



The flower of Battle

A Book of Weapons, Duels and Battles for

THE
RIDDLE OF STEEL



THE RIDDLE OF STEEL

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The Riddle of Steel:

The Flower of Battle



Brian Leybourne Jacob Norwood

The Flower of Battle



The Riddle of Steel:

The Flower of Battle

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Special Thanks

**This book is dedicated to Mark "Sorty" Sorton and my loving family,
who kept me sane when my world fell apart.**

-Brian Leybourne

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James "Ginzu" Memoli, Adam "Time to roll up a new character" Packard,
George "Was there ever any question in that?" Thompson

Visit us on the Web at: www.theriddleofsteel.net

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Welcome to Driftwood Publishing's third (and probably most anticipated) book, *The Flower of Battle*!

It's been a long and occasionally difficult road for us over here at Driftwood. Once again, it's been about a year between supplements, and you, our fans, have been really patient and understanding, for which we are eternally grateful. As many of you will know, DWP has been through a lot this year – Jake Norwood, the original creator of *The Riddle of Steel* has moved on and enlisted in the US army, leading to the sale of the company. But don't worry, Jake found the time before he left to write a few sections for this book, and he's promised to pop in from time to time to cast an enlightened eye over things. In the future, he'll be staying on as a consultant and he'll be working on supplements and projects as time allows. Brian Leybourne (that's me) who wrote *Of Beasts and Men* is still around, and I'm really excited about the future of Driftwood and *The Riddle of Steel*. The new owners are keen gamers just like Jake and me, and we have big and interesting things in store for the future (and we promise that you won't have to wait a year between books anymore!)

So, what's *The Flower of Battle* all about? Essentially, it's about choices. There are a lot of new rules in this book, covering everything from firearms to poisons to weapon schools. We've also included updates and clarifications to a lot of older rules that were confusing or just needed refreshing, such as how dropping weapons works in combat, and when and exactly how many dice do you lose when you're knocked from your feet. Some rules have been greatly updated, such as the long requested new armor rules, a change to the way missile weapons work, and a clarification of terrain rolls and their role in the game. We've also rounded the book off with a greatly increased weapons list (including nifty pictures of every weapon), rules and guidelines for mass combat, and a section on Items of Power that perhaps belongs more in our next supplement *Sorcery and the Fey*, but we just couldn't wait to present it to you.

A lot of these rules add a ton of complexity to the game... so why use them? It's true that using *all* of the optional rules in this book in any given TROS campaign could lead your elegant and streamlined sessions into what could be hours of number-crunching. This book, even more than its predecessor, is written with *modularity* in mind. In other words, if you like the stance rules but can't stomach the new maneuvers, then the clear choice is to use the one and discard the other. We even considered an A-B-C encyclopedia-style layout for this book originally, just to emphasize the build-your-own-TROS approach that we want *The Flower of Battle* to promote (but you, our fans, told us you hated that idea). As we've always said in the past – this is your game now, do with it what seems right to you, but make sure you drop by <http://www.trosforums.com> now and then to tell us about what you are doing with the game – if we like it, we may write about it in an upcoming book!

One thing you will notice in this book is a greatly decreased emphasis on Weyrth. We really wanted to use TFOB as an avenue to educate, or at least to inspire self-education in the hands of our fans and players. TROS is not and never has been about Weyrth. It's about the drama that comes from entering into the world of a person who trains his or her whole life to kill another in an activity that can rely on as much luck as it does skill. It's about "What's worth killing for?" and "What's worth dying for?" Weyrth was created with some of our favorite elements of historical based fantasy and the real world mixed in with as much "gray area" conflict as possible (religion, politics, philosophy, etc). Every historically inspired element in this book remains as true to the original "truth" (as we know it, that is) as possible. Other elements are romanticized and are meant for Weyrth and its kin, not necessarily the historical TROS game. Hopefully every player will get use out of both!

So, let's get started...

Book 1





Book One:

Living on the Razor's Edge

Book 1

Peter paid for his first lesson with a dead man's velvet purse.

As a child, he had wrestled, boxed, ran, and fought with sapling branches on the many bridges of the Empire. When a foreign Master of Defense—a teacher of fencing and fighting—came to his end of the city and opened his classes to anyone that could pay tuition, people were outraged. Gentlemen hailed the end of civilization. The council charged triple taxes in an effort to shut the place down without enacting a potentially dangerous citywide ban, but later embraced the school as the taxes came without pause or complaint. This new master—a godless fencer from the northern reaches—was the answer to Peter's prayers. He just had to pay for it.

Running errands for local merchants put a few coins into Peter's own canvas purse, but that barely supplied sustenance, and Peter's love for women prevented what little savings

he could muster from amounting to anything that even approached paying for a lesson at the hands of Monsieur Fabrice Jaquise. After three months of saying, "I'm going to be a student of Jaquise," to every girl he bedded and every peer he fist-fought, he finally found a chance to get there.

A brandy merchant paid Peter to run a message across town. Peter ran down the road, made three left turns, and snuck up behind the waiting importer. "You've just bought lessons for the greatest swordsman in the Empire," Peter hissed, and he struck the merchant at the base of the neck with a 14-inch cudgel. What the stick left, Peter's heels finished with five or six stout blows to the groaning man's skull. He took the man's whole belt—sword, dagger, and purse attached—and quenched his newly acquired blade in its former owner's belly. This time as he ran down the street, he took as many left turns as right, and found it easy to lose a militia that didn't care so much for the





northerner's life as they did for the casks of fine brandy he left behind.

And so the purse—sold just one bridge over from the canal where the merchant's body had been dumped by the local authorities—brought in enough money for one lesson. The coins left in the purse paid for two more, plus a little bit of time with la bella Beatrice down by the harbor.

This chapter gathers together updates and clarifications for existing rules. Within, you will find greatly altered (and improved, we think) rules for armor, fatigue, replacement grappling rules, archery, mounted combat, and a number of clarifications such as how to handle dropping and retrieving weapons in combat, how Knockdown is handled, and more. Most of the information in this chapter is intended to replace or supplement existing rules; as usual, you should use or discard sections that appeal to you, but most of the information found herein should prove very valuable in your games, and hopefully answer a few questions you may have.

Cinematic vs. Real

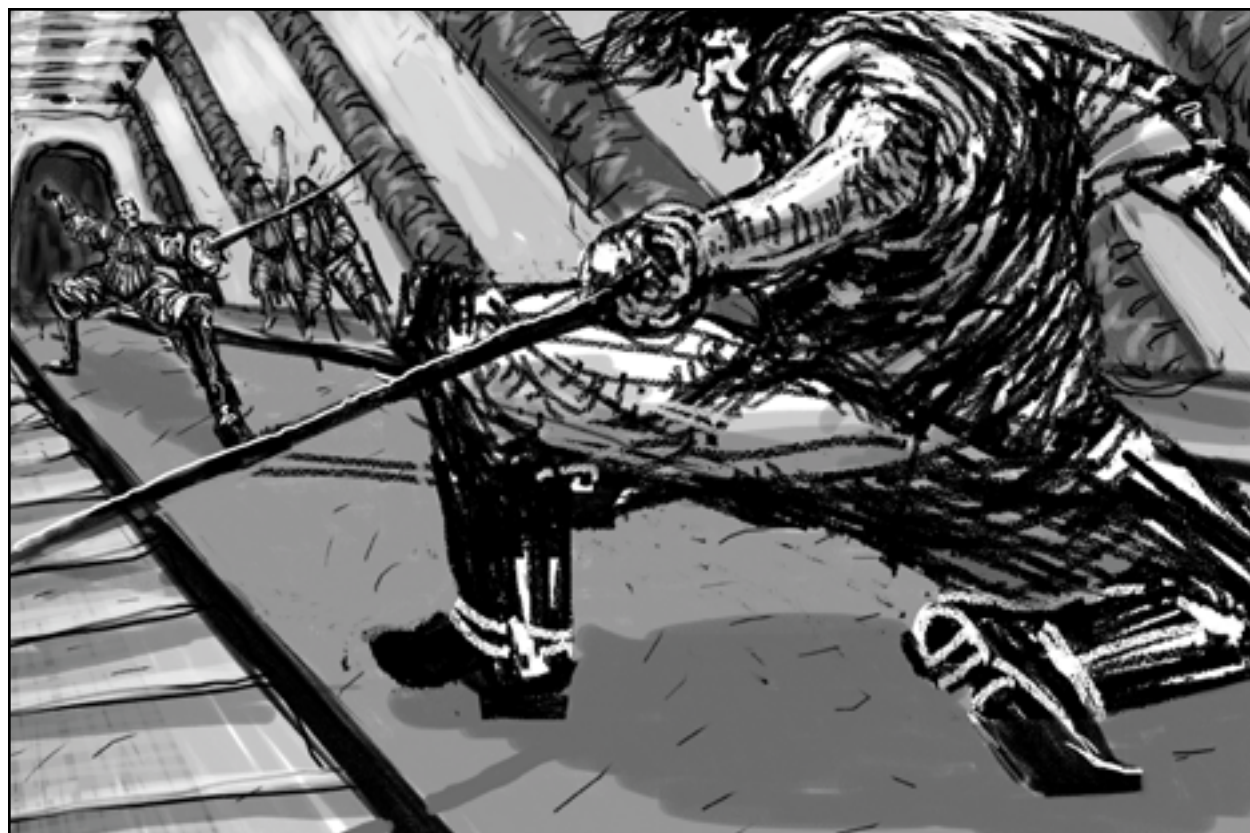
One debate that has raged ever since *The Riddle of Steel* was first released several years ago is the two opposing camps of those who like realistic RPG's, and those who like cinematic RPG's. So just which one is *The Riddle of Steel*, anyway?

First, let's have a thought about what those two terms mean. Cinematic is a pretty obvious one – a cinematic RPG is one that allows GM's and players to recreate (or just create) games, scenarios and situations that reflect movie reality. In the films, the heroes are always just slightly larger than life, the hammer usually swings in their direction (towards the end of the film, at least), wounds don't slow them down for very long at all, death scenes usually

take just long enough for them to save the day anyway, and perhaps most importantly, the good guys almost always win. Is all of that realistic? Not really, in real life, fate doesn't favor the "goodies" over the "baddies", wounds hurt and take a long time to heal, and even heroes can die quickly, painfully, and pointlessly.

Most RPG's favor a cinematic approach to roleplaying. Players and characters are given a large amount of leeway, errors are quickly reversible and there's always a second chance. *The Riddle of Steel* was written with a slightly different set of goals in mind. TROS was designed by guys who know fighting. Jake Norwood, the original Designer of TROS is a Senior Free Scholar in the Association for Renaissance Martial Arts and runs training seminars and exhibitions across the country. The maneuvers and techniques in TROS were developed with real world fighting in mind, and there are no hit points or second chances – combat in TROS is fast and deadly and the first hit often decides the match. The rest of the system was designed around this ideal as well, particularly the Spiritual Attribute system where, just as in real life, people fight, play, focus, concentrate, and achieve a lot better when they genuinely care about whatever it is that they are doing.

So, TROS is a realistic game then? Well, yes and no. The simple answer is that TROS was designed to be able to fit easily into both camps. If a gritty and realistic game is your thing then TROS can do that. The combat system in its raw form is fast and deadly, and requires a strong level of cunning and tactics. A better swordsman can be defeated by a lesser if the lesser cares more about the fight, or the better simply makes mistakes. Staying alive is a matter of thinking through your actions, fighting when it's important (and thus when your Spiritual Attributes are firing), and not leaping maniacally into a room with 12 guardsmen, screaming at the top of your lungs and flailing about with your sword. All just like in real life.



However, TROS suits more cinematic play as well. It's not even a difficult transition to make, you just need to keep a few things in mind and make some minor adjustments to the way you use the rules. Here are some of our suggestions for making the game more "mistake friendly" and cinematic.

Wounds

In the core rules, characters get to make a healing roll once per week to reduce the severity of their wounds. This leads to large wounds taking a very long time to heal, which is realistic but can slow down the action. Consider allowing characters to make healing checks every day instead of every week to speed up healing and get them back on their feet quickly. Additionally, you might allow a healing roll for each wound immediately after the combat has finished, to see if maybe the wound wasn't as bad as it seemed in the thick of the fight after all.

Terrain rolls

Liberal use of terrain rolls can always give

players a break. Encourage them to use terrain to split opponents, get height or space advantages, or just get flashy. You can find more information on terrain rolls and some ideas on their cinematic use from p. 51.

Spiritual Attributes

In the films, it's always the love of the girl or the need to stop the bomb seconds before it destroys the city that drives the hero onwards, allowing him to ignore pain and adversity. Consider allowing players to burn (permanently spend) Spiritual Attribute points in order to drive themselves forward in moments of need. As long as the current situation fits an SA, a player might be allowed to burn a relevant SA point to automatically succeed in a skill or attribute check instead of having to roll it. If you're a really generous GM, you might even allow them to burn SA points to cancel wounds. We suggest each SA point cancels 3 points worth of Pain from a wound, again as long as the SA in question is relevant to the wound received (burning passion for the princess while fighting



to protect her, for example). Do SA points spent in this fashion still earn insight? That's up to you, but what could be more insightful than realizing that your love of the princess has helped drive you on? And of course, luck could be considered a catchall SA for this kind of use in any situation.

Mooks

Not every bad guy fights to the death. Most of them have friends, family, and/or loved ones. For standard opponents, as soon as they receive any kind of serious wound (assume any level 3 wound, or any two wounds of level 2) they suddenly realize that they have somewhere better to be and run, or simply drop their weapons and beg for mercy (unless they have reason to know that the PC's are unlikely to spare them). Actually, this is a pretty good guideline for

realistic play too – very few people will fight to the death unless they're fighting for something they really care about!

Fatal Flaws

If a cinematic experience is what you and your PC's are looking for, then ensure that your bad guys have those fatal flaws that all the black-hats in the films seem to have. Herald them, let the players learn what they are and exploit them. Or simply don't play the bad guys to the best of your ability. Remember, in a movie, the good guys are *supposed* to mow down opponents like wheat.

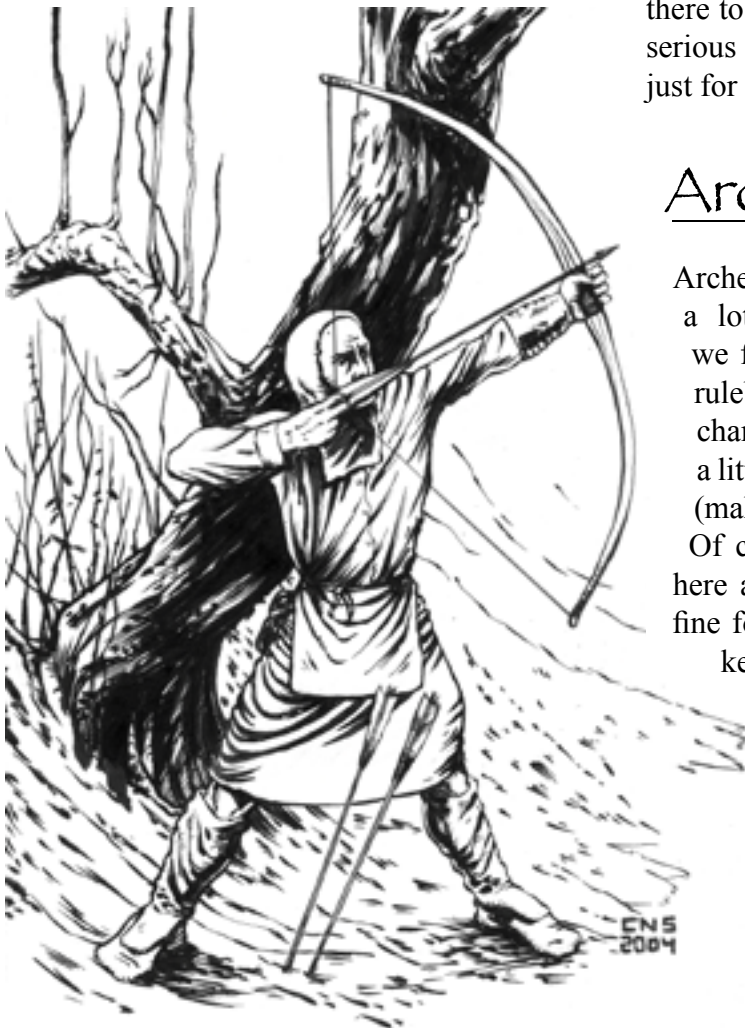
By following these guidelines, and keeping in mind what the overall goal of the session is, realism or cinematics, but over both of those is (presumably) the concept that everyone is there to have fun; TROS can be played deadly serious and realistic, heroic, and cinematic, or just for a bit of a laugh. Go nuts!

Archery

Archery in *The Riddle of Steel* has generated a lot of comment over the years since we first published rules for it in the main rulebook. This section introduces some changes to the archery rules, bringing them a little more into line with the melee system (making marrying the two a little easier). Of course, most of the changes presented here are optional – if archery was working fine for you the old way, then by all means keep using it!

Missile Pool and Refresh

The original rules for refreshing MP were too reliant on Wit, and did not allow for Proficiency to be a factor in how fast a character could release missiles. The breakdown of the missile pool is your Proficiency plus your Aim derived attribute.





Optional Rule: Bow/Crossbow Damage

Arrows and crossbow bolts make far smaller wounds than spears and throwing axes. For the sake of simplicity, the puncturing tables do not refer to this, but it's likely that such wounds might be less severe than equivalent wounds from larger piercing weapons. As an optional rule, you can incorporate this by modifying the damage of arrows and crossbow bolts as per the following chart. Note – this modification happens as the last step in determining damage - it comes AFTER the Toughness and Armor have been subtracted from the MOS plus Strength plus Damage calculation.

Arms/Legs:	Subtract 2 from the final damage level
Torso:	Subtract 1 from the final damage level
Head:	No modification to damage

It would seem to make sense then, that your Proficiency should be your raw ability to shoot, while your Aim attribute gives you an extra benefit for, well, aiming. As such, the new procedure for filling your MP is as follows:

As soon as a character has completed the missile preparation time (cocked the knife to throw, or nocked the arrow and drawn back the string), he gains his Proficiency in dice as an immediate refresh. Note that missile rounds are identical to melee rounds (which are a variable 1-2 seconds long, remember), so a preparation time of 3 missile rounds takes 3 melee rounds (6 exchanges) to finish. On the fourth melee round, the missile character is ready to release his missile with his Proficiency in dice. At the start of the round, when initiative is determined (either by throwing red or white dice, or because one melee combatant has won initiative the previous round) the missile user also throws an initiative die. Red means that he intends to release his missile in the first exchange, while white means that he intends to release it in the second exchange (or not at all this round). If the character does not release the missile that round, the following round he adds his Aim attribute to his die pool, giving him his maximum possible die pool (his MP), and he again throws red or white to indicate in which exchange he will release the missile. If he throws white, he is again not obliged to release the arrow and

may wait another round if he likes. On this third round he will again refresh his Aim into his missile pool, but the maximum size of the missile pool is still Proficiency + Aim so there will usually be no benefit to be gained from the third round refresh (unless the character had originally elected to pre-use Proficiency dice to speed up the preparation time, see below).

As long as a target is aware of the archer (surprise rolls may be in order), he can always defend against missile fire, even when such fire is directed into combat. Assuming the Melee combatant is aware of the danger, treat the incoming arrow simply as another attack that exchange – it may be blocked (but not parried) or avoided with an evasion. This may mean that the target is facing two attacks that exchange if his opponent has initiative, or that he may wish to perform a Simultaneous Block/Strike or similar maneuver if, he has the initiative. As always, a character who is not presently engaged in combat uses his Reflex as a die pool for evading or blocking missile fire.

If the target of a missile attack is not aware of the archer, the Seneschal should simply declare that he has been struck (or not) at the appropriate time and determine the results.

Geralt is battling Stefan, while Stefan's brother Rinaldo looks on, nocking his short

bow. It takes Rinaldo two rounds to nock and draw the arrow. At the start of the third round, Rinaldo is ready to shoot, and has his Proficiency in dice in his MP. He throws white, and elects not to fire this round. At the start of the fourth round, the Seneschal announces that Rinaldo will shoot, as he has now refreshed his Aim into his MP as well, and so has a full pool. He could throw an initiative die, but chooses simply to tell Geralt's player that Rinaldo will release the arrow in the first exchange. Stefan (who currently has initiative) will duck and thrust at Geralt's pelvis (zone X) and Rinaldo will simultaneously be launching his arrow at Geralt's chest (Zone XII). Geralt's player decides to split his remaining dice, electing to block the arrow with his shield and parry Stefan's thrust with his rapier. His other option would be to declare a terrain roll (p. 48; TROS p. 77) to try to keep Stefan between him and Rinaldo, but of course, this would merely delay Rinaldo's shot, not prevent it. Eventually, he is going to fail that terrain roll...

Reducing Preparation time

As in the old missile rules, it's always possible to reduce the preparation time for a missile attack. Each missile weapon lists the cost in MP dice and the roll required. This roll may only be made once and if it's successful will reduce the preparation time by one round (the minimum overall preparation time is still one round). This cost is deducted from the first (Proficiency) refresh. Only one attempt to reduce the preparation time can be made for each missile.

Rinaldo is nocking his short bow by pulling the arrow from a quiver on his back. Normally, this will take four rounds. He elects to spend two dice to make a roll to try to reduce this time by one round. As outlined in the short bow statistics on p. 124, he rolls Reflex against a TN of 8 and gets one success – he has successfully reduced his preparation time to three rounds.

At the start of the fourth round, he is ready to shoot, with his Proficiency in dice, less 2 dice for the reduction in preparation time. If he chooses not to shoot that round, the following round he will refresh his Aim into his missile pool as well, so he now has Proficiency + Aim - 2 dice to shoot with. If he elects not to fire that round either, then on the third round he will refresh his Aim again, but will cap out at Proficiency + Aim, which is the maximum MP he can have. In effect, the third round cancels out the penalty for reducing the preparation time.

Range

The thrown and missile weapon lists on p. 122 and p. 198 have new entries for the range of the missile. Rather than the old system of increasing the ATN of a missile depending on a range increment, that ATN now remains the same, but there is an additional cost in dice to shoot at greater range. The ranges in the entries are Point Blank / Short / Medium / Long / Extreme. The extra costs are in the table below. Missile attacks at point blank range not only have no penalty, they actually grant one additional die to the attack pool, this die can take the MP over its usual maximum.

Range	Modifier
Point Blank	+1 die
Short Range	-
Medium Range	-1 die
Long Range	-3 dice
Extreme Range	-5 dice
Beyond Extreme Range:	No hit possible or -10 dice (Seneschal's decision)

If this penalty reduces the attack pool to zero or fewer dice, then the character simply is not good enough to hit at that range.

Rinaldo is taking a shot at a charging marauder. At the moment, the man is 25 yards away, which is medium range for Rinaldo's short bow. He already has a penalty on his



shot because the man is moving (but the penalty is only 1 die because the target is moving directly towards him). If he chooses to fire now, it will cost him one additional die from his MP for the range, leaving his MP-2 to actually roll the attack. If he waits until the attacker has moved into Short range, there will be no range penalty (but he would still face the -1 die penalty for the movement of the target). If he's really daring, he could wait until the man is at point blank range (3 yards) and then fire, actually gaining a die due to the range (which would cancel out the one die penalty for movement) but since the marauder would then be so close, he had better be very sure the shot was a good one...

Determining Hit Location

In melee combat, you never know exactly where you will hit your opponent, but you can narrow the odds somewhat by the zone you swing or thrust at. Missile combat is more tricky – it's hard enough just releasing a missile in the right direction, let alone actually choosing where to hit an opponent. Unlike the original missile rules in TROS, it's now necessary to roll to see where you have struck an opponent. Roll 2d6 on the following chart to determine the zone struck (you still then roll 1d6 for that zone to determine the specific hit location, of course).

Roll	Location
2	Head (Zone XIII)
3	Arm (Zone XIV, choose which arm randomly)
4	Arm (Zone XIV, choose which arm randomly)
5	Torso (Zone XII)
6	Torso (Zone XII)
7	Torso (Zone XI)
8	Torso (Zone X)
9	Torso (Zone X)
10	Upper Legs (Zone IX, choose which leg randomly)
11	Upper Legs (Zone IX, choose which leg randomly)
12	Lower Legs (Zone VIII, choose which leg randomly)

As you can see, it's very easy to hit the torso and more difficult to hit the arms, legs or head. The trick is that before the attack is rolled, the character can choose to concentrate a little bit more to ensure that he hits where he really wants to. For each die set aside and not used in the shot, the hit location roll may be modified by +/-1. The maximum number of dice that may be set aside in this manner is equal to the characters Aim attribute.

Optional Range modifiers for hit location

We've made this an optional rule because it adds a bit more complexity to missile combat, but it's reasonable that at longer ranges it's even harder to specifically aim at different regions of the body. To represent this, the cost in dice to modify the hit location increases at longer ranges. Note, this is in addition to the extra cost in dice to actually shoot at those longer ranges!

Point Blank Range:	1 die = +/-1 on the hit location chart
Short Range:	1 die = +/-1 on the hit location chart
Medium Range:	2 dice = +/-1 on the hit location chart
Long Range:	2 dice = +/-1 on the hit location chart
Extreme Range:	3 dice = +/-1 on the hit location chart



Missile Attributes	Modifiers
Maximum MP	Proficiency + Aim
Target is moving directly towards shooter	-1 die
Target is moving away from, or laterally to shooter	-2 dice
Target is moving erratically	-3 dice
Attacker is moving	-1 die
Attacker is moving fast and/or erratically (e.g. on a horse)	-2 dice
Dim lighting	-1 die
Twilight or shooting into sun or other bright light	-2 dice
Shooting at night or other similar darkness	-3 dice
Point Blank range	+1 die
Medium range	-1 die
Long range	-3 dice
Poor Weather	-1 to -3 dice

Rinaldo is lining up a shot at a swordsman who is engaging his brother Stefan. Because the swordsman is wearing a cuirass, Rinaldo wants to be sure he can aim around it to miss the solid metal so he sets aside 3 dice from his MP before taking the shot. Once the shot has been determined, Rinaldo will roll 2d6 on the hit location table, but he will be able to modify the roll by up to 3 points in either direction to represent the extra care he has taken to aim the shot to miss the swordsman's breastplate. He rolls a 6, and so chooses to adjust the roll to a 4, striking the man in the arm and thus avoiding his armored body.

Avoiding Arrows

Arrows travel very fast, but the human body can move almost as fast when sufficiently motivated (such as to avoid being hit by an arrow).

To block an arrow with a shield, the target may roll as many dice from his CP as he likes against the Missile DTN of the shield (see the section on shields on p. 22 for information about the difference between Melee DTN and Missile DTN). This presupposes that the character is currently engaged in melee combat and is not already using his shield in another fashion that exchange. Outside Melee combat, use the raw Reflex score as the die pool. Before the attack is launched, the target may position the shield

(as outlined in the Armor section on p. 26) to anticipate where the attack will come, with all of the benefits and penalties usually associated with this maneuver.

Dodging an incoming Missile attack works in much the same way. The target takes dice from his CP (if involved in combat) or uses his Reflex pool (outside combat), and rolls against a difficulty determined by the Seneschal based on how free to move about the target is. On a wide plain with ditches to jump in or trees to hide behind, use the Full Evasion DTN of 4. In more restricted situations, use the Partial Evade DTN of 7. If the target really has nowhere to go (such as in a narrow corridor, for example) use the Duck and Weave DTN of 9.

Armor

This section is intended to replace the Armor and Shield information in the main rulebook for *The Riddle of Steel* (TROS p. 86). The system presented in that book is simpler, but can occasionally be confusing as to which armor covers which areas of the body, plus we feel we were a little overly severe with the penalties associated with wearing armor. It really doesn't hamper one in combat as much as you might think, and the main penalties are for armor on the arms and legs, which slow



Real World Armor

As in many RPG's, we have had to take a few liberties with the different forms of armor and the periods they came from on Earth. In reality, many of the types and forms of armor presented in this section did not exist at the same time as each other, and some were not contemporaries with some of the weapons available in *The Riddle of Steel* either (in the real world, the rapier was invented long after heavy plate armor had gone out of fashion, for example). We would love to have the liberty in this book to provide a full timeline of when various forms of armor and weaponry appeared on Earth, but there just isn't space. Seneschals and players should feel free to adopt their own norms and customs, or perhaps research real-world timings if they wish. However, as a general guideline:

The concept of leather armor stretches right back into antiquity and it is quite impossible to determine its origins, although it wasn't until the middle ages in Europe that anyone worked out how to boil it in oil to make it set (creating *Cuir Bouilli*). Scale armor (which was made by simply attaching scales of metal to the leather) is thought to have been invented around 200BC, but only really survived until the 5th or 6th century AD when mail became more available, as mail was superior against piercing attacks. A variant of scale armor, *Brigandine*, remained popular through into the 15th century however, as the scales were hidden under a second layer of leather making it hard to tell from a distance that someone was wearing armor at all. It was popular with highwaymen and brigands, hence the name. Mail armor itself has been found depicted in artwork from as far back as the Bronze Age; it is thought to have been invented in Asia, and also by the Celts at about the same time. It is known to have been used by the Romans and the Vikings. Mail seems to have been most popular from the 5th century onwards, right through until the 13th century or so when technologies improved and plate attachments began to become affordable and popular. This of course heralded the invention of banded mail, which became more plate and less chain over the years until circa 1440 when the first full suit of plate armor is thought to have been fashioned (although even then, mail was used to protect gaps such as under the arm and at the crotch.) Plate was hugely popular until the invention (or at least common adoption) of firearms in the early 16th century at which time lighter forms of armor began to come into vogue again.

a body down far more than carefully weight-distributed armor on the torso.

The following information will present a number of armor types and fashions, along with diagrams and information as to exactly which areas of the body they cover and the penalties for wearing them. Many forms of armor must be individually fitted to the wearer. This will be mentioned in the individual descriptions, but in general applies to everything other than many simple leather or mail jerkins (shirts) or leggings. Improperly fitted armor carries CP and/or Movement penalties that will be mentioned in the text.

Most forms of armor are designed to be worn over clothing or their own "under-wear", and as such, it is not generally possible to "double up" protection by wearing one suit of armor under another. In the case of overlapping armor, simply take the highest AV to the overlapped area, but apply both sets of CP and Movement penalties. However, if the optional rules for armor effectiveness versus differing damage types (see p. 13) are being used, then allow the maximum benefit against each damage type according to the armors stacked. For example, if a long sleeved leather jack is worn under a mail birnie, the AV penalties for both will stack (there is no penalty for leather, so you're fine there), the best AV



value will apply (the AV of the chain) and the best effectiveness vs. each type of damage will apply. Leather provides -1 versus cutting attacks, +1 versus piercing attacks, and -1 versus bashing attacks, while Mail provides +1 versus cutting attacks and -1 versus bashing attacks. Taking the best benefit for each, the combination provides +1 to cutting and piercing attacks but still has -1 against bashing attacks. Remember, these bonuses and penalties will apply to the best AV (that of the mail) for every location covered by both armors.

Armor also affects the fatigue of the wearer – please see the Fatigue rules (p. 33; TROS p. 82).

Unless noted otherwise in the individual sections, the following chart lists the AV of different materials that armor may be fashioned from:

AV	Material
1	Heavy and/or padded cloth and the like
2	Leather
3	Light Mail; Cuir Bouilli (Hardened Leather)
4	Scaled Armor; Mail; Light Plate
5	Doubled or Banded Mail; Plate
6	Heavy Plate

Notes

Heavy/Padded Cloth: Layers of cloth, often padded with small “pillows” of heavy wadded cloth quilted into the fabric.

Leather: Usually cow or pig leather, layered and sewn together. Leather may be toughened and hardened by boiling it in oil and fashioning it into shape before it dries and sets. This is often known as Cuir Bouilli.

Scaled Armor: Small plates of metal sewn or riveted onto a leather backing. This is sometimes known as Scale Mail, Coat of Plates, or Jazeraint and counts as hard armor for weapons that have extra effect against hard armors. A variant of this is known as Brigandine, where the plates are sewn inside two layers of leather.

Mail: Thousands of individual metal rings linked together. At great cost, mail may be “doubled” which uses heavier rings and doubly links them. This toughens the armor but increases the cost and the weight sharply.

Banded Mail: “Bands” of metal strips attached to leather, with mail protecting the gaps between the bands. This counts as hard armor for weapons that have extra effect against hard armor.

Plate: Plates of metal, riveted together with mail protecting the gaps at body joints (often with additional sections of plate over those joints for extra protection; more below). All plate is, of course, considered hard armor for purposes of weapons that effect hard armor differently.

Don't you mean Chain Mail?

Mail armor may be more familiar to many readers by the name *Chain Mail*. In the real world, this is actually a very modern term for mail armor, however, and would not have been used in the medieval period when such armor was in common use. The terms *Chain Mail* and *Mail* may be seen as interchangeable for all intents and purposes.

Armor Types

Some of the individual items described below have fractional CP and/or Movement penalties. When purchasing armor, simply add all of these fractions up, and round up the resulting total to the next highest whole number.

These resulting numbers represent the penalty to the characters base CP and Move scores while wearing the armor. For example, if a character with a CP of 13 and a Move of 7 puts on a regular AV4 mail suit (see below) he suffers a -1 penalty to both, reducing his CP to 12 and his Move score to 6 at all times while wearing it.

Additionally, the total CP penalty applies as an additional activation cost to all evasion maneuvers (including full evade, partial evade and duck & weave, but not parries, blocks, or any other form of defense). The character in the example above would have a 1 die activation cost to evasions he performed in combat while wearing his chain suit. A different character in heavy armor with a large shield who had a CP penalty of 3 would

Optional Rule: Armor effectiveness vs. differing damage types

This optional rule makes allowance for the properties of various forms of armor materials, and how effective they are against differing damage types. If used, these rules supersede the individual rules presented with specific weapons specifying that they have greater or reduced effectiveness against “hard” or “soft” armor.

As a general rule, rigid armors fare better against bashing damage than flexible armors, as the force of the blow is distributed across the armor surface instead of being transferred through to the body beneath (although this may damage the armor, of course). Conversely, flexible armor is often better at deflecting the immense point impact of piercing attacks than rigid armor. Finally, a higher tensile strength and “tear resistance” can help armor resist cutting attacks. The table below lists optional AV modifiers for various armor materials based on those properties, against the three main damage types.

Armor Type	vs. Cutting attacks	vs. Piercing attacks	vs. Bashing attacks
Padded cloth	-1AV	-	-
Leather	-1AV	+1AV	-1AV
Cuir Bouilli	-	-	+1AV
Scale Armor / Jazeraint	+1AV	-1AV	-
Mail	+1AV	-	-1AV
Doubled Mail	+1AV	+1AV	-1AV
Banded Mail	+1AV	+1AV	-
Light plate (greaves, etc)	-	-	-
Plate or Heavy Plate	+1AV	-	+1AV

have an additional 3-die activation cost for any evades (on top of having 3 fewer dice in his CP to start with!). In general, the heavier the armor, the harder it is to move about quickly to evade attacks.

In the armor sections that follow, each piece of armor is presented along with its description, the materials it may be fashioned from, and a shaded diagram showing the areas it protects. We have not specified zones that each item protects; remember that the zones represent swinging or thrusting arcs of attack, but not specific hit locations. A swing to Zone IV, for example, may hit the upper arm, the shoulder, the upper chest, the neck, or the face. Use the shadings given as a guide to shading in the figure on your character sheet to indicate areas of protection.

Head and Neck Protection

Helmets often restrict the vision and coordination

of the wearer, and certainly affect the hearing. Most forms of Helm incur no CP penalty, except as noted in the table below:

-0.5 CP	Pot Helm with Aventail or Doubled Mail Coif
-1 CP, -0.5 Move	Full Helm (the move penalty represents restricted vision.)

While wearing any form of Helmet, perception rolls involving hearing have a 2-die penalty, and vision-based perception rolls in a full helm incur the same penalty.

As a general rule, most forms of head protection do not need to be specifically fitted to the wearer, but they must be of the correct general size. Pieces too small or too large will not wear well and carry an additional -1CP penalty per piece (if too small, they may not be able to be worn at all, of course).



Aventail (Camil)

An Aventail is a mail covering (AV3-5, depending on the type of mail used) designed to be attached to a Pot Helm or a Full Helm, hanging down and protecting the neck and shoulders of the wearer from swinging or thrusting attacks.



Bascinet (Pot Helm)

Usually fashioned from light plate or plate (thus AV 4 or 5), a Basinet covers the top and back of the head but leaves the face open. The protection thus applies to all swinging attacks to the head (but not face), but no thrusting attacks, except from the side or behind.



Coif

A coil is a mail (light, normal, doubled or banded) hood (AV3-5). It covers the sides, top and back of the head (but leaves the face uncovered), and also protects the neck and shoulders like an Aventail. Some coifs have what is known as a Ventail – a flap that attaches across the mouth and protects the lower face.

In some cultures, a leather coif may be available as well (although not Cuir Bouilli as it is not flexible enough).



Gorget (Bevor)

A Gorget is a plate (AV4-6) hard covering for the neck and shoulders (similar to an Aventail). It is usually worn over a mail shirt or hauberk for extra protection of those vital areas.





Full Helm

A full helm is fashioned of plate (AV4-6) and protects the entire head and face from all attacks (but not the neck, making a Gorget or Aventail a common additional purchase). Vision is through eyeholes or narrow slots, which restrict peripheral vision terribly.



Kettle (War Helm)

A Kettle is a plate “hat” (AV4-6) that protects the upper head against swinging (downward) attacks (only).



Upper Body Protection

Armor designed for the Torso is made to fit firmly and comfortably, and does not overly restrict the movement of the wearer. Unless noted below, there is no CP penalty for Torso protection. However, armor on the arms and hands can weigh a man down, and affect his ability to swing or thrust his weapon properly. Short-sleeved armor incurs no penalty, but long-sleeved armor incurs the following CP penalties. Note - these penalties assume both sleeves are the same armor type.

Plate armor must be specifically fitted to the wearer, and generally may not be worn by anyone other than the person it was fitted to. It is possible to cobble plate armor to fit, but until it has been taken to a competent smith for proper refitting, a penalty of at least -1.5 CP and -1 Movement applies (Seneschal’s discretion).

Mail and Leather shirts and the like are not generally fitted to a specific individual, but must be of the correct general size. If they are too small or too large, they carry a -1 CP and -1 Move penalty per piece (if too small, they may not be able to be worn at all, of course).

No CP Penalty	Cloth or Leather Sleeves
-0.5 CP	Leather Sleeves with 2 or more Plate Accessories
-0.5 Move	Mail or Scaled Armor Sleeves
-1 CP	Mail or Scaled Armor Sleeves with 2 or more Plate Accessories
-1 Move	Plate Sleeves



Aketon (Action; Gambeson)

An Aketon is a padded “shirt” (AV1) that covers the entire torso and the arms down to (but not including) the hands. Many also have a high stiff collar to provide protection for the neck from slashing or thrusting attacks.



Birnie (Mail Shirt; Habergeon)

A Birnie is a mail shirt (AV3-5) with either short sleeves or long sleeves. It protects the torso and shoulders (but not the neck) of the wearer, down to the waist. A short-sleeved Birnie also protects the upper arm and shoulder, while the long sleeved version protects the entire arm down to the wrist. The shirt may be fashioned of Banded Mail for extra protection. In this case, the protection is AV5 to the torso and arms, except to the elbows which require too much flexibility to be Banded and which are therefore AV4.





Cuirass

A Cuirass is plate armor (AV4-6) that covers the front and back of the torso (literally a Breastplate attached to a Backplate). The neck, shoulders and arms are uncovered, but the rest of the torso down to the waist is protected. It is possible to wear just the Breastplate attached to a leather backing (AV2-3 against attacks from the rear). In some cultures, a Cuirass may be fashioned from Cuir Bouilli (Hardened Leather) with AV3. Although a cuirass affords no protection to the arms, a leather jack or mail shirt may be worn underneath for arm protection (this does not increase the AV to the torso).



Doublet (Jack, Vest)

A Doublet is a leather shirt (AV2-4) that protects the entire torso down to the waist (not including the neck). Some have short sleeves that also protect the shoulder and upper arm, while others have long sleeves that protect the entire arm down to the wrist. Some Doublets may be Hardened Leather (AV3) or Scaled Armor (AV4) on the torso, but the shoulders and arms are still only AV2, as they must be fashioned of more flexible (lighter) leather.





Hauberk

A Hauberk is a mail shirt (AV3-5) with long sleeves that covers the entire torso (except the neck), the arms down to the wrists, and the pelvis and upper thighs (stopping at the knees, which are not protected). Swinging attacks at Zone VI (upward swing) only receive half protection (some other form of pelvis/thigh armor is recommended). The torso (but not the arms) may be fashioned of Banded Mail for extra protection. In this case, the arms are AV4 while the rest is AV5. Hauberks fashioned of Doubled Mail provide AV5 to the body and arms, but are extremely heavy and carry an extra -0.5CP penalty.

Hauberks tend to hang awkwardly from the shoulders and carry an extra -0.5 Movement penalty on top of any other penalties.

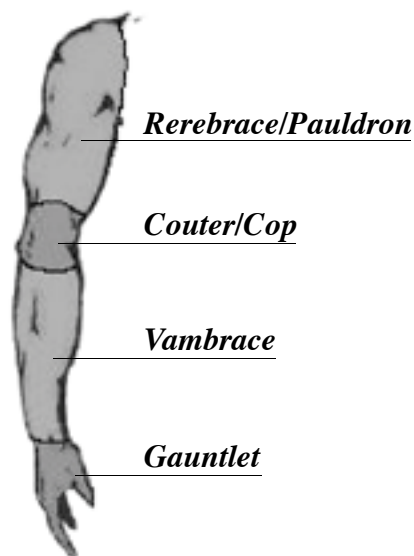


Arm Accessories: Rerebrace (Pauldron) / Couter (Cop) / Vambrace / Gauntlet

When wearing torso armor, it is also important to remember to protect the arms. Requiring at least a Leather Jack or Mail Shirt, plates of metal are attached to that armor for extra arm protection. A Rerebrace (also known as a Pauldron) protects the upper arm and shoulder, a Couter (also known as a cop) protects the elbow, a Vambrace protects the lower arm, and Gauntlets protect the hand and wrist. These protective items are generally fashioned from plate (AV4-6), and any areas uncovered are assumed to have the base AV of the armored sleeve underneath.

It is, of course, possible to purchase gloves as a form of lesser hand protection. These may come in leather (AV2), Leather with bands of metal across the back for protection (AV4, CP -0.5), or Light Mail (AV3).

Arming Gloves are mail gauntlets with “knuckleduster” plate additions. They provide AV3 protection to the hand, may punch for STb damage with range “hand”, and may be used to parry some attacks. See the Shields section below for more on Arming gloves.





Lower Body Protection

Leg armor tends to be heavy, and often restricts the wearer's movement. This results in both Movement and CP penalties for wearing heavier or bulkier forms of leg armor, as outlined in the table below:

Mail and Leather leggings and the like are not generally fitted to a specific individual, but must be of the correct general size. If they are too small or too large, they carry a -1 CP and -1 Move penalty per piece (if too small, they may not be able to be worn at all, of course).

No Penalty	Cloth or Leather Leggings
-0.5 CP & -0.5 Move	Leather Leggings with 2 or more Plate Accessories Mail or Scaled Armor Leggings
-1 CP & -1 Move	Mail or Scaled Armor Leggings with 2 or more Plate Accessories Plate Leggings

Chausses

Chausses are a set of mail "trousers" which protect everything from the waist down, including the Pelvis and the Feet. They may be fashioned from any form of Mail (AV3-5) but carry an extra -0.5 CP and Move penalty if made from Doubled Mail, as they are so heavy. If fashioned from Banded Mail, they provide AV5 to the pelvis, thighs and shins, but only AV4 to the foot and knee as those areas require too much flexibility to be Banded.





Leather Leggings

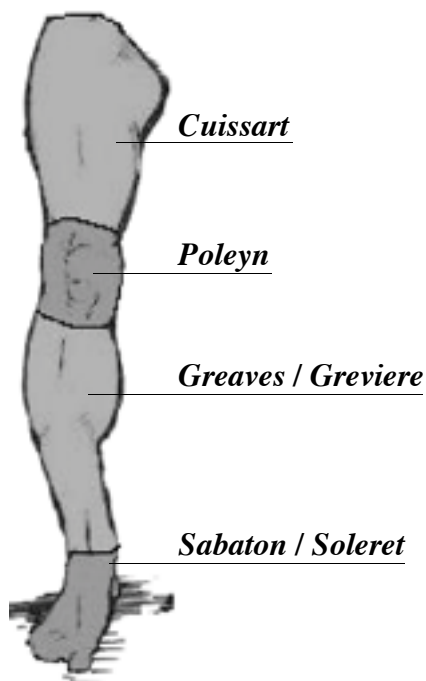
A set of Leather Leggings ranges from AV2-3, and protects the body from the waist down, including the pelvis. They will usually stop at the ankle, allowing for other footwear, but it is possible to buy Leggings that cover the foot as well. It is possible to fashion the leggings with Scaled Armor; the plate scales will give AV4 to the upper and lower leg, but do not protect the knee or foot (for flexibility) which remain at AV2.



Leg Accessories: Tassets / Cod Piece / Cuissart / Poleyn / Greaves / Sabaton (Soleret)

When wearing leather or mail leggings, it is often desirable to improve the protection to the legs by attaching additional plate “accessories”. Tassets are plate strips that attach to a Cuirass or Breastplate and hang down like a metal kilt, protecting the Pelvis, Crotch and Upper Thighs. A Cod Piece is a metal cup to protect the groin, a Cuissart is a plate covering for the Thigh, a Poleyn protects the knee, Greaves protect the shins, and a Sabaton (also known as a Soleret) is basically a metal shoe to protect the foot. These protective items are fashioned from plate (AV4-6), and any areas uncovered are assumed to have the base AV of the armored legging underneath.

As well as Sabaton, it is possible to buy a good pair of leather shoes or boots. These protect the foot (shoes) or foot and shin (boots) with AV2 in the case of regular leather, or AV3 for Cuir Bouilli.





Full Body Suits

Requiring careful manufacture and fitting, full suits of armor protect most of the body, while remaining light and flexible enough to allow almost full range of movement.

Mail Suit

Mail Suits are fashioned from any form of Mail. They cover the entire body from the torso down (not including the neck), the arms down to the wrist, and the legs and feet. The suit may be fashioned from Light or Regular Mail (AV3 or 4), or from Doubled or Banded Mail (AV5). Doubled Mail is much heavier than regular mail, and carries an extra -0.5 CP and Move penalty on top of those listed below. Banded Mail suits do not suffer this penalty, but the protection drops to AV4 at the Elbow, Knee and Foot as those regions require flexibility and cannot be Banded.

To calculate the CP and Move penalties for wearing a Mail Suit, calculate as if the character was wearing a mail shirt and mail leggings. Thus the default penalty would be -0.5CP and -0.5 Move for the upper body, and -0.5CP and -0.5 Move for the lower body, for a total of -1CP and -1 Move (rounded up).

If any Plate Accessories are attached for added protection, apply the same guidelines - 2 or more accessories on the upper body or on the lower body will increase the CP and/or Move penalties according to the information in those sections, above.





Plate Mail Suit

A full suit of Plate is the ultimate in combat protection. A Breastplate and Backplate are joined by fully articulated arm, pelvis and leg plate units. The joints at Knee, Elbow and Neck are supplemented with additional attachments (a Couter at the Elbow, Poleyn at the Knee, and Gorget at the Neck) and a Cod Piece protects the groin to ensure all-around protection of everything except the head, simply requiring the addition of a Helmet. Plate Suits may be fashioned from any form of Plate (AV4-6), the only limit being on the wealth of the purchaser. Full Plate suits must be professionally fitted and may not be used by anyone other than the fitted wearer.

Light (AV4) Plate: -1.5 CP and -1 Move.

Regular (AV5) Plate: -2 CP and -1 Move.

Heavy (AV6) Plate: -2 CP and -1.5 Move.

Note that Heavy Plate is uncommon outside the jousting grounds, as it is extremely heavy and encumbering.



Shields

The section on shields below introduces shield rules that work a little differently to how shields were first presented in the main *Riddle of Steel* rulebook. The blocking DTN of the shield is determined by its size, while the material the shield is fashioned from determines the AV. Both the size of the shield and the material the shield is fashioned from may affect the CP and Move penalties of the wearer; simply add the penalties together and add the result to whatever armor penalties have already been calculated.

Note that each shield type listed has a Melee blocking TN and a Missile blocking TN. The Melee TN should be used for all melee combat attacks as well as slow moving missiles (thrown spears and Javelins and the like). The Missile TN is used against fast moving missiles, such as arrows and sling stones – very fast moving objects are that much harder to block! See the section on blocking missile attacks on p. 10 for more information.



Hand (e.g. Buckler)

Hand shields are designed to be held in the off-hand rather than being strapped to the arm. The advantage is their small weight and maneuverability. However, they do not provide much in the way of passive protection - when struck in combat, a Hand shield provides its AV protection to the hand and lower arm of the wearer only.

Melee Block TN: 7
Missile Block TN: 9
CP Penalty: None
Move Penalty: None



Small (e.g. Round, Target)

Small Shields are strapped to the forearm. They have the advantage of being very light and maneuverable, and do not encumber the wearer. The shields AV applies automatically to the entire shield arm except the shoulder, and the shield-side chest, abdomen and ribcage of the wearer.

Melee Block TN: 6
Missile Block TN: 8
CP Penalty: None
Move Penalty: None





Medium (e.g. Heater)

Shields such as the Heater are extremely popular in battle. Although they do not offer as much passive protection as a larger shield, they are still excellent for blocking attacks and are not quite as encumbering. The shield extends its passive AV to the entire shield arm of the wearer, plus his shield side chest, abdomen, ribcage, pelvis and thigh.

Melee Block TN: 5
Missile Block TN: 7
CP Penalty: 0.5
Move Penalty: 0.5



Large (e.g. Kite, Tear)

Large shields extend almost down one entire side of the wearers body. They provide passive AV protection to everything a Medium Shield does, plus the shield side knee and shin. They are cumbersome, however, and difficult to hold for long periods in combat.

Melee Block TN: 5
Missile Block TN: 6
CP Penalty: 0.5
Move Penalty: 1






Shield Materials

Material	Notes
Wood	Wooden shields are relatively inexpensive to make, and with careful blocking may last a long time before becoming too damaged for continual use. AV4 CP Penalty: None Move Penalty: None
Banded	Some Wooden shields are fashioned with metal banding to help maintain the integrity and shape of the wood, and help it last longer against repeated damage. AV6 CP Penalty: None Move Penalty: 0.5
Metal	Few shields are fashioned from metal, as it is not only very heavy and cumbersome but also very expensive. Nevertheless, a metal shield provides the ultimate in protection. AV8 CP Penalty: 0.5 Move Penalty: 0.5

Getting weapons caught in shields

 On occasion, weapons can become unavoidably caught in shields. Sometimes this is by design, such as with thrown weapons like the Francisca, and other times it's just an unfortunate circumstance (or fortunate, depending on which side of the shield you're standing on).

Whenever a penetrating (i.e. non-blunt) weapon strikes a shield, there is a chance that the weapon will become lodged. This is, of course, an optional rule in the usual course of combat, but should always be adopted when the attacker is using a weapon designed to be caught.

If the attacker is trying to get the weapon lodged in the shield, then compare the attacker's Margin of Success (attack successes minus defense successes, not final damage) against the AV of the shield (the stronger the shield, the harder it is to get a weapon stuck). If the attacker's MOS is equal to or higher than this number, then the weapon has become lodged. Weapons that are designed to become stuck in shields treat the AV as one point lower. Of course, this can only occur when the shield has actually been struck by the weapon, which generally requires either the defender to have used it in a block, or the shields passive AV to have come into play.

If the attacker is not trying to lodge his weapon in the shield, use the shield AV or the attacker's Strength score (as he tries to wrench the weapon free), whichever is higher.

The difference between the MOS and the AV/Attackers Strength determines exactly how "stuck" the weapon has become. Any person may attempt to pull the weapon free by rolling their Strength against the shields AV value (the stronger the shield, the harder it is to pull a stuck weapon free) and must achieve as many successes as that difference between the AV and the original MOS. These successes can be accumulated over successive rounds. If a defender is attempting to do this while actually wearing the shield, the TN is 9.



Metal Shields

On Earth, shields were simply not constructed from solid metal. Contrary to popular belief, Knights did not carry around 10-20 pound weapons and shields, as this would tire them far too quickly. Light weapons and shields were the order of the day, and solid metal shields were too heavy to be considered. We have presented metal shields here because we know we would hear about it from our fans if we didn't, but if you're interested in historical accuracy, we suggest that you refrain from allowing them.

Arming Gloves, Armored Sleeves and Hilts

Rather than carrying a shield, many characters like to wear arming gloves or specially armored sleeves on their offhand/arm for protection. These may be used as follows:

Arming Gloves are chain gloves that protect the hand with AV3 and have built in knuckledusters. They may therefore be used to attack (range "hand"); doing STb damage (this already takes into account the knuckleduster bonus). They may also be used to parry thrusting attacks or slashing attacks made with 4 or fewer dice with a Parry TN of 7. A failed parry means the attack has got past as usual, while a botched defense means that the arming glove has been compromised – calculate normal damage to the original target, and assign additional damage equal to half that amount directly to the parrying hand.

Additionally, any character wearing heavily armored sleeves (anything AV4 or greater) may attempt to use his forearm to parry attacks, but this is not without its risks. Use a TN of 6 against swinging attacks, or 7 against thrusts. Like an arming glove, a botched defense means that the forearm takes half of the total damage sustained by the original target, but this additional damage also applies even to successful parries against

cutting or swung bashing attacks made with 5 or more dice. All thrusts and any swings made with 4 or fewer dice do not suffer this additional damage penalty.

Finally, many weapons provide additional protection to the wielding hand (or both hands, for two-handed weapons) due to the design of their hilt. See the weapons section (p. 119) for further information. Note, unlike most other forms of armor, Hilt protection and hand protection (in the form of armored gloves) do stack their AVs together – even if a blow gets past the hilt it may then be stopped by the glove!

Shield Positioning and Favoring

Sometimes a need arises to favor the defense of one area over another, due to an unarmored zone, an already-wounded limb, or the inherent weaknesses of a given stance. Favoring can be done in many ways – by moving ones shield to the desired area of protection, holding ones blade ready to parry an expected attack, or by ones stance which may make it harder for an opponent to target specific body area. Favoring is declared before the aggressor declares his attack location and CP allotment by placing any number of CP dice from one's own pool over a hit location zone on the hit location table (TROS table 4.2, p.76; also on the character sheet). Generally one thrusting and one swinging zone are protected simultaneously, as common sense and Seneschal fiat dictate (thus zones V and XIII would be protected with a single Favoring die allocation, as could zones II and VIII, although only on the same side of the body). The attacker need not know where these favoring dice have been placed, and the defender should feel free to shield his choice from prying eyes by using a screen, book, etc. (Note: this makes cheating easy, so Seneschals should feel free to either disallow, monitor, or otherwise regulate this maneuver in play. On the other hand, if your group can't be honest with each other about this sort of thing, you might want to pick up another kind of game...)



Optional Rule: Shield/Armor Damage

This optional rule adds a lot of bookkeeping to combat in *The Riddle of Steel*, but adds an extra level of realism. And besides, you (our fans) asked for it!

Almost any kind of material you can name has a breaking point. Some break (or get damaged) easier than others. In order to accommodate this, it becomes necessary to track how much damage or stress individual pieces of armor have taken over their lifetime, as per the following chart. For armor, track the damage to each region (use the “on-body” zones 8-14 for simplicity). When a zone/location reaches its damage threshold, the armor has been compromised and will no longer provide protection to that specific individual location. The Seneschal will have to decide if a piece of armor is still usable with this damage. For shields, simply track damage the shield has taken and when the threshold has been reached, the entire shield is useless. Note: these damage counters apply whenever a blow strikes the region or shield in question. If the attack is not completely stopped and some damage gets through, add +1 to all of the following numbers.

Leather or cloth: +2 per slashing attack, +1 per puncturing attack, +0 from bludgeoning attacks. When a total of 10 is reached that section of the armor is useless.

Hardened Leather: +1 per slashing or puncturing attack, +2 per bludgeoning attack. The threshold is 12.

Scale Armor: +1 per slashing, puncturing or bludgeoning attack. The threshold is 20

Mail: +1 per slashing or puncturing attack, +0 from bludgeoning attacks. The threshold is 25.

Doubled Mail: As above, but the threshold is 30.

Banded Mail: +1 per slashing, puncturing or bludgeoning attack. The threshold is 30

Plate: +1 per puncturing or bludgeoning attack, +0 from slashing attacks. The threshold is 30, 35 or 40 (light plate, plate or heavy plate).

Wooden shields: +2 per slashing attack, +1 per bludgeoning attack, +0 from puncturing attacks. The threshold is 15

Banded Shields: As above, but the threshold is 20.

Metal Shields: +1 per bludgeoning attack only. The threshold is 40.

If Favoring is being done through putting the body into an odd stance or ready to evade, then any number of areas may be protected by allotting CP dice. However, the benefits of these dice only occur if the defense actually is an evasion (and the attacker targets a protected area). Alternately, favoring dice may be assigned for parrying weapons or shields, in which case the benefit is only gained if parrying or blocking, as appropriate. Only one double zone may be selected for protection by a parrying weapon or shield (You can't guard your head and your foot

at the same time with the same shield), however when positioning a shield, several extra zones may be protected for free by the size of the shield as outlined on p. 28.

The attacker then declares his chosen target and the CP dice used for the attack and the defender responds in kind by declaring a defensive maneuver and assigns dice from his CP. Here the attacker may declare a Feint, as usual (TROS p.61). After a Feint is declared (if at all) the Favoring kicks in: if the final attack



Shield Size	Areas protected
Hand (or parrying weapon)	Only the specific zones (one thrusting and one adjacent swinging) selected are protected
Small	As above, but one additional (adjacent) swing <u>or</u> thrust zone is also protected
Medium	As above, but an additional adjacent thrust and swing zone pair is also protected
Large	As above, but any two additional adjacent thrust and swing zone pairs are also protected.

targeted a “favored” zone, then the defender gets twice the dice he allocated to favoring that zone as bonus dice for defending that target this exchange; if the final attack targeted a zone that wasn’t protected by Favoring, then no bonus dice are gained and dice spent on Favoring are discarded.

Note that shield positioning may alter which areas receive passive shield AV protection. The Seneschal must adjudicate if the new position of the shield would provide passive protection based on the location of the attack.


Example of Favoring in Play

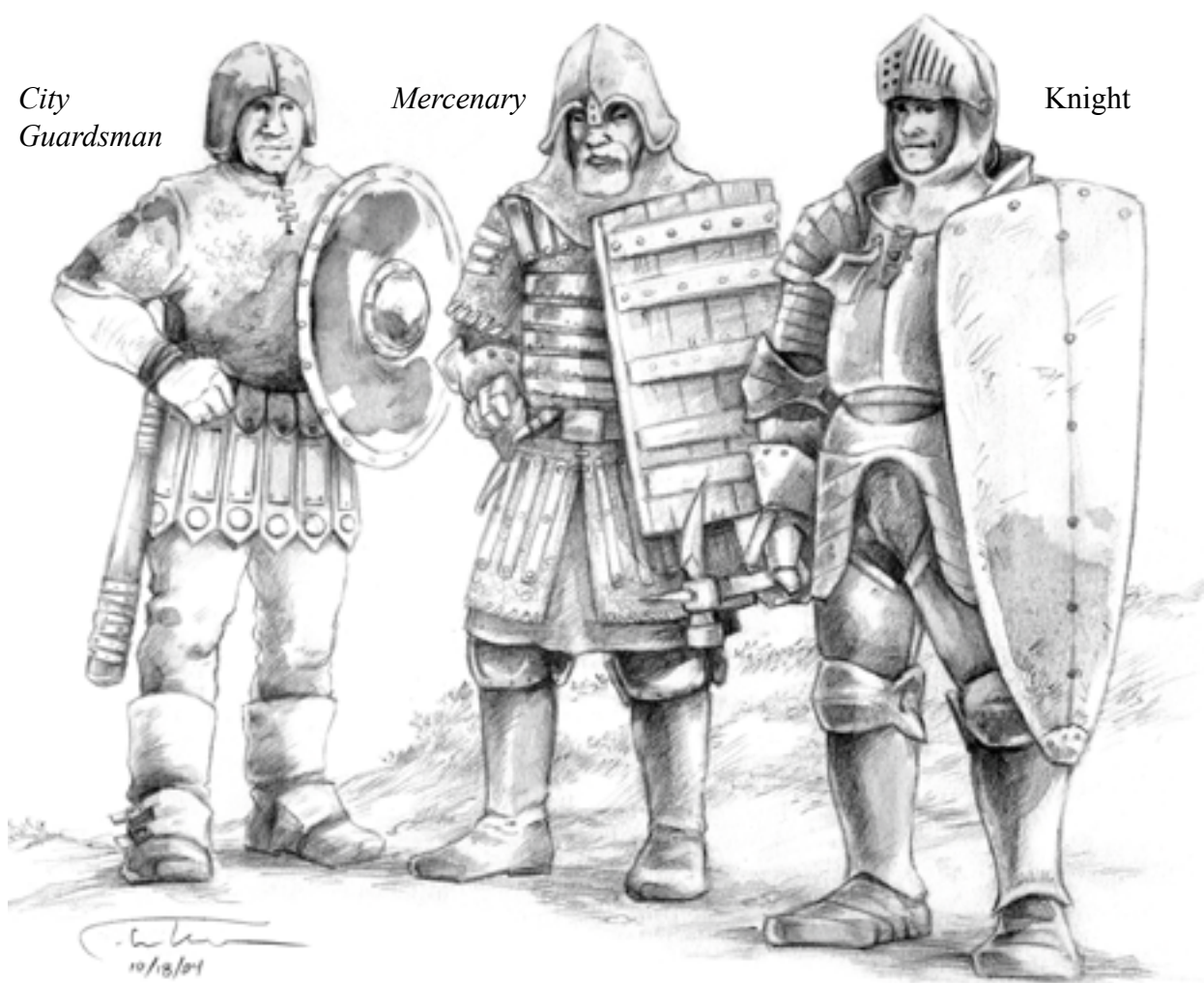
Bohdan Stefanovitch, a commanding officer in the army of the Rzeczpospolita, is spending a few moments before a battle with the Zaporozhyans to finalize his plans. He is fully armored in shining plate (AV 6), except for his bald head which he has left bare. The sounds of a scuffle outside his tent end with two of his own men entering unbidden—fully armored and bearing bloodstained weapons. As they fan out to surround the old officer, Bohdan realizes he’s been betrayed. In such a tight space he won’t be able to run about and avoid entrapment (thus he cannot make a terrain roll to face only one opponent), so he takes a defensive stance, shouts for help, and throws a white die (actually the player throws the white die, but you knew that). Both assailants throw red, but before they announce their attack Bohdan’s player places 3 CP on zone V/XIII (downward slash and head thrust) and 2 CP on zone IV/XII on his non-weapon side (downward diagonal slash and upper chest thrust). The Seneschal knows

he’s Favoring, but the attackers don’t. By doing this Bohdan is relying on his armor to protect his body should his gamble that they’ll come for the head be wrong.

