Obstacles

Combat

Combat is generally not the most important part of **Ars Magica** stories, but when it occurs it is both dramatic and deadly.

Combat Scores

Characters have five combat scores: Initiative, Attack, Defense, Damage, and Soak. If a character is just using one weapon, the weapon modifiers can simply be read off the weapon table (page @@). If the character is using a weapon and a shield, add together the modifiers of the weapon and the shield to get the final modifier.

**Initiative Total: Quickness + Weapon Initiative Modifier – Encumbrance + Stress Die**

**Attack Total: Dexterity + Combat Ability + Weapon Attack Modifier + Stress Die**

**Defense Total: Quickness + Combat Ability + Weapon Defense Modifier + Stress Die**

**Damage Total: Strength + Weapon Damage Modifier + Attack Advantage**

**Soak Total: Stamina + Armor Protection (+ Form Bonus, for magi)**

In addition, the Attack Advantage, calculated during combat, is central to resolution.

**Attack Advantage: Attacker's Attack Total – Defender's Defense Total**

Combat Botches

A botch on a combat roll reduces the total to zero, just as for any other botch. If a character botches his Defense roll, he is almost certain to be killed if his opponent is armed and at all skilled. His opponent will have a large Attack Advantage (equal to his Attack Total), which will translate into serious damage, most likely fatal. This is what should be expected; if you make a serious error while someone competent is trying to kill you, you will die. This makes **Ars Magica** combat potentially extremely deadly, so characters should think very carefully before wading into it.

If a combatant has a negative base Defense Total (someone with negative Quickness and no combat Abilities, for example), then a botch does not increase the Defense Total to zero; rather, it adds zero to the total, leaving it at its full negative value.

Combat Sequence

Initiative is determined once for the whole combat, and then remains the same every round.

Length of a Combat Round

A combat round lasts for about six seconds, so that a Diameter Duration spell lasts for twenty rounds.

Each party to the combat acts in order of decreasing initiative, so the party with the highest initiative acts first. A party with a high initiative may delay its action to respond to a later action in the round. If two or more parties tie, they should re-roll to determine which goes first.

Initiative Ties

Suppose that there are six parties to a combat, A, B, C, D, E, and F. On the first initiative roll A gets a total of 10, B gets 6, C, D, and E all get 4, and F gets 2. On the reroll, C gets 12, D gets 4, and E gets 1. The final order of actions is A B C D E F. The reroll only determines the relative ordering of C, D, and E; it does not over-ride the initial initiative result.

On its action, the attacker rolls a stress die, and uses the result to calculate the Attack Total. The defender also rolls a stress die, and uses the result to calculate a Defense Total. If the Attack Total exceeds the Defense Total, the attack has hit. The Attack Advantage is the amount by which your Attack Total exceeds your opponent's Defense Total.

If you hit, subtract the opponent's Soak Total from your Damage Total. The opponent suffers wounds depending on the amount by which your Damage Total exceeds his Soak Total, and the opponent's Size.

If you miss, you cannot do any damage, no matter how high your Damage Total.

Spell Damage

Spells list their damage as “+X”. This means roll a stress die and add X to calculate the Damage Total. The target’s Soak Total + Stress Die is then subtracted from this to determine the wounds suffered. When a spell is aimed, an Attack Advantage is calculated, but it does not affect the damage dealt.

Damage Table

**Size Light Medium Heavy Incapacitating Dead**

**–4 or less** 1 2 3 4 5+

**–3** 1–2 3–4 5–6 7–8 9+

**–2** 1–3 4–6 7–9 10–12 13+

**–1** 1–4 5–8 9–12 13–16 17+

**0** 1–5 6–10 11–15 16–20 21+

**+1** 1–6 7–12 13–18 19–24 25+

**+2** 1–7 8–14 15–21 22–28 29+

**+3** 1–8 9–16 17–24 25–32 33+

Each further +1 size adds +1 to each wound range. For every 5 + size points by which the Damage Total exceeds the Soak Total, the wound level increases by one.

Repeat until all parties to the combat have had the chance to act.

A single combat round, consisting of one attack from every party to the combat, takes about six seconds.

Combat Sequence

1. Roll initiative and calculate initiative order.

2. Individual with highest initiative attacks.

2. a. Attacker rolls and generates an Attack Total.

2. b. Defender rolls and generates a Defense Total.

2. c. Calculate Attack Advantage: Attack Total – Defense Total.

2. d. If Attack Advantage is zero or less, the attack missed. Move on to step 3. If it is one or greater, calculate Damage Total.

2. e. Calculate damage taken by defender.

3. Repeat attack sequence (2. a. – e.) for party with next highest initiative. Once all parties have acted once, return to step 2. Note that initiative is *not* re-rolled.

Missile Combat

If only one side in a combat has missile weapons, the other side can do no damage at range.

The Attack Total suffers a –3 penalty for every range increment beyond the first between the attackers and the defenders. The range increment depends on the weapon.

If you are defending against missile weapons, only a shield's Defense Bonus adds to your Defense Total. Other weapons are no good against missiles. Your Combat Ability still adds, as this represents your ability to dodge as well as to defend using weapons.

Combat: Simple Example

Ignatio finds himself fighting Polandrus, the Infernal wolf from the Bestiary chapter. Ignatio is on foot, fighting with a shortsword and round shield. Polandrus fighting with his teeth. Their combat statistics are as follows:

Ignatio: Init: +1, Atk: +12, Def: +11, Dam: +7, Soak: +11

Polandrus: Init: +18, Atk: +11, Def: +9, Dam: +8, Soak: +6

They start by rolling for Initiative. Ignatio rolls a 2, for an Initiative Total of 3. Polandrus rolls a 6, for an Initiative Total of 24. Polandrus attacks first, to no-one's surprise.

The wolf rolls a 5 for his attack, for an Attack Total of 16. Ignatio rolls a 6 for his defense, for a Defense Total of 17. He fends the wolf off with his shield, and is unharmed.

Then Ignatio attacks, and rolls a 0. He now has to check for a botch (see page @@). The storyguide decides that the standard one botch die should be rolled, as there are no special circumstances calling for more botch dice. Fortunately for Ignatio, he rolls a 4 and doesn't botch. His Attack Total is thus 12, since the zero he rolled on his stress die just counts as a zero. The wolf rolls defense, and also gets a 0. He also rolls one botch die and gets a 1, so Polandrus also managed to avoid botching. The wolf's Defense Total is only 9, so Ignatio has an Attack Advantage of 3. This means that he does his base 7 plus his Attack Advantage of 3 = 10 points of damage. Polandrus has a Soak of +6, so 4 points get through. Since Polandrus's Size is –1, looking up the damage vs. Polandrus's Size on the Damage Table (page @@) results in a Light Wound. Polandrus now gains a –1 Wound Penalty to all actions.

In the next round, Polandrus attacks again. He rolls a 6, which, with the Wound Penalty, only yields an Attack Total of 16. Ignatio rolls a 7, for a Defense Total of 18. Safe, again.

On his attack, Ignatio rolls a 6, for an Attack Total of 18, while the wolf only manages a 2 (including penalty), for a Defense Total of 10. This gives Ignatio an Attack Advantage of 8, which after accounting for Ignatio's Damage and Polandrus's Soak works out to 9 points of damage (note that Polandrus's Wound Penalty does not apply to Soak because Soak is not an action). This inflicts a Heavy Wound on Polandrus, adding another –5 to his Wound Penalty. The wolf is now at –6 to all actions.

At this point, Polandrus realizes that he will lose this battle unless he gets very lucky. As a demon, he can escape simply by reverting to spirit form, and he does so. Ignatio is the winner.

Moving in Combat

To simplify things for the game, there are three speeds with which characters can move while in combat.

A **walk** is rarely used in combat. More often, characters walk when they are not expecting danger.

A **hurry** is the usual pace on the battlefield, equivalent to jogging or marching at double cadence.

A **run** is very fast, but tiring. The character may be required to make a Fatigue roll.

**Walk:**

**10 + Qik – Encumbrance paces per round**

**Hurry:**

**2 x (10 + Qik – Encumbrance) paces per round**

**Run:**

**4 x (10 + Qik – Encumbrance) paces per round**

Length of a Pace

In Ars Magica, a pace is three feet.

Groups

Combat in Ars Magica is usually between groups rather than individuals, and there is no guarantee that a single player is controlling a single character. Thus, combatants may be divided into groups. Groups are handled together for combat purposes, and may consist of one to six characters, inclusive. Some troupes may not want to use the group combat rules, either because they hardly ever have combats against multiple enemies, or because they prefer to play with exactly one character per player at all times.

All members of a group must be of roughly comparable ability. This means that all Combat Totals must fall in a five-point range. That is, for each Combat Total, the best member of the group can be no more than five points better than the worst. This requirement only applies when the group is formed; wounds and other penalties taken during combat do not force the group to split unless the leader or vanguard (see below) is incapacitated.

In general, player character groups will consist of grogs fighting together. Martial companions will almost invariably be fighting independently.

A group has a vanguard, the character who bears the brunt of the fighting. Trained groups also have a leader, who may or may not be the same person. The leader and vanguard may only be changed while the group is not in combat, but for these purposes a single round in which the members of the group neither attack nor are attacked is long enough. This is also long enough to merge a number of individuals into a group, or split a group.

If the vanguard or leader is killed or otherwise incapacitated, the group splits into individuals. They may reform into a new group in a single round, as long as they stay out of combat.

Group Damage

When a group inflicts damage, it inflicts the damage calculated in the combat sequence a number of times equal to the number of combatants in the group; effectively, each member of the group hits once. The blows should be spread as evenly as possible among the members of the opposing group. The vanguard must always take at least as many blows as every other member of the group.

For example, a group with four members strikes a group with three members, one of whom is Giant Blooded, although the vanguard and the other fighter are normal sized humans. After subtracting the defending group's Soak (which is equal to the vanguard's Soak), the attack does 6 points of damage. Thus, four six point wounds are inflicted. Because four blows cannot be split evenly between three characters, the vanguard must take two blows. For a normal human, a six point wound is Medium, so the vanguard takes two Medium Wounds while the other normal human takes one. For a Giant Blooded character, six points is only a Light Wound, so that character takes a Light Wound.

Wound penalties from wounds taken by the vanguard are applied to the group's statistics, but other members continue to give their full bonus until they are incapacitated.

Untrained Group

A number of characters on the same side, of approximately equal ability (as defined above). Designate one character as the vanguard. Combat statistics are as for the vanguard.

Trained Group

A group of characters who have trained to fight together. A group can be considered to have trained to fight together if they have spent at least one season improving combat skills at the same time and in the same place (for example, last summer at the player characters' covenant).

A trained group has both a leader and a vanguard. These may be the same person, but need not be. The leader organizes the group, while the vanguard bears the brunt of the fighting.

The maximum number of fighters that can be coordinated is equal to the leader's Leadership score. If the group is larger, it is treated as an untrained group, as above, because the leader cannot co-ordinate it. As noted earlier, a group cannot have more than six members, even if the leader has a very high Leadership score.

The group's combat statistics are equal to the vanguard's statistics.

The other members of the group generate a bonus. The bonus is equal to the sum of the combat abilities of the other members of the group, but limited by three times the group leader's Leadership score. Thus, if the group leader has a Leadership score of 3, the bonus cannot exceed 9. This bonus can exceed 18 if the leader has a Leadership score of 7 or higher. This bonus can be applied to either Attack or Defense, but only to one of the two. The group can switch its application from round to round.

Defender

One or more characters are defended by one or more other characters. Treat the defenders as a group of the appropriate kind. The defended character is only injured if the defenders botch or are incapacitated. The most common instance of this is a magus defended by one or two grogs, known as his shield grogs. The character being defended is not a part of the defending group, and thus does not need to be roughly comparable in ability. The defending group may undertake any normal combat actions.

The number of characters defended may not exceed the number of characters defending.

Defenders without Groups

If you are not using the group rules, you should still allow defenders. A defended character cannot be attacked until all his defenders have been incapacitated.

Combat Options

Most combat options are equally available to groups and individuals.

Disengaging

A party that wants to disengage from combat generates a Defense Total instead of an Attack Total when it is their turn to act. All opponents who have attacked that party in the last round generate an Attack Total as well. If the disengaging Defense Total beats all the Attack Totals, the party has left the combat, and cannot be attacked unless another party also disengages and chases them.

Note that a party that has not been attacked since its last turn may disengage automatically.

A party that tries to disengage repeatedly gets a +3 cumulative bonus for every attempt after the first: +3 on the second attempt, +6 on the third, and so on. If the party attacks before it disengages, the bonus resets to zero.

Exertion

By expending a Fatigue level you can add a bonus equal to your Combat Ability to either attack or defense for one round. This bonus applies to a single attack roll, but to all defense rolls you make before your turn comes round again. In a group, all members of the group must expend a Fatigue level, and the bonus is equal to the vanguard's Combat Ability.

Magic

Magi may wish to use magic in combat. They may cast spells at their place in the initiative order, but since spells have no initiative modifier this is based on their Quickness alone. A magus Fast Casting a spell (see page @@) acts in immediate response to another action, and thus not at a particular initiative point.

It takes approximately one combat round to cast a spell, unless it is fast-cast. Thus, a magus cannot cast more than one normal spell in a single round, but may also cast a fast-cast spell, or cast only fast-cast spells. A very fast magus may be able to cast more than one fast-cast spell, but this is beyond most magi.

Mounted Combat

A mounted character adds his Ride score, to a maximum of +3, to his Attack and Defense Totals, due to higher position and control of a large animal.

Non-Lethal Combat

There are two basic types of non-lethal combat: grappling and scuffling. In a grapple, one character tries to immobilize the other, while in a scuffle one tries to knock the other out. The rules for both types of combat are closely based on the normal rules, differing only in the way the consequences are worked out.

In a scuffle, the effects of a successful attack are changed, causing the opponent to lose Fatigue levels, and take much less serious wounds. Work out what level of wound the defender would take in a normal combat, using the rules above, and read the scuffle result off the Scuffle Effects table. Fatigue levels inflicted in a scuffle are Short-Term Fatigue levels.

A character may scuffle with no penalty when unarmed or armed with a sap. If using a real weapon, he takes a –3 penalty to his Attack Total, reflecting the need for care to avoid killing his opponent by mistake, and does not add the weapon's Damage Bonus to his Damage Total.

Scuffle Effects

**Wound Level Effect**

Light 1 Fatigue level

Medium 2 Fatigue levels

Heavy 2 Fatigue levels and a Light Wound

Incapacitating 3 Fatigue levels and a Light Wound

Dead 5 Fatigue levels and a Medium Wound

A character attempting to grapple another succeeds if his Attack Advantage is greater than zero. Record the Attack Advantage, as the Grapple Strength. The grappled character may make a normal attack against the grappler to attempt to escape, but may not make any other attacks or take other actions that involve moving around. If the grappled character's attack succeeds, subtract his Attack Advantage from the Grapple Strength. If this reduces the Grapple Strength to zero or less, the grappled character has escaped from the grapple, inflicting a Light Wound on the grappler.

A grappling character may make another attack in later rounds to strengthen his grip. Add the Attack Advantage from each attack to the Grapple Strength. Similarly, the grappled character may make repeated attempts to escape.

Note that the Grapple Strength is only changed by successful attacks, in which the Attack Advantage is greater than zero.

A character must use the Brawl Ability to grapple, and must have free hands. Any melee Combat Ability, including Brawl, may be used to break free from a grapple.

Special Effects

Sometimes characters want to do something that is within combat, but not an attack. This would include tripping an opponent, disarming him, or grabbing the amulet round his neck. Follow the normal combat sequence, and set an Attack Advantage needed to succeed. If the 'attacker' achieves that Attack Advantage, the maneuver succeeds.

Most maneuver attacks are based on Brawl, because the attacker is not using a weapon.

Sample Advantages

Task Required Advantage

Disarm 9

Trip 3

Grab worn item 6

Take the weapon your opponent is using 12

Splitting Groups

If two or more groups are attacking a single defending group with more than one member, the attackers may attempt to split the defending group. This is resolved as a normal attack, but if the Attack Advantage is zero or higher the attacking group splits a group off the defenders, rather than inflicting damage. The statistics for the defending groups should be recalculated as appropriate. Under these circumstances, groups may assign new leaders and vanguards in combat.

As a general rule, the group should be divided evenly when split. If two groups are attacking one, and one attacker succeeds in splitting them, the defending group should be split in half. If three groups are attacking and two or three attackers succeed in splitting the defending group, the group should be split in thirds. If, say, five groups are attacking, but only one group succeeds in splitting the defenders, the defending group should be split in half.

Groups may only try to split their opponents' groups in melee combat.

Combat: Complex Example

Paul, Gerard,and Ignatio are on a patrol that takes them into a faerie forest. The faeries, deciding to have some fun, create exact duplicates of them, and send them into battle. The three grogs must now fight themselves.

Their combat statistics are as follows:

Gerard: Init +0, Atk +10, Def +9, Dam +10, Soak +6 (Single Weapon 6, Leadership 2)

Ignatio: Init: +1, Atk: +12, Def: +11, Dam: +7, Soak: +11 (Single Weapon 6, Leadership 2)

Paul: Init +2, Atk +8, Def +6, Dam +7, Soak +9 (Single Weapon 5, Leadership 3)

They qualify to form a group, and the *real* grogs have trained together in the covenant. The faeries haven't, though, so they can only form an untrained group. The grogs quickly adopt their fighting formation. Ignatio is the vanguard, so they use his combat statistics, and Paul is the leader. The relevant Combat Abilities add to 11, so they have the full +9 bonus allowed by Paul’s Leadership. They decide to put it on Attack in the first round.

The faeries form an untrained group. Ignatio is still the vanguard.

The grogs roll a zero for Initiative, but don't botch, for a total of 1. They're probably going to go last. The faeries also roll a zero, so it's a tie. On a re-roll, the grogs get an 8 and the faeries get a 4, so the grogs go first.

The grogs roll a 4 for attack. With the group bonus, this gives them an Attack Total of 25. The faeries get really lucky, and roll a 12 for defense, for a Defense Total of 23. The grogs still hit, but only for 9 damage, which doesn't get through the faerie vanguard's Soak.

The faeries roll a 2 for attack, for an Attack Total of 14, and the grogs also roll a 2, for a Defense Total of 13. An Attack Advantage of 1, however, is not enough to get through the grogs' Soak, so no damage is done.

On their next attack, the grogs roll another 2, for an Attack Total of 23 (they are still putting the bonus into attack). The faeries also roll a 2, and the troupe call for new dice. Anyway, they have a Defense Total of 13. This gives the grogs an Attack Advantage of 10, so 6 points of damage, enough for a Medium Wound on each of the faeries, gets through. The faeries now have –3 to all combat totals.

They roll a 4 on attack, for an Attack Total of 13, including the penalty. The grogs roll a 3, for a Defense Total of 14, holding them off.

The grogs attack again, getting a 5, for an Attack Total of 26. The faeries can only manage a 2 in defense, which now only gives them a Defense Total of 10, because of the Wound Penalty. An Attack Advantage of 16 translates into 12 points of damage getting through, inflicting a Heavy Wound, and a –5 penalty, on the faeries. Their total penalty is –8.

At this point, the faeries decide they want to run away. Thus, they generate a Defense Total instead of an Attack Total. They roll a 1, followed by a 3, for 6 in total. This gives them a Defense Total of 9, because of the penalty from wounds. The grogs roll a 2, for an Attack Total of 23; the faeries aren't getting away that easily.

The grogs attack again, and roll a 3, for an Attack Total of 24. The faeries roll a 9 in Defense, for a total of 12. An Attack Advantage of 12 means 8 points of damage, and another Medium Wound. The faeries now have –11 to all totals.

The faeries try to disengage again, and now get a +3 bonus on the roll. This, unfortunately for them, only offsets the Wound Penalty. They roll a 0, which doesn't help at all, giving them a Defense Total of 3. The grogs don't botch, and the faeries are still trapped in combat.

On their next attack, the grogs roll a 6, for an Attack Total of 27. The faeries roll a 6, but they don't get the disengage bonus on this roll, so this gives them a Defense Total of 6. An Attack Advantage of 21 translates into 17 points of damage, an Incapacitating Wound. The faeries all drop, and the combat is over. The grogs take the opportunity to thank the turb captain for insisting that they train together.

Armor

Armor is important — it helps prevent characters from sustaining grievous wounds in battle. Two factors describe the armor a given character wears: what it is made of and how much of it the character is wearing. The Armor Table at the end of this section lists the statistics for each type of armor available in **Ars Magica**.

Materials

Quilted cloth, a thin layer of leather, or layers of leather-strap-wrapped fur or cloth is the most basic of armor. Using very thick leather, or hardening leather by wax impregnation or baking, makes a better material for deflecting crushing damage. Using further reinforcements to the leather through the application of studs, rings, or other metal pieces strengthens it against slashes and cuts. Breaking the leather up into a flexible array of scales allows the use of thicker pieces of leather. Replacing the leather scales with small overlapping metal plates again increases protection while retaining flexibility, although metal weighs slightly more. At the top of 1220 technology lies chain mail, a suit of flexible metal made of links of chain.

Outfittings

Partial armor covers the vital areas only, and generally consists of a hauberk (a short-sleeved armored coat that extends down to the knee), perhaps a coif to protect the head and neck, and often an open-faced helmet. Full armor adds gauntlets to protect the hands, vambraces for the forearms, chausses for the legs, a closed helm that protects the face, and perhaps additional pieces for the throat, elbows, and knees. Full armor also often includes a gambeson, a heavily padded surcoat worn over the armor. The small auxiliary pieces may be made of a different material than the main cuirass - for instance, a suit of full chain mail might have chain mail to protect the torso and leather scale on the arms and legs (or it might be entirely made of chain mail). For simplicity, only the predominant material of the suit has any effect on game statistics (Protection and Load).

Armor Table

Partial Full Cost

Material Prot Load Prot Load

Quilted/Fur 1 2 n/a n/a Inexp.

Heavy Leather 2 3 n/a n/a Inexp.

Metal Reinf Leather 2 2 4 4 Std.

Leather Scale 3 3 5 5 Std.

Metal Scale 4 4 7 7 Std.

Chain Mail 6 4 9 6 Exp.

Prot: The bonus the armor grants to the character's Soak score.

Load: The amount the armor adds to the character's Burden.

Cost: A general indication of the expense of the armor. More expensive armor is better.

Melee Weapon Statistics

Ability Init Atk Dfn Dam Str Load Cost

Dodge Brawl 0 n/a 0 n/a n/a 0 n/a

Fist Brawl 0 0 0 0 n/a 0 n/a

Kick Brawl –1 0 –1 +3 n/a 0 n/a

Gauntlet Brawl 0 0 +1 +2 –3 0 Inexp.

Bludgeon\* Brawl 0 +2 0 +2 –2 1 Inexp.

Dagger Brawl 0 +2 +0 +3 –3 0 Inexp.

Knife Brawl 0 +1 +0 +2 –6 0 Inexp.

Axe Single +1 +4 0 +6 0 1 Std.

Club Single +1 +2 +1 +3 –2 1 Inexp.

Hatchet Single 0 +3 +0 +4 –2 1 Inexp.

Lance Single +2 +4 0 +5 0 2 Std.

Mace\*\* Single +1 +3 0 +8 0 2 Std.

Mace and Chain Single +2 +3 0 +7 0 2 Std.

Spear, Short Single +2 +2 0 +5 –1 1 Inexp.

Sword, Short Single +1 +3 +1 +5 –1 1 Std.

Sword, Long Single +2 +4 +1 +6 0 1 Exp.

Shield, Buckler Single 0 0 +1 0 –2 1 Std.

Shield, Round Single 0 0 +2 0 –1 2 Inexp.

Shield, Heater Single 0 0 +3 0 0 2 Std.

Cudgel Great +1 +4 +1 +7 +1 2 Inexp.

Farm Implement Great +1 +3 +1 +5 0 2 Inexp.

Flail Great +1 +3 +1 +8 0 2 Inexp.

Pole Arm Great +3 +4 +1 +8 0 2 Std.

Pole Axe Great +1 +5 0 +11 +1 2 Std.

Spear, Long\*\*\* Great +3 +3 +1 +7 0 3 Inexp.

Sword, Great Great +2 +5 +2 +9 +1 2 Exp.

Staff Great +2 +3 +3 +2 –1 2 Inexp.

Warhammer Great 0 +6 0 +12 +2 3 Std.

\* Any improvised bashing weapon such as a rock or hand tool

\*\* Includes spiked clubs, military hammers, and other bashing weapons

\*\*\* Includes the lance, if used dismounted.

Ability: The Weapon Ability needed to use this weapon.

Init: The Weapon Initiative Modifier.

Atk: The Weapon Attack Modifier.

Dfn: The Weapon Defense Modifier.

Dam: The Weapon Damage Modifier.

Str: The minimum strength score needed to use the weapon. The minimum strength requirements for a weapon and a shield must be met separately.

Load: The contribution that the weapon makes to Encumbrance (page @@).

Cost: A general indication of the cost of the weapon. More expensive weapons are better.

Missile Weapon Statistics

Weapon Ability Init Atk Def Dam Range Str Load Cost

Axe, Throwing Thrown 0 +2 0 +6 5 0 1 Std.

Javelin Thrown 0 +2 0 +5 10 0 1 Std.

Knife Thrown 0 +1 0 +2 5 –2 0 Inexp.

Sling\* Thrown –3 +1 0 +4 20 –3 0 Inexp.

Stone Thrown 0 +1 0 +2 5 -1 1 Inexp.

Bow, Long\* Bow –2 +4 0 +8 30 +2 2 Exp.

Bow, short\* Bow –1 +3 0 +6 15 –1 2 Std.

\* Requires two free hands to load and fire.

Ability: The Weapon Ability needed to use this weapon.

Init: The Weapon Initiative Modifier.

Atk: The Weapon Attack Modifier.

Dfn: The Weapon Defense Modifier.

Dam: The Weapon Damage Modifier.

Range: The range increment for the weapon, in paces.

Str: The minimum strength score needed to use the weapon. The minimum strength requirements for a weapon and a shield must be met separately.

Load: The contribution that the weapon makes to Encumbrance (page @@). For bows and the sling, this includes the load of appropriate ammunition.

Cost: A general indication of the cost of the weapon. More expensive weapons are better.

Weapon Descriptions

Brawling Weapons

Dodge: Simply getting out of the way of opponents, without trying to do damage.

Fist: This is includes any unarmed attacks made with the hands

Kick: Unarmed attacks made with the feet are more powerful, but less accurate. Characters may kick standing opponents but most often this attack is used against prone enemies.

Gauntlet: This is a heavy glove of hardened leather or chain mail. It does more damage than a bare fist, and is more effective at blocking attacks. Full armor always includes gauntlets and partial armor sometimes does (troupe’s option).

Bludgeon: This could be a sap (a leather bag filled with lead shot) or any heavy object like a stone or a small hammer.

Dagger: For the purposes of this table, a dagger is any knife-like weapon of length between about 6 inches and 14 inches. Daggers are commonly carried as tools, as well as for self-defense.

Knife: Any sharp knife of 6 inches or lesser length. Knives are even more common than daggers; they are everyday tools.

Single Weapons

Axe: This could be a common woodcutter's axe or a heavier battle weapon. It is small enough to wield in one hand, albeit sometimes awkwardly.

Club: A club could be simply a heavy stick, or an iron-shod weapon.

Hatchet: Any axe with a haft shorter than about 18 inches. It does less damage than a longer axe because of poor leverage. Some hatchets are suitable for throwing.

Lance: The lance may only be used from horseback, where it is a Single weapon. If the rider is dismounted, he may wield the lance two-handed as a Long Spear.

Mace: The mace is any heavy, bludgeoning weapon with a weighted head, usually made of iron. The head is usually spiked or flanged. Other weighted, one-handed bludgeoning weapons, like hammers, are treated identically to maces.

Mace and Chain: One or more weighted, spiked or flanged heads connected to a haft by a length of stout chain. Sometimes called a "morning star."

Spear, Short: A spear short enough to wield in one hand, from 4–7 feet in length. This is a very common battlefield weapon, often used by warriors who cannot afford a sword.

Sword, Short: Any bladed weapon from 14 inches to about 28 inches long. Short swords in the Middle Ages were not uncommon and could be single- or double-edged, usually with a sharp point for thrusting. Large woodsman's knives are big enough to count as short swords.

Sword, Long: Any sword over 28 inches long. These swords are typically used by horsemen because they are long enough to reach opponents on foot. Long swords are typically straight, even in Arabia: the curved sword was introduced later than the 13th century.

Shield, Buckler: A small shield that buckles to the forearm; usually made of metal. It is light enough that other objects can be held in the shield hand.

Shield, Round: A wooden shield that is cheap and easy to make.

Shield, Heater: Often made of a combination of wood and metal, this shield tapers to a point at the bottom. The outer surface is not flat, but convex to better deflect blows.

Great Weapons

Cudgel: A heavy, two-handed club.

Farm Implement: Many farm implements such as rakes, scythes, and mattocks can be used as improvised weapons. They are characterized by awkardness and a tendency to break under the rigors of combat. As improvised weapons, farm implements are less effective even than other Inexpensive weapons.

Flail: A two-handed, heavier version of the common threshing flail, this weapon is effective and easy to make. Treat a smaller, one-handed flail as a "mace and chain."

Pole Arm: A number of bladed, long-handled weapons were in use during the Middle Ages, from the continental guisarme to the English "brown bill." They vary in details but are characterized by a long cutting blade. For simplicity, they all have the same statistics.

Pole Axe: Any axe that is too large to wield one-handed. Length typically varies from four to six feet.

Spear, Long: Any spear too long to use one-handed, from about 8' to 15' or longer.

Sword, Great: A heavy, two-handed sword, designed to penetrate heavy armor

Staff: A common, inexpensive weapon often carried about the countryside for self-defense.

Warhammer: Includes other weighted, bludgeoning weapons such as a two-handed mace.

Missile Weapons

Axe, Throwing: Can be wielded in melee as a hatchet.

Javelin: Can be wielded in melee as a short spear.

Sling: Although the sling uses the Thrown Weapon skill, it has much greater range than a hand-hurled weapon.

Stone: A stone heavy enough to hurt someone, about the size of a fist.

Bow, Long: The famous English longbow, which equally famously required years of training and physical conditioning to use.

Bow, Short: The name makes it sound weak compared to the long bow, but the short bow is still powerful enough to use on the battlefield or to hunt large game.

Encumbrance

Characters who are carrying a great deal of equipment are hindered in many of their actions. This is represented by subtracting the character's Encumbrance score from the relevant rolls. Most athletic activities are penalized, as is spell casting (see page @@), but, in combat, Attack and Defense are not, as long as the Encumbrance is largely due to weapons and armor.

Encumbrance is calculated in two stages. Heavy or bulky items have a Load value (listed in the Armor and Weapons tables on pages @@ and @@). Add up the total Load that a character is carrying, and use it to calculate the character's Burden. Burden increases when Load reaches the level for that Burden, so that a character with a Load of 9 has a Burden of 3.

**Total Load Burden**

0 0

1 1

3 2

6 3

10 4

15 5

21 6

28 7

36 8

45 9

55 10

If the character's Strength is zero or negative, his Encumbrance is the same as his Burden. If the character has positive Strength, his Encumbrance is the amount by which his Burden exceeds his Strength. Thus, if a character has a Burden of 2 and a Strength of 0 or less, he has an Encumbrance of 2. If a character has a Burden of 2 and a Strength of +1, he has an Encumbrance of 1. A Burden of 2 and a Strength of +3 gives Encumbrance 0; the character does not get bonuses.

Fatigue

Characters who exert themselves in combat and other strenuous activities can become tired and even exhausted. This is measured using Fatigue levels. Most characters have six Fatigue levels, and each is given a name. Listed in order from least fatigued to most fatigued, they are Fresh, Winded, Weary, Tired, Dazed, and Unconscious. Fatigue levels can be lost as Short-Term Fatigue or Long-Term Fatigue, but both kinds come off the same set of levels. Thus, a character who has lost one Short-Term and two Long-Term Fatigue levels is Tired, and takes a –3 penalty to all actions.

Each Fatigue level above Winded has a penalty associated with it (except for Unconscious, which is its own penalty). Fatigued characters must apply the relevant penalty to all rolls, including further Fatigue tests, but not Soak attempts. These penalties represent the effects of growing exhaustion, and are cumulative with those resulting from Wounds (page @@) The penalty for Weary is –1, for Tired –3, and for Dazed –5.

Short-Term Fatigue

Characters are normally Fresh until they perform some strenuous action, such as engaging in combat, casting spontaneous spells, or sprinting. Brief strenuous actions require a Fatigue roll: roll Stamina – Encumbrance on a stress die against an Ease Factor of 6. Failure means the loss of one Short-Term Fatigue level. A botch costs two. Combat and magic use have different rules for Fatigue loss that replace those given here. See pages @@, @@, and @@.

Recovery From Short-Term Fatigue

A character recovers from Fatigue one level at a time, starting with the most exhausted level. The table below is a guideline to help you determine how long it will take a character to recover. Recovery from Fatigue requires quiet rest; if the character remains active, recovery time is doubled. At the storyguide's option, fatigued characters may make a Stamina roll against an Ease Factor of 9 when they are recovering. Success allows recovery in half the normal time.

If characters take Fatigue levels above Unconscious, each additional Fatigue level adds one hour to the time required to recover to Dazed.

Fatigue Recovery Chart

Fatigue level Time to recover to next lower level

Winded 2 minutes

Weary 10 minutes

Tired 30 minutes

Dazed 60 minutes

Unconscious 2 hours + 1 hour for every additional Fatigue level.

Long-Term Fatigue

Long-Term Fatigue levels are lost from extended tiring activities, such as hiking all day under a hot sun, or running to carry a message between cities. The levels are lost automatically, and the number of levels lost is at the storyguide's discretion. These levels are only regained after a good night's rest. One night's rest removes one Long-Term Fatigue level.

If a character has lost both Long- and Short-Term Fatigue levels, the more serious levels are treated as short term. Thus, a character who climbed a wall while being chased by dogs, losing one Short-Term Fatigue level, and then was pursued all afternoon by the same dogs, losing two Long-Term Fatigue levels, would be Tired. After half an hour's rest, he would recover to Weary, but any further improvement requires a night's rest.

Wounds

When characters take damage from any source, they suffer wounds. The severity of the wound depends on the amount by which the Damage Total exceeds the character's Soak Total. (See page @@ for how to calculate these totals in combat, and page @@ for how to calculate them in other situations.)

Damage Table

**Size Light Medium Heavy Incapacitating Dead**

**–4 or less** 1 2 3 4 5+

**–3** 1–2 3–4 5–6 7–8 9+

**–2** 1–3 4–6 7–9 10–12 13+

**–1** 1–4 5–8 9–12 13–16 17+

**0** 1–5 6–10 11–15 16–20 21+

**+1** 1–6 7–12 13–18 19–24 25+

**+2** 1–7 8–14 15–21 22–28 29+

**+3** 1–8 9–16 17–24 25–32 33+

Each further +1 size adds +1 to each wound range. For every 5 + size points by which the Damage Total exceeds the Soak Total, the wound level increases by one.

Wound Table

**Wound Taken Penalty Per Wound**

Light –1

Medium –3

Heavy –5

Incapacitated \*

\*The character may not undertake any actions.

Characters may have any number of any type of wound, in any combination. The character suffers a penalty to all actions (rolls and totals) equal to the sum of all penalties due to his wounds, and the activities he can safely undertake are restricted (see Activities While Injured, below). Note that Soak is not an action, and thus does not take the Wound Penalty.

For example, a grog has taken one Heavy Wound. He has a total Wound Penalty of –5. Another grog has taken two Light Wounds and one Medium Wound. He also has a total Wound Penalty of –5, but his wounds will heal more quickly (see page @@).

There is no maximum limit to a character's Wound Penalty, and characters cannot die immediately from non–fatal wounds, no matter how many there are. However, less serious wounds can worsen and become Incapacitating, and an Incapacitated character can still die (see below).

Activities While Injured

Characters are severely limited in what they can safely do while injured. Obviously, Incapacitated characters can do nothing. Less wounded characters are also limited. Any character who does more than his injuries allow must make an immediate Recovery roll for his most serious wound. This roll can result in the wound worsening, but not in a bonus to future rolls or improvement.

Characters who are injured in a combat need not make Recovery rolls for further activities within that combat, but must make the rolls if they take excessive action afterwards.

**Wound Penalty –6 or greater:** The character can talk, eat, and move himself short distances given time and assistance. Productive activities (including study, Hermetic Lab work, and craft work) are impossible.

**Wound Penalty –3 to –5:** The character can walk, provided he is allowed to go slowly and take frequent rests. All long-distance travel rates are halved. The character may study, but his Advancement Total is halved if he is at this level of penalty for one month or more of the season. Hermetic Lab work and craft work are impossible.

**Wound Penalty –1 or –2:** The character can travel and study normally, but cannot undertake strenuous activities, including casting spells that cost Fatigue. Hermetic Lab work and craft work can be undertaken as normal.

Recovering From Wounds

Players must make Recovery rolls for each wound that a character has. This roll generates a Recovery Total:

**Recovery Total: Stamina + Medic's Chirurgy or Medicine score + Magical Aid + Stress Die**

Recovery rolls are made at intervals determined by the severity of the wound, and there are two Ease Factors. If the Recovery Total equals or exceeds the Improvement Ease Factor, the wound improves by one level, for example from Medium to Light. If it equals or exceeds the Stable Ease Factor, the character remains at the same level of wounds, and gains a +3 bonus to future rolls. These bonuses are cumulative until the wound improves or gets worse. If the Recovery Total is less than the Stable Ease Factor, the wound becomes one level worse due to infection.

Recovery rolls do not suffer from the Wound Penalty.

**Wound Level Interval Stable Ease Factor Improvement Ease Factor**

Light One week 4 10

Medium One month 6 12

Heavy One season 9 15

Incapacitated See below

Characters recover from all their wounds at the same time. Thus, a character with three Light and one Medium Wounds would make three Recovery rolls every week until the Light Wounds heal, and one every month until the Medium Wound became a Light Wound, at which point he would start making rolls every week for that wound.

Recovery from Incapacitation

For an Incapacitated character, the outlook is grim — death could come at any time. The player must make two Recovery rolls each day (at sunrise and sunset) that the character has an Incapacitating Wound. On a roll of 0 or less, the character dies. A roll of 9+ improves all Incapacitating Wounds to Heavy Wounds, and recovery then proceeds normally. Any other roll means a somewhat worsened condition, and all subsequent Recovery rolls are made at a cumulative –1 penalty until the wounds improve or the character dies. If the character is attended by a chirurgeon or medic, a bonus equal to the relevant Ability applies.

These are standard Recovery rolls, and magic that helps normal Recovery rolls also helps these.

Medical Attention

As noted above, a character's recovery may be aided by medical attention. The relevant sort of attention depends on the source of the wounds. Combat wounds and similar injuries require Chirurgy, while diseases and poison require Medicine. Only one Ability can help with a given wound. An attending medic's player does not need to make any die rolls.

More detail on medicine is given in *Art and Academe,* Chapter 4.

Healing Spells

Certain Creo Corpus rituals can heal wounds immediately, without requiring a roll (see The Chirurgeon's Healing Touch on page @@).

Other Creo Corpus spells provide a bonus to the Recovery roll (see *Purification of the Festering Wound* on page @@). This bonus adds to any bonus due to medical attention. These spells must be in effect for the whole of the recovery period, either because their duration exceeds the recovery period, or because they are recast. They can cause Warping (see page @@).

Other Perils

Debilitation

Characters may suffer from afflictions which drain them over time, such as diseases or poisons. Such afflictions cause wounds, but these wounds are treated with the Medicine Ability, rather than Chirurgy. The rules for recovery are otherwise the same as for injuries inflicted in combat.

Anyone exposed to a debilitating agent, whether poison or a cause of disease, must make a Stamina check against an Ease Factor set by the cause of the disease. If the check succeeds, the character suffers nothing more than minor discomfort. If it fails, the character takes a wound, the severity of which depends on the severity of the agent. This wound then recovers according to the normal rules, including the chance for it to get worse.

Diseases

Most diseases in Mythic Europe are caused by imbalances in the patient's humors. There are four humors, blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile, and in a healthy person they are in balance. When the humors come out of balance, they cause diseases. The imbalance can happen spontaneously, or be caused by an imbalance in the character's diet. Bad air can also unsettle the humors, and cause a disease to afflict an entire community at once. Diseases are not normally transmitted from one person to another, however.

Some diseases are caused by disease spirits, often minor demons. As these diseases are magical attacks, they are resisted by Magic Resistance, and their details depend on the spirit responsible. Magi are still vulnerable to mundane diseases, however.

Spontaneous diseases are covered by the aging rules (see page @@). Diseases due to an external cause are covered by the debilitation rules (see above).

Since most people do not have access to medical attention, a disease with an Ease Factor of six will afflict about half of the population, and an Ease Factor of twelve means that the disease strikes almost everyone. Potentially fatal diseases inflict Heavy or Incapacitating Wounds. Diseases should not inflict fatal wounds on first being contracted.

Note that a type of disease can have any Ease Factor and Wound type, as they come in varying strengths.

More detailed rules for diseases are provided in *Art and Academe,* pages 45–51.

Disease Table

**Disease Excess Humor Symptoms**

Quotidian Fever Blood High temperature, red color, fever constant.

Flux Phlegm Chill, diarrhea, running nose, wet cough.

Constriction Black Bile Chill, dark color, dry cough, constipation.

Quartan Fever Yellow Bile High temperature, yellow color, dry cough, fever strikes in four day bouts.

Poisons

Poisons come in many forms, derived from plants, animals, and minerals. The Ease Factor for the initial Stamina check is at least 3, as nothing weaker counts as a poison, and can range as high as 15. Poisons can inflict fatal wounds from the beginning. Poisons are treated as injuries for recovery purposes and the details of Recovery rolls. More information on poisons can also be found in *Art and Academe,* particularly pages 64–65.

Poison Table

**Poison Ease Factor Wound**

Adder Bite 6 Light

Asp Bite 9 Incapacitating

Monkshood 9 Heavy

Arsenic 9 Medium

Deprivation

Characters deprived of food, water, or air suffer quite seriously. Each kind of deprivation has a check time, and the character must make a Stamina check when he has been deprived of that necessity for the specified length of time. The Ease Factor for the check starts at 3, and increases by one for every time period that passes. When the character fails a check, he loses a Fatigue level. When he has lost consciousness due to fatigue, the next failed check results in a Light Wound. This wound gets one step worse for every subsequent failed check. Wounds due to deprivation are treated with Medicine.

Fatigue levels lost due to food or water deprivation are Long-Term Fatigue levels, and can only be regained once the character has eaten or drunk. Fatigue levels lost due to air deprivation are Short-Term.

Deprivation Table

**Type of Deprivation Time**

Air 30 seconds

Water 1 day

Food 3 days

Injuries

Non-combat sources of injury have a damage bonus, which is added to a stress die to determine the amount of damage done. Typically such a roll would have only one botch die, and a botch would mean no damage done. In most cases, only the bonus is written, so a fire might be described as Bonfire (+10), which means that it does a stress die + 10 damage.

Soak against other sources of injury is calculated by adding a stress die to Soak. In some cases, such as immersion in boiling water, armor may provide no protection, at the storyguide's option. Note that Hermetic magi get a bonus to Soak from their Form scores, which may well apply to non-combat sources of injury.

These rules are also used for calculating damage inflicted by spells, including during combat.

**Non-combat Damage Total: Damage Bonus + Stress Die**

**Non-combat Soak Total: Soak Total + Stress Die.**

Heat and Corrosion

The damage modifiers for heat and corrosion depend on how much of the character is covered, and how intense the source is. If the source covers a small part of the character, such as a hand or foot, it does its base damage. If it covers an entire limb, the damage bonus is doubled. If half the character's body is within the source, the damage bonus is tripled, while complete immersion quadruples the damage bonus. (Note that spell damage already includes the modifier for amount of exposure.) These multipliers are applied before the stress die is added.

The damage is inflicted once every six seconds (once per combat round), and the wounds caused are independent, as for combat wounds (see page @@ for details). These sources of damage tend to ruin items as well, at the storyguide's discretion.

Heat and Corrosion Table

**Source Intensity**

Wood Fire +5

Boiling Water +3

Boiling Oil +6

Molten Lead +9

Molten Iron +12

Ice +1

Lye +3

Quicklime +6

Vitriol +9

Impact

Characters may also take damage from falling, or having things fall on them. This damage is taken once.

Impact Table

**Type of Impact Damage**

Falling +1 per two feet, doubled for hard surfaces, halved for soft.

Jug dropped from second floor +6

Inside collapsing wooden house +15

Mature tree felled onto character +18

Inside collapsing stone building +21

Travel

Travel time between important scenes is generally played through quickly. If little of interest happens on the road, you don't want to waste time detailing every moment of the journey. Travel times are extremely variable, depending on weather, bandits, officious toll collectors, and the condition of the road. Thus, the times that follow are merely guidelines; more detail can be found in *City and Guild,* Chapter 5.

Peasants could expect to be able to walk seven miles, do a day's business at market, and return home to sleep. If they only need to travel, twenty miles in a day would not be unreasonable. A mounted courier would expect to travel about thirty miles in a day carrying normal messages, such as announcements of laws, or up to fifty miles if carrying urgent messages. The main limit on the speed of the courier is the need to rest the horse. With access to lots of good horses, speeds of up to one hundred miles in a day were possible, but that leaves no time for the traveler to rest.

Larger groups travel more slowly. Moving an army at a rate of thirty miles a day was the stuff of legend, but it was achieved once. Carts also slow the process down, and they are a lot more sensitive to the quality of the road. Twenty miles in a day with a cart is very good progress.

At sea, most ships travel about thirty miles in a day, although good ships with good wind can go at three or four times that speed. Bad weather, of course, can drive ships backwards.

Attempts to travel quickly cost one Long-Term Fatigue level per day, as long as the characters actually travel. Delays due to terrain and weather do not reduce the amount of Fatigue suffered; delays due to having to wait while toll collectors inspect all the baggage do.

For most sagas, you should work out which places can be reached and returned from in a day, with activities in between, which need an overnight stay at the site, and which need a full day of travel in each direction, so that to have time to do anything the characters must stay away two nights. These are the places that the members of the covenant will deal with most often.