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Warfare, Laws of

Modern warfare is governed by several civilising rules, which are generally followed by all civilised realms. Foremost amongst these is the prohibition of indiscriminate magical effects such as balls of fire or clouds of toxic gas. Use of such things is permissible against barbarians and savages, but not against armies. Second, there is an acceptance of the rights of those who surrender in civilised conflict. Provided a prisoner does not again seize arms and rejoin the fray, he is to be subject to no more harm, and to have rights of medical care, if it is available, and of decent treatment fitting his station. His goods are forfeit, and he can be held for ransom (custom dictates that ransoms not be ruinous or exceed the captive's annual income), but he is to suffer no physical harm or be paraded in a mocking manner.

Warlands, the

The area lying between the rivers Raracas and Tesh. For nearly two centuries the Warlands was fought over by Thestria and Montour, with possession changing hands frequently. The inhabitants, a mixed population of Thestrians and Montese, developed a hard-bitten and cynical attitude, happy to change allegiance with little provocation (even during battle) and famed for their raiding of one another and the people across the rivers.

Warm

A denizen of the Avenue of Sin in Atabash (fl. 353). She is a rival of Welcoming.

Warty Ones, the

Waymor, Forest of

Wealth

Wealth is not looked down upon, in general. While some nobles, especially, may sneer at the upstart merchant who gained great treasure from trade, this would not stop most of them going to that merchant for financial aid, or even offering a marriage connection between the two families. Nobody (with the exception of a few ascetics and lunatics) would turn down many opportunities to improve their financial position. The kingdom is, however, a land of great contrasts between the haves and have-nots. Most of the population, in towns and in the country, is poor - tenant farmers or casual labourers working for the rich landowners and wealthy burghers. A few mutterings aside, though, this situation is accepted as the norm and is not questioned.

Welcoming

A denizen of the Avenue of Sin in Atabash (fl. 353). She is a rival of Warm.

Sir Werner the Grey

(b.329) King's Champion. Sir Werner became the Champion after vanquishing Sir Emeron of Galt, the former champion in single combat at the battle of Harloc. The Champion bears a powerful magical sword that is cursed to be the doom of its bearer, but at the same time to make him the greatest warrior of his time. He is certainly very, very dangerous.

Whisperwood

White Keska

A nomadic people with a bent for banditry who inhabit the southern Plains of Tafaszes. They are very vocal in demanding adequate tolls from all travellers using the trade route between Montour and Karakiraz. Their leader is called the Sirk.

Wild Women

William III

King of Valliore (326-)

Wizardry, Orders of

The magicians of Imperial Castrovia saw their craft as a science rather than an art, and they grouped themselves together to pool their knowledge and abilities. These magicians found that cooperation proved more fruitful than the old-fashioned individual endeavours. As the total magical knowledge increased, various magicians began to specialise in certain areas of study. Eventually these specialisations became so arcane and esoteric that the activities of any group became opaque and strange to members of the others. Jealousies and secrecy grew, and eventually each specialisation became a separate Order, whose secrets were closely guarded from outsiders and membership of which became rights of passage for the aspirant wizard. There were still many magicians who remained apart from all others, but membership of an Order provided aid and increased the speed at which wizardly power was gained. These Orders came into Thestria with the rest of the Empire, and from there they began recruiting from Montese magicians. With the incursions of the Gel into the Empire it is said that several of the Orders have abandoned the Empire entirely and moved their operations northwards.

Women, Role of

Men and women are officially of equal status among the Montese. Women have the same legal rights as men, but in practice there is a difference in the roles performed by the two genders. Perhaps because the main deity is female, most of the higher clerical posts and divine mysteries are restricted to women, in fact if not in theory. Men, because of their greater strength, are naturally more capable in war. Since the Montese still largely follow the old Fendal custom whereby heirs are selected rather than automatically designated by birth, and since skill at arms is still seen as a highly desirable characteristic in rulers, most sovereigns and magnates are men, sons chosen by their fathers, often over older daughters. Further down the social ladder, however, one finds an increasing proportion of women acting as the heads of households, as heirs are chosen for different skills than the ability to swing a sword.

In Thestria, however, the situation is somewhat different. Here women are more hampered in their aspirations, since the Castrovian tradition is more androcentric and patriarchal. Women are far from being chattel, but they are limited in the lifestyles and careers open to them. Female warriors, especially, are frowned upon. Women from these regions who do succeed in becoming famous fighters, however, receive great admiration from their people however, which is another instance of a double standard operating. Only a few old houses, such as the Karnac of Sardeth, now follow the old tradition, for women to wear hoods and veils.

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