

# **Book of the MerovanX**

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## Book of the MerovanX

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# Chapter 1. Overview

## *A Darker, Rougher Camelot*

Merova presents a picture of Norman Knights and Men at Arms (Chain, Plate and Leather, Long Swords and Bastard Swords, Spears and Pole Arms, and Cross bows rather than Self Bows). The Merovan language is mixture of the original language with a growing collection of loan word from the Native Borne language. The absolute core of Merova is Meara Bay and the King's lands around it. Surrounding the Kingsland is a set of 39+ Ducal fiefdoms. On the outskirts of all the Ducal fiefdoms are the Marches which act as a buffer to the outside world. The Dukes have the population and the wealth while the Marches have the arms and the pride. Their only real common ground is the king. The king is from a small neglected branch of one of the Ducal families (Almost Native is the phrase....).

Merova lies on the northeastern edge of the continent. Merovans are built like the Norman French with many brunettes and ash blondes. Merova is the King Arthur's court of the world. Merova looks like the traditional fantasy version of feudal society composed of Knights, Nobles and Ladies. Is a single kingdom with 39 strong dukes newly united under one king. It has high wizards and sorcerers as well as priests and priestesses. If you want to play a traditional men at arms or a knight, this is the culture to be from. Women's roles are more limited, with only priestesses easily being able to travel and adventure. Typical Merovan characters would be Knights or men at arms. Priests or priestesses. Thieves. Wizards and sorcerers of various types.

Merova has an established relationship of trade with the Hairochan. In addition, they have a strong ruling tradition over the. existing Native Borne population who act as the serf populkation of the Dukedoms and Marches.

### **Note**

It is not obvious tro outsiders that Merovan culture involves a strangely strong, and sometimes uneasy, relationship between three cultures: Merovans, the Hairochan, and the Native Borne. The Merovan "settled" know that the Hairochan are more than they seem but try not to talk about it. And all of the settled know that while the Native Borne negotiated the role of servant for themselves it might be catastrophically dangerous to push them. They all have the feel of that gypsy wise woman that you don't want to transgress against.

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# Chapter 2. Physical Environment

## Geography

The geography is filled with rugged hills and valleys. It is bounded on the western boundary by a sheer mountain range with a few passes through to the valleys to the west. There are moraines, high ridges formed from glacial debris especially in the northern areas of Merova. The southern islands especially are composed of that kind of moraines. Many of those moraines have ridges cut out by meltwater streams often framed by large boulders at the base. There is a significant number of valleys filled with rivers, lakes and ponds. Glacial till (a mix of sand, clay, gravel, and rocks) left behind poor, rocky soil in much of the region, though river valleys often have fertile floodplains.

The southern and eastern border are edged in rocky coastline with peninsulas, islands, and estuaries. Most of the coastline is edged in rock, not sand. There are two large bays in the region, Meara Harbor, and Badger Bay (Naragensat). Merova is easily accessed via small boats throughout the coast.

There are a set of Torgan roads running east to west and north to south. The largest, the *King's Road* is a 16m wide road that runs from Meara Harbor in the east to the Great Doors in the westward pass. It has 1-2m high walls on each edge. Periodically there are Trivia. The roads enable a very high rate of individual and cargo travel.

On the far western edge of Merova lies the Western Wall, a sheer mountain range which has very few passes that are usable. The most commonly used pass is the Great Gate which is guarded by and managed by the Uru, who charge tolls for passage,

## Climate

The climate is characterized by four distinct seasons, including cold winters, warm summers, and moderate precipitation throughout the year. The region's climate is influenced by its latitude, proximity to the Ocean, and varying topography.

**Winter.** Winters are cold and dry inland but moderated along the coast by the Ocean. Averages range from 10°F to 30°F (-12°C to -1°C) in the north and 20°F to 40°F (-6°C to 4°C) in southern coastal areas. Subzero temperatures are common in the northern regions, especially at night. Heavy snowfalls are typical, with annual snow accumulations of 60–100 inches (1.5–2.5 meters) in the northern and mountainous areas. Coastal areas receive less snow but can experience intense nor'easters (winter storms bringing snow, wind, and coastal flooding).

**Spring.** Gradual warming, with highs ranging from 40°F (4°C) in March to 70°F (21°C) in May. Rainfall increases, and melting snow can lead to flooding in some areas. Spring is often unpredictable, with a mix of snow, rain, and warm, sunny days. Budding trees and blooming flowers mark the season.

**Summer.** (June to August). Daytime highs average 75°F to 85°F (24°C to 29°C) across the region, with cooler temperatures in the mountains and along the coast. Heatwaves can push temperatures above 90°F (32°C), especially inland. Summers are humid, especially in southern Merova. Frequent thunderstorms, particularly in the late afternoon and evening. Summers are warm and humid, with plenty of sunny days for outdoor activities.

**Autumn.** (September to November). Crisp, cool weather with clear skies makes autumn one of the most popular seasons in Merova. Cooling from 70°F (21°C) in September to 40°F (4°C) by November. Has vibrant fall foliage, with trees displaying brilliant shades of red, orange, and yellow.

## Resources

**Rivers and Streams.** Abundant rivers are used for transportation, trade, and as sources of fresh water. Fast-flowing rivers power water mills for grinding grain and sawing lumber.

**Coastal Waters.** The ocean provides opportunities for near shore fishing, some deep sea fishing, and trade. Bays and harbors, like Meara Harbor, supported shipbuilding and commercial activity. Merova's waters, particularly the Grand Banks, are rich in cod, which are a cornerstone of the economy. Lobsters, clams, and oysters are also significant food and trade sources. In addition, the more shallow waters are used to form fish weyrs to farm fish and some shellfish in.

**Soil and Agriculture.** The soil is rocky and less fertile compared to the southern polities, making large-scale farming difficult. It typically takes around 3-7 acres of land to feed a family, with most farms ranging between 50 and 100 acres, as the rocky soil and harsh climate limits the amount of crops that can be grown, requiring families to focus on subsistence farming to feed themselves directly.

**Granite and Slate.** Abundant Granite quarries. Granite is used for building foundations, mills, and gravestones.

**Metals.** Iron Ore found in bogs and streams, iron is smelted for tools, nails, and household items. There are also large deposits of Lead, Copper, Tin, and Antimony, Coal, Zinc

**Precious metals and gems.** There are large silver deposits with smaller gold and mercury ore fields. Merova is blessed with multiple, easily accessible gem Tourmaline, Spinel, Sapphires and Rubies, Zircon rose quartz, garnets, beryl, amethyst, rhodonite and garnets, quartz crystals, beryl, lepidolite

**Talc and Asbestos.** Asbestos is known for its fire resistance and durability and it is used for rudimentary fireproof cloth and insulation for indoor ovens and stoves. In a few situations it is used for Wicks in tepls. Talc in Colonial America Talc is a soft mineral that is used for its smooth texture and absorbent properties. It is used for personal hygiene powders – Finely ground talc is used as a body powder to reduce moisture and friction under heavy robes or armour.

## Wild Trees

Merova is heavily forested, with a mix of old growth conifers and deciduous trees. The types of trees vary based on the region's soil, climate, and elevation. Below are some of the most common trees found in Merova.

**White Pine.** A tall, straight tree growing up to 200 feet, with soft, lightweight wood. Highly valued for ship masts as well as Timber for construction, furniture, and export. Resin used for making pitch and tar.

**Spruce.** Medium-sized evergreen trees with dense, needle-like foliage. Timber for building and ship planking. Resin for pitch and tar. Native Borne Spruce beer made from its needles

**Hemlock.** A shade-tolerant evergreen tree with soft needles and scaly bark. Bark used for tanning leather (high tannin content). Wood for framing and fuel

**Fir.** A fragrant evergreen with short, soft needles. Firewood and basic construction. Resin used for medicinal purposes and sealing.

**Oak.** A strong, durable hardwood tree with many species, such as white oak and red oak. Shipbuilding (hulls, keels, and frames). Furniture, tools, barrels (cooperage), and construction. Firewood, as it burns long and hot.

**Maple.** A medium-sized tree known for its striking autumn foliage and sweet sap. Sap for making maple syrup and sugar. Wood for furniture, tools, and flooring.

**Birch.** A fast-growing hardwood tree with white, yellow, or gray bark. Wood for furniture, tools, and firewood. Bark used by Native Americans for canoes and containers.

**Beech.** A large, smooth-barked hardwood tree. Durable wood for furniture and tools. Nuts provided food for wildlife and humans.

**Chestnut.** A tall hardwood tree producing edible nuts. Timber for building, as it was resistant to rot. Nuts were a significant food source for colonists and livestock.



**Elm.** A tall, graceful tree with a spreading canopy. Wood for wheel hubs, furniture, and construction. Popular for shade and ornamental purposes in colonial towns.

**Ash.** A tall, straight tree with strong, flexible wood. Handles for tools, baseball bats, and other items requiring durability. Construction and firewood.

**Hickory.** Valued for its strong wood and as fuel for high-heat fires.

**Willow.** Found along rivers and wetlands, used for baskets and medicinal purposes.

**Poplar.** Used for light construction and firewood

**Black Walnut.** They are found primarily in southern Merova, though less commonly in the northern parts of the region due to colder temperatures. Produces edible nuts enclosed in a green husk. Eaten by colonists and used as a food source, though extracting the meat from the tough shells was labor-intensive. Highly prized for its rich, dark color, black walnut wood was used for furniture, cabinetry, and gunstocks. The husks of the nuts were used to produce a dark brown dye.

**Butternut (White Walnut).** More common than black walnut in northern parts of Merova, as it is better adapted to colder climates. Wood: Used for furniture, paneling, and small crafts, though it was softer and less durable than black walnut. Nuts: Butternut nuts were sweeter and easier to process than black walnuts, making them a popular food source. Dye: The husks were used to create a yellowish-brown dye.

Pine, Hemlock, Tamarack, Spruce, Cedar, Juniper, Fir, Sycamore, Witchhazel, Locust, Paper Birch, River Birch, Smooth Alder, Hophornbeam, Green Alder, Hazelnut, Beech, Black Oak, Pin Oak, White Oak, Chestnut, Cottonwood, Weeping willow, Red Mulberry, Black Cherry, Shadbush, Mountain Ash, Slippery Elm, Basswood, Smooth Sumac, Red Maple, Horse-Chestnut, Staghorn Sumac, Silver Maple, Sugar Maple, Boxelder, Black Tupelo, Flowering Dogwood, Northern Catalpa, Black Ash, Walkingstick, Downy Hawthorn

## Cultivated Trees

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**Apple.** Apples were grown for eating, cooking, and fermenting into cider (a staple beverage). Seeds and saplings were brought by Merova settlers and quickly became a staple of agriculture.

**Pear.** Cultivated for eating and cooking, as well as cider. though less popular than apples. Hardy and adaptable to Merova's climate

**Cherry.** Valued for their fruit and ornamental appeal. Sweet cherries and sour cherries were both introduced by Merovan settlers

## Wild Plants

**Elderberries.** Found along rivers and wetlands

**Wild Plums.**

**Wild Grapes.**

**Nanny Berry.**

**Ground Nuts.**

**Hazelnuts.**

**Chestnuts.**

**Acorns.**

**Sage.**

**Yarrow.**

**Brabeans.**

**Squash.**

**Pumpkins.**

**Corn.**

**Potatoes.**

## Cultivated Plants

...

**Barley.**

**Oats.**

**Rye.**

**Wheat.**

**Cabbage.**

**Asparagus AKA Spear Greens.**

## Wild Fauna

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**Fisher Cats.**

**Beaver.**

**Catamount.**

**Black Bear.**

**Rattlesnake.**

**Deer.**

**Moose.**

## Cultivated Fauna

### Dogs

**Alaunts.** A hunting dog breed that is expensive to buy and maintain. A sight hunter used as a large game catch dog, as a war and guard dog.

**Mastiffs.** A hunting dog breed that is expensive to buy and maintain but excels as a trainable guard and war dog.

**Wulfhund.** Large dog used to hunt dangerous game. Very popular in the Marches.

**Diggers.** Also called Creuseurs. Small dog (About Beagle size) used to hunt rodents and burrowing creatures.

## Horses

**Merova Cob.** Typically used as war horses (though sometime as draft houses), Cobs are generally gray or black in coloring with white verigation. The head has a straight profile, broad forehead, large eyes and long thin ears. The chest is deep and wide and the croup long and level. The legs are heavily muscled, and the lower legs generally have heavy white feathering. Enthusiasts describe the temperament as alert, and members of the breed are considered intelligent, willing workers with good dispositions, and easy keepers.

**Table 2.1. Cob**

Attribute	Stallion	Mare
Height	18-21 hands (182-213 cm)	16.5-19 hands (168-193 cm)
Weight	540-1270 kg	417-950 kg
Walking Speed and Range	3-8 kph, 7 hrs, 21-56 km	
Trotting Speed and Range	13 – 19 kph, 2 hrs, 26-38 km	
Canter Speed and Range	10-17 kph, hrs , 6 km	
Gallop Speed and Range	30-45 kph, 3 km	
Average Lifespan	25 to 30 years	

**Merova Trotter.** Primarily used as a riding and harness horse is usually brown to dark brown in color. It has a very high endurance and are able to travel up to 75 km per day, usually outstripping the endurance of their riders.

**Table 2.2. Trotter**

Attribute	Stallion	Mare
Height	15 to 17 hands (152-172 cm)	15 to 16.5 hands (152-168 cm)
Weight	540 to 1,270 kg	500-1200 kg
Walking Speed and Range	3-6 kph, 9 hrs, 27-54 km	
Trotting Speed and Range	14–21 kph, 3 hrs, 42-63 km	
Canter Speed and Range	17-25 kph, 6 km	
Gallop Speed and Range	33-48 kph, 3 km	
Average Lifespan	25 to 30 years	

## Livestock

**Cattle.** Several breeds brought by Merova settlers. Used for meat, and farmers trained oxen to pull heavier loads.

**Pigs.** Several breeds brought by Merova settlers.

**Sheep.** Several breeds brought by Merova settlers.

**Chickens.** Raised in coops

**Ducks.** Raised in fenced-in yards

**Otters.** Tamed by settlers after they arrived in Merova

**Beavers.** Tamed by settlers after they arrived in Merova

## Esoterica

Merova is a region filled with esoteric energies especially mana, spirit and the divine

**Ley Lines.** It is common knowledge that Merova has several large ley lines of great strength .

**Eruptions.**

**Still Pools.**

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# Chapter 3. Merovan History

A culture's history, including colonization, wars, migrations, and revolutions, impacts its identity and traditions..

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## Merovan Pre History

## Merovan Historical Memes

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## Merovan ZZZ

## Merovan ZZZ

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## **Chapter 4. External Influences**

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**Other Cultures**

**Economic**

**Other Religions**

**ZZZ**

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# **Chapter 5. Merovan Beliefs and Values**

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## **Memes**

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# Chapter 6. Language and Communication

The primary means of communication, including spoken and written languages, dialects, and non-verbal cues (gestures, body language, etc.). Language often reflects cultural priorities (e.g., Inuit languages have multiple words for snow).

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**ZZZ**



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# Chapter 7. Merovan Social Norms and Behaviors

The social mores and unwritten rules that govern acceptable behavior in a society. Examples: Greetings, table manners, dress codes, and etiquette.

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## General Social Traditions

Razors for Distinguishing

- ?

## General Social Rituals

...

## Childbirth Social Traditions

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## Childbirth Rituals

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## Childbirth Expectations

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## Childbirth Success or Failure

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## Childhood Social Traditions

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## Childhood Rituals

...

## Childhood Expectations

...

## Value of Education

...

## **Why?**

...

## **Childhood Success or Failure**

...

## **Young Adult Social Traditions**

...

## **Young Adult Rituals**

...

## **Young Adult Expectations of Work**

...

## **Young Adult Expectations of Sex**

...

## **Young Adult Conformism and Rebellion**

...

## **Young Adult Success or Failure**

...

## **Adulthood Social Traditions**

...

## **Adulthood Rituals**

...

## **Adulthood Expectations of Work**

### **Razors for Distinguishing**

- Is the full adult expected to innovate, to teach his craft, to explore new ideas?
- Conversely, is his role to prevent innovation, to guard tradition, to maintain an unbroken line from past history to the future?
- How does gender, race, or social status change the expectations with which the culture views the full adult and his work?

- What work is open to the full adult that is not open to young adults or children?
- What work is closed to the full adult that is available to children or young adults?
- How does the full adult in your culture regard future career advancements?
- Is it possible to change jobs?
- Is it possible to choose different work?
- Is it possible to pursue dreams?

## Adulthood Expectations of Sex

### Razors for Distinguishing

- How will the full adult of your culture find or keep a mate?
- How will he or she replace an unsatisfactory mate?
- How will he deal with a mate lost to desertion or death?
- How will he deal with sexuality if single?
- Does the culture press the full adult to continue adding to family, to expand numbers of wives or concubines, to support the households of his young adult children and their families?
- Must the full adult gather dowries?
- Is the full adult permitted sexual experimentation of any sort, or is that something that must be put aside?
- What happens to those adults who stray outside of the permissible modes of sexual expression?
- Punishment, shunning, banishment, execution?

## Adulthood Conformism and Rebellion

### Razors for Distinguishing

- How does your culture view the rebellion of the full adult?
- How does it treat the rebellious full adult?
- How does the full adult who wants to rebel do so and still survive the experience?
- The perfect full adult male in your culture will ....?
- The perfect full adult female in your culture will ....?
- The failed full adult male in your culture will....?
- The failed full adult female in your culture will ....?

## Old Age Social Traditions

### Razors for Distinguishing

- How does your culture determine who is and who is not an elder?

- What part do the actions of the full adult play in moving him into the category of elder?
- Is old age seen as an achievement, or is it something people just age into? Do people attempt to fend it off? How does your culture view old age?
- What privileges does the elder earn by achieving this passage? Are there multiple layers of old age?
- What privileges or later status are withheld for elders, if any?
- How are these later increases in achievement given?

## Old Age Rituals

### Razors for Distinguishing

- What family rituals mark the entrance of full adulthood into old age?
- The successful birth of a first grandchild?
- The wedding of the last child?
- The giving of a place of honor in the family hierarchy?
- Leaving work to retire?
- What community rituals mark the entrance of the full adult into old age?
- A place of leadership in a secret society?
- A place of prestige in a community group?
- A master-raftsman status that brings other masters to study with the elder?
- What religious rituals mark the entrance of the full adult into old age?
- The assumption of a role in the religion, or the handing off of responsibilities to someone younger?
- A ceremony?
- Becoming overseer of the new leaders who teach the religion?
- What government rituals mark the entrance of the full adult into old age?
- Recognition by a king or lord?
- Retirement from military service with or without pension?
- Release from the payment of taxes?
- Ability to become a leader?
- Right to bestow property, or bestow rank or privilege on others?

## Old Age Expectations of Work

### Razors for Distinguishing

- Is the elder expected to teach his craft or transmit the culture's heritage, mores, and conventions?
- Is the elder expected to explore spirituality, to transmit or create laws or other forms of guidance for those coming behind?

- Is the elder expected to find lessons from his long life and turn them into something useful for younger generations?
- How does gender, race, or social status change the expectations with which the culture views the elder and his work?
- What work is open to the elder that is not open to others?
- What work is closed to the elder that is available to others?
- How does the elder in your culture regard future career advancements, or career continuance?
- Does the elder look forward to a future in which he is secure, or into an abyss of gradual poverty and darkness?
- Is he/she permitted control of his own destiny?

## Old Age Expectations of Sex

- How will the elder of your culture deal with a mate lost to desertion or death?
- How will he or she replace a lost mate?
- How will he deal with sexuality if single?
- Does the culture press the elder to maintain and support numbers of wives or concubines, and assist in the upkeep of households of his adult children and their families?
- What are the responsibilities of the elder to his progeny?
- Is the elder permitted sexual experimentation of any sort, or is that something that must be put aside?
- What happens to those elders who stray outside of the permissible modes of sexual expression? Punishment, shunning, banishment, execution?

## Old Age Conformism and Rebellion

### Razors for Distinguishing

- How does your culture view the rebellion of the elderly?
- How does it treat the rebellious elder?
- How does the elder who wants to rebel do so and still survive the experience?
- 
- The Cost of Aging
- Does your culture fight to prolong life?
- In which cases?
- What place has it made for dying elders?
- How do families care for dying elders?
- How does the community care for them?
- How does religion care for them?

- How does government care for them?
- What respect does the culture show dying Elders?

## Old Age Success or Failure

### Razors for Distinguishing

- The perfect elderly male in your culture will ....?
- The perfect elderly female in your culture will ....?
- The failed elderly male in your culture will....?
- The failed elderly female in your culture will ....?

## Death Social Traditions

### Razors for Distinguishing

- How does the culture treat the death of one of its members? Does it treat the death differently by age, by status, by gender, by singleness, or if the dead was paired, or familial?
- Does it treat the death differently when it occurs by different means—suicide or murder, disease or illness, when caused by congenital problems, accident or old age?
- How does the family deal with the death of a member, and those bereaved?
- How does the community deal with death and those bereaved?
- How does religion deal with death and those bereaved?
- How does government deal with death and those bereaved?

## Death Rituals

### Razors for Distinguishing

- What rituals do the family and/or friends perform or require for the dead?
- What rituals does the community perform or require for the dead or from the bereaved?
- What rituals does religion perform or require for the dead or from the bereaved?
- What rituals does the government perform or require for the dead or from the bereaved?

## Death Expectations

### Razors for Distinguishing

- How does the culture as a whole view the future of the dead person?
- How does that future vary related to the life the person lived?
- How does that future vary related to the person's status, or gender, or age at death, or religious or government affiliation?

## Death Success or Failure

*Razors*Razors

- So with that in mind, how does your culture define a success in death?
- How does it define a failure in death?
- What variables in religion, age, status, gender and so on will change whether the deceased dies a success or a failure?

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# Chapter 8. Merovan Social Organization

How a culture structures relationships and roles in society. Includes family dynamics, gender roles, class systems, and community hierarchies

## Razors for Distinguishing

- What are the rules?
- Who made the rules?
- How does society get its rules?
- How is justice dispensed?
- How are criminals apprehended?
- What punishments are used?
- Who are the rulers?
- How has the presence of magic and magicians affected law and government?
- Are wizards barred from certain kinds of government jobs or offices?
- Do some government jobs require that their holder be a wizard?
- What forms are used in neighboring countries, and why are they the same or different?
- What services does the government or head of state provide: schools, wells, courts, an army to protect people from the Vikings?
- