

The World of Gaiah

The Player's Guide

*A Player's Introduction to Gaiah.
Includes rules for character creation, plus a brief introduction to the setting.*

Version 1.1

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Foreword

The main purpose of the World of Gaiah Player's Guide is to bring the player's attention to all the little details that he needs to consider while creating his character. As such, it is only a very brief introduction to the campaign world. I have left it to each individual GM to decide the full extent of the information that his players need to create their characters; this guide details only the barest essentials.

However, I hope that the small glances of the game world that it gives will be enough to spark your interest. Gaiah is wide and dark and deep; it has enough secrets to last a lifetime. It has already grown and lived for over five years – with your interest and imagination added to the mix it may breath on for many years to come.

Annette Beatwell
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CHARACTER CREATION

Notes on the Game System

The Gaiah campaign was written for a home modified version of RM2, so the character creation guidelines here refer quite extensively to that version of the Rolemaster game. There are also references to home rules. I have tried to give clarifications and references to all obscure material. I have also added some suggestions for users of RMSS.

Character Concept

Before even starting to consider the details of your character, you should read this booklet. A basic overview of the setting is presented, in order to give you a clearer idea of your character's environment. Every character should be shaped by their world, and every world places certain restraints and obvious opportunities on a character.

Although the Gaiah campaign does allow for a huge variety of characters, there are certain concepts that do not fit it at all. For instance, the central gaming area for the campaign has a very European flavour. The only martial art to be practised is Savante, and that is rare, and not really taken that seriously. Consequently, dedicated Martial Artists do not exist as natives.

In addition, there are a number of factors that are very important to a Gaiahan character that are glossed over in other games. Social class will have a major impact on your character. Depending on how your GM wishes to run the game, he will either restrict your character to certain social classes from the outset, or have you roll their class randomly. There are more notes on social class below (see Page 8) . Be sure to discuss with your GM any restrictions that he will be placing on you (social class, character class, race etc.) before character design has progressed too far. It is best to be familiar with these guidelines before becoming too involved in character creation.

And remember, your GM is the final judge on all matters regarding his campaign, regardless of what is written in these notes.

Character Race and Class

All PCs designed for the Gaiah campaign will usually be human (use the racial statistics in Character Law). Although there are other sentient races on the planet, the central gaming area is populated only by humans.

However, your GM may have specially decided to run a campaign based on a different race, or he may be more flexible on race choices. As usual, ask your GM for the final word on this.

The Gaiah campaign allows for a large variety of character classes. They are listed below under two categories; Very Suitable and Suitable. Some classes have notes attached in order to give you a clearer idea on how they fit into the world. If a class does not appear on either of these lists they are not native to the central gaming area (or are not particularly suitable as PCs) and would only appear in exceptional circumstances. There also follows some general notes on the standing of various magics.

Notes for Channeling casters; All channeling casters should, of course, choose a church to belong to. The larger churches are given brief descriptions later in this booklet. Your GM will be able to tell you which churches accept casters of your chosen class. Channeling casters may gain access to special lists and powers determined by their church (ask your GM for more details).

Notes for Essence casters; In the central gaming area, the teaching of Essence casting has become semi-formalised. The University of Magic in Orthlandris takes students for formal training, the army also purposely recruits and trains Essences users. A few casters still learn by the old apprenticeship method too. The use of Essence is begrudgingly accepted by the general populace, though they doesn't mean that they will not complain if you start letting *Fireballs* off in the street.

Notes for Mentalism casters; Although Mentalism users do exist, they always operate secretly and in fear. The use of Mentalism has been outlawed in Orthlan and in some of its neighbouring countries for

centuries. This is largely at the insistence of the churches, who consider the use of Mentalism to be blasphemous (your GM has more details). The general populace tend to get a bit hysterical on the subject, objecting to people "poking around in their heads". The good news is most of the populace wouldn't recognise Mentalism being used anyway.

Permitted Character classes;

Very Suitable

- Adept; (*Alchemy Companion*) typifies the new ideologies.
- Burglar; (*RM Companion I*) some things never change.
- Cleric
- Duellist; (*RM Companion III*)
- Enchanter; (*RM Companion IV and Mentalism Companion*) highly valued for their use in political scheming etc. Suffers the usual problems facing Mentalism users.
- Fighter; just hasn't got the style of the Duellist or Romantic though. Usually of lower class.
- Healer
- Magician; Could have either a scholarly or military background.
- Mentalist; Their powers make them deadly in political play. They must work in secret due to the general fear directed at mentalism.
- Mystic; highly valued for their use in political scheming etc. Suffers the usual problems facing Mentalism users.
- Rogue; These people fit right in to almost every level of society.
- Romantic; (*RM Companion VI*) Perfect for the setting in a number of guises.
- Thief; There will always be thieves.
- Warrior Mage (*Version derived from the Essence Companion*) Very sexy class, well suited to swashbuckling.
- Witch; (*RM Companion II*) Although rare, the Witch is caught at the very centre of the struggles of the Faerie realms to maintain their power in Gaijah. Excellent character choice for any player interested in that element of the game world. Your GM has more notes on the special role of Witches in this setting.