The first attacker (total CP: 13) goes for Bohdan’s feet (zone I) with 10 dice. The second (total CP: 13) thrusts ferociously at Bohdan’s head (zone XIII) with a whopping 13 CP! Bohdan (total CP: 15) responds by using a 3-die partial evasion on the first attack (this has a 2CP activation cost because his CP penalty from his plate armor is 2) and a 5-die parry against the second. The Seneschal informs Bohdan’s player that no one is feinting, after which the player reveals that Bohdan was favoring the head with 3 dice. Both attackers roll their attacks (10 and 13 dice respectively) and Bohdan rolls his defenses (3 and 11 (5 plus double his investment of 3) dice, respectively). He hopes that his armor holds, his rolls are high, and that help comes soon.

Plate Armor and a Shield?

 On Earth, shields were “out” by the time Full Plate armor was “in”. Thus (with the exception of jousting shields), you would usually only see a knight wearing Mail Armor with a shield, or Plate Armor without. Jousting armor was far heavier than regular armor, and certainly not intended for melee or normal battle conditions. In TROS, Heavy Plate could well be considered jousting armor, with regular Plate or lower the maximum worn by foot knights.



Some Armor Examples

City Guardsman

Most city guardsmen are not expected to get into any serious trouble, their main duties being to look menacing and to haul off (poorly armed and armored) troublemakers. This guardsman has a short-sleeved mail Birnie, leather leggings, a pot helm and a small (round) wooden shield. For that Roman look, he also has a set of Tassets. He has plate protection to his head (but not face), mail on his torso excluding his arms, plate to his pelvis and thighs, and leather to the rest of his legs.

Total CP penalty: None; Move Penalty: None.

Mercenary

Mercenaries often pick up what little armor they can find and cobble it to fit. Payment is often low, or in the form of the spoils of war (what they can loot, basically) and as such, no two mercenaries usually look alike, even in the same company. This chap has managed to salvage a banded hauberk, a pot helm with an aventail, gauntlets and vambraces, leather leggings with poleyn (knee guards) and a banded wooden heater shield. His only really vulnerable part is his face, with plate protection to his head, mail for his neck, arms, and most of his body down to his knees, then plate for his knees and leather for his shins and feet. His lower arms and hands are well protected by plate also.

Total CP Penalty: 2; Total Move penalty: 2.



Knight

This fully armored knight is ready for battle or the joust. He is wearing a full suit of heavy plate armor, a full helm, and carries a metal kite shield for additional protection. There is no part of his body that is not well protected behind AV6 plate armor (to say nothing of his monstrous shield!). Although the movement penalty may seem excessive, that's because full heavy armor and a heavy shield are generally

only used in jousting (when the knights Move score is irrelevant). If forced to battle on foot, the movement penalty below is a hefty chunk of the average Move score, meaning that an average Knight would not be able to move much. Knights, therefore, need to be far greater than average.

Total CP Penalty: 4 (3 without the shield);

Total Move Penalty: 4 (2 without the shield).

Armor Price List

For all Leather prices below, double the cost for Cuir Bouilli (Hardened Leather) or triple for Scaled Armor.

For all Mail Prices, cost is 2/3 for Light Mail, double for Doubled Mail, or triple for Banded Mail.

All costs for plate are times 2/3 for Light Plate or doubled for Heavy Plate.

For Shields, the price listed is for Banded shields; halve the price for wooden shields or multiply by 2.5 for Metal shields.





Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
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Body Armor			
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Aketon	6 copper	3 copper	2 copper
Arming Glove (each)	15 silver	7 silver, 6 copper	4 silver, 6 copper
Banded leather gloves (pair)	12 silver	6 silver	4 silver
Breastplate with leather back	8 gold	4 gold	2 gold, 13 silver
Chausses (with Foot)	5 gold	2 gold, 10 silver	1 gold, 13 silver
Chausses (without Foot)	4 gold	2 gold	1 gold, 6 silver
Cuirass	14 gold	7 gold	4 gold, 13 silver
Cussart, Greaves, Sabaton (pair)	1 gold, 10 silver	15 silver	10 silver
Doublet/Jack (long sleeves)	1 silver, 8 copper	10 copper	6 copper, 2 bits
Doublet/Jack (short sleeves)	1 silver	6 copper	4 copper
Gauntlets, Couter (pair)	1 gold, 5 silver	12 silver	8 silver
Hauberk	6 gold	3 gold	2 gold
Leather boots (pair)	14 silver	7 silver	4 silver, 2 copper
Leather gloves (pair)	2 silver	1 silver	8 copper
Leather Leggings	1 silver	6 copper	4 copper
Leather shoes (pair)	6 silver	3 silver	2 silver
Light Mail Gloves (pair)	8 silver	4 silver	2 silver, 6 copper
Mail (full suit)	10 gold	5 gold	3 gold, 7 silver
Mail shirt/Birnie (long sleeves)	5 gold	2 gold, 10 silver	1 gold, 13 silver
Mail shirt/Birnie (short sleeves)	2 gold, 16 silver	1g, 8 silver	18 silver
Plate (full suit, w/o helm)	30 gold	15 gold	10 gold
Poleyn (pair)	1 gold, 5 silver	12 silver	8 silver
Rerebrace, Vambrace (pair)	1 gold, 10 silver	15 silver	10 silver
Tassets	2 gold	1 gold	13 silver

Headgear			
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Aventail	3 silver	1 silver, 6 copper	1 silver
Full helm	1 gold, 10 silver	15 silver	10 silver
Gorget	10 silver	5 silver	3 silver
Kettle	3 silver	1 silver, 6 copper	1 silver
Leather coif	2 silver	1 silver	8 copper
Mail coif	7 silver	3 silver, 6 copper	2 silver, 2 copper
Mail coif with Ventail	8 silver, 6 copper	4 silver	2 silver, 6 copper
Pot helm	10 silver	5 silver	3 silver

Shields			
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Hand "Buckler" shield	10 copper	5 copper	3 copper
Small "round" shield	20 copper	10 copper	6 copper, 2 bits
Medium "heater" shield	3 silver	1 silver, 6 copper	1 silver
Large "kite" shield	5 silver, 4 copper	2 silver, 8 copper	1 silver, 10 copper



Drawing weapons during combat

If a character wishes to draw a new weapon during combat (whether because his old one has been dropped or broken, or because he was caught without a weapon handy), this is treated as a terrain roll. Note that there is also a faster Quick Draw maneuver for those who have been trained in such matters – see p. 66.

The terrain roll difficulty to draw a new weapon during combat depends on how readily accessible the weapon is, based on the following table. Note that it is not possible to get a weapon out of a backpack during combat unless one has friends who can hold off opponents for a while.

Sample Weapon Location	TN
Small weapon (e.g. dagger) in belt or sheath	6
Larger weapon (e.g. sword) in belt or sheath	7
Small weapon in boot	7
“Medium” or shorter weapon in back sheath	8
Weapon length “Long” or longer in back sheath	9
Weapon strapped to back	Impossible during combat

As with all terrain rolls, dice must be taken from the character’s current CP. If the character has no weapon in hand, use his Wrestling or other unarmed CP, or raw Reflex if he does not have any applicable Proficiency. Drawing the weapon takes a single exchange (during which the character can usually do little except parry or evade), and succeeds as long as one or more successes are rolled on the terrain roll.

After the weapon has been drawn, the character usually faces a moment or two of “readjustment time” to fall into using a possibly different combat style. The current CP (or what is left of

it) is retained until the end of the current round, and the new weapon and Proficiency are taken into account when the CP is refreshed at the start of the next round.

Dropping (and retrieving) items during combat

Many of the damage table results to the arms or hands call for the character to make a roll to avoid dropping whatever is held in that hand. This section clarifies what roll should be made in that circumstance.

Whenever a character takes a wound to the hand, there is a chance that the character will drop whatever is being held in that hand. Use the character’s Knockdown derived attribute $(ST+AG)/2$ as the die pool for this roll. The TN is 8, just as in a Knockdown roll, and the penalty or bonus listed in the damage tables modifies the die pool rather than the TN.

If the character rolls one or more successes the item has not been dropped, but a failure indicates that it has, while a botch indicates it has flown out of the characters hand and may have landed some distance away. Note that it is not possible to drop shields (except bucklers) as they are not held but actually strapped to the arm.

In order to pick up a weapon or other dropped item in combat, the character must make a terrain roll against the Duck & Weave TN of 9. This may be made while evading, blocking or parrying, but not while attacking ones opponent. One or more successes indicate that the character has retrieved the item. At the Seneschal’s discretion, this TN may be higher if the item has fallen a distance away because of a botched Knockdown roll (we suggest TN13 – or in other words, time to draw your dagger) or may be lower if the opponent is not attacking the character.



Fatigue

The following rules for fatigue supersede those found in *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook (TROS, p. 82), and take into account the altered rules for armor found in this book (p. 10). If you are using the old armor system, stick with the old fatigue rules.

Fatigue is an optional rule that simulates the wear and exhaustion that comes from constant physical exertion. While engaged in combat or any other physically demanding exercise, characters lose 1 CP per 2xEN rounds. Thus Sir Vhord, who has an Endurance of 4, loses 1 CP every 8 rounds. However, this number of rounds is reduced by the total CP penalty of the armor and/or shield worn by the character (see the Armor section on p. 10). Sir Vhord, while wearing his full plate suit and full helm (which carry a total CP penalty between them of 3) therefore loses 1 CP every 5 rounds rather than every 8. These points may be recovered by taking a number of rounds equal to your current fatigue penalty to rest and rolling EN/TN6. Each success reduces fatigue by 1 point (and thus restores 1 lost CP).

For further information on Fatigue, see **Book Five: The Laws of Nature** in *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook.

Fatigue and Encumbrance

Encumbrance from armor does not count towards fatigue, as this has already been factored into the armor CP penalty. However, encumbrance from other sources (a great deal of equipment and/or physical size) may. Check the encumbrance penalties (TROS p. 94, table 5.2) and add any CP penalty there to the armor CP penalty to determine the total rate at which characters will lose additional CP dice due to fatigue.

Grappling and Wrestling

In *The Riddle of Steel*, the terms Grappling or Wrestling refer to the martial application of the unarmed body. While in proper medieval/renaissance fashion the origin of the maneuvers and rules in this section originate in the German *Ring*, Italian *abrazzarre*, and English *gryppes*, they could just as easily be modified in color only for use in Asian-themed TROS games, as the arts of Jiu-jitsu, Aikido, or Sambo feature the same principles and often the same results. These arts all downplay the roll of striking with the fists or with high kicks in favor of quick leverage-based throws, locks, and limb-breaks.

Thus, all Grappling techniques in *The Riddle of Steel* aim at one of these three goals: to throw an opponent, to incapacitate an opponent (either entirely or one piece at a time), or to break an opponent's bones. A fourth goal surfaces in a purely defensive capacity: to break free of the clinch or hold before it's too late.

Integrating with the rulebook

If these new grappling rules are used, then the activation cost of the grappling maneuver in the main rulebook must be altered slightly. The rules provide 2 activation costs for offensive grappling, the first for set-up grapples and the second for straight grapples. When using the new Grappling/Wrestling rules presented here, always use the first listed cost (which is 2 in most cases). The cost for defensive grappling does not change.

Phase One: Getting into the clinch

The attacker (who has initiative) declares a Grapple maneuver and allocates dice to the attack. If his opponent also wishes to grapple, then you may come into the clinch automatically. He still allocates dice for defense (also declaring



the grapple maneuver), and the contest is rolled. The winner keeps the Margin of Success as bonus dice for the next exchange.

If his opponent does not wish to grapple, he may choose to defend with an evasion. If successful, the combat continues normally. If the attack wins, however, he can carry his Margin of Success over into the next exchange.

He may also use a parry against the incoming hands (randomly decide right or left, unless the circumstances make it obvious). As with standard parries the DTN is used, but if the parry is successful damage is dealt to the parried limb as if the defense were an attack *and* the defender gains initiative along with the range advantage (if any). If the attacker wins, he carries his Margin of Success dice into the next exchange as bonus dice.

Alternately, his opponent can choose to forfeit his defense in favor of an attack (as if both parties had thrown red at the beginning of the fight, see TROS p. 74). This attack follows the initiative rules for red-red conflict (again, p. 74) and may be directed at any feasible target, unlike the parry above, which can only be delivered to the arms. If the grappler has any dice left in his attack, he may enter the clinch without contest, and all of his rolled successes—the Margin of Success—predictably become bonus dice for the next exchange. If your opponent does nothing (because of surprise or some other form of unawareness), the attacker rolls normally, carrying over every success into the next exchange.

It's also possible to initiate a clinch as a defensive maneuver when attacked in melee combat. Defensive grappling involves stepping in and attempting to grab an attacking opponent before his attack can land. Clearly, this is a dangerous move, as failure usually means you have left yourself wide open to whatever attack was coming in the first place. After the opponent has declared his attack, the defender declares that he is attempting to grapple as a

Dirty Tricks

Sometimes when trapped or clinched, a finger in the eye or a snapped pinky is the best way to reverse the situation. Such dirty tricks are declared as “strike” attacks to the fingers (use the Hand row in Bludgeoning Zone VII), groin (From Bludgeoning Zone X), or eyes (the Face row from Bludgeoning Zone XIII).

defensive maneuver. He drops his weapon (if it's anything larger than a dagger), pays the activation cost (remember range penalties as well—grappling happens at hand range) and rolls. If the attacker wins, the defender is dealt damage as normal (his defense successes count to reduce attacking successes, as usual). If the defender wins, he has avoided the attack and entered a clinch. He wins initiative, and his Margin of Success carries over into bonus dice for the next exchange. Regardless of how it was achieved, the clinch leads to the next phase...

Phase Two: Throwing, Trapping, Breaking, and Striking

From the clinch the attacker—who has initiative either from attacking previously or from successfully defending with the clinch as in the first and last options above—chooses to execute a Throwing, Trapping, Breaking, or Striking Maneuver.

Throwing Maneuvers

The current attacker states his desire to throw his opponent and allocates dice to the “attack.” Just as with the Bash maneuver on TROS p. 59, one CP can be spent off the top to add an extra point of damage should the throw be successful. The defender can use the Grappling maneuver to attempt a break-free or a reverse. The TN to throw is TN7

If the attacker is successful, damage from a throw is calculated as a fall from 6' (see TROS P.96) plus the attacker's Margin of Success. The total

damage is applied as falling damage (see the same page reference), and the defender is now prone, with all of the usual penalties (see Knockdown, p. 40). The attacker, however, may end up going down with the defender. If the attacker chooses to go to ground with the throw, he may add his weight to the fall, adding one extra point of damage to the defender. As both parties are now on the ground, switch to ground fighting (below). If the attacker wishes to remain standing, he must make a terrain roll against TN7 or fall with the defender (involuntary falls such as this do not gain the extra point of damage).

Trapping Maneuvers

Trapping, here, refers to any attempt to prevent movement on the part of an adversary. At the smallest level, it refers to an extremity; at the highest level, it represents the near-complete pinning of an opponent's body.

The attacker chooses one or more of the following targets to trap, and places them in order by priority:

One Arm
Torso/Hips
Head
One leg

Each target has a cost in success, taken from the Margin of Success. One success gives one target, two for the next, three for the next, and four for the next. These costs compound: trapping one arm requires one success, trapping both arms requires three, trapping the arms to the body requires six, and holding down the entire body in one attack would require 10 successes. Any successes gained over the required minimum for the pre-chosen targets act as bonus dice for the next exchange, during which additional targets can be acquired and trapped (at the compounding rates above; if you have one arm trapped and wish to lock in another in the next exchange, that second arm requires two successes, not one). The Trap TN is 6

The defender uses the Grappling Maneuver to attempt a break-free or a reverse. Roll the contest

as usual. If the attacker wins, figure out how many targets were trapped, and how many bonus successes can be applied to the next exchange.

The effects of trapped body parts:

Arms: No actions, attacks, or defenses that involve the trapped arm(s) are possible. CP reduced by half if primary hand is trapped, by $\frac{1}{4}$ if off-hand, and $\frac{3}{4}$ if both hands trapped.

Torso: No movement from place to place (as in walking, running, etc) is possible, -1/4 CP.

Head: -1/2 CP, no movement is really possible.

Legs: -1/4 CP for one leg, -1/2 CP for both.

If the defender wins, a break-free or reverse takes place.

Optional Rule: Size modifiers

The size and Strength of an opponent is a very important factor in wrestling. This is especially true in those maneuvers that are not meant to immediately damage an opponent. The rules concerning weight on TROS p. 23 are fine for competitive, friendly matches, but for real life-and-death grappling follow this rule:

Compare both parties ST + TO. Every 2 points difference costs the loser 1 CP when trying to Trap or Throw.

Because size and weight in TROS are primarily calculated from EN and other temporal attributes, this rule simplifies the processes to a comparison of ST and TO.

Breaking Maneuvers

Either from the clinch or following a trap to the arm or head, the attacker may attempt to break a limb or even the neck of an adversary. This is done by twisting or torquing the joints of the limb or, with more difficulty, the neck to cause damage to it. For TROS purposes, this damage is reckoned on the Bludgeoning tables against the shoulders, elbows, wrists, knees, ankles, or neck. The DR of a break is simply



ST, plus any successes from the “attack” as normal (remember to add in bonus dice from the previous exchange). The victim/defender may try to reverse or break free in defense. Note that the presence of armor does not help in any way! While in some ways, the rigidity of certain armors would protect the joints, in other situations that same armor prevents a limb from flexing out of a threatening break. As a simplification, therefore, armor is to be ignored for the sake of breaking techniques. The TN for breaking is 8 or 6 if the limb in question is already trapped.

Specialized: Choking and neck-breaking

If a breaking technique is targeted onto the head/neck one can choose to either choke a person into submission or attempt to break the neck.

Breaking the neck works just as all breaking techniques, above, but requires an activation cost (as with maneuvers) of 3 CP.

Choking, however, works a little differently. Once entered into by a successful choke “attack” (as with any normal breaking maneuver), the choker does generic damage equal to ST + Margin of Success (the victim’s TO is still factored in) that round and every round—not every exchange—thereafter, without re-rolling, until the total Pain Drops the victim’s CP below zero (0), when he falls unconscious for 1d10 x 5 rounds (1d10 x 2 seconds). Maintaining the choke after the victim loses consciousness for another 1d6 +1 minutes kills him.

If, after calculating in Shock and Pain, the victim is able to resist, he may do so by using the Break-Free defensive maneuver, below. Resistance is only possible once per round.

Once a choke is released, Pain is recovered at 1 CP/round until the victim is “healed.” Choking is a good way to incapacitate an opponent without permanent damage.

Breaking the neck from a choke is possible at

any point during the choke by “attacking” with a neck break as above. Neither failure nor success has any bearing on the choke itself, which continues on either way.

Striking Maneuvers

Striking involves attempting to hurt your opponent while he’s in the confines of the clinch and less able to defend himself. Only small weapons (dagger sized or smaller) may be utilized, but armored gloves, helmets (head butts) or just plain fisticuffs can be equally useful. Because of the narrow confines of the grapple and the difficulty of getting a good swing in, halve ST when calculating damage. TO applies normally, but the defenders AR value is halved because it’s easier for the attacker to find gaps and chinks in the armor from so close. Needless to say, shield bonuses do not apply at all. The Defender has the option of attempting a Break-Free or Reverse (twisting out of the way of the attack while trying to get up or reverse the hold) or of parrying the strike. Treat this as a standard parry with a TN of 6 (versus fists, head butts and the like) or 8 (versus daggers or other small weapons).

Defensive elements/ maneuvers of phase two

Any time after a clinch begins either party may chose to break free. This works much like the evasion maneuvers in TROS, p. 84. The Target Number is a product of what the defender is trying to break out of. See the table below. A successful break-free, like an evasion, causes a pause in the combat. In the event of a tie, the actions of both parties are stalled—the aggressor retains initiative but does no immediate harm to the defender.

Break-free and Reversal TNs	
Against a:	
Clinch	5
Trap	8
Break	7
Neck-break	6
Choke	7
Throw	8



Optional Rule: Stalling

Often when two parties come into a clinch, they vie for advantage for some time before choosing to commit to action. This is represented by the winning party discarding their bonus from the last exchange and “Stalling” by re-rolling the clinch roll (from Phase One). This is a risky move that gives the opponent a chance to gain the advantage, but it also may result in a greater advantage.

Example: Garret (CP 12) attempts to enter into a clinch with Henri (CP 10). Garret attacks with 7 dice and Henri defends, evading with 6 dice. The attempt to enter into the clinch is successful, with Garret winning by merely 1 success. Although Garret could apply his bonus die to a break, trap, or throw in the next exchange, he thinks that a stalling could gain him a greater advantage. The clinch contest is re-rolled, with Garret putting his remaining 5 dice against Henri’s last 4 dice. This time Henri manages to win, but likewise with only a 1-success margin. Now he’s feeling brave, and stalls into the next exchange. This time around, Henri rolls all 10 of his dice in attack, and Garret defends with only 9 (hoping to pull off something the following exchange). Henri wins the roll by 4 dice, and chooses to apply that bonus to the next exchange, where he declares a throw. Now Henri has 4 dice (all bonus dice from the last exchange), and Garret has 3 (unused from the last exchange) as he attempts the throw...

Reversals

A reversal is similar to the parry defense on TROS p. 84. Here, instead of simply breaking away, the defender attempts to reverse the odds into their own favor. Use the same table as for breaking free, above, but pay an activation cost of 2 CP. Success means that the initiative is passed on to the defender (now turned aggressor) along with the new Margin of Success for use in the next exchange. Figure any attacks following a successful reversal as being “from the clinch.” Ties result in no ground gained or lost, stalling any decisive action until the next exchange.

Strikes

Although not really a defensive maneuver, the defender may elect to ignore what the attacker is doing and attack him, following all of the rules for Strikes, above (assuming he has a weapon in hand, and/or his hand has not been trapped etc). Calculate the effects of the strike normally, but the defender has no defense against whatever the attacker is doing this exchange, and the attacker will still go first unless the defender steals

initiative. If the attacker traps the defenders hand (or head if the defender had elected to try a head but) then the defenders strike action immediately fails

Ground Fighting

Should a fight go to the ground due to the throw maneuver or any other reason, very little changes. All of the above Phase Two maneuvers still apply, with a few small alterations:

Break Free TNs go up by +1.

Breaks must follow Traps

Trapping cost is -1 CP (minimum of 1)

No throws are possible

Hans (grappling CP 14) and Kurt (grappling CP 13) are two brothers, both fighting over the same woman. Hans has snuck into Kurt’s bedchamber at night to “convince” him to back down, but to his dismay, Kurt heard him enter and is ready. They banter for a few minutes, and then Hans steps in. He pays a 2CP activation cost and declares his intention to grapple, assigning 6 dice to the



attempt. Kurt looks about the room, but sees no convenient weapons nearby, so he elects to step into the grapple, allowing it to happen. He still assigns defensive dice (hoping to take the initiative) and so assigns 7 dice. They both roll; Hans gets 4 successes and Kurt rolls 5. They have entered the grapple, but Kurt has the advantage at the start of the second exchange, with one bonus die to whatever he decides to do.

Kurt does not want to hurt his brother, so he declares a trap, specifying right arm, left arm, head, body as his four targets in order. He has 6 dice left in his CP, plus 1 carried over from the first exchange, so he assigns all 7 dice to this. Hans assigns 6 dice to a reversal, paying his final 2 dice as the activation cost. They both roll, Kurt gets 2 successes, but Hans gets 5 (a lucky roll indeed!) and takes the initiative. The round ends and both pools refresh, but Hans has 3 bonus dice from his successful reversal. He decides to go straight for a neck break, assigning 3 dice for the activation cost and putting all 14 remaining dice into the attempt. Kurt tries a reversal, paying 2 dice activation and putting 10 of his 11 remaining dice towards it. Hans rolls 13 dice against TN 8 for 5 successes, while Kurt has 10 dice at TN6 and makes 7 successes, taking the initiative. Additionally, Hans is now out of dice while Kurt has 3 for the second exchange (1 remaining in his pool plus 2 from his Margin of Success). He puts all 3 into a throw, and rolls 2 successes, adding +1 damage for choosing to go down with the defender. They are now on the ground and will be using the ground fighting rules (and Hans is likely winded) with a new round starting. The fight has moved into Kurt's favor...



Initiative

One of the things our fans have repeatedly asked us is “Why is the system for buying initiative so complicated? Isn’t there a simpler way?” Well, you asked for it, so here it is.

Buying initiative is never a matter to be taken lightly. In essence, it boils down to a gamble. Your opponent has already begun his attack. Do you seriously think that you’re fast enough to get a hit in before his blow lands? Are you as quick as you think you are?

Trying to buy initiative is how you find out.

Buying initiative is not possible during a red/red initiative declaration. Both parties have already committed to their attacks, and only their reflexes and skill will determine whose blow lands first (as

NOT stealing initiative

Although a completely valid tactic, some players dislike the fact that it’s possible to declare a Simultaneous Block/Strike or Evasive attack as your “defensive” action, and elect not to bother stealing initiative because you know that the defensive part of your attack will protect you and then the offensive portion of the attack will get the now defenseless attacker. If this is an issue in your games, we suggest two possible fixes:

- 1) Disallow Simultaneous Block/Strike or Evasive attack except in the case of an actual red/red initiative situation. In other words, it’s not possible to use either attack when you are on the defensive, whether you try to steal initiative or not.
- 2) Always require a defender to attempt to steal initiative if they declare an attack instead of a defense (this forces them to spend at least 3-5 dice as an additional activation cost for making the attack).



described in the TROS rulebook, both parties roll Reflex against their own ATN. In the case of a tie, compare actual Reflex scores. If this is still a tie then the blows are simultaneous). In any other situation, where one combatant is on the offensive and the other defensive, the defensive character may elect to declare an attack instead of defending himself. If he wants to try to make his blow land first, he can attempt to steal initiative.

To do so, declare an attack instead of a defense. Assign dice and an attack location as usual, and pay an additional activation cost as determined by the table below. This attack is now your declared action for the exchange, and cannot be altered. Having paid the activation cost, both parties roll Reflex against their own weapon's ATN, in the same manner as the roll when red/red has been declared, and all the same modifiers apply (such as +1 Reflex for thrusting attacks in the case of a tie). The winner's blow lands first and the losers blow second. In the case of a tie on both the roll and the raw Reflex scores, then the original attacker's blow lands first (this is the risk for trying to steal initiative).

At the Seneschal's option, either or both parties may be allowed to add CP into their Reflex pool for this roll – he who is prepared to invest more into the attack may well have that pay off...

To determine the activation cost for buying initiative, look at the table below, and reference your Proficiency with the weapon you are using. This is your raw Proficiency, remember, not your Combat Pool.



Proficiency	Activation Cost
0-4	+5CP
5-9	+4CP
10+	+3CP

Weapon Length and Initiative

When opponents with weapons of differing length both strike at the same time, the longer of the two weapons is more likely to strike first. When rolling Reflex to determine whose blow lands first in a red/red or buying initiative situation apply range penalties to the relevant die pools (*see p. 78 TROS for more information on weapon length*).

Manut is in a desperate battle with a dagger-wielding assassin who has the drop on him.



Which pool?

When two opponents launch attacks simultaneously, one usually lands slightly faster than the other (unless both the Reflex rolls and the Reflex scores are ties). The main advantage to striking first is the possibility of putting the other person off his attack so that you don't get hit yourself. If the first attacker (the person with initiative) successfully strikes his opponent, apply any Shock penalty from the blow to the opponents allocated attack die pool first, to represent the Shock and Pain of the strike putting him off his own attack. This is, of course, an optional rule, but it's the way we do things in our own games at Driftwood.

A couple of rounds into the fight, the assassin has scored a long slash down Manut's arm and has the initiative. Manut knows that the wound will continue to bleed and will soon begin to hamper him, so he decides to steal initiative. At the start of the next round, the assassin declares a downwards slash at Manut (zone V) with 7 dice. Manut declares a thrust at the assassin's face (Zone XIII) with his own dagger, assigning 6 dice to the attack, and 4 dice to the activation cost (because his dagger Proficiency is 7). Both assailants roll their own Reflex against their own ATN: The assassin has 5 dice against a TN of 8 (a dagger slash); while Manut has 6 dice against a TN of 7 (a dagger's thrusting ATN). If Manut rolls more successes than the assassin, his thrust will land first. If not, he's in even more trouble since he has no defense. If they tie for successes, the contest comes down to a comparison of actual Reflex scores (Manut's Reflex would be considered one higher than usual because of his thrust, see TROS P.64) and Manut would win as he has the higher Reflex (the Assassin would keep initiative if his Reflex were higher or equal to Manut's).

Knockdown

The following section provides a clarification of the Knockdown rules, as presented in *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook.

Occasionally during combat, characters must make a Knockdown roll. This is usually as the result of the trip maneuver or because they have suffered an injury that calls for it. Knockdown is a derived attribute (based on ST+AG)/2 and is always rolled against a TN of 8. Penalties or bonuses to this roll (as specified under the trip maneuver or in the damage tables) modify the Knockdown die pool, rather than the TN. The character rolls his (modified) Knockdown pool and if he achieves one or more successes, he has not been knocked down.

If knocked down, the character's CP is immediately reduced to 1/3 of its usual maximum (or left as it is if the current total is less than this). This represents the character being knocked down and slightly dazed. In subsequent combat rounds when CP is refreshed, halve the CP after applying any other modifiers – the character is on the ground but at least aware of what is going on and is able to react.

Standing up

While on the ground, characters are able to make attacks if they have initiative. Their reduced CP makes this a dangerous option, but it is available. Characters may also defend against attacks using parries, blocks or evasions.

Standing up while all this is going on is a tricky thing to do. The character must make a terrain roll against a TN of 8 if acting defensively, or a TN of 9 if acting aggressive (attacking at the same time). If at least one success is generated, the character has gotten to his feet and at the start of the next combat round will refresh CP normally.



Mounted Combat

As this is a combat supplement, we thought it fitting to re-present rules for mounted combat in *The Riddle of Steel*. These rules were first found in our first supplement *Of Beasts and Men*. Naturally, we couldn't reproduce everything from that book, so if you want rules for barding (armor for your horse) or horse hit location charts and damage tables, you will have to refer to that book. If you don't have access to OBAM, you can extrapolate that information from the armor and damage rules for humans found in this book and the TROS rulebook. Note that some of the information below has been changed a little and should be considered to supersede the rules found in OBAM.

Mounted combat is a popular image, and jousting knights and cavalry battles come quickly to mind when we think of medieval times or fantasy worlds. Presented here are some ideas regarding mounted combat, and some new horseback maneuvers. The historical validity of some of these maneuvers is hard to verify – it's likely that horses were never

really trained to rear up and strike foes in battle, for example, so Seneschals who are concerned with historical accuracy/plausibility may wish to ignore some of the following horseback combat maneuvers. We suggest you keep them, simply because they add something to the enjoyment of roleplaying horseback combat.

While fighting from horseback, a character receives the following benefits/penalties:

- * The CP penalty from leg armor cancelled.
- * All other armor CP penalties apply in full (this is a change from what we said in OBAM, because of the changes in armor rules found in this book)
- * +2CP per round height bonus (against ground-based opponents only). This bonus varies with the quality of the horse ridden (see the horse breeds section, OBAM p. 36. Otherwise, you can use the horse statistics found in TROS, p. 222).
- * AG/Ride checks may be made instead of spending CP on terrain rolls vs. ground opponents.



* All attacks come from the characters CP, not the mounts CP. (The mounts CP is only used if it is fighting by itself, without a rider).

* The mounts barding CP penalty does not apply to the rider's CP, but should be applied as an additional activation cost for any evasions made while on horseback (this is a change from what we said in OBAM and should be considered the new official rule). An unriden horse that is using its own CP to fight suffers the CP penalty from barding as usual.

Combat Rounds (or "*Ride-By Attacking*")

When facing ground-based opponents from horseback, the trick is to use the horses speed as a form of defense. It's possible to make attacks from horseback while the horse is at a canter or even a full charge. This requires a terrain roll (as noted above, this roll is made with AG/Ride rather than by spending CP). A successful roll limits a combat round to a single exchange, usually one where the rider attacks and the opponent merely defends (of course, the opponent may declare a simultaneous attack). If the roll is failed, the round lasts two exchanges as usual (potentially allowing an opponent who has successfully blocked or parried an attack to retaliate) before the horses momentum carries the rider past. A botch on this roll means the rider has lost his concentration and toppled from the horse.

When two horsemen battle, rounds last two exchanges unless one or both are moving at speed (and not in the same direction), in which case the round lasts only one exchange (red/red probably).

When performing ride-by attacks, it takes a short while to wheel around to be able to come back for another pass. Assume that a character on horseback can wheel around and charge back for another run every 3-4 rounds. Continued charging in this way would be very tiring for the horse eventually, and the Seneschal may wish to consider using the fatigue rules but applying the penalty to the rider's CP (because the horse is not responding quite as fast anymore).

Hit Location

Rather than providing an entirely new set of hit location charts for mounted combat, the player(s) and Seneschal are encouraged to use common sense when assigning or determining hit locations. The following points should be kept in mind:





* A mounted figure may not attack a foe directly in front of his mount, unless he is using a weapon with a very long (8' or greater) reach. Attacks must be made at opponents to the side or rear of the mount. Swiveling around to attack an opponent to the rear is tricky, and carries an additional +4CP activation cost per attack.

* When attacking a ground-based opponent from a mount, lower bodily targets are inaccessible. As a general rule, swinging zones 3, 4, 5 and 7 are available, as is any thrust target above the belly. The Seneschal must make consideration as to available attack zones if the target is not a humanoid.

* Defending from horseback is very difficult, and nearly impossible if the target of the attack is the horse itself. A mounted character may use a partial evasion to have the horse dance back from an attack, but may generally not duck and weave or use any form of block, parry or counter versus attacks to his mount. Full evasion is only useful when leaping from a mount to avoid an attack against the rider. Essentially, the best horseback defense is a strong offense or good barding.

* Attacking a mounted opponent from the ground is tricky. If attacking from the front or rear of the mount, the rider may not be attacked unless a weapon with a very long (8' or more) reach is used although of course the mount can be attacked. From the side, either mount or rider is a fair target. The Seneschal must decide which parts of the target are accessible based on the range and the reach of the weapon (it's just not possible to thrust a dagger at the head of a mounted opponent). Swing attacks must be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis, remembering that many swing attacks (particularly zone 4 or 5 type swings) will probably still hit the mount even if they miss the rider.

Remaining Seated

Staying on a horse when you have been hit is a tricky thing to do. Whenever a character is successfully struck while mounted, he must make

an AG/Ride check with a penalty of 1 die for every point in his opponents attack Margin of Success. Failure indicates that he has been knocked from his horse. Calculate damage as for a 10' fall and apply it as per the falling rules (TROS, P.96).

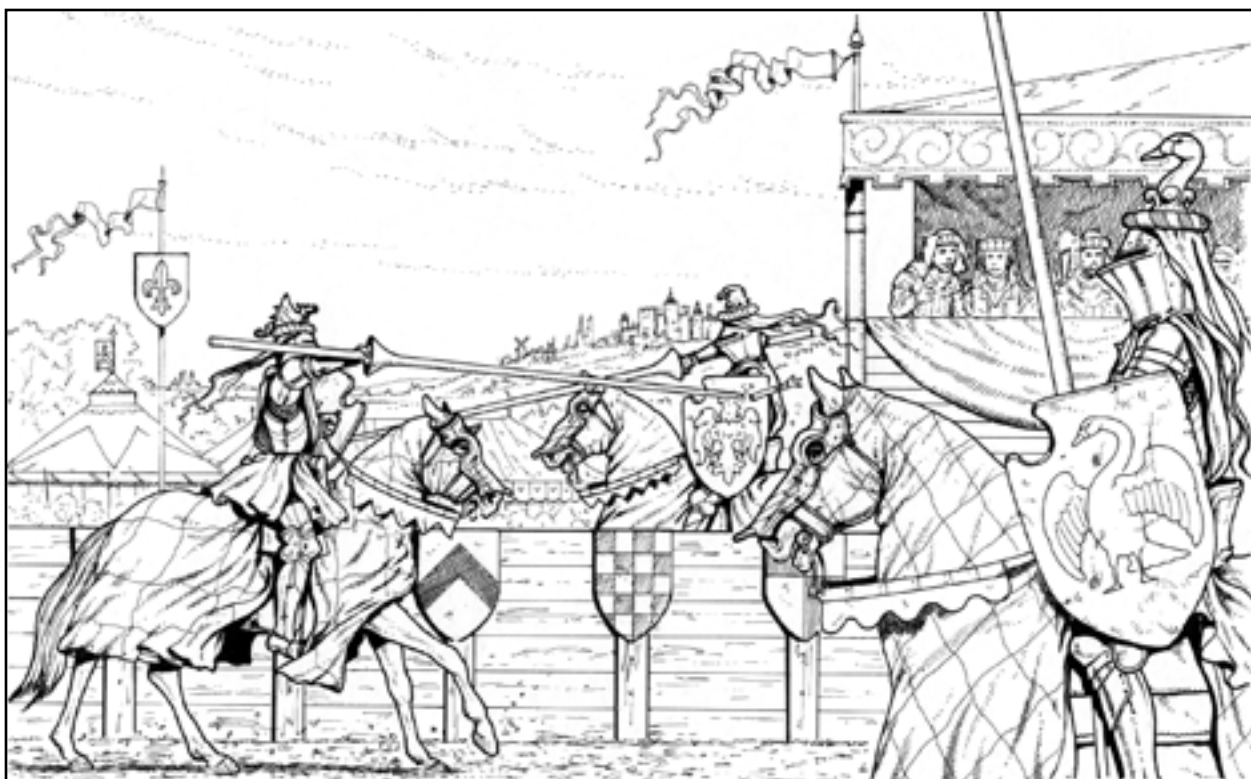
Jousting

Jousting is an extremely popular sport in many regions, and is the main entertainment and source of gambling revenue for the nobility. There are three parts to each pass in a joust, handled as follows:

The Charge – First, the combatants must make an opposed ride skill check (each rolling Agility versus his own Ride Skill) to make a good, fast and straight charge. This check is made at +2 dice if the knight is riding a Destrier, or -2 dice if his mount is a Palfrey (and don't even think of trying it on a lesser horse). The two results are compared, and the combatant with the larger number of successes receives the difference as a CP bonus for stage two, the Clash.

The Clash – When the two jousting knights meet, each splits his full CP (less penalties for armor and barding, as usual) into attack and defense portions (very like a Simultaneous Block/Strike maneuver). Each combatant then makes a contested roll of his attack versus the others block, attempting to get a successful strike which might unseat his opponent, while remaining seated himself.

The Check – If either Knight was struck, he must make an AG/Ride check with a penalty of 1 die for every point in his opponents attack Margin of Success. Failure indicates that he has been knocked from his horse. Tourney lances are designed to splinter on impact, therefore no actual puncturing damage is taken, however damage must be calculated for a 10' fall and applied as per the falling rules in chapter 5 of the main rules. Note that it is not unlikely that both Knights may be knocked from their steeds. This usually requires another pass, until there is a clear winner who has unhorsed his opponent



but remained seated himself. Depending on the local rules, a double Knockdown may instead be settled through melee combat, usually using blunted weapons. If real lances are being used, calculate the damage as Margin of Success + the horse's STR + Lance damage (less Toughness and armor as usual).

Rearing

Although it's hard to verify historically, the image of a horse rearing up in combat to strike an opponent is a popular one. This maneuver may only be attempted versus a ground-based opponent directly in front of the mount. It uses the attackers CP, not the horses CP, and counts as an attack. On command, the horse rears up and attempts to strike the opponent with its front hooves. This attack may be evaded or blocked, but cannot be countered or parried. The ATN is the attackers ride skill. If the attacker wins, the Seneschal should determine the actual location of the strike randomly (any target from the chest upwards is possible, including the arms) and damage is the attack success margin plus the horses Strength + 2, less Toughness and armor. This is applied as bashing damage.

If the defender wishes, another option to counter a rearing attack is to declare an attack and attempt to steal initiative. If successful, the stomach is a valid target, and if attacked there the horse receives only half its Toughness score for defense because of the extreme vulnerability of its stomach. If the horse is injured in this way, the mounted combatant must make an AG/Ride check with a penalty of 1 per level of damage taken, or fall from his horse (incurring damage as from a 10' fall).

Rearing attacks are considered to have Long range. They may not be made during a "ride-by attack" (i.e. when the horse rider is attempting to limit the combat round to a single exchange by keeping his horse at speed). This limitation applies to the Kicking and Pivoting maneuvers described below as well.

Kicking

Kicking on horseback is very similar to rearing, but the attack is made at an opponent to the rear of the horse. The rider declares the kick attack; the defender may evade or block, but cannot



parry or counter. Bashing damage is the horse's Strength + Margin of Success (less Toughness and armor). The Seneschal should determine the actual hit location randomly; any target above the waist (including the arms) is valid.

Kicking attacks are considered to have Medium range.

Pivoting

Pivoting consists of the rider causing his mount to swivel on its front legs, swinging its rump around and striking an opponent standing at the side of the horse. This maneuver is paid out of the riders CP rather than the mounts, and counts as an attack. The attack is declared, and the defender must evade, he may not block, parry or otherwise redirect the attack. The ATN is the attackers Ride skill. If the defender is successful, he steals initiative as normal. If the attacker is successful, the DR is half the Horses Strength + success margin, and is distributed to the defender as falling damage. Additionally, the defender must make a Knockdown roll with a penalty equal to the attack success margin or be thrown to the ground.

Pivot attacks may be made at any range from Short to Very long, and only suffer a range penalty of +1 attack activation cost if the current range is Hand or Extra Long.

Stances

The issue of stance is handled in almost complete abstraction in the original version of TROS. Such an approach makes it easy to run combats without a slew of technical knowledge and without losing intensity. This section can replace either that found in the TROS core rulebook on p. 74-75 or can be added to it. These rules add a degree of complexity and subtlety at the expense of a higher learning curve (as do most of the changes to TROS basic rules in this book!). We recommend using them for dueling-oriented games or players. Other styles of play or players should stick to the old

rules, which are fully compatible with these new ones. In addition, there's no rule against using the basic TROS modifiers and using the stance names below for color's sake—just make sure the Seneschal knows what you're doing!

It's worth reiterating at this point that the bonuses granted by stances only last for the first exchange of any combat, although at the Seneschal's discretion it may be possible to drop into a stance following a break in the action, such as after a successful full evasion. In general, the character with the lower Reflex declares their stance first, after which the higher Reflex character can respond with a stance of their own. Of course, in the case of a white/white initiative declaration, either or both parties can change their stance, again with the lower Reflex having to choose and the higher being able to reach to that.

In keeping with both the original TROS stance rules and the differences in the attitude of engagement found in historical and modern martial schools, any of these positions (including "No Stance") can be declared as "offensive" or "defensive" instead of their natural "neutral" state. Offensive guards gain +1 CP for attacks but -1 CP for all defenses; defensive guards gain +2 CP for defensive maneuvers and -2 for offensive maneuvers, predictably. Any offensive/defensive coloration of the following stances should be noted by the initiating player before any maneuvers are declared by either side. Additionally, any and all feints (using the maneuver on TROS p. 61) gain offensive bonuses due to stance and the *original target chosen before the feint is declared* (not for the altered hit location following the feint). Likewise, all bonuses here can be compounded by dice gained from other maneuvers, Spiritual Attributes, and the optional hit-location rules on TROS p. 234. Powerful stuff...

Each entry contains the TROS name of the stance, followed by some real-world equivalents and a description of the stance with appropriate



Why would you ever NOT use a stance?

As long as you know what you're going to be doing, it's pretty easy to ensure that you almost always get a bonus when using stances in TROS, and avoid the listed penalties. So why would you not do it? As in real life, stances have the disadvantage that they let your opponent know what you're probably going to do. If you drop into a high back stance, for example, he knows that you're most likely to attack him high (which allows him to more easily use shield positioning and/or favoring (see p. 26) to assist in his defense), and that if he targets your lower body you will be at a disadvantage for defending yourself.

game mechanics and modifiers. All CP modifiers apply to the character in the stance described (unless noted otherwise) and only last so long as the described conditions are met.

High Forward

(German *Ochs*, *Einhorn*, and *Hengen*; Italian *Finestra*; French *Prima*; English *High Guardant*)

This is the first position that a drawn sword (or other hip-born weapon) comes into, with the hilt and hands high near the head and the point toward the opponent. This position is appropriate for any weapon with thrusting capability, and is common with swordsmanship and staff-work in every corner of the world in one form or another. Many masters consider it an instable guard, suitable for reaction, winding-and-binding, or for immediate deployment and attack—not to receive.

Because it defends primarily by threatening the opponent, characters using a High Forward stance suffer a -2 CP when forced to defend against

anything except overhand blows and high thrusts (zones IV, V, XII, XIII), which grant +1 CP to the defender. Offensively, characters thrusting to targets above their own midsection (usually zones XI, XII, XIII; common sense applies!) from the High Forward stance gain +3 CP; other thrusting attacks gain +1 CP, and all cuts or swinging bashes are executed with no modifier.

Middle Forward

(German *Pflug*, Italian *Breve*, French *Tertia*, English *Guardant*, Japanese *Chudan No Kamae*)

This is potentially the most instinctive and all-purpose guard for most every weapon. The hands generally sit at about waist level with the point or business end of the weapon toward the opponent's face. It's excellent for thrusting attacks and defense, and adequate for all other attacks.

Defending the midsection (zones II, III, X, XI, XII) is easier with an extra +2 CP, as is protecting the shoulders and head (zones IV, V, XIII) with +1 CP. Other defenses are unmodified. When attacking, Middle Forward positions favor thrusting to the head and chest (zones XII and XIII) with +1 CP. All other attacks are unmodified.

Low Forward

(German *Alber* and *Eisenpfort*, Italian *Porta di Ferro* and *Posta di dente Chinghiale*, English *Low Guardant*, Japanese *Gedan No Kamae*)

This relaxed position is ideal for receiving an opponents attack or goading them on. While it appears vulnerable, it is in fact quite secure—the German name, *Alber*, means “Fool” and the Italian name, *Porta di Ferro*, means “Gate of Iron.” The hands rest comfortably at waist level or lower, with the point of the weapon either toward the opponent's feet or off to the side. This guard is appropriate for all types of weapons.

Defensive modifiers consist of +3 CP against any



attack to the legs or groin (zones I, II, VI, VIII, IX), +2 against any midsection attack (zones III, X, XII), and -1 CP against the vulnerable head and shoulders (zones IV, V, and XIII...we recommend evading those!). There's only one offensive bonus: +2 CP when attacking the opponent's hands (zone VII); all other attacks are at -1 CP (thrusts) or -2 CP (swings).

High Back

(German *Vom Tag* and *Zornhut*, Italian *Posta di Donna*, Japanese *Jodan No Kamae*)

This aggressive position is perhaps the second most instinctive of all the guards. The hands are either by the head or over it, and the point of the weapon points up and back to some degree or another (some versions are vertical, others even go down and back some). Like the High Forward guard, which threatens with a thrust, the High Back guard threatens with a long-reaching and powerful downward blow. This position is used with any weapon that is used for swinging to strike.

Defense of the hands and lower legs (zones I, VII, VIII, XIV) is the weakest section of the High Back stance's wall of intimidation, penalizing defenders with -2 CP against such attacks. Other defenses are unmodified. The high, hawk-like position of the High Back stance makes swinging attacks to the head, shoulders, and arms (zones IV, V, VII) an obvious choice with a +3 CP bonus. Cuts or swinging bashes to other zones gain +1 CP, but thrusting to any target is more difficult with a -2 CP modifier.

Low Back/Tail Guard

(German *Nebenhut* and *Wechsel*, Italian *Coda Longa*, Japanese *Waki Gamae*)

This low and deceptive guard invites attack and masks the length of one's weapon. Here the hands lie low by the hip, and the point extends back or to the side. Like the High Back stance, this position is really only useful for weapons with a capacity for swinging. Any characters

that are resting (to regain dice lost due to fatigue, for example) may opt to stand in Low Back instead of "no stance."

Defensively, this stance is not optimal. Defense of the hands and lower leg zones (zones I, VII, VIII and XIV) has no penalty, but there is a -2 CP penalty to defend all other zones. Offensively, this stance is an ideal starting point for below-the-belt attacks, gaining +2 CP to any such strike (zones I, II, III, VI, VII). Swings to any other location are at -1 CP; thrusts anywhere are at -2 CP.

Charging

Charging isn't so much a stance as an action that works like one. Like a standard offensive stance in original TROS rules, chargers get a +2 CP bonus to attack or -2 CP for any defense. Yes, you can declare a charge to be aggressive or defensive - there's a difference between sprinting recklessly at ones opponent, and running at him cautiously, ready in case he gets an attack in as you come.

Hans has managed to dispatch an assassin in the center of the market square, but moments later one of the would-be killer's friends arrives on the scene. Hans assumes an aggressive High Forward stance, with his trusty staff pointing right at his opponent's face. This new assassin reacts by taking a Middle Forward stance with a defensive attitude. The Seneschal calls for initiative and Hans ends up attacking the defending assassin with a thrust to the face. Hans gains +4 CP (3 for stance, 1 for attitude) to the attack, and the assassin gains +3 CP for his defense (1 for stance, 2 for attitude), leaving Hans with an effective +1 bonus overall. A moment later the second assassin falls to the ground with his skull split wide open.

Hans, now tired from all this fighting, decides to recover from fatigue by resting in a Low Back stance. This way he will be prepared if anyone should attack while he catches his breath backing out of the market.



Terrain

One of the most fundamental mechanics in any *Riddle of Steel* combat is the terrain roll. This section fleshes out terrain rolls, clarifies what they can and cannot do, and provides plenty of examples of how they may be used to enhance your combats, make them more cinematic (if that's your thing), and keep your character alive.

The following rules by no means cover every possible use of terrain rolls, but should provide wily players and Seneschals with enough ideas and examples to be able to work out additional uses.

Basic Terrain Rolls

Reduced to its most basic form, a terrain roll is this:

The player declares that his character wants to do something other than attack, defend or parry that is not otherwise covered by a combat

maneuver. The Seneschal assigns a TN for the attempt, and the player removes as many dice as he likes from his CP, rolling them against that TN. As long as he achieves at least one success, he succeeds.

Boris is facing off against a pirate on the deck of his ship. The pirate has been slowly pushing Boris back, and he's in danger of soon being pushed back to where his blade might get entangled in the shrouds. Boris declares that he's going to leap backwards up onto a raised hatchway (closed, he hopes) to give him some more room. The Seneschal assigns a TN of 7 (5 for being in a "tight space", +2 for the added difficulty of leaping backwards while parrying an attack), and Boris rolls three dice from his CP, getting 2,5,7. One success is all he needs – Bois athletically leaps backwards onto the hatchway. Now he has more room, and possibly a height advantage.

Difficult Fighting Conditions

The other main use of terrain rolls is to counter the debilitating effects of difficult





fighting conditions. Battling on the narrow top of a castle wall or fighting on ice (for example) requires a measure of concentration by the fighter, which is concentration that he's not focusing on his foe. As described in *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook, the Seneschal assigns the TN of the terrain roll and the potential consequences for failure. The player takes as many dice from his CP as he deems appropriate and rolls them, looking for at least one success.

Thomas is battling a heavily robed cultist back and forth on the upper walls of the city. Because of the limited space atop the wall, the Seneschal calls for a terrain roll and states that anyone who fails will risk overbalancing, losing half their CP. Boris has a TN of 5 (he's in a narrow space, and Hurried because he's attacking), while the cultist has a TN of 3 (Narrow space, Normal because he's defending). Thomas' player takes three dice from his CP while the Seneschal rolls 2 dice for the cultist. Thomas gets 3, 6, 9 – two successes, while the cultist rolls 1, 1 – not only a failed terrain roll but actually a botch. The Seneschal declares that the cultist has stepped backwards one step too far... and falls screaming from the battlement.

Opposed Terrain Rolls

Opposed terrain rolls are made to prevent your opponent making a successful terrain roll. They work in exactly the same way as terrain rolls – the character nominates as many CP from his pool as he likes and rolls them against the same TN as the terrain roll TN. The character with the highest number of successes wins, although in the case of a tie the victory goes to the character making the terrain roll, rather than to the opposing character.

Boris is facing off against a pirate on the deck of his ship. The pirate has been slowly pushing Boris back, and he's in danger of soon being pushed back to where his blade might get entangled in the shrouds. Boris declares that

he's going to leap backwards up onto a raised hatchway (closed, he hopes) to give him some more room. The pirate sees this, and attempts to counter Boris' attempt. The Seneschal assigns a TN of 7, and Boris rolls three dice from his CP, getting 2, 5, 7. The pirate rolls 2 dice and gets 7, 8. Because the pirate got more successes, Boris' terrain roll fails – the Seneschal declares that by flashing his blade in the sun and startling Boris with a shaft of light in the eyes, the pirate successfully fouled the jump (he could just as well have declared that the pirate leapt up on the hatchway at the same moment as Boris – Boris's jump succeeded but the advantage was nullified).

Multiple Opponents

One of the most useful uses of the Terrain Roll is that used to confuse multiple opponents in battle – causing them to get in each other's way so that the character has to face only one per round. The procedure for this is well covered in *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook (TROS, p. 77), but what happens if the opponents notice this and want to attempt to counter it?

Using the procedure noted above, allow the opponents to make opposed terrain rolls. Each opponent rolls as many dice from his CP as he likes (those who choose not to roll are considered to have rolled but received zero successes).

Note that only exceptional opponents are likely to make opposed terrain rolls in this manner. The Seneschal must use his discretion as to how likely or how often this occurs. These kinds of rolls are extremely useful for several PC's trying to outmaneuver a single highly skilled opponent, however.

- If the lone character beats (or ties) all opponents, he may choose which one he will face for the round.
- If a single opponent gets more successes than the character, that opponent is the only one



to face the lone character this round OR can choose to NOT engage the character and the character must select one to face from the remaining opponents (this allows a wounded opponent to back out of the fight).

- If two or more opponents get more successes than the lone character, the character must face two of them (the opponents choose which two out of those who beat the character's number of successes). If there is only one opponent left who wants to face the character and who rolled more successes than he did, then the character faces only that opponent this round. If there are no opponents with more successes than the character who wish to face him, the character chooses a single opponent out of the remaining ones who rolled fewer successes than the character or chose not to roll.
- If the character botches his terrain roll, he must face three opponents of the opponents' choice (or four in the case of smaller opponents, such as dogs or wolves – see *Of Beasts and Men* (OBAM, p. 30) for further information).

Boris has dispatched his foe and moved onto the forecastle. Three scurvy sea dogs see him and make a beeline for him, rapiers at the ready. Boris declares that he wishes to hurry around beside one of them, keeping that pirate between him and his other foes. The GM declares that the pirates spot Boris starting his run, and spread out to receive him, trying to counter the attempt. Boris' TN is 8 (avoiding 3-5 opponents in regular combat), while the Pirates also have TN's of 8 (opposed rolls, but they need to avoid each other, thus they have the same number of "opponents"). All parties roll – Boris rolls 4 dice and gets two successes while the pirates get 2, 2 and 3 successes apiece with very lucky rolls. Looks like Boris will only have to face one opponent after all, but it's the one who got more successes than him, not

Tactical Maneuvering

In the section presented to the left, Boris attempts to outmaneuver several opponents who, in turn, use terrain rolls to outmaneuver him. Their difficulty is just as high as Boris' because of the necessity to get around each other. This is fine for a disorganized rabble such as pirates, but what about if the opponents were an organized military unit? This is a good example of where the Tactics skill can come into play. In the case of an organized group who are trying to outmaneuver a single opponent, have the leader make a Wit/Tactics roll. Each success on this roll reduces the TN of the individual members' terrain rolls, as the leader oversees the exercise and shouts commands. In the example presented here, if the pirates had been organized, their leader could have rolled Wit/Tactics to order them. Assuming he received three successes, the Pirates would have each had a TN of 5 for their terrain roll instead of a TN of 8. Note – this makes organized units very dangerous.

one of his choosing. If the pirates had instead rolled 2,3,3 successes, he would have to face two opponents this round after all – and with 4 fewer dice in his CP (although they would each be down however many terrain dice they rolled as well, of course).

Pressing Opponents

Melee combats rage back and forth as opposing fighters thrust and swing at each other, stepping into gaps and falling back before ferocity. One very good tactic to throw off your opponent is to push him back or otherwise lead him to a position where his fighting conditions become hampered, giving you the advantage. Terrain rolls may be used for this purpose.

Unless the characters specify otherwise, fights are assumed to range roughly back-and-forth,



with the attacker always pressing forward and the defender falling back slightly, and the gain being reversed when the defender becomes the attacker and vice versa. It is possible for either character to press his opponent, however, to attempt to gain the upper hand.

Any character, while defending or attacking, may declare that he is pressing his opponent. This will often be an opposed terrain roll, if the opponent attempts to push back. Terrain dice are rolled against a TN of 3 (while attacking) or 4 (while defending). The attack/defense Margin of Success is used to determine how far in feet the combatants move during the exchange (toward the defender if the attacker has the higher Margin of Success, or toward the attacker if the defender does). Successes on the pressing terrain roll then add to whichever side rolled them. The Seneschal will adjudicate the results of the press. Success in the press does not necessarily imply that initiative has been won or lost – this is still determined by the winner of the exchange. It's quite possible to fail miserably in trying to hit your opponent, but push him back anyway.

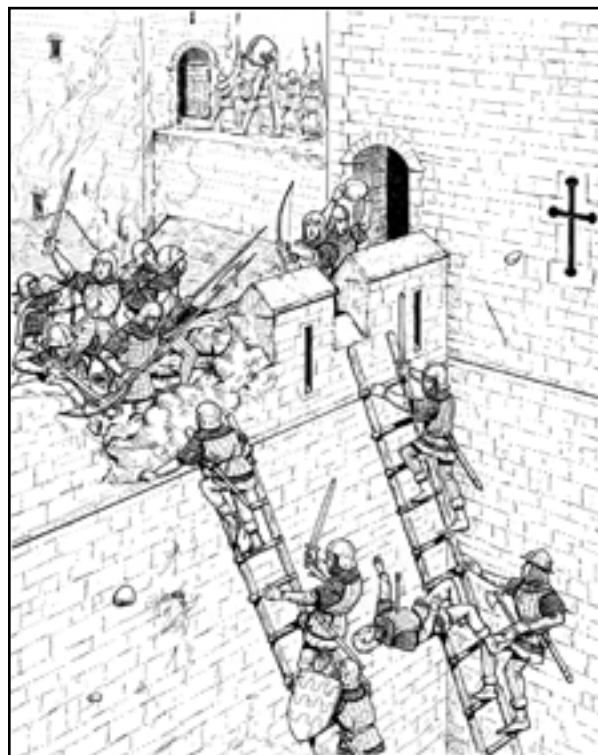
Thomas is dueling the enraged husband of one of his brief liaisons, and is faring badly. Luckily, the meadow in which they are battling has a shallow stream at one end, which the Seneschal declares to be 9 feet behind Thomas' opponent. He goes on to state that anyone standing in the stream while fighting will suffer poor footing, leading to a terrain roll every round or risk falling over backwards. Thomas and his opponent fight back and forth for a few rounds, until his foe is within 4 feet of the stream. Having initiative, Thomas declares a thrust at his opponent's chest with 6 dice along with a 5-die press. His opponent could contest the press by pushing back of course, but is short on dice and elects not to. Thomas rolls 4 successes on his attack and 4 terrain/press successes. His opponent parries, achieving only 2 successes. Thomas's 2-die attack Margin

of Success does not harm his opponent (who is wearing a breastplate), but it does push his opponent back two feet, plus four more feet for the press. His opponent now stands in the shallow stream, and must make an Ice/Slippery terrain roll every round or fall prone, until he can press back and step onto dry land.

Cinematic Terrain Rolls

Another very cool (and optional) use for terrain rolls is being cinematic in combat. Want to leap up and swing across the room on a chandelier while slashing at foes below you? Make a terrain roll. Want to slide beneath your opponent's legs and come up behind him, while slashing at his pelvis on the way? Make a terrain roll. Want to... well, you get the idea.

Why? Because it makes the fight more cool. Lets face it - the duel between Inigo and The Man in Black on the top of the cliff of insanity in *The Princess Bride* wouldn't have been nearly as good if they weren't flipping over each other, throwing their swords around and catching them, and so on. Such things make the game more fun, and may well be awarded with bonus style dice by your

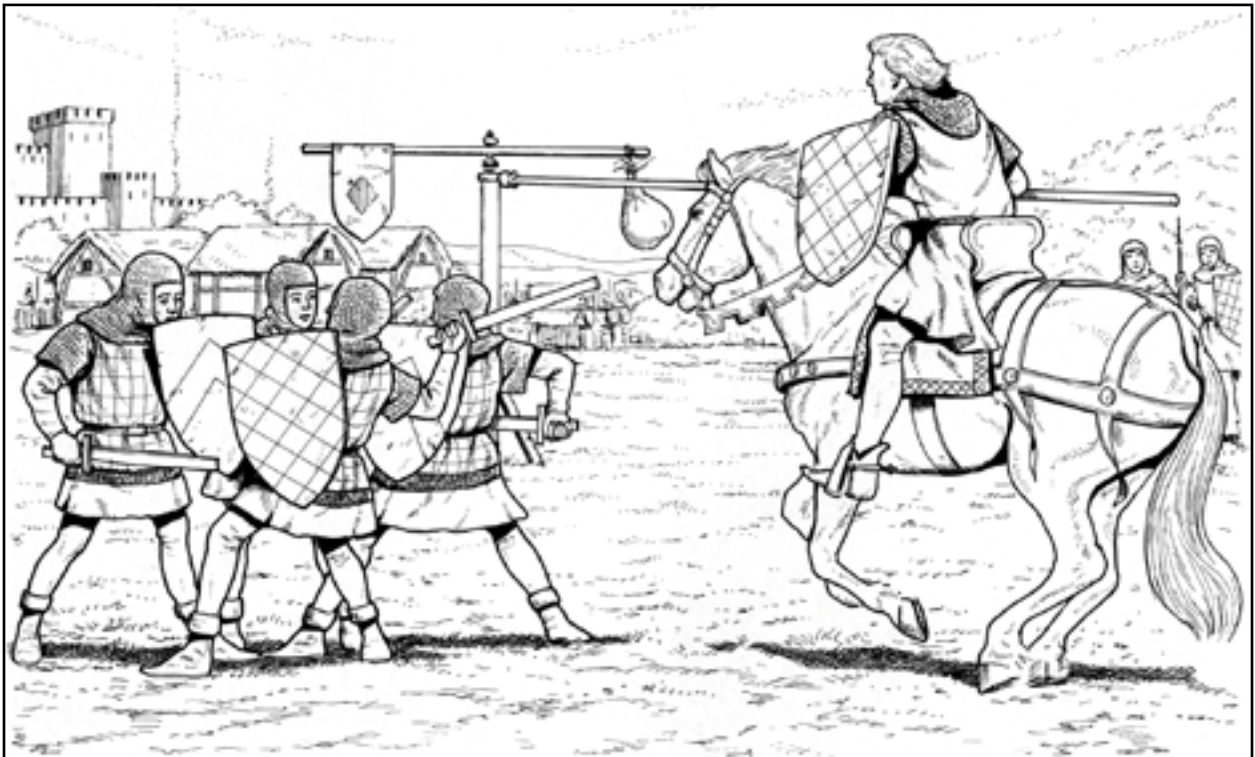




Seneschal. This style of play isn't for everybody of course – some groups like their *Riddle of Steel* games to be more realistic while some like them to be more cinematic. It's up to you.

Another good option to encourage flashy and interesting play in cinematic games is to give each character bonus CP dice that may only be used for cinematic terrain rolls. These may be in the form of 2-3 extra dice per round, or perhaps a pool of dice per session that get slowly used up. We like the refreshing 2-3 dice per round idea, as this means that the characters won't run out of cinematic terrain dice at any point, but the idea of a stable pool has possibilities as well – perhaps every time the character pulls off a particularly nifty move he gains bonus dice in his “cinematic terrain die pool”. Of course, either way there's nothing stopping the characters from using dice from their normal CP to supplement these moves!

Tyler is facing off against a large assailant on the roof of an inn. Behind his foe, he can see a second opponent just reaching the top of the ladder. If that second attacker makes it to the top, Tyler is going to be in trouble. The PC declares that Tyler will run at his foe, slide between the mans legs, and at the end of his slide kick the ladder away from the wall to prevent the second opponent from reaching the top. The Seneschal declares this to be highly stylish, but difficult, so he bases the TN on the Wit of the opponent (4) and adds +3 for the difficulty of the move for a final TN of 7. The PC crosses his fingers and drops 4 dice, rolling 2,6,9,9. Tyler slides neatly beneath his foe and kicks the ladder away from the wall, with a satisfying thump as the screaming would-be assistant falls two stories to the paved courtyard below. Tyler leaps to his feet just as his foe turns around with a confused expression on his face...





Terrain Rolls outside Combat

Outside combat, use the characters raw Reflex attribute as a pool to make all terrain rolls. Sample difficulties are listed below.

Terrain Roll Target Numbers

(Some of the following information is reprinted from *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook)

Difficult Terrain

Terrain	Standing / Crawling	Cautious	Normal / Defending	Hurried / Attacking	Sprinting
Narrow (ledges, walls, roofs)	1	2	3	5	7
Swampy or Rocky	2	3	4	6	8
Ice/Slippery	2	4	6	8	10
Tight spaces (to not get stuck)	2	3	4	5	6
Limited footwork room in combat	-	-	5	6	8
Pressing opponent during combat	-	-	4	3	3

Facing Multiple Opponents (success = face one; fail = face two; botch = face three)

Number of Opponents	Hurried (regular)	Sprinting (+2 to armor penalty for purposes of determining fatigue only; see Fatigue on p. 33)
2 opponents	6	5
3-5 opponents	8	6
6-9 opponents	9	7
10+ opponents	10	8

Cinematic Rolls

Cinematic rolls should have their TN's determined by using a base, and adding a variable number due to the difficulty. The base is determined by the Seneschal depending on the circumstances. Outwitting opponents might use their average (or highest) Wit as a base (such as in the rooftop example above), while darting between two figures might use their average Reflex attribute, and so on. If an obvious number cannot be determined, the Seneschal should use a default base of 4-5. To this base number is added a difficulty modifier as listed below:

Relatively straightforward (e.g. <i>Sliding down a rope</i>)	+0
Tricky (e.g. <i>Sliding down a rope in a heavy breeze</i>)	+1
Difficult (e.g. <i>Sliding down a rope in a heavy breeze, holding a weapon in one hand</i>)	+2
Very difficult (e.g. <i>Sliding down a rope in a heavy breeze with one hand while parrying an attack with the weapon in the other hand</i>)	+3
Heroic (e.g. <i>Sliding down a rope in a heavy wind with one hand while fending off multiple attacks with the weapon in the other hand</i>)	+4 or more

These modifiers may be added to other forms of terrain rolls, as the Seneschal deems fit.



Toughness

One of the things we hear a lot of comments about is the role of the Toughness attribute in TROS play. Some people think that it is too powerful and shouldn't be a ready substitute for Armor. We think it works just fine the way it is, but here are a few suggestions from our fans at the Forge Forum for different ways the Toughness attribute could be modified in your games.

- Limit Toughness to a maximum of 6 (realistic) or 7 (cinematic) in humans.
- Toughness can only cancel out Strength but never weapon damage (i.e. with a Toughness of 7 versus a Strength of 4, the Toughness only counts as 4; this way it can offset an opponents Strength but not the extra damage added by his weapon). This still gives higher Toughness scores a benefit (against higher Strength) but not an overwhelming one. We really like this option and recommend it as the best easy adaptation of the Toughness rule (if you want one) with a minimum of extra work.

There is one “gotcha” with this method, however – it disadvantages creatures with naturally large Toughness attributes. Nobody is suggesting that a Wyrms Toughness only be able to cancel out the Strength of his attacker! If this method is used, we suggest that large or extremely tough creatures either be allowed to count their full Toughness against attacks, or that you consider a portion of their Toughness as Armor.

- Toughness and Strength do not automatically count as their full values. Instead, roll each stat against a TN of 6 and apply the successes to the damage calculation. This will tend to normalize high attributes and “even things up”. It also avoids the occasional quirk where an exceptionally high Strength opponent can never inflict only a minor wound because of its immense Strength. However, it means a great deal more dice to roll in every round of combat. Also, be warned that randomizing damage can come around and bite players. Remember, a bad dice roll and a few extra wound levels can easily prove fatal. If this option is used, make sure the players are getting plenty of opportunities to roll their spiritual attributes.

Toughness and Large Opponents

An alternate way of handling very large or otherwise very tough creatures (such as Wyrms, Giants, Gargoyles and the like) is to allow them to take more damage before feeling the effects of their wounds. This may be achieved by dividing the resulting number of wounds by 2, in effect requiring 2 successes per wound rather than the usual 1 (round up, as usual). In other words, instead of a 2-point success margin causing a level 2 wound, it only causes a level 1 wound, while a 7 point Margin of Success is required to cause a level 4 wound.

While this is perhaps more realistic, this does of course make it even more difficult to affect large or abnormally tough creatures, and the Seneschal may wish to consider lowering the creatures Toughness attribute a little to compensate.



Book Two:

The Tides of War

Book 2

"He told me to leave the salle, Bella. He said that I fought too often for the wrong reasons. That I was earning his school a bad reputation and now the tax-men want more while the student roster dwindles."

Beatrice was silent. Men needed to talk after, much as women need to talk before. Smiling softly, she laid her dark-tressed head on Peter's chest and pretended to listen to his breathing. A new armoire would be nice, right over in the corner across from the door. Something to greet her when she came home alone (as rare as that was).

"There's no way I'm toning down. I'm on a roll—I mean, I'm getting really, really good. Jaquise won't say it, but after only nine months, I've put all of his other local students to shame. Gerard is still better, the ugly bastard, but he's been training for twenty-three years. I shouldn't be expected to be better than him, should I?"

"No, Peter. But in time, I'm sure you will

be." A dark, almost burgundy-stained armoire, with etched glass in the corners.

"Another master, maybe. A local? Too treacherous. There's a rapier teacher in the south quarter. I couldn't fight his students—they're all gentry—but he's a foreigner. Persona non grata. A challenge, then. A formal duel."

"Dom Marco?" That gorgeous, mahogany armoire with etched crystal panes vanished, as the very real issue of who was going to pay for it muscled in from the corner of her mind to the furniture-less corner of the room. If Peter died—and he would, fighting the Southerner—Beatrice stood to lose a significant portion of her income. "He's a gentleman in his own country, love. The locals might take too much offence at a commoner challenging someone of higher birth. Kill one of his provosts, one of his senior aides. They're no more than esquires, and they would certainly make a fine feather in your cap." Her head stayed on his breast, now





carefully measuring the beating of his heart.

"It lacks grandeur, Bella." His heart tapped a sleepy tune.

Panic. No armoire. No more Johnny-stepping-gently behind the fear that beating la bella Beatrice on the job meant death at the hands of Peter the swordsman-thug. She had ugly work to do now, and all for an armoire. "Kiss me, Peter."

Like Dom Marco and Monsieur Fabrice Jaquise, Herr Heinrich Freispieler was a foreign fencing teacher in the Seat of the Empire. Once popular, the weapons he taught had fallen sadly out of fashion off the battlefield, causing his school to fall on hard times.

"A job's a job, Beatrice," his accent had never softened in forty-plus years of living and teaching in the Empire. "But I verk for gold. An elderly man has little use for ze sings you offer. Turn your tricks at my fechtschule, if you like. But I only take gold."

Never mind, forget it, her mind chanted. However, it was the armoire that managed to speak aloud, "Name your price."

"They were all dead when I got there to post my challenge, Bella. That ancient bastard—Heinrich—killed them all with his longsword in a sham of a duel only an hour before I arrived."

"Perhaps you should fight him, then, Peter," for the first time in all their conversations after, her head came up from his chest and their eyes

met. "Is he not now the most famous fencer in all the Empire? If you beat him, you could open your own school. His students might become yours. You would be wealthy. You could have me all to yourself, then." It wasn't quite true, but his pupils dilated all the same. She kissed him and returned her head to his now rapidly beating heart.

The following evening Peter strode with great confidence to the Fechtschule door. One well-placed hammer-blow nailed the challenge to the door. Tomorrow, Vitas' Bridge, nine o'clock. The challenge was on expensive paper with expensive calligraphy—the purchase of a man who expected to be rich or dead by dusk tomorrow. Even as he waltzed away la bella Beatrice slithered up to the same door and let herself in. She had yesterday's duel to pay for and tomorrow's to guarantee. The first with her body, the second with a two-copper vial of itching powder.

Within this chapter, you will find altogether new rules for *The Riddle of Steel*, introduced for the first time. We've added a number of new weapon Proficiencies and maneuvers, weapon schools, firearms and poison, and more. Each of the sections in this book should be considered carefully before including it in your games – at Driftwood we use all of these new rules, but almost never at the same time; some campaigns we will incorporate firearms and weapon schools, others will not use those rules but will have an increased focus on the use of poison, mass combat and Asian-style combat maneuvers, and so on. As we've always maintained, this is your game – use what you like and discard the rest.



Firearms

Gunpowder, a mix of sulfur, saltpeter and charcoal, was known for a long time before anybody ever thought of using it to make weapons. The main original use of gunpowder was as a propellant for fireworks, and its use is known from as far back as the early 1200's. Although gunpowder weapons lack the range, accuracy and sheer deadliness of a longbow or heavy crossbow, they have the advantage in one very important aspect – they're scary. Those who are not expecting it are frightened by the loud retort and black smoke of a firearm, and the fact that it can kill with no visible projectile is hard for those unfamiliar with guns to fathom, all too often putting the effects down to magic or witchcraft. Bullets are also a lot faster than arrows, and thus much harder to avoid. Finally, it is far easier to learn how to fire a gun than to spend the years it takes to train as a really good archer.

Gunpowder is difficult to store safely. Even a tiny amount of moisture can ruin it, and so it is usually carried around in small waxed bags, carefully sealed against the elements. Although very volatile, it's not actually explosive; it merely burns very quickly and generates a lot of heat and gas. This means that gunpowder in the open is not overly dangerous, even in large quantities, it will simply burn if ignited. If the powder is in a confined area when it burns however (such as tamped down in the barrel of a gun or inside

a barrel) then the gas has nowhere to go and quickly fills the available space, exploding outwards with force when the pressure of the gas exceeds the strength of whatever is confining it. This is what makes gunpowder dangerous, and is another good reason to carry it around in bags instead of boxes!



Firearms use this explosive property of gunpowder to expel bullets at high speed. When the gas around the gunpowder expands quickly, it is forced up the barrel, pushing the bullet along before it and leaving the barrel at hundreds of feet per second. This projectile quickly slows down due to air friction, and tends to spin off course quickly, hence the low accurate range of most firearms.



Firearm accuracy

Round bullets and smooth barrels made ancient firearms notoriously inaccurate. One of the beneficial side-effects of this was that in duels, if one stood sideways to one's opponent, there was a good chance the bullet would veer off course and miss (the other reason was that by presenting your side to an opponent, he was far more likely to hit your arm or leg if he hit at all – a survivable if painful wound). It was not until the invention of rifled barrels in the mid 16th century that firearms on Earth became more accurate, although smoothbore barrels remained popular right into the 1800's. Rifled barrels use a series of grooves that cause the bullet to spin as it leaves the barrel. Because the bullet is spinning, it is less affected by air friction and remains more accurate to a longer range. The weapons described here are pre-rifling. To introduce rifled weapons into your games, use the below statistics, but double (at least) the effective ranges and increase the damage by +1-2 as a spinning bullet penetrates flesh much easier.

There are three different types of early firing mechanisms. They are the matchlock, the wheel lock and the snap lock. The matchlock appeared first, and consists of a gun with an open powder pan. The shooter holds a lit piece of match cord (which is very slow burning) and touches the exposed powder with it to ignite it. The main disadvantages of the matchlock are the requirement to hold the burning match cord in your off-hand, and the open pan which is prone to weather or wind (both of which can be a particular problem if you're trying to use the weapon from the back of a charging horse). The wheel lock uses a trigger mechanism to release a tightly wound wheel of flint which strikes against the pan to create a spark, but the exorbitant cost of manufacture and the fact that this did not solve the drawbacks led to

the wheel lock being all but abandoned soon after the snap lock was invented. The snap lock (sometimes known as a flintlock) mechanism involves a piece of flint held in a "hammer" above the flash pan, and a lock that is pulled down over the pan, protecting it from wind and weather. When the trigger is pulled, the hammer is released which strikes the lock, flipping it open and creating a spark at the same time, which ignites the now revealed powder. This proved very weather resistant, and a great deal more wind resistant, although it is still prone to misfiring if fired in very windy conditions.

Firearm Proficiency

The following new missile Proficiencies are available for purchase at character creation or during the game.

Hand Guns

(defaults to Muskets/Blunderbuss at -2)

Muskets/Blunderbuss

(defaults to Hand Guns at -2)

Gun Defense

Bullets travel too fast for the target to react. As such, it is not possible to actively block or parry a missile attack from a firearm, nor is it possible to position a shield to receive a shot (as described on p. 10) as the firer can simply adjust his aim slightly to avoid the shield. It is possible to attempt to "dodge" gunfire, but only when the target knows it is coming and is at liberty to watch the shooter and anticipate when the weapon will be fired, leaping aside just as/before the firer does so. The target must make a Wit/Read Body Language roll, and if successful may attempt to evade with a TN of 13 minus the number of successes on the Read Body Language skill check. Alternately (for those without the Read Body Language skill and/or a low Wit), the target may attempt to move erratically, making it harder for the attacker to aim the shot. This allows the target to use the Duck and Weave TN of 9 to attempt to evade the bullet.



Misfires

Improperly loaded firearms are dangerous, and although open gunpowder tends to burn rather than explode, if that powder is sitting in a confined space and the only opening is upwards towards the face or hand of the firer, the results can be nasty. When using a firearm, if the result of the shooting roll is ever a botch, then the gun has suffered a mishap, because either the powder was not tamped down correctly or the bullet was not loaded properly. In the event of a misfire, roll 1d6-1 for every charge of gunpowder in the weapon (1 for handguns, 1-2 for muskets, on Muskets, or 3 for a blunderbuss). The result is the number of wounds that should be distributed among the upper body of the firer, randomly determined according to the following table (ignoring Toughness but counting armor). Additionally, the gun is now damaged and will need the services of a skilled smith before it may be used again.

D6 Roll	Damage Location
1	Face/Head
2-3	Chest
4	Firing shoulder
5-6	Firing hand

Rinaldo is trying out a musket for the first time. He has double loaded the powder to increase the Strength of the weapon, but has somehow loaded it wrong, as evidenced by botching his firing roll. Because there are two measures of powder in the gun, he rolls 2D6-2, which results in 5 wounds. Rolling on the above table, he ends up with a level 1 wound to his face, a level 2 wound to his chest (which is cancelled by his AV4 mail shirt), a level 1 wound to his right shoulder (also cancelled by his mail shirt), and a level 1 wound to his right hand. Cursing himself for forgetting to wear gloves today, Rinaldo drops the now useless gun.



Matchlock or Handmatch?

Historically, there's actually a difference between a Matchlock and a Handmatch weapon. What we refer to here as a Matchlock was sometimes called either a Matchlock or a Handmatch. There was another form of early firing mechanism that was *also* sometimes called a Matchlock, where a burning match was held in a pivot above the powder lock of the gun, and depressing the trigger worked the pivot to bring the match down into the powder. For the sake of simplicity, we have used the terms Matchlock, Wheel Lock and Flintlock in this document, but for Matchlock we are talking about the one where it is necessary to manually touch the burning match to the powder.

Clay "Mine"

One additional use of gunpowder is in the manufacture of explosive mines. A flattened sphere of fired, hardened clay is made and packed full of gunpowder, scraps of metal and glass. A small wick (light string soaked in pitch) protruding from the side of the mine allows time for the user to get away before it explodes. Any length of wick from 5 seconds up may be used, but of course, the longer the wick the more likely someone may find the mine and simply pull the remaining wick out before it reaches the gunpowder inside.

When the flame reaches the gunpowder, the entire device explodes with a great deal of force, throwing shards of clay, glass and scraps of metal out in all directions. Anyone within 40 yards of the mine will be hurt, and windows will be shattered for that distance as well.

Any person within 10 yards of the device will be seriously wounded across their entire body – roll 4d6-4 and subtract Toughness and

whatever "average" level of AV protection the character has on their body (as a general rule, use the AV protection to the torso as a body average). The result is the level of wound sustained on the generic damage table (if the result is a level 6 wound or above, the character must make a TO/wound level roll or die instantly). If he survives, reduce the wound effect to level 5. In addition, characters must always make a knockout roll with a penalty equal to the unmodified wound level suffered. From 11-20 yards from the explosion, the same results occur, but the roll is only 3d6-3. From 21-30 yards, roll 2D6-2, and from 31-40 yards roll 1d6-1 (which is unlikely to harm anything but small animals or children).

Wheel Lock Firing Mechanisms

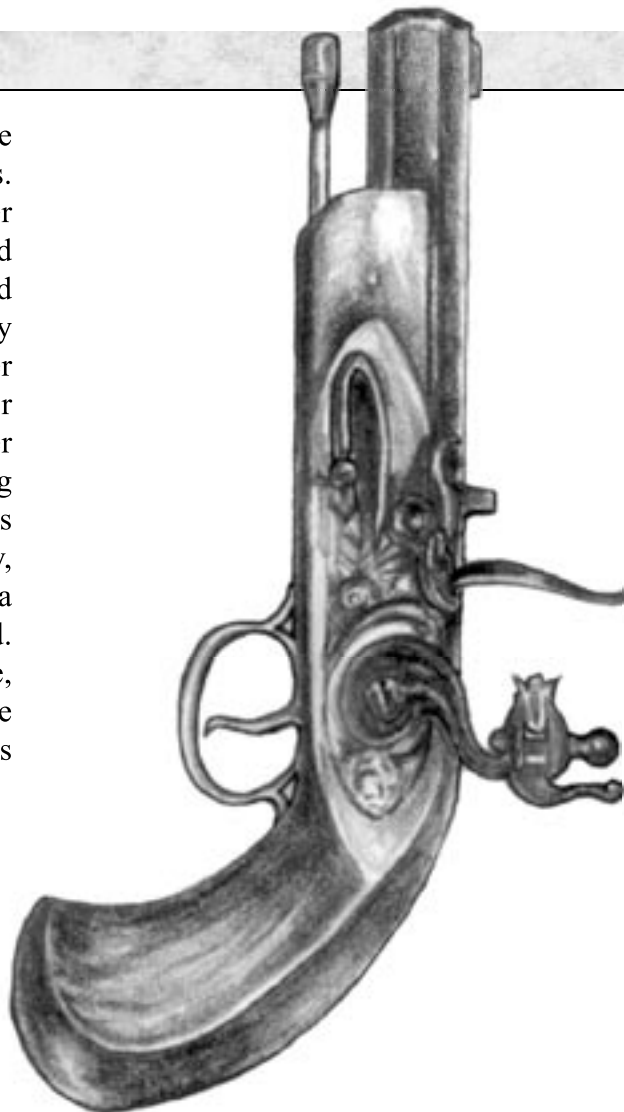
Wheel Lock firing mechanisms use a tightly spun wheel that spins against a piece of flint and creates sparks to ignite the powder in the flash pan (almost exactly like the mechanism in a bic cigarette lighter). They are no more reliable than a matchlock (other than the advantage that they only require one hand to fire), but they are terribly expensive to manufacture. For the stats below, if you want a wheel lock version of any gun, use the matchlock stats (but only one hand is required to fire), and the cost is double the cost of the flintlock version of the same gun.

Haruk was caught in a clay mine explosion. He is standing 13 yards from the explosion, so he rolls 3d6-3, totaling 9 wounds. Haruk is wearing a leather jack (AV2) and has TO4, so he subtracts 6 from the total, leaving a level 3 generic wound to his body. Looking up the generic damage table, he finds that the result is Shock: 8 and Pain: 12-WP (which is a total of 6). Haruk has suffered extensive injuries and will need some time to recover. Because he sustained a level 3 wound, he must also roll his Knockdown at -3 against the usual TN of 8, or fall unconscious from the blast.



Hand Gun

Hand Guns may be purchased with either the matchlock or snap lock firing mechanisms. Each require a single measure of gunpowder and take approximately 30 seconds to load the powder, tamper it down, and then load the bullet. Matchlock hand guns are very prone to dampness or wind (either will render them unfireable by wetting the gunpowder or blowing it away). Snap locks do not suffer these problems, but suffer a -2MP firing cost to shoot them in windy conditions (such as from the back of a horse). Finally, Matchlocks require two hands to fire, while a Snap lock may be held and fired in one hand. Both versions of the weapon are inaccurate, as the bullet tends to veer away from the target due to air friction and resistance, thus the high range penalties.



25 rounds preparation time

20 rounds prime and load gunpowder

3 rounds tamper gunpowder and load bullet

1 round cock hammer (Snap lock only)

1 round raise and aim

(or) 1-2 rounds preparation time (if already primed and loaded, and in hand)

1 round cock hammer (Snap lock only)

1 round raise and aim

Refresh begins with weapon aim

Attack Target Number (ATN): 5

Effective ST: 4

DR (Damage Rating): ST +2p

Range: 2 yards / 5 yards / 10 yards / 20 yards / 40 yards

Against any form of armor, hand guns are +1DR. Additionally, all wounds suffer additional +X Shock, where X is the Margin of Success.



Musket

Muskets are guns with long barrels. The greater length of the barrel increases the speed of the bullet, and helps its accuracy as it is forced to travel in a straight line for a longer period before hitting air friction and possibly being spun off-course. Muskets with either the matchlock or snap lock firing mechanism are available. Both require two hands to hold, which makes the ignition of the powder tricky in the matchlock version. This means the barrel must be steadied on a tripod or low wall etc so the offhand is free to touch the match cord to the powder. As with handguns, matchlocks will not fire in wet or windy conditions, while snap locks may be fired in either conditions but suffer a -2MP cost to fire in the wind. Muskets require a single measure of gunpowder to prime, although two measures may be loaded if desired. This will increase the effective Strength of the weapon to 6, but will of course increase the potential ill effects of a misfire (and costs more).

25-35 rounds preparation time

20 rounds prime and load gunpowder (or 30 for a double charge)

3 rounds tamper gunpowder and load bullet

1 round cock hammer (Snap lock only)

1 round raise and aim

(or) 1-2 rounds preparation time (if already primed and loaded, and in hand)

1 round cock hammer (Snap lock only)

1 round raise and aim

Refresh begins with weapon aim

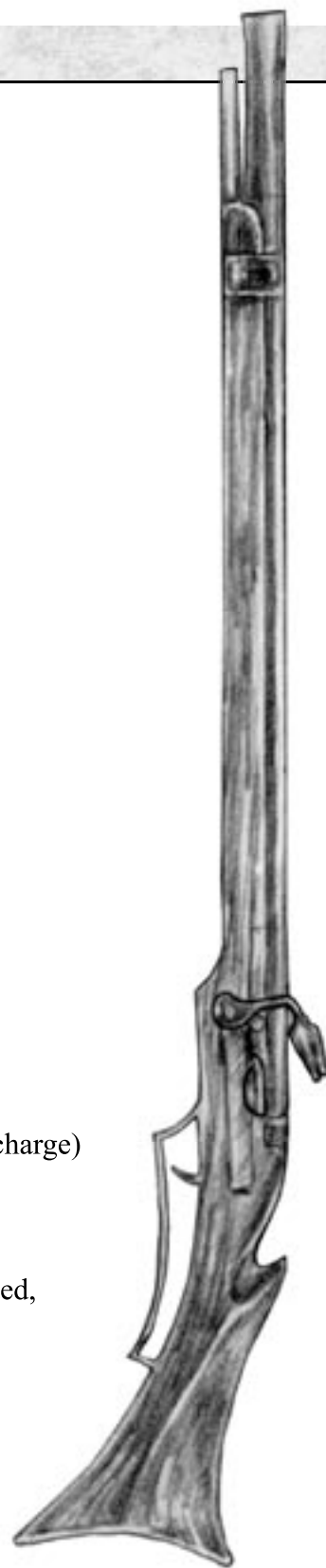
Attack Target Number (ATN): 5

Effective ST: 5

DR (Damage Rating): ST +3p

Range: 5 yards / 10 yards / 25 yards / 50 yards / 100 yards

Against any form of armor, muskets are +2DR. Additionally, all wounds suffer additional +X+1 Shock, where X is the Margin of Success.





Blunderbuss

A blunderbuss is a musket with a larger stock and a wider barrel, which opens up like a bell at the end. It takes three measures of gunpowder to load a blunderbuss, and the weapon is so heavy it must be steadied on a tripod, wall or similar to fire. Blunderbusses are almost always matchlock weapons, as flintlock versions are very rare. They fire a large volume of tiny shot that does very little damage at range but is devastating up close. A Blunderbuss may be fired at more than one person, as long as all targets are within a few yards of each other. The number of attack successes are divided evenly among up to three targets, and then compared against each targets defense (if any) to determine the specific Margin of Success or failure for that target. If the attack was a success for that target, add the Strength and weapon DR as usual. Once the specific damage total has been determined for a target, subtract the target's Toughness from that total, and assign the remainder like falling damage (TROS, p96). This means that areas struck that are armored are unlikely to be damaged, but unarmored areas may well be at great risk.



46-47 rounds preparation time

40 rounds prime and load gunpowder

5 rounds tamper gunpowder and load shot

1 round cock hammer (snap lock only)

1 round place on stock and aim

(or) 1-2 rounds preparation time (if already primed and loaded, and in hands)

1 round cock hammer (snap lock only)

1 round place on stock and aim

Refresh begins with weapon aim

Attack Target Number (ATN): 4

Effective ST: 10 (Point Blank Range), 8 (Short Range), 6 (Medium Range), 4 (Long Range), 2 (Extreme Range)

DR (Damage Rating): ST +2p

Range: 2 yards / 5 yards / 10 yards / 20 yards / 30 yards

Against any form of hard armor, Blunderbuss damage is at -2DR. However, wounded people suffer an additional +2X Shock, where X is the Margin of Success applied to that person.



Gunpowder barrels

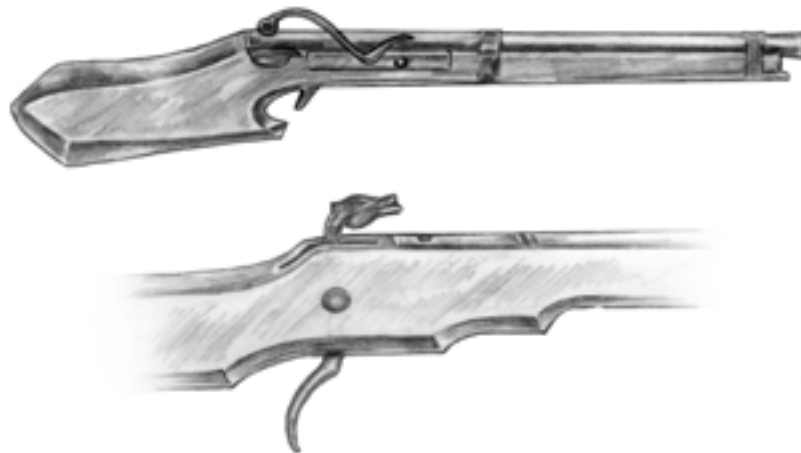
Of course, we know your players are going to want to blow up entire barrels of gunpowder (hey, who wouldn't!). There are two possible ways to set up such an explosion. The first involves filling the barrel totally with gunpowder and is used to damage fortifications, while the second half fills the barrel with powder and the other half with bits of metal and glass, which is used against people (and nasty, to boot).

A fully laden barrel of gunpowder will explode out to at least double the range of a clay mine.

If the target is a wall, carriage or other kinds of structure, the Seneschal must adjudicate the results depending on the Toughness of the target, but in general wooden walls will be shredded, carriages will be destroyed, and even stone walls will take a heavy beating depending on the thickness of the stone. A barrel that is primed to kill people works just like the clay mine above, but double the range to 80 yards and start the damage at 8d6-8, reducing it by 1d6-1 for every 10 yards distant each target is – you do not want to be near that barrel when it goes off!

Purchase costs

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Firearms:			
Matchlock Hand Gun	5g	2g, 10s	1g, 15s
Flintlock Hand Gun	8g	4g	2g, 15s
Matchlock Musket	8g	4g	2g, 15s
Flintlock Musket	12g	6g	4g
Matchlock Blunderbuss	10g	5g	3g, 10s
Flintlock Blunderbuss	15g	8g	6g
Clay Mine (filled and ready)	5g	2g, 10s	1g, 15s
Sundries:			
Gunpowder Bag (one measure)	6s	3s	2s
Gunpowder Barrel (100 measures)	25g	12g, 10s	8g, 10s
Wick (per 5 seconds of burn time)	1c	2b	1b
Match Cord (burns for 10 minutes)	2c	1c	3b
Ammunition:			
Hand Gun shot (per 10 “bullets”)	10c	5c	3c, 2b
Musket shot (per 10 “bullets”)	15c	7c, 2b	5c
Blunderbuss bag of shot (per shot)	3c	1c, 2b	1c





New Maneuvers

Disarm

Offensive or Defensive

A popular tactic in closely contested melee is to deprive one's opponent of his weapon. Beyond the obvious advantage that he cannot counter-attack until he picks it up or draws a new weapon, his defensive options are likely to be reduced as well. Disarming is a popular maneuver when you are trying to avoid hurting your opponent or trying to make him surrender, but it can just as easily be used as a prelude to an easy kill.

Disarms may be performed as an attack or a defense. As an attack, it is performed in a similar manner to the Beat Maneuver (TROS, P.60), except that it is not necessary to perform the disarm after a break in the combat like a beat. The attacker assigns as many dice to the disarm as he likes (after paying the activation cost) while the defender makes whichever defense he chooses. If the disarm attack is successful, the defender must make a Knockdown roll TN8 with a penalty to his Knockdown pool equal to the attackers Margin of Success. If this roll is failed (or his Knockdown pool has been reduced to zero or fewer dice) then the weapon has been dropped (refer to the Dropping rules on p. 32 of this book). If the Knockdown roll is successful, then the defender has managed to retain his grip on his weapon but

the attacker keeps initiative. Of course, as always, the defender has the option to ignore the disarm attempt and simply attack instead of defending, but unless he steals initiative (p. 38) he's risking being disarmed before his attack strikes. Additionally, even if the defender succeeds on retaining his grip on his weapon, his pool of dice assigned to the attack is reduced by the attacker's Margin of Success as the defender struggles to not drop the weapon while he swings it (this does not apply if he steals initiative, of course).

As a defense, the disarm maneuver is performed in a similar manner to a Parry. Perfect timing is required, as the defender must wait for the attack to come, and sweep the weapon aside at the optimal moment, twisting it out of the attacker's hands. After the activation cost has been paid, dice are assigned as if for a parry. If the defense is successful, then the attacker must make a



Knockdown roll against TN8 with a penalty to his Knockdown pool equal to the defenders Margin of Success. Failure in the Knockdown



roll means that the attacker has been disarmed (see the Dropping rules on p. 32). Whether the attacker drops his weapon or not, the defender takes initiative. Of course, if the attacker wins, then the disarm attempt has failed and the attack goes through (minus the defender's number of successes, as usual).

This maneuver is available at Proficiency level 4.

Draw Cut

Offensive

The Cut maneuver (TROS, P.60) covers almost all forms of cut attacks with edged weapons. The maneuver is more suitable for straight and/or heavy blades, however. Some edged weapons, particularly curved blades such as scimitars, sabers and many Asian swords are designed more with a draw cut attack in mind. Where a normal cut involves slashing the blade into an opponent in a swinging and/or chopping action and damaging him when the weapon strikes, a draw cut is a specific type of slice or slashing cut in which the blade moves as much laterally as into the wound. To execute a draw cut, it is necessary to touch the target and draw the edge forward or backward across it. This allows for wider and often deeper cuts, especially into soft targets.

A draw cut requires the attacker to be standing slightly closer to his opponent than for a thrust or a swing. As such, the range of the weapon when performing a draw cut is reduced by one (to a minimum of one, of course). This means that if you are already at the usual range for your weapon, you will face a 1CP range penalty to attack with a draw cut, and if successful you will be at one range step closer, meaning that further draw cuts do not suffer the penalty but other cuts or thrusts would (after which you would have moved back to the usual range for your weapon) and so on.

All cutting weapons on the weapons list (starting p. 119) have a new statistic named

“Draw Cut Modifier”. This modifier is added to or subtracted from the Cut damage rating of the weapon when performing a draw cut, depending on how suitable that weapon is for draw cutting. However, because a draw cut relies more on the sharpness of the blade than the Strength behind the blow, the final damage rating is reduced by -1 against any form of soft armor (Cloth, Leather and Light Mail), or -2 against hard armor (Cuir Bouilli, Scaled Armor, regular Mail, Doubled and Banded mail, and any form of Plate).

This maneuver is available at Proficiency level 2.

Quick-draw (Japanese *Iai* or *Iaijutsu*)

Offensive or Defensive

Perhaps every culture that has carried weapons about in the civilian world has spent some time devising methods for quickly moving one's weapon from a carrying position to one of attack. Western techniques seem to have focused on the knife or dagger, with some additional methods for quickly drawing a sword into a fighting stance or attacking immediately with the still-sheathed weapon's haft or hilt. Where curved swords, such as the scimitar or saber, are concerned, a quick draw-and-slice appears to have been a common start to street fights and impromptu duels. Nowhere, however, does the quick-draw take the place of an art-within-an-art as it did in Earth's Ancient Japan, where it achieved a status comparable or even surpassing that of the Old West gunslinger. In *The Riddle of Steel*, this art form has moved into the repertoire of many wandering bladeslingers and duelists.

Characters using this maneuver can attack with a cut, bash, or parry (so yes, this can be used as a defensive maneuver, too) with any weapon of medium reach or shorter. Because the curvature of a weapon makes this easier, straight-bladed or hafted weapons of medium or short reach require an additional 1 CP over the normal activation cost. Weapons with a



range of “hand” need no such curvature, and can be quick-drawn with no penalty.

Weapons of long reach and shorter can also benefit from this maneuver by making a sudden thrusting attack with the pommel or butt end of the weapon. This has no additional cost, but does have different statistics than the parent weapon:

Reach: Hand
ATN (thrust): 7
DTN: 8
DR: ST (bludgeon)



In all cases, the weapon being quick-drawn is assumed to be at the hip or in some other very accessible place. Less accessible carrying places, such as a boot knife or short weapon over the shoulder, add 1 CP to the activation cost (compounding with any other penalties or modifiers). Weapons in packs or other immediately inaccessible places are just that—inaccessible.

To perform this maneuver in play simply declare which weapon is being quick-drawn at the beginning of any exchange (usually the first, but not necessarily), and whether it is being used to cut, bash, or parry. After spending the activation cost and any penalties added thereon, a Terrain roll is made against the weapon’s normal ATN -1 (if the drawing hand is free) or ATN -2 (if the drawing hand is on the weapon’s grip already; see TROS p. 77 and TFOB p. 48 for more on the versatility of Terrain rolls). If this Terrain roll is successful, the attack or parry goes forward normally, using standard attack and defense rules (TROS p. 76-

82). If this Terrain roll fails then the character is forced to use some form of Evasion (TROS p. 84) or get hit; the weapon will be free for the next exchange. In the rare occasion of a fumbled Terrain roll here (see TROS p. 7-8 for fumbling rules); the weapon is stuck, dropped, or otherwise unavailable for use for a few moments at Seneschal discretion.

This maneuver can be combined with the rules for initiative (and stealing it) found in TROS p. 74-76 or TFOB p. 38. Likewise, don’t forget to use reach rules here, including those rules for getting inside of a weapon’s reach, or this maneuver will lose much of its bite (see TROS p. 78 for reach rules). This maneuver is available at Proficiency level 6.

In the middle of a skirmish on the edge of a battle between two lords, Jorgen the Pikeman comes face-to-face with a nimble swordsman. The swordsman manages to land a level 0 wound (a successful hit but with no damage) on



Optional Rule: Using Maneuvers across Proficiencies or without Proficiencies

Situations may frequently arise in play where a character wishes to use a maneuver from one Proficiency while fighting with another. If the character has the maneuver already listed for another known Proficiency and its use “makes sense” at the moment then simply add +1 to the activation cost. The same is true of the most obvious maneuvers—cut, thrust, bash, punch, kick, even grapple!—whether the character has the maneuver listed anywhere or not. If the character does not have the maneuver listed under any Proficiency at the time (barring previous examples), then add 2 to the activation cost if it seems like something that an untrained character could do. If a maneuver just doesn’t make sense given a certain character or context, the Seneschal can disallow it.

If a character’s Proficiency is too low to use a given maneuver, on the other hand (such as a character with the Katana Proficiency at level 4 who wants to use Quick Draw, which requires level 6), then the activation cost is the Proficiency level deficit or 2, whichever is less.

Jurgen, and now Jurgen’s considerable range advantage—a pike with extremely long reach against a sword with medium reach puts a -3 CP penalty on whoever’s got the disadvantage; at first the swordsman had to overcome it, but now Jurgen does, if he intends to stick with the pike (see TROS p. 78 for reach rules). The swordsman has initiative.

Jurgen decides to meet the swordsman on fairer ground, and declares a quick-draw to parry with the short sword at his side. He pulls one die out of his CP for the Terrain roll (TN 4, from ATN 5 – 1) and gets 1 success. Jurgen can now parry normally, and when it’s time for him to attack he’ll only have a 1 die reach penalty instead of 3 (remember that he had to drop his pike to draw his sword, so using it is no longer an option, unless he tries to pick it up again). What if he had failed? Jurgen would have been forced to use some kind of evasion this exchange to keep him alive for the next one, when his weapon will finally be free.

Master-Strike (Meisterhau)

Offensive or Defensive

The jewel of the art of fighting is the Master-Strike, a type of hit that both defends and offends in one motion. It is found in every school in every land with a different name and possibly

even a different “how,” but the “what” remains the same. This is how the masters kill. The technique, as it applies in *The Riddle of Steel*, can be used either as an offensive or defensive maneuver which in many ways resembles the Simultaneous Block/Strike Maneuver on TROS p. 63, but which uses only one weapon!

As an Offense

Declare a Master-Strike alongside any cutting attack and pay the activation cost. Divide the attacking dice into offense and defense, in any proportion. This is clearly most useful in a situation where both of you are attacking at once, such as the infamous “red-red” throw for initiative (see TROS p. 73). If your opponent is *not* attacking, but waiting to receive (white die), then any set-aside defense dice cancel out any Stance bonus dice (see TROS p. 74 and TFOB p. 45) at an exchange rate of 2 defense dice for every 1 bonus die. Stance bonus dice cannot be cancelled out lower than zero (0).

As a Defense

Declare a Master-Strike as your defense or alongside a Parry and pay the activation cost. Split this exchange’s dice into offense and defense. Roll the defense first, as your opponent attacks. If your defense is successful, carry the dice in your Margin of Success over into the offensive roll!

Should your defense fail, regardless of offensive or defensive role, the attack also fails, and all dice assigned to it are lost.

This maneuver is not available until Proficiency level 15!

Example of the Master-Strike

Thomas, a dueling master, has been called out from his favorite tavern by an overambitious student from an opposing school. The student (CP: 14) makes a few unpleasant comments regarding Thomas' parentage and charges in to attack, declaring a downward swing at Thomas' head (Zone V) with 9 dice. Thomas (CP: 23), weary of such foolish challenges, decides to end the matter quickly and declares a Master-Strike. He pays the activation cost of 5 dice, and then assigns 12 dice to defense and 6 dice to attack (a thrust at Zone XIII). He does not bother purchasing initiative. The student rolls, getting 5 successes on the attack. Thomas rolls his defense, and makes 10 successes. This is clearly a successful defense, and Thomas now gets to roll his full attack – 6 dice plus 5 more for his Margin of Success) in his thrust at the student's face. Things are not likely to go well for the student. What did the onlookers see? The student leapt in, slashing brutally down at Thomas' head, and Thomas calmly slid his blade forwards, deflecting the attacker's sword at the same moment as impaling his head. Maybe now they'll leave him to have a drink in peace...

Murder Stroke (Mortschlag)

Offensive

The murder stroke is an unusual maneuver, used to take down a foe in heavy armor when you're having trouble getting through the armor with your blade. The Murder Stroke can only be performed when using heavier one- or two-handed blades, and involves reversing the entire weapon, gripping the blade with the hands and beating the opponent in the head with the pommel of the sword. Obviously, this requires gauntlets or some other form of hand protection!

The murder stroke reduces the effective range

of the weapon by one step (which could be an advantage or a disadvantage, of course) and the attack must be a swing aimed at zone V or IV (either side). If successful, and if the head is struck, the damage rating is STb but the Shock rating is increased by +X where X is half the attacker's damage rating (ST+DR+Margin of Success; this is the total *before* TO and Armor have been deducted). The Opponent can make a knockout roll (TN is 10-AR rating on the head); each success on this roll reduces the extra Shock by one point. This maneuver is not available to bashing weapons, but of course, any time a bashing weapon hits the head the above benefit optionally applies anyway (see TROS, p. 82).

This maneuver is available at Proficiency level 5.

Overrun (Ueberlauffen)

Defensive

An Overrun is a highly specialized maneuver, similar in concept to a Simultaneous Block/Strike or a Master-Strike. It combines an attack and a defense in the same action, but instead of defending against the opponent's blow, it involves avoiding the attack while launching an attack of your own. The character leaps aside to avoid an incoming attack, throwing an attack of his own at the same moment. The Overrun is very similar to the Evasive Attack maneuver, but is far more specialized and requires a much higher level of ability. Like the Master-Strike or Simultaneous Block/Strike, dice are assigned to an Attack (usually a swing, but it can be a thrust) and a Partial Evasion in any proportion, after paying the activation cost. Resolve both sets of attacks as usual, except the Margin of Success for defense from the overrun is carried over as bonus dice into the attack (the better you evade into prime position, the better your counter blow). If the defense fails, then any Shock result from a failed or only partially successful Evasion are subtracted from attack pool before the attack is determined, as usual.

This maneuver is not available until Proficiency level 12.



Rota

Defensive

The Rota (whose name comes from “Rotare”, which means “to turn”) is a riposte maneuver. The back edge of the blade is used to deflect an opposing attack, after which an immediate cut with the forward edge is performed. The weapon is not moved far, and as such, the location of the counter attack is fixed. This maneuver is only available against swinging (cutting or bashing) attacks, and the counter attack must be a cutting or blunt swinging attack, not a thrust.

The Rota is similar to the Counter maneuver (TROS, p. 65) with the same 2-die activation cost and the same benefit for success (the attacker’s successes as bonus dice for the counter attack the following exchange). However, instead of the random location of the counter attack, the Rota counter attacks the same cutting zone on the opponent that the opponent had originally attacked on the character.

This maneuver is available at Proficiency level 3.

Twitching

Offensive

A twitch-hit is a blow that is pulled at the last moment in favor of striking elsewhere. It’s like a feint in some regards, but it bears more commitment, and actually requires that an opponent manages to defend successfully. The technique hinges on striking with one edge or side of a weapon, and then “twitching” the opposite striking edge or surface to the other side of an opponent. This hit, too, may then be twitched over to the other side. The purpose of the twitch-hit is to retain initiative even when a strike fails to make contact! Although double-edged swords are the best suited to twitching, it can be performed with a single-edge sword by simply making every other twitch-hit with the blunt side of the weapon. Blunt weapons such as cudgels have no edge, making every twitch an attack with the “primary” striking surface.

To perform a twitch-hit declare “Twitch” alongside any cutting or bashing attack, pay the activation cost (if any), and put a “secret” quantity of dice taken from the CP off to the side. Roll the attack as normal. If the attack is successful or a complete failure (no successes, but not necessarily a fumble), put half of the “secret” twitch dice—rounded up—back into your current CP for the next exchange (if CP refreshes on the next exchange these dice are simply part of the normal refresh, not bonus dice of any kind). With the hit accomplished or failed due to a poor attack, combat continues as normal. If, however, your opponent manages to defend your attack (including ties) with anything other than an evasion (which renders twitches useless), reveal your “secret” twitch dice. If the number of “secret” dice you set aside is higher than your opponent’s net defense successes, put them *and* the dice from your opponent’s Margin of Success into your next attack as bonus dice on top of the dice you actually assign to that attack (these bonus dice are in addition to any die refresh if a new round has started). The only limitations are that this second hit must (1) be with the opposite edge or side of the weapon (this only really matters with single-edged weapons), (2) be on the opposite side of your opponent from the one you attacked initially. If you attacked straight down that means Zone VI (straight up). If you attacked zone IV (diagonal down), then the follow-up attack must be to Zone III or IV on the other side of your opponent (take note of shields!). If the number of twitch dice put aside does not exceed the opponent’s Margin of Success, then the Twitch fails and those Twitch dice are all lost.

The follow-up attack can be a normal cut or bash, or it can be a Feint, another Twitch, or whatever else seems appropriate. No more than four twitches in a row are possible, however.

This maneuver is not available until Proficiency level 8.

Example of Twitching

Gildenwere charges in with a narrow-bladed

hand axe against a defending militiaman. Gildenwere's CP is 11 (he's wounded, down from 18); the militiaman's is 13 (he's been practicing). The charge acts as a "red" die, and the militiaman chooses to receive and defend, equivalent to a "white" die. For the sake of example, Stance rules (TROS p. 74, TFOB p. 45) will be ignored.

Gildenwere declares a downward diagonal cut (zone IV) with the cutting edge of the axe to the militiaman's right side for 5 dice. He simultaneously declares "Twitch," pays an activation cost of 1 CP, and then sets aside 5 dice in secret. The militiaman, armed with a sword, declares a Parry with 7 dice. Gildenwere rolls only one success vs. ATN 7. The militiaman rolls three successes vs. DTN 6. Here, normally, the militiaman would take initiative...but not so! Gildenwere set aside 5 "secret" twitch dice, which is more than the militiaman's 3 net successes. Gildenwere hangs onto initiative and attacks in the second exchange with his axe's back-spike to the left of the militiaman's belly (zone III). Although he spent all of his dice this round, the 5 "secret" dice plus the two "stolen" dice from the militiaman's Margin of Success make up a powerful 7-die attack. The militiaman is forced to remain on the defensive. He could wisely choose to pull a full evasion with his remaining 6 CP, or he could opt for a Parry or even Counter in hopes of regaining initiative.

Alternately, Gildenwere could have gotten bold with another Twitch for his follow up attack. How would that have gone down? Gildenwere hangs onto initiative and attacks in the second exchange with his axe's back-spike to the left of the militiaman's belly (zone III), simultaneously declaring a Twitch. He squirrels away 5 dice in secret again, leaving only 2 for the actual attack. If the militiaman was wise, he might choose to back out right now with a full evade with the knowledge that he'll be hard pressed to come out on top in this situation. However, alas, he opts to Counter (TROS p. 65), in hopes of stealing the initiative back and dealing damage to his foe. Gildenwere

rolls a lucky two successes. The militiaman, with 2 of his 6 CP in the activation for the Counter, rolls three dice and manages three successes. Normally the militiaman would have now taken over as the aggressor (with two bonus dice for his next attack thanks to that Counter), but instead the 5 "secret" dice in the Twitch overrule the 1 net success in the militiaman's defense. Now both the exchange and the round end, and CPs refresh. Gildenwere starts with 17 dice (11 base CP + 5 Twitch dice + 1 defender's Margin of Success); the militiaman once again with 13. Now the advantage is clearly with Gildenwere...

Winding and Binding

The Winding and Binding maneuver is very complicated, and requires a fair amount of time to resolve as well as having to learn a new set of rules for this combat-within-a-combat. As such, we suggest it be treated very much as an optional rule, it certainly won't be for all groups!

Winding & Binding

Offensive or Defensive

Winding and Binding (German *Winden und Binden*) is a deadly game that results from the clash of two weapons "sticking" together for a time. It is a subtle art that involves feeling out even subtler changes in pressure, direction, and leverage. Any time weapons make contact with one another (only evasions and shield blocks prevent weapon-on-weapon contact, generally) either the attacker or defender can attempt to initiate a contest of Winding, so long as they know this maneuver. The defender, however, doesn't need to know this maneuver in order to try and defend himself from a winding opponent, though he will be at a disadvantage. This throws the entire encounter into a new form of conflict—a fight within a fight. As a general rule, both weapons must be medium length or longer, and must be within 1 reach category of one another (e.g. medium can Wind & Bind



with Long, but not with Very Long; see TROS p. 78 for reach rules). Time passes in normal exchanges and rounds, as with all combat.

This specialized and subtle-in-fight game can take place whenever the Margin of Success is 2 dice or less (including ties)—regardless of who won—and either fighter declares the intention to go to Winding and Binding (note that the initiator still needs to know the maneuver). Additionally, because Winding and Binding relies on weapon-on-weapon contact, no one can initiate it in the case of any evasion or other defensive maneuvers that rely on non-contact between weapons.

At the beginning of the next exchange, the Winding and Binding initiator pays the maneuver activation cost (determined by Proficiency), and attacks with a thrust “running along the bind” to either the face or torso (Zones X through XIII). This has an activation cost of 2 dice. The defender has one of five options (the numbers in parenthesis are the activation cost that the defender must pay to attempt any of these options; the value to the left of the / is for defenders with the Winding and Binding

maneuver in their repertoire, whereas the value on the right of the / is for defenders that do not know this maneuver):

1. Closerange and grapple defensively (using the Grapple maneuver from p. 34 or TROS p. 65). (0/1)

Due to the sudden clash involved in Binding any reach, penalties are negated, allowing a sudden powerful advantage over longer-reaching weapons. Any

activation cost for the Grapple maneuver must still be paid. If this attempt at a grapple fails, you’ve disarmed yourself!

2. “Run off,” by withdrawing your weapon from the bind in an attempt to set up for a normal strike. (1/3)

This is simply an attempt to get out of the bind, but stay in the fight. If this is successful, the bind is broken and you begin the next exchange with initiative. In addition, any successes the attacker had in the previous (unsuccessful) attack become bonus dice on your follow-up cut or bash (no thrusts), much as if you had performed a Counter (TROS p. 65)—but you get to choose your target! Any range penalties that existed before the Winding and Binding still apply to this follow-up attack.

3. Maintain the bind and wind into a position advantage. (2/4)

This is very difficult for the untrained. If successful, you gain initiative next exchange just as if you had parried, and gain +3 CP for immediate use in any of the four offensive options outlined below.

4. Half-sword (2/3)

This is identical to using the Half-Sword Maneuver to perform a Counter (TROS p. 62 and 65). The price for transition into Half-Sword from a normal grip must still be paid. (Half-Sword Stats: ATN 5, DTN 6, +3 DR vs. armor.) This breaks the bind if successful.

5. Get the hell out (3/4)

Easier said than done! This is a standard Full Evasion (TROS p. 84), but with a huge activation cost. If successful, the flow of combat is interrupted, sending it back to the initiative phase. In addition, you didn't get hit.

If the attacker's thrust lands, damage is calculated as usual, but none of the defenders successes count for determining the Margin

of Success (thus 4 successes is effectively a Margin of 4, so long as the defender had anything less than 4), and the fight continues normally with the initiative staying in the hands of the victor. If the defender is successful in any of the previous five options, then follow the guidelines there. Should the defender have chosen the third option (maintaining the bind and maneuvering for advantage), he takes the initiative (now becoming the attacker), and has four options:

1. Close range and grapple offensively (using the Grapple maneuver from p. 33 or TROS p. 62). (0/0)

As above, all reach penalties are negated, allowing a sudden powerful advantage over longer-reaching weapons. Any activation cost for the Grapple maneuver must still be paid.

Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks

Many of these new maneuvers are perfectly suited to Proficiencies from the TROS core rules. The following list outlines which ones are most appropriate:

Case of Rapiers: Disarm (1/3*), Master Strike (6), Overrun (3)
 Cut & Thrust: Disarm (1/3*), Draw Cut (0), Quick Draw (2), Master Strike (6), Overrun (3), Rota (2), Twitching (2), Winding and Binding (2)
 Dagger: Disarm (2/4*), Draw Cut (0), Quick Draw (1), Overrun (3)
 Doppelhander: Disarm (1/4*), Master Strike (4), Overrun (4), Rota (2), Winding and Binding (3)
 Greatsword/Longsword: Disarm (1/3*), Draw Cut (0), Master Strike (5), Murder Stroke (1), Overrun (3), Rota (2), Twitching (2), Winding and Binding (2)
 Mass Weapon & Shield: Disarm (1/3*), Overrun (4), Rota (2), Twitching (2)
 Pole-arms: Disarm (2/5*)
 Pole-axe: Overrun (3), Rota (2), Twitching (2)
 Pugilism/Brawling: Disarm (2/4*)
 Rapier: Disarm (1/3*), Master Strike (6), Overrun (3)
 Sword & Shield: Disarm (1/3*), Master Strike (6), Overrun (4), Rota (2), Twitching (2), Winding and Binding (2)

* For the Disarm maneuver the first number is the cost if performed offensively, the second number is used if performed defensively.

Another option is to buy up new maneuvers that do not usually come with a Proficiency, making them a permanent addition. Cost (in spent Spiritual Attribute points) is equal to the minimum Proficiency level at which a given maneuver can be used. The new maneuver has an activation cost that's one point lower than those listed above (for those weapons), or one higher than the standard activation cost for using that maneuver in most other Proficiencies (see p. 81 for completed listing of new Proficiencies).



The downside? If it fails, you've disarmed yourself!

2. "Snap off," by making a sudden strike to the other side of the opponent's weapon/body. (1/2)

This is the first instinct for many fighters—especially those who hang on to a desire to kill with a tool instead of bare hands. The attacker must declare a target on the other side of the opponent's body (opposite the side that the initial binding attack came from). The attack is carried out normally after spending the activation cost. If successful, the bind is broken, but you struck your opponent. The disadvantage? If you fail, your opponent can thrust to your face or body (Zones XII and XIII) using each of your successes from the failed attack as bonus dice on the next exchange—just as if he had performed a Counter maneuver instead of his declared defense (TROS p. 65).

3. Thrust from the bind. This is the most lethal option, but also the most difficult. (2/4).

Here thrust to the face or body (Zones XII and XIII) as normal, after spending the activation cost. If this fails, the bind continues for another exchange, unless the defender's action has broken it. If the thrust is successful then all defending successes are ignored for determining the Margin of Success (that means that if the attacker has 5 successes and the defender has 4, the attacker's Margin of Success is effectively 5, not 1!).

4. Half-sword (2/3)

Make a thrusting attack using the Half-Sword rules on TROS p. 62 (ATN 5, DTN 6, +3 DR vs. armor). This option is only available if you know the Half-Sword maneuver. If successful, do damage as normal. If you fail, the bind is broken, and you are still in Half-sword position. The above activation costs do not take into account the 1 CP cost and Reflex/TN 6 roll to change into Half-Sword mid-exchange, but that

doesn't make the requirement go away! The primary advantages to this are a sudden closing of range (as with Grappling, no range penalties apply for this in Winding and Binding) and a lower ATN.

The defender may respond with the previous five options for defenders, and so the contest can continue indefinitely, until someone gets a hit in (ending the bind), or otherwise breaks contact (either through a breakaway attack or defense of some kind).

It is important to note that characters don't move about as much when Winding and Binding: no flamboyant uses of Terrain rolls (p. 54) or attempting to manage multiple opponents (either by splitting the CP or using Terrain rules from p. 49 and TROS p. 77). These techniques are considered highly advanced, making this maneuver available at Proficiency level 7.

Example of Winding and Binding in a Duel between Two Fighters that Trained in this Maneuver

Johannes Zornmann, a popular greatsword teacher, squares off against a rival teacher, Franz Delange. Johannes CP is 22; Franz' is 23. Johannes wastes no time (red initiative die), attacking downward diagonal (Zone IV) on the first exchange with a raging 15 dice! Franz declares a Counter with 17 dice and pays his activation cost of 2 dice, leaving him with 4 CP. Both roll. Johannes gets 9 successes vs. ATN 6. Franz gets 7 successes vs. DTN 7. Knowing that a Margin of Success of 2 will not make much difference against Franz' Toughness and armor, Johannes sees a window to exploit and declares his attempt to Wind-and-Bind, spending 1 CP activation cost, leaving him with 6 dice.

On the second exchange, Johannes retains initiative because he won the last one. He has 6 dice to use. The start of a Wind & Bind always

involves an immediate thrust from the bind, to which Johannes allots 4 dice for the attack and 2 for the activation cost. Franz chooses to maintain the bind (defensive option 3) in hopes that his larger CP will bring him more luck next exchange. Because this costs him 2 dice in activation, he only rolls 2 in his own defense. Johannes rolls 1 success vs. ATN 7 (thrusting). Franz rolls 2 successes vs. DTN 7. Franz steals initiative and gets a +3 CP bonus for the next exchange of Winding and Binding.

Now on the offensive with a full CP of 26 (23 + 3), Franz chooses to “snap off” (option 2, above) by spending 1 CP activation and throwing all 25 leftover dice into a horrific head and shoulder strike (Zone IV). Johannes, now in big trouble, goes for the “run off” option and spends 1 CP activation, allotting his remaining 19 dice to defense. Franz rolls 13 successes vs. ATN 6 (cut). Johannes rolls 10 successes vs. DTN 7. Franz’ hit makes it in with 3 successes in the margin, and things are likely to be over for Johannes. Either way, someone landed a hit, and the Winding and Binding contest is over.

What if, by some miracle (or ruthless use of Luck dice), Johannes had won that last exchange and defended himself? He would have had two options. First, he could have followed his “run off” with a cutting attack using the 13 bonus dice won over from his opponent’s successes. Alternately he could have thrust to Franz’ face or breast with those same 13 bonus dice. Either way, because Franz had used up everything in the previous exchange, a 13-die undefended attack would have ended things very, very quickly.

Alternately, what if that entire fight had been played out with Franz not having any training in Winding and Binding? All his option activation costs would have been higher, which probably would have slid the upper hand over to Johannes.

Creating New Maneuvers

The maneuvers above and in the *Riddle of Steel* rulebook cover almost every possible action you might wish to perform during combat (including a few quite specialized ones). There is no rule against developing your own new maneuvers if it seems warranted, however.

The process of creating a new maneuver is not something that can be done through a formula, so it’s tricky to give guidelines as to how it might be done. The best way to create a new maneuver is through a great deal of play- and balance-testing with your group, until it seems right. In general, if you end up with something that you would never want to use compared with existing maneuvers, then it’s probably not good enough. By contrast, if you end up with something that you could see yourself using a great deal, then it may be too powerful.

By way of example, we have created two new maneuvers, below. They were designed as “special” additions to the two new Proficiency packages we created as examples in the Proficiencies section (p. 77).

Shield Wall

(for the Spear and Shield Proficiency)

Defensive; Activation cost: 1CP

(Each; Spear and Shield Proficiency)

The original concept for the Proficiency came from the hoplites, who were experts in the fashioning of shield walls in battle, so it makes sense to work up a new Proficiency to honor that!

This maneuver can only be used when two or more spear-and-shield characters are fighting together. By paying a 1CP activation cost (each) two such characters can lock their shields together in the start of a shield wall. More characters can join the wall at any time, with a limit of two per exchange – one at each end.

With shields locked in a wall, the characters become less maneuverable – reduce Move scores



by 2 points each, and add an activation cost to any terrain rolls equal to the number of characters in the shield wall (maximum cost is 5 dice). In addition, any attempt to perform any evasion maneuver breaks the shield wall immediately. However, the wall provides bonus dice to any blocking defense equal to the number of characters involved in the wall (maximum bonus is +5 dice). This makes a shield wall most useful against large single opponents, charges, and missile attacks.

Net Throw

(for the Trident and Net Proficiency)

Offensive; Activation cost: 1CP

(Trident and Net Proficiency)

This maneuver was a pretty obvious inclusion for this Proficiency. Just being able to use the Trip maneuver with the net didn't seem enough of a benefit to us. The best thing you can use your net for is to toss it over your opponent, entangling him so that he can't move about as much or fight as effectively, allowing you to close and stab him with your trident. Because the net throw is often a once-a-battle kind of maneuver, we decided to make it a little more powerful than the norm.

At any stage during combat, a character may elect to throw his net to attempt to entangle an opponent (the best time is of course immediately following an exchange where the opponent attacked, that way he can't do a full evasion). After paying the activation cost, the character puts as much of

his CP into the attack as he likes. The opponent may only full evade, partial evade or duck & weave to avoid the net – no parrying or blocking is possible. If the defender successfully evades, then the attack has failed and the net has fallen to the ground. Depending on circumstances, the character may be able to pick it up again (see the section on dropping and retrieving weapons on p. 32). If the attack is successful, however, then the defender has become entangled and loses the attackers Margin of Success in dice from his CP. This is a permanent reduction (well, permanent until he can get out of the net) and so it affects his CP refresh at the beginning of each combat round as well as the immediate penalty. In addition, the penalty increases by +1 every round thereafter as the character becomes more and more tangled in the net through movement. His options are to ignore the net and hope to finish the opponent quickly, or to try to free himself from the net. To do so, roll as many dice from your CP as you like in an attack against the net each exchange. The TN varies from 5 (a poor quality net) to 8 (a very strong net) and the successes plus the characters Strength are compared to the Toughness of the net, which is generally also 5-8. Each success over the Toughness reduces the CP penalty by 1 at the next refresh as the character slowly frees himself. If the penalty is ever reduced to 0, then the character is free and the net drops to the ground. Of course, while the character is attacking the net, he's also likely to have to assign dice to evading attacks from the net's owner...





Proficiencies

What is a “Proficiency” in TROS?

Part of the initial conception of weapons and fighting in TROS was the idea that fighting is a general skill: if you can kill with a stick, then you can kill with a sword, a rock, or a toothbrush. Proficiencies in *The Riddle of Steel* represent a full training regimen that has focused on a single group of weapon, but which has emphasized “how to fight” as much as “how to fight with *this*.” Sometimes the lines between weapons and uses is sketchy—we know that in our own history the ancient masters focused on principles that worked in fights with all manner of weapons. Proficiencies are more granular than schools, but broader than some kind of weapon “skill.” Think of them as foci of training instead of what a character can or can’t use.

Each Proficiency, as with the original TROS rulebook, is really a set of techniques devised for a certain group of weapons. When a character has a weapon that is “close enough” to their Proficiency’s focus, all maneuvers and a full Combat Pool should apply. The further a given weapon is from the Proficiency’s intended focus, the greater the CP penalty should be, and the less inclined a Seneschal should be to allowing some maneuvers to be used. Just as in all TROS rules, a good deal of group discussion and Seneschal moderation is advised. Go with what works for you, based on the guidelines here. You’re a smart bunch, you can handle it.

All entries are formatted just like in *The Riddle of Steel* core rulebook, except the defaults, which have all been integrated into a single table further on in this section. Maneuvers for each Proficiency that are in italics are new maneuvers, which can be found in this book from p. 65.

Escrima (also Kali, Arnis)

Fighting with two short (24” or less) sticks is popular throughout the islands of Earth’s Pacific

Ocean. According to tradition, the sticks originated as training tools for short swords or long knives, used in pairs for flurried attacks and parries. The size of such weapons makes them convenient for daily carry and even concealment without resorting to the most intimate reach of a dagger.

The Escrima Proficiency covers the use of balanced cutting and bashing weapons of “Short” range, especially when used in a pair. Therefore, sticks, short cudgels, short swords, or long cutting knives in any combination are all reasonable uses of this Proficiency. The greatest advantages of such a combination lies in speed and in the two-fisted approach to attacking: when performing the Double Attack Maneuver (TROS p. 60), the activation cost is in fact a +1 CP bonus to the lesser of the two attacks, even if each attack is targeted at a different person!

Example:

Luiz della Fauth, an escrima fighter with two short sticks, is in the middle of a street-brawl with his lover’s fiancée and her father (both are using arming swords with “medium” range). With his Passion: Lover Spiritual Attribute firing away Luiz is using a whopping 18 dice in his Combat Pool. He has chosen not to use Terrain rules (TROS p. 77) to divide his opponents, and instead has chosen to rely on dividing his currently large CP to end the fight quickly. Each of his opponents has 10 CP.

This round (remember, this is the middle of the fight) Luiz has taken initiative from both of his opponents by winning the last exchange against them. He declares a Double Attack and puts 5 dice against the fiancée and 8 against the father, leaving 3 in reserve for the second exchange (because he had to spend 1 die each to close range, TROS p. 78). His special activation “cost” for the Double Attack maneuver gives the first attack 1 bonus die, pumping it up to 6 (note that one is still less than the other attack, as per the rules on TROS p. 60, though it’s fine if the bonus brings the lower up to the higher). The fiancée chooses to defend wisely and puts 8 dice into a parry; the father plays it risky and declares a parry with only 6 dice. They roll: Luiz

gets 4 successes (TN 6) against the fiancée, who rolls 4 successes (TN 6). Against the father, Luiz comes up with a strong roll of 7 successes against the father's roll of only 2 successes. This exchange ends with the fiancée holding his own (without retaking the initiative because of a tie) and the father getting whacked with 5 successes. The father goes down, leaving the fiancée alone with Luiz on the second exchange of this same round. Here Luiz decides to use the same maneuver against a single opponent, and declares a Double Attack with 1 die (plus 1 bonus die to the lesser attack for a total 2-die attack) and 2 dice. The fiancée has only 3 dice himself, and so chooses to parry the first attack with 2 dice and partially evade the other with 1 die. Luiz rolls 2 successes on his first attack against the fiancée's roll of one success. The second attack comes in with 2 successes against the fiancée's roll of no successes. Luiz has just struck his lover's fiancée with two single-success hits, and the fight has clearly moved from disadvantage to potential victory in one single round.

Offensive Maneuvers:

Beat (1)
 Bind and Strike (0)
 Cut or Bash (0)
 Double Attack (special)
 Feint (variable)
Quick Draw (1)
 Simultaneous Block/Strike (1)
 Thrust (1)
 Toss (0)
 Defensive Maneuvers:
 Block Open and Strike (2)
 Counter (2)
 Grapple (2)
Overrun (3)
 Parry (0)
Quick Draw (1)
Rota (2)

Kenjutsu

The far-eastern *katana* is perhaps the most romanticized of weapons today. It was the symbol of the warrior-gentry of Japan, and was considered the soul of the Japanese *samurai*. In these places such weapons are often a sign of

caste, and one's social class determines what weapons may be openly carried. Generally freemen may bear the short *wakizashi*, but only gentry—*Samurai*—have the right to carry a *katana* or *tachi*, the *katana*'s wartime counterpart. The *katana* and its sister weapons, the *tachi*, *wakizashi*, *no-dachi*, and even *tanto* are generally single-edge slightly curved-bladed weapons famed for their cutting ability and quickness. They lack the cross-guard and pommel of their western counterparts, changing the range of maneuvers somewhat in appearance and execution, though not in principle.

Which Sword?

Although most of a Samurai's training was performed with a Katana, in reality much of his actual fighting often ended up being performed with the Wakizashi. Because it was socially unacceptable to carry one's Katana into temples, places of state, other people's homes and so on, it would usually be left at the door. It was always acceptable to carry the Wakizashi however. Consequently, with the exception of pre-planned duels or battles it was often the case that fights would occur when one was without ones Katana and the Wakizashi would be all that was available. When one knew a fight was coming, the *katana* resumed its place as weapon of choice.

This Proficiency covers the use of the *katana*, a long sword, the *wakizashi*, a short sword (the *katana* and *wakizashi* together were called the *dai-sho*), the *tanto*, a knife fashioned like a *katana* in miniature, the *tachi*, a wartime version of the *katana*, and the *no-dachi*, a sort of great-sword. The use of all of these weapons is similar in form and this Proficiency does not cover all possibilities of each. Many maneuvers available to someone specializing in *tanto* use are not found here—supplementing or replacing the Kenjutsu Proficiency with the Dagger Proficiency from the TROS core rules is the right way to create a highly skilled *tanto*-fighter. This Proficiency does not cover the use of the *dai-sho* together, a style

traditionally made famous by the Japanese folk-hero and sword-saint Musashi Miyamoto. This is a separate Proficiency, with maneuvers listed below those for standard Kenjutsu.

Offensive Maneuvers:

Beat (0)
Cut (0)
Disarm (1)
Draw Cut (0)
Evasive Attack (1)
Feint (variable)
Grapple (2 or 4)
Master Strike (4)
Quick Draw (1)
Stop Short (0)
Thrust (1)
Twitching (2)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Counter (2)
Disarm (3)
Grapple (2)
Master Strike (4)
Overrun (3)
Parry (0)
Quick Draw (1)
Rota (2)

Kenjutsu: Dai-sho (Two-sword style)

This Proficiency covers only the use of the katana or tachi in tandem with the wakizashi.

Offensive Maneuvers:

Beat (0)
Bind and Strike (0)
Cut or Bash (0)
Disarm (1)
Draw Cut (0)
Double Attack (0)
Feint (variable)
Quick Draw (1)
Simultaneous Block/Strike (1)
Thrust (1)
Toss (1)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Block Open and Strike (2)
Counter (2)
Disarm (3)

Grapple (2)
Overrun (4)
Parry (0)
Quick Draw (1)
Rota (2)

Modified Tools

Many, if not most weapons are the militant children of common agricultural equipment. Some, such as the whip, can go from tool to weapon with no modification at all. Others, such as many kinds of threshers and flails (e.g. Japanese *nunchaku*), are based on farming implements, although a given weapon may have never been intended for a non-martial purpose. Every culture has variations on these weapons, and societies with strict laws limiting the legality of certain weapons are likely to produce more weapons of this type than any other.

This Proficiency does not cover any kind of polearm (that's handled by the Pole-arms Proficiency), knife (that's the Dagger Proficiency or perhaps the Long *Messer*, below) or axe (which is handled by the Pole-axe or Mass Weapon and Shield Proficiencies, TROS p. 55-56), although these do default favorably. Instead this Proficiency governs threshers, whips, wooden flails, *tonfa*, sickles, scythes, and all related weapons. When in doubt with an exotic eastern weapon, try this Proficiency first.

The primary advantages to this Proficiency and its weapons are, first, a focus on disarming or tripping/trapping/hooking and, second, a legal method of defense for lower-class characters in societies that strictly monitor the weapons its citizens carry.

Offensive Maneuvers:

Beat (1)
Cut or Thrust or Bash (0)
Disarm (2)
Feint (variable)
Grapple (2 or 4)
Hook (0)
Twitching (2)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Counter (2)



Disarm (4)
Grapple (2)
Overrun (3)
Parry (0)

Open-Hand

Like tools modified for use in self defense or war, many cultures developed sophisticated methods of self defense good against unarmored opponents. This Proficiency covers the high-kicking *savate* of Earthly France, the *kung-fu* and *tae-kwan-do* of ancient China and Korea, and the *karate* of Okinawa. A greater emphasis on punching and powerful kicking is emphasized in this generalized approach to something that is highly varied in reality. As such, this Proficiency does not cover the intensive grappling of more battlefield-ready unarmed combatives in the vein of *kampfringen* or *jujitsu* (which use the Wrestling Proficiency, TROS p. 58), although some grappling and wrestling is included.

Some specialized rules need to be considered. The first is that all encumbrance penalties originating from equipment carried or clothing are increased by 1 die or 50%, whichever is greater. Second is that striking stiff (any non-mail) metal armor with a fist causes half of the damage inflicted *before* calculating in TO or AV to be applied to the striking hand (although any TO or AV applying to the attacking fist may then be calculated into the final result). Thirdly, the range for kicks may be extended to medium reach (up two steps from “hand,” TROS p. 256), and the +1 penalty for kicking above the belt is waived. Next, the Duck and Weave evasion (TROS p. 84) can be used as a maneuver with TN 7 and an activation cost of 2, but only when fighting unarmed! Finally, attacks from armed opponents may be parried with an additional activation cost (see below), but not without risk—failure on a parry results in the attack striking either the defending limb or the intended target (Seneschal fiat or flip a coin; a point of Luck lets you decide).

Offensive Maneuvers:

Disarm (2)
Grapple (1 or 2)

Kick (0)
Punch (0)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Disarm (4)
Duck and Weave (2, special)
Grapple (1)
Parry (unarmed attacks: 0; thrusting weapons: 1; swung weapons: 3)

Sabers, Scimitars, and Long Messers

The Riddle of Steel core rulebook (p. 52) says to use the Cut and Thrust Proficiency for these weapons. This is an alternate package with different maneuvers for the use of a solitary single-edged sword with some curvature. Both sabers and scimitars are traditionally cavalry weapons and bear a significant curve. The *Langes Messer* or “long knife” is carried on a daily basis by hunters, commoners, and professional fencers alike. In appearance it is much like a combination of a katana and a very large (3’ 6”) kitchen knife with a cross guard. It may be used with one or two hands and the Greatsword/Longsword Proficiency (bearing in mind its shorter range), or single-handed with this Proficiency here.

Offensive Maneuvers:

Beat (0)
Cut (0)
Disarm (1)
Draw Cut (0)
Feint (variable)
Half-sword (*messer* only, variable)
Quick Draw (2)
Stop Short
Thrust (0)
Twitching (2)
Winding and Binding (2)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Counter (2)
Disarm (3)
Expulsion (2)
Grapple (2)
Half-sword (*messer* only, variable)
Overrun (3)
Parry (0)
Quick Draw (2)
Rota (2)

Creating Your Own New Proficiencies*

Very few historical styles of fighting can't be modeled by these 18 basic Proficiencies. Some players or groups may have a specific need for Proficiencies that aren't from Earth's medieval or renaissance periods. What about Greek Hoplites with big shields and long spears or Roman gladiators with trident and net? These kinds of Proficiencies are uncommon in TROS play, but many of you may want them, or something else that doesn't quite fit into the current mold. Here's a modified version of the process that we used to create most of these new Proficiencies.

Step One: Compare your idea for a new Proficiency to the initial 18. Is it for an elf with two long knives...use Escrima wholesale. Is it for a preying mantis-style ninja? Use Modified Tools and Open Hand for this guy. Alternatively, like the hoplite and the gladiator above, is it a combination of existing Proficiencies? Which ones?

For the hoplite we choose the Pole-arm and Sword and Shield Proficiencies as the two closest. For the gladiator we choose the Pole-arm, Cut-and-Thrust, and Modified Tools Proficiencies.

Step Two: Decide what possible weapons or combinations outside of your primary idea are covered by this Proficiency. This should be a small selection of weapons or styles conjoined by several similarities in use and instrument type. What are the primary advantages of this new Proficiency? Any primary flaws? How does it compare to those existing Proficiencies that you're stealing from?

The primary advantages to the hoplite Spear and Shield Proficiency are pretty obvious: reach, a shield, and good mutual support in formation. The advantages of the Trident and Net Proficiency are a bit less apparent, but on some thought and research we decide that the reach is a definite plus, as is the net's ability to entangle an opponent or his weapon.

Step Three: Select maneuvers from those previously chosen "pretty close" Proficiencies. Decide if any of the activations costs should be different from the source material, and make sure that the advantages outlined earlier appear somewhere in the maneuver list if appropriate.

For the hoplite's Spear and Shield Proficiency we choose the following...

Offensive Maneuvers:

Thrust (0), this one is obvious.

Stop Short (0), to simulate a false charge, maybe?

Bind and Strike (1), with a higher activation cost, because the reach of the spear vs. the shield.

Simultaneous Block/Strike (1), also with a higher activation cost, because the reach of the spear vs. the shield.

Defensive Maneuvers:

Block Open and Strike (2), unchanged from Sword and Shield.

Block (0), unchanged from Sword and Shield.

Parry (1), +1 activation cost, because I'm skeptical that parrying one-handed with a spear would work very well, but only +1 because I'm not 100% sure.

In addition, of course, the shield wall outlined on p. 75 of this book.

For the gladiator's Trident and Net Proficiency we choose the following...

Offensive Maneuvers:

Thrust (0)

Stop Short (0)

Bind and Strike (1), +1 activation cost because this seems unwieldy to me.

MASTER PROFICIENCY DEFAULT TABLE

Your Proficiency...	You Want to Use...	
	Case of Rapiers	Cut & Thrust
Case of Rapiers	-	-
Cut & Thrust	-2	-
Dagger	-4	-2
Doppelhander	-4	-4
Escrima	-3	-2
Greatsword/Longsword	-4	-3
Kenjutsu	-4	-2
Kenjutsu: Dai-Sho	-3	-2
Mass Weapon & Shield	-4	-2
Modified Tools	-4	-3
Open Hand	-3	-3
Pole-arms	-3	-3
Pole-axe	-4	-4
Pugilism/Brawling	-2	-2
Rapier	-1	-2
Saber, Scimitar, Messer	-3	-1
Sword & Shield	-3	-2
Wrestling	-3	-3
Spear and Shield (New) *	-4	-4
Trident and Net (New) *	-4	-4
Case of Rapiers	-	-
Cut & Thrust	-	-
Dagger	-	-
Doppelhander	-	-
Escrima	-	-
Greatsword/Longsword	-	-
Kenjutsu	-	-
Kenjutsu: Dai-Sho	-	-
Mass Weapon & Shield	-	-
Modified Tools	-	-
Open Hand	-	-
Pole-arms	-	-
Pole-axe	-	-
Pugilism/Brawling	-	-
Rapier	-	-
Saber, Scimitar, Messer	-	-
Sword & Shield	-	-
Wrestling	-	-
Spear and Shield (New) *	-	-
Trident and Net (New) *	-	-



Hook (0), this is the primary advantage of this combination, and can be done with either weapon. In addition, if you do it with the net, the effect of the hook can last for 1d10 exchanges as the victim tries to get free. If it fails, though, the net is dropped.

Moreover, of course, the net throw outlined on p. 76 of this book (which might be in addition to, or instead of the hook maneuver; seneschal's decision)

Defensive Maneuvers:

Parry (1), this seems like a poor combination defensively, which makes sense for a bloodsport.

Step Four: Assign Defaults (see the * on the previous chart), stealing like before from the "model" Proficiencies with appropriate

modifications. Use your best judgment here, tempered with research if you're really dedicated. The basis for defaults is twofold: first, how similar in use is it to the defaulted weapons? Second, how likely were the defaulted weapons to be cross-trained in by practitioners of this new Proficiency? Really close associations get -1; the most distant get -4.

In the case of both of these new Proficiencies, I make the lowest defaults those that originated the idea. Otherwise, the defaults are pretty bad, because my feeling is that one of these new Proficiencies is a rank-and-file form of combat from days gone by where the other weapons are concerned, and the other is a freak show combination for gladiatorial use. In other words, they're not ideal for the brand of personal combat that TROS excels at.





Poison

Sometimes known as a lady's blade, poison is used to kill from a distance or to kill foes that are unattainable by other means, be it because they are well-guarded, cautious, excellent fighters, or a combination of all of those.

Below, you will find a list of common poisons, their properties and symptoms, and how and how quickly they kill. Additionally, there are rules for creating and administering poison, and for attempting to cure a poisoned character before they die.

Creating Poison

Creating poison is a tricky profession, but can be very profitable – just make sure the authorities don't track you down! The raw materials for most poisons are commonly available in the wild, but the secrets of preparing them for maximum effect are known only to a select few. There are two stages to preparing poison.

The first stage is collecting the raw ingredients. On the table below, the TN shown is the difficulty of the Perception roll to find enough ingredients in the wild after half a day's searching to fashion one "dose" of the poison. Note that this step does not need to be performed by the Herbalist who will make the poison, but must be done by someone with at least SR7 in the Herbalist skill or the right ingredients might not be collected. Alternately, the raw materials for some poisons may be grown in an herb garden;

this is indicated on the table if possible. Of course, growing a garden full of poisonous plants is a sure way of bringing unwanted attention down on your head...

The TN's listed below are an indication only. The Seneschal has the final discretion as to whether a particular plant or ingredient is available to be located in the geographical area.

The second stage is actually creating the poison, which must be done in an Herbalist's



lab. On the table below is listed the minimum number of successes needed on an Herbalist roll to create one dose of each type of poison (assuming the raw materials are available). If the required number of successes is not achieved, the attempt has failed and the raw



Poison	Ingredients	TN to locate/collect	Grow in herb garden?
Arsenic	Extracted from rocks	9	No
Belladonna	Belladonna plant	6	Yes
Curare	Various (Toad poison, Bark Scrapings, Poisonous Ants etc)	12	No
Cyanide	Bitter Almonds, Rose Hips and Cherry Laurel Leaves	8	Yes
Ergot	Ergot Plant	7	Yes
Meadow Saffron	Saffron Plant	7	Yes
Poison Hemlock	Poison Hemlock Plant	8	Yes
Ricin	Castor Oil Plant	9	Yes
Wolfsbane	Aconite Plant	7	Yes

ingredients are ruined. If the roll is botched, the Herbalist has somehow exposed himself to the poison, check under the specific poison entries to determine the results (assume base Strength). The table also lists the base Strength for each poison type. Each success above the number required to make the poison raises the Strength/potency of the resulting dose of poison by 1 step, up to the maximum, which is listed in brackets. Finally, the Herbalist is able to fashion a poison of carefully determined effect so as to take the target to a specific level on the individual poison effect chart, but no further. This may be done by simply adding 1 to the minimum number of required successes.

It takes a long time to manufacture most poisons, as a great deal of care must be taken. Assume a base of 1 day per required success on the chart below, as an average.

Many of the following poisons have very high base or maximum Strengths. The Seneschal is free to adjust these for individual campaign preferences, but the reality is that these poisons usually do kill their targets, resisting them is very difficult and when exposed, death is always a serious likelihood.

Poison	Successes required	Base Strength (Max Strength)
Arsenic (Realgar)	1	8 (10)
Arsenic (White) *	2	9 (12)
Belladonna	1	7 (10)
Curare	3	8 (12)
Cyanide	4	10 (14)
Ergot	1	7 (9)
Meadow Saffron	1	6 (10)
Poison Hemlock	1	8 (12)
Ricin	2	8 (12)
Wolfsbane	1	6 (10)

** It takes two lots of Arsenic raw materials to create one dose of White Arsenic. This is done by heating the raw ingredients.*

Administering Poison

There are three main ways to deliver poison to a target:

Contact Poison is the easiest to introduce, but the trickiest to work with (you have to be careful you don't touch it yourself) and is also the weakest, making it easier for the target to resist. An item or items must be coated with the poison (gold coins work well, since many people mysteriously like to run their

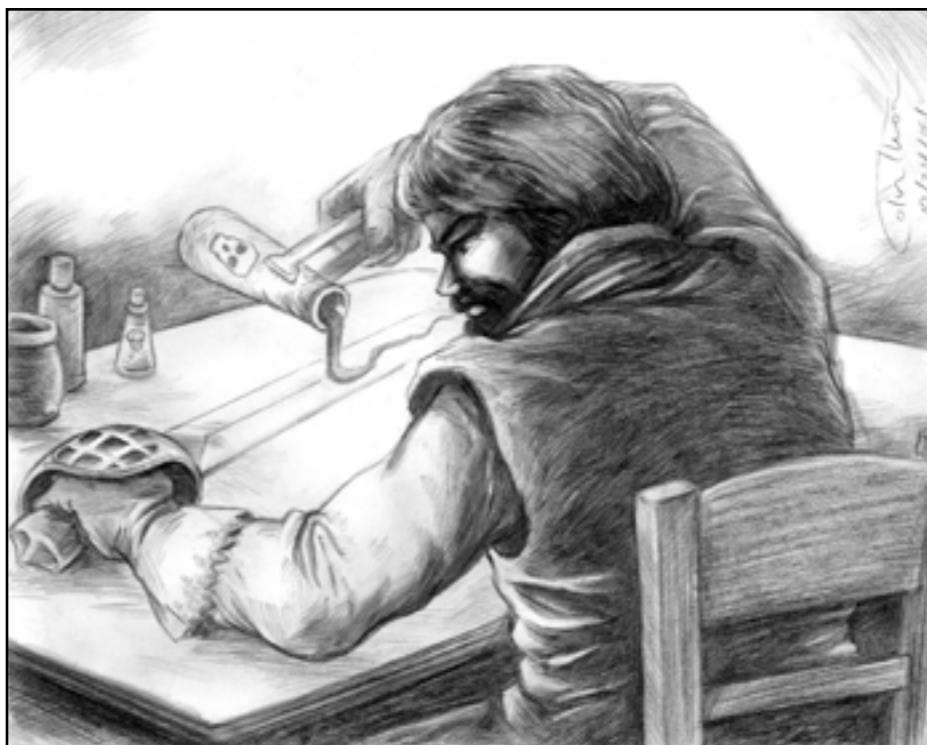


hands through piles of money they've just obtained) and then that target (and ideally nobody else) must be made to touch the item for an extended period of time.

Ingested Poison is arguably the easiest to deliver in lethal doses, as long as you can get the target to eat the food you have laced. This is the most popular form of poison. Ingested poisons often take a short while to begin working, which may defeat attempts at using “tasters” to see if the food is poisoned, but some are very quick acting.

Injected Poisons must be introduced directly into the bloodstream of the target. This is commonly done by coating a blade and slashing the target, or by coating an arrow or dart tip with the poison (or using a reservoir arrow, see p. 133) and shooting the target. The payload tends to fall between Contact and Ingested poisons in terms of effectiveness, but of course the target is immediately aware that they have been attacked (however, they may not understand right away that they have been poisoned). Poison coated on arrowheads or weapons will last until the poison has been delivered to a target, until the weapon gets wet, or until 48 hours have passed, whichever occurs first. Not much poison can fit on the tip of an arrowhead – unless using a reservoir arrow (see p. 133), each dose of poison may coat up to three arrowheads, but each functions at –2 Strength.

When poison is introduced to the system, the victim will pass through a number of



stages, outlined under each specific poison listed below. At each stage, a Health Check must be made against the Strength of the poison (see the section on creating poisons, above). If successful, the body has begun to overcome the poison and the symptoms will temporarily halt. Another health check must be made again after the same period, and if that is successful then the poison has been beaten. If not, then the symptoms will again begin to progress. If the character is receiving assistance from someone who has the knowledge and necessary supplies to help, a successful Herbalist check will add to the victims HT check a number of dice equal to the number of Herbalist successes rolled. Only one Herbalist check may be made at each stage.

Note that a good herbalist may fashion poison at specific Strengths, designed to only take a victim to a specific stage on the individual poison chart, rather than taking them through all stages (which usually ends in death). See the section on *Creating Poison* for more information.

Poisons

Arsenic

Ingested or Contact

Arsenic is a red powdery mineral, most commonly known as Realgar. Its full name is Red Arsenic Sulfide, and it is usually located in hot-spring deposits, volcanic areas, and in some forms of limestone. It can be made more potent by heating it, which turns it white (this is known as White Arsenic). In extremely weak doses, ladies often apply Realgar to the skin as it is said to improve the complexion. Arsenic is a powder, and may be inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or ingested (either dissolved in a drink or sprinkled over food). Arsenic has no smell or taste, so it is essentially undetectable by the victim.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
30 Seconds	Dry mouth, Nausea	-1HT
10 Minutes	Excessive Vomiting	-1 all temporal attributes
30 Minutes	Convulsions	-1 all temporal and mental attributes
60 minutes	Victim goes into shock and dies	

Arsenic is one of the most potent poisons known, and surviving arsenic poisoning is unlikely, but if the victim does the lost attribute points will return at a rate of 1 point per attribute per week.

Belladonna

Ingested

Belladonna is a plant of the Nightshade family (it is commonly known as Deadly Nightshade). Every part of the plant is poisonous, but especially the berries, from which poison may be manufactured. It

was considered fashionable in and around the Renaissance Italy for ladies to drink belladonna berry juice in extremely diluted form, as this makes the eyes dilate which was considered attractive. In stronger forms, Belladonna is an ingestible poison. It has a strong bitter taste that is difficult to mask; the victim may roll Per/8 to detect the tang of the poison.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Unpleasant bitter taste	None
5 Minutes	Victim suddenly loses voice and pupils dilate sharply	-2 Per, cannot speak
10 Minutes	Dry mouth, Severe headaches, Hallucinations	-1 all temporal attributes, -2 all mental attributes; Pain 3
20 minutes	Victim enters coma and will die if a further HT check is failed.	If not dead, a further -1 all temporal and mental attributes.

If the victim survives poisoning, the lost attribute points will return at a rate of 1 point per attribute per day. If in a coma, roll HT/8 every 12 hours. Success indicates victim has woken up.

Curare

Injected

Curare is difficult to make, as it is fashioned from multiple ingredients (toad venom, bark scrapings from certain trees, and so on). It works by paralyzing the skeletal muscles of the victim, rendering the victim helpless but fully aware. It must be delivered by injection, and is popular with hunters, as the poison becomes quickly inert in the blood and does not enter the meat, so poisoned

animals are safe to eat. Curare smeared on a blade or arrowhead gives a minor dosage, while Curare delivered by a reservoir arrow (see P. 133) gives a major dosage, which kills extremely quickly.

Minor Dosage

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Lethargy	-1 ST, EN and HT
2 Minutes	Eyesight fails and victim is blind	Per 0
5 Minutes	Arms and Legs fail, victim cannot move	All temporal attributes except HT considered 0; HT -2
10 minutes	Torso is paralyzed. Victim cannot breathe and asphyxiates.	Death

Major Dosage

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Lethargy and weakness	-2 ST, EN and HT
Less than a minute	Entire body is paralyzed and victim dies from asphyxiation	Death

Once the torso is paralyzed, the victim can only survive if another person makes a First Aid check against the Strength of the poison. This represents the rescuer performing CPR and making the victim breathe until the poison wears off; this takes 1-2 hours, after which all attributes return to normal, except ST and EN which remain at -1 for one day. If this assistance is not given for the entire 1-2 hour period, the victim will die. Although

completely paralyzed, the victim is conscious and aware the entire time.

Cyanide

Ingested

Cyanide may be extracted from certain nuts and leaves, such as bitter almonds, rose hips and cherry laurel leaves. It is an extremely potent poison that tastes bitter and kills almost immediately by targeting the brain. It must be ingested to work, and the victim may roll Per/6 to detect the bitter taste. By the time they taste it however, it's probably too late.

Because Cyanide is so fast acting, it's easy enough to avoid if the target is rich or important enough to utilize food and wine tasters. As one of the deadliest known poisons, it is well known and utilized by assassins.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Bitter taste in mouth	None
30 seconds	Victim collapses and dies	

The victim has a single HT roll to avoid death from cyanide poisoning, and there's nothing any onlooker can do with First Aid to assist. If the victim does not die, they are nevertheless likely to faint and enter a coma (roll HT/10 to avoid; if failed, repeat the roll once every 12 hours or so to wake up).

Ergot

Ingestion or Injection

Ergot is a nasty fungus that grows on rye plants. Fluid extracted from it may be introduced to the body through ingestion or injection. Ergot also acts as a mild contact poison, which will not take the victim below the second stage on the following chart. On top of the debilitating effects of the poison, exposure to the drug often causes bizarre hallucinations and a form of madness, and can cause gangrene to form on the extremities. Gangrene can only be cured by

amputation, thus Ergot is a popular poison when what is desired is the anguish and mutilation of the victim, rather than their outright death.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
2d10 minutes	Hallucinations, nausea and vomiting	-1 HT and EN
1 hour	Dizziness, difficulty breathing	-1 all temporal attributes
2 hours	Convulsions, madness	-1 all temporal attributes; -2 Wit; Pain 4
3-5 hours	Gangrene may begin to form on extremities, requiring amputation	Varies
5-10 hours	Victim dies of respiratory failure	

St Anthony's Fire

On 15 August, 1151 several hundred of the inhabitants of a large French village called Pont Saint Esprit went crazy. Victims suffered severe hallucinations, extreme nausea, and convulsions. It eventually turned out that they were suffering from what was then called St Anthony's Fire, an illness caused by Ergot poisoning. It transpired that the local rye fields had been infected with the Ergot fungus and had been used to make bread, which infected everyone who ate it. With no cure and little care, most of the victims were doomed to extreme agony and insanity before gangrene eventually claimed their hands and feet (the lucky ones died first).

If the victim survives Ergot poisoning, Pain recedes quickly, but attributes only return at a rate of one point per attribute per week. The Seneschal must adjudicate the effects of gangrene if it has set in. Future exposure to Ergot increases the likelihood of gangrene per exposure.

Meadow Saffron

Ingestion or Injection

Meadow Saffron is a nasty plant. Poison produced from it is slow to begin acting on the body (perfect for assassins), but very virulent, and those who survive it discover to their horror that the poison remains in the blood and relapses can and do occur. The poison must be administered by ingestion or injection.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	No reaction	-
1D6+1 hours	Abdominal Pain and diarrhea	-1 EN and HT; Pain 2
+ 1 hours	Thirst, vomiting, headaches	-1 all temporal attributes; Pain 4
+ 1-2 more hours	Victim suffers heart failure and dies	

If a victim survives Meadow Saffron poisoning, there is a 5% chance for relapse, checked monthly for the next two years. If relapse occurs, it is as potent as the original exposure, and may relapse again within the original two years, and so on. Lost attributes return at a rate of 1 point per attribute every 1-2 days.

Poison Hemlock

Ingestion

This plant is perhaps best known as the capital punishment plant, used in early times to slay important criminals who could not be seen to die in a messy way such as by beheading.



All parts of the plant are poisonous, although heating or boiling it can destroy the toxins. Hemlock provides a relatively painless and quick death by gradually paralyzing the central nervous system, although the poison generates nervousness and anxiety in the victim (as if they weren't anxious enough already!)

The most famous use of Hemlock

Perhaps the most famous known use of Poison Hemlock is that of the philosopher Socrates, who was sentenced to death by Hemlock poisoning in Athens in 399BCE. At the time, Hemlock was the most commonly used form of capital punishment in Athens. Socrates was put to death for "refusing to recognize the gods recognized by the state" and "corrupting the youth of Athens". A jury of 500 presided over his trial, and he lost by a vote of 280-220. He was immediately moved to a nearby jail and Hemlock was administered to end his life.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Nervousness, trembling, dilated pupils, lack of coordination	-1 Wit, MA, WP
2 minutes	Weak heartbeat, tingling extremities	-1 all temporal attributes
3-5 minutes	Coma	All attributes considered 1
10 minutes	Victim dies	

If the victim survives Hemlock poisoning, it can take some time to come out of the coma. Make a HT/10 roll every 24 hours. When a total of 5 successes have accumulated, the victim wakes up. Attributes return at a rate of 1 point per attribute per week.

Ricin

Contact, Ingestion or Injection

Ricin is produced from the castor oil plant, and has a long delay before the body begins to react, making it popular with assassins. It may be delivered as a contact poison, injected or ingested. As a contact or injection poison, it is slow acting but is usually ultimately deadly. Ingested, it is very quick acting.

Contact/Injection exposure

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	No reaction	-
2D10 hours	Abdominal Pain	-1 EN and HT; Pain 2
+ 12 hours	Vomiting and diarrhea.	-1 all temporal attributes; Pain 4
+ 1-2 days	Severe dehydration and thirst, burning throat, headache	-1 all attributes; Pain 8
+ 1-2 days	Victim enters shock and dies	

Ingested exposure

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Mouth burns and tongue swells from severe anaphylactic reaction	Pain 2
1 minute	Severe abdominal pain, convulsions	-2 all temporal attributes; Pain 4
3-5 minutes	Victim dies from anaphylactic shock	



A real life assassination

One of the most famous modern assassinations is the Umbrella Assassination of Georgi Markov in 1978. Markov was a Bulgarian writer who defected to the west in 1969, where he became a famous radio reporter who was well known for his outspoken views regarding Bulgaria and the ruling state. In 1977, the leader of the Bulgarian communist party hired the KGB to assassinate Markov to silence him. Several attempts were made on his life, the first few involved a toxin that was introduced to his drink, but which failed to work. Finally, he was stabbed in the thigh with an umbrella on September 7th, 1978, while he waited at a bus stop. A needle on the tip of the umbrella injected a small sphere containing ricin deep into his thigh. He fell ill, and was misdiagnosed as having septicemia. He died three days after the attack. After the fall of the Soviet Union, two ex-KGB agents admitted the former Soviet Union's involvement in the assassination, and explained that the poison umbrella was a common method used by the KGB, developed in their super secret laboratory "The Chamber".

If the victim survives Ricin poisoning, lost attribute points return fairly quickly, being restored over a 12-hour period, but there is a lasting effect on the immune system, HT is permanently reduced by 1.

Snake Venom

Ingestion

Potent poison may be fashioned from snake venom. This must be injected into the victim, and is of varying potency and effect, depending on the type of snake the venom was collected from. Full details of how snake venom works on the body are found in *The Riddle of Steel* supplement *Of Beasts and Men* (OBAM, p29).

Wolfsbane

Ingestion or Injection

Wolfsbane, also known as Aconite or Monkshood, is a poisonous plant whose effects act very rapidly and may be delivered by ingestion or injection. It is popular as an arrow poison, and in fact, its real name "Aconite" means "arrow" or "dart". Its common name, Wolfsbane, comes from the old practice of using it to spike meat left out for Wolves to kill them or drive them away from populated areas. It begins acting immediately in the victim's body, and as such, the victim will know they have been poisoned. Its initial debilitating effects strike very quickly, but then the victim may linger for some time until death.

Time since exposure	Effect on body	Attribute Penalty
Immediate	Local pain (mouth if ingested or site of attack if injected)	-1 ST and TO; Pain 2
1 Minute	Severe chest pains	-1 all temporal attributes; Pain 4
10 Minutes	Extreme thirst and vomiting, convulsions.	-1 all temporal attributes; Pain 8
1 Hour	Victim has trouble breathing. Make HT roll every hour for 8 hours. A failed roll indicates death	Death

If the victim makes all of his HT rolls, the poison has passed through the system after 8 hours. Pain will wear off over a 24-hour period and attributes return at a rate of 1 point per attribute per 1-2 days.



Poison Prices

Below you will find a chart listing the common prices for buying (or selling, if you have made it) single doses of various poisons. The prices assume the poison has

been made to base Strength and intended to kill. Double the price for maximum Strength doses or use a proportional cost in between the two for Strengths in between the base and maximum Strength.

Poison (a single dose)	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
Arsenic (Realgar)	6g	3g	2g
Arsenic (White)	10g	5g	3g, 5s
Belladonna	10s	5s	3s, 4c
Curare	3g	1g, 10s	1g
Cyanide	20g	10g	6g, 10s
Ergot	1g	10s	6s, 8c
Meadow Saffron	10s	5s	3c, 4c
Poison Hemlock	10s	5s	3c, 4c
Ricin	1g	10s	6s, 8c
Wolfsbane	10s	5s	3s, 6c

Weapon Schools

Weapon Schools are an optional addition to *The Riddle of Steel*, offering an alternative way for characters to buy weapon Proficiencies. Rather than buying a single Proficiency and then defaulting others from it, the character will buy ranks in the school itself, from which several different Proficiencies are derived. In addition, each type of weapon school offers different special benefits to characters, but has several drawbacks and/or entrance requirements as well.

Seneschals and players can use the information presented below to develop weapon schools for their own campaigns. The guidelines below are flexible, and may be modified to suit individual schools, preferences and campaigns. All schools are one of four types, and share the following characteristics:

School Region/Type: See below for details. When investing Priority/Proficiency

points into a school the number of points spent becomes the base value from which all other in-school Proficiencies are calculated. When buying a school, only the base value can be purchased with Proficiency points at character creation – individual Proficiencies within the school cannot have points assigned at this step (but can be improved individually through play, see *Advancement in Schools*, below). When investing points into a school, it costs 1.5 Proficiency points per point of the school base value you wish to have. Thus, by spending 6 points on a school you will start play with a base value of 4 in the school, and calculate your different weapon focus Proficiencies from that figure.

Enrollment Requirements: Although these may vary somewhat between individual establishments or guilds, each school places physical, social, and financial demands on their members. In return, the schools provide training, practice facilities, a venue for public competition and the accrual of fame, and a support network of friends and

companions with lethal skills and/or political connections.

Failure to meet these standards prevents enrollment in a given school or guild. Moreover, failure to continue to meet these standards or to practice regularly in a guild setting causes a loss of school privileges. The largest drawback to this is that without access to the school for training, it's impossible to improve your base value or any Proficiency within the school (by any means) which means that your school Proficiencies cannot improve.

Primary Focus: The Weapon Proficiency that is central to this school. The listed focus for any given school is really just the most likely choice in that region—other choices are possible, but will be harder to find. The Proficiency listed after this entry uses the base school investment as the actual Proficiency score.

Specialization: Some schools specialize in a certain weapon. When this weapon is being used, the Weapon Proficiency is treated as if it were +1 (or +2 for a traditional school, see traditional schools for details). This applies to any focus Proficiency (primary, secondary or outside) when using that particular weapon.

Secondary Focus: These are Weapon Proficiencies that students are expected to be proficient in before moving forward in the ranking system of any given school. There may be several of these, and they need not all be equal. Most Secondary foci are calculated as -1 or -2 to the base investment for the school.

Outside Focus: Some schools provide opportunities and encouragement in studying other Weapons Proficiencies without requiring them or offering expert training. Each outside focus starts at -2 to -4 on the base investment of the school.

Non-school Default Penalty: Due to the added energy spent in the vigorous regimen these

schools demand and the pre-conceived mind set that they endorse, any Weapon Proficiency not in the above three categories has a worse default than if the Proficiency had been bought on its own. Each non-school Proficiency may be defaulted from any school Proficiency (not including any specialization bonus) but at a further -1 on top of the existing negative default modifiers from p. 81.

Special Benefits: Most Weapon Schools offer special benefits for training with them and being a member. Some of these benefits will be available right away, while others will only be achieved when a certain level of aptitude in the school's primary focus Proficiency has been achieved).

There are four main types of schools. Most medium and large population centers will have one or more local schools and potentially a number of schools from other regions. This section presents the most likely curriculum for a school of each type.

When is a school not a school?

This section adds new rules for creating weapon schools. Many of these are run as guilds with strict guidelines for advancement; ones place in the school, and ones privileges and responsibilities. Other "schools" developed with these rules may be considered more like "methods of training" with little to no pomp and circumstance, no concept of rank or fees, and so on. As Seneschal, use what you like and discard the rest. The only really important mechanic here is the concept that the investment in the "school" determines Proficiency ratings for the weapons you train in the most (primary focus), the ones that are taught alongside that (secondary focus) and the ones that are taught as a sideline (outside focus). Everything else is just window dressing.

Traditional Schools are more conservative in their approach to weapons and methods. They tend to run on a little more ritual and spend a lot of time investigating potential students who must join and pay the school or guild. The focus here is military, judiciary (for duels), and the brutal elimination of life. Traditional schools are usually organized as guilds.

Traditional Schools tend to favor heavier 1- or 2-handed weapons and heavy armor.

Enrollment Requirements: A character may usually only enroll in a traditional school if he is a High Freeman (or higher). There may also be an additional enrollment fee (determined by the Seneschal) and a monthly due to be paid. Because traditional schools emphasize heavy weapons and armor, there are often physical requirements for entry.

Primary Focus: Usually a heavy weapon Proficiency

Specialization: Usually Longsword, Bastard Sword, or a similar heavy weapon.

Secondary Focus: 2 or 3 Proficiencies that are complimentary to the Primary focus.

Outside Focus: Usually 1-2 Sharp weapons if the primary focus is Bashing, or vice versa.

Special Benefits: Weapon Specializations gain +2 instead of the usual +1. Additionally, when the character reaches a school investment of 12 points he can use the Master Strike maneuver (which is normally not available until a Proficiency level of 15) and at -1 on the usual activation cost.

Progressive Schools quickly embrace new technologies and techniques, often before they are fully proven. Their emphasis is on street-weapons first and foremost, with a secondary emphasis on public demonstrations of martial skill and duels of honor. Anyone that can pay the tuition and uphold the school rules is admitted. Progressive schools are usually organized as guilds.

Progressive schools favor light (or no) armor and lighter, thrusting weapons.

Enrollment Requirements: A character may usually only enroll in a progressive school if he is a High Freeman (or higher). There may also be an additional enrollment fee (determined by the Seneschal) and a monthly due to be paid. Speed and maneuverability are very important to progressive schools, and this is often reflected in physical requirements for entry.

Primary Focus: Often Rapier (or Case of Rapiers) or Cut & Thrust

Specialization: Usually a light thrusting weapon

Secondary Focus: 2 or 3 Proficiencies that are complimentary to the Primary focus.

Outside Focus: Often a throwing Proficiency and 1-2 other Proficiencies similar to the focus.

Special Benefits: The Duck & Weave evasion may be performed with a TN of 7 instead of the usual 9 (but only if the character is wearing no armor any heavier than standard leather). Additionally, after the character has a school investment of 10 points or more, he can elect to set aside up to 6 dice before an attack to adjust the D6 hit location roll after the attack has been determined. Each 2 dice set aside allows the character to adjust the D6 roll by 1 in either direction. This benefit does stack with the minor or major accuracy gift.

Common Schools are really a combination of town and village militia-style training in common weapons of raid, defense, and battle. The focus is on both practical tools and common, affordable weapons. Common schools are usually informally organized within individual villages, neighborhoods, and communities. While often illegal in larger metropolitan areas, rural locales and lords often endorse and even supply common schools for the training of levies.

Common schools may have almost any weapon focus, and they tend to have a broader selection of Proficiencies, usually including one or more missile Proficiencies.



Enrollment Requirements:

There are not usually any status-based enrollment requirements to a common school, although there may well be an enrollment fee and possible physical requirements for entry.

Primary Focus: Any, as determined by the region and Seneschal.

Specialization: A weapon that can be used with the primary focus.

Secondary Focus: 3 to 5 additional Proficiencies, often at least one missile Proficiency.

Outside Focus: 2-3 other Proficiencies.

Special Benefits: None, other than the wider Proficiency options.

Chivalric Schools focus on cavalry battle and the tournament. In recent years the latter has gained precedence over the former as the supremacy of the heavy cavalryman is steadily eclipsed by gunpowder, crossbows, and pike formations. Knights seeking real martial prowess on the battlefield and in the street eventually end up joining a traditional or progressive fighting guild. Such training usually comes at the hands of older knights and masters at arms hired on by the local lord.

Chivalric schools generally focus on mounted combat and weapon-and-shield styles.

Enrollment Requirements: Character must usually be nobility to enroll in a chivalric school. Additionally, being able to ride (well) is generally a strong requirement.

Primary Focus: Usually Lance or Sword & Shield, depending on the school focus.

Specialization: Lance or Arming Sword.

Secondary Focus: Usually Lance or Sword & Shield (whichever is not the primary focus) and



one other related Proficiency.

Outside Focus: 1-2 other “noble” Proficiencies

Special Benefits: When mounted, the height CP bonus is increased by an additional +1, and the character gets an additional +1 die on rolls to avoid falling from horseback when struck (see the Mounted Combat section on p.41). Additionally, when using the Cut or Bash maneuvers, Chivalric students may use a “great blow”, setting aside up to 2 dice before the attack to add to damage, instead of the usual 1 die (see the Cut and Bash maneuvers in TROS for further information).

Advancement in Schools

Individual Proficiency scores within school curriculum (meaning Primary, Secondary, and Outside Focus Proficiencies) can be improved in two ways for school members.

1) Improve the base value of the school. This is the most expensive option, costing one and a half times (1.5x, round up) the current base value in Spiritual Attribute points. This raises every Proficiency score within the school by one point.

2) Improve an individual Focus Proficiency from its current level. This costs the current Proficiency score in SA points (see TROS p. 68).



Rank Name	Rank Requirements (cumulative with lesser ranks; note that any requirement can be waived by the school master)	Usual Privileges and Responsibilities (cumulative with lesser ranks)
Novice	None other than a current enrollment	P: Open use of school facilities and instructors R: Pay dues
Scholar	Minimum one year enrollment, public evaluation of skills (see Prize Playing, below), Primary focus Proficiency at 5, all Secondary focus Proficiencies at 3	P: Right to wear school colors and/or insignia R: Train novice students
Free Scholar	Minimum five years as a Scholar, public Prize Playing, Primary focus Proficiency at 9, all Secondary focus Proficiencies at 6, one Outside Focus Proficiency at 4	P: Increased Access to school equipment, craftsman, etc. R: Train Scholars, accept reasonable challenges
Provost	Minimum five years as a Free Scholar, public Prize Playing, Primary Focus Proficiency at 13, all Secondary Focus Proficiencies at 9, one Outside Focus Proficiency at 6.	P: Direct, constant access to the guild masters; administrative control over school resources; enrollment fees replaced with a moderate salary R: Joint responsibility (with other Provosts) over school resources and day-to-day affairs; train Free Scholars
Master	Minimum 5 years as a Provost, public Prize Playing, appointment to head teaching position in the service of a lord or guild, Primary Focus Proficiency at 16, all Secondary Focus Proficiencies at 12, one Outside Focus Proficiency at 8.	P: Final say in all school matters; as generous of a salary as your school can afford R: Final accountability for all school affairs, enrollment, and finances
Free-Fencer*	Primary Focus Proficiency at 12, all Secondary Focus Proficiencies at 8 *Free-Fencers sit somewhat outside of the above ranks. They primarily act as teachers for larger schools, wealthy lords, or those recently sentenced to judicial combat. They almost always belong (or once belonged) to an established school or guild, and may hold rank within that organization as well. Many of history's best-known masters were actually Free-fencers who set up their own schools or who were awarded the position of Master after an invitation (and a Prize Playing) from an existing school or guild.	P: Less accountability to an organization, guild, or school R: Unless connected to an established guild or school, a Free-fencer must provide their own facilities, etc., and has essentially none of the long-term benefits of school ranking

Prize Playing and Public Fighting Exhibitions

In order to advance past the rank of novice in most schools, it is necessary for the student to undergo a public examination, called a Prize Play. The student faces several opponents, with a variety of weapons in the schools various focus Proficiencies. These opponents are all better than the student (and generally of the rank he is trying to attain), and their mandate is to seriously test him so he can be judged. It is not strictly necessary for the student to win all bouts, but he must make a good showing. All weapons used are blunted and/or padded and success is determined by the first person to make three successful clear hits (any hit with a Margin of Success of 2 or more).

Novices attempting to advance to scholar will face four opponents, at least 2 with the school primary focus Proficiency and two more with weapons from randomly selected secondary Proficiencies. He is given little or no time to rest between bouts.

Scholars who wish to advance to Free Scholars will face 7 opponents, three with weapons from the school's primary focus Proficiency, three with weapons from randomly selected secondary focus Proficiencies, and one with weapons from a randomly selected outside focus Proficiency. Little time is given to rest between bouts.

Free Scholars who are being tested for advancement to Provost will face 10 opponents, four with weapons from the primary focus Proficiency, four with weapons from randomly selected secondary focus Proficiencies and two with weapons from randomly selected outside focus Proficiencies. Little to no time is given to rest between bouts.

A Provost who wishes to advance to Master must face no fewer than 12 masters, with weapons randomly selected from any of the schools focus

Proficiencies (primary, secondary or outside). He is given no time to rest between bouts.

Some Sample Schools

A Germanic Traditional School (*for a Weyrth campaign, this could include Stahl or Ouestenreich*)

This school emphasizes reach, aggression, and a conservative approach to new weapons. The guild structure is very tight and competition between various guild-alliances or common-school communities is fierce.

Enrollment Requirements: Applicants to traditional schools must be highborn or wealthy enough for other students not to notice that they aren't (Social Class of High Freeman or Better). Tuition is stiff (4 gold/month) and the physical rigors of regular classes and "practice" bouts are very hard on even the newest students (min ST and EN 4, WP and TO 5). Finally, some experience as a wrestler or brawler is expected (Wrestling, Dagger, or Pugilism Proficiency at 2).

Primary Focus: Longsword/Greatsword

Specialization: Longsword (at +2)

Secondary Focus: Dagger, Wrestling, and Messer (see p. 80) or Sword and Shield (Buckler) all at -2

Outside Focus: Polearms -3

An Italian Renaissance Progressive School (*for Weyrth, the Seat of the Xanarian Empire or Farrenshire*)

This school emphasizes speed and maneuverability in combat. Class sizes are generally large and students struggle to make themselves noticed, leading to fierce competition between them.

Enrollment Requirements: Anyone that can pay tuition and not bring obvious shame to the school is admitted (Social Class: Low Freeman or Higher). Tuition is generally



more affordable at the expense of larger classes and teachers with less experience (15 silver/month). The lack of class-instituted structure leaves the pecking order more immediately to the students, who often rely on less martial wiles to gain acceptance among their classmates (min WP, Wit, or Soc 6). Membership in most progressive schools is less prestigious than with their traditional counterparts, but the rise in respected younger Free-fencers (see Advancement, above) is changing that bit by bit.

Primary Focus: Rapier

Specialization: Rapier (at +1)

Secondary Focus: Cut and Thrust (at -1), Dagger (at -2), Polearms (at -2)

Outside Focus: Wrestling, Messer (both -3)

A Medieval Asian Chivalric School

(for Weyrth, Tengoku)

This school is modeled on the Samurai. The code of honor (Bushido) is extremely important and any student who brings shame to the school is expected to commit suicide immediately to restore face. Unlike many chivalric schools,

this one does not emphasize riding as a requirement.

Enrollment Requirements: Only nobility are accepted (Social Class Lord) and training begins from a very young age. Students are expected to be extremely swift of hand and eye (Reflex: 6 or better) and to know their social graces (Soc: 5 or better).

Primary Focus: Kenjutsu

Specialization: Katana (at +1)

Secondary Focus: Dai-sho (at -1), Bow (at -2), Open Hand (at -2)

Outside Focus: Modified Tools, Wrestling (both -3)

A Common School

(for Weyrth, pretty much anywhere)

This is a generic fighting school, which could be located in many towns or villages.

Enrollment Requirements: Live in the village or community and buy the drinks when it's your turn (max Social Class Peasant or Low Freeman). Bring your own gear and expect to use it. Don't expect any mercy from your practice partners or tolerance of any setbacks this causes in your "real" job from your lord or employer (min TO and EN 5).

Primary Focus: Messer

Specialization: Messer (at +1)

Secondary Focus: Polearms, Dagger, Wrestling, Sword and Shield, Modified Tools (all -1); Crossbow or Gunpowder Weapon (at -2)

Outside Focus: Rapier or Cut and Thrust (both for urban schools only), Mass Weapon and Shield, Pole Axe (rural schools only) (all -3)

The Black Shadow Progressive School

(for Weyrth, pretty much anywhere, but especially Ahr)

The black shadow is an underground school that specializes in training assassins. Advancement in the school is generally through (sanctioned) assassination of one's elders rather than prize



playing exhibitions. The progressive school's ability to use weapons with pinpoint accuracy is extremely useful to an assassin!

Enrollment Requirements: Only those from the lower walks of life are admitted (Low Freeman or lower) but applicants must be extremely quick thinking and perceptive (Wit and Per min 6) and must have killed at least once previously. Dues are steep (1gp/month) which usually leads to students doubling as cutpurses or cat burglars.

Primary Focus: Dagger

Specialization: Dagger (+1)

Secondary Focus: Cut & Thrust (at -1), Thrown Knives (at -1; dagger specialization applies)

Outside Focus: Open Hand, Pugilism/Brawling (both -3)

A Common School focusing on missile combat

This school shows how a weapon school might be constructed primarily to train its students in the use of various missile weapons and associated melee Proficiencies.

Enrollment Requirements: This school is open to anyone who has a natural talent for missile weapons (minimum Aim 6). A monthly fee covers expendable ammunition (5 silver/month)

Primary Focus: Bow

Specialization: Short bow (+1)

Secondary Focus: Dagger (at -1), Thrown Knives (at -2), Spear/Javelin (at -2)

Outside Focus: Spear and Shield, Poleaxe (both -3)

Creating New Schools

There are no hard-and-fast rules for the creation of a weapon school; a lot of it must be done through intuition and a bit of "guesswork". By way of example, let's create a new chivalric school.

I've always liked the Knights Templar, an order that was created in 1118 to protect pilgrims traveling to the holy land from Europe. A little

reading tells me that only nobles were accepted (and only fit and well ones at that), that they were expected to provide their own trappings and equipment (but then take an oath of poverty), and that (of course) being able to ride was a strong requirement. These, then, become the entrance requirements.

The primary focus is pretty easy; Templar knights excelled in Sword & Shield fighting, so I make that the primary focus of the school, and because they would need to be able to fight other armored opponents, I select the Arming sword (the traditional knight's sword) as their specialization weapon.

For the secondary focus weapons, I select Longsword/Greatsword (for use when they have lost their shield) and Lance (for riding down opponents). It seems to me that the Lance would be more likely to be focused on than fighting without a shield, so I put the Lance as a -1 secondary focus, and thus put the Longsword/Greatsword Proficiency at -2 (because two Proficiencies at -1 seems too much of a benefit). For the outside focus Proficiencies, I select Mass Weapons & Shield, and Poleaxe, both of which seem to me to be good knightly Proficiencies, and since neither are particularly far from the primary and secondary foci (in terms of skill needed to use them), I assign them as -3 instead of -4. That completes my school, except for noting that the usual chivalric benefits while on horseback will definitely apply to my Templar Knights.

The final result is thus:

An Old Earth Templar Knights Chivalric School (*for Weyrth, perhaps Xanar or Cynrithmeir*)

The knights Templar were a monastic order founded in the early 1100's to protect pilgrims traveling between Europe and Jerusalem. Although most were never formally trained in



a school, this school attempts to recreate what such an order would have been like.

Enrollment Requirements:

Only noblemen can join the Templar school (Social requirement: Must be a lord), and ST, EN and TO must all be at least 5. Additionally, all knights must be able to ride (riding skill 7 minimum) and must provide their own horse, armor and weapons, after which a vow of poverty is taken (no accumulation of wealth or all school benefits are lost).

Primary Focus: Sword & Shield

Specialization: Arming Sword (+1)

Secondary Focus: Longsword/Greatsword (at -2), Lance (at -1)

Outside Focus: Mass Weapon and Shield, Pole Axe (both -3)

How to use a school during character creation

Matt is creating a new character called Thomas. He pictures Thomas as an impoverished knight, similar to the old Knights Templar. He discusses the idea with his Seneschal, and they agree that Thomas can start off with the Templar School presented above, with the idea being that in between training he will be sent on specific missions for the guild. Because Thomas will need to start off with his own horse, armor and weapons, Matt makes him a Landed Noble when assigning social priority (to give him enough money for



those purchases). Matt then makes sure that his attributes priority is high enough that he can meet the ST, EN and TO requirements, as well as ensuring that he starts with a 7 in the Riding skill. Thomas ends up with a priority of B in Proficiencies, which gives him 9 points. By assigning all 9 to the school, Matt will have a base value in the school of 6. Note that weapon Proficiencies and schools can never have more than 7 points assigned to them (8 for an "A" priority in Proficiencies), but in the case of schools the limitation comes after the point calculation, so Matt is considered to be assigning 6 points (which is fine) instead of 9 (which would not be). The base value of 6 means that Thomas has a Proficiency of 6 in Sword & Shield. He also has a Proficiency of 4 in Longsword/Greatsword, 5 in Lance, and 3 in both Mass Weapon & Shield, and Pole Axe. He also notes that his 6 in Sword & Shield is boosted by +1 whenever he is using an Arming Sword, because it is the school specialization weapon.



The Riddle of Steel Battle System

This system is perhaps a little different from the usual style of mass battle systems presented in many RPG's today. Most systems are designed to replicate battles in some detail, with the players and GM determining specific troop tactics and maneuvers, and rolling for the effectiveness and battle skill of individual units of men (usually involving grid maps and small metal figures). We feel that such systems downplay the actions of individuals, as it is difficult for a lone warrior to shine when surrounded by hundreds or thousands of his fellow men. *The Riddle of Steel* isn't really about that; we feel that the actions of the heroes – your characters – should be the most important factor in a battle because, really, that escapism is why we roleplay. As such, the Riddle of Steel Battle system focuses on the actions of individuals within the context of a battle, shifting the battle to the background somewhat, and allowing PC's and Nap's to strive to affect the course of the conflict through their personal actions and heroics. This is perhaps a less "realistic" system, but we find it more personally satisfying as the action is focused directly on the most important participants (the characters). This battle system has a very "movie battle" feel, such as the excellent fights depicted in films like *Braveheart* and *The Last Samurai*.

Logistics

The subject of Logistics deals with the hiring, supplying, training and moving of armies. It is a very broad subject and details vary greatly across timelines and cultures. As such, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive essay here detailing full details about how to build, supply and pay for armies in *The Riddle of Steel*. Rather, we will try to provide an overview, along with some specific rules that players and Seneschals can modify as required, and use in your *Riddle of Steel* games.



Few countries can afford to have large standing armies. The costs of recruiting and maintaining a large force of men are prohibitive, and unless the army will be constantly in-use (through military expansion or defense against aggressive neighbors) its battle readiness and capability begins to decline. As such, in many

cases armies are made up hastily, drawn from conscripts and the peasantry as they are needed. Usually smaller forces are kept in constant readiness, and used to shepherd and train larger conscripted armies. Another possibility is that of the “ready but disbanded” model, where soldiers are trained and then returned to their normal lives, ready to be called up again at short notice if needed (and usually called up one to two times a year for refresher courses).

What concerns us when we are developing an army for Mass Combat in *The Riddle of Steel* is how well trained the men are, and how much it costs to equip, feed and maintain them. For simplicity, all costs will be dealt in one bundle – a total cost per month per man, which covers his salary, equipment, food and transport costs. If this cost cannot be met, armies will start to disperse as individuals begin to desert. The cost will also take into account the level of training the man has received, which affects his battle skill. Remember, these figures are indicative only. If your campaign world is Weyrth, treat the following figures as being Imperial Standard coinage. Double all figures for lightweight coinage, or multiply by 2/3rds for heavy coinage.

Cost	Skill
2 silvers per month for green troops	(Battle Skill 9)
4 silvers per month for poorly trained troops	(Battle skill 8)
6 silvers per month for average trained troops	(Battle skill 7)
8 silvers per month for well trained troops	(Battle skill 6)
10 silvers per month for very well trained troops	(Battle skill 5)
15 silvers per month for expert troops	(Battle skill 4)
20 silvers per month for veterans	(Battle skill 3)

These costs are for raw men (per man) with sufficient equipment and sufficient provisioning. Reduce the cost by 10% for poor provisioning

or equipment (or 20% for both), but this will affect the resulting army CP (see below). To raise the standard to “well provisioned” or “well equipped” add 10% to the cost (or 20% for both). The result is the cost per man for basic footmen.

Heavy Infantry cost 150% of the standard footman cost, as they require more expensive equipment (this does not determine the quality of their equipment).

Archers also have an additional cost, that of the bow, bowstrings, arrows and such that they require. Like Heavy Infantry, the basic per-man cost is 150% to cover this.

Logistically, it costs about four times as much to feed and water a horse as it does a man. Thus, mounted troops add four times the cost of the basic man. In other words, to determine the cost of standard cavalry, take the per-man cost and multiply it by 5. The cost for heavy cavalry would take the per-man cost (multiplied by 150% to make them heavy Infantry) and then multiplied by 5 to get the final heavy cavalry cost.

For simplicity, all troops in an army must be purchased with the same level of equipment and provisioning.

Dave wants to develop a Stahlrish army for use in taking back a section of his character's homeland, which was recently overrun by Gol from the north. He wishes to have 400 footmen, 300 archers and 100 cavalry. He decides that averagely trained troops (Battle Skill 7) will suffice, which cost 6 silvers per man per month. However, Dave wishes to gain an advantage over the Gol force by well provisioning and equipping his army, so he adds 20% to the basic cost, making 7.2 silvers per man. The 400 footmen will therefore cost 2880 silvers per month to maintain (144 gold). An additional 300 men will cost 2160 silvers, which he then multiplies by 1.5 because they will be archers, making 3240 silvers (162

gold). Finally, the 100 cavalry cost $720 * 5$ or 3600 silvers (180 gold). All in all, it will cost around 486 gold coins per month to maintain this army. The troops are well provisioned and equipped (see the section on determining the army CP later), and have a battle skill of 7. The same army with average equipment and provisions would have cost 405 gold per month. Dave's character is hoping it won't take too long to rout the Gol, or else he's going to be bankrupt very quickly!

Troops with varying skill levels

It's tricky to represent troops with varying skill levels in this form of battle system, as all troops on a side are conglomerated down into a single set of statistics. That's why the system requires a commander to purchase new troops at the same level of ability as existing troops. However, what happens if two armies or several disparate sets of forces join together and the different elements are at different skill levels?

The simplest way to handle this is to average the different Battle Skill levels of the troops down to a single number. If the troops are only coming together for a short time, keep track of their different Battle Skill levels for when they split apart, but while they fight together as a combined force, use the single averaged number.

Army Replacements, Training and Experience

When replacements are purchased to bolster the size of an army, it is necessary to pay the same cost for provisioning, equipment and battle skill to match the existing members of the army. This is purely to keep bookkeeping simple.

As armies battle, they receive training during downtime and experience from campaigning. Unfortunately, as troops get better, they begin to expect better conditions and more pay! After any campaign (series of battles)

where the main army core has survived, the Seneschal may declare that the force have gained enough experience to improve their Battle skill by 1 (the best battle skill humans can have is 3). Re-determine the per-man per-month cost based on the new battle skill of the army. If the commander(s) cannot or will not pay this new cost, they must reduce the size of the army to keep their costs down, or the army will disperse.

Adding other variables

It's difficult to provide full guidelines for everything you may want to add to an Army for mass combat. Here are some samples to help you in determining approximate costs:

Addition	Month Cost for Battle Skill 9	Additional cost per -1 Battle Skill
War Dogs/Wolves	4 silvers	+2 silvers
Chariots	8 silvers	+3 silvers
War Elephants	30 silvers	+10 silvers
Siege equipment	100-200 silvers	+50 silvers

Dave's army needs a little fleshing out, so he decides that his character has brokered a deal with a foreign diplomat and secured the purchase of ten war elephants (along with their handlers and support staff). Because the rest of the army is Battle Skill 7, this will cost Dave's character 50 silvers per elephant, for a total of 500 silvers (25 gold) per month.

Medical Corps

Most armies retain a corps of support personnel; doctors, field surgeons, veterinary surgeons, engineers (to build and repair siege weapons) and so on. In the *Riddle of Steel* Battle System, all of these personnel are treated as a single Medical Corps. They are rated by their medical skill and their medical pool. The medical skill

is determined by how much is spent retaining them (rather like the battle skill of the troops), while the medical pool is based on the number of personnel retained compared to the size of the army. On the table below, the listed cost is the monthly cost to retain 1MP worth of medical personnel per 100 points of army size. In other words, for a 500-point army, it would cost 5 times the amount listed per point of MP. It is not possible to buy more than 10 dice worth of MP for any army.

Cost	Skill
1 silver	Medical Skill 9
3 silvers	Medical Skill 8
5 silvers	Medical Skill 7
7 silvers	Medical Skill 6
9 silvers	Medical Skill 5
12 silvers	Medical Skill 4
15 silvers	Medical Skill 3



Dave's Stahlrish army size is 1150, including the elephants. (See the section on Army Size below to see how that figure was determined.) This means that Dave will need to pay 12 times the listed cost in silver, per point of MP. He decides that a Medical Skill of 6 is a good figure, so he multiplies that cost by 12 to get a total of 84 silvers. This will be the cost per point of MP per month. Dave decides that his medical corps will have 6 dice in their medical pool, so he commits to paying 504 silvers (25 gold & 2 silvers) per month to maintain them so they can maintain his army. After each day of battle, Dave's medical corps will have 6 dice to roll against TN6 to reduce his casualties for that day.

Determining results in The Riddle of Steel Battle System

The TROS Battle system is designed to simulate the results of a battle while focusing the spotlight firmly on the PC's and important

NPC's involved. This system does not make a great distinction between different troops of men, and does not really allow for battle commanders to design and implement intricate strategies (except in an abstract way). Rather, the battle is handled in the background as a set of rolls, while the characters act in the foreground, their actions affecting those battle rolls, so that battle fortunes will tend to mirror individual ones as tends to happen in great battles in literature and film. Of course, the more effect characters wish to have on the battle, the more risk they must place themselves in – as in all aspects of life, you can never be sure when you are truly safe, and when you are not...

Opposing armies in the TROS Battle system are tracked by only a few statistics. It is important to know the size of the army, its battle skill, and its combat pool. Furthermore, it is important to know the strategy,

leadership and tactics skills of its battle commander or commanders (who will usually be PC's or at least important NPC's) as well as their Wit and Soc attributes at least. It is recommended that the commander(s) be fully stated up as TROS characters, however, as their personal combat ability and other skills may well come into play during the battle.

Army Size

The size of the army is determined as a raw number of men (see the logistics section (p. 101) for information on the acquisition, training and supplying of troops). Footmen count on a 1-for-1 basis, while Archers count as 150% of their number, since they can battle effectively at a distance and thus often account for more troops in battle than Footmen. Similarly, mounted troops count as 200% or 300% of their number. See

Gol is often the equivalent of up to three normal men (or one heavy knight) in battle.

Because the idea of the TROS Battle system is to keep the battle itself as simple as possible (so that the action can focus on the characters), there is no real provision for siege weapons, entrenchments, and the like. Such things may be handled either through bonuses to Strategy and Tactics rolls (in the case of walls, ditches and such), or simply an increase to the calculated army size – Seneschals may decide that each item of siege weaponry is worth the equivalent of 50 or 100 men, for example.

The size of an army is important only when compared to the size of the opposing force. The ratio of the sizes of the forces is calculated, and

Troop Type	Ratio	
Footmen/Infantry/Skirmishers	1:1	<i>e.g. 100 men = 100</i>
Heavy Infantry	1.5:1	<i>e.g. 100 men = 150</i>
Archers	1.5:1	<i>e.g. 100 men = 150</i>
Cavalry	2:1	<i>e.g. 100 men = 200</i>
Mounted Archers	2.5:1	<i>e.g. 100 men = 250</i>
Heavy Cavalry	3:1	<i>e.g. 100 men = 300</i>
Sample Additional Types		
Gol Warriors	3:1	<i>e.g. 100 Gol = 300</i>
Chariots	5:1	<i>e.g. 10 chariots = 50</i>
War Elephants	10:1	<i>e.g. 10 elephants = 100</i>
War Machines	50:1	<i>e.g. 2 catapults = 100</i>
And if you really want to get interesting		
Wolves	2:1	<i>e.g. 100 wolves = 200</i>
Walking Dead	4:1	<i>e.g. 100 walking dead = 400</i>
Hef	8:1	<i>e.g. 10 Hef = 80</i>
Wyrms	200:1	<i>e.g. 1 wyrm = 200</i>

below for the full list. The Seneschal is free to make other determinations for other troop types. For example, an army with a contingent of Gol warriors may count those troops size as 300% of their number to account for the fact that a savage

the side with the larger ratio of troops gains an advantage during the battle. This advantage may change from turn to turn as either or both sides lose troops. Remember that the number of troops referred to in the following table



refers to the calculated army size, not the actual number of figures on the field.

Army	Size
1:1	Neither side is at least half again as large as the other
1.5:1	One side is at least half again as large as the other, but not double
2:1	One side has at least twice the size of the other side
3:1	One side is triple the size of the other side
5:1	One side has five times the size of the other side
10:1	One side is ten times (or more) larger than the other side

Tactical manipulation of numbers

It is possible for wily generals to play with these numbers within the boundaries of their army to get the largest advantage possible. For example, an army that is triple the size of the opposition could decide to hold back half its forces each day, alternating which side fights and which rests. This means that while battling, the advantage will only be 1.5:1, but it means that the troops will not suffer die pool losses to fatigue as each day the non-active half of the army is resting (you can find more on fatigue below).

*A force of Gol is facing off against a contingent of Stahlnish regulars. There are 600 Gol in the enemy army (a large force of Gol indeed), and so the size of that army is considered to be 1800 (600x3). The Stahlnish force contains 400 footmen, 300 archers and 100 mounted warriors (not knights, who would count as heavy cavalry). Their army size is therefore 400 + (300*1.5) + (100*2) or 1050. Additionally, the Stahl have managed to source ten war elephants, and the Seneschal decides that Elephants are worth a 10x multiplier, giving the Stahlnish an extra 100 points worth of army size, taking them to*

1150. Even though there are almost half again as many men than Gol, the sheer brutality and might of each Gol warrior easily overcomes this limitation and, in fact, the calculated total of the Gol army size is more than half as large again as that of the Stahl army. Thus, the ratio is 1.5:1 in the Gol's favor, which will give them a slight advantage in battle.

Battle Skill

In the TROS Battle system, all troops in an army are conglomerated together into one force, which makes it impossible to use individual ATN's and/or DTN's from the varying weapons that different troops in an army might possess. Instead, the raw, basic combat skill of the troops is used, which is accounted for in the Battle skill. Essentially, the average Battle skill of the troops is used as a figure for the army as a total. See the Logistics section (p. 101) for information on recruiting troops of varying skills and how this is handled in the greater scope of an entire army. This skill is used during battle turns to determine how well the troops have fought that turn.

Gols are born warriors who learn to fight from a very young age and mature quickly. Their Battle skill is 5. The Stahlnish army has been recruited from a variety of sources (as outlined in the Logistics section, p. 101), and their average Battle skill is 7. Remember that, as with all skills in The Riddle of Steel, a lower number is better.

Combat Pool

The combat pool of an army is determined based on varying factors, and represents the number of dice the army gets to roll each turn against its battle skill (this is similar to a melee Combat Pool, but is rolled against the battle skill instead of being divided between attack and defense maneuvers). The Combat Pool is made up of various factors dependant on the size of the army compared to the size of its opposition, how well equipped and supplied the army is, how well rested the troops are, and so on. Note that the actual fighting skill of the troops is not



considered in this step, instead that accounts for their Battle Skill, as outlined above. Regardless of the penalties or bonuses assigned to the CP, the result cannot be any lower than 1 or any greater than 10. The base die pool is 4.

Condition	Modifier
Base die pool	4
Army has 1.5:1 ratio over opposition	+2 die
Army has 2:1 ratio over opposition	+3 dice
Army has 3:1 ratio over opposition	+4 dice
Army has 5:1 ratio over opposition	+5 dice
Army has 10:1 (or higher) ratio over opposition	+6 dice
Troops have no provisions	-2 dice
Troops are poorly provisioned	-1 die
Troops have sufficient provisioning	-
Troops are well-provisioned	+1 die
Troops have extremely poor (or no) equipment	-2 dice
Troops have poor equipment	-1 die
Troops have sufficient equipment	-
Troops are well-equipped	+1 die
Troops have extremely good equipment	+2 dice
Troops are much more maneuverable than opposition	+2 dice *
Troops are a little more maneuverable than opposition	+1 die *
Ranged Troops greatly outnumber opposition	+2 dice **
Ranged Troops outnumber opposition	+1 die **
Troops are seriously fatigued	-2 dice
Troops are fatigued	-1 die
Troops are rested	-
Troops are well-rested	+1 die
Fighting in defense of ones homeland and/or loved ones	+1 die
Favorable conditions over opposition (e.g. fighting downhill)	+1-3 dice
Unfavorable conditions (e.g. fighting uphill)	-1-3 dice

The Seneschal is free to add or subtract other modifiers as he/she sees fit

* This benefit covers armies that are primarily composed of footmen as compared to armies with sizable contingents of cavalry, dogs/wolves and the like. Equipping and maintaining these types of troops is a lot more expensive than footmen or infantry, but the maneuverability gives them an advantage. This bonus is awarded at the Seneschal's fiat depending on the ratio of cavalry to infantry in each army.

** Like the maneuverability bonus (above) this bonus is awarded by the Seneschal for the army that has the greater ability to fight at range, due to war machines, large contingents of archers, and so forth. Being able to weed out numbers of the opposing army before the forces even clash is a massive advantage.

The Gol have a base CP of 4, with an additional +3 dice for having a 1.5:1 ratio over the Stahlnish army. They have sufficient equipment (no modifier) and provisions (no modifier), but they are fatigued from the long march out of the mountains (-1 die). This gives them an overall total of 6 dice, which they will roll against their Battle skill of 5 each battle turn. The Stahlnish army have a base of 4 dice, plus 1 die because they are well equipped, 1 die for being well rested (because they waited and let the Gols come to them), 1 die because they have secure supply lines and thus are well provisioned, one die because they have archers and the Gol don't, and 1 die because they are fighting to defend their homeland. They will have a CP of 9 dice to roll against their Battle Skill of 7. These numbers may well change a little from turn to turn as troops gain fatigue and as numbers fluctuate, possibly altering the troop ratios.

Battles are calculated on a daily basis, and are divided up into approximately one hour-long turns. This means that depending on the time of year, the number of battle turns available in a day will vary, as battles are fought during daylight hours only. In winter, there may be as few as 7-8 battle turns during a day, while in mid summer there may be as many as 10-12. The Seneschal must decide how many turns each day of battle will be, and inform the players.



Getting more dice

Don't forget that this is *The Riddle of Steel*. If the Battle Commander and/or Commander have relevant Spiritual Attributes, you should certainly let them add them to their rolls for the Strategy and Leadership rolls each day. Just remember that the leaders on other side may have relevant SA's as well...

The first step each day is for the battle commander to devise the daily strategy for the troops. This is done by rolling MA+Wit against the Strategy skill. Make a careful note of how many successes are achieved – these will be used throughout the day to alter events through the carefully pre-planned strategic decisions made. Secondly, the commander makes a rousing speech to his troops. This is achieved by rolling Social+Wit against the Leadership skill and recording the number of successes generated (keep this number separate from the Strategy successes). Note that the commander who is seen to be leading the troops (making the speech) need not be the same person as the one planning the battle strategy.

Both types of roll may have modifiers associated with them, see the chart at right for details.

The Gol are known as supreme warriors, but they usually win battles through perseverance and prowess, not through any great strategic skill. The Gol leader has a good knowledge of the Stahlnish troops, but a poor knowledge of the terrain (which cancel each other out) so he rolls his base MA+Wit against his (poor) Strategy skill and gets just 2 successes. His “rousing” speech to his troops consists of threats should they fail in battle and the random disemboweling of a warrior who wasn't looking fierce enough, which counts as having just punished them (+1 die), and he is well known as a leader who wins battles

Strategy roll Modifiers (minimum result 1 die)	
Condition	Modifier
Base die pool	Wit+MA
No knowledge of opposition	-2 dice
Little knowledge of opposition	-1 die
Basic knowledge of opposition	-
Good knowledge of opposition	+1 die
Well informed about opposition (requires a spy in enemy camp, see PC actions)	+2 dice
Poor knowledge of own army (new or recent command)	-1 die
Basic knowledge of own army	-
Good knowledge of own army (has led them through several campaigns)	+1 die
Poor knowledge of terrain	-1 die
Basic knowledge of terrain	-
Good knowledge of terrain	+1 die
Carefully studied terrain (and/or is home province)	+2 dice
Fortifications/City Walls/ Burning Ditches/Etc	Varies

Leadership roll Modifiers (minimum result 1 die)	
Condition	Modifier
Base die pool	Social+Wit
General has reputation as a coward and/or has lost many previous battles	-2 dice
General has no reputation (or a poor one) and/or lost previous battle	-1 die
General has an average reputation	-
General has a good reputation and/or won previous battle	+1 die
General is well known and loved and/or has reputation for winning many battles	+2 dice
Troops have been just punished	+1 dice
Troops have been just rewarded	+2 dice
Troops have been recently punished (previous day)	-1 die
Troops have been recently rewarded (previous day)	+1 die
Army did well overall the previous day of battle	+1 die
Army did poorly overall the previous day of battle	-1 die

The Seneschal is free to add or subtract other modifiers as he/she sees fit



regularly, which grants another 2 dice. He therefore rolls his Social+Wit+3 against his Leadership skill and achieves 7 successes. The Stahlrish forces are being led by two men, a strategic commander (who rolls his Wit+MA/Strategy and achieves 6 successes, having gained 2 extra dice for knowing the terrain, but losing 2 for not knowing anything about the Gol) and a General to actually lead the troops in battle. The General makes a rousing speech, gaining 1 die for his reputation and 2 dice for the fact that he awarded extra rations the night before the battle; this gives him +3 dice on his Social+Wit/Leadership roll, and he achieves 6 successes.

Finally, it is time to make the rolls for each turn during the day, and determine the results of the battle. There are two rolls to be made for each side, each turn. The army General makes the first roll, to determine how good his tactical skill is at leading the men. This is a Wit/Tactics roll, and is modified as listed below. The second roll is to determine how well the troops fight during that turn. Roll the army CP against their Battle skill.

Magic on the battlefield

Unlike many other fantasy RPG's, magic in TROS takes time to cast, is potentially quite dangerous to the wielder, and is not generally something that is done repeatedly in a short period of time (because the SP takes time to refresh). On the other hand, a single spell can wipe out armies, change the local geography or instantly assassinate opposing leaders. This makes it difficult for us to present hard-and-fast rules for magic use in mass combat. For a simple solution, the Seneschal might award +1 or +2 dice to the army CP per turn for each sorcerer on that army's side. For anything more complicated, it is best for the Seneschal to determine the results of magic him or herself, and consider that outcome when determining mass combat results.

The trick is that both of these rolls may be modified using the daily Strategy and Leadership rolls. The number of successes gained in the Strategy roll gives the General a pool of bonus successes that he can add, one

by one or all at the same time, to any Tactics rolls throughout the day (because the pre-calculated strategy has affected and improved his tactical decisions). However, each bonus die may only be used once throughout the day, so they must be used carefully. Similarly the pool of bonus dice from the leadership roll may be used to add successes to battle rolls for the troops (the speech has roused the troops and spurred them to extra action).

What about night battles?

It is altogether possible for battles to occur at night rather than during the day. Human troops generally avoid this, because it disadvantages their side as much as the opposition, but it could make tactical sense at times and, of course, one or both sides of the battle might not be entirely human... Battles played out during the night have a -4 penalty to both the tactics and battle roll pools for armies that are primarily composed of humans. Certain other armies, such as Rock Dwarves, Gol or other Fey or Siehe might not suffer this penalty, at the Seneschal's discretion.

In the totals determined above, the Gol leader achieved 2 Strategy successes, and 7 Leadership successes. This means that during the day he may add a total of two successes to tactics rolls, either both to the same roll or one each to two different ones (remembering that he will have somewhere from 6-9 turns and thus 6-9 tactics rolls). He may also spend his seven leadership dice to add successes to battle rolls throughout the day. The Stahlrish leaders have a pool of six strategy and six leadership dice that they may use to add successes to tactics or battle results as they see fit.

The first battle turn begins, and the two armies surge towards each other. The Gol General rolls his Wit/Tactics, and gets 3 successes. He also rolls for the troops – they

have 6 dice against a Battle Skill of 5, and they get 4 successes. Note that these numbers are kept secret from the other side until all parties have rolled. The Stahlrish leader rolls his Wit/Tactics, and gets 2 successes, but he assumes that this will not be enough and so he raises that to 4 by using two of his strategy dice for the day. He also rolls the Battle Skill of the troops – 9 dice against a TN of 7, for a total of 4 successes. Both sides now compare their results...

Some groups will dislike the idea of adding Strategy and Leadership successes to Tactics and Battle rolls as a “blind” process. We designed it that way because it makes battles more edgy, but it might not be for everyone. If you like a little more planning to be involved in the decision, then this optional rule may be utilized:

After the opponent has allocated extra dice (or not), allow the battle commander to make a Wit+Per roll against a TN of 9. This roll may only be made once per battle turn for one aspect of the conflict

What are the PC's doing?

The most important factor of combat (missing from these examples) is the actions of the player characters (and important NPC's). These will be covered in detail a little later, but for now it is important to remember that each turn, each PC/NPC has a chance to perform one Heroic Action, the result of which can grant extra dice on Medical, Tactics and Battle rolls, extra Strategy or Leadership bonus dice, and so on. Along opposing lines, PC actions can affect the other sides die pools, by poisoning supplies, killing opposing generals, sabotaging their equipment or supply lines, etc. Thus as the characters do well, the army correspondingly does well, but of course the opposite is also true – failed or foolish actions can dishearten the troops and lead to poor battle performance.



(Tactics or Battle). Success will let him know if his forces are ahead, behind, or tied in that aspect, giving them some insight as to whether they need to add Strategy/Leadership dice.

Resolving Battle Turns

Once the Tactics and Battle rolls have been calculated, it is time to compare the results. Compare the Tactics rolls of both armies; the result will either be a tie or one side will have more successes than the other, which means it is said to have won that part of the battle. The same comparison is then made for the Battle roll results, giving two win/tie/loss results for each army. Refer to the following chart:

Resounding success

If one side wins both the tactical roll and the battle roll, then it is said to have made a resounding success in this battle turn. Move the army up two positions on the Battle day track before calculating losses for the turn.

Narrow Success

An army achieves a narrow success if it wins either the Battle or Tactics contest, and ties the other. Move the army up one step on the Battle day track before calculating losses.

Push

A push happens when one army wins the battle roll and the other wins the tactics roll, or when both rolls are ties. Neither side has gained the advantage this battle turn; leave the armies in their present positions on the Battle day chart and calculate losses.

Narrow failure

A narrow failure occurs when an army ties either the battle or the tactics roll, but fails the other one. Move the army down one position on the Battle day chart and calculate losses.

Resounding failure

For whatever reason, this battle turn was a washout. An army records a resounding failure when it loses both the Tactics and the Battle rolls. The army slips two places on the Battle day chart and then calculates its casualties.

The two armies compare their results. The Tactics result shows 3 successes for the Gol and 4 for the Stahlrish troops. However, the Battle roll is a push – both sides achieving 4 successes. Overall, the Gol have suffered a narrow failure, while the Stahlrish have correspondingly achieved a narrow success. The Gol army moves down one step on the battle day chart while the Stahlrish move up one. The next step is to calculate casualties.

Battle Day Chart

Track both armies on the following chart. Each day of battle, both armies start out at “Even” and move up or down according to



the results of each individual turn (some PC actions can directly influence this chart also – *well, maybe?*). At the end of each battle turn after armies have been moved (if applicable), calculate casualties. As army sizes fluctuate, the ratio of troop sizes may change, granting extra dice (or taking them away) to the Combat Pool for the following battle turn.

Additionally, after every day of battle, each army moves down on the “fatigued” scale (presented on p. 107), which also affects the CP for the following turn. Well-rested troops become simply rested, fatigued troops become seriously fatigued, and so on (seriously

fatigued troops do not degrade any further, however). A day spent not fighting will restore one level of Fatigue.

Battle continues until the end of the day or until one army has routed the other. Record the total losses sustained during the day with a single count that increments after every battle turn. At the end of the day, each army may make a medical roll (as outlined below) to recover troops lost during the day who were actually only stunned, knocked out, injured, scattered, or otherwise not killed. At this point, the day’s battle is over, and the next day of battle should begin – starting with strategy and leadership rolls as usual. Note that both armies start the new day returned to the “Even” position on the Battle day chart.

If one army has routed the other, then that army is victorious. The winning army (only) may make the medical rolls as outlined below, and gather any applicable spoils of war (determined by the Seneschal).

Medical Support

At the end of each day’s battle and when the overall battle has been won, an army may send its medical corps among the wounded and lost on the battlefield, looking for those who can be saved and especially those who can be patched up enough to fight again the following day. Medical care determined here also includes medical efforts during the battle, such as wounded men pulled back by combat medics or other less-wounded comrades. Refer to the Logistics section (p. 101) for information on the hiring and maintaining of a medical corps for an army, and the quality of their care. Note that the Medical corps includes not only field surgeons and nurses, but also animal handlers and veterinary surgeons (for elephants and such), engineers to repair siege equipment, and so on. The Medical corps has two attributes – their Medicine Skill (which is a conglomeration of the First Aid, Surgery, Engineering, Animal Handling skills, and so on) and a Medical Pool,

Condition	Casualties	Special Result
Victorious	None	This army has won the battle, and routed the opposing army
Close to Victory	1d6%	
Winning Convincingly	1d6%	
Winning	2d6%	
Strong Advantage	2d6%	
Gained the Advantage	3d6%	
Even	3d6%	Starting position for both armies, each day
Losing the Advantage	2d10%	
Fighting Poorly	2d10%	
Losing	3d10%	
Losing badly	3d10%	
Close to Rout	4d10%	
Routed!	4d10%	This army has been routed and immediately loses the battle.



the size of which is determined by how large a corps has been retained compared to the size of the army. Roll MP/Medicine, and every success means that a certain percentage of the day's losses are returned to the army for the following day's battle. For an army that ends the day having "Gained the Advantage" (or higher) or who wins the battle, restore 5% of their losses per success. An army who ends the day at a disadvantage only gains 3% of his losses back per point of success. Should a battle end the day with both sides even on the Battle day chart, each side restores 4% per success rolled.

After a particularly grueling day of battle, losses have been heavy on both sides. The Gol army has lost a staggering 680 points worth of troops and has ended the battle Fighting Poorly (thanks to some last minute use of saved Strategy and Leadership points by the Stahlnish army). The Stahlnish army has lost 464 troops, but managed to end the battle with a Strong Advantage. Because Gol leave their wounded for dead, the Gol army has no team of medical personnel, and so its losses remain as they are. The Stahlnish army has a dedicated team of doctors, surgeons and engineers, who have an MP of 6 and a Medical skill of 6. Rolling MP/Medical, the result is 4 successes, and so the Stahlnish army regains 20% of its losses (92 troops, rounded down). The second day of battle will begin with both armies a little more fatigued than they were the previous day and both restored to Even on the Battle Day chart. The Gol army's size is now 1120, and the Stahlnish army has 778 points worth of troops left. The Gol Army no longer has a 1.5:1 advantage, which will lower its army CP.

After a battle is over, it is necessary to determine which troops made it through and which were lost. Players should use their final army size figure to "buy back" troops to determine which troops survived the battle. Seneschals should monitor this to ensure that the division is done reasonably. In other words, each three points of remaining army size could be used to say that

one mounted heavy cavalryman survived the battle, or three footmen, and so on.

Longer-term campaigns

For long-term campaigns, it is necessary to know what the breakdown of losses actually was, so that some consideration can be made as to long-term troops' sizes. After all, not all of the troops lost on the battlefield are necessarily dead, some may be seriously injured and require a period of downtime while others may have fled the battle and scattered by might be later found and "persuaded" to rejoin the force. This kind of decision is best left to the Seneschal, but as a general guideline:

50% of total losses are actual deaths.

25% of total losses are long-term injuries; these troops will be able to rejoin the army in an average of 2-3 months time.

25% of total losses are deserters or routers.

Retrieving many of these could well be the focus of an entire campaign itself...

Assuming that in the above example, the Gol retreated and the battle was over, the final figures would have stood at army sizes of 1120 for the Gol and 778 for the Stahlnish. Because the Gol were a simple force of beasts, it's easy enough to determine numbers. Each is worth 3 points, so there must be 373 (round the fraction down) Gol left from the original force of 600. The Stahlnish force takes a little more computation: The players and GM decide that 6 of the 10 War Elephants survived the battle. This takes 60 points, leaving 718. They also decide that 68 of the original 100 cavalry survived the battle. This is 136 points because each member of the cavalry is worth 2 points, so it leaves 582. Out of the original force of 300 archers, they decide that a large number would have survived (since they were in less immediate danger than front-

line fighters), so they declare that 220 archers are left standing. Because archers are worth 1.5 points each, this is 330 points, which leaves a total of 252 points. Since footmen are 1 point each, 252 footmen must have survived the battle also. The Seneschal agrees that these figures are acceptable, and the matter is decided.

Heroic Actions

The real meat of the TROS Battle system is the actions of important characters on both sides of the battle. Each battle turn, PC's and important NPC's are given the opportunity to perform one of the following special actions in an attempt to influence the battle to the benefit if their side (or the detriment of their opponents). Each battle turn is an hour, which gives character plenty of time to move about the battlefield, attempting different actions as necessary. Some of the following possible actions take longer than a single battle turn to get any benefit from them, while others will only show benefit at the end of the day. Actions are determined each turn (or the turn they finish) before the Tactics and Battle rolls are made, giving a chance for the action to

directly affect the course of the battle that turn (if applicable).

The following list is by no means exhaustive; Seneschals and players are encouraged to come up with their own heroic actions and the effects they may have on the battle. This list also assumes that all heroic actions will be carried out during the battle. If characters wish to make nighttime raids on opposing armies between days of battle and suchlike, the Seneschal must adjudicate the results of this. Note that the army General (who is making the Tactics rolls each turn) cannot perform heroic actions, as he is busy commanding the army and making the minute-to-minute tactical decisions.

Lead the Charge

This heroic action may only be attempted the first battle turn each day, and only by a single character (per side). That character leads the charge, inspiring the troops by being the first into the fray. Extremely dangerous, this heroic action has the potential to give a fantastic boost to an army, but also the potential to crush their morale should the character fall.

Aren't Heroic Actions just a bit too good?

With a sizable group, it's altogether possible for PC's performing heroic actions each turn to be adding a sizeable number of dice to one side of the battle, in some cases overshadowing other factors (for example, the quality of the armies' equipment only makes a difference of 2-3 dice overall, while it's possible for a PC to add a similar number of dice just by leading the charge for the day). Some groups may find this frustrating and/or unrealistic. Our justification for this is that in a roleplaying game, players want their characters to be important and their actions to matter. In a battle, there's no fun in being mook #376; everyone wants to be William Wallace in Braveheart or Nathan Algren in The Last Samurai. The reality is that with more realistic rules, PC's would have very low life expectancies and even lower importance in the press of real battle, so we have designed a system that lets them stand out and be noticed and important.

If you're still not convinced, there are a couple of options available to you. Firstly, it's quite possible to do away with Heroic Actions altogether, and resolve Mass Combats with the rules already presented. Secondly, how likely do you think it really is that only one side of the battle has a group of heroes handy? Some PC's may find their actions being contested from the other side, and of course, there's no reason the opposing army can't have figures performing Heroic Actions of their own...

The character charges with the army, and must battle with them for a while so they can see his prowess. The Seneschal should pit the character against foes in melee combat. The character should roll Wit/Battle and must fight for as many rounds of combat as 12-the number of successes. He is likely to face common soldiers, and must battle one or two per round (making terrain rolls or splitting his CP as usual). Seriously wounded opponents will fall back at the end of each round, letting fresh ones through to face the character. This will carry on until the character makes a Full Evade out of the front line and pulls back to let the men behind him fill the gap.

If the character fights for at least as many rounds as calculated above, the army will gain +2 dice to its CP for the battle turn. In addition, if the character emerges unscathed from the charge, add +1 die into the bonus Leadership dice pool for the day. If the character does not last the required number of rounds, there is no benefit to the troops, and if he should fall in battle, the troops will be disheartened – subtract 1 die from the CP of the army this battle turn.

If characters from both sides of the conflict Lead the Charge, have both characters roll Wit/Tactics. The character with the higher number of successes can avoid the other (both continue the Lead the Charge action) or decide to push through the battle and engage his opponent, turning both characters actions into a Personal Challenge.

Join the Battle

This Heroic Action allows a character to join a unit of men and fight alongside them, impressing them with his battle prowess, and hopefully inspiring them to fight harder.

The character must fight for as many rounds of combat as 10 – the result of a Wit/Battle check, facing one or two common opponents each round. Seriously wounded opponents will fall back at the end of each round, letting fresh ones

through to face the character. If the character lasts the required number of rounds, he will add +1 to the CP of the army for the battle turn. If the character suffers no wounds at all during that time, the bonus is +2. The drawback of this maneuver is that if the character is slain or forced to retreat from the fight (which may be done at any time through the use of the Full Evade maneuver) without lasting the required number of rounds, the troops will be disheartened, losing 1CP for the battle turn.

If a character on the opposing army is also involved in a Join the Battle, Lead the Charge, Directing the Troops, Assisting the Wounded, or Challenging the Opposing General action, either character may force an opposed Wit/Tactics roll. The side with the larger number of successes can choose to avoid his opponent for this battle turn, or move towards him forcing a Personal Challenge.

Direct the troops

A character directing the troops moves through the battlefield, assisting the General by enforcing his tactical decisions and making minor adjustments as necessary according to conditions and unexpected surprises. The character makes a Wit/Tactics roll, and must fight as many rounds of combat as 9 minus the number of successes on that roll. Each round will be against one or two common opponents, and seriously wounded ones will fall back at the end of each round, allowing fresh ones to face the character. If the character survives this battle without fleeing prematurely, he is able to pull back and report to the General, allowing the general +1 die on his Tactics roll for the round. If the character emerges from the conflict unscathed, this will be noticed by the troops and they will gain heart from it, adding +1 die to their CP for the round when determining their Battle result.

Assist the Wounded

Character may elect to move about the battlefield, assisting wounded soldiers and pulling them



back to safe areas. This is sometimes noticed by opposing soldiers, who will often attempt to target characters involved in this. The character must make a Wit/Battle roll, and fight as many opponents as 5 minus the number of successes (minimum zero). These opponents will attack the character one at a time, and will be of the common soldiery. If the character survives, he is able to pull back some of the wounded soldiers, granting one additional die on the MP/Medical roll made by the medical corps at the end of the day. If this heroic action is performed by multiple characters (or the same character on more than one battle turn) the effects stack, although it is not possible to add more than half again onto the MP.

Assist the Command Tent

This heroic action requires the character to spend at least half the day (half the number of battle turns in the day) assisting the strategic planner

in the command tent. By doing so, the character is able to roll Wit/Strategy. If this roll is successful, the strategic commander may add +1 die to his strategy roll the following morning to plan that day's battle. If three or more successes were rolled, the bonus is +2. Additionally, if the character achieves at least 5 successes, then an extra benefit is gained – the character points out a minor flaw or wrinkle in *today's* strategic plan, adding one extra die into the current strategy bonus die pool. Only one character may assist the strategic commander at a time.

Challenge Opposing General

A character may elect to challenge the opposing general in an attempt to throw off the enemy's plans. The character must move through the battle with the express intent of finding and challenging the opposing side's battle general. This requires the character to engage enemy troops for a number of rounds of melee combat equal to 11 minus the number of successes on a Wit/Battle check. He will face one to two common opponents each round, with seriously wounded opponents falling back at the end of each round, letting fresh ones face him. If he successfully makes his way through these opponents, he can get into a position to challenge the enemy general. Note that it takes an entire battle turn to get to the opposing General, and another battle turn to return after the challenge (if the character survives). It is possible in either turn to be spotted by a character from the opposing army and challenged to a Personal Challenge, making it risky to attempt to seek out the enemy general.

If the enemy general wishes to refuse, he may. However, this will penalize both his Tactics roll and the troops' Battle roll at the end of the battle turn by 1 die each – he has been rattled

and the men have seen him as a coward. This will also affect the Leadership Roll modifiers for subsequent days, lowering the General's reputation by one level. If the general accepts the challenge, the two characters must face off in personal combat (the other troops will pull back slightly, and will not help). If the General wins the melee, his troops take heart from his success, and roll 2 extra dice on their Battle roll this battle turn. However, if the character making the challenge wins the fight, the troops become disheartened, losing 2 dice from their CP this battle turn. Additionally, because the general is dead the opponent is assumed to roll zero successes on the tactics roll for the Battle turn (although strategy bonus dice may be spent as usual) and the opponent must find a new general to take over the following battle turn. If the character wins the Personal Challenge unscathed, he will be seen with awe by the troops, and allowed to retreat back into his own army. If he was wounded in the battle, however, he must make a Social/Battle check. Success indicates that the onlookers are impressed enough by the battle that they let him depart in peace, failure indicates that they attack, and he must survive another set of melee combats lasting as long as 11 minus successes on a Wit/Battle roll before he can escape into the ranks of his own army.

Personal Challenge

Personal Challenges can come about when two opposing characters meet during a battle. This usually comes about because one of them is Leading the Charge or has Joined the Battle and has forced the issue by moving toward his opponent. See either of those Heroic Actions for details.

The two characters come together to make the challenge, and switch to standard TROS melee combat. Other troops will pull back to allow the two characters their personal battle. Either character may surrender at any point, but of course it is up to the victor to decide if he will accept surrender or not (accepting the

surrender usually means that the loser will be taken captive and ransomed after the battle). If one character wins by forcing his opponent to surrender, he not only has a ransomable captive, but he adds 1 die to his army's tactics and battle rolls for the turn. The army of the loser must take a 1 die penalty to their Battle roll for the turn as the troops are disheartened at seeing their champion lose in melee combat. If a character instead wins by slaying his opponent and the opponent did not offer to surrender, the bonus is +2 dice on the tactics roll and +1 die on the battle roll, but the penalties for the opposing army remain the same. However, there is a risk that the army of the loser will attack the victor in anger. The character should make a Social/Battle check. If any successes are rolled then the losing army honors the challenge, but if he fails they will attack him, forcing him to fight a set of melee combats lasting as long as 11 minus successes on a Wit/Battle roll, facing one to two opponents each round. Finally, if one character wins by slaying an opponent who had offered surrender, the bonus is different – his troops will not respect his decision not to honor the surrender so he will not add any dice to the troops Battle skill roll this turn, but he still gains the +2 dice for his army's Tactics roll. The opposing army still suffers the 1 die Battle roll penalty of course; however, they *will* attack the winning character in anger, as described above.

Scouting

Scouting involves approaching the enemy camp by a circuitous route, and hoping not to be spotted for long enough to learn something about the enemy forces. This takes a minimum of three battle turns, and may take substantially longer. It takes one battle turn to approach the enemy camp, and the character must allow at least one turn to return to his own camp. For each turn actually spent scouting the enemy camp, the character must roll Wit/Sneak or be spotted (note that this may well be an opposed roll if the enemy has set sentries, which he will have). If the character fails or botches his Sneak roll,



he has been discovered by 2d6-1 enemy guards, and must fight his way out using the standard TROS melee rules (terrain rolls to reduce the number who can attack simultaneously will be very useful here). If the character defeats all the guards who discovered him, he can then flee the enemy camp before reinforcements arrive. Once back at his own camp, the character may make a Tactics roll using one die for every turn he was not spotted and thus spent scouting and observing the enemy camp. If successful, the strategic commander gains valuable information regarding the opponent and moves up one step on the “knowledge of opponent” track for subsequent daily strategy rolls (see p. 108). This knowledge of the opponent may not be improved more than one step per day. If more than one character goes on the scouting foray then each character involved must make the roll to avoid being spotted, making discovery far more likely (since if even one is found, then the game is up).

Raiding

A Raiding attempt is similar to the scouting heroic action, but it involves striking at the

enemy and attempting to spoil (or poison) his supplies or damage his equipment. Because the character must actually *act* rather than just *observe*, raiding is a great deal more dangerous than scouting. At the Seneschal’s discretion, raiding is best performed at night, but in many ways it may actually be easier during the day (when most of the enemy are on the battlefield as opposed to guarding or sleeping near the supplies and equipment), which is why it is presented here as a heroic action.

It takes one battle turn to approach the enemy camp (taking a circuitous route, of course), and one turn must be left available to return after the raid. The character must make either a Wit/Sneak or (at the Seneschal’s discretion) a Social/Disguise roll every battle turn to move undetected inside the enemy camp (these will be opposed rolls against the perceptions of the enemy guards and camp members). If the character fails or botches this roll, he has been discovered by 2d6 enemy guards, and must fight his way out using the standard TROS melee rules (terrain rolls to reduce the number who can attack simultaneously will be very useful here). If the character defeats all the guards who discovered him, he can then flee the enemy camp before reinforcements arrive. While inside the camp and undetected, the character may attempt to destroy enemy supplies or equipment (but not both on the same raid). For each turn the character spends sabotaging the supplies or equipment, he may roll 1 die against a TN of 9 (these rolls are not make each turn, but when the character decides he has been there long enough to not want to risk staying any longer or after he flees). If the resulting roll is successful, the enemy’s provisions or equipment rating decreases by 1; however, this change does not take effect until the start of the following day. If more than one character goes on the raid then each character involved must make the roll to avoid being discovered, making discovery far more likely (since if even one is found, then the game is up).



Book Three:

Tools of the Trade

Book 3

"Damn zat girl," Heinrich spat as he scratched, "now I remember why I stopped whoring with you all twenty years ago." His three senior provosts sat with pained faces and rabidly clawing fingers trying to relieve the incessant itching that started shortly after that local girl left last night. The night previous, they had pitched in to buy some time with her for their teacher, as a reward for the boom in enrollment since the massacre at Dom Marco's. The old man had begrudgingly agreed. Now they all regretted it, scratching as they had never scratched before.

Onlookers, come to see the already famous duel between a local commoner and the city's most famous swordsman, laughed and jeered at the unfortunate men even as betting odds evened out a little. The catcalls were soon replaced with cheers as their new folk hero sauntered towards Vitus' Bridge.

Peter enjoyed the attention. Funny, he

thought, how easy it was for a thug to become an icon. A murder on this very street bought him his first lesson—the blood long since washed out from between the cobblestones. The bones of the merchant probably settled right beneath Vitus' Bridge. He played the crowd for a moment before finally walking up to the waiting quartet.

"Herr Heinrich, I come to fulfill the challenge I made last night." Peter wanted to sound heroic. Famous. Wealthy.

"Ja, gut." And in traditional fashion, the elderly fencer leapt directly to attack with his 52-inch sword. Decorum, deportment, and braggadocio are Southern hang-ups.

It was not an exciting fight, really. Heinrich assaulted with the same fury that Beatrice had witnessed two mornings before outside of Dom Marco's. The long, parallel-edged blade with a reputation for lumbering attacks moved faster





than the eye could follow, and within a moment, Peter's left arm beneath the elbow flopped—still twitching and tightly gripping the main gauche—into the crowd.

Peter took the wound surprisingly well—a testament to willpower—and began alternately running and backpedaling in the impromptu circular arena on the bridge, just trying to stay alive. The aged fencer followed like a mad dog.

And so Peter, just when he decided that the shame was too much and that he was sure to die anyway, was granted a reprieve. The old man's hip gave out, and he crashed to the ground with yelp. One hand went to his broken hip; the other resumed scratching his poisoned groin. Peter approached with one shaking hand and knocking knees while the crowd physically restrained the fallen teacher's three provosts. His long, rigid rapier passed through both sides of his opponent's skull with ease six times before blood loss overtook the young braggart.

A new burgundy-stained armoire with etched crystal panes leered at Peter from the corner of Beatrice's room. His new school hadn't done as well as he had hoped, but somehow his now full-time woman always had money for new furniture. What he needed were famous students to cultivate his salle's reputation while he developed his own skill with a single rapier. Time, just time.

Downstairs, outside, Beatrice came home from morning shopping for bread and Peter's generous daily ration of wine. Nailed to her door was a challenge, issued to One-armed Pete, from a young student who claimed to have bought his first lesson with Peter's dagger...

This chapter contains a large number of new (and updated information for older) weapons for *The Riddle of Steel*, as well as a number of different arrowheads for use with arrows and bolts.

As discussed in the main rulebook (see TROS, p. 203) it is possible to purchase or manufacture weapons and armor of fine quality. Such items cost at least 5x the basic cost of the item (and possibly more) but they will have one aspect improved by one step – either the ATN (swing or thrust, but not both) or DTN is reduced by one, the damage (for one attack, not all attacks) is increased by 1, or in the case of armor the AV is increased by 1 or the CP or Move penalties are reduced by 1. It is possible to improve two aspects of a weapon or piece of armor, but in this case, the cost is multiplied by (at least) a factor of 20 – such items are true artifacts indeed!

Fine weapons and armor are either constructed using special techniques to forge the steel (see below), or use rare hard woods (in the case of staves or other purely wooden weapons). Items comprised entirely of other materials may not be fashioned in “fine” quality (or rather, they may, but not enough to improve an aspect of the item). Leather, for example, may only really be improved by boiling it in oil so that it sets; this is already taken into account in the form of Cuir Bouilli armor (see p. 12). It is the Seneschal's decision as to whether dragon leather or other such special materials could exist in his campaign and whether they would allow the fashioning of fine quality items.

Damascus/Pattern Welded steel

Steel is an amazing substance: It can be made as flexible as a spring, or as hard as glass, although normally not both at the same time. This has always posed a dilemma for blacksmiths, because weapons, especially swords, require both properties simultaneously.



Whether a piece of steel is hard or soft depends on the carbon content and tempering processes. Hardness dictates how good an edge a weapon can hold, while springiness is critical to surviving battlefield conditions. While today a chef's knife, for example, can be made of very high carbon steel or even brittle ceramic, in the days of our ancestors a sword had to be both hard enough to hold a good edge, and flexible enough to spring back unscathed from contact with helmets, shield rims, and other swords.

The basic solution to this problem was typically to forge blades that were as hard as possible while retaining good flexibility. A master swordsmith using the best tempering techniques could make this compromise work well, and create outstanding weapons. However, there was always an interest in forging a blade just a little bit better: As sharp as glass yet as flexible as a supple reed.

Damascus Steel was the result of this attempt by ancient smiths to have their cake and eat it too; to make swords with both desirable properties. Perhaps surprisingly, it worked. In Damascus steel of all types, the high carbon and low carbon steel are basically twisted together in a sort of lattice. When etched with acid, the two metallic compounds (called pearlite and cementite) can be seen in beautiful swirling patterns resembling water or the grain of wood. This pattern came to be called "Damask" and has been imitated in many fabrics.

There are two types of historical Damascus steel. The first is the so-called 'true' Damascus steel, also known as wootz steel, which was actually made in southern India, and used by the Persians, Chinese, and Arabs. The second type is Pattern Welded steel, which was made in Europe by the Celts and possibly the Romans, and later most famously by the Vikings.

The Vikings knew such blades when they found them, for they could see the pattern in the steel when they cooled it off in the snow and then breathed across the blade with their hot breath.

They called this 'the serpent in the steel'.

Modern efforts to reproduce the qualities of good pattern welded or wootz steel weapons were unsuccessful until very recently and even now it's not certain if they have managed to get it right. The basic structure of high carbon and low carbon steel has long been understood, but efforts to reproduce metals with the same properties proved fruitless.

Tiny amounts of certain elements had long been detected in wootz steel but it had been believed that they were in quantities insufficient to create alloys. Recent electron microscope analysis of some old wootz steel sabers provided an important clue. It turns out that the marginal trace amounts of certain rare metals such as vanadium seem to play a key role in strengthening the wave crests of cementite alloy in the molecular structure of the steel.

It now appears that the mining of the vanadium holding clay used in the crucibles for the smelting process in Southern India is actually what ended their ability to make wootz steel. The smiths used the same techniques, but the materials were no longer the same and the techniques no longer worked.

Scientists and metallurgists are currently speculating how the introduction of other elements may have played a role in the special properties of wootz steel and pattern welded steel. For example, Viking pattern welded weapons contain possibly significant quantities of phosphorus from using bone in the smelting process.

Damascus Steel weapons have displayed remarkable properties, which are not fully understood to this day. They are in many ways superior to ordinary steel weapons, not to mention beautiful to behold, and would represent a treasure to any warrior, past or present.





Bows

Long Bow



Preparation time: 2-4 rounds total. Pull arrow 0 (on ground) 2 (in quiver), nock and draw 2
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: 5

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 3p (8 total)

Draw Weight: 80 – 110 lbs

Range: 15 yards / 30 yards / 45 yards / 90 yards / 260 yards

A bow five to six feet, normally as tall or slightly taller than the wielder, and too long to be fired from horseback, the longbow is typically made of yew, and fires a three-foot-long arrow. The effective volley range of the longbow was 180 - 250 yards when firing in a high arc, though the maximum direct fire range (where a human sized target can be specifically attacked) was closer to 75 yards. The draw strength was impressive, somewhere between 80 - 110 pounds, requiring a strong and experienced individual to use the weapon. An expert yeoman can shoot 10 to 12 arrows a minute. The longbow could punch through light and medium armor.

These types of weapons were actually used in many different cultures and in many different periods of history, (all the way back into the Neolithic period, in fact). They seemed to go in and out of favor or prominence, existing even while other much weaker and less effective weapons were much more widely used on the battlefield. The issue seems to be that a culture of archery and constant training had to exist in order to make the weapon effective.

The Welsh (and later, their masters the English) were by no means the only people in history to make use of a long, strong draw longbow, which also seems to have been known in Scandinavia, among other places, but they were perhaps justifiably the most famous. Welsh Yeomen were trained from when they were very young solely for the longbow, a significant part of their training included firing in volleys at large sheets, to practice battlefield area-fire.



Recurve Bow



Preparation time: 2-4 rounds total. Pull arrow 0 (on ground) 2 (in quiver), nock and draw 2 2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: 5

DR (Damage Rating): ST +1p (6 total)

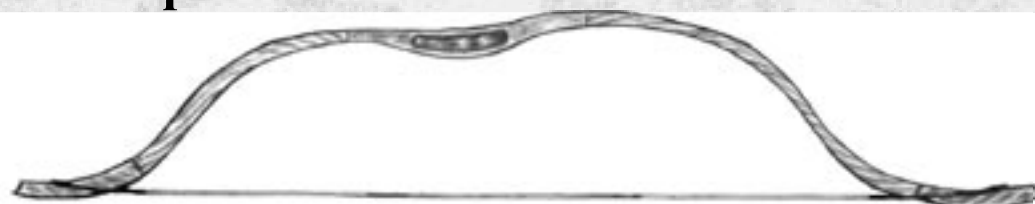
Draw Weight: 50 – 60 lbs

Range: 10 yards / 20 yards / 30 yards / 60 yards / 120 yards

Usually fired with a thumb ring, this moderately powerful weapon was made with some composite materials (sinew and horn as well as different types of wood) allowing it to be relatively compact (with a draw strength of about 50 - 60 lbs), small enough to be fired from horseback.

The classic ancient weapon of the near east, found in Persia, Arabia, and Anatolia going back to the earliest classical times (The Parthians and even the Assyrians used weapons of this type).

Recurve Composite Bow



Preparation time: 2-4 rounds total. Pull arrow 0 (on ground) 2 (in quiver), nock and draw 2 2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: 6 (nobody with a lower ST than 6 may draw this bow)

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 2p (8 total)

Draw Weight: 80 –120 lbs

Range: 10 yards / 20 yards / 35 yards / 70 yards / 220 yards

Sophisticated compound weapons, the built-in recurve made them exceptionally powerful. Draw strength was high, from 80- 120 lbs or even more, and range was double that of a normal bow, with penetration significantly better. Like the longbow, these weapons could be fired in volley at area targets, making them exceptionally dangerous.



The weapon of choice of the central Asian steppes, favored primary weapon of the Huns, the Bulgars, the Magyars, and the Mongols, to name a few. Very powerful and relatively compact, small enough to be fired from horseback.

Short Bow



Preparation time: 2-4 rounds total. Pull arrow 0 (on ground) 2 (in quiver), nock and draw 2
2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: 4

DR (Damage Rating): ST+1p (5 Total)

Draw Weight: 30-50 lbs

Range: 10 yards / 15 yards / 25 yards / 40 yards / 80 yards

Unstrung length is 3-4'. Maximum effective direct fire range is about 75 feet, as much as triple that for indirect / area fire. Penetration is sufficient to kill up to that range, but not usually sufficient to defeat medium to heavy armor.

This ubiquitous weapon was found all over the world and was in widespread use in some places until the 19th century. In Europe the short bow began to be phased out by the early medieval period, increasingly replaced by heavier and more militarily effective longbows, recurve bows, crossbows, and firearms. By the Renaissance period, the short bow was an extreme rarity on European battlefields

Crossbows

Crossbows have been in use for centuries, all over the world. During the Classical period in the Mediterranean, their use was relegated to light hunting weapons and large siege engines, while in China, light repeating crossbows were in use. By the dark ages, heavy military and hunting crossbows began to appear which were developed through the medieval period until so powerful that they could slay armored opponents.

Contrary to legend, the crossbow remained a popular military weapon alongside early firearms until well into the Renaissance, and their eventual replacement by muskets and



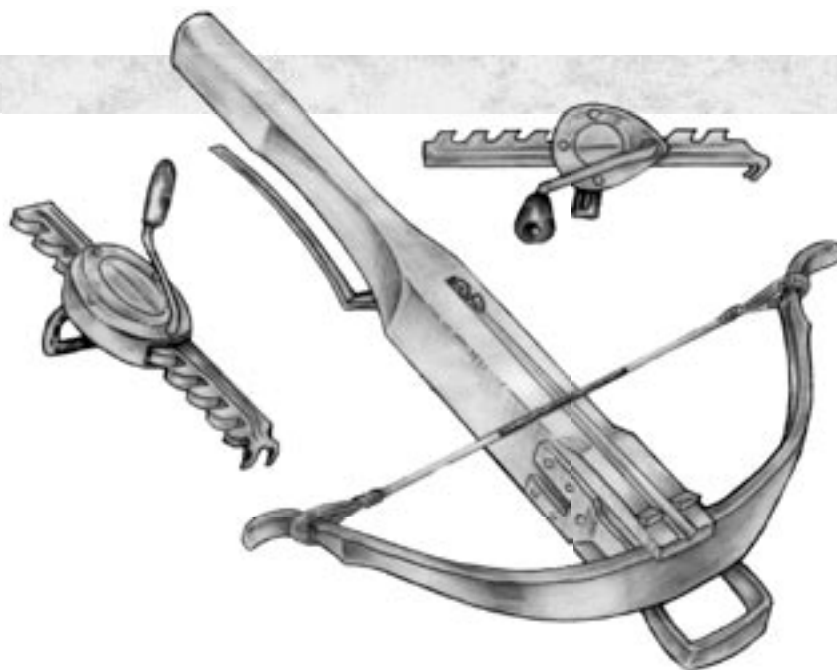


the arquebus had more to do with expense of manufacture and relative difficulty in training marksmen than with any difference in power. Late Renaissance era military crossbows were slow to span but once prepared were formidable weapons indeed.

Methods of loading a crossbow

There isn't one 'generic' way to span (load) a crossbow. Light crossbows could easily be spanned by hand, whereas heavier crossbows such as an arbalest could not be spanned without mechanical assistance. For the heavier types, a number of tools were available, each of which could assist the marksman in different ways in preparing their weapon to fire. Some, like the foot stirrup, spanner, and belt hook, merely augmented the strength of the marksman, while others such as the windlass and cranequin, properly used, were sufficiently strong on their own to span any crossbow no matter how powerful.

Arbalest



Preparation time: 8-10 rounds total. Pull bolt 0 (on ground) 2 in quiver, Span and nock 8 rounds

Attack Target Number (ATN): 5

Effective ST: 7

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 4p (Total 11)

Draw Weight: 350 – 1200 lbs

Range: 10 yards / 25 yards / 50 yards / 100 yards / 200 yards

The arbalest is a super-heavy crossbow, so powerful that in most cases it could only be loaded by mechanical means. These very formidable weapons first began to appear in the late medieval period as part of the arms race between ever heavier and more effective armor and the weapons that were designed to defeat it.

Appearance and Design features

The arbalest or armbrust (in German) is simply the ultimate refinement of the notorious heavy crossbow which gained notoriety in Europe from the Dark ages when the use of the (weaker) heavy crossbow was banned by a Papal bull for use against fellow Christians. The draw weight of an arbalest was



between 350-1,200 lbs, and unlike lesser crossbows, the prod (bow) was normally made of heavy spring steel. The bowstring was a very strong composite cable. The arbalest was so powerful it could only be spanned with mechanical assistance, often a special winch or a type of reduction gear hand crank (called a cranequin). A mistake during loading could easily lead to broken or severed fingers or worse.

Marksmen skilled in the use of such heavy crossbows (usually hailing from Italy or Switzerland) were rare, highly sought after and well paid. Waxed leather covers for the prod are common accessories carried by most marksmen to prevent damage by rain.

To make up for the slow firing rate, Swiss marksmen deployed with a pavise shield and two assistants, with each marksman responsible for two weapons. As one weapon is aimed and fired, the other is being spanned. This allows them to keep up a reasonably steady rate of fire if both marksman and assistants are sufficiently well trained.

In Italy, the Arbalest gained a less enviable reputation as a favored instrument of rebels, assassins, bandits and snipers. Highwaymen were particularly fond of using the weapon to take out armored escorts from concealment before attacking carriages.

Range

The arbalest was basically designed to fire its heavy bolts in a flat trajectory, and for this reason was significantly out-distanced by the justifiably famous long bows of Wales. Longbows, and the shorter but more powerful composite bows of Central Asia, could be volley-fired in ballistic arcs at area targets well beyond the range where a specific individual could be targeted.

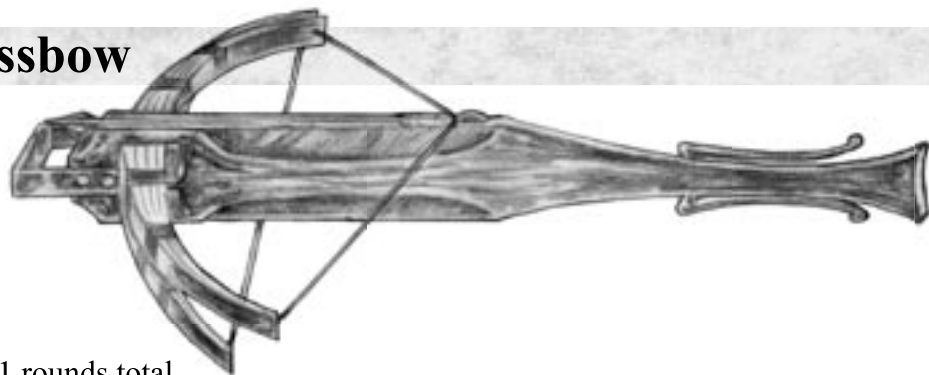
At short to medium range, however, these more precise heavy crossbows were much more accurate, could be held in readiness longer, and retained a vast superiority in penetrating power out to a greater range. This is one of the very few true armor piercing missile weapons. There are already many tales of Swiss arbalests shattering shields and splitting iron helmets, for example.

The arbalest or armbrust (German) is simply a heavier heavy-crossbow that first appeared in Europe in the 14th century, the pinnacle of a series of progressively heavier European designs going back to the 8th century. Crossbows and the more powerful bows launch their projectiles at a relatively similar initial velocity, (120-350 fps) but the bolts or quarrels fired by medieval crossbows (as opposed to those of modern crossbows) were designed very differently. They were significantly shorter, heavier and wider than arrows. Due to their weight and size, they carried substantially more kinetic energy to the target, allowing the enormous power of the heavier crossbows of the period to have a significant effect on the impact of the bolt.

There is a myth, apparently spread by English historians, that the Heavy Crossbow was a simple weapon that “anyone” could use. Shooting and aiming a crossbow is fairly easy, easier to master than aiming a self-bow, but loading, maintaining, and adjusting a heavy crossbow is another matter entirely. Crossbow marksmen were usually highly paid mercenary specialists, often recruited from Italy, where the use of the Crossbow was more widespread than elsewhere in Europe.



Double Crossbow



Preparation time: 9-11 rounds total.

Pull bolts: 1 (on ground) 3 (from quiver), span and nock 8

Refresh begins once the bolts are cocked. After the first is fired, refresh for the second begins at the start of the next round.

2 MP to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex/TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: 4

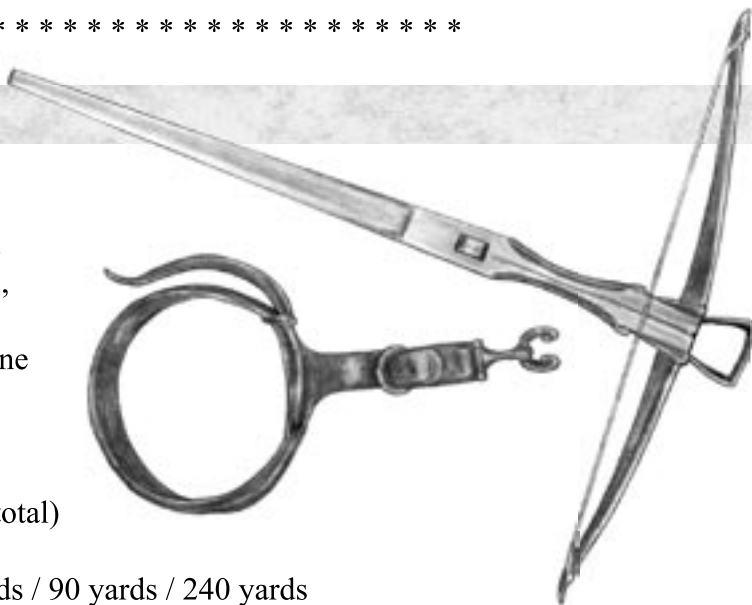
DR (Damage Rating): ST +2p (6 total)

Draw Weight: 80-120 lbs

Range: 8 yards / 12 yards / 20 yards / 40 yards / 64 yards

The double crossbow is essentially two crossbows attached to each other – two separate arrows are knocked into two separate strings, and pulled back. There are two triggers. Because of the bulkiness of the weapon, the double crossbow is slightly harder to aim and use, but the advantage is that a second shot may be made without a lengthy reload time after the first (MP refresh begins again immediately). It is even possible to pull both triggers simultaneously and shoot both arrows at the same target – simply split the MP as desired and roll both attacks separately. Both attacks must be aimed at the same zone on the same target, of course, but each may strike a different part of that zone – roll a D6 for location for each.

Heavy Crossbow



Preparation time: 4-6 rounds total.

Pull bolt 0 (on ground) 2 (in quiver), span and nock 4

2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 5

Effective ST: 5

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 3p (8 total)

Draw Weight: 200 – 350 lbs

Range: 15 yards / 30 yards / 45 yards / 90 yards / 240 yards

A very powerful crossbow for hunting big game or for warfare. Crossbows with this much draw strength were dangerous and tricky to span, and difficult to maintain. The prod (bow) was made of



composite materials (wood, sinew, and horn) or steel. The bowstring would be a heavy composite cable. Draw weight was between 200- 350 lbs.

These weapons required a foot stirrup for cocking, at minimum. Heavier versions required a belt hook, a spanner or a winch unless the marksman had exceptional strength.

It should be noted that the composite (wood, horn and sinew) prods were very vulnerable to rain, as was the bowstring / cable. A crossbow lacking a steel prod, which got wet could be useless, and could even be permanently ruined. As a result, oiled covers for the prod were common accessories carried by most crossbow marksmen in Europe.

Many historical battles were lost when bad weather prevented the effective deployment of crossbow marksmen.

H heavy crossbows are the most powerful military crossbow normally in use outside of Europe. Crossbows of this type were used in central Asia, Japan, North Africa, and the Middle East.

More powerful heavy crossbows with over 200 lbs draw strength became known in Europe from around the 10th - 11th century, they were a new and dangerous innovation.

Hunting Crossbow

Preparation time: 4-6 rounds total. Pull bolt 0 (on ground)

2 (in quiver), span and nock 4

2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

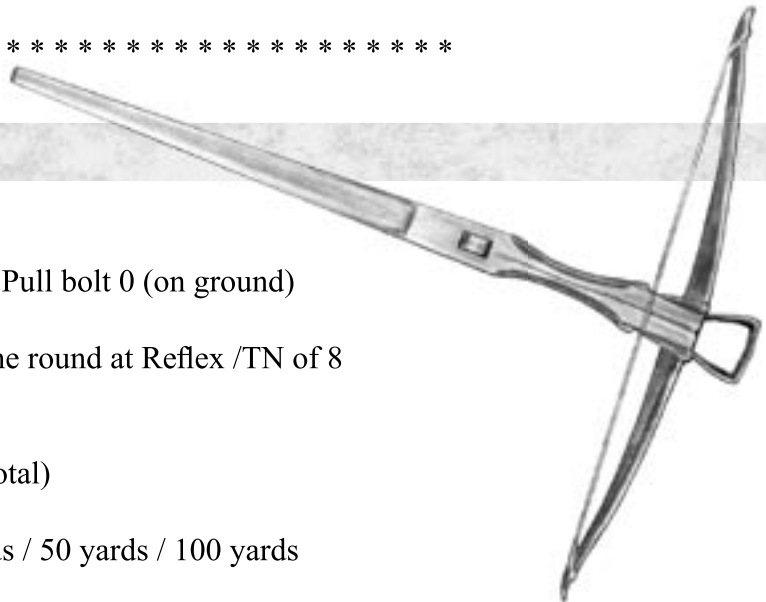
Attack Target Number (ATN): 5

Effective ST: 5

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 2p (7 total)

Draw Weight: 120 – 200 lbs

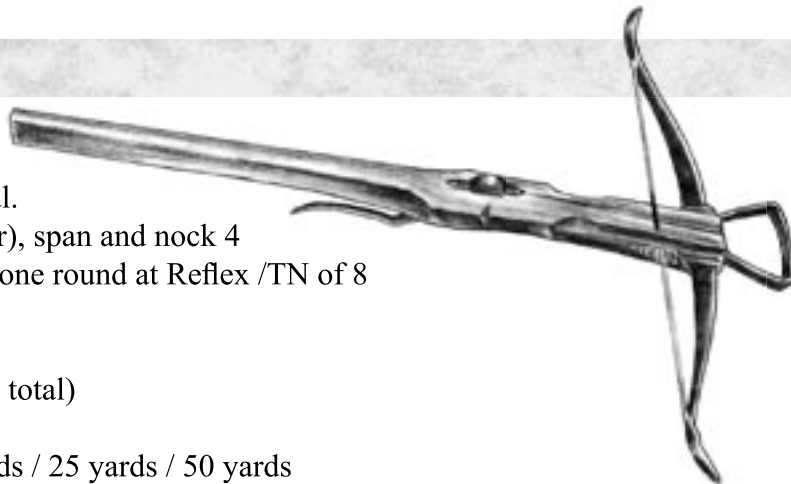
Range: 10 yards / 20 yards / 30 yards / 50 yards / 100 yards



A medium powered crossbow suitable for hunting light and medium game, but also sufficiently powerful to be useful for self defense. The prod (bow) was made of wood, composite materials (wood, sinew, and horn) or steel. Draw weight was between 120 and 200 lbs. Penetration was somewhat superior to that of a short self-bow. Requires the use of both hands to load. Many weapons of this type are made with a foot stirrup to assist in loading.



Light Crossbow



Preparation time: 4-6 rounds total.

Pull bolt 0 (on ground) 2 (in quiver), span and nock 4

2 MP dice to reduce prep. time by one round at Reflex /TN of 8

Attack Target Number (ATN): 5

Effective ST: 4

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 1p (5 total)

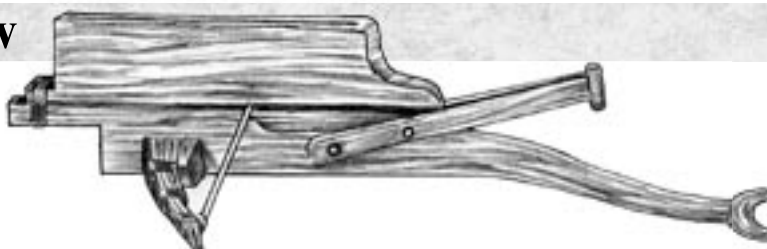
Draw Weight: 80 - 120 lbs

Range: 5 yards / 10 yards / 15 yards / 25 yards / 50 yards

A simple crossbow capable of being spanned by hand. Draw weight was between 60 and 120 lbs. The prod (bow) was made of wood or more rarely horn. This was a hunting weapon suitable for taking small game. Though it would not normally be considered appropriate for military use it is powerful enough to pose a threat of serious injury to anyone being shot with it, and it could kill if striking a vital area. Penetration is somewhat less than that of a short self-bow.

Light crossbows were used all over the world, including China and the Pacific Islands going back to Bronze Age and before. They were known to the Greeks though not considered very valuable as military weapons. (The Greeks however perfected many much stronger siege engines based on the crossbow, such as the ingenious Gastrophetes)

Repeating Crossbow



Preparation time:

(To load the magazine): 20 rounds total. Load arrows in magazine 15, attach and load magazine 5

(Before each shot): 1 round total. Winch back mechanism; bolt falls into place automatically 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: 3

DR (Damage Rating): ST (Total 3)

Draw Weight: 40 – 60 lbs

Range: 5 yards / 10 yards / 15 yards / 25 yards / 50 yards

Repeating Crossbows did in fact exist, (they were used in ancient Greece and by peasant militias in China from ancient times until the late 19th century!) but they had several limitations. The Chinese types fired very light bolts that lacked fletchings (feathers) for stabilization. Thus, they were weaker in impact and less accurate.



Repeating Crossbows have actually existed on Earth for at a very long time. They were thought to have been first invented by the Chinese, and are known to have been used in their war against Japan in the late 1800's. The actual age of the invention is unknown, having been lost in antiquity. Chinese repeating crossbows were capable of releasing 10 arrows in as little as 15 seconds. These were fired with a lot less force than the heavy European crossbows, of course, and their killing power was thus often supplemented with poison (see injection poisons, p. 86). Repeating crossbows cannot fire reservoir arrows.

Pricing

The following prices are indicative only, depending on the campaign world you use. If you are using Weyrth as your setting, the following are Imperial Standard coinage prices. For Heavy coinage, all prices are 2/3rds of the amount listed. For light coinage, double it.

Weapon	Cost
Arbalest	90 silver
Double Crossbow	50 silver
Hunting Crossbow	25 silver
Light Crossbow	15 silver
Long Bow	20 silver
Recurve Bow	12 silver
Recurve Composite Bow	30 silver
Repeating Crossbow	50 silver
Short Bow	7 silver

Optional Rule: Different arrow heads

Arrows are not particularly sophisticated devices; their primary purpose is to kill, and little variation is necessary in such an elegant design. However, different cultures and different needs have been the genesis of alternate designs for the arrowhead, some of which are detailed below and may, at the Seneschal's discretion, be used in *Riddle of Steel* campaigns. Most arrowheads are designed to be removed from a broken shaft and reattached to another shaft for re-use. This is often not possible where an arrow has pierced hard armor however, as that can distort the head.

All of the following arrowheads may be used for crossbow arrows (bolts) as well.

Hunting



This is the “default” arrowhead, and may be metal attached to the shaft, or may in fact simply be the sharpened wooden tip of the shaft, often fire-hardened. Hunting arrows work in all respects as described above and in The Riddle of Steel rulebook.

Barbed



Barbed arrows are designed to go in easily, but come out only with effort. They have backwards-pointing barbs for this reason, and the wound is often torn larger in an attempt to remove them. When removing a barbed arrow, the Pain level of the wound increases by +1 unless the remover makes a successful First Aid roll with at least as many successes as the attackers Margin of Success.

Blunt



Blunt arrows are often used in hunting or where the desired outcome is the submission of the target rather than its/their death. The tip is rounded and hard. Blunts cause bashing damage instead of piercing, and the DR is reduced by -2, or -3 against any form of armor. However, the Shock result of the wound is increased by +X, where X is the margin of attack successes.

Bodkin



The bodkin is designed for maximum penetration through armor or other defenses. The head is very long and tapered, and razor sharp. Because they tend to be lighter, the DR of a bodkin arrow is -1, however all forms of armor count as if their AV were two lower (minimum 0) against a Bodkin, making them very effective as armor-piercers.

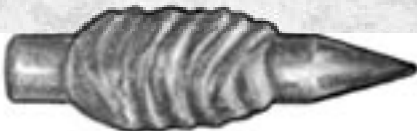


Broadhead



Broadhead arrows are designed with extremely sharp edges so as to slide through flesh very easily. They work in all respects as described above and in *The Riddle of Steel* rulebook, except that the BL of the resulting wound is +2

Flaming



Although not technically an arrowhead type, it's possible to fashion flaming arrows by wrapping pitch-soaked cloth around the head and upper shaft. It generally requires two people to fire a flaming arrow, as it's not easy to nock and aim an arrow that has already been lit, so one person aims and prepares the arrow, and the other ignites it just before release. The ATN to fire a flaming arrow is +2 and each range increment is halved. The most common use of a flaming arrow is to ignite walls etc, but they may be fired against a person just as easily. The Seneschal must adjudicate the flammability of the clothing the target wears and how quickly those clothes ignite. Flaming arrows are, of course, not reusable.

Galling / Forked



A galling or forked arrowhead curves forwards to two points, with the edge between them worked to be extremely sharp. They are popular in hunting, as they may take a bird's head off in flight while leaving the body totally untouched. They may also be used to sever ropes from a distance, useful against opposing ships during naval battles. Against a person or creature, the arrow does not penetrate as deeply as a regular arrow, but makes a larger and more vicious surface wound. The odd aerodynamics of the head increases the ATN to fire the arrow by +1 and decreases the DR by -1 against any form of hard armor, but the resulting wound has +1 Pain and +4 BL.

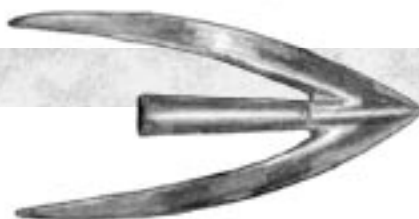


Reservoir



Although tricky to manufacture, it's possible (albeit extremely difficult and expensive) to fashion arrows with a glass reservoir, designed to break on impact once the arrowhead is inside the targets body. This reservoir may be filled with animal venom (OBAM p.29) or poison (p. 84), or may even be filled with oil and the arrow shot at a source of flame so that flaming oil sprays outwards from the point of impact. The ATN to fire a reservoir arrow is +2 and each range increment is halved. The DR is -1, but on impact, the reservoir will break and dispense the contents. The arrowheads will shatter upon hitting anything hard (any armor or shield of AV3 or higher) and have no effect at all, but may go through soft armor such as leather or padded fabric and still dispense their payload. Naturally, reservoir arrowheads are not reusable.

Swallowtail



The Swallowtail is the most vicious and nasty arrowhead available, and is designed to penetrate very deeply, and be almost impossible to remove without tearing a huge chunk out of the surrounding flesh and muscle. The increased weight of the head halves each range increment, but the resulting wound is +1 Pain, and when the arrow is removed the wound increases by another +2 Pain unless a *Surgery* check is made with more successes than the attackers Margin of Success (a tie means the Surgery check was not successful).

Whistler



Whistling arrows function exactly the same as plain/hunting arrowheads, but have a hole drilled through them so that the arrow whistles in flight. Some cultures have used this to great effect, as the chilling sound of hundreds of whistling arrows approaching from the other side of the battlefield can demoralize troops and terrify them. Whistler arrowheads are not recoverable if they have penetrated any form of hard armor as the hole weakens the structure of the head and striking a hard surface will deform it. For this reason, whistler arrows are -1 DR against hard armors.



Costs

Arrow shafts, complete arrows and arrowheads are usually bought in bundles of at least ten. Because individual manufacturers may make arrows and/or heads differently, and even items from the same manufacturer may alter according to the day they were made, fletchers and smiths who fashion heads will make items in bundles of 10 or more so that each item in the bundle will be as similar to the others as possible. This ensures that subsequent arrows fired in sequence will share approximately the same aerodynamics and fly similarly, allowing an archer to hone in his aim the more arrows from the same bundle he fires.

Item	Light-weight Coinage	Imperial Standard Coin	Heavy-weight Coinage
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Complete Arrows (plain/hunting heads), bundle of ten			
Crossbow bolt	4 copper	2 copper	1c, 1b
Longbow arrow	5 copper	2 copper, 2 bits	1c, 2b
Short bow arrow	4 copper	2 copper	1c, 1b

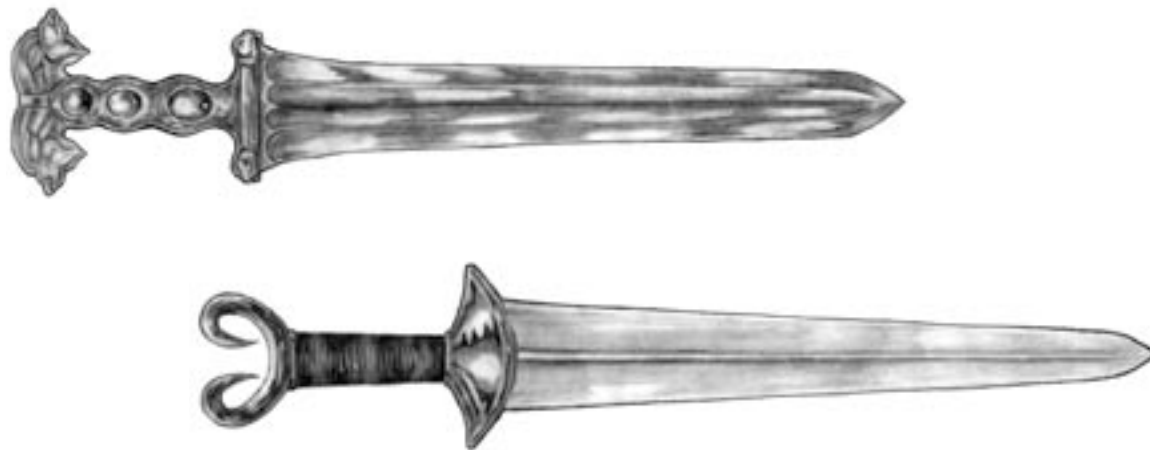
Arrow Shafts (no heads), bundle of ten			
Crossbow bolt, per 10	1 copper	2 bits	1 bit
Longbow arrow, per 10	1 copper, 1 bit	3 bits	2 bits
Short bow arrow, per 10	1 copper	2 bits	1 bit

Arrow Heads, bundle of ten			
Barbed	6 copper	3 copper	2 copper
Blunt	4 copper	2 copper	1 copper, 2 bits
Bodkin	10 copper	5 copper	3 copper, 2 bits
Broadhead	4 copper	2 copper	1 copper, 2 bits
Flaming (includes pitch bundle)	10 copper	5 copper	3 copper, 2 bits
Galling	7 copper	3 copper, 2 bits	2 copper, 1 bit
Plain/Hunting	3 copper, 3 bits	1 copper, 3 bits	1 copper, 1 bit
Reservoir (empty)	4 silver	2 silver	1 silver, 6 copper
Reservoir (empty), each	5 copper	2 copper, 2 bits	1 copper, 2 bits
Swallowtail	8 copper	4 copper	2 copper, 3 bits
Whistler	4 copper	2 copper	1 copper, 2 bits



Daggers and Shortswords

Akinakes



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Akinakes	1H, S	7	6	8	0-1	2E	ST-1	ST	+1

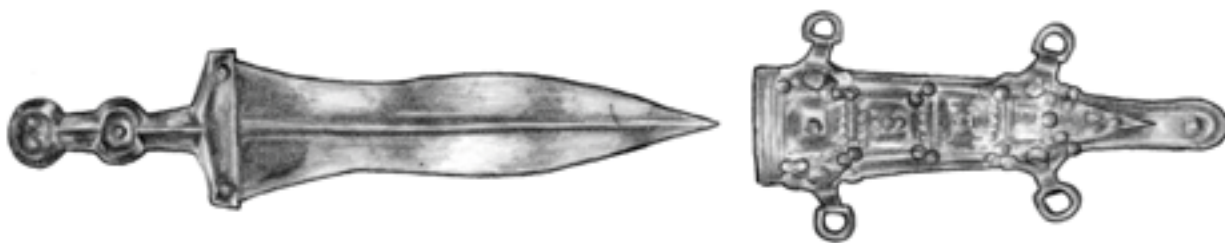
Proficiency: Sword & Shield, Dagger

An ancient type of short sword first used by wild tribesmen in Central Asia, Persia, and Anatolia during the Bronze Age and early Iron Age, this archaic weapon was found in many lands of the East well into the Classical period, remaining a popular sidearm for cavalry. A fairly wide, double-edged, parallel bladed weapon with a rounded or spatulate tip, usually 14"-18" in length (the entire weapon is from 20"-24" long), the akinakes is also characterized by a unique two-lobed pommel. The akinakes is a cut and a thrust weapon, but also useful for slashing (draw cutting) and to a lesser degree, hacking and cutting.

A Persian weapon originally adopted from the Scythians, Sarmatians, and other steppe peoples of Central Asia who used them well back into the Bronze age. This specific weapon was found in tombs and other archeological sites dating from thousands of years BC through the classical period. Archeologists use its presence to identify settlements of steppe peoples.



Broad Dagger



Roman Pugio

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Broad Dagger	1H, S	7	7	7 (6)	0	Heavy, 1E	ST-1	ST+1	+1
Pugio	1H, S	7	6	8 (6)	0	Heavy, 1E	ST-2	ST+1	+2

Proficiency: Dagger

The dagger has long been reduced to the status of a second or even third class weapon in most RPG's. In the less popular realm of historical fact however, the dagger had much greater prominence as a weapon. The truth is, not every knight carried a sword, even less so the myriad other soldiers of the ancient battlefield, not to mention the various renegades, bandits, thieves, bravo's, and thugs one might encounter in the cities and byways of ancient Europe. But the dagger was more ubiquitous: indeed nearly every individual who ever expected to get in a fight in their life, (and quite a few who didn't) from professional soldiers to the lowliest peasant, carried a big knife. We are not of course talking about your typical eating knife, but a real pig sticker with a good 7 to 15 inch blade.

One fact known to serious killers, of which there were many in the days of yore, is that the chief trade off of a thrusting weapon was that of penetration versus injury. A stiletto, or it's longer cousin the smallsword or even rapier, pierces easily, sliding past bone, puncturing muscle, fascia and cartilage with nary a pause. Causing instant death with such a weapon however requires a great deal of precision, and can be much harder than say, causing a wound likely to ultimately prove mortal.

The other end of the spectrum of thrusting weapons are the wider bladed instruments, which though more difficult to press through flesh and bone, cause vastly more catastrophic damage in doing so, thus making an instant kill more of a possibility. The ancient barbarians of Europe understood this, as did their perennial foes, the Romans. This is why the Romans adopted broad bladed daggers and short swords for the battlefield, in preference to longer, thinner thrusting weapons.

The broad dagger represents just such weapons, which were discovered among Celtic barbarians and adapted by the Romans. Two examples are the Roman Pugio, which somewhat resembles a small hand shovel, and the triangular "cinquedea", named for it's five finger width at the base. The latter weapon was rediscovered by the ultra practical Italian families of the Renaissance, and saw a resumption of popularity both as a dagger, and as a short and even medium length sword. One notable example of the latter was made for the infamous Cesare Borgia, who liked to use it for Boar hunting, (an endeavor in which the immediate death of the victim is of paramount importance.)



Cutlass / Dussack



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw cut Modifier
Dussack	1H, S	6	7	7	4	1E	ST	ST-1	+1

Proficiency: Saber, Sword and Shield

The origins of the modern naval cutlass can be somewhat difficult to trace. The cutlass probably is not, as superficial observation might suggest, merely a stouter, shorter variant of the cavalry saber, despite in it's modern form having a similar hand guard and overall shape. The cutlass in fact has a much different purpose.

The saber was optimized for the draw cut from horseback. It featured a fairly narrow blade suited for quick slashes, and often a canted grip for weapon retention. The cutlass by comparison is a much simpler hacking weapon, a weapon which can kill without requiring remarkable finesse, and is eminently practical: Short enough to get around in cramped shipboard conditions, and heavy enough to hack through rope in an emergency.

The cutlass in fact in all likelihood evolved from a far more ancient line of weapons. This family of short single edged cutting and thrusting peasants swords included the ancient Sax and it's variants, the single edged norse swords of the dark ages, the falchion of the medieval battlefield, and eventually the curious German weapon known as a Dussack which began to appear in the fencing manuals of the 15th century.

The Dussack, as it appeared in the fencing manuals, was a primitive single edged, curved-bladed steel chopper, with a curious hand guard with all the appearance of a hole cut into the steel like the finger hole in a pair of scissors, or in other variants, a tang warped around forward to protect the hand. These depictions may in fact be practice Dussacks used by the masters for training, just as some of the long sword variants seen in a few of the fechtbuchs seemed to be specifically made for the gymnaisium.

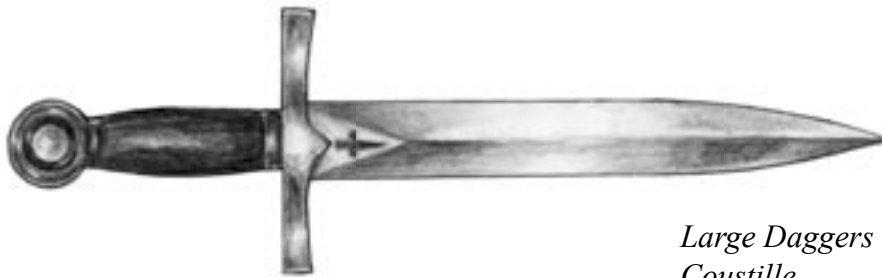
Few modern spathologists have yet attempted to document the origins of the weapon, but examples of blades very much resembling an 18th or 19th century heavy cutlass currently exist in Museums and private collections which date back to the 15th century. As simple cut-and-thrust weapons, these were popular with peasants who lacked a great deal of military training. It is very likely that the slightly more elaborate version of this essentially simple weapon, one of which is depicted here, was the true predecessor of the modern cutlass. Their familiarity to the common man, ease of use and practicality, and brutal effectiveness in close quarters combat made them ideal weapons to issue to saliors and marines for use aboard ship.



Dagger



Small Daggers
Bassilard



Large Daggers
Coustille
Dirk

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Small Dagger	1H, H	9	7	9 (7)	0-2	2E	ST-3	ST-1	+2
Large Dagger	1H, H	8	6	8 (6)	0-3	2E	ST-2	ST	+1

Proficiency: Dagger, Short Sword

Small dagger

A small dagger by medieval or Renaissance standards was a very large and formidable weapon compared to a modern hunting knife, more on the order of a mid 20th century bayonet. Like a bayonet, a dagger was double edged, and it normally had a blade at least 6 inches long. In fact, a dagger with a 9-inch or even a 12-inch blade was not particularly unusual. Daggers normally had a dual use as a utility knife and even a farm tool, but as weapons, they were used primarily for thrusting, with a secondary cutting ability best utilized as a draw cut.

Daggers were the most ubiquitous weapons in the middle ages. Not every knight carried a sword or even a lance, but every knight, and every soldier carried a dagger, as did nearly all peasants and most city folk. A dagger is very formidable in combat at the close quarters where many fights end up, and a dagger with a 9" blade can deliver a fatal wound just as easily as a sword or a spear.

Large Dagger

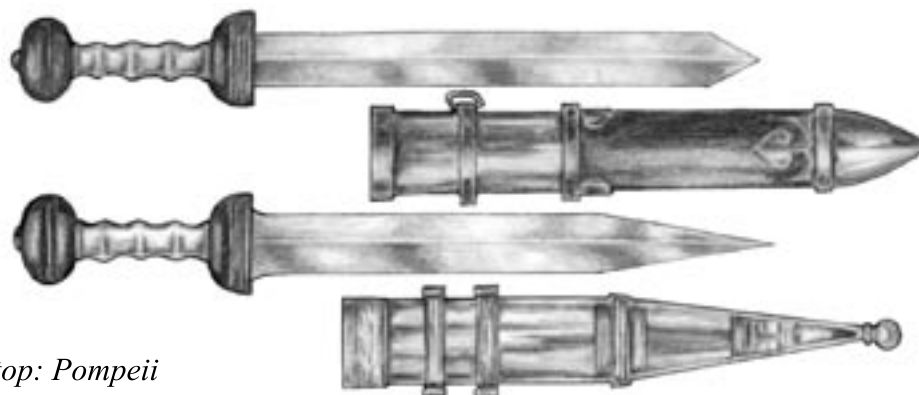
A large dagger was an even more deadly hand weapon. Any knife, which has a double-edged blade, 10"-15" long, an overall length of 14"-20", and a small cross guard, can be considered a

large dagger. Many specific dagger types fall into this general category, a typical example being the popular coustille dagger of Spain and France.

Though capable of slashing and even hacking, the coustille was primarily designed for thrusting. It was often worn in areas where swords are restricted. This type of weapon was small enough to still be legally considered a dagger, but large and heavy enough to have some defensive value in a fight. It was also easy to ride with, as it could be thrust under a belt in varying positions. Another notable sub type was the notorious dirk of the Scottish Highlands.

The effectiveness of daggers is testified by their being the single most ubiquitous weapons in the world from the Bronze Age until the 19th century.

Gladius



*From top: Pompeii
and Fulham Gladius*

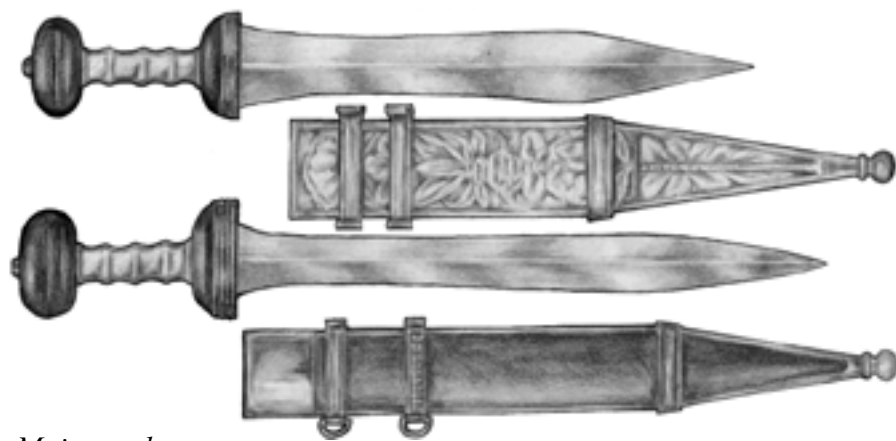
Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw cut Modifier
Gladius	1H, S	6	6	7	0	2E	ST	ST+1	0

Proficiency: Sword & Shield

Though obsolete on the Medieval European battlefield, the old Roman gladius was the most formidable military sword of its day and a very respected weapon for close quarters fighting. In fact, many generally similar short swords reappeared on some battlefields of Europe in the Renaissance, carried especially by pikemen and archers for use as backup weapons (see short sword, cinqueda, katzbalger).

A short to medium sized sword used in various forms as the primary hand weapon of the Roman Legions for nearly 4 centuries, the gladius in its various forms was from 27"-32" in total length, and characterized by a bar-bell handle, featuring a spherical wooden pommel and a hemispherical wooden guard, with a grip normally made of bone or ivory. These were fairly heavy, stiff, broad-bladed double-edged swords, primarily used as thrusting weapons but equally capable of effective hacking and chopping.

In fact, though thrusting was emphasized in Roman military doctrine, the gladius was widely known as one of the few short swords to be broad and heavy enough for effective chopping. Despite being



*Mainz and
Hispaniensis Gladius*

outmoded by the larger two handed and thrusting weapons of later eras, the gladius was a very quick weapon, lethal in both modes of attack, and still one of the deadliest close-quarters weapons in existence. It was considered highly effective particularly when used in conjunction with a large shield, as it traditionally was.

Archeologists have identified four subtypes of the Roman gladius, the original hispaniensis, the mainz, the fulham, and the utilitarian pompeii. The Arabs and Central Asians have a short two-edged short sword called a kindjal that is nearly identical to a gladius and may be a variant of that weapon.

As with much Roman military equipment, the gladius was originally copied from the arms of Rome's enemies, in this case the Celts. It was based on a broad bladed, medium length cut-and-thrust design which the Romans first encountered in Spain, but which dates back well into the early Hallstadt (Bronze Age) period (in bronze).

Gradually the weapon was Romanized, later forms such as those found in Mainz Germany, Fulham England, and latest of all in Pompeii, progressively lost the elegant curves and wasp-waist of the original Celtic design and became strait and parallel edged with shorter triangular points. Evolving from that earlier Spanish (Celtiberian) design, the Gladius was ultimately perfected as a brutally efficient, multi-purpose short sword.

All varieties of the Gladius performed similarly in combat. In fact, according to classical eyewitnesses of the first reported use of the weapon in a battle against the Macedonians, the victorious Romans left the field littered with the severed limbs and heads of their enemies.

Generally speaking, the gladius was one of the most versatile weapons of the classical period, well balanced, maneuverable, and lethal. Along with the huge but relatively light scutum shield, the pilum (javelin), helmet, and heavy body armor of the Legionnaire, the gladius formed an integral part of the Roman military machine that crushed opposition from England to Egypt, and across the breadth of the Mediterranean, from the pillars of Hercules to the deserts of Parthia.



Jambiya Dagger



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Jambiya	1H, H	7	8	10	1	1E	ST-3	ST-1	+2

Proficiency: Dagger

The jambiya was a traditional Arabic dagger, a formidable double-edged slashing weapon with a blade normally from 6"-9" and a pronounced curve to aid in delivering draw cuts.

The jambiya remains very popular and is still carried by nearly every grown man in places like Yemen.

Knife



Large Knives



Razors





Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Razor	1H, H	8	-	10	0	1E	ST-5	-	+5
Small Knife	1H, H	10	7	10	0	1E	ST-4	ST-2	+2
Large Knife	1H, S	9	7	10	0	1E	ST-3	ST	+2

Proficiency: Dagger

A small knife is a single edged blade, with a blade length from 2"-5", a large knife has a blade from 6" to 9". Knives are not primarily military weapons but can be very effective at close quarters, especially for thrusting and draw cutting. Razors are of course civilian implements for shaving, but were popular with assassins and street criminals for their ability to deal devastating draw-cuts at close quarters.

Kukri / Falcata / Kopsis



Falcata



Kopsis



Yataghan

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Kukri	1H, Hand	6	9	8	1	1E, Heavy	ST	ST	+1
Falcata	1H, Short	6	9	8	1	1E, Heavy	ST+1	ST	+1
Kopsis / Yataghan	1H, Medium	6	9	8	1	1E, Heavy	ST+2	ST	+1

Proficiency: Sword & Shield

The falcata was a short sword with a rather acutely curved blade, the most common of a family of similar weapons found across Europe and Asia which feature blades that are bent downward in the opposite manner of a saber or a tulwar with the cutting edge on the inside

of the curve. Similar weapons include the kukri knife favored in India, the kopis of Ancient Greece, and the yataghan of Ottoman Turkey. The falcata was said to have originated in Spain in the early Iron Age, and was introduced to Roman use by Iberian troops of Hannibal during the Punic Wars.

Since the archaic period, this ancient blade-shape has remained in use in one form or another all over the world, though it remained popular longest in Central and South Asia.

In use, these blade-heavy, inward-curving swords are close-quarters choppers extraordinaire, reportedly capable of severing heads and limbs with ease. Both the falcata and the larger kopis share a unique type of canted grip, reminiscent of later cavalry swords. The grip shape was supposed to aid in weapon retention when delivering hard, jarring blows. Due to the weapons length and to a lesser extent its shape, the falcata was probably most effective if used close in, especially in conjunction with a shield. It was not normally used for thrusting.

Essentially, the falcata brings the cutting power of a large axe or long sword into the close hand-to-hand arena. Though somewhat blade-heavy and less agile to wield than many more modern types, the weapons in this family pack a lethal punch; in fact the falcata and the kukri are probably the single most effective chopping/cutting weapons less than 30" in length. Used in conjunction with a shield any of the three weapons of this type can be particularly dangerous in a close fight.

Special Features: Single edged, heavy

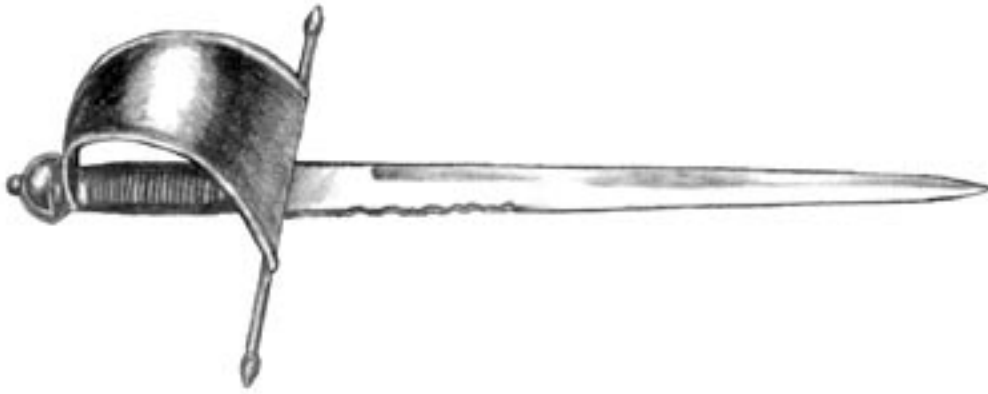
The falcata, like its larger cousin the kopis, was believed to be a development of the ancient Egyptian khopesh; a militarized sickle shaped something like a question mark. Many historians believe that the kukri knife of the Gurkhas and many similar weapons of South Asia were developments of the falcata and the larger kopis that were introduced to India by the troops of Alexander the Great. The falcata was a later design developed by the Celtiberians of Spain.

The Romans first encountered this specific type of weapon that was carried by Celtiberian troops fighting under Hannibal during the Second Punic War. The Romans later adopted the type themselves along with another more versatile Celtiberian weapon, the Gladius Hispaniensis. Later, they encountered yet another weapon with an inward curving blade, the notorious two-handed falx of the Dacians, for which the Romans had a great deal of fear and considerable respect. The falcata went on to become popular all over the Mediterranean for centuries, but was eventually replaced by the larger slashing swords of the Goths, which remained predominant until the medieval period.

After falling out of favor in late antiquity, the basic blade design reappeared in the form of the Turkish/Arabic yataghan and other similar weapons. Compared to the falcata or the kopis, the yataghan was slimmer, normally slightly less acutely curved, and was usually characterized by an 'eared' pommel, yet the similarity is striking. The yataghan remained popular until well into the 19th century.



Main Gauche



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw cut modifier
Parrying Dagger	1H, H	8	6	8 (6)	2-4	2E	ST-3	ST -1	+1
Main Gauche	1H, S	-	6	7 (5)	3-5	2E	-	ST -1	-

Proficiency: Dagger

Daggers have been used as off-hand weapons in conjunction with swords for centuries, but it wasn't until the late medieval period that sword-and-dagger fighting gained such popularity in Southern Europe in particular that specialist weapon types began to appear which were specifically developed for the purpose. Specialized blocking daggers appeared in Italy in the late medieval period for use with civilian weapons, while the true main-gauche rose to popularity in France in the Renaissance, from where it has spread throughout Western Europe as popular companion to civilian swords such as the rapier, cut-and-thrust sword, or smallsword. It was especially popular with professional duelists and bladeslingers.

The main-gauche was a long bladed dagger with an enhanced guard, which was specialized for parrying, usually wielded in the left hand (hence the name) in conjunction with a second longer weapon held in the right. Often lacking an edge (sometimes single edged or triangular shaped in the manner of certain smallswords), the narrow blade on the typical main-gauche ensures that despite its overall defensive purpose, it was capable of effective thrusting attacks.

Special Features: Due to the lightness of the blade, it defends with a TN of 8 against any heavy striking or cutting weapon, and with a TN of 5 against lighter thrusting weapons and civilian swords.

Blocking daggers existed in the Medieval period, the true Main Gauche appeared in the Renaissance in Italy and were used primarily in civilian circumstances into the 19th century.



Protosword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Protosword (Macahuitil)	1H, S	6	8	7	0	Wood	ST	ST-1	+1
Two-Handed Protosword (Tbutje Pacho)	2H, M	7	9	8	0	Wood	ST+1	ST-2	+1

Proficiency: Sword and Shield

This was a war club, generally a single-handed weapon not as heavy as a “gunstock” club or a taiaha, but fitted with sharks teeth or pieces of sharp obsidian to cause extra slashing damage with each attack. This type of weapon would be used in more sophisticated Neolithic cultures lacking knowledge of or access-to bronze or iron.

Special Features: –2 Cut or Draw-cut damage vs. Mail or Plate armor.

The weapon depicted above was called pacho, tbutje pacho, or macahuitil by the Aztecs. The Conquistadors considered these to be “swords” and described them as being very effective (though they seemed to lack the ability to penetrate iron armor). Similar weapons were in nearly every part of the world, including Europe, and persisted long after bronze and even iron had become theoretically available in a given area. The Germans used weapons similar to this during their first few encounters with Roman troops in the 2nd century BC.

Rondel Dagger



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage
Rondel Dagger	1H, H	-	6	8 (6)	1	-	-	ST

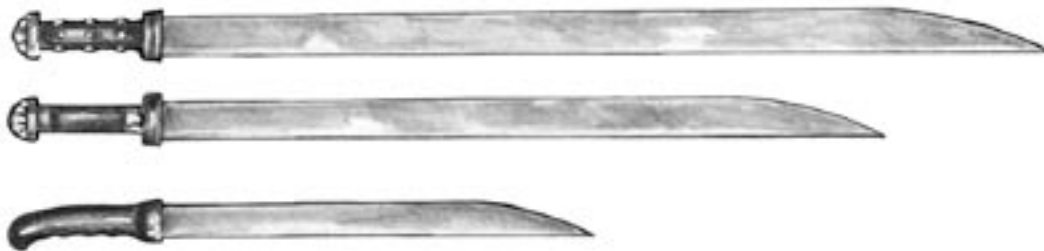


Proficiency: Dagger

A rondel dagger was a type of reinforced armor piercing dagger with a disk shaped guard and a parallel disk shaped pommel. A specialized thrusting dagger, it was very popular with the knightly class throughout Europe and used for both armored and unarmored fighting. It was characterized by a narrow, tapering, triangular shaped blade, often strengthened with a reinforcing rib. Used to thrust into the weaker joints between the armor, this strong dagger was useful as a thrusting weapon, being stiff and narrow for good penetration. The rondel was frequently relied upon as a blocking dagger, wielded in the left hand.

Special Rules: Rondel daggers do +1 damage against any type of armor. Rondel daggers are very common in the Western nations.

Sax and Long-Sax



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Sax	1H, S	6	8	8	0	1E	ST-1	ST	+1
Long Sax	1H, M	7	8	7	0	1E	ST	ST	0

Proficiency: Sword and Shield (Long Sax) Cut and Thrust, Dagger (Sax)

The simple iron Sax was a popular traditional sidearm and general-purpose tool found in a wide swath of Northern and Western Europe, from Germany to the British Isles. Most had relatively short blades only a little longer than a dagger, but in some areas, particularly in Scandinavia and northern Germany, there were longer examples with a function more like a poor-mans sword.

These medium length weapons are referred to as the long-sax, linen sax, or scramasax. They cut quite effectively but could be somewhat blade heavy, not always being balanced for combat. The type of skill required to use a sax depends on the specific weapon's length. Dagger Proficiency is used for the smaller saxes under 20" (these would be considered a large knife). Sword and Shield is used for the sax between 20" – 30", and Sword and Shield or Cut-and-Thrust can be used for any weapon over 30".



Saxons of Northern Germany and later the British Isles were named for this weapon. The sax was a general utility knife used by most Germanic and Scandinavian peoples throughout the migration period. As much a farmer's implement and general-purpose tool as a weapon, it came in many variations on the basic form and in sizes ranging from a few inches up to three feet.

Its primary defining characteristic was the long blade widening out toward the end, with the edge along the longer, straight side, a trait found very few other bladed weapons. Long saxes were used quite often in warfare. Weapon caches in Scandinavia have revealed as many as 25% of the swords were actually single edged weapons, probably long-saxes.

Short Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Short Sword	1H, S	7	5	7	0-1	2E	ST-1	ST	+1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust, Sword and Shield

The earliest bronze swords were short, often less than 20", because longer weapons would break or bend too easily. The larger short sword featuring a total length of 20"-28" survived from ancient origins in prehistory and was found across the world in all iron or bronze using cultures into modern times. It was deadly at close range, particularly with the thrust.

Though in Europe it was increasingly supplanted as the primary battlefield weapon by around 100 AD by ever longer bladed swords, short swords continued to appear as backup weapons and sidearms throughout the Medieval period, and were back in vogue in certain specific forms in the late Renaissance. A two edged, cut and thrust short sword called a kindjal that is very similar in appearance to the old Roman gladius has persisted in Arabic countries and in Central Asia until modern times.

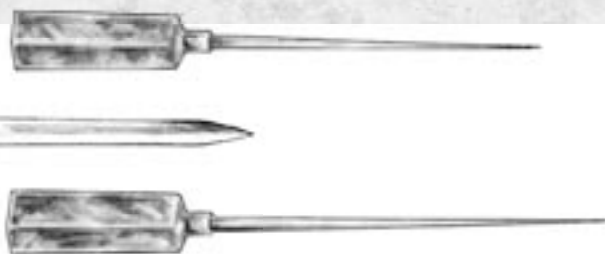
Generally less in vogue in medieval times than in the ancient past, and often supplanted by more specialized derivatives, the basic two edged short sword nevertheless remained a popular sidearm for eons and is a potent weapon in the hands of a determined opponent, particularly dangerous in a close fight.



Stiletto



Stiletto



Misericorde / Poniard

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage
Stiletto	1H, S	-	5	9 (7)	1	Light	-	ST-2
Misericorde / poniard	1H, H	-	5	10	1	Light	-	ST-2

Proficiency: Dagger

A stiletto was a dagger with a thin, strong blade almost like a large ice pick, specialized for thrusting. This was a favored assassin's weapon, also carried concealed by many in urban settings. The narrowness of the blade ensures that it can easily slip through bone and light armor to seek vital areas inside the body. Stilettoes had superb penetration against little or no armor, but were likely to break if used against heavy armor.

The misericorde ('mercy' dagger) or poniard was essentially a cruder, smaller stiletto, generally 7" – 12" long and featuring a crude wood handle. They were nevertheless effective, particularly at finishing off struggling armored knights.

Special Features: Armor Piercing: Damage is +1 vs. hard armor

Invented in Italy during the Renaissance, the Stiletto remained the favored weapon of assassins for centuries.

Dagger and Short Sword pricing

The following prices are indicative only, depending on the campaign world you use. If you are using Weyrth as your setting, the following are Imperial Standard coinage prices. For Heavy coinage, all prices are 2/3rds of the amount listed. For light coinage, double it.

Weapon	Cost
Akinakes	14 silver
Blocking Dagger	10 silver
Broad Dagger	7 silver
Cutlass / Dussack	20 silver
Falcata	22 silver
Gladius	15 silver
Jambiya Dagger	5 silver

Kopis / Yataghan	25 silver
Kukri	16 silver
Large Dagger	6 silver
Large Knife	8 copper
Long Sax	18 silver
Main Gauche	30 silver
Poniard	5 copper
Protosword	6 copper

Razor	2 copper
Rondel Dagger	2 silver
Sax	15 silver
Short Sword	8 silver
Small Dagger	1 silver
Small Knife	3 copper
Stiletto	12 silver



Eastern Swords

Dao Sword



From top to bottom: Lieu Ye Dao saber with canted grip, Lieu Ye Dao saber, Yan Mao Dao sword.

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Yan Mao Dao (Sword)	1H, S	6	8	7	1	Heavy, 1E	ST+1	ST	+1
Lieu Ye Dao (Saber)	1H, M	6	9	8	1	Heavy, 1E	ST	ST-1	+2

Proficiency: Saber, Cut-and-Thrust Sword

The dao sword and dao saber were both fairly heavy, single-edged slashing weapons, very popular across the east, particularly in Mongolia, Korea, India, many parts of Central Asia, and in China, where in various forms it was standard military weapon of the Chinese Imperial Army for centuries. The dao sword came to China from Mongolia nearly a thousand years ago, and was soon adopted by the military (even though the jian was probably more respected among the elite within that secretive nation's borders).

Dao sabers and dao swords in particular were generally shorter than the Western saber. They also tended to be somewhat heavier in cross section, handling a bit like a cutlass, yet being effective at both chopping and draw cutting. They were considered easier to wield than jian, probably because they can more easily deliver an effective cut. Many had partially sharpened false edges.

There were several sub-variants of the dao. The shorter straight-bladed dao swords were used by marines and sappers, while the rather longer, gently curving sabers, normally of the “willow leaf” (liu ye) subtype, were used by both cavalry and, as a backup weapon, by infantry and marksmen.

Though jian remained the most popular weapon for aristocrats, dao swords were also favored by high officials and officers, and some special dao were made for holders of high office. These



usually incorporated advanced differential hardening techniques, and were often forged from superior wootz steel. Such weapons were extraordinarily sharp (add +1 to cutting damage). One of the many extraordinary features incorporated into some of these very special dao were the so called “rolling pearls”, these being small metal balls like ball-bearings, which roll back and forth in a unique fuller hollowed out all the way through the spine of the blade.

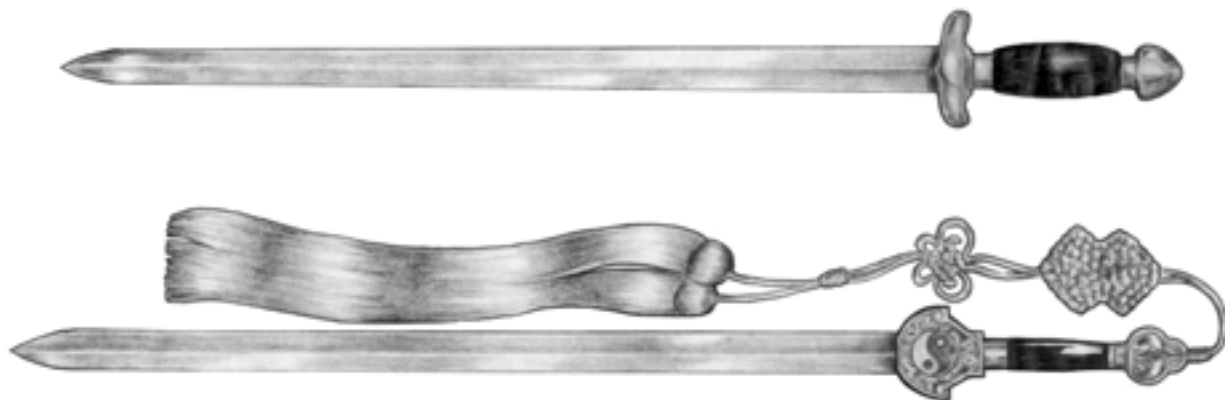
The Arabs had a short two edged saber variant of their gladius-like kindjal short sword. This short saber is functionally identical to the lieu ye dao and can be treated as such. There were also some special heavy variants of dao, which were functionally identical to the western falchion.

Special Features: Single edged, heavy

The dao were first used in China during its bronze age. During and after the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century BC-771 BC), it was briefly replaced by bronze jian (sword). During the seven years of turmoil which resulted in the end of the Qin Dynasty (221 BC-206 BC) and the beginning of the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 25), the importance of cavalry increased dramatically and the dao sword was increasingly adopted.

The weapon did not achieve full popularity, however, until it was re-introduced to China by Mongol invaders from the north. By the 15th century, the dao saber had become the standard weapon of the Chinese military. Dao remained in use in Chinese armies until the twentieth century.

Jian Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Jian Sword	2H, M	6	7	6	1	2E	ST	ST	+1
(1 Handed)	1H, L	7	8	6	1	Standard	ST-1	ST-1	0

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword, Cut and Thrust

Also known as the gim sword in certain dialects, the jian is considered the most ancient and noble hand weapon of the very ancient and noble land of China. Light and supple, though considered difficult to wield, this very sharp, very agile sword was popular as a civilian sidearm and as a badge of rank among aristocrats.

It was a fairly long sword by eastern standards, often close to 40" or more in overall length. The grip was designed to accommodate all of one hand and three fingers of the other, making it literally a hand-and-a-half sword. It was by design a cut-and-thrust weapon, though more optimized for cutting than thrusting, having a fairly flexible blade and an often slightly rounded or spatulate tip. Jian have a minimal "winged" guard, normally made of brass, and a pommel of the same material, with a wooden grip often covered in ray skin. Unlike western swords, the "wings" of the guard often face toward the hand.

As the favorite personal weapon of lords and high officials, jian were often made with considerable embellishment. The blades, normally made of excellent steel, were carefully wrought using sophisticated forging and metallurgical techniques. Many examples were plated with a thin layer of silver or nickel, etched with slogans or cartouches, or even embellished with gold trim or jewels. The guards and pommels in particular were often gilded and frequently the pommel ended in a silk tassel, which once played a role in some ancient Chinese fencing techniques, now believed lost.

Special Features: These swords were highly prized treasures and often command a value far outweighing their actual utilitarian worth as weapons (which can be considerable).

Often called the "sovereign of blades", the jian (also chien or gim depending on the dialect) has a history dating back 3,000 years (in it's original bronze form), though it first came to notoriety during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770 BC-256 BC). In this period, it became a favorite of Emperors and Dukes. Many famous literary works were also produced regarding swordsmanship, such as Yue Nu Jian (Yue Nu Sword) from the Spring and Autumn Era of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty and Jian Dao (Way of the Sword) from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 25). By the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD), the jian was no longer widely used in war, having been supplanted by the dao sword (see below). Few ancient jian remain due to restrictions on private weapon ownership and subsequent mass destruction of weapons ordered by later Emperors.

Though relegated to the status of a civilian weapon, it remained highly popular with men of position who still wore it to flaunt their eminence. Today, Daoists still use the jian to begin incantations, and martial artists use it in combat. The many styles of swordsmanship that employed the jian gradually caused unique sub-variants to evolve over time. For example, today there is tai ji jian (Tai Chi Sword), wudang jian (Wudang Sword), and flimsy zui jian (Drunken Sword).



Katana / Tachi Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Katana	2H, M	5	7	7	1	1E	ST+1	ST	+2
(one handed)	1H, M	6	8	8	1	1E	ST	ST	+1

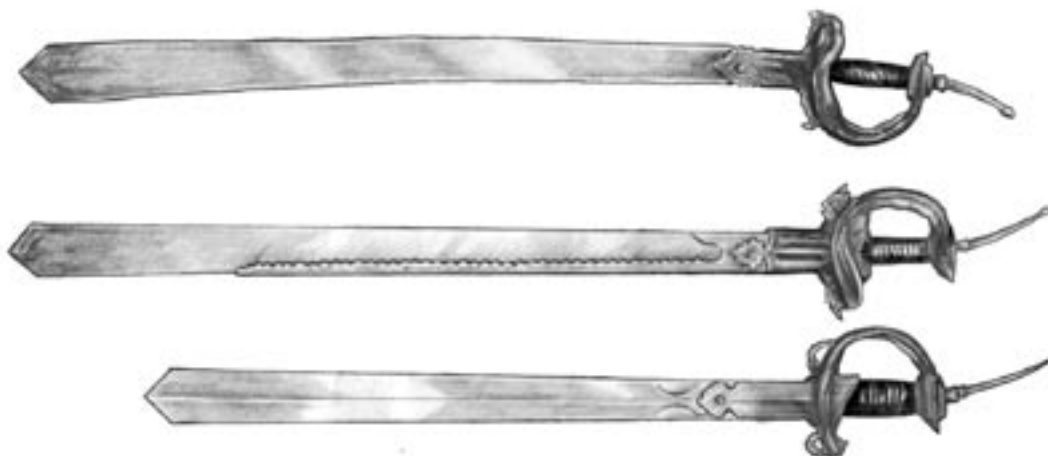
Proficiency: Saber, Kenjutsu, Kenjutsu: Dai-sho

The katana was the traditional weapon of the samurai of Japan. Only a true samurai, or an aristocrat could legally carry the katana or tachi, commoners were allowed only carry the smaller wakizashi (see p. 156). The katana is a type of two-handed saber with a gentle curve, a clipped point, and an incredibly hard, sharp edge, backed up by a softer spring steel spine, forged with the most advanced differential hardening techniques and extremely sophisticated heat treatment rivaling if not surpassing anything done in the most sophisticated smithies of any western state.

Though shorter (circa 39") than most western two-handed swords, it is a powerfully agile blade with devastating cutting power. A very specialized weapon designed for use with the specific fighting style of the samurai, who were first and foremost horse archers, the katana proved so effective that it has helped win an awesome reputation for the Japanese samurai. (From horseback, the weapon is used one-handed in a manner not utterly dissimilar to other types of sabers.)

The draw cut is the preferred method of attack. Cuts were normally inflicted by means of a draw cut, with a passing step forward, backward, or to the side.

Khandar Sword





Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Khandar	2H, M	7	9	8	1	Heavy, 1E	ST+2	ST	-2

Proficiency: Greatsword / Longsword

A hand-and-a-half sword used in India. The spike extension from the pommel is meant for a second-hand grip. The back edge is either partially or fully sharpened, the blade flares out toward the end, and in some examples curves inward toward the cutting edge. The back edge is often reinforced with a kind of spine.

Though not as versatile as the more sophisticated western longswords or as agile as the tachi / no-dachi of Japan, the Indian khandar is a formidable weapon with phenomenal cutting power in spite of it's relatively short overall length.

The Khandar probably descended from the Arabic khanda, which is functionally identical to a Roman spatha or a Germanic migration era sword. Like the spatha, this was a single-handed sword, with a simple grip. The khandar is usually seen with the cup hilt and grip extension for use with two hands.

No –Dachi Sword



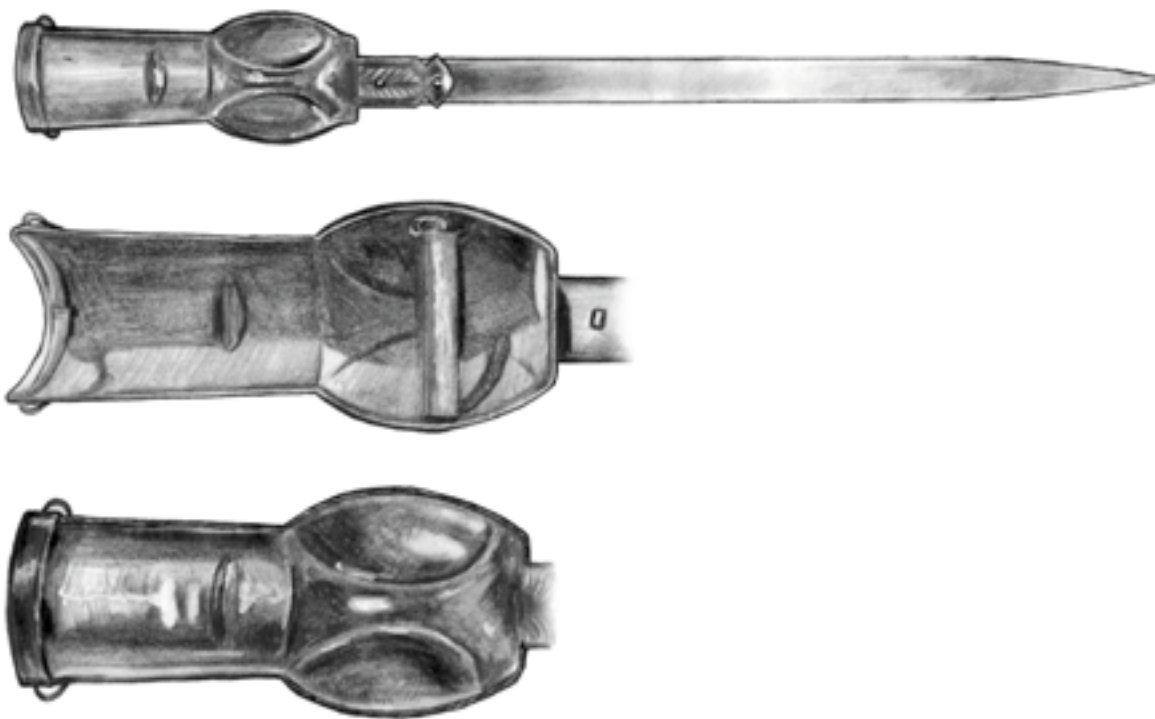
Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
No Dachi	2H, L	5	7	7	1	Heavy, 1E	ST+2	ST	+2

Proficiency: Kenjutsu

Two-handed version of the katana used by elite infantry of Japan, but frowned upon by some purists of Kenjutsu. These weapons were also used in China where they were known as “dao miao”. An extremely devastating weapon in the attack, very sharp and capable of causing horrendous wounds: a no dachi has been known to cut a man in half with a single stroke. As with the other weapons of this family however, cuts were normally inflicted by means of a draw cut, with a passing step forward, backward, or to the side. Like many slashing weapons, the no-dachi is somewhat less effective against heavy armor.



Pata Sword



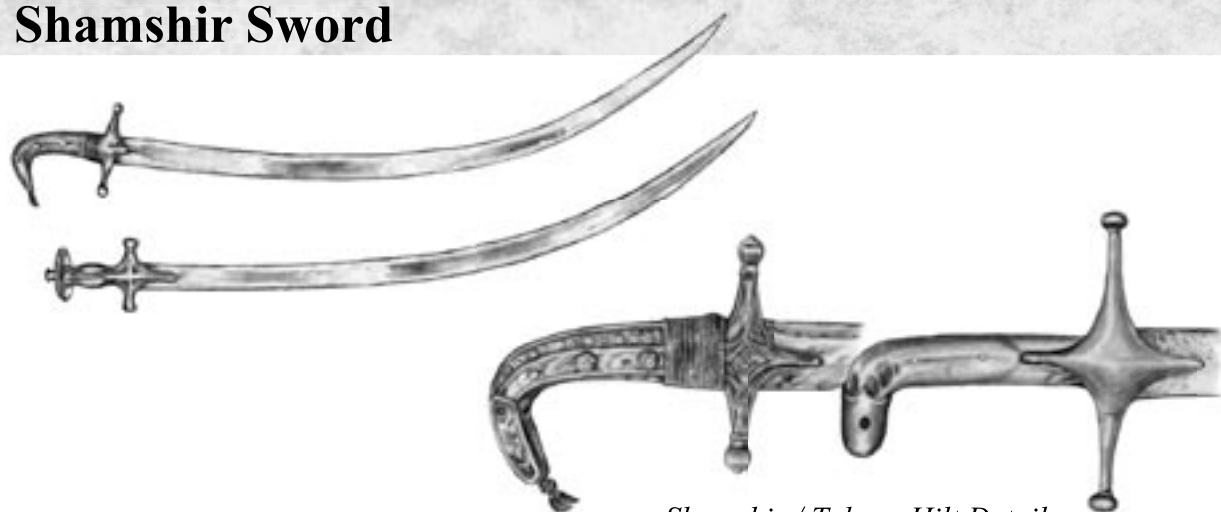
Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Pata	1H, M	8	7	8	5	2E	ST	ST+2	-1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust sword

The pata was a development of the katar or punching dagger, an interesting specialized weapon that was almost unknown outside of India. Like the similar though much smaller katar, it has a punching grip, in this case reinforced with a kind of half-gauntlet. This is a cavalry weapon, and when set for a charge from horseback, it can, like a lance, be used to attack with the horses ST.



Shamshir Sword



Shamshir / Tulwar Hilt Detail

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Shamshir	1H, ML	6	9	7	1-2	1E	ST-1	ST	+2
Shamshir (wootz)	1H, M	6	9	7	1-2	1E	ST	ST	+2

Proficiency: Saber, Cut and Thrust, Sword and Shield

The “shamshir” of India (meaning ‘curved like a tigers tail’) was also known as the ‘tulwar’ in Persia and Ottoman Turkey, where it was adopted for both widespread military and civilian use. This was a long-bladed saber or ‘scimitar’ with a pronounced curve of as much as 60 degrees, often featuring a canted grip intended to aid in weapon retention. This was another slashing sword designed for use from horseback. It was a highly specialized weapon, primarily intended for cavalry, though due to its acute curve it could be used in slightly closer quarters than most slashing types. It was equally popular with infantry and as a civilian weapon.

Though little appreciated in the West, some modern scholars rate the shamshir as one of the world’s five greatest swords, along with the versatile European longsword, the nimble rapier, the Viking sword, and the devastating katana / tachi of Japan.

Many of these weapons, particularly those made in India and Persia, were masterpieces of the swordmaker’s art, fashioned from special ‘wootz’ steel, lighter and more flexible than ordinary variants, and far sharper. These highly sought after weapons were also often engraved with cartouches and slogans, and feature gilded and / or gem encrusted pommels. They were chiefly identifiable however from the “water pattern” or “wood-grain” pattern in the steel of the blade itself (very much akin to the special Viking swords, though made with a different technique).

Historically these elegant weapons were used by Persian, Arab, and Mughal (Indian) cavalry from around the 16th century through the 19th.



Wakizashi Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Wakizashi	1H, S	5	7	7	1	1E	ST	ST	+1

Proficiency: Short Sword, Kenjutsu, Kenjutsu: Dai-sho

The Wakizashi is a single-handed backup weapon carried in Japan, worn alone or in conjunction with katana or tachi. The comparatively short (30") wakizashi can be used as a primary fighting weapon or as a backup, but was not normally used in conjunction with the katana except by fighters with special training (Dai-sho). Cuts were normally inflicted by means of a draw cut, with a passing step forward, backward, or to the side. Despite being less effective overall against armor, with its draw cutting ability the wakizashi was arguably the most lethal cutting weapon under 32" in length.

Eastern weapon pricing

The following prices are indicative only, depending on the campaign world you use. If you are using Weyrth as your setting, the following are Imperial Standard coinage prices. For Heavy coinage, all prices are 2/3rds of the amount listed. For light coinage, double it.

Weapon	Cost
Dao Falchion	18 silver
Dao Miao (No Dachi)	60 silver
Jian Sword	50 silver (250–1,000 silver for officers Jian)
Katana / Tachi	80 silver (special versions can be considerably more)
Khandar Sword	30 silver
Kindjal short saber (Dao)	10 silver
Lieu Ye Dao Saber	15 silver (200 –500 silver for officers Dao)
No Dachi	90 silver (special versions can be considerably more)
Pata Sword	20 silver
Shamshir Sword	45 silver (300 silver for wootz)
Wakizashi	70 silver (special versions can be considerably more)
Yan Mao Dao Sword	12 silver



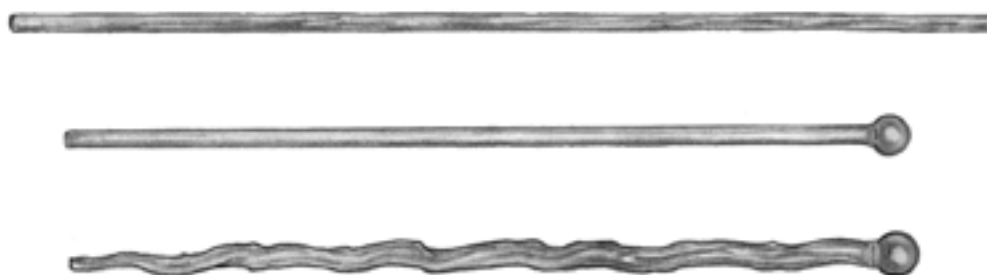
Hafted Weapons

(Staves, Axes, clubs, maces, spears, pole-arms, etc.)

Staves

As with many hafted weapons, the staff is an ancient weapon indeed.

Bata / Alpeen



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Bata	1H, M	6	6	6	Wood	Staff	-	-	ST-2
Knobbed cane	1H,M	7	6	6	Wood	Staff	-	-	ST

Proficiency: Pole-Arms, Mass Weapon, Sword and Shield

Almost every nation has its own traditional fighting stick, usually of hardwood and three to four feet in length, which is carried for defense and often used in tribal, factional or sectarian conflicts. Bata is the Celtic name for one such weapon, the traditional stout blackthorn walking stick of Ireland, mistakenly known as a “shillelagh” to the English. Other countries have their own names for their own sub variants, but the similarities are striking for these ubiquitous weapons.

In some parts of the world, a fighting stick may be a rude hacked down sapling with leaves still affixed. In more civilized regions, one is more likely to find variants of this weapon embodied in the elegantly carved, silver mounted walking stick or gentleman’s cane. Regardless, the actual use of such fighting sticks was largely the same from the Amazon to the streets of Paris. Surprisingly effective in a pinch for defense, these sticks were probably more widely used than any other weapon except the ubiquitous dagger.



Quarterstaff



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing damage	Bludgeon Damage
Quarterstaff	2H, L	7	6	6	Wood	Staff, Heavy	-	-	ST

Proficiency: Pole-Arms

A stout fighting staff six to eight feet in length, highly effective in defense and very popular in the West. The strike TN for these weapons is listed for overhand strikes, which do bludgeoning damage. Staffs can also be used effectively to thrust with however; in fact European staff fighting doctrine emphasizes this technique. The thrust TN is for thrusting as with a spear or a thrusting sword, except it causes bludgeoning damage and not piercing damage. Bludgeon damage is as listed for a strike; it is ST -1 for a thrusting attack.

Shortstaff



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Quarterstaff	2H, VL	8	6	7	Wood	Staff, Heavy	-	-	ST+1

Proficiency: Pole-Arms

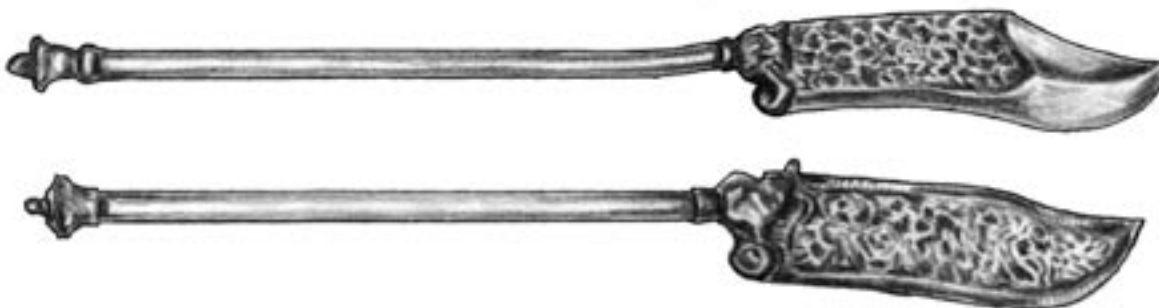
Actually, by far the longest type of staff, normally from 8-12'. The strike TN for these weapons is listed for overhand strikes, which do bludgeoning damage. Staves can be used effectively to thrust with, however. The thrust TN is for actual thrusting as with a spear or a thrusting sword. Bludgeon damage is as listed for a strike; it is ST for a thrusting type attack.



Axes

Axes are hafted chopping weapon, adopted from farm or logging tools. Contrary to popular opinion, the axe heads are normally lighter and smaller axe heads than on equivalent tools.

Bhuj / Kutti



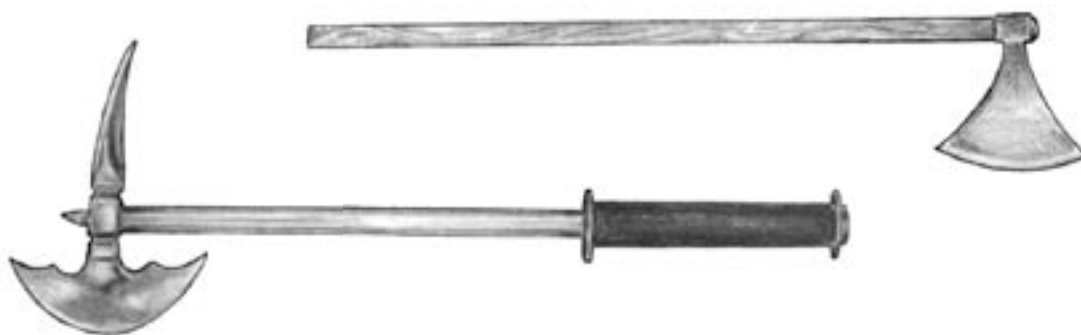
Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Elephant Knife	2H, M	8	10	9	0	Axe, Heavy	ST+4	ST	-

Proficiency: Pole-Axe, Mass Weapon

Bhuj axe (elephant head knife). A short, heavy, two-handed pole-cleaver used in India, somewhat similar to the Celtic kern axe but heavier and more optimized for cutting. A somewhat blade-heavy weapon, it does deliver incredible damage. Often used against large and dangerous animals found in that nations tropical jungles.

Special: + (1 * Damage Level) Shock from any cut damage

Hand Axe / Battle Axe





Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage (backspike only)	Bludgeon Damage
Battle Axe	2H, M	8	-	8	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST+3	ST+1	ST
(1 handed)	1H, L	7	-	9	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST+2	ST	ST
Bearded Axe	1H, L	8	-	8	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST+1	-	ST

Proficiency: Mass Weapon

This is the basic broad-bladed military axe. The haft is about three and a half to four feet long, making it suitable for use one handed to two handed. Contrary to popular opinion, axes made for battle are generally neither heavier nor broader bladed than those made for hewing wood; on the contrary, the blades were often thinner and lighter, though also harder and sharper.

Special Features: + (1 * Damage Level) Shock, +1 Damage versus hard armor (+2 for a back spike).

Hatchet / Tomahawk



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Hand Axe	1H, S	6	-	7	Wood or Iron	Axe, Heavy	ST+1	-	ST

Proficiency: Mass Weapon

The hatchet is a short (22"-30"), single-hand cutting weapon usually featuring a small flat blade. These weapons often have solid metal or metal-reinforced shafts, and unlike many larger axes, are commonly used for parrying as well as attacking.

A popular specialist's weapon, often used by cavalry from the steppes of Central Asia and farther to the East, these small hand axes are also popular in many poorer nations where swords are more rare.

Special Features: + (1/2 * Damage Level) Shock, +1 Damage versus hard armor



Kern Axe



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Kern Axe	2H, M	7	8	7	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST+3	ST+1	ST
(1 handed)	1H, L	8	9	9	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST+2	ST	ST

Proficiency: Pole Axe, Pole Arms, Mass Weapon

This weapon is not really an axe at all; it is more accurately a medium length (4'-5') pole-cleaver with a sharp point making it a fairly serviceable thrusting weapon as well as being a vicious chopper. This rather archaic killing instrument gained some notoriety in Europe since the “Gallowglass” mercenaries from Ireland and Scotland used them.

The heavily armored Gallowglass, who usually gird themselves with huge weapons such as doppelhanders, claymores or sparth-axes, were often accompanied by light Irish infantry called “kern”, these latter being subdivided into skirmishers (similar to ancient Roman peltasts), and archers. The skirmishers were equipped with javelins and light target shields, and their favored hand weapon was the kern axe.

As with the even more fearsome sparth-axe, the kern axe was not nearly so clumsy a weapon as it appears, but was rather difficult to master, and was best used with two hands in order to be wielded effectively (which defeated much of it's reach advantage over many swords). Wielded properly, it was a fairly good weapon both offensively and defensively, and well-swung it delivered just as nasty a blow as it looks like it would.

Furthermore, the shape of the “axe” blade allows it to be used to hook opponents in the manner of a bill or a halberd. In skilled hands, it is an effective and dangerous weapon with a lot of hidden tactical flexibility, rather like an archaic version of a glaive or guisarme-volgue.

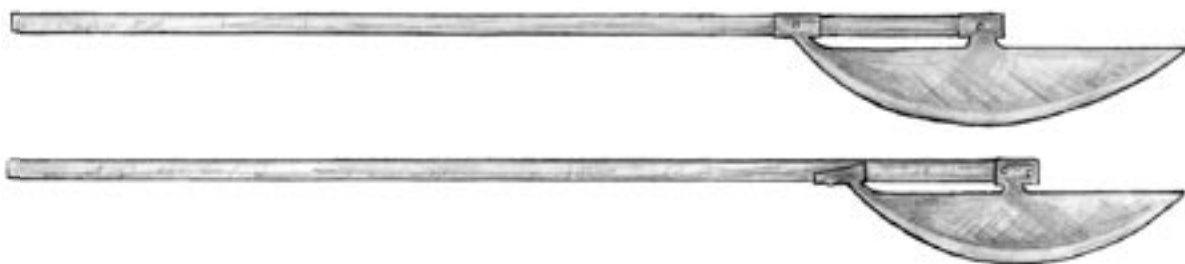
All in all a weapon well suited to the wild passions of the Celtic warrior. The kern axe is best used with the Pole-Arm Proficiency, or alternately when wielded in one hand from behind a shield (as it is sometimes done), as a Mass Weapon.

Special Features: When used two handed, + (1/2 * Damage Level) Shock, +1 Damage versus hard armor (cuts only)

One of the standard weapons of the Irish Kern, or simple foot soldier (along with swords, javelins, and bows). Kern often accompanied Gallowglass mercenaries in Campaigns in England and on the Continent, where they were respected for their bravery and ferocity.



Sparth Axe / Bardiche



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Sparth Axe	2H, VL	8	9	8	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST+4	ST+1	ST

Proficiency: Pole Axe, Pole Arms

A large weapon, almost absurd in appearance, the sparth-axe is as intimidating as it is deadly. A huge, cleaver-like rounded axe blade, coming to a point at the tip, mounted on a five to six foot haft, the weapon looks as if it would be impossibly clumsy. In fact, although it is not nearly as awkward as it first appears, this is a difficult weapon to wield, and requires great skill to use effectively in combat.

The sparth axe was made famous in the Renaissance due to its use by the notorious “Gallowglass” mercenaries of Scotland and Ireland, but similar weapons were also known around Europe. The same weapon is called berdyche in Russia, and bardiche in Italy and France.



Special Features: + (1 * Damage Level) Shock, +2 Damage versus hard armor

*“Scots wha’ hae with Wallace bled,
Scots wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory.”*

Robert the Bruce of Scotland, who relied heavily upon Gallowglass mercenaries in his campaigns against the English, was himself an expert with the Sparth Axe. In a famous incident at the battle of Bannock Burn, Robert’s Brother Edward Bruce faced a fully armored English Knight named Henry de Bohum in single combat. With his Sparth Axe he allegedly ‘clove the man’s head in twain’, breaking the haft of his axe in the process.

Hammers

Like axes, hammers are hafted weapons adopted from tools. Contrary to popular opinion, war hammers also normally had much lighter and smaller striking heads than equivalent civilian tools, though also often harder and more efficiently shaped to break armor. Most war hammers were also equipped with a pick-like end; some were converted into essentially picks for piercing armor.

The strike TN for these weapons is listed for overhand strikes which can do either bludgeon or piercing (thrust) damage. The thrust TN is for actual thrusting as with a spear or a thrusting sword. In all cases, 'thrust' damage is as listed for a strike; it should be considered -1 for an actual thrusting attack.

Poll Hammer, Poll Axe



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Poll Hammer	2H, L	7	8	6	Wood	Hammer, Heavy	-	ST+1	ST+1
Poll Axe	2H, L	7	8	6	Wood	Axe, Heavy	ST	(ST+1)	ST+1

Proficiency: Mass Weapon, Poll Axe



The so-called poll hammer is a relatively short (4'-6') pole arm with a complex hammer and pick head, also featuring a spear-like thrusting spike. Unlike many other pole arms, these were popular knightly weapons, and frequently used in tournament and judicial combat, as well as on the battlefield by dismounted knights.

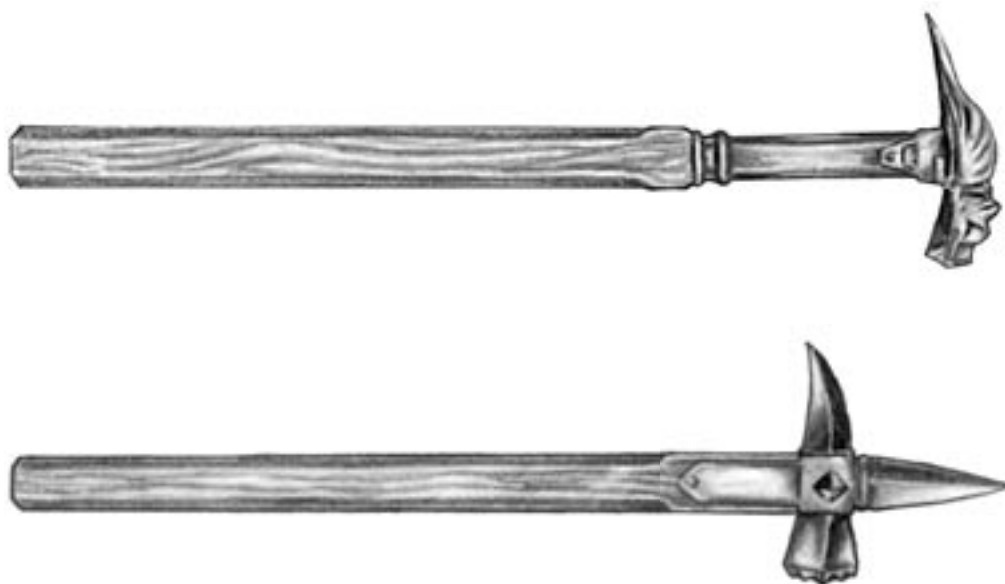
Poll Axe

A poll axe is identical to a poll hammer except that instead of a back-spike or pick end, it has a small axe blade. Piercing damage is therefore for thrusting only, and the axe blade causes cut damage.

Special Features: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. Hammer blows (bludgeon damage) cause +1+X Shock (X=Dam Level)



War Hammer



Weapon	Length	Attack TN Strike- (Pierce or bludgeon)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
War Hammer	1H, S	6	8	Wood	Hammer, Heavy	-	ST+2	ST+1

Proficiency: Mass Weapon

The single-handed war hammer or war pick was popular throughout the world. With a hammer on one side and a spike or pick on the other, this short weapon is excellent at piercing armor and even the thick hides of powerful animals.

Special Features: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. +1+X Shock (X=Dam Level)

Spears

Spears are ancient hunting weapons with origins in remote antiquity. Spears designed more for throwing are classified as javelins. Spears designed for thrusting from horseback are designated as lances. Overlong spears 12-18' in length are referred to as pikes, and are generally only used with special formation tactics. Those spears remaining in this fairly broad category are mostly multi purpose spears capable of thrusting, being thrown, or even of cutting and slicing at a distance.

Spears range in length from as little as 3 or 4', to as long as 12' or so, though the vast majority rely the chief advantage of the basic design their reach. Spears can be used in conjunction with a shield or as a two handed weapon in a manner similar to a staff, but in the west almost always from the end to emphasize the reach advantage (it is worth noting that staves were used the same way in the west... see quarterstaff). Some spears have knobs mounted on the butt end, for striking as with a mace. Many have sharpened butt spikes so that the wielder can thrust with the 'heel'.

The defensive TN for a spear basically represents the threat of counterattack or passive defense rather than parrying. Listed spear stats are for one-handed use. Any spear can also be used two handed in a manner similar to a staff, which allows a strike with the haft for bludgeoning damage of ST -1, and an improved defense TN of 6.

Spear



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Short Spear	1H, M	9	7	10 (8)	Wood	Spear	ST-2	ST+1	Special
Spear	1H, VL	9	6	10 (7)	Wood	Spear	ST-1	ST+2	Special
Pike	2H, EL	-	8	10	Wood	Spear	-	ST+2	Special
Light Lance	1H, VL	-	7	10	Wood	Spear	-	ST+2	Special
Heavy Lance	1H, EL	-	8	10	Wood	Spear	-	ST+1	Special

Proficiency: Pole-Arm



The ancient spear is one of the simplest yet most effective weapons on the battlefield; the reach advantage is a great equalizer. Contrary to popular opinion, spears can be used to cut as well as thrust. It is the reach of the basic spear which makes it such an effective and eternally popular weapon, because with a spear in hand and a little basic motivation (like someone trying to kill them) even the most poorly trained warrior can make some use of the reach advantage, at least initially.

The defensive TN for the short spear is 8 two handed, or 10 single-handed. Similarly, the Spear has a DTN of 7 when held two handed. Lances use the Horses ST if charging, but have a 25% chance



of breaking with each hit. Spears may be thrown, though not pikes or lances. Pikes and long spears may be set against charges (AT 6, +2 damage).

Balanced Spear



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Balanced Spear	2H, L	8	6	6	Wood	Spear	ST-1	ST+1	ST+1

Proficiency: Pole-Arms

This ancient traditional weapon of the Persian Immortals features a heavy knob on the butt-end, which can be used for striking, and helps balance the weapon. This helps a great deal with defense, particularly when the weapon is used two handed (though it was normally intended for use with one hand, in conjunction with a shield).

Balanced spears used by the Persian immortals in such battles as Marathon and Thermopylae. The historical examples featured counterweights of silver or gold wrought in the shape of pomegranates or apples.

Hewing Spear



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Hewing Spear	1H, VL	8	7	7	Wood	Spear, Heavy	ST	ST+2	Special



Proficiency: Pole-Arms

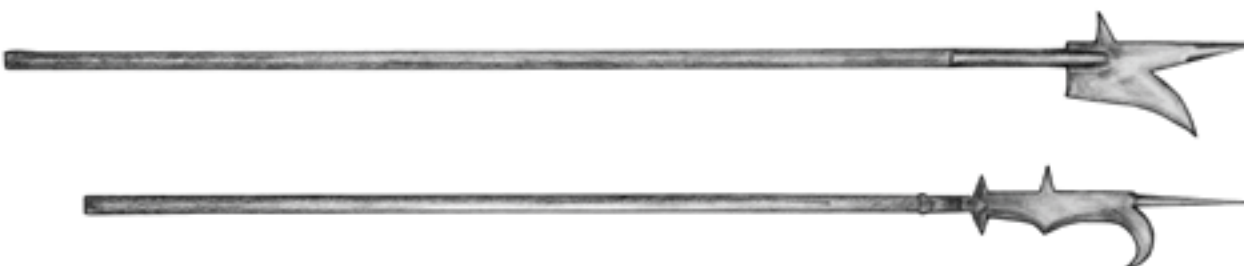


The Germanic boar-hunting spear, notable for the cross just below the hilt, gradually evolved into a weapon almost equally capable of cutting and thrusting. These weapons were mentioned several times in the Icelandic Sagas as so – called ‘hewing spears’.

Pole Arms

Pole arms are basically spears mounted with sword, axe or cleaver heads, plus spikes in various formats. As with spears, it is possible to strike with the haft for bludgeoning damage of ST –1

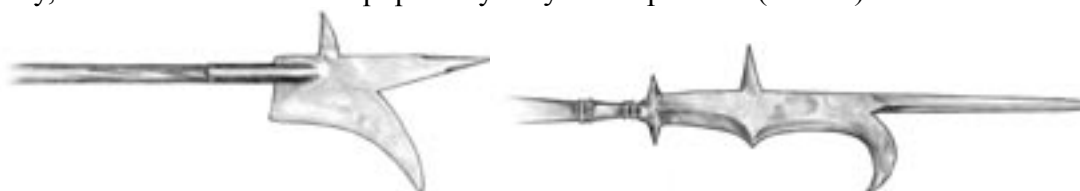
Bill



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Bill	2H, VL	8	7	8	Wood	Pole Arm, Heavy	ST+2	ST+1	Special

Proficiency: Pole-Arms

The farmers’ bill has been adapted for warfare since time immemorial, certainly well back to the Bronze Age. The militarized version of the basic bill became widely adopted across Europe during the Renaissance, particularly in England, where it became the standard infantry weapon, and in Italy, where it was second in popularity only to the partisan (roncha).



Early Bill

Bill-Guisarme



The billhook could be used to trip, disarm, or dismount opponents, while a spear point could fend off enemies, and a back-spike could be used to puncture armor with great sweeping strikes. Unlike many pole-arm configurations, the bill was a very versatile and practical weapon probably second only to the halberd as the most effective pole-arm in history.

Special Features: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. + (1 * Damage Level) Shock from any cut damage

Goedendag



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Goedendag or Morgenstern	2H, VL	8	7	8	1	Heavy, 1E	-	ST+1	ST+3

Proficiency: Pole-Arms

A simple and cheap weapon produced by Western peasants for use against heavily armored knights. While most pole-arms are essentially some kind of blade on a long shaft: an axe on a spear, a sword blade on a spear, a cleaver, or a bill on a spear with various hooks added or deleted for further effect, this particular weapon was basically a spear which doubled as a two-handed mace. As such, though heavy, it was still light enough to handle fairly well as a short spear, and when opportunity presented itself, it could be used to bludgeon as a kind of ‘super’ mace.

According to historical anecdotes, this seemingly crude weapon was quite effective in the hands of a skilled fighter. It is normally used like a small spear, and then turned into a two-handed club as opportunity presents itself.

Special: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. The morgenstern adds +2 BL with any strike hit. +1+X Shock (X=Dam Level)

Flemish peasants used the goedendag (gudentag, gudundog) against French knights in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. It is still a source of national pride in Holland and Belgium.

Many Renaissance peasant armies, especially the Hussites, used the morganstern (‘morning star’, also sometimes incorrectly called a holy water sprinkler) in the early 15th century, as did German peasants in uprisings in the 16th. Due to the spear-point, this is obviously not the same thing as a spiked mace, which was also referred to by the same term.



Halberd



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Halberd	2H, VL	7	8	8	Wood	Pole Arm, Heavy	ST+3	ST+1	Special

Proficiency: Pole-Arms, Poll-Axe



Swiss Volge

The traditional pole-axe of Switzerland, developed in the 13th century, this was the first “modern” pole-arm to see use in the Middle Ages. A devastating weapon, both individually and (especially) when used with special formation tactics, the halberd, as well as to a lesser extent its less perfect related cousins such as the volge and the glaive, became the most popular pole arms in Europe.

In 1315, a small federation of militia formed from Swiss peasant Cantons joined together to face off a heavily armored column of Austrian Hapsurg aristocrats invading their land. The Swiss eidgenossen, or “oath brothers”, sprung an ambush in their heavily forested mountain home, and swept down onto the Austrian knights wielding seven foot halberds. The ensuing massacre, together with the battles of Bannockburn in Scotland in 1314 (where no less than 34 English lords perished) and Courtrai in Flanders (in 1302 where French Knights fell to Flemish militia wielding Guden Tags), sent a shockwave throughout Europe. This was the true beginning of the end of hundreds of years of knightly invincibility.

Special Features: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. +1+X Shock (X=Dam Level).

The Swiss used early versions of the halberd (actually the similar volge) successfully against Austrian Hapsburg knights at the famous battle of Morgarten. Later versions featured more prominent, narrow stiletto-like points, some as long as 24”, and smaller pronounced convex shaped axe heads.



Partisan



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Haft	Weapon Type	Cut Damage	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Partisan Axe	2H, EL	8	8	7	Wood	Polearm	ST+1	ST+2	Special

Proficiency: Pole-Arms



A development of the so-called winged spear, the partisan was popular throughout the West and was also adopted by some Eastern nations. The “wings” or lugs set below the spearhead assisted in defense and could be used for disarming. Partisans tended to be long, as much as 8–12 feet.

The long blade of the partisan could be sharply tapering for better penetration, or wide and rounded in a so-called ox-tongue shape, but in either case both sides were sharpened for the cut as well as the thrust. The lugs or wings on each side could be used to pierce targets, to hook in the traditional pole-arm manner, and also for special disarming techniques.

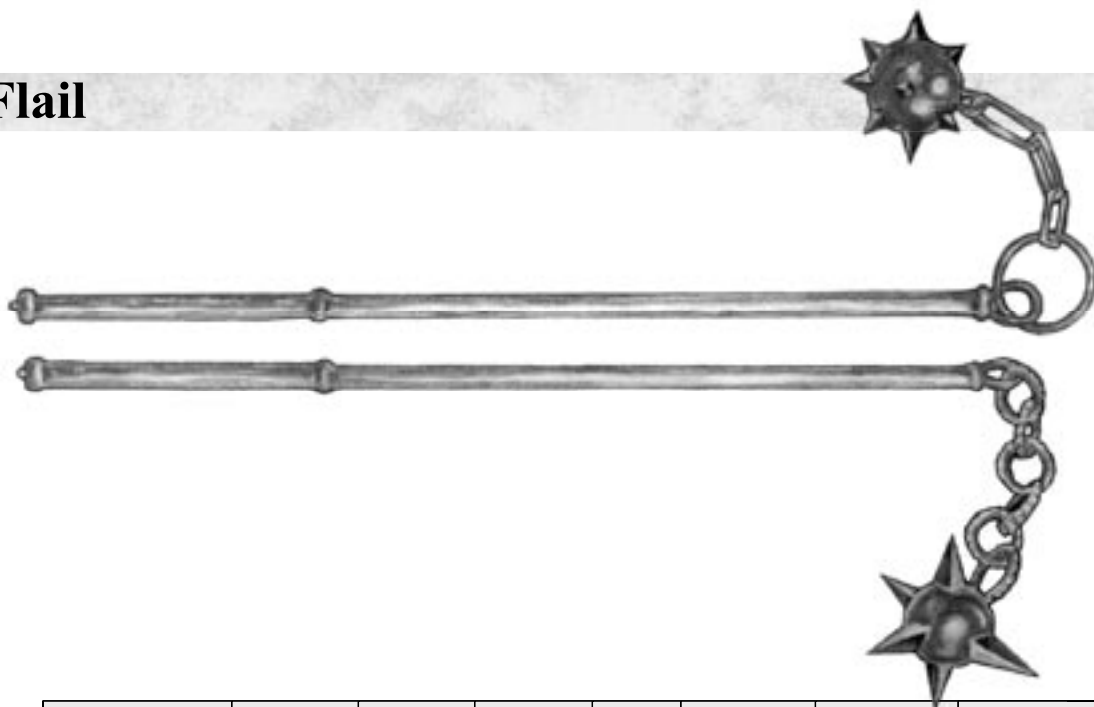
Variations include the spetum, the ranseur, and numerous others, some with wider or narrower ‘wings’, some with wings pointing up, some down, and some in both directions.



Maces and Flails

Maces are basically glorified clubs. As such, they are among the world's simplest yet most effective hand-to-hand weapons. Perhaps their lethality and value on the battlefield is reflected by the fact that they have been long associated with monarchy. The kings' scepter is itself a derivative of the mace.

Flail



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Light Flail	1H, L	8	10	1	Heavy	-	ST+3
Heavy Flail	1H, L	8	10	1	Heavy	-	ST+4
War Flail	2H, VL	7	8	1	Heavy	-	ST+4

Proficiency: Mass Weapon (Flail)

A flail was a mace on a chain or some other flexible medium, which greatly increased the weapons momentum and therefore striking power. Flails are not easy weapons to master, and are not especially effective in defense, but they can strike unexpectedly, reach over shield rims and parrying weapons, and most importantly, they hit harder than any other existing mass weapon.

Flails evolved from agricultural threshing tools, and were originally made of wood. Similar devices appeared all over the world, the Asian nunchaku is an example of another weapon based on the same theory. European and Central Asian flails were normally made of iron or steel. The Hussites of Bohemia pioneered the use of heavy agricultural flails as weapons of war in the 15th century, these differed from the better known military flails in that they were long-handled wooden implements with iron striking surfaces, often incorporating spikes. This was the War flail.

Special: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. Bonus against shields: automatically ignores 2 blocking successes when facing shields. Spiked flails add +4 BL with any strike hit. +1+X Shock (x=Dam Level)



Mace



Spiked Mace



Flanged (heavy) Mace

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Piercing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Light Mace	1H, S	6	6	1	Heavy, 1E	-	ST+1
Heavy Mace	2H, S	7	7	1	Heavy	-	ST+2
Spiked Mace	1H, S	7	7	1	Heavy	-	ST+1

Proficiency: Mass Weapon, Pole Axe

A mace is an iron club, or less often, a wooden club with an iron head. As such, the distinction between a mace and a hammer is rather subtle: Essentially a mace can strike in any direction while a hammer has a distinct striking head or beak on the front and often a beak on the back. The mace is an ancient weapon going back to the Bronze Age. It came in and out of favor in Europe and was always more popular in Eastern Europe and Central and South Asia, but it never disappeared from the battlefields, remaining in use until well after the Renaissance.

Maces did remain popular largely because of their effectiveness against armor. This is why the mace evolved into the royal scepter as the symbol of monarchical power in many nations across the globe: It was the weapon of kings, the weapon of choice for use against armored aristocrats. It could also be a popular weapon with commoners for the same reasons. The infamous Hussite leader Jan Ziska used a mace in his many successful battles against German Knights.

Special: Particularly effective against armor: +1 damage against all forms of armor. The spiked mace adds +2 BL with any strike hit. +1+X Shock (X=Dam Level)



Weapon pricing

The following prices are indicative only, depending on the campaign world you use. If you are using Weyrth as your setting, the following are Imperial Standard coinage prices. For Heavy coinage, all prices are 2/3rds of the amount listed. For light coinage, double it.

Weapon	Cost
Balanced Spear	12 silver
Bata / Alpeen	1 copper
Battle Axe	5 silver
Bhuj Axe	7 silver
Bill	15 silver
Gudendag / Morgenstern	4 silver
Halberd	14 silver
Hand Axe	2 silver
Heavy Flail	30 silver
Heavy Lance	8 copper
Heavy Mace	20 silver
Hewing Spear	1 silver
Kern Axe	6 silver

Light Flail	25 silver
Light Lance	5 copper
Light Mace	3 silver
Longspear	4 copper
Partisan	12 silver
Poll-Hammer / Poll Axe	8 silver
Quarterstaff	1 copper
Short Spear	2 copper
Shortstaff	1 copper
Sparth Axe	16 silver
Spear	3 copper
Spiked Mace	22 silver
War Flail	18 silver





Swords

Swords were cutting and piercing weapons, believed to have evolved from narrow edged hardwood clubs and / or boomerang like throwing woods. The sword has existed for eons. It appeared in various early Neolithic forms of stone and wood, then gained prominence as a weapon during the Bronze Age, but it came into it's own during the age of Iron.

First introduced to Europe by the Celts, the sword remained one of the most important weapons in the world from the rise of the Roman Empire until the Sun finally set on the Empire of Great Britain.

Arming Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw cut Modifier
Arming Sword	1H, M	6	7	6	2-3	2E	ST+1	ST	0

Proficiency: Sword & Shield, Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 42" long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

Appearing as a development of earlier Norse, German, Celtic, and Roman swords of the dark ages, the arming sword leapt to prominence around the time of the first crusade, and ultimately became perhaps the most familiar and ubiquitous weapon of the European knightly panoply. From Scandinavia to Sicily in the south, from England to Armenia, it was the chivalrous weapon par-excellence, and probably the ultimate military counterpart to the shield.

Though eclipsed in the 14th century somewhat by the increasing popularity of more sophisticated cut-and-thrust and two-handed types, the basic arming sword remained very popular in Europe until well into the 16th century. Even as a new cycle of weapon development started with the two handed and thrusting weapons, arming swords were still worn by knights as a secondary weapon: a longsword hung on the saddle and an arming sword worn at the hip.

The arming sword is a strait, parallel or slightly tapering double-edged sword about three to three-and-a-half feet in length, normally with a fairly stiff blade having a diamond or hexagonal cross-section, and typically a simple cross or half-circle cross-guard. Equally suited for both cutting and thrusting attacks, its blade is wide enough to cut effectively, stiff and sharply pointed for dangerous thrusts, and though generally heavier than its predecessor the Norse sword or its descendants the cut-and-thrust swords, usually well balanced enough to be highly effective at both attacking and defending.



In use in various forms from the 10th through the 16th centuries, Arming swords made the reputation of the knight and proved their worth as weapons. They were the principle knightly weapon of the medieval period.

Backsword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Backsword	1H,M	7	7	6	4-5	1E	ST+1	ST	+1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust
Dimensions: 40” long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

The Backsword is a heavy bladed, medium length, single-edged cutting sword with an elaborate ‘closed hilt’ guard offering excellent hand protection. Developed in the British Isles in the late 16th century, originally as a cavalry weapon, it became popular on the continent as well, and was also used by infantry. The Scottish basket-hilt claymore (not to be confused with the earlier two handed claymore, see p. 177), the English broadsword, and the mortuary sword were all examples of the versatile backsword. The good cutting performance, defensive agility and protective hand-guard of this weapon make it well suited for heavy combat.

Special Features: Normally single-edged.

This category covers many types of strait bladed, single edged complex-hilted swords such as the hanger, mortuary sword, and the basket hilt words of Scotland used from the late 16th century through the 19th. Many of these types of weapons were also adopted as hunting swords.



Bastard Sword



An Italian Spadona, one of the less ornate types of bastard sword.

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Bastard Sword	2H, L	6	6	6	2-4	AP	ST+1	ST+2	0
(one handed)	1H, L	7	7	7			ST	ST+1	0

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword

Dimensions: 48" long, 2-3 lbs

Appearing in the mid 15th century, bastard swords were one of the last functional variations on the basic longsword. Generally lighter, stiffer, and more acutely pointed, these weapons were made with a sharply tapering blade which conveyed a closer to the guard balance and a point more appropriate for thrusting, as well as a chisel-like blade cross-section for cutting effectively through armor. Bastard Swords were popular across Europe and remained in both the military and civilian arsenals well into the late Renaissance.

As their popularity as a civilian weapon increased, many lighter versions began to appear with complex hilts, featuring finger rings to assist with over-the-guard 'fingering' thrusting grips, as well as side rings, and other protective features especially appropriate for use without hand protection such as gauntlets. All in all, the bastard sword is regarded by many spathologists as the ultimate refinement of the European two handed or hand and a half sword, though others prefer the less specialized and therefore more versatile longsword.

Special Features: Bastard Swords were Armor Piercing weapons and do +1 Damage when used in a two-handed thrust against any form of hard armor.



Claymore Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Claymore	2H, L	6	8	7	2	Heavy, 2E	ST+3	ST+1	-2

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword

Dimensions: 60” long, 2.5-4 lbs

A large two-handed great-sword (4 1/2 -5’), the Scottish Highland claymore is a specialized chopping weapon, though also capable of thrusting. It is longer than a continental great-sword but still a foot or so shorter than a ‘true’ two-hander. The guards were usually canted upward at a 45-degree angle ending with open quatrefoil terminals resembling four leaf clovers.

Lowland Scottish great-swords were similar in size and blade shape but have generally strait guards. The infamous ‘gallowglass’ mercenaries also wield similar weapons with strait guards, notable for an open ring-hilt, revealing an exposed-tang (a common feature of contemporary Irish swords). All of three similar types of swords were sometimes made with a ricasso for half sword fighting.

Now called claidheamh de laimh in Gaelic (claidheamh-mor now refers to later era basket-hilt swords) used in the highlands of Scotland from the early Renaissance through the 17th century. All three weapon forms were believed introduced to the British Isles by gallowglass mercenaries who fought on the continent, (notably with Landsknecht companies) where they became proficient with greatswords and doppelhanders. It should be noted that the later Scottish basket hilt backswords were also called “claymores” (see backsword).



Cut-and Thrust Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Cut-and-Thrust	1H, M	6	6	6	2-5	2E	ST	ST+1	+1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 44" long, 1.5-2.5 lbs

The cut-and-thrust sword is an evolutionary development of the arming sword in the direction of the primacy of the thrust. A few inches longer than the typical arming sword, the blade is tapered rather than parallel edged, coming to an acute point, and of diamond, flattened diamond or hexagonal cross section, sometimes with a central ridge running down the center of each face to further stiffen it. Most examples incorporate a ricasso, or unsharpened section, at the base of the blade to ease in 'fingered' guards.

Unlike some later sub-variants, the basic cut-and-thrust sword was still wide enough to cut effectively, and heavy enough to be a practical military weapon. In fact, these stiffer and more acutely pointed swords were more effective at piercing the heavy armor of the era than many more specialized civilian weapons that evolved from this basic transitional design. Many cut-and-thrust swords incorporate compound hilts with side rings, thumb rings and/or finger rings, the latter being used to employ a "fingered" or over-the-guard grip, which assisted in point control when thrusting.

Special Features: Some cut-and-thrust swords were sufficiently specialized to be considered Armor Piercing weapons. These examples gain a +1 in any thrusting attacks against hard armor.

This type of transitional weapon is a good example of the difficulty facing modern spathologists interested in sword typology. Almost any sword that can both cut and thrust can conceivably fall into this category, and has been put there by one historian or another. In the period when these weapons were in use, they were often referred to simply as swords (as most swords often were).

As the high middle ages gave way to the Renaissance, more sophisticated sub-variants (such as the schiavona, the espada ropera / sidesword and the pallasch, see below) began to appear which existed side by side with the basic form for centuries.



Dopplehandler Sword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Dopplehandler	2H, VL	7	8	8	3	Heavy, 2E	ST+4	ST+1	-2
When half-swording	2H, L	7	6	6	2	Heavy, 2E	ST+2	ST+2	-2
Flammard	2H, VL	7	9	8	3	Heavy, 2E	ST+4	ST+1	-2
When half-swording	2H, L	7	7	6	2	Heavy, 2E	ST+2	ST+2	-2

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword

Dimensions: 72" long, 3.5-5 lbs

These fearsome specialists' weapons were introduced into battle by mercenary infantry during the Renaissance, eventually becoming standard equipment for certain elite mercenaries. First appearing in the 16th century, the so-called 'true' two-handed sword has an overall length of 5-6 feet, and a typical weight between 3 1/2 - 5 pounds.

The weapon typically featured an enormous and often complex guard, and a long ricasso of 12 inches or more, often protected with spikes or lugs and not infrequently covered in leather, with a grip as long as 16 inches or more. Since their original appearance on the battlefield, these unlikely weapons grew slowly but steadily in popularity for nearly a century, in spite of their expense and the relatively advanced training required to properly wield them. Even after dopplehandlers ceased to be used on the battlefield, they remained popular for display during parades and processions.

This was a chopping weapon, which through the means of half-swording techniques was also effective at thrusting. The dopplehandler can be used in a traditional manner through means of maintaining attack momentum, or via half-sword techniques in a technique something more like a quarterstaff or a spear. Half-swording in particular allowed dopplehandlers to be wielded with considerable agility, and rather amazingly, these immense weapons gained some popularity for duels and judicial combat. In battle, they were often used to snap the heads off of pikes, as well as to defend the company standard. Soldiers who wield these weapons received double pay and were referred to as "dopplesoldners."



The famous military and mercenary infantry companies which began to dominate European battlefields in the late Renaissance, most notably the Swiss Reisläufer Companies and the German Landsknechts, primarily consisted of pikemen, halberdiers, and marksmen (armed with crossbows or primitive muskets, or more rarely, longbows equipping archers from Wales). There was also a special class of elite troops, called “dopplesoldner” (for their double pay), who specialized in the use of increasingly formidable greatswords. These eventually evolved into the so-called ‘true’ two-hand swords.

Variant

Sword, Flammard or Flambard (VL)



A dopplehander (6- 6 1/2 ‘) with a serpentine blade specialized for chopping and slashing. Landsknechts and Swiss Mercenaries used this type of weapon for snapping pikes. Also known as a “flammard”. Note: the term “flamberge” actually refers to a type of wave bladed rapier.

Estoc / Kanzer / Tuck



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Strike)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Puncturing Damage	Bludgeon Damage
Estoc	2H, L	7	7	6	4	1E	ST+1	ST-1

Proficiency: Greatsword/Longsword

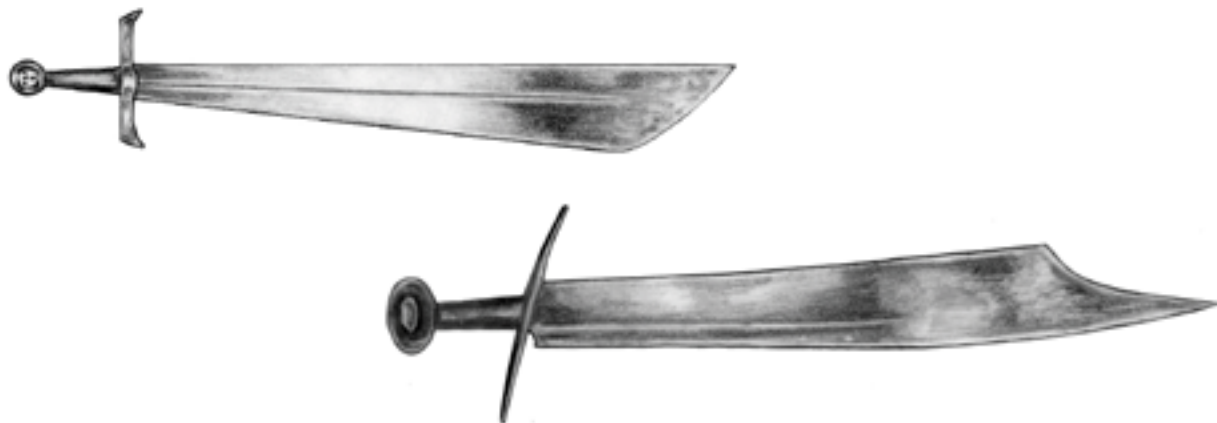
The Estoc developed as armor improved in the high Middle Ages. As cutting weapons were losing their effectiveness, crushing weapons such as maces and axes were increasingly utilized. However, thrusting weapons that could pierce mail or find the joints and crevices of plate, were another good method to defeat armor. The word Estoc is French, meaning “thrust” or “point”. The same was weapon was called Kanzer in Russia and Poland, and Tuck in England. Somewhat like a heavy-duty military version of a rapier, the Estoc remained in use through the Renaissance.



This was an effective weapon, having a long, straight, very rigid blade, which could thrust effectively with one hand, or half-swording techniques could be used to grip the blade to deliver an even more powerful thrust.

Special: +1 puncturing damage vs. all forms of armor. The Estoc has no edge, so swinging attacks do bludgeoning damage rather than cutting.

Falchion



Conyers Falchion, 13th century

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Falchion	2H, S	6	8	7	1	Heavy, 1E	ST+2	ST	-1
(1 Handed)	1H, M	7	9	8	1	Heavy, 1E	ST+1	ST-1	-1

Proficiency: Sword & Shield, Mass Weapon

Dimensions: 34" long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

A fairly blade-heavy instrument but very deadly upon impact, the falchion was a popular weapon in Europe for several hundred years, largely due to it's ability to hack through armor. It even gained some popularity in the East, notably in Turkey. A nearly identical weapon was also known in distant China (a derivative of the Dao Saber, qv.).

Falchions were often made with a stepped hand and a half grip, and could be wielded two handed. In fact, though wielding this fairly short, heavy blade single-handed can gain a fencer a bit more reach, it is easier to wield with two hands.

The shearing cuts caused by a Falchion made it a popular weapon for use against dangerous varmints and allegedly, supernatural creatures.

Special Features: Single edged, heavy. The Falchion gains an extra +1 damage when wielded against hard armor with a cutting attack.



Falchions were popular from the early middle ages through the Renaissance. There were numerous variants, some with rounded ends, others like the French badelaire, some shorter, some longer. Interestingly, several famous falchions (such as the Conyers Falchion) were associated with the slaying of infamous “wyrms” in the Middle Ages. Falchions can be distinguished from messers as being generally broader especially toward the center of percussion, and in having heavy prominent pommels.

Falx



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Falx	1H, L	8	9	8	0	Heavy, 1E	ST+2	ST	+1
Rhomphia	1H, VL	7	9	9	0	Heavy, 1E	ST+2	ST	+1

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword, Pole Arm

Dimensions: 60” long, 3.5-4 lbs

An archaic type of pole-arm which was essentially a curved sword on a long grip, with the blade curving inward toward the cutting edge, in the manner of a kukri knife or a falcata. The falx is a member of a family that was popular in Central Europe from biblical times until the Roman invasion and conquest of the Dacians in the 3rd century AD.

The size of a falx varies but a common example has a 3’ blade on a 2’ –3’ handle, for an overall length of 5’–6’. The yet more archaic romphia were nearly a foot longer. These weapons were so feared by the Romans that they had to resort to issuing new types of limb armor to prevent legionaries from having their arms severed.

Used by the ancient Dacians of central Europe, greatly feared by the Romans. Similar weapons were used in other time periods by many other cultures, the falx resembles the Japanese naginata and was thought to be a derivative of the earlier Thracian romphia (which is mentioned in the Christian bible).



Greatsword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Great Sword	2H, L	6	8	7	2-3	Heavy, 2E	ST+3	ST	-2

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword

Dimensions: 54" long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

The greatsword, also called a “war sword” or a “sword of war”, was a cutting sword designed for use with two hands. These larger swords, the original subtype of the longsword first appeared in the 13th century, were capable of facing heavier weapons such as pole-arms and larger axes, had extraordinary reach, and cause devastating cuts, especially against unarmored opponents and those wearing light to medium armor.

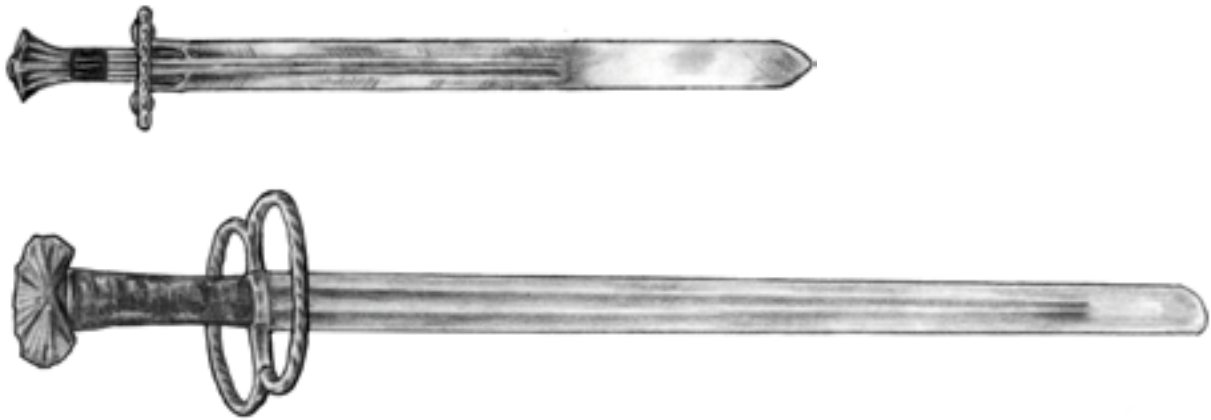
Greatswords generally had a parallel edged blade with a flat cross-section suitable for cutting and chopping, somewhat less useful for thrusting, and both wider and usually a few inches longer than other types of longsword. They often feature slightly longer grips as well.

A typical greatsword measures 4 1/2 in length, and is basically a two handed weapon (though not to be confused with “true” two-handed swords such as the doppelhander which measures over 6’). Greatswords were often made with a long ricasso, as much as the first 10” inches so of the blade. This was to assist in half sword techniques.

These weapons initially appeared in the late 12th century but were most frequently used in the 13th. They were gradually replaced by more versatile longswords, but then reappeared in the 15th century. Oakeshott types XIIa, XIIIa, and XX may be considered greatswords. (Type XX is a more sophisticated and versatile design, which could also be considered a large longsword.)



Katzbalger



Katzbalgers

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Katzbalger	S	6	8	6	3	2E	ST+1	ST	0

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 36" long, 2-3 lbs

The katzbalger was the unique sidearm of the Landsknecht infantry soldier of the late Renaissance. Landsknechts were the elite of European mercenaries, second only to the dreaded Swiss Reisläufer from the time of their original foundation by German Emperor Maximilian I in 1486, until their gradual obsolescence nearly 100 years later. During their heyday, few could face them on the grim battlefields of Europe.

Nearly all Landsknechts of every rank carried katzbalgers: pikemen, arquebusiers, even musicians. To wear the weapon was to identify oneself as a mercenary, specifically with Landsknecht companies in particular. The katzbalger was a short to medium length parallel bladed sword, with a distinctive 'S' shaped or 'figure 8' shaped guard that protects the hand and wrist quite well. The blade itself was broad, strait and parallel edged, usually lightened by multiple fullers extending $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ the way to the normally rounded or spatulate point.

Primarily a chopping weapon, the katzbalger was designed for the confusing aftermath of pike skirmishes, well suited for defense with a close-to-the-hilt balance and an effective hand guard. Though most lacked the reach of two-handed swords (a few two handed katzbalgers have been found), the katzbalger was a very deadly weapon in close combat. It was normally used without a shield or secondary blocking weapon.



This weapon is often seen depicted in woodcuts and paintings from the Renaissance era, and many fine examples have survived to this day. As a badge of membership in the fraternity of the Landsknecht mercenary, katzbalgers were finely made weapons and often featured decorated hilts inlaid with gold or silver. These were therefore fairly expensive weapons.

Longsword



Bohemian Longsword

Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Longsword	2H, L	6	7	6	2-3	2E	ST+2	ST+1	-1
(one handed)	1H, L	7	8	7			ST+1	ST	-1

Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword

Dimensions: 52” long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

The multifunctional longsword first began to appear in the 14th century in Germany as a development of the greatsword or sword of war (see below). By stiffening and strengthening the blade without substantially increasing the weight, swordsmiths were able to create a highly versatile weapon that was as devastating as the greatsword in combat, while being much more effective in the thrust, making it more useful against armor, and ultimately more agile and more efficient overall. It was with the longsword that half-swording techniques were first perfected.

By the mid 1350’s the longsword had become the knightly weapon of choice in most of Europe, and it was found in nearly every nation. The blade of a long sword was typically straight or slightly tapering, double-edged, and the weapon normally had a simple cruciform hilt. Some early longswords were little more than arming swords with longer grips or handles, which allowed them to be used two handed, with blades in the neighborhood 30-33”. Some more modern longswords had blades 34-39” for an overall length of 48 – 56” (roughly four to four and a half feet.)

Compared to greatswords, longswords also often had more taper especially toward the end of the blade, and a stiffer, more chisel-like cross-section (often flattened-diamond or hexagonal shaped), sometimes with multiple fullers running partially down the length of the blade.



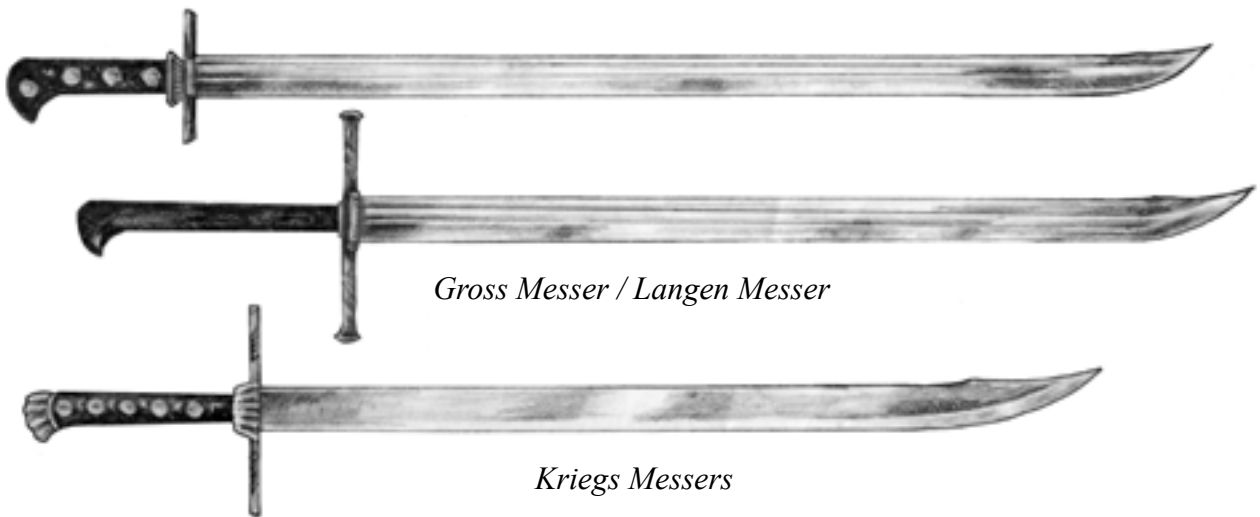
Special Features: Longswords were Armor Piercing weapons and do +1 Damage when used in a two-handed thrust against any form of hard armor.

The long sword was actually a two-handed or hand-and-a-half weapon that was developed as advances in plate armor increasingly obviated the need for a shield, allowing two-handed weapons to be used. The single-handed weapon incorrectly described as a 'long sword' in most role playing games is actually more accurately designated as a 'single sword' or an 'arming sword.' Great swords and bastard swords were subtypes of the long sword.

Sub-types were developed, including the bastard sword, a pointier, skinnier cut-and-thrust variety, and the great sword or war sword; broader and a bit longer and flatter, specialized for chopping. The long sword eventually evolved into a sophisticated combination weapon, equally effective at chopping and thrusting, well balanced and easy to wield, versatile in attack and reliable in defense.

The European long sword was arguably the single most effective and versatile hand weapon developed by any culture at any time in the world. Extremely adroit in attack and defense, and very fast with a deadly reach, it is equally capable of chopping, slashing, and thrusting; and lethal against both armored and unarmored opponents.

Messer



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Grosse Messer	1H, L	6	8	7	2	Heavy, 1E	ST+1	ST	+1
Kreigs Messer	2H, M	6	8	7	2	Heavy, 1E	ST+2	ST	+1
Kriegs Messer	1H, L	6	8	8	2	Heavy, 1E	ST+1	ST	+1



Proficiency: Messer (see p. 80), Longsword / Greatsword, Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 40" long, 2-3 lbs (grosse messer)
48" long, 2-3 lbs (kriegs messer)

A surprisingly light, deadly chopper, the messer was once derided as a peasants blade, as it was first known as the eccentric 'giant knife' favored by commoners in Germany (allegedly in attempt to get around local sumptuary laws preventing the low born from carrying 'true' swords). The weapon proved exceedingly agile and effective in combat however, and the messer soon attracted the attention of local lords, eventually becoming adopted by several Renaissance era fencing masters and appearing in a number of surviving fechtbuchs from the era.

An offensive tool in application, like the long sword it can be used with half-swording techniques for better defensive performance.

The messer looks like nothing so much as a very long knife (the name messer is German for "knife"). The langen messer, being the original form, is a formidable single-edged cutting sword, suitable for chopping wood or hacking the arms from attacking brigands, highly effective in the attack. A later, more militarized two-handed version called the kriegs messer was developed in Germany, and is better balanced for fighting, while every bit as deadly in the attack as it's notorious predecessor.

Special Features: Single edged

Norse Sword ("Broadsword")



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Norse sword	1H, Medium	6	8	6	ST+1	ST	0

*"Praise no day 'til evening;
no wife 'til on her pyre;
no sword 'til tested;
no maid 'til bedded;
no ice 'til crossed;
no ale 'til drunk."*
...Norse Proverb

Proficiency: Sword & Shield, Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 39" long, 2-3 lbs



The primary weapons of Viking raiders were spears and axes, but the most precious item in the Viking's arsenal, and the most valued reward that a Jarl could bestow upon his Thanes, was the unique Norse sword. These lethal blades were commonly given individual names such as "biter", "foot breaker", and "mail cleaver", and were often passed down as precious heirlooms from generation to generation for as long as they continued to hold an edge.



Appearance and Design features

The Norse broadsword was a straight, double-edged cutting sword with an overall length of about three feet, and a tight single-hand grip with a minimal guard. These swords were counterweighted by heavy pommels, and had broad, long-fullered blades with parallel or slightly tapering edges, ending in a rounded or spatulate point. The typical weight was about two to two and a half to two pounds, with a total length of between 34"-39". The prominent pommel was often multi lobed or shaped like a top hat or a Brazil nut.

This weapon was probably second only to the later medieval arming-sword as the perfect weapon counterpart to the shield. Like modern Scandinavian furniture or glassware, Norse swords from the Viking era were simple, elegant, ergonomic and efficient. They were specialist weapons, light, fast, and extremely agile, wrought from fine steel of exceptional flexibility and lethal sharpness.

As weapons, they did have two small disadvantages. First, they were not very effective at thrusting, usually having a rounded point and a relatively flexible blade making it difficult to pierce bone or armor in the thrust. Second, they had a minimal guard which left the hand somewhat exposed, but this was somewhat less of an issue when the weapon was used with a shield as intended (as the sword itself was not used much for parrying).

The Serpent in the Steel



*"The hard-edged blade with its woven patterns quivers and trembles;
grasped with terrible sureness, it flashes into changing hues."*

...excerpt from the Anglo-Saxon poem Elene. Translated by H.R. Ellis Davidson



In the Dark Ages when the Norse broadsword was first constructed, blades were often made with a special pattern-welded technique, which was necessitated by the lack of large quantities of suitable iron. Pattern welded swords were highly sought after by the Norse of later generations after the technique was lost in the early middle ages with the advent of technologies such as the Barcelona hammer. Those brave enough would sometimes recover them from ancient barrows.



“The central part of their blades, cunningly hollowed out, appears to be grained with tiny snakes, and here such varied shadows play that you would believe the shining metal to be interwoven with many colors.”

5th century Roman Senator Cassiodorus, describing a sword made by the Teutonic Warni tribe

These scarce and precious jewels of early Norse iron technology, themselves perhaps a small piece of *the Riddle of Steel*, were the prized possessions of many a Viking Jarl, (and not a few Frankish counts or Anglo-Saxon lords). Pattern Welded blades should be considered Fine weapons (see TROS, p.203)

These weapons differ from the earlier migration era Germanic types in having generally lighter blade with a long, wide fuller, and a closer to the hilt balance due to a heavier pommel. (The pommels on migration era swords were often made partially from non-ferrous materials such as horn, wood, brass, etc.)

The special “pattern welded” blades, made by a technique known to Celtic blacksmiths well into the La Tene period, (as early as 300 – 500 BC), were similar in appearance to the so-called Damascus or wootz steel weapons from India. There were references to such blades in the Icelandic sagas and in epic poems such as Beowulf, lauding them as gifts of the capricious Northern Gods.

Unlike celebrated wootz steel, the overall effectiveness of pattern welded weapons is still controversial, but the best evidence currently available from chemical and metallurgical analysis, archeological finds, review of historical texts, and tests with modern reproductions, is that many pattern welded swords were considerably stronger and more flexible than the best modern homogeneous steel reproduction swords, while retaining an edge hardness approaching that of the very sharpest knives.



Pallasch



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Pallasch	1H, L	7	7	7	3-5	1E	ST+2	ST+1	+1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 43" long, 2.5-3 lbs

Another cut-and-thrust sword variant appearing in the late 16th century, the pallasch was thought of by some as Poland's answer to both the Hungarian saber and the early Italian dueling rapier. The pallasch was a very long, heavy, single-edged cut-and-thrust sword with a basket hilt and a fuller running nearly the entire length of the blade.

These stiff, heavy weapons were specialized cutting swords designed for combat from horseback. Though less nimble than a rapier, they had excellent reach, and unlike most cavalry sabers, were fairly easy to parry with and could also be used to thrust effectively. The heavy blade is difficult for lighter civilian weapons to parry, making it an ideal opponent for the rapier or smallsword.

Special Features: Single edged, heavy

I ncreasingly popular in Russia, and Poland where they were first developed for the heavy cavalry, pallasch swords also gained popularity in Germany, both as a military weapon and a hunting sword.

Rapier



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Rapier	1H, L	7	5	8 (6)	3-5	2E	ST-3	ST+2	+1



Proficiency: Rapier, Case of Rapiers

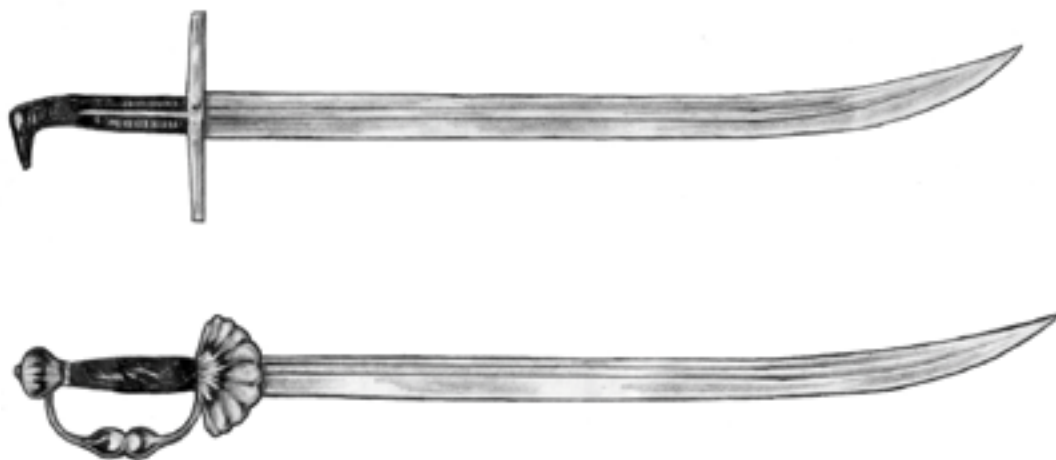
Dimensions: 44" long, 2.5-3 lbs

A sophisticated development of the sidesword (see above), the rapier is essentially a civilian blade, narrower and more optimized for thrusting, which began to appear in the cities of Italy and Spain in the late 15th century. Eventually, it became extremely popular in various forms right across Europe.

In most cases, the rapier was not used as a military weapon at all, being preferred for use in duels and street encounters. The design sacrifices most cutting ability and a great deal of strength in favor of the all-important thrust. The rapier ultimately became so narrow that it was barely effective at all as a cutting weapon (many could only make draw-cuts), and so flexible that it was of limited efficacy against armored opponents. The reach and swiftness of the weapon however ensured that it was extremely lethal against lightly armored or unarmored opponents, and it quickly became the most popular civilian weapon in Europe. The rapier was itself ultimately replaced by the smallsword.

Special Features: Due to the lightness of the blade, it defends with a TN of 8 against any heavy striking or cutting weapon, and with a TN of 5 against lighter thrusting weapons and civilian swords. The rapier is also less effective than normal against metal armor (Puncturing damage is ST+1 against mail or plate).

Saber



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Saber	1H, M	6	8	8	1-3	1E	ST	ST	+2

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust, Sabers (see p. 80)

Dimensions: 39" long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

The saber was a specialized slashing or draw-cutting sword, ideally adapted for use from horseback.



The saber had a number of unique features when compared to most western swords. Most importantly was that it curved away from the cutting edge, like many of the shorter cavalry swords of Asia, which makes it specialized for the draw-cut. Most examples also feature the fashionable canted grip designed to aid in weapon retention, a feature eventually adopted by many cavalry swords in the most militarily advanced nations.

Some very modern sabers also featured cup-hilt guards to protect the hand, though most featured minimal crosspieces after the Eastern fashion. Western sabers in general were quite long compared to their Eastern counterparts (36" or more), and not as acutely arched.

In use, the saber is optimized as an attacking weapon. It is intended to deliver one or more vicious slashing attacks from horseback. It is most suited for the traditional light cavalry tactics of hit and run attacks, ride bys and overruns. The weapon is not intended or best adapted for a protracted fight or melee, as it is fairly difficult to parry with and was considered ill suited for the thrust.

The European saber was one of the last swords to remain in use by European military forces, seeing action in significant numbers as late as WW I and even in the early stages of WW II. Though sabers were known in the West going back to the time of Charlemagne, the European saber was originally adapted from 17th century Hungarian cavalry weapons, which were in turn influenced by the shorter Central Asian saber which goes back to the bronze age (see the Chinese Dao).

Schiavona



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Schiavona	1H, L	7	7	6	4	1E	ST+1	ST+1	+1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust

Dimensions: 40" long, 2.5-3 lbs

The schiavona was a gradual development of the basic cut-and-thrust swords used by the Dalmatian Slavic mercenaries employed by the Doge of Venice from the Early Renaissance period. These formidable bladeslingers were known locally as 'schiavoni', and their trademark sword was therefore called a schiavona. As the schiavoni won a reputation for ferocity and military efficacy, their unique weapons caught the attention of knights in Germany and France, and within a relatively brief period, the schiavona was fashionable across Europe. Eventually it became a favored weapon of the heavy cavalry in many nations.



The schiavona can be distinguished from other cut-and-thrust types by its considerable length (usually between three and a half and four feet), its multiple fullered, double-edged blade, its unique swept basket-hilt, and its characteristic cats-head pommel. In combat, it is equally effective at cutting and thrusting, though its length, while conferring a reach advantage, makes it somewhat more difficult to handle than some smaller swords. These were well-balanced blades however, and the schiavona's handling characteristics combined with its complex hilt make it an excellent defensive weapon.

Special Features: Single edged

This was the celebrated weapon used by the mercenary bodyguards of the Doge of Venice from the late 15th century. These fanatically loyal men, known as the Schiavoni, were Slavs from the Dalmatian region. The weapon became popular in southern Germany and Italy, and eventually saw fairly widespread use by heavy cavalry, well into the 17th century.

Schwiezersabel



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Schwiezersabel	2H, L	6	8	7	3-4	1E	ST+1	ST	+2



Proficiency: Longsword / Greatsword, Saber

Dimensions: 52" long, 2.5-3.5 lbs

A very specialized weapon developed in Switzerland, the schwiezersabel or "Swiss saber" seems to be an unlikely cross between a bastard sword and a cavalry saber or a messer. Unlike the latter, schwiezersabels often included complex guards offering some protection for both hands.

Quite popular in Switzerland in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Essentially, this weapon, little known beyond the shadow of the Alps, could be thought of as the Western answer to the Japanese Katana.

Sidesword



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Sidesword	1H, M	7	6	7 (6)	3-5	2E	ST-1	ST+2	+1

Proficiency: Cut and Thrust, Rapier, Case of Rapiers

Dimensions: 40" long, 1.5-2.5 lbs

During the late Renaissance, the basic cut-and-thrust sword evolved into specialized thrusting types, intended primarily for civilian or quasi-military use. These weapons were known as "espada de lato" (sidesword) in Italy and by the similar "espada ropera" (sword of the robes) in Spain. They were lighter than more basic cut-and-thrust types, and featured fairly complex hilts, normally incorporating side rings and thumb rings as a minimum. These transitional blades were still broad enough to cut with some authority, but were optimized for thrusting.

Generally heavier, shorter, and broader-bladed than more specialized thrusting rapiers, many considered these swords to be a good compromise between the lighter civilian weapons and the heavier, more versatile military swords. They were often carried by noblemen on journeys, and were assigned to town guards, for example.

Developed in Spain and Italy, the sidesword became popular throughout the Mediterranean, and



eventually across Europe. By the late Renaissance they became a common component of the civilian dress of nobles (hence the name “sword of the robes”) and wealthy merchants in most major European cities, until being gradually replaced by more specialized thrusting rapiers.

Special Features: Due to the lightness of this civilian blade, it defends with a TN of 7 against any heavy striking or cutting weapon, and with a TN of 6 against thrusting weapons and lighter civilian swords. It is best used with the Rapier skill.

Transitional predecessor and cousin of the rapier. Early rapiers and sideswords were in fact confused for each other. Popular mostly in southern Europe, from the late Renaissance through the 17th century.

Smallsword (‘Epee’)



Weapon	Length	Attack TN (Cut)	Attack TN (Thrust)	Defense TN	Hilt	Blade Type	Cut Damage	Puncturing damage	Draw Cut Modifier
Smallsword	1H, M	9	5	9 (6)	3	Fine	ST-4	ST+1	+1
Colichemarde	1H, M	9	5	7 (6)	3	Fine	ST-4	ST	+1

Proficiency: Rapier, Case of Rapiers

Dimensions: 36” long, 1-1.5 lbs

Sometimes known as a “court-sword”, a “walking-sword”, or “town-sword”, this gentleman’s weapon par-excellence first appeared in France, (where it was known simply as an ‘epee’) in the early 18th century, and quickly became popular among nobility and gentility throughout Europe. A specialized refinement of the rapier, this smaller (medium length, 28”-34”) thrusting sword features a very narrow blade and essentially no cutting edge.

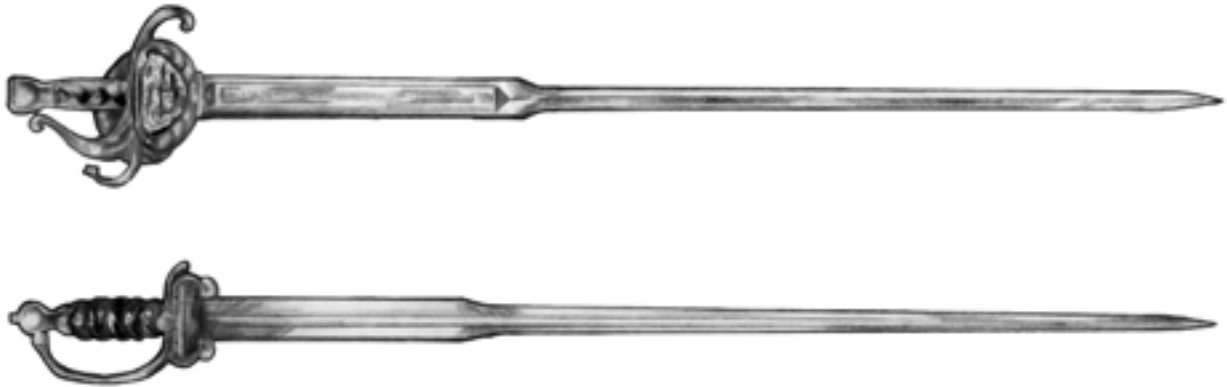
Not a military weapon at all, the smallsword has certain advantages over other weapons in the civilian arsenal: it is discrete enough to wear upon ones person without attracting undue attention, nor is it nearly as bulky or cumbersome as a rapier, and yet it is far more lethal than say, a walking stick. Perhaps best of all, it does not require brutish physical strength to wield, relying instead upon finesse and precision which can with sufficient training, be acquired by even the most delicate of aristocrats.



The design philosophy of the smallsword is grounded in the controversial school of the ‘primacy of the thrust’, based on the idea that a thrusting sword need only pierce a few inches into a vital area to kill, while a cutting sword must be used with much greater force. Be that as it may, the smallsword is an incredibly nimble weapon, though it lacks significant reach and is not strong enough to be used in active defense against any sort of heavy instrument, nor is the blade formidable enough to penetrate heavy armor.

It can quickly dispatch a human opponent however, and has saved many a dandy’s purse from the calloused hands of the uncouth and poorly armed ruffian. Fairly easily concealed with a well penetrating blade rather like an oversized stiletto, the smallsword is also sometimes favored by better-dressed thieves and assassins.

Smallsword Variants:



Colichemarde

The colichmarde is a development of the smallsword, designed to allow it to be used against heavier weapons. It has a unique two-stage blade featuring a “carps tongue” shape, characterized by a wide and strong ‘forte’ for parrying, and a very stiff blade with a triangular cross section, which then abruptly tapers to a much narrower point. These weapons were strong and extremely quick.

Special Features: Due to the lightness of the blade, it defends with a higher TN against any heavy striking or cutting weapon, and with the lower TN of 6 against lighter thrusting weapons and civilian swords. The smallsword is also less effective than normal against metal armor (Puncturing damage is -1 against mail or plate).

These were the weapons that evolved into the epee and the modern sport fencing foil and “saber”. A similar German weapon to the Colichemarde existed which was called a konigsmarke.

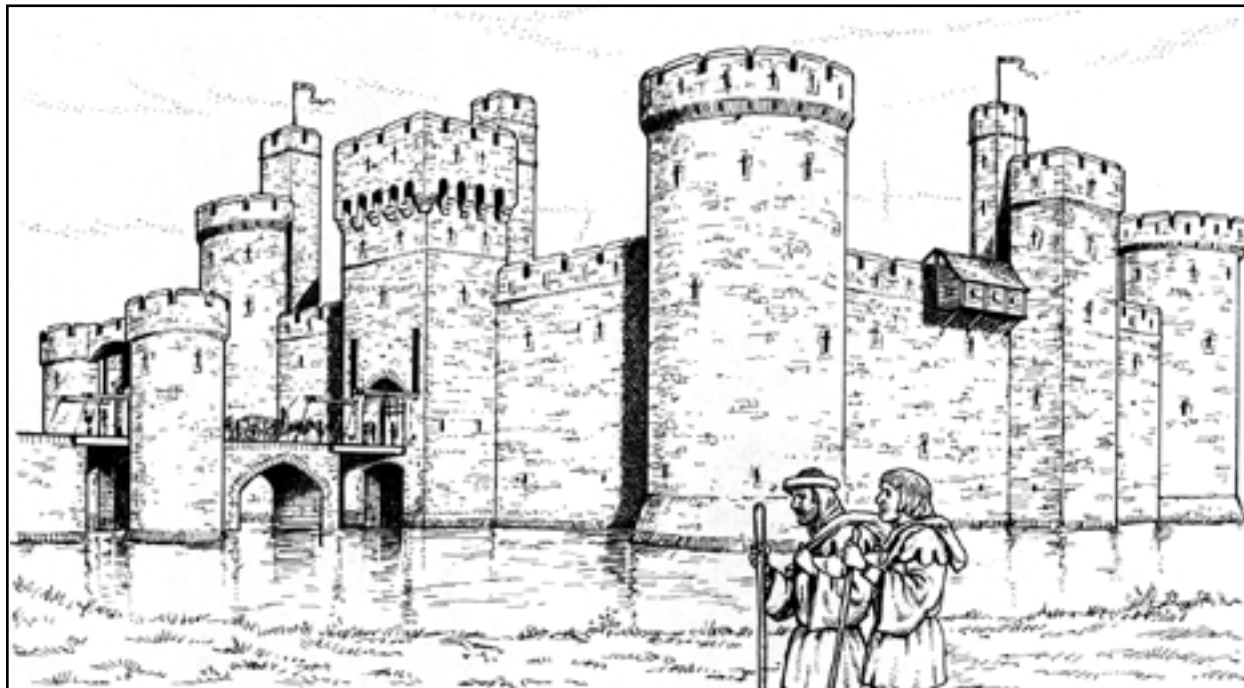


Swords pricing

The following prices are indicative only, depending on the campaign world you use. If you are using Weyrth as your setting, the following are Imperial Standard coinage prices. For Heavy coinage, all prices are 2/3rds of the amount listed. For light coinage, double it.

Weapon	Cost
Arming Sword	15 silver
Backsword	20 silver
Bastard Sword	50 silver
Claymore	65 silver
Colichemarde	110 silver
Cut and Thrust Sword	32 silver
Dopplehander	85 silver
Estoc	40 silver
Falchion	13 silver
Falx	10 silver
Flammard	90 silver
Gallowglass Sword	55 silver
Greatsword	35 silver

Grosse Messer	12 silver
Katzbalger	24 silver
Kriegs Messer	18 silver
Longsword	40 silver
Norse Sword	16 silver
Pallasch	25 silver
Pattern Welded Norse Sword	200+ silver (Fine)
Rapier	80 silver
Saber	30 silver
Schiavona	60 silver
Schwiezersabel	70 silver
Sidesword	45 silver
Smallsword	100 silver





Thrown Missile Weapons

All missile weapons not including bows or crossbows.

Cateia



Preparation time: 1-3 rounds total. Grab Cateia 0 (in other hand or nearby) 2 (from belt, etc.); cock back: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: by thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST -1b or ST +1p

Type: Bludgeon or Piercing

Range: 3 yards / 6 yards / 9 yards / 12 yards / 36 yards

The archaic throwing wood (as differentiated from a throwing-stick), known as cateia to the Romans, remained varying forms in active use for thousands of years. This ancient and primitive missile, made of hardwood or more rarely, wood and stone, ivory or even bone, dates back to the days of myth and legend, but was still used by armies and war-bands throughout the world as late as the 19th century: the “*trombash*” of Sub-Saharan Africa, the “*marawar*”, “*kulbeda*” or “*valai tadi*” of India, the “*lisan*” of ancient Egypt, and the boomerang of Australia, were all military or hunting versions of the cateia.

When thrown adeptly, some cateia would return to the hand of the thrower, and could be caught. A more useful tactic could also be mastered, to angle the weapon so that it veered back and struck the target from the side or from behind. Though relatively ineffective against medium to heavy armor, against lightly clad targets these weapons could be devastating.

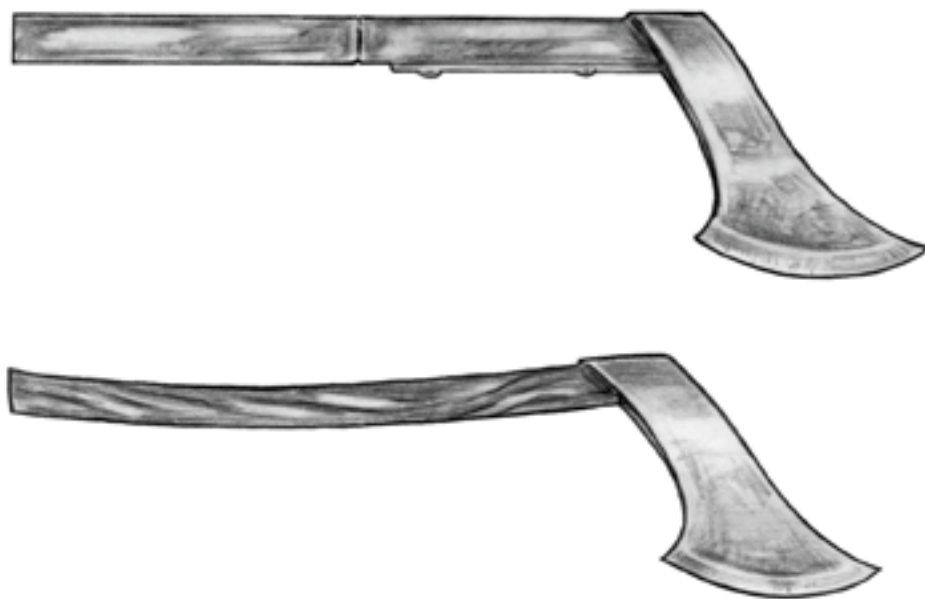


“Et quos maliferae despectant moenia Abellae
Teutonico ritu soliti torquere cateias.”

Virgil, Aeneid vii, 740

The best documented examples of boomerangs outside of Australia are the classical cateia, attributed by the Romans to the Gallic troops of Hannibal; the lisan of Egypt, depicted in paintings and Hieroglyphs; the marawar or vali tadi of India which was used as a hunting weapon into the 19th century; and various types of throwing knives and throwing sticks found in sub-Saharan Africa.

Francisca



Preparation time: 1-3 rounds total. Grab Axe 0 (in other hand or nearby) 2 (from belt, etc.); cock back: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: by thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 2c

Range: 4 yards / 8 yards / 12 yards / 24 yards / 40 yards

The preferred weapon of the ancient German and Scandinavian hosts, and used by Northern European infantry from Classical times into the Renaissance, the francisca was a specially designed throwing axe notorious for its ability to skip across the ground and slam unpredictably into bodies and shields. It was particularly effective for breaking up shield – walls, as each weapon became

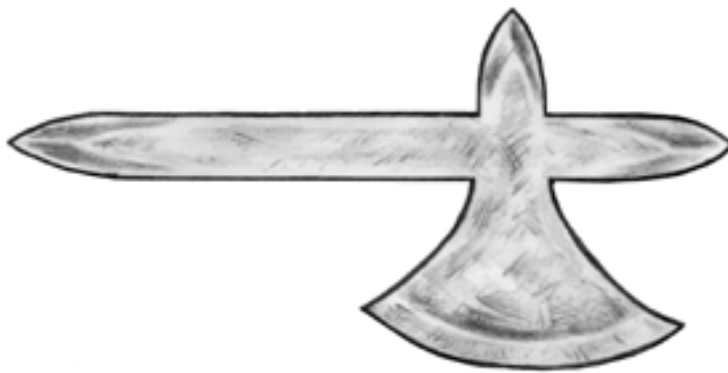


embedded into a shield, it encumbered it and charging Frankish warriors would allegedly step on the protruding shaft to pull their enemies shields down before dispatching them.

Special: Any shield hit by this weapon suffers +2 TN to all maneuvers using the shield until the francisca is removed.

The Franks were named for this weapon, and its use in the manner described above was documented by Roman eyewitnesses.

Hurlbat



Preparation time: 1-3 rounds total. Grab Hurlbat 0 (in other hand or nearby) 2 (from belt, etc.); cock back: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: by thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 1p or ST+2c

Type: Cut or pierce

Range: 2 yards / 4 yards / 8 yards / 10 yards / 20 yards

An ancient missile weapon made of iron, steel, bronze, or brass, favored by the barbarian tribes of Northern Europe in antiquity, and popular into the Renaissance both on the battlefield and in judicial combats. The iron hurlbat is believed by some historians to be a development of the more primitive cateia (see p. 198).

The Hurlbat is a “throwing hammer” or “throwing axe” consisting of sharp blades or points on every protruding angle, making it a much easier weapon to throw successfully than an ordinary hammer or axe. It is a short-range weapon with some effectiveness against armor, and it can also be used to encumber a shield in the manner of a Francisca or a pilum.

Special: Any hit against a shield causes +1 TN to all maneuvers using that shield until the hurlbat is removed.



The Hurlbat is a small throwing-axe or throwing “hammer” of ancient lineage. Used well into the medieval period and even the Renaissance, its ultimate origins are clouded in mystery.

Archeological evidence shows that the hurlbat was used throughout the iron and bronze ages in Europe, and earlier stone and wood or hardwood forms were prolific in the Neolithic era (the Neolithic era persisted locally in iron-poor areas such as Denmark until well into the late Hallstadt period). The Hurlbat is believed to have evolved from earlier boomerang –like weapons (see Cateia). The Hurlbat is also not unlike the many variations of Sub-Saharan African throwing “knives” and throwing sticks, both of hardwood and of iron.

Javelin



Preparation time: 1-2 rounds total. Pull spear: 0 (already in hand), 1 (in ground); prepare to throw: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: By thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 2p

Range: 6 yards / 12 yards / 18 yards / 24 yards / 48 yards

Arguably THE most ubiquitous missile weapon in the pre-firearms arsenal just about everywhere in the world, the javelin is a short, light spear that weighed about one or two pounds, not always even needing a sharpened head, sometimes made with fletchings or vanes to assist flight. Javelins are easy to use though fairly hard to perfect.

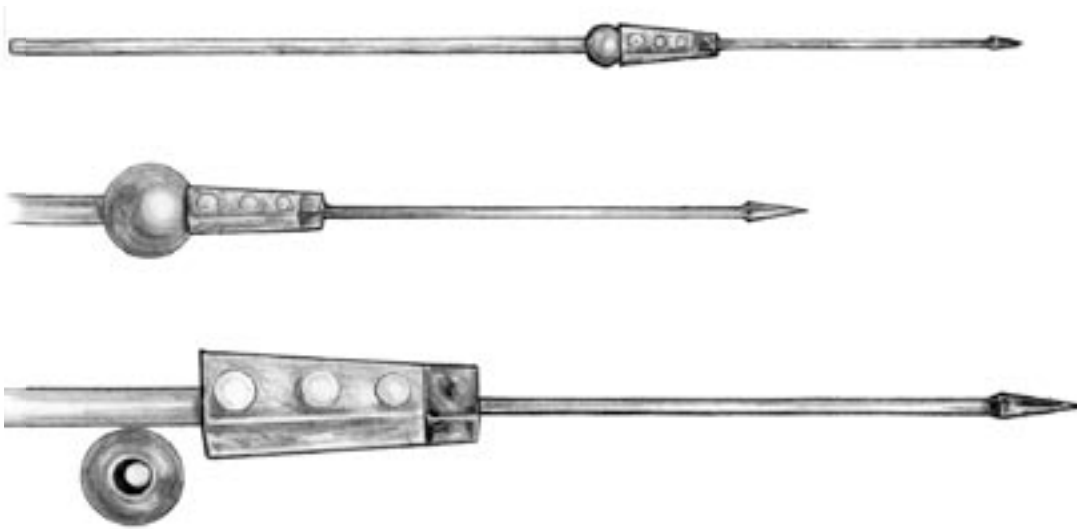
At medium to long range, javelins are not too difficult to sidestep, or even catch (as barbarians proved in several reported incidents during Classical times), therefore they were most effective if launched at very short range, or in volleys of several weapons simultaneously.

Use: The javelin was used as a missile, with a maximum effective range of about 50 to 75 feet. Thrown from horseback or from a chariot (as it often was in early Classical times) the range was somewhat longer, and penetration higher. At very short range (inside 20 feet), the javelin has extraordinary penetration. Generally, however as missiles go javelins were fairly large and slow, and lost energy relatively quickly as they approached their maximum range.

Therefore the best chance to hit something at long or medium range was to throw it at a mass of bodies, or in a volley, or into the backs of retreating or fleeing enemies (by far the favorite technique of light cavalry). Often a typical strategy was to throw the javelin at the enemy’s shield (which were wood or leather at the time), so that it would hamper the foe’s movements and force them to discard the shield.



Pilum / Angon



Preparation time: 1-2 rounds total. Pull spear: 0 (already in hand), 1 (in ground); prepare to throw: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: By thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 3p

Range: 4 yards / 8 yards / 12 yards / 16 yards / 32 yards

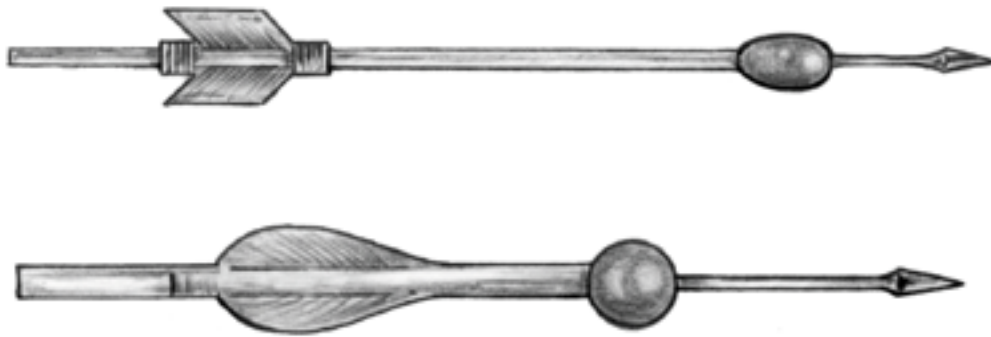
The primary weapon of the legions of the Roman Republic and Empire during its heyday, this, perhaps the most deadly of javelins persisted throughout history long past the disappearance of the last Legions. Few of the warriors of Ireland, Germany, or Scandinavia where the popular weapon persisted through the middle ages under the name ‘angon’, were aware of the ancient lineage of this simple but effective killer. Though eventually outclassed by the heavier crossbows and bows, the armor-piercing javelin formed a critical part of the arsenal of many armies even into the Renaissance. The effect of a well-timed volley of these missiles upon massed infantry in particular cannot be overstated.

Special: The pilum could be used to effectively encumber a shield. Any hit against a shield causes +3 TN for that shield when used defensively, and the weapon cannot be removed in combat. The pilum is also an Armor Piercing weapon, and causes +1 damage against any type of armor.

The primary weapon of the Roman Legions, the critical component of Roman kit along side the Gladius sword and the Scutum shield.



Plumbata



Preparation time: 1-3 rounds total. Grab Plumbata 0 (in other hand or nearby) 2 (from belt, etc.); cock back: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: by thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 1p (+2p at range 60+ yards)

Range: 5 yards / 10 yards / 20 yards / 40 yards / 100 yards

A popular weapon developed toward the height of the power of the Roman Empire, the plumbata was a long ranged mini-javelin or dart popular into the late Imperial period primarily due to its ability to outrange nearly any bow available in those days (1st – 5th century AD) which was very important since many Roman units did not themselves have archers. It was also light and relatively cheap to make.

Roman Legionaires from the middle to late Imperial Period were believed to have carried as many as two plumbata inside the straps of their scutum (shields). Plumbata heads and weights have been recovered at several sites, but the non-metal rear portion of the weapons have never survived intact, so the reconstruction of the vanes etc. is partial speculation, based upon images on bas reliefs and columns.

Special: The plumbata could also be used to encumber a shield in the manner of a francisca or a pilum. Any hit against a shield causes +1 TN for that shield when used defensively. Plumbata are also Armor Piercing weapons, and they cause +1 damage against any type of armor.



Sling



Preparation time: 3-4 rounds total. Get rock or bullet: 0 (already in hand), 1 (on ground or in pouch); place in sling: 1; whirl up to speed: 2 (Note: MP refresh begins at start of whirl)

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

Effective ST: 5

DR (Damage Rating): STb (stones) or ST + 1b (bullets)

Range: 8 yards / 16 yards / 24 yards / 42 yards / 84 yards

Though not quite as ancient a weapon as the rock, the sling has been used for eons, and it's ultimate origin lies buried in antiquity. Though not a complex weapon or even extremely difficult to grasp the basic use of, it is a difficult weapon to truly master.

In the hands of trained marksmen, the sling was indeed considered an effective military weapon, especially when used to fire lead bullets instead of stones. In fact in combat slings were more often used with bullets. The sling also has the advantages of being cheap to make, and very small (and thus both portable and concealable) as was the ammunition.



Ammunition could also be scrounged in an emergency, making the sling an excellent survival weapon for hunting. Militarily, the sling could not be used safely from behind ranks of infantry, as



archers could, because of the way it is launched. On the other hand, it was less affected by weather, and because the weapon was fired with one hand, slingers could carry shields. They were therefore often used as skirmishers.

Finally, the sling has an extremely long range, some modern estimates putting it at in excess of 350 yards, though this would not be precision fire, and they did not lose energy at the extreme limits of their range as quickly as arrows or crossbow bolts do. This alone makes it a weapon worth consideration!

The use of the sling was much more widespread in the Classical period, the Bronze Age and before than in the medieval or renaissance period, by which time it had been relegated to a fairly obscure hunting weapon. In Classical times, most slingers used in military campaigns came from areas where the sling was used traditionally as a hunting weapon, such as Rhodes or the Balearic Isles.

Weavers Beam



Preparation time: 4-6 rounds total. Pull spear: 0 (already in hand), 1 (in ground); 2 wind around shaft, 1 insert wrist into thong, prepare to throw: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: By thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 2p

Range: 8 yards / 16 yards / 24 yards / 36 yards / 70 yards

The weavers beam, veritum, string spear, or thong-spear are just a few of the names this ancient weapon acquired during its vast lineage. Originally pioneered during the early Bronze Age, this was one of the first major technical innovations to hit the battlefields of the ancient Middle East. Some historians believe that combined with the fast two-wheeled chariot, the weavers-beam led to the victories of many early civilized armies, including the Assyrians and the Hittites.

The weapon was known by the Greeks (it appeared in the Olympics) and used as a military weapon by the Romans during the Republican period, (they knew it as the veritum). There is some evidence that Chariot using Celts of Britain favored the weapon, and much later, there are numerous references in the Icelandic Sagas to its use among the Vikings.

Use: A simple but ingenious variation on the basic javelin. This is a javelin with a string or thong attached about midway. The thong is coiled or wound around the shaft of the spear (javelin) and then around the throwers wrist. When the weapon is thrown, this imparts both extra momentum



and spin, which stabilizes the weapon making it more accurate and long ranged, at the obvious penalty of longer preparation time and therefore a slower rate of fire.

The early use of this weapon seems to have been largely restricted to being used from chariots. Upon its re-invention as an infantry weapon, there is some evidence that the Romans and the Vikings used it only for an initial volley, following up with other shorter ranged missile weapons or charging into melee for subsequent attacks.

Melee Weapons Used as Missile Weapons

Thrown hammer



Preparation time: 1-3 rounds total. Grab Hammer 0 (nearby) 2 (from belt, etc.); cock back: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 6

Effective ST: by thrower

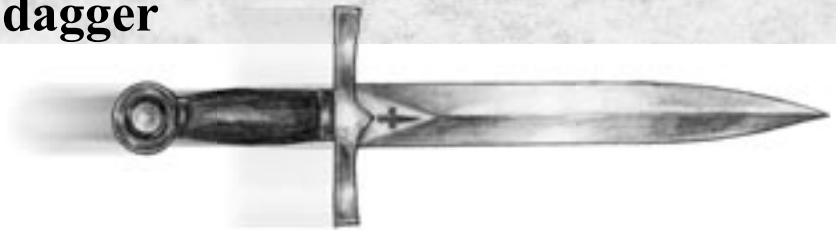
DR (Damage Rating): ST + 1b

Type: Cut or pierce

Range: 3 yards / 5 yards / 8 yards / 11 yards / 20 yards

A thrown hammer can be devastating to an unarmored target, and unlike a thrown knife or sword, it matters little if the hammer strikes sideward or even backward, nor does energy dissipate as quickly.

Thrown knife / dagger



Preparation time: 1-2 rounds total. Grab Knife 0 (already in hand) 2 (from belt, etc.)

Attack Target Number (ATN): 8

Effective ST: by thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 1p

Type: Cut or pierce

Range: 1 yard / 3 yards / 5 yards / 8 yards / 16 yards

Throwing a knife is not nearly as easy as it seems in the movies. From a very short range (inside 5 feet), it is fairly predictable and easy to throw hilt first, with the expectation that the blade will



strike. Thrown in this manner penetration is excellent, better than the hardest thrust. Thrown at longer-range penetration is less, though still good. At a range where a half-turn or more is required, the weapon is normally thrown blade first. The longer the range and the more difficult the number of turns required, the more challenging it is to correctly judge the throw.

Thrown spear



Preparation time: 1-2 rounds total. Pull spear: 0 (already in hand), 1 (in ground); prepare to throw: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 7

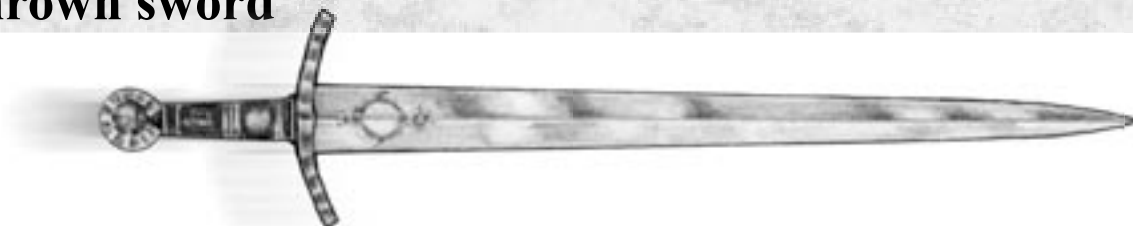
Effective ST: By thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 3p

Range: 3 yards / 6 yards / 10 yards / 15 yards / 20 yards

Throwing a spear greatly increases penetration, though effective range is very short, as the energy dissipates quickly.

Thrown sword



Preparation time: 1-3 rounds total. Grab weapon 0 (already in hand) 2 (from belt, etc.); cock back: 1

Attack Target Number (ATN): 9

Effective ST: by thrower

DR (Damage Rating): ST + 3p

Type: Cut or pierce

Range: 1 yard / 3 yards / 5 yards / 8 yards / 12 yards

Since most swords are balanced close to the hilt, when thrown more than a few feet it is very difficult to strike point-first. At very short range this can be an effective, if risky gambit however, as penetration can be increased.

Weapons	Cost
Cateia	4 copper
Francisca	2 silver
Heavy Pilum	4 silver
Hurlbat	6 silver
Javelin	2 copper
Javelin (veritum)	3 copper
Pilum	3 silver
Plumbata	1 silver
Sling	1 copper
Sling Bullet (clay) (20)	1 copper
Sling Bullet (lead) (5)	1 copper
Sling Stones (50)	1 copper



Items of Power

Items and weaponry of a magical nature are exceedingly rare in The Riddle of Steel. Magic itself is a rare, feared and dangerous thing; those who know little about it despise it, and those who practice it hoard it, for it can do terrible things to the body when mis- or overused. Thus, the intentional creation of items of power is almost unheard of. And yet, on occasion, such items do turn up. Discovered in an ancient tomb, perhaps, or as a treasured heirloom. This section discusses the possibilities and properties of items of power in The Riddle of Steel, including how they come about, how they work, and what they do. It will also present a number of sample items and weapons, which can either be used verbatim in your own campaigns or as examples for the creation of your own.

Because of the nature of Items of Power and their inherent linkage with the campaign world they are found in, many of the examples in this chapter are focused on the world of Weyrth. However, you will also find a few “real world” items of power, to get you thinking along those lines.

Where do they come from?

Magic is an unpredictable thing. It is born in the blood, and yet few understand its properties or how it is passed along – many powerful sorcerers have come from completely mundane parents, and have themselves gone on to produce entirely mundane offspring. One can never know when a child will have the spark in their blood or not. Some, however, claim that it is not a pre-existing spark in the blood that determines magic, but rather that some individuals are somehow able to awaken the power within themselves, simply through the pure desire to do so. The actual truth is unknown, but what is true is that those with power are usually destined for greatness, and those who achieve greatness often have power.

It is this essence of magic adhered to such people that has on occasion empowered special or important belongings of theirs. A hero who carries his sword into battle against particular foes year after year may begin to find that his sword begins to enjoy the taste of the blood of those foes. A well respected clergyman who blesses the faithful with fervor, and with the same symbol of his God that his father used to use to bless the faithful, and his father's father before that, may come to discover that the blessings of the God are coming a little more freely these days.

Consequently, items of power should be extremely rare. Additionally, because of their nature they tend to be hoarded by those who know of their properties (or think they do). The discovery of an item of power should be a campaign-shaking event, and certainly not something to be taken lightly by those who find it.

What can they do?

Through their associations with their original owners, items of power pick up a measure of the spiritual attributes of that owner. Specifically, any one spiritual attribute is adopted by the item and begins to develop independently of the owner (often without the owner even realizing it, at least at first). Thus, the sword of a hero who has a Drive to slay the evil hordes invading his homeland may itself develop a similar Drive over time.

These Spiritual Attributes may never be sold down by the wielder as experience or to gain insight, but otherwise follow all of the usual rules for SA's – when the owner/wielder of the item is acting in accordance with the Spiritual Attribute, they may use the current value in the SA as bonus dice and the SA itself will occasionally increase, as per the usual rules for the increasing of Spiritual Attributes through focusing on them. Conversely, whenever the owner has an opportunity to act in accordance with the

SA and chooses not to, the current value of the SA will decrease. Unlike normal SA's, however, this value will also very slowly increase over time even if the owner has not been in a situation where the SA might have been followed and/or chose not to. Thus, the more an Item of Power's SA's are not "fed" the more the item will tempt the user with power to try and get him to "feed" it. When an item of power is found, it's generally safe to assume it is at low to average strength (1-3 points).

That sounds too good to be true, surely there's a downside?

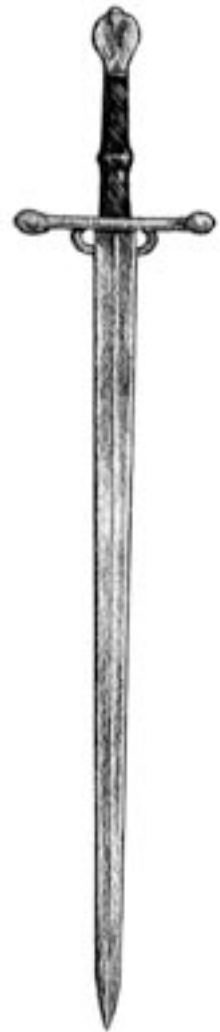
Items of Power cannot talk, and thus cannot communicate to the person holding them what their desire/SA relates to. However, the character will feel a sense of rightness when performing acts in line with the SA, and a slight sense of disappointment or wrongness when acting directly against the SA. These feelings become stronger the lower the Spiritual Attribute is, from very mild at 5 (the item is sated for now) to rather strong at 0 (the item is in dire need). In situations where there is a great opportunity to feast the Spiritual Attribute (a battle is brewing for a weapon that has a Drive to slay those on the other side, for example), Seneschals may wish to make characters roll Willpower against a TN of (11 – the current SA level of the item), and if unsuccessful then they will feel an irresistible urge to indulge the SA. Forcing character actions is never a matter to be taken lightly, so this should be reserved for rare situations where there is a great deal of opportunity for the SA to be activated. Additionally, very ancient or very powerful Items of Power often become hard to disguise – we all know of a certain short sword wielded by a very small hero that glowed blue in the presence of Orcs – this was a manifestation of the weapons desire to slay Orcs. Similarly, some Items of Power in the Riddle of Steel may glow, hum, throb, or otherwise herald

their will when the object of their Spiritual Attribute is at hand.

There is one further drawback to the possession of an Item of Power; As well as the SA already discussed, all Items of Power have a second, secret Destiny SA. This Destiny need not have anything to do with the main SA of the item (although it may), but is related instead to the items eventual fate. This SA always starts out at zero, and increases slowly whenever the wielder helps to bring the destiny to pass, accidentally or otherwise. No hints, feelings or encouragement are ever given to the user, although over time they may work out what the Destiny is by taking careful note of when they suddenly receive extra dice at a possibly unexpected moment. When the Destiny SA reaches 5, the particular destiny of the item (and user, if applicable) will come to pass. Note that this may be a good or a very bad thing for the possessor of the Item of Power. The item itself is usually destroyed, or at least drained of any and all power upon the achievement of its destiny. Item Destiny SA's will slowly leech to zero over time while they are not being carried and wielded, so a new owner of such an Item of Power will always start with the Destiny SA at zero.

Example: The Blade of Justice

The Blade of Justice is thought to have been the sword wielded by Xanar himself as he spread across the world with his army of Justice bringing truth to all lands. The blade is a Greatsword fashioned of bronze, blackened and pitted with age and yet with an edge one would not normally associate with





a metal that ancient and soft (use standard Greatsword statistics). It carries the Drive SA “Slay servants of the Foul One”, which the sword interprets as any practitioner of magic or other similar foul deeds. In the presence of such people, the hilt of the blade will begin to warm up slightly, getting hotter and hotter as the weapon gets closer to the sorcerer. This heat will never burn the wielder of the blade (rather it feels righteous), but may possibly be noticed by others nearby. Perhaps unfortunately for the wielder, the blade also carries the secret Destiny SA “Confront one of the Nine”, and should this Destiny ever reach 5, then one of The Betrayers Nine will surely come forth to battle whoever possesses the blade...

Additionally, there’s no reason why items of power cannot be extraordinary in ways other than just by possessing SA’s – Swords may become mystically sharp, armor unbelievably hard, and so on – players and seneschals are encouraged to apply additional bonuses (heck, or even penalties) in situations where it seems appropriate. Perhaps a wondrous sword has its cutting ATN decreased by 1 but its DTN increased by 1 because it likes to run on the offensive and dislikes defending. Most items of power should (at the very least) be items of fine quality (TROS, p. 203).

Sample Items of Power from Weyrth

The Awl of Aesbiorn

Aesbiorn was a fabled Savaxen shipwright who lived nearly six centuries ago. His longboats were said to be blessed by Wodan One-Eye Himself, and it was believed that a raider who navigated in an Aesbiorn boat would always find favorable plunder and could not fail to return home alive. The actual truth behind these tales is unknown,

Notes on the use of Items of Power

Items of Power should be rare and wondrous things in any campaign. In fact, the acquisition of such an item could be the focus of an entire campaign, particularly if the characters have great need and have heard rumors and stories about a wondrous item (always a long way away, along a road fraught with many perils, you know the score) that may help them out of their current predicament. Keeping the actual SA secret from the players may prove to be tricky over time, especially since it means that you, as Seneschal, must keep track of what the players are doing and make calls on when the SA applies and when it doesn’t (we think it should be the players call when to request SA dice). So, we suggest keeping it a secret for a while until the player has had a chance to basically work out what the SA is, and then tell them and let them track the value of the SA from then on (telling them when it increases or decreases). However, the specific Destiny of the item should always be kept a secret. Remember to grant bonus dice to the player when he is playing in accord with the Destiny, but never reveal what it actually is; this will keep your players guessing what the Destiny may be, and whether they really want to see it fulfilled.

but the awl used by Aesbiorn in his craft was believed to be the source of his skill, and was stolen. Since that day, the awl has changed hands many times over the years, always bringing good skill and fortune to its owner.

Aesbiorn’s awl has the Drive SA “Build the perfect ship” and comes into play whenever the possessor uses it in the construction of any form of naval vessel (adding its dice to all Craft: Shipwright skill rolls). Interestingly (and some would say unfortunately) the Awl also has the secret Destiny SA “Built the

perfect ship”, and should it ever do so (by reaching 5 dice in that Destiny) then the Awl would immediately lose all power since, after all, you can’t improve on perfection...

The Cup of Shire

The land of Imjia is a barren, pitiful land filled with fear and despair. Worst of all are the priests of the demon Shire, who torment the wretched with water from the Canaan River, forcing them to drink the acidic, polluted and foul liquid as an act of faith and dedication to Shire Himself. Many walk away from such an experience no worse for wear, but some fall terribly ill, a sure sign that they have found disfavor with Shire.

The Cup of Shire is an otherwise nondescript example of one of the cups used by the priests that has taken matters somehow into its own hands. The cup has the Passion SA “Revulsion for all life” which manifests as an opposed roll against the Health attribute of the drinker (use a TN of 6). Failure means that the poor unfortunate has contracted a hideous wasting disease from the water that will slowly rob him of life (-1 HT and TO per week until either reaches 0 at which point the victim is dead). The cup has a secret Destiny SA “To manifest Shire in the flesh” which may well happen should the Destiny SA ever reach 5 and another unfortunate victim fails his HT check.

Gunther’s Fey Sword

Fey swords are made of substance known as Fairie Glass, which is Obsidian enchanted with sorcery, to become as hard as steel, but with a razor’s edge. The Fey also know how to color this “glass” in many different hues as part of the enchantment process. These swords, in addition to their inherent magical abilities, are always considered Fine weapons.

Such swords are the pride of The Fey, as they cannot wield weapons made of iron, (including steel of course) and many Fey Lords use such

weapons. Sometimes they are given as a gift for a great service to the Fey realm, as was such a case with Gunther Pendercoste, who was bequeathed his sword from the Fairie Queen of the Sapphire Court.

In addition to being a Fine weapon, the sword has the Drive “To Serve the Fey Interests”, which can be quite fickle at times. The sword’s secret Destiny is to “Bring its wielder to become one with the Fey”, which will slowly change its bearer over time until the call of the Fey realm entices him enough to make the journey to it for the final time, never to return to the mortal realm.

The Mask of Panchatantra

Legend tells of an ancient priest of Tez’Hamun named Panchatantra who used to wear a feathered snake mask while preaching to the people of the gods. The mask was used to inspire fear and awe into the onlookers, and was picked up by Panchatantra’s son after his death and continued to be used in such a fashion. Over the years, the mask has come to represent the divine animal-headed Gods of Tez’Hamun in a very real way.

The mask is fearsome to behold – it depicts a hissing serpent with ruby eyes (that the wearer looks through, giving the world a blood-colored hue), and is adorned with multicolored feathers said to come from the fabled phoenix. It has the Faith SA “The Divine Spirits of Tez’Hamun” which is invoked whenever the wearer intones Tez’Hamun dogma or attempts to sway listeners to that religion. The mask also has the secret Destiny SA “To overlook the return of the embodiment of the animal headed Tez’Hamun gods”. It’s anyone’s guess as to what that means...

Ronaldo’s Rapier

There was once a mighty Xanarian Empire hero by the name of Ronaldo Edwardo. Known for his daring exploits, his charming



smile and his flashing blade, Ronaldo was well known and loved by the common folk, and was often seen righting a wrong or defending the helpless. Ronaldo's blade was a mighty blue-steel Rapier, and over time, the blade came to know almost as much fame as its owner. Since Ronaldo's unfortunate premature end in a minor skirmish (his body was found in a shallow ditch in a wide field), the blade has changed hands many times, and has always been used to champion the cause of the righteous.

Ronaldo's rapier is a magnificent dark blue steel rapier, made by the finest Xanarian swordsmith. It is a quality weapon, with the following statistics: 1handed, Medium; Cut ATN 6; Thrust ATN 4; DTN 8(5); Cut ST-3; Thrust ST+2. The sword has the Conscience SA, which grants its dice whenever the wielder is acting in the "right way" despite there being a less risky, more profitable or perhaps just easier way to act. However, the blade also has the secret Destiny SA for its wielder "To die in a ditch" as its original owner did, so long ago.

What if I want to play on Earth?

There is no reason why a campaign set on Earth could not feature Items of Power, even a very low magic campaign. After all, these items have gained their power by being ancient and important, and who is to say that the Ark of the Covenant, if we found it today, wouldn't have some special significance other than its historical importance? In that light, here are a few possible "real world" Items of Power to get you thinking along the right lines.

The Dagger of Kukulcán

Kukulcán was one of the more notable Mayan gods, he was the wind god and (at one point at least) was possibly a real man who somehow gained divinity. He was thought to overlook

the famous pyramid of Chichen Itza in and around the 15th century CE. The Mayans were well known for their blood sacrifices, which they thought brought the favor of the gods down upon them. The highest form of worship was the heart sacrifice, where the victim was stabbed and their heart removed, then the blood would be smeared all over the body of the priests performing the sacrifice before the body was dismembered, skinned, and eaten.

The dagger of Kukulcán is the last surviving dagger once used in such sacrificial ceremonies. It is a standard Broad dagger, but its blade is fashioned of stone, adding +1 to the Cut and Thrust TNs and subtracting 1 from the Cut damage rating. The dagger has the Faith SA "Kukulcán" and grants those faith dice to any one action performed by someone who has used the dagger to perform a heart sacrifice to Kukulcán (to get the bonus again, another sacrifice must be performed). The dagger has the secret Destiny SA "To die in the service of Kukulcán", which increases by one point every time a heart sacrifice is performed by the owner. When is secret destiny reaches 5, those dice are rolled against the Faith: Kukulcán of the wielder (a shame for him if he doesn't have that SA) and if he fails, the next sacrifice he sees will be his own.

Khufu's Staff

Khufu was one of the most famous Egyptian Pharaohs from the 4th dynasty (approximately 2500BCE). He was the ruler who built the Great Pyramid at Giza, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Although little is known of Khufu himself, his greatest work - the pyramid - is known worldwide and as such, he has enjoyed an immortality of sorts, although perhaps not the one he would have liked. The actual feat of building the pyramid was extraordinary, and required the careful planning and coordination of literally thousands of stonemasons, laborers and architects.





Khufu's staff was a sceptre that Khufu always carried with him while planning his mighty tomb. In doing so, it picked up his almighty drive SA "To be eternally remembered in this world" and fuelled it. After his death and entombment, the staff vanished, perhaps taken by graverobbers to later find its way into the hands of other fame seekers. Sadly, the Staff's secret Destiny SA is to cause the fame of the owner to be twisted, causing them "to be remembered by their works only". It is likely that the staff has been responsible for many of history's greatest enigma's over the centuries - not only the Great Pyramid but the mysterious lines at Nazca, the Chinese terracota soldiers of Shi Huangdi, and so on - all remembered more for their mystery and wonderment than for their creators.

Robin Hood's Longbow

According to British legend, Robin Hood was a nobleman who was cast out of his lands and driven to become an outlaw, living with a band of men in Sherwood Forest. Their creed was that they only robbed from those who could afford to lose it, and they were known for their generosity when it came to helping the common folk pay their taxes or buy necessary supplies, thus the oft quoted phrase "rob from the rich and give to the poor". Supposedly, Robin and his men were crack shots with their longbows, and could bring down far larger forces than themselves with cunning, stealth and ambush tactics.

Robin Hood's Longbow is a yew bow with an extremely strong pull (use normal Longbow statistics, but increase the ST and the ST requirement on the user to 6). The bow has the Drive SA "Take from the rich and distribute to the poor", and will grant its dice to the user only when he is robbing those who can afford to be robbed, and only if the user truly intends to redistribute at least half of that wealth among the needy. The bow also picked up Robin's own Destiny "To see and assist the fall of the usurper King".

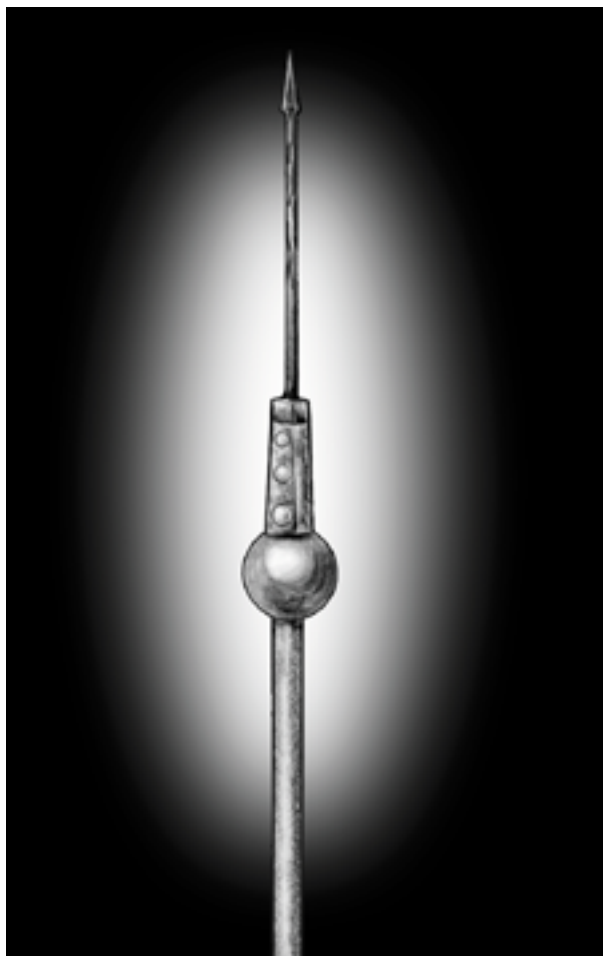
The Spear of Leonidas

Leonidas was the Spartan general who in 480BCE held the pass at Thermopylae for two days against half a million invading Persians with three hundred men. The narrow pass and the long spears of the Spartans proved fatal to the Persians with their shorter spears. Even their bowmen could not get in telling shots, as the narrow walls and overhanging sides of the pass defeated most of their arrows - according to popular myth, there were so many arrows loosed at the defenders that they blocked out the sun and Leonidas was reputed to quip "Good, then will fight them in the shade". After two days, the Persians won only because a second, hidden pass was revealed to them by a Grecian traitor. Leonidas' spear carries the Passion SA "To fight for one's homeland" and grants its bonus dice whenever the wielder is fighting in the defense of such. However, it also carries the Destiny SA "to be betrayed by one most trusted" - a destiny which usually brings about the death of the possessor of the spear.

The Spear of Longinus

According to Christian dogma, Longinus was a Roman private who stabbed Jesus in the side during the crucifixion to see if he had died yet. The blood ran down the spear and touched Longinus, curing his poor eyesight, which turned him into a believer. So the legend goes, blood never stopped flowing from the tip of the spear after that time.

The Spear of Longinus is an otherwise ordinary one-handed short spear with a permanently bloody tip. Outside battle, any person gently touched with the tip of the spear (and thus the blood of Christ), may add the spears Faith SA "Christianity" to a special Health roll (TN determined by the Seneschal) to cure any otherwise incurable injury or affliction. During battle, the wielder of the spear (and his army) were said to be undefeatable. If the spear is carried by the general of an army, he may add the Spears



Faith SA to all applicable general/leadership rolls (see the section on Mass Combat, p. 100). The spear has a secret Destiny SA “to stop bleeding on the Day of Judgment”, so should that SA ever reach 5, well, I hope you’ve asked for forgiveness recently...

William Shakespeare’s Pen

William Shakespeare is one of the most famous authors and playwrights the world has ever known. According to popular fable, he had a favorite quill pen that he always used when writing his masterpieces. Perhaps this pen has picked up a measure of the magic of its owner.

Shakespeare’s quill pen has the Drive SA “To write great fables” and grants its bonus dice whenever the user is attempting to write poetry or prose. Unfortunately, it also has the secret Destiny SA “To make its owner famous posthumously”, meaning that anyone using Shakespeare’s pen to write is likely to only find fame long after he has passed away (like many of histories more famous people).



Afterword

As many of you will know, I originally got involved with Driftwood Publishing as a fan. I wrote the Combat Simulator and the Character Sheet Generator as a favor to Jake Norwood, the then-owner of Driftwood. Both pieces of software went down pretty well (and apologies to those of you who are still waiting for updates, it's been a hectic year!) and it was through that and my friendship with Jake that I was given the opportunity to become a part of the company and write my first book *Of Beasts and Men*. It wasn't a difficult book to produce – the fiction stories were fun to write and the statistic blocks suggested themselves from the content of the stories. There was a fair amount of research into mythical beasts from all around the world but in general it was a book that could be mostly taken from my own imagination, with no constraint on the “realism” of the content (there's not a lot of realism in gargoyles, dragons and werewolves; well, unless you're a loony).

The Flower of Battle was different.

We decided pretty early on in developing The Flower of Battle that what we wanted to do was present the book in as accurate a form as possible. “Part RPG supplement and part encyclopedia” was our goal, and that meant a great deal of research, cross-checking, and argument..sorry..heated discussion as to how to make the in-game mechanics match historical accounts as well as possible. We wanted this book to “ring true” with the readers, and give them a little bit of real (and, we hope, interesting) historical information

along the way, even if only enough to peak their interests and lead them to further research stuff themselves.

The result is what you hold in your hands. Most of the sections in this book are modeled as well as we could from real accounts of historical fighting techniques (many of which are still in use today in fighting schools and organizations like the ARMA and the SCA), what's known about real weapons and armor fashioning techniques, real-life poisons and what they do to the body, and so on. We've had to take a few liberties here and there; as in all RPG's there always has to be a careful balance between realism and playability. And of course, some sections have no actual basis in reality, such as the Items of Power. (Or do they.....?)

As we said right at the start of the book, The Flower of Battle is all about choices. Even we don't use all of the rules in this book at the same time, and we would be surprised if you did (although if that's your thing then by all means go for it). The idea is that each of the rules presented here will be useful at different times and in different styles of campaigns, mixing and matching to get the balance that you want. As we've always maintained, it's your game now, play it exactly as you like, but stop by our forums and drop us an email now and then and tell us about it.

Have fun!

Brian Leybourne
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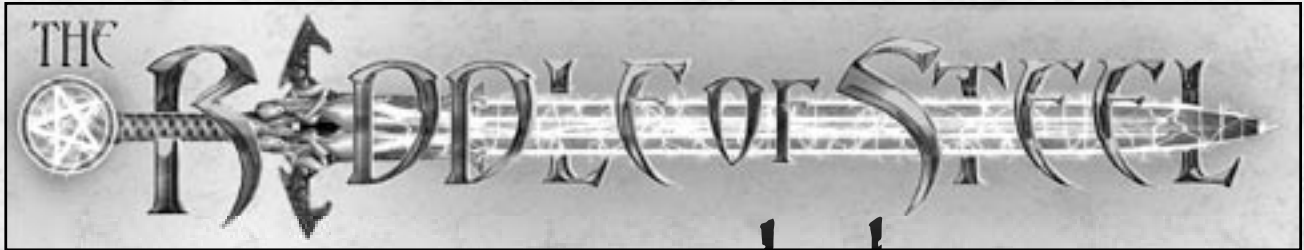
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