a paddlewheel ship travels no faster than the average Speed of a sailed ship. The vehicle's Endurance becomes that of the people who turn the wheels.

Paddlewheels take far more labor than sails, though, and even slaves drained of their souls by the Fair Folk cost money to feed. People use paddlewheel ships when reliability matters more than cost. These ships also see extensive use on rivers—paddlewheel ships travel throughout the River Province, where a captain cannot count on a wind to blow his ship against the river current.

**Crew:** 4/2

**Cargo:** As small yacht, but has three cabins for six passengers instead, plus a small entertaining/dining room. Pirates pack in many more crew, in far less comfort.

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux10/Mx5/Cx4/I/D

**Weapons:** None, or two light artillery emplacements for corsairs

**Other Notes:** Measures 24x6x4/4

## SMALL COASTER (RESOURCES ●●●)

This single-masted sailing ship can serve as a fishing boat or a local coastal freighter that carries goods and people for short distances.

**Speed:** 10/20 mph

**Maneuverability:** -3S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents

**Crew:** 3/1

**Cargo:** Dozen of tons of anything or anyone that can fit on deck; no long-term accommodations

**Armor:** 5L/9B

**Health Levels:** Ux4/Mx4/Cx3/I/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** Measures 11x4x2/1

## COASTAL TRADER (RESOURCES ●●●●)

Tubby little single-masted ships like this carry cargo along rivers and coasts throughout Creation, but seldom dare the high seas. Crew have a sheltered deck area for sleeping (walled in and heated as a crew cabin in colder climates). The hold runs the length of the ship and encompasses most of its volume.

**Speed:** 10/20 mph

**Maneuverability:** -3S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents

**Crew:** 10/4

**Cargo:** Up to 100 tons. If the hold is used to transport troops instead of merchandise, it can carry 50 marines for extended journeys or double that number for short-range missions.

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux10/Mx5/Cx4/I/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** Measures 13x9x2/2

## BLUE-WATER MERCHANT (RESOURCES ●●●●)

These large sailing ships traverse Creation from the White Sea (in summer, at least) to the isles of the far Southwest, carrying freight ranging from dried Laplander vegetables to fine marble from Calin. Many navies also use these ships as troop transports. Such ships often have two masts. The stern holds a large, enclosed deckhouse that can quarter crew or passengers. A primary hold and a secondary, lower hold can house personnel or merchandise.

**Speed:** 7/15 mph

**Maneuverability:** -4S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents

**Crew:** 22/6

**Cargo:** 2,000 tons or more; troop carriers use the primary hold for 125 soldiers and the lower hold for their gear and supplies

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux12/Mx6/Cx5/I/D

**Weapons:** None for civilian craft. Troops ships carry at most two artillery pieces, whether catapults, fire cannons or rare First Age weapons.

**Other Notes:** Measures 35x8x3/3

## LARGE MERCHANT SHIP (RESOURCES ●●●●●)

Creation's largest sailing ships often carry three masts. Their two-deck holds can be configured for cargo, crew, passenger cabins or troop barracks, while forecastles and aftcastles hold officers' quarters and upper decks for weapons. Reinforcing ribs and division into multiple holds makes these ships hard to sink. Such vessels serve as freighters for bulk cargo as well as heavy troop transport and mobile artillery platforms.

**Speed:** 3/6 mph

**Maneuverability:** -5S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents

**Crew:** 41/12

**Cargo:** 3,000 tons or more. Troop transports house between 250-500 soldiers depending on gear and the length of the mission.

**Armor:** 10L/15B

**Health Levels:** Ux15/Mx3/Cx3/I/D

**Weapons:** Artillery ships can carry one heavy cannon, two light cannon or up to light catapults of various sorts, typically ballistae and light onagers—or up to six artifact weapons such as lightning ballistae, implosion bows or concussive Essence cannons. The exact number depends on the size of the weapons and the ship's configuration (not that anyone is likely to



place six priceless First Age weapons on a single ship).

**Other Notes:** Measures 65x20x4/4.

### IMPERIAL TRIREME (RESOURCES ●●●●●)

Triremes have no purpose except war. They can sail, but are rowed in combat. A single deck holds benches for the rowers, while raised platforms in front and back can hold weapons and lookouts. As no-frills attack vessels, these ships have no accommodations for crew and depend on tenders or nightly encampment on shore for long-term deployments.

**Speed:** Varies with crew: 7/15 mph (sailing with full crew); 15/30 mph (sailing without oarsmen); 20/40 mph (rowed).

**Maneuverability:** -3S (under sail); +0S (rowed).

**Endurance:** Winds and currents, or the fatigue limit of the rowers

**Crew:** 200/35 (rowed); skeleton crew for sailing is five

**Cargo:** Triremes carry 25 marines each in addition to their crew, but no cargo.

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux8/Mx4/Cx3/I/D

**Weapons:** Ram, aft-mounted sailcutter or implosion bow or foredeck-mounted fire projector

**Other Notes:** Measures 22x6x2/1

### IMPERIAL TRIREME TENDER (RESOURCES ●●●●●)

These massive ships follow a trimaran design, with a large central vessel and two outriggers that are each the size of a trireme. Two attack triremes can dock between the main vessel and the outriggers (and two more can tie up alongside). Winches can lift the inner triremes out of the water for repairs and cleaning. As a support vessel for war galleys, tenders provide food and facilities for the crew of its triremes, plus housing 125 marines of its own. Imperial trireme tenders move using both three masts of sails and lines of paddlewheels on each side of the main hull.

**Speed:** 7/15 mph

**Maneuverability:** -5S

**Endurance:** Winds and currents, or rowed (slowly)

**Crew:** 93/17

**Cargo:** Hundreds of tons of supplies, plus hundreds of crew and soldiers

**Armor:** 10L/20B

**Health Levels:** Ux15/Mx7/Cx7/I/D

**Weapons:** Various flame weapons and catapults of varying sizes; perhaps a rare, singular implosion bow or the like.

**Other Notes:** Measures 60x38x4/4

### MARINE ASSAULT BIREME (RESOURCES ●●●●)

Although a bireme carries a single mast for sails, it is rowed in battle, typically with two rowers per oar. A bireme can ferry 25 to 50 troops into battle as a marine boarding or landing craft, not counting the rowers themselves. The Realm and other professional navies extend the bireme's

range by using a trireme tender for crew accommodations. Northern raiders and other irregulars, however, might just sleep at the oars.

**Speed:** Varies: 7/15 mph (under sail); 15/30 mph (rowed)

**Maneuverability:** -3 (under sail); -1 (rowed)

**Endurance:** Winds and currents, or the fatigue limit of the rowers

**Crew:** 66/15 (rowed); skeleton crew for sailing is four

**Cargo:** A ton or so of raiders' loot

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux8/Mx4/Cx3/I/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** Measures 22x6x1/1

## SAND VEHICLES

In the deserts of the Far South, where seas of sand stretch for thousands of miles, people build ships to sail those barren wastes. Billowing sails catch the hot winds, and the ship rides on long, flat runners that resemble oversized skis; rowing and paddlewheels do not work in sand. The South has sand-ship analogs to fast couriers, small and large yachts, small coasters and coastal traders. So far, no one in the Second Age has built larger sand-ships.

## ICE VEHICLES

Wheels don't work well in snow. For centuries, people traveled the Northern winter only in sleds or sleighs, and they preferred not to travel at all. The Haslanti are changing all this. A few centuries ago, Haslanti explorers found a small ship on runners in an ancient tomb, along with models of other strange vehicles. In the High First Age, perhaps iceships were just a sport or curiosity. Now, as the Haslanti League perfects the technology and its neighbors learn from example, iceships may become as important to the North as sailing ships are to the rest of Creation.

### DOGSLED (RESOURCES ●●)

**Repair:** 1

Many people in the North still travel on sleds pulled by teams of hardworking dogs. Dogsleds can carry just a few people at a time, or a few hundred pounds of cargo. In an emergency, though, dogsleds can travel hundreds of miles in a few weeks to carry small but vital cargo... such as the hearthstones needed to power a First Age weapon or strategic intelligence for a military campaign. Thus, these humble vehicles see occasional use in war.

**Speed:** 6/12 mph

**Maneuverability:** -2R (Survival 1 with 1 specialty in dog-handling)

**Endurance:** Fatigue limit for the dogs and the driver

**Crew:** 1

**Cargo:** 200 pounds, or one person

**Armor:** 3L/5B. A dogsled offers no protection at all to its driver or a passenger.



**Health Levels:** Ux2/Mx1/Cx1/Ix1/D

**Weapons:** None, but a dozen sturdy dogs are no joke.

**Other Notes:** A trained dog team is a separate Resources 3 expenditure. A week's food for the dogs costs Resources 1.

### SLEIGH (RESOURCES ••)

**Repair:** 1

Remove the wheels from a carriage and replace them with long steel runners; that's a sleigh. Some sleighs are open to save weight, but Northerners often prefer to hook up another horse or reindeer so they can give their sleigh walls and a roof, rugs and maybe a little charcoal-burning stove. The unfortunate driver still has to shiver outside. Sleighs usually serve as short-range transport for civilians, but an army that must travel in the Northern winter might have a baggage train of sleighs. A sleigh could also serve as a small, mobile platform for archers or a light ballista.

**Speed:** 2/4 mph

**Maneuverability:** -4R

**Endurance:** Fatigue limit for the animals and driver

**Crew:** 1/1

**Cargo:** Up to 600 pounds, or four passengers

**Armor:** 3L/5B

**Health Levels:** Ux3/Mx2/Cx1/Ix1/D

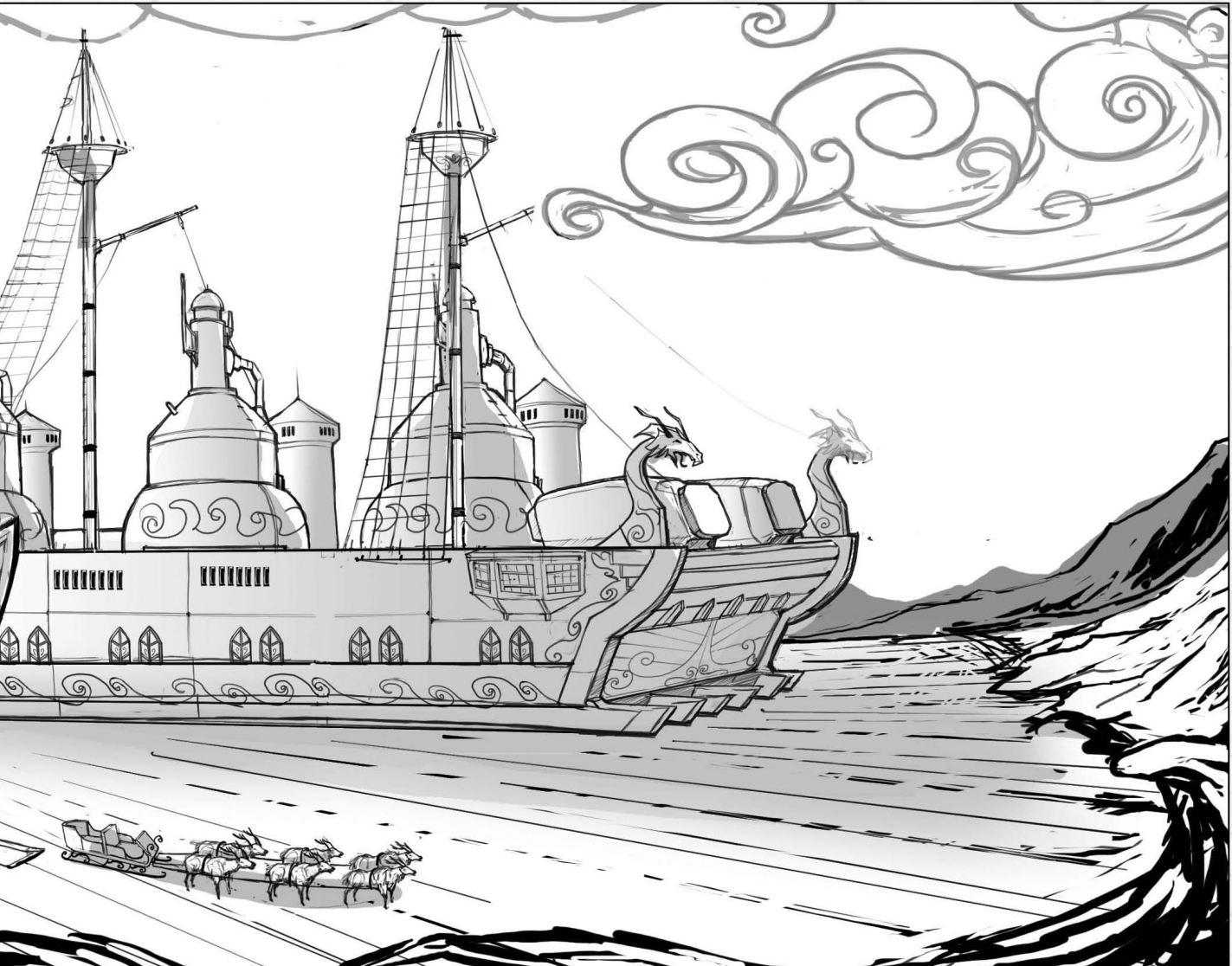
**Weapons:** Normally none

**Other Notes:** This sample sleigh is mostly wood. An open sleigh offers at most 50% hard cover to occupants. A closed sleigh could supply 75% hard cover. The driver and the beasts that pull the sleigh receive no cover at all. Animals to pull a sleigh are a separate expenditure.

### ICESHIP COASTER (RESOURCES ••••)

**Repair:** 1

The everyday passenger and cargo vessel of the White Sea can sail on open water as well as ice. Despite the name, this ship no longer restricts itself to coasts: it can sail anywhere in the White Sea or up onto the Great Ice.



icy

A coaster's rounded hull extends 28 yards, or 33 yards with the steel-bladed outriggers, and four yards wide. The outriggers can be unbolted and drawn in if the coaster must enter water—to keep them from corroding, not because the ship sails any worse with them still attached. A single mast holds the sails. The ship further has a raised forecastle and quarterdeck. Passengers and lighter cargo go on the main deck, while heavier cargo and ballast go below decks. The crew sleeps forward, while officers sleep aft.

The coaster has a regular rudder and an ice-rudder, a long, levered steel spike that can jam into the ice. For sharper turns, the crew can throw out harpoons with tow cables. This requires considerable skill, however—and a (Dexterity + Sail) check at -2 dice from the steersman's player—and the disposable harpoons aren't cheap, so captains don't like to do this very often.

**Speed:** 4/8 mph

**Maneuverability:** -4S (Sail 1 and 1 specialty in Ice-Sailing)

**Endurance:** The winds decide

**Crew:** 22/8

**Cargo:** 1,200 tons or a talon of 125 passengers

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux12/Mx6/Cx4/Ix2/D

**Weapons:** One heavy ballista or onager each on foredeck and quarterdeck

**Other Notes:** A coaster has a four-foot draft between the outrigger blades and the hull. In the water, the ship has a draft of six feet or more, depending on the load.

### ICESHIP CRUISER (RESOURCES ●●●●)

**Repair:** 1

These large iceships serve as cargo vessels, troop transports and, in a few cases, major weapons platforms. (One, the *Frost Dream*, is even a luxury passenger ship.) A heavy cruiser has a hull 50 yards long and 12 yards wide, while the outriggers stretch its length to 80 yards and





its width to 25 yards. The narrow construction reduces wind drag. Unlike a coaster, the massive, steel-bladed outriggers cannot be removed if the cruiser must enter the water.

A cruiser has two masts bearing square and triangular sails. These masts reach 100 feet high, each with a crow's-nest for crew to watch for pressure ridges, crevasses or other hazards. Two ice-rudder spikes, one on either side of the keel, help the cruiser to turn. A forecastle two decks high breaks the force of the wind, while an aftcastle one deck high provides a second platform for heavy weapons. On naval vessels, such weapons may be mounted on swivel platforms for a 360-degree arc of fire.

**Speed:** 3/6 mph

**Maneuverability:** -5S (Sail 1 and 1 specialty in Ice-Sailing)

**Endurance:** The winds decide.

**Crew:** 55/15

**Cargo:** 2,000 tons or a dragon of 500 soldiers or other passengers

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux15/Mx3/C/I/D

**Weapons:** Four ballistae on a side, mounted on the lower deck

**Other Notes:** A cruiser has a three-foot clearance between the outriggers and the hull. In the water, the ship has a draft of eight feet or more, depending on the load.

## ICEHOLT BARGE

**Repair:** 1

These squat, slow iceships are veritable moving villages. They plow about the Great Ice as mobile platforms for fishing, hunting, mining... and, sometimes, war, as troop transports. Only a skilled captain should attempt to pilot these huge, clumsy vessels.

An iceholt barge has a squared-off wooden hull 100 to 200 feet long and 60 to 80 feet wide. Two masts and a dozen or more steel runners enable it to sail across the ice or wallow through the waves. A typical barge's deck is crammed with little greenhouses, rendering huts, harpoon lockers and other structures between the pilot-house in the bow and the galley and officer's hall in the stern. Down below, workers and their families crowd amidst two decks of workshops and cargo holds. No two barges are alike, for each is custom-built, then painted and carved by its residents.

Normally, an iceholt barge carries a pair of ballistae to ward off ice pirates or, more likely, shoot a fortuitously-



Haslanti

encountered whale or ice bear. A barge that the League commandeers for troop transport could sport many more weapons.

**Speed:** 1/2 mph

**Maneuverability:** -4S (Sail 3)

**Endurance:** Depends on the wind. Row this monster? Hah!

**Crew:** 130/25

**Cargo:** Thousands of tons or hundreds of workers, troops or other passengers

**Armor:** 6L/12B

**Health Levels:** Ux15/Mx5/Cx3/Ix2/D

**Weapons:** A pair of harpoon-shooting ballistae

**Other Notes:** An iceholt barge has a draft of 18 feet. It can tack four points into the wind.

## AERIAL VEHICLES

In most of Creation, humans fly only with the aid of Essence and potent artifacts. In the North, people fly on spidersilk cloth, struts of light wood or feathersteel, hot air and sheer damn courage and skill. The icewalker barbarians have dared the winds on gliders for centuries. More recently, the Haslanti League has invented dirigible balloons lifted by burning oil and propelled by sails and pedal-driven propellers.

## AIR BOAT SECOND CLASS

**Repair:** 2

The smaller of the Haslanti air boats has a sausage-shaped balloon 300 feet long, made from resin-treated rasp-spider silk held taut by an inner frame of wicker and bamboo. Below the gasbag hangs a narrow, 80-foot gondola of wood, bamboo and wicker. From the balloon extend six bamboo masts, two above and two to either side. The top masts can carry square sails, while the side masts carry jibs. Clever rigging enables the sailors to extend and retract the sails from within the cabin. A pair of propellers extends from the rear of the cabin, powered by a gear train and the pedaling feet of the crew.


Lift comes from burning kerosene or whale oil, stored in a tank made from a whale's stomach and tarred wicker. The heavier the load, the more fuel the crew must burn; and so, using an extra tank of fuel to fill the air boat's cargo capacity does not really improve the air boat's range.

**Speed:** 10/20 mph

**Maneuverability:** -2S

**Endurance:** 40 hours lightly laden, 15 hours fully laden, 30 hours with a second fuel tank

**Crew:** 18



**Cargo:** Two tons, or 10 healthy Haslanti passengers  
**Armor:** (gondola) 3L/5B, (gasbag) 1L/2B  
**Health Levels:** (cabin) Ux4/Mx6/C/I/D, (gasbag) U/Mx2/Cx4/I/D

**Weapons:** None, normally

**Other Notes:** Clever sailing and a wind in the right direction can conserve fuel and so increase the air boat's range: each success on a (Wits + Sail) roll gives one hour's worth of travel without expending fuel. The pilot's player can roll once per day of travel.

Note that the gondola and gasbag have separate health levels, and the cabin gives 25% hard cover to the gasbag against any attack from below. Damage to the gondola breaks and unravels it, until finally there's nothing left and the crew must hold onto tatters of wicker or fall. Damage to the gasbag reduces lift as well as speed: once an air boat's balloon reaches it Minor damage levels, it is sinking (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 33). If the gasbag is Destroyed, the air boat plummets in free fall.

### AIR BOAT FIRST CLASS

**Repair:** 3

The largest Haslanti air boats have gasbags 450 feet long, with internal chambers of cured whale intestine to make the structure harder to damage and compensate for leaks. At the midpoint of the gasbag, a fan-like semi-circular sail rises perpendicular to the airboat's keel. Six pedal-powered propellers drive the air boat when the wind does not suffice.

The gondola has three decks. The open top deck carries six gliders (q.v.). The middle deck holds crew cabins and the pedal array for the propellers. The bottom deck is for cargo and passengers.

Although air boats are not themselves armed, they can serve as aerial platforms for attack. The crew can drop stones, caltrops or various grenades, or shoot arrows (albeit with very little chance of hitting any specific target). Most importantly, they deliver commandoes to places that would otherwise seem impregnable to attack.

**Speed:** 10/20 mph

**Maneuverability:** -3

**Endurance:** 60 hours lightly laden, 25 hours fully laden, 50 hours with extra fuel

**Crew:** 20/10

**Cargo:** 20 tons, or 10 tons plus six dozen soldiers in full gear

**Armor:** (cabin) 4L/6B, (gasbag) 1L/2B

**Health Levels:** (cabin) Ux6/Mx8/C/I/D, (gasbag) U/Mx3/Cx5/I/D

**Weapons:** Normally none

**Other Notes:** Just as for the smaller air boat, skillful sailing can conserve fuel, and damage to the gasbag causes the air boat to lose lift.

### GLIDER

**Repair:** 2

Every air boat of the Wind Fleet carries at least one glider. First-class vessels carry at least six; second-class air boats usually carry just one or two. They are made of spidersilk cloth, laminated wood and the North's rare feathersteel. A glider has a 40-foot wingspan.

Glider on air boats are usually disassembled; taking one apart or putting one together requires 10 minutes' work with a wrench and screwdriver. Strapping in takes no more than a Miscellaneous action. Strapping in *safely* takes a full 30 seconds. A glider can be launched from a cliff or air boat deck at least 10 yards off the ground.

**Speed:** 15/30 mph

**Maneuverability:** +3R (Ride 1 + 1 specialty)

**Endurance:** Pilot's endurance (also subject to wind conditions)

**Crew:** 1

**Cargo:** 1 passenger or 200 pounds of cargo

**Armor:** 3L/5B

**Health Levels:** Ux2/Mx4/Cx2/Ix2/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** The pilot controls the glider by shifting her weight and working hand controls that are connected by wires to the wings and tail. To pilot a glider, an unExalted character needs at least one dot in Ride and one specialty in Gliders. Just about any action with a glider calls for some sort of Ride roll, such as (Dexterity + Ride) to launch or (Perception + Ride) to avoid clear-air turbulence, usually at difficulty 1. Botching a roll means the pilot stalled the glider and it's free-falling; another roll, at difficulty 3, enables the pilot to regain control. If the rider was not *safely* strapped in, however, a botched roll also means the pilot fell out of the glider and now plummets to her very probable death. See *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age* for other aspects of piloting vehicles.

### FOLDING GLIDER

**Repair:** 3

The greatest Haslanti artisans invented a glider made entirely of feathersteel struts and spidersilk fabric. The glider weighs only 20 pounds and folds into a bundle half the size of a standard traveling pack. This takes only 10 ticks to unfold into two narrow, bird-like wings and a fan-like tail. The glider has an eight-yard wingspan. Strapping in takes another ten seconds. Launching the folding glider requires at least a five-yard altitude or a stiff headwind. Folding the glider takes a full minute (one long tick) of careful effort.

**Speed:** 15/30

**Maneuverability:** +3R (Ride 1 + 1 specialty)

**Endurance:** Pilot's endurance (also subject to wind conditions)

**Crew:** 1

**Cargo:** Only what the pilot can carry

**Armor:** 3L/5B

**Health Levels:** Ux2/Mx3/Cx3/1x2/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** All regular rules for glider piloting apply to the folding glider as well.

## PARACHUTE

**Repair:** 1

A parachute is barely a vehicle at all. While it slows a fall, the wind can carry it hither and yon. (In the windy North, an unlucky gust can carry a parachutist for miles.) A daring parachutist can pull on the lines, tilting the great canopy of cloth this way or that, so she drifts in one direction or another. The Speed rating reflects this possibility. With a successful (Dexterity + Athletics) roll from her player, a parachuting character can tuck and roll as she lands, then instantly spring to her feet, ready for action. A parachutist must drop at least 20 yards for her chute to open.

A Haslanti parachute packs into a bulky backpack. Paratroopers check their harness *very carefully* before they jump off an air boat, though in theory one could strap on a backpack in only two Miscellaneous actions. After the paratrooper lands, disentangling from the parachute takes another Miscellaneous action.

**Speed:** 3/6 mph downward, 1/2 mph horizontally

**Maneuverability:** -2S (Sail 1, 1 specialty in Parachute)

**Endurance:** Until you reach the ground

**Crew:** 1/1

**Cargo:** None

**Armor:** None

**Health Levels:** U/Mx2/1/D

**Weapons:** None

**Other Notes:** Since a parachute is just a big sheet of cloth, attacks do not necessarily inflict their full damage upon it. For instance, an arrow simply punches a small hold in the fabric, no matter how much damage it's supposed to do: not good, but not instantly catastrophic, either. Storytellers can rule that parachutes have many more "Minor damage" levels than listed here, at least against such attacks.

## TRAPS

Traps are common delaying tactics for guerrilla forces. Because the partisans know the traps' locations, the guerrillas can lead pursuing forces through a series of lethal hazards on the way to another ambush. Traps also form an early-warning system of sorts: enemy troops on reconnaissance set off the traps well in advance of an encampment, warning those within that intruders are nearby.

Traps have the strategic limitation that a victim must come to them. They work best in locations that constrain a potential victim's movement, such as a path through dense forest or a hallway in a building. Alternatively, a trap-setting can try to lure victims with some sort of bait, such as food (for trapping animals) or a tactical objective (for trapping soldiers). For instance, guerillas who hide out

in concealed tunnels might create a false tunnel entrance to lure in the Realm troops who hunt them. The soldiers think they can catch some guerillas, move toward the tunnel... and step into the trap.

## SYSTEMS

Traps have the following characteristics:

- **Detection:** This is the base difficulty on a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll to see the trap. Success means the character spots the trigger and recognizes the danger... hopefully in time to avoid setting off the trap. If the character has Joined Battle, this roll takes place one tick before the character would set off the trap, plus one tick per additional success rolled. (Characters who used a Dash action can still set off the trap, if their action won't refresh before they move through the trigger.) Charms and other effects based around detecting danger (such as Surprise Anticipation Method) always reliably detect a trap in time for the user to avoid it. Charms and other effects based on detecting hostile intent, or other mental states that threaten the character, do not detect a trap automatically, unless some being or entity directs the trap's attack.

- **Attack:** The base chance of the trap harming someone who passes through it. This incorporates not just accuracy, but reliability, complexity and other factors. Roll this as a standard attack roll, but many traps cannot be parried, only dodged.

- **Damage:** The amount of damage the trap does to anyone caught in it. Extra successes might add to this base damage. Some traps, however, inflict damage in ways other than a simple attack, such as poison or restraining the victim. See the trap's description for details.

- **Construction:** What Abilities a character needs in order to build the trap, the base difficulty, and the time typically needed to produce one. (This is merely a suggestion, in case characters need something more precise than "one scene.") If the trap is normally purchased, it has a Resources cost instead.

Most traps are built using Craft (usually Fire or Wood, but sometimes Earth), but many can be assembled with Survival instead. Traps that involve complex mechanical workings, alchemy or thaumaturgical elements often require Lore or Occult. Poison traps usually require either Craft: Water (to make the poison) or Medicine (to get an effective dose on the working parts of the trap).

Players of trap builders roll the appropriate (Attribute + Ability) against the listed difficulty. Additional successes can be used to make the trap harder to detect (two extra successes raise the Detection difficulty by 1) or better at trapping prey (each success devoted to Attack raises the trap's base attack roll by 1). Failure on the roll results in a trap that looks like it should work, but really doesn't. Botching the roll results in the character being caught in his own just-created trap.

- Trap descriptions also include a **Trigger** (what sets the trap off), an **Effect** (what the trap does), and a **Counter** (how to avoid or dismantle the trap).







## MAGICAL TRAPS

In the Age of Sorrows, few people have the skills to set magical traps—but it does happen. Elementals, least gods or very minor demons can be bound to traps, giving them will and discrimination. This not only raises the traps Detection difficulty by +2, it also gives the trap an attack score equal to the spirit's (Dexterity + appropriate Ability). Ranged attacks for a trap usually call for Thrown, while other traps might use the better of the spirit's Melee or Martial Arts. If the trap's typical Attack rating exceeds the spirit's dice pool, use the former instead.

Other magical traps rely on ancient sorceries or enchantments to keep mechanisms working, provide ammunition or summon blades from Elsewhere when triggered. These typically appear only in unlooted tombs, ancient fortifications and other First Age ruins. Many of them work like conventional traps, except that they last forever and need no maintenance.

## TRAPS YOU STEP ON

Hunters use pit traps to catch animals, but they can also catch people. Pits are not normally dug very deep. Indeed, a pit in ordinary soil can't go very deep without timber or cut stone to shore up the walls. Then again, pits usually are not intended to kill the victim—merely to hold him or delay him.

Once tripped, a basic pit trap becomes obvious. Constructing a pit covering such that it disguises itself after every triggering adds +2 to the Difficulty.

The Trigger for all pit traps is stepping on the camouflaged covering, and falling through it. The Counter usually involves moving around the pit trap, or (in the case of large pits) catching the wall of the pit and not falling all the way in (see **Exalted**, p. 126). Characters can dodge a pit trap, but not parry it.

### PIT TRAP

**Detection:** 2

**Attack:** 6

**Damage:** Falling

**Construction:** Craft (Earth) or Survival 1, hours

The basic pit trap is a hole in the ground, big enough to hold a creature of the desired size, covered with camouflage to disguise its presence. The Effect is falling into the pit; this inflicts falling damage as normal. A more vicious pit trap (intended for enemies, not game) might have sharpened stakes at the bottom, possibly smeared with dung, natural poisons or offal to encourage infection and poisoning (see **Exalted**, p. 151).

Some pit traps are easier to detect than others. A trap designed to catch a tyrant lizard must be much larger (and deeper) than one designed for humans, and does not need such perfect disguise.

### STAKE TRAP

**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 5

**Damage:** 3L, Piercing, disabling

**Construction:** Craft (Earth) or Survival 2, 20 minutes

A stake trap is designed to disable a running opponent. The trap consists of a conical pit a foot or so deep, with a spike or stake at the bottom. The design of the trap guides the victim's foot onto the spike, which pierces the boot sole to puncture and disable the foot. The Effect is a base 3L Piercing attack against the victim's foot. Personal soak protects normally, but most boots provide only 1L/2B protection. (Iron boots, god-kicking boots or perfected boots—see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 52—protect completely.) If the victim suffers more than two levels of damage, treat him as Disabled in one leg (see **Exalted**, p. 152) until the wound heals.

Countering the trap involves detecting the trap, wearing special, heavy boots or having sufficient lethal soak to withstand the impact.

### LEG TRAP

**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 5

**Damage:** 5L, disabling, special

**Construction:** Craft (Earth) or Survival 3, 30 minutes

The leg trap resembles the stake trap but uses a shallower, flat-bottomed hole. The walls of the pit are studded with wooden stakes or metal spikes, angles slightly downward. A foot can enter without harm... but the stakes rip the victim's flesh when he tries to pull his foot out. The trap's creator may poison the stakes or defile them with feces to add infection as a secondary hazard.

The Effect of a leg trap is to catch the victim's foot. If the victim's player succeeds at a (Wits + Awareness) roll, difficulty 2, she notices the stakes before she tears out her foot. If not, the victim suffers a 5L attack against her foot, with the same disabling effects as the stake trap. Clearing this trap involves several minutes of sawing out the stakes with a knife, or grubbing them out of the soil.

### FIRE MINES


**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 5

**Damage:** 9L/3 or 4L/3

**Construction:** Craft (Fire) 4, one hour

Clever artisans of the South build land mines. A mine consists of a tube (pottery or a thick section of bamboo) packed with firedust, and a mechanism that can strike a spark when someone steps on a pressure plate. To deploy the mine, place it in a shallow hole and cover it with a thin layer of sand or soil. When someone steps on the pressure plate, the mine explodes in a blast of flame two yards in radius. The person who steps on the mine takes full damage;



everyone within two yards can resist it as an environmental effect (Trauma 3).

The Haslanti build their own incendiary mine. Instead of firedust, it contains their version of Ardent Embrace Resin (see p. 141). When someone steps on the mine, it sprays the greasy liquid, which ignites on contact with air or water. Instead of a momentary burst of flame, however, the Haslanti mine inflicts an environmental effect (Damage 4L, Trauma 3) on anyone within two yards, lasting up to 15 Miscellaneous actions, or until a victim succeeds in three resistance rolls to remove or extinguish the flaming liquid.

### CALTROPS

**Detection:** 1

**Attack:** 3

**Damage:** 2L, Piercing, disabling

**Construction:** Craft (Fire) 1, days

Caltrops consist of short metal spikes welded together in a pyramid shape, so whatever way it lands a point sticks up. An army can scatter caltrops or launch them using a catapult. The trigger is to step on them; the result is a wounded and disabled foot. Collecting the caltrops from the area, or just walking carefully to avoid them, counters the trap.

Under most circumstances, caltrops are easy to see and avoid. Animals, however, may not know enough to avoid stepping on caltrops. They also force enemies to move slowly, as if on Difficult terrain.

### SNARES

Hunters use simple wire or rope loops to snare animals around the neck and strangle them, but such traps do not work well against hands and knives. Instead, snares for people consist of strong ropes or nets, tied to some sort of spring (such as a bent sapling) or counterweight. When triggered, the rope closes around the person's leg (or perhaps some other limb) and the counterweight hauls the victim into the air, along the ground or otherwise away from where they want to be. The Trigger for such traps is usually stepping on a release concealed inside the hidden loop of the snare. The Counter is avoiding the trap, setting it off with a stick or other harmless object or nailing the snare loop in place so it can't release. Characters can parry snares with a stunt or Charm.

### SNAGLINE

**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 6

**Damage:** 4B or 8B, Hold

**Construction:** Survival 2, 20 minutes

The simplest and most common man-catching snare tightens a loop of rope around an extremity and then lifts the victim into the air. Even a foot or two can suffice to delay the victim frees herself. In the forests and jungles of the East, however, snaglines are often designed to haul a

victim several yards upward and leave her dangling. The mere act of being dragged upward by one's wrist or ankle inflicts 4B damage, but snaglines can also smash the victim against one or more branches on the way up, inflicting 8B damage instead. The victim can quickly cut herself free with a sharp knife—but without a successful (Dexterity + Athletics) roll at difficulty 3, the character then falls to the ground.

A snagline's victim suffers some of the same penalties as being Held. The character can take actions, but suffers a -4 dice penalty from being upside down and partially pinned, cannot move and has Dodge and Parry Defense Values reduced by 2.

### CATCHNET

**Detection:** 2

**Attack:** 8 (two-yard diameter net)

**Damage:** Hold

**Construction:** Survival 2, 45 minutes

Catchnets resemble snaglines, but use a net instead of a single line—potentially catching more than one victim. A net two yards wide can capture only a few people. Larger nets can snare more victims but are harder to conceal, reducing the Detection difficulty or raising the Construction difficulty by 1 for each additional yard of diameter. Victims in a catchnet are Held, with the same penalties as someone caught by a snagline.

### THROWLINE

**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 6

**Damage:** As snagline, plus falling damage

**Construction:** Survival 4, 45 minutes


A throwline resembles a snagline, but is attached to a far more powerful lever—and loosely. When the victim sets off the trap, the rope hauls him high into the air on a parabolic arc, perhaps above the tree line... then lets go, sending him flying until he comes hurtling down. Victims can land anywhere from 100 to 200 feet from where they started: Treat them as if they fell half this distance. As consolation, survivors have a long, sturdy piece of rope or vine tied around one leg.

### DEADFALLS AND DROPFALLS

These traps all drop something on a victim. Deadfalls can form naturally in forests. As trees die and fall, occasionally their trunks catch in another tree's branches. When that tree dies, the branch weakens, eventually resulting in a large weight on a hair trigger, ready to fall and crush anything underneath.

People also create their own deadfalls. They lift tree trunks, boulders, or other objects into the canopy, gather them behind a release point, or set them to swing on ropes. A deadfall might be set as an automatic trap, or might be rigged so a hidden guard can trigger the trap against someone else.





A deliberately set deadfall usually has a Trigger consisting of a trip line or a pressure pad that activates the release mechanism. (This is especially common in fortifications, tombs and the like.) Natural deadfalls can become so precarious that almost anything can set them off. Just walking underneath can be enough.

Deadfall traps are Countered by spotting the Trigger or, failing that, getting out of the way of the falling hazards. (This may be difficult: some of them roll.) Deadfalls can always be dodged, but often cannot be parried without the use of a stunt or Charm.

#### DROPFALL

**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 7

**Damage:** varies

**Construction:** Survival 2, one scene

This trap drops a payload of some sort, which can range from cut logs, a net full of stones, point-down javelins, or juvenile (but still dangerous) diversions such as nests full of angry wasps. Damage varies according to what was dropped, and how far (see sidebar). The area attacked also varies by payload, ranging from a thin stream of liquid, to a massive scatter of rolling logs.

#### SWINGING LOG

**Detection:** 3

**Attack:** 9 (lengthwise) or 6 (endwise)

**Damage:** 10L/3 or 15L/5 (Piercing, Overwhelming)

**Construction:** Survival 2, 30 minutes

A large log, suspended from a high branch by vines or ropes, is drawn up into the canopy and secured by a trigger line. When the trap is triggered, the log swings out from the canopy into the targeted area, smashing anything that can't

#### DROPFALL AMMUNITION

Nearly anything that can be hoisted up into the air and tied into a trigger line could become the payload for a dropfall trap. Possibilities range from the practical (boulders, logs, boxes of stones), to the vicious (refined whale oil with lighting mechanism, acids, cuttings of deadly toxic Eastern plants), to the surreal (dump boxes filled with seashells, bones, rotting meat or snakes).

Instead of trying to detail all the myriad possibilities, here are some guidelines for basic types of dropfall payloads.

**Big and Heavy:** Large boulders or cut stones, logs, mammoths (live or dead—living ones make poor traps, however, with all the noise they make). Large items deal a base bashing damage according to weight. One and one-half times the (Strength + Athletics) score needed to lift them makes a good rule of thumb, so a steel anvil would deal base 2L damage. Add an additional +1B per yard they drop before hitting their target. The payload's base area of effect is equal to their size, but some payloads (a cluster of logs, for example) can scatter as they fall or after they hit. The scatter area depends greatly on the terrain: On flat ground, heavy objects won't roll more than a few yards, but they could travel down a hillside for a long way.

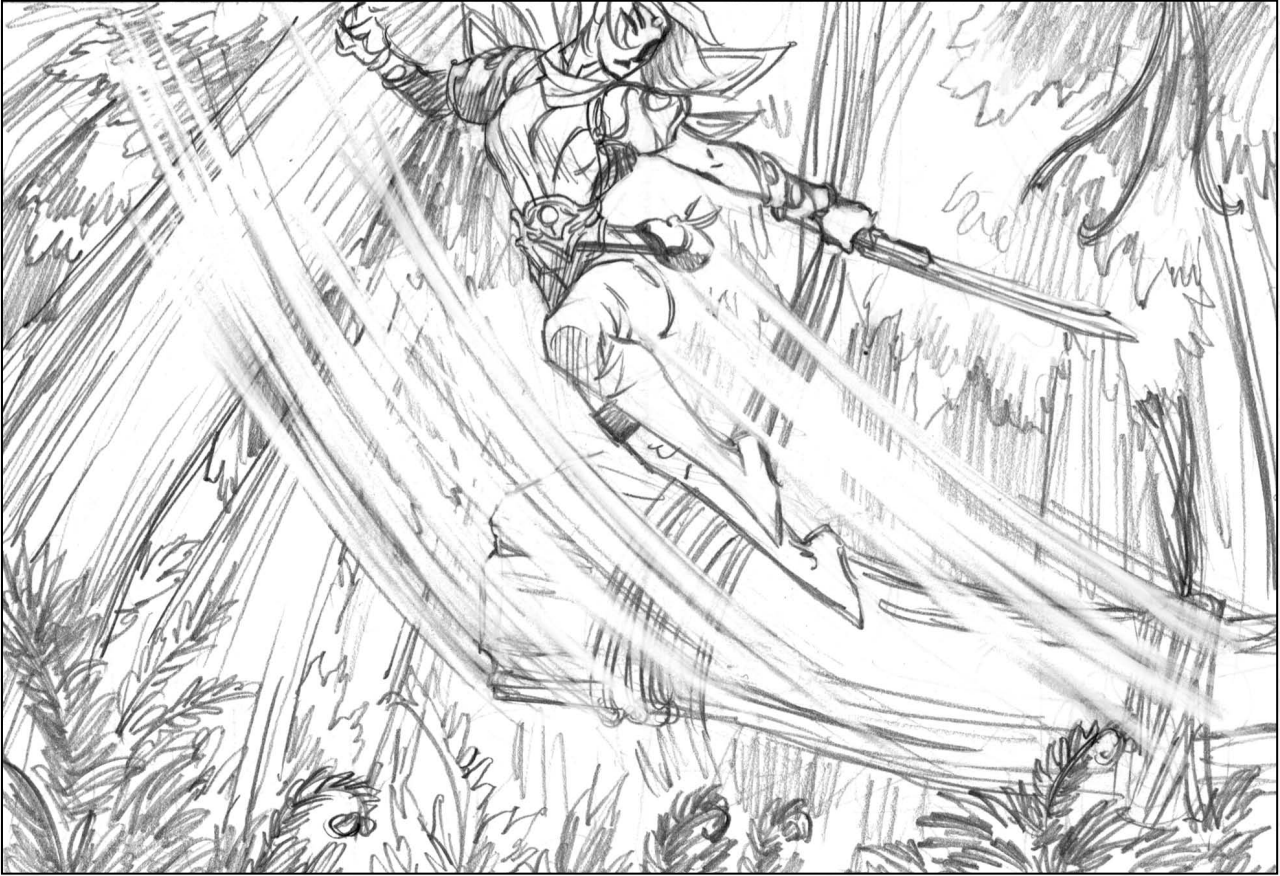
**Small and Heavy:** Dump boxes full of smaller stones, javelins or the like. Smaller items can scatter into a wider area, but tend to do less damage individually. Smaller objects deal one to four dice of damage base, +1 die per yard dropped. Damage may be bashing or lethal, depending on the payload (bashing for rocks, for instance, but lethal for spike-studded sections of logs).

Do not add extra successes from the attack roll to damage. Instead, for every 3 threshold successes on the attack roll, a target gets hit with an additional "attack" at the base damage. In the case of very small, or very large numbers of objects being dropped, the number of extra successes needed to score an additional hit can drop to 2, or even 1.

**Fluids and Powders:** Fuel oil, perfume, sleeping powder, various bodily fluids, skunk musk, or the like. These typically deal damage based on their nature: Unless a very large amount of liquid falls, the most a falling stream might do is knock someone over. A basic dropfall releases a localized stream or cascade of fluid. The right set of baffles and diverters can send liquids in nearly any shape, but this increases the trap's Construction difficulty by at least 2. Fuel oil (and some other substances) can be ignited as a fire environmental hazard, perhaps equal to a bonfire.

**Nuisances:** Hornet nests, bags full of nettles, boxes full of ants, worms, spiders or other wriggly things—almost anything guaranteed to annoy the hell out of anyone it hits, though perhaps not likely to kill them. Most are best simulated through a relatively mild, non-lethal poison. Damage takes the form of an internal penalty on all actions until the victim has a chance to clean out her armor and recover from any associated stings, bites, rashes or other annoyances.

Storytellers should feel free to adjust damages upwards or downwards based on the nature of the trap. Very large (or very heavy) objects may have Piercing or Overwhelming added to their damage rating, as may sharp objects dropped from a substantial height.



escape its path. Swinging logs can impact lengthwise (giving an area attack of three to 10 yards), or endwise, giving different attack and damage ratings. Larger versions of this trap can deal more damage, have a higher attack score (large logs are harder to avoid than smaller ones) and impact a larger area. Anything less massive than a yeddim is knocked off of its feet by the impact.

To add more injury to injury, a swinging log, like any pendulum, swings back through its arc after completing it—perhaps multiple times—unless it hits something strong or massive enough to stop its journey. This secondary attack

(coming from the opposite direction from the first) happens five to 10 ticks after the original, depending on how far the log travels in its path (Storyteller's discretion). Each secondary attack loses two dice on its attack roll *after* the second (as people expect it thereafter), and -3L damage on each swing after the first (the log loses momentum). When the attack loses all its damage, it has come to a rest at the bottom of its arc.

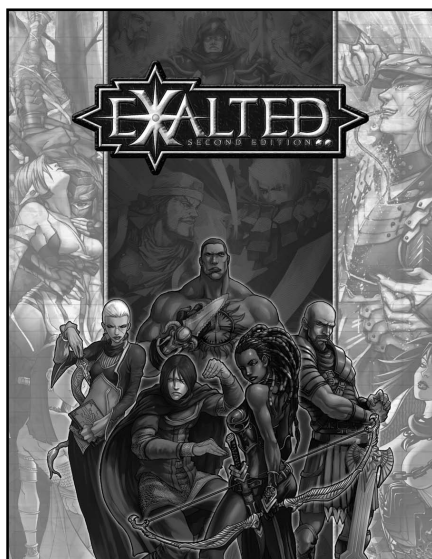
Characters can stop this series of attacks by severing the ropes that the log swings upon, or tying the ropes in place so the log cannot swing.





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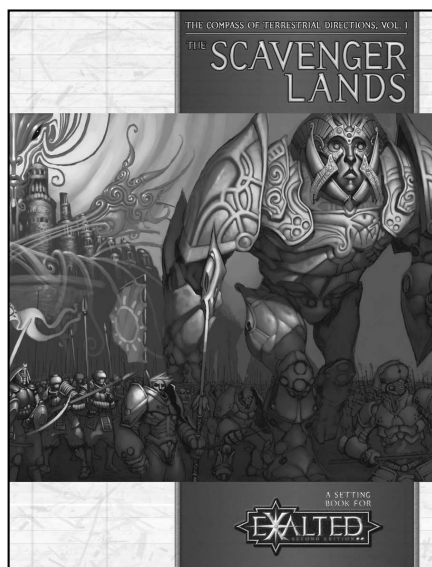
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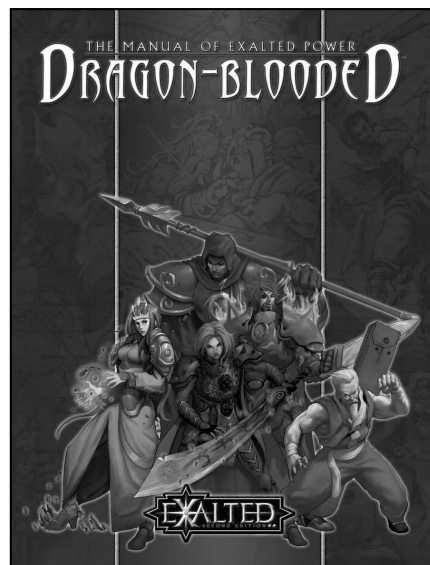
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