Suitable

- Animist; some of the older religions support them. A dying breed.
- Assassin; (*RM Companion III*) A rare but valued specialist.
- Astrologer; Some religions quietly support them, but as Mentalism users they suffer the usual discrimination.
- Bard; a dying class.
- Bounty Hunter; (*RM Companion III*)
- Cavalier; (*RM Companion III*) there are still those who adhere to honour. The rules have just changed a little. And you can forget about full plate too.
- Dancer (*RM Companion II*)
- Dervish; (*RM Companion II*) only in the service of the Court of Aldora. Must be native to Yaman and female.
- Elementalist; (*RM Companion VII*) quite likely to be ex-military.
- Elemental Warrior (*Elemental Companion*) Elementalism is rare in the original campaign core area, though it is extensively practised elsewhere in the world. Appropriate for a visitor from Southern Calendor, or a descendant of a native of that area.
- Engineer; (*Alchemy Companion*) can be found either in a military setting or as a Lord Architect.
- Evil Alchemist (*Alchemy Companion*)
- Geomancer (*Alchemy Companion*) Almost always associated with the Cathedral of the Great Architect.
- High Elementalist (*Elemental Companion*) Elementalism is rare in the original campaign core area, though it is extensively practised elsewhere in the world. Appropriate for a visitor from Southern Calendor, or a descendant of a native of that area.
- Hourii; (*RM Companion IV*) Rare, and persecuted, but eminently suitable for political and social play.
- Illusionist; Rare, but always considered very dangerous.
- Lay Healer; People still need healers. Just make sure they don't find out exactly how you're doing it.

- Leader (*RM Companion IV*) Particularly appropriate for Sidhe of Alfar (if your GM allows such characters), due to their military-centred society.
- Magus; (*RM Companion III*) with the printing press enhancing the power of the written word, the Magus is considered a very “modern” class. It is still very rare though.
- Moon Mage; (*RM Companion III*) only associated with The Sisters of the Moon, or covens. Must be female.
- Nightblade; (*RM Companion I*) Rare, very secretive, and invaluable to certain people in the higher ranks of society.
- Paladin; (*RM Companion I*) Some churches insist on holding on to their military might, but the Paladin is fast looking outdated. They're just not very subtle, are they?
- Ranger; some are plain woodsmen. Some are deliberate protectors of the Faerie Realms.
- Runemaster; (*RM Companion II*) As the magus, just not quite as cool.
- Sailor (*RM Companion III*)
- Sage; (*RM Companion II*) Their ongoing search for knowledge fits the spirit of the age. But they are rare, and suffer the usual problems of being a Mentalism caster.
- Scholar; (*RM Companion II*) A Sage without the problems.
- Scout; (*New Class – See the Red Companion*) Usually ex-military.
- Seer; Their powers can be deadly in the social and political arena, but they are rare, and suffer the usual problems of being a Mentalism user.
- Smith (*Alchemy Companion*)
- Sorcerer; Usually a follower of the older religions.
- Tarotmage; (*RM Companion VII*) A very new class, harnessing the new wisdom surrounding the very ancient symbols of the Tarot.
- Trader (*RM Companion II*)
- Warlock; (*RM Companion II*) A dying class. Usually a follower of the old religions, Warlocks are used to working in secret and under a cloud of fear, so the problems surrounding the use of Mentalism makes little difference to them.

STATS

Twelve temporary stats are rolled, any under 40 being rejected. Then the potentials will be calculated as shown in Character Law. Finally, the figures are assigned to the required statistics (it is done this way around in order to give the player more control over the type of character they ultimately get). Remember that you can always place 90s on your character class's prime stats, and that you may swop one of your retained stats with Appearance, as long as the stat comes off worse.

For RMSS: The standard method of stat. determination should work fine.

BACKGROUND OPTIONS

As humans you will all have six background options. These may be used on the following categories:

Stat increases (Maximum of four options)

Languages. Either one language at 10/10 or two at 5/5.

+15 to a secondary skill.+10 to a primary skill.+1 adder (form determined randomly).

A roll on the Starting Item table.

(Details of these are all in Character Law).

For RMSS: The Background Options Table T – 1.5. can be used, or your GM may decide to use Talent Law.

STARTING LANGUAGES

Your character's starting languages usually depend upon their social class. You GM will furnish you with details of your character's starting languages, and those he may have an opportunity to learn before play starts.

HOBBY SKILL RANKS AND SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE LORES

At the end of zero level all characters gain two lots of Hobby skill ranks; four ranks in one skill and two in another. These may be used in two ways; they may be placed on secondary skills that you already have at zero level, or they may be used to gain Specific knowledge Lore (see *Rolemaster Companion V*). You may, of course, use one set on an existing skill and the other on a Specific Knowledge Lore. Specific Knowledge Lore may only be gained in this way, and they do not count towards your secondary skill total. After initial learning they are treated like any other secondary skill.

Specific Knowledge Lore must be approved by the GM, of course. A few suggested Lore include; the Orthlan Court, Terms of Address, Famous Alchemists, Famous Faeries, etc.

TRAINING PACKAGES

For RMSS: The original campaign started before Training Packages were introduced. However, the following selection would be quite suitable for Gaiaban characters;

*Adventurer
City Guard
Cloistered Academic
Con Man
Crafter
Crusading Academic
Cut Purse
Diplomat
Herbalist
Highwayman
Loremaster
Mercenary
Merchant
Performer
Philosopher
Soldier
Spy
Weapon Master*

SOCIAL CLASS

This is determined near the beginning of character generation. It can be partially effected by character class, and it affects two other numbers; starting money and cost modifier.

Cost modifier is used to determine the minimum quality of goods that a character must routinely purchase in order to retain his social class. Clothing, accommodation, food and weaponry must all be at least as expensive as the sum generated by the cost modifier in order to prevent loss of face and standing. For instance, a well-to-do merchant must routinely spend 1.25x the standard price on the above items.

Be aware that there are some social levels which begin with less than 1x starting money, but have a cost modifier of more than 1x. Impoverished squire, mayor or noble falls into this category.

Some characters may also receive a monthly income, but this will be determined on an individual basis.

It is possible to generate a titled character, but in most cases the character is more likely to be the child of the title-holder, rather than the title-holder himself. Interested characters may wish to check out the notes on inheritance at this point.

In the case of clerical characters, the generated class is that of the character's family, since all starting clerical characters are assumed to belong to the well-to-do clergy group, and have a cost modifier of 1x..

It is possible to raise your social class over time. At lower levels this could be achieved by consistently spending lots of money over a long period of time, and preferably in front of someone whose opinion counts. At higher groups it requires extended court intrigue and grovelling to those already of higher status. Be warned, however, that it is highly unlikely that the born nobility will ever accept anyone from a much

lower class as one of their own, even if they have saved the kingdom several times over and married a Comtle.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Height and weight can be rolled on the usual tables.

Coloration will be left up to the player. Natives of Orthlan can be of any colour combination. Skin colouring varies from olive to very pale, and hair from black to platinum blonde. Eyes are of any usual human colour.

But note that the higher up the social scale the character is, the more likely it is that they are a relatively pure example of one of the following two types; olive skinned with dark eyes and very dark brown or black hair (probably curly); or, slightly tanned complexion with blonde to auburn hair with green, blue or grey eyes.

STARTING ITEMS

Most characters begin play with; two standard weapons (they must have at least 1 rank in each), clothing (of appropriate standard) and personal effects (eating knife, washing equipment etc). Spell users will begin with the following number of spell picks in their book; Pure and Hybrid 5, Semi 3, Nons 1 (prosaic only). Starting money is determined by social class (refer to your GM).

In addition, any character who is capable of creating items through the use of skills or spells is allowed to start the game with any items they can have produced in six months. However, any raw materials, including the hiring or buying of tools, must be paid for out of their starting money.

Most clerical characters have their starting items determined by the church that they belong to. But keep in mind that there may also be some minimum requirements that such characters will have to live up to by third level.

THE WORLD OF GAIAH – PLAYER INFORMATION

Campaign Flavour

The Gaiah campaign has been in existence for a long time, and it has expanded into a world with many layers and many areas of interest. However, there are a number of themes that run heavily through the campaign. They are listed here to give you some idea of what you have let yourself in for;

- The central campaign area is embracing a Renaissance of learning. The new study of science, and the continuing exploration of magic is expanding the possibilities open to man.
- The campaign uses a very large urban area as the party's base of operations. Orthlandris, capital of Orthlan, is a sophisticated, civilised centre (at least its inhabitants like to think so).
- However, lurking just beyond the city wall, most of Orthlan is still a wilderness. And in that wilderness a desperate battle is being fought. Gaiah exists in parallel with the Faerie Realms, and it has been Faerie touched. Faerie represents the dark, primal nature of the world, and its folk enjoy the power that they exercise over mortals. But the new ideologies taking over weaken Faerie. Faerie lives off superstition and fear, awe and wonder, and the new ways of thinking are killing these things. Once they are gone, the Faeries will no longer be able to walk among mortals. The peoples of the Faerie realms will not pass quietly, but cling on grimly, casting their own realm and that of mortals into a darkness of conflict.
- Also symbolising this conflict between the humanised and the primal, the present and the past, is the struggle of the mortal churches to capture the souls of their people. Ancient religions, grown from the peasant wisdom of the land itself, are being pushed aside by modern, city based churches, that appeal more to reasoning and self interest. The old ways are truly dying, but for Gaiah, their loss could be deadly.
- Carrying on, blind to the more fundamental struggles gripping the world, most mortals continue to be pre-occupied by power, wealth and politics.

Cosmology

Gaiah is a blue and green planet of a similar size to Earth. It has examples of many environments upon its sphere.

To those who are interested, there is a greater quantity and accuracy of information regarding Gaiah's geography available than there was regarding our world at a similar period in our development. However, it is obscure, and expensive to obtain, particularly in areas beyond North Calendor (the continent on which Orthlan is situated).

It is already widely accepted, even by the lowest in society, that Gaiah is a sphere. The flat-earth principle was exploded over a hundred years ago by a team of curious magia-graduates.

However, it is still almost universally supposed that Gaiah is the centre of the universe, and that the other planets and stars rotate around it on their celestial spheres. A few brave explorers have suggested that everything rotates around the sun, but the churches aren't having any of it.

In one important respect Gaiah's night sky is very different from our own - Gaiah has two moons. Albusol, the Noble moon, is a grey scarred moon, much like our own, with a regular 28 day cycle. Alcina, the Witch moon, is a perfectly smooth orb that varies in colour from pale pink to bloody red and seems to have a random cycle varying from 4 to 30 days.

ORTHLAN AND IT'S NEIGHBOURS

There follows a brief description of the country in which the campaign will begin, with some details of the countries around it. Keep in mind that all this information is given from the point of view of a native of Orthlan. It is almost certainly biased in some areas and may be completely wrong in others.

Orthlan

Orthlan is a civilised country in Northern Calendor, renowned for it's fashions, it's manners, it's food and it's wine.

It is a fairly sized kingdom, characterised by soft rolling hills and green plains. However, its soil is poor, and the only crops it will sustain with any success are grapes and some root crops. Its trees are similarly limited - only pines and junipers flourish in Orthlan.

The country's borders are as follows: To the north and west, the River Monstro, to the east, the River Iter (Little Iter), to the south east the River Ianua, to the south, the Tholus Peaks (disputed with Galhea).

Orthlan is a monarchy, with a complex political system of parliaments, guild-councils and church authorities. This system is further complicated by the remains of a feudal system supposedly dismantled at the time of the creation of the current parliaments.

The current king is Almaster II, and he has two children, Prince Lodvico and Princess Yolanda. He has yet to announce his heir.

Rumours have been flying for years that the kingdom is in financial difficulties. This is hardly surprising, considering that Orthlan has been constantly at war with Galhea for nearly 70 years. For much of this time though (including the present) this war has been restricted to raids at the boarder. But the necessity of maintaining a heavy garrison at the Tholus Peaks is obviously a big drain on the national finances (and does horrible things to the rate of taxation).

Orthlandris is the capital of Orthlan, and the site of two royal palaces. It is also one of the country's three big commercial centres (the others being Silverview in the east and Londarum in central Orthlan), and the most populace city in the area. It also boasts the greatest number of High Clerical residences (the centre of a religion in a country) in Orthlan.

Orthlandris is also noted for a unexplained curiosity. Towering above the buildings of Iter Ward is a huge stone sphinx. It has been here much longer than the city, but bares no sign of age. No one knows who put it there or why.

The native language is Orthlandic, a sonnerant language with an unusually wide vocabulary (NB; based on French. Orthlandian characters tend to have French names). People living near the River Iter may also speak some Karsethran, since contact between the two countries is frequent and friendly. However, as in most of Northern Calendor, Latin is used as the universal language of scholars, clergy, practitioners of magic, lawyers and anyone else who wants to sound official and/or clever.

Theocracy of Galhea

Until quite recently, the lands now known as Galhea were part of Orthlan. However, during the Orthlan Civil War of 1533-34 the rebel forces snatched the land south of the Tholus Peaks, which they were finally legally granted by the peace treaty in 1534 (which both sides have been breaking ever since).

Since gaining independence, Galhea has rapidly been transformed into a matriarchal nation of religious zealots. It seems that soon after independence the leader of the rebel forces "King" Owen, was ousted by persons unknown who replaced his rather slip-shod government with a state church. Just how they managed it, or who they were, no one in Orthlan will admit to knowing.

Galhea is now a rather mysterious place, overshadowed by stories of obscene public rituals and of the manner in which it persecutes foreigners (and particularly Orthlandians). It gets very few visitors. The state

religion, normally referred to by Orthlandians as "the Galhean Devil worship", remains a secretive organisation ruling from the shadows.

Galheans speak a dialect derived directly from Orthlandic. It has developed rapidly over the last seventy years, but even so, someone with a grounding in Orthlandic will be able to partially understand it after a period of familiarisation (Orthlandic counts as half ranks of Galhean).

Mandoris

Mandoris is Orthlan's neighbour to the west, where it stretches from the River Monstro to the foothills of the Wall of the World. The land is far less developed than that of Orthlan, and the country is less unified.

Orthlandians consider it to be a rather backward nation, mainly because their style in manners and dress tend to clash horribly with the Orthlandian ideal. But this aside, Orthlan enjoys a pain free relationship with this neighbour. Both nations tend to treat the other with indifference (at least until they want something). Individual traders do quite well moving between Orthlan and Mandoris, but there is no national trade deal.

Mandorian visitors are quite common in Orthlan, where they can be heard praising Orthlan's roads (much to the native's astonishment), and towns, but moaning about the lack of decent beer or gin and speculating as to what it is the Orthlandians put in their food (Mandorian cuisine is notoriously bland).

The Mandorian people are currently involved in a land dispute with a sizeable "kingdom" of Vulfen (dog-men) that is trying to establish itself on the north Mandorian boarder. It is generally believed that the nobles of the country advocate absorbing the Vulfen rather than driving them off (more taxes).

Mandoris' native language is Mandoric, a rather harsh language which tends to grate on the typical Orthlandian ear. It is a common joke in Orthlan that the Mandorians haven't discovered poetry yet because they haven't found a poetic form that will survive the roughness of their language.

Karsethra

Of all it's neighbours, Orthlan is on best terms with Karsethra. It lies to the east of Orthlan, across the River Iter, which the two countries patrol and maintain together.

The Royal families if the two countries are closely related, and inter-marriages are common. The kingdoms maintain a strong trade and political agreement, and are highly likely to co-operate in times of war. During Orthlan's Civil War Karsethra sent a sizeable force into the country on the side of the Loyalist forces of Queen Azala, but they have wisely refused to get involved with the almost continuous round of skirmishes that has taken place ever since.

Karsethra is a mountainous country, with some areas of rich farmland. A number a valuable ores are found in its mountains. As in Orthlan, the vast majority of the population is concentrated in a few highly developed areas. Karsethra's capital, Urlino, rivals Orthlandris in its size and magnificence and nearly in it's reputation as a cultural centre too. In particular, Karsethra is known for it's artists and sculptors, and it is the ultimate learning ground for students of those arts.

However, Karsethra does have a dark underside. It is generally known that Thieves guilds hold a disproportionate amount of power in the country (where they are called Thief Tribes). It is even rumoured that these Tribes hold more power than the monarchy due to their ability to influence people in high positions. Corruption is rumoured to be epidemic throughout the country's government and legal system.

The native language of Karsethra is Karsethran, although many natives also speak Orthlandic reasonably well, particularly those living close to the boarder. The two languages are rather similar in sound and rhythm quality and they even share a few words.

Karelia

Karelia lies to the south-east of Orthlan, across the Ianua river. It is a big, rather sparsely populated country, still under a feudal system of government. Mismanagement has ensured that it has remained the weakest and poorest country in this area of Northern Calendor, despite the fact that it probably has the richest supply of natural resources.

Recent visitors to Karelia report an air of unrest and warn of a peasant uprising brewing in the country. It's neighbours watch with foreboding, hoping that such an uprising will fail, since most of them are guilty of plundering Karelia's resources while those in power weren't looking and are afraid that any new political state might discover their activities.

Karelia, with its wild countryside and lax "policing" is a favourite stomping ground for mercenaries and free-lancers (i.e. adventurers), who recognise it as a wonderful place of opportunities. Their activities may well also be threatened if a new government style comes into power.

There are two languages spoken in Karelia. In the northern end of the country (that part neighbouring Orthlan) they speak a dialect of Karsethran, although with such a strong accent that the resulting language seems to bear no relation to its parent. In the southern part of the country they speak Karli, a harsh language famous for its high number of vulgar terms.

Lyonesse

Lyonesse is not actually a neighbour of Orthlan (it is on the sea coast, to the north of Karsethra) but it is mentioned here because the two countries share a curious love/hate relationship. This is really a kind of rivalry, in which both countries try and out-do each other in art, economics, style and conquest, although they have only once resorted to direct military confrontation.

Each country assumes itself to be superior in all things, and many of their learned men spend embarrassing amounts of time proving this - usually by insulting the other side.

The native language of Lyonesse is (surprise, surprise) Lyonesse. It has become an Orthlan fashion to totally refuse to learn the language as a patriotic gesture.

SUMMARY OF THE CHURCHES

This summary of the major churches is given to help players of Channeling casters decide which religion their character will follow. This choice will have a huge impact on the character, defining restraints on his behaviour, the core of his spiritual belief, and possibly giving him access to some special abilities.

The GM has a much more detailed description of these religions, plus information about other religions. He may wish to give you more information “up front” or give you access to other churches. As always, ask your friendly GM for full guidelines.

The Cathedral of the Great Architect

A relatively modern church, the Cathedral celebrates the act of creation in its many forms. The church reveres a “great creator”, the Great Architect, who formed the world, but this creator is not personified in any way; he remains an invisible, spiritual force that inspires craftsmen, scholars and thinkers.

This church is among the most powerful of the modern religions, since it is particularly appealing to the emerging middle classes; many of whom have a great deal of money and influence.

The Church of Brigantia

Brigantia is the goddess of rivers, live-stock and rural life. To most of the common folk of Orthlan, she also has a definite connection to the Faerie folk. The worship of Brigantia is very ancient, but it still holds great relevance to a good majority of the people living in the countryside of Orthlan today.

The church is a friendly, supportive group, quite different in character to any other religion in Orthlan. It's clergy are often seen as a group of Samaritans trying to aid the rural community in any way that it can, and country folk will often turn to them in times of need. They are always treated with respect, and anyone mistreating a priest of Brigantia can expect an angry response from the surrounding natives.

The Church of Libriarna

Libriarna is the goddess of Justice and Law. Her church has a strong connection with the government of Orthlan, exercising considerable influence over the justice system. However, the church's insistence that their goddess is the highest authority on any legal matter, superseding any civil officer, has often strained their relationship with the civil authorities.

Clergy of Libriarna seem to fall into two camps; those who maintain the letter of the civil law almost without question, and those who regard justice more highly than the written law.

The Church of the Eternal Path

This church is dedicated to the goddess Sulis, who represents the natural path of life and all its elements; birth, wisdom, war and death. She is seen as the natural protector of pregnant women, children and warriors.

In its current form, the Church of the Eternal Path is a relatively modern church, although Sulis has been worshipped for many centuries. It has strong connections with the Orthlan army, as well as worshippers from almost every area of society. The goddess' almost universal appeal has ensured this church's place as a monetary and political force.

The Court of Aldora

This is a very recently imported religion. Aldora is a Yaman goddess of sensual pleasure, beauty and wine. Some high-up in the native church spotted the potential for expansion into Orthlan, and sent a mission to Orthlandris.

The Court is expanding rapidly; wine is Orthlan's biggest product, and the other aspects of the goddess' character naturally appeal to the Orthlandric character – and particularly to the idle rich. The church still feels very foreign though, and most of the clergy are still natives of Yaman.

The Priesthood of the Trees

This is a small church, dedicated to a philosophy of physical and psychological health that they symbolise with a tree. A very ancient cult, a Priest of the Trees will be warmly welcomed in the countryside. Most town dwellers have forgotten the native wisdom that they proscribe to however, and they are not taken seriously in the developing urban areas of the country.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The following collection of material is all given from an Orthlan-centric viewpoint. Other countries will, of course, have their own coinage, manners and characteristics.

The Calendar

The current calendar and dating system was devised by a scholar named Scathmore (hence the dating standard, Scathmore's Reckoning). It is now used widely throughout Northern Calendar. The calendar for 1605 is given since it is the starting year of the original campaign (the first session started on New Year's Eve – 28th Februarius 1604).

The Year 1605 S.R.

	Martius	Aprilis	Maius
Primus	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29
Adiuvo	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30
Tertius	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31
Quartus	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Quintus	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26
Sextus	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27
Septimus	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28
	Iunius	Quintilis	Sextilis
Primus	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Adiuvo	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29
Tertius	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Quartus	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31
Quintus	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Sextus	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Septimus	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
	September	October	November
Primus	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Adiuvo	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Tertius	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29
Quartus	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Quintus	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Sextus	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Septimus	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
	December	Ianuaris	Februarius
Primus	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Adiuvo	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Tertius	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Quartus	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22
Quintus	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23
Sextus	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Septimus	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25

There is a leap year every four years, with a single day added at the end of the year. This is a high festival known as the Feast of Misrule. The next leap year will be 1606.

Coinage Standard

Orthlan, and most of the countries of North Calendor, have an advanced trading system, using coins of debased metals backed by government security of their value. The standard coin in Orthlan is the Orthlandian Silver Franc.

Gold Crown	=	25 Silver Francs
Silver Franc	=	10 Bronze Livre
Bronze Livre	=	2 Copper Pistoles
Copper Pistole	=	5 Tin sous

Paper money is also issued. The most common bills are in the values of five, ten, twenty, fifty and one hundred Francs. These are created using the copy spell, on special paper, from a master.

WEAPONS COMMON IN ORTHLAN

This listing gives details of those weapons that are in current, fashionable use in Orthlan. It will influence which items are most commonly found as treasure, and which weapon skills your character is most likely to have.

If a weapon does not appear on this list it doesn't necessarily mean that it doesn't exist at all. It may be an obsolete weapon which is no longer made, but might be found as an old artefact. It might be foreign to the environment, and might turn up as an imported item. Either way, the weapons not on this list are very rare, and no PC can begin play with skill in a weapon not on this list.

This list also indicates whether a weapon is fashionable or not (a very important factor, particularly to high-classed characters), and whether it is generally legal to carry the weapon unsecured in a city or town. Citizens of Orthlan may carry any offensive weapon they wish in the countryside and villages (mainly because there's no one to stop them). However, most towns and cities have made it illegal to carry most weapons within their districts. The penalty for being caught with an unsecured illegal weapon is confiscation of the item, at the least.

This list is not an accurate account of weaponry commonly available in one area and historical period in our own world. In at least one major way it cannot be; in our history the fencing style of combat, and hence the fencing weapons, were a direct response to the invention of personal gunpowder weapons. Since personal guns have not yet been developed in Orthlan, bows are still very much in business. In fact there was practically no over-lap of the fencing style and the use of bows (except perhaps in England, where peasants were still using the longbow in 1650). Gunpowder weapons made bows obsolete just as the infantrymen adopted the lighter style of combat in response to the musket.

In addition, at least one weapon on this list was technologically very difficult at the time when the fencing weapons were being introduced. The hand-crossbow has only really been made practical by high-tension plastics. The Italian versions of the 16th to 17th century had very short ranges and even shorter life spans. They were a specialist assassin's weapon, rather than a general purpose missile weapon. However, given the superior know-how suggested by Orthlan's relatively large Alchemist population, I feel justified in including the weapon, which suits the environment, if only for style and pose-value.

Rapier

By far the most common, and most fashionable melee weapon. The rapier generally has a long (36") straight-edged blade designed for thrusting. The hilt is often elaborate, and can be heavily ornamented.

This would be the most commonly encountered magical weapon type, simply because most of the people who can afford to have such a weapon commissioned take this as their weapon of choice.

Dagger/Knife

Almost everyone, including children, carries a dagger or knife. But they are not highly regarded as weapons, since they are carried as eating utensils and tools.

Daggers are sometimes used as weapons, but the stiletto is much more popular. There are lots of high quality, highly decorated knives and daggers, but few magical examples.

Smallsword

This recent development on the rapier is fast becoming popular, particularly among the idle rich. The Smallsword is considered more of a fashion accessory than a serious swordsman's weapon by many people "in the trade". It is essentially a dress-sword, with a simpler hilt and a shorter blade (30") than the rapier. That being said, a few villains have come to grief by assuming that the wearer of a Smallsword couldn't use it effectively. It has also begun to appear as a duelling weapon of choice for a few people.

Thanks to its status as an ornament there are lots of good quality, highly decorated Smallswords, and, as it begins to be taken seriously as a weapon too, magical versions are becoming more common.

The Smallsword hits as a Shortsword.

Epee/Foil

These are both light weapons blunted for use in fencing practice. Both are similar in design to the rapier, but won't usually be seen outside a training room. Both these weapons can be used with the same skill, and anyone with rapier skill can use half their ranks with these weapons.

Good quality versions of these weapons are quite common, but magical ones are practically unheard of.

They strike on the rapier table with -10 to all OBs. All crits are punctures.

Stiletto

There are two forms of stiletto; the Long stiletto, which is popular as a melee weapon, particularly in the off-hand; and the Short or Throwing stiletto, which is almost always used as a missile. The Long stiletto is between 1 ½ and 2 ½ feet long, and weighs some 2-3lb. The Throwing stiletto is 6" – 12" long and weighs 1-2lb.

Both forms of the weapon have a blade that is circular in cross-section and comes to a sharp point. It has a reputation as an assassin's weapon, since it can be easily concealed and, when used by an expert can inflict deadly wounds that leave the tiniest trace and bleed very little.

The Long stiletto is a common weapon and is the off-hand weapon most likely to be found in magical form. The Throwing stiletto is also frequently found as a magical example. However, it is illegal to carry an unsecured stiletto, of either type, in many cities in Orthlan, including Orthlandris.

The Long Stiletto strikes on the rapier table, with -10 to all OBs. The Throwing stiletto strikes on the rapier table with -20 to all OBs, and the throwing ranges of a dagger.

Broadsword

This is the Renaissance Broadsword, a heavy, double-edged blade with a basket hilt that fully covers the sword hand. Although primarily a cavalry blade, it also sees a lot of use by infantry.

The Broadsword is by far the most common heavy weapon in Orthlan. It is the favoured weapon of the military officers and a number of religious military arms. It is the heavy weapon most likely to be found in a magical version. It is illegal to carry an unsecured Broadsword in most cities of Orthlan, including Orthlandris.

Cutlass/Saber

Whether this weapon is a Cutlass or a Sabre depends on whether it's being used on land or sea. It is a short, heavy blade, sometimes slightly curved, with a single cutting edge. It has a heavy basket hilt.

The Sabre is favoured by mercenary types but is very unfashionable among the rich. As a result, it is fairly common to find a standard cutlass but very rare to find a magical one. It is illegal to carry an unsecured cutlass in most cities in Orthlan.

This weapon hits on the Broadsword table, with a -5 OB vs AT 1-12 and a +5 vs. AT 17-20.

Maine-Gauche

This is an off-hand blocking weapon with a knuckle-guard. It is often used with a rapier.

The Maine-gauche actually originates in Orthlan and is very popular among the patriotic upper-classes. High quality and magical examples are quite common.

Quaterstaff/Sling-Staff

These weapons are only really used by the clergy of some religions. They are very unfashionable among the general populace. Technically it is illegal for a Lay man to carry a Quaterstaff or Sling-staff in many cities, but it is so easy to claim that it is a walking stick, particularly in the case of the plain Quaterstaff, that most city Watch don't even try to enforce this rule (although some might try and nick you for impersonating a member of the clergy).

Buckler

The Buckler is a small metal shield, sometimes used in fencing, but rarely seen as a battle weapon. It is rare to find a magical one, and it is also illegal to carry one in most towns.

The Buckler can be used to deliver a Small shield-bash.

Hand Crossbow

This is the only missile weapon you are ever likely to find in the hands of the upper-classes. A small, hand-held crossbow which fires metal bolts about 3 inches long. The minimum quality materials needed for this weapon is a low steel body with a high steel bow and string. This is a +0 hand-crossbow. The bow is loaded using a small lever mechanism.

As the upper-classes favourite missile weapon it is relatively easy to find quality and magical hand crossbows. However, it is illegal to carry one in many towns, and a few towns have even made it illegal to trade in hand crossbows and its bolts within the city boundaries.

The metal hand crossbow described above, which is made in Orthlan, hits on the Light crossbow table with the range modifiers of a sling. It takes 100% to load the bow, which can be shortened to 50% with a -40 to the next shot. It has a fumble range of 1-5.

There are also examples of inferior hand crossbows made in Karsethra of wood. Although they use the same OB they strike as a dagger, with sling ranges. They take 50% of an action to reload. The string is drawn back by hand and the weapon fires wooden bolts. It has a fumble range of 1-4, but there is a flat 10% chance with ever shot is fires that the weapon will be damaged. The type of damage is determined by a D10; 1-5 the string, 6-9 the bow, 10 the body of the weapon - the weapon is unrepairable.

Military Weapons

The following weapons are favoured by some military men. Although they will be available they are not really suitable for the PCs. All are illegal in towns and cities, and all are very rarely encountered in a magical form. Still, if a PC has a military background some knowledge in the following weapons might be possible.

Handaxe

Standard war axe, used instead of swords by some military units.

Halberd

A short polearm about six feet long. This is the favoured weapon of many town guard and watch, but is rarely seen on the open battlefield. Uses the Polearm attack table.

Pike

The standard battlefield infantry polearm; a 16-18 foot shaft tipped with a heavy iron point. Practically useless when used by a single man, but the pike wall can render a cavalry unit helpless, and probably quite dead too.

Strikes on the polearm table with +10 to OBs, but is hopeless once your opponent gets within 10 feet of you.

Light & Heavy Crossbow, Arbalest and Longbow

Usually used to back up the bolteers (the magic-users that take the place of the musketeers in a Calendor Pike Wedge). The light Crossbow and Longbow are inevitably wielded by peasants. Cavalry and officers sometimes use the heavy Crossbow or lighter Arbalests. Heavier Arbalests are almost inevitable encountered in defence of fortifications.

Lance

Only used as a calvary weapon.

Farming Weapons

These are the implements that a levy will pick up to use as a weapon. They are around but they are totally unsuitable for a PC since they are unstylish, unfashionable and totally unobtainable as magical weapons. If anyone insists on using one of the following, they will forever be marked as low-class scum and it is highly unlikely that any high-classed member of the party will ever take them seriously or treat them as anything better than a servant (if they're lucky).

Hoe (Polearm -15)
Pitchfork (Spear table)
Scythe(Polearm -5)
Flail

NOTES ON ARMOUR

The only armour that a civilian may legally wear in towns and cities is soft leather. It is by far the most common armour, but it is rarely produced as a magical item.

Rigid leather armour is far more common in Orthlan than it has ever been on our world, for the simple reason that it is so effective against those pesky bolteers. Armour type 11 is the Armour type you are most likely to find in a magical form.

Chain mail is practically non-existent. Very few people can make it any more. However chain turns up quite a lot as old curiosities.

The different plate armours enjoy varied popularity. AT17 and 18 are actually quite common, mainly because many city guard and pikemen use them. AT19 and 20 both have to be specially made and fitted. Cavalrymen sometimes still wear AT19, but AT20 is now made very, very rarely. It is quite rare to find any enchanted plate, and any that you do find probably dates from the period before the introduction of the fencing style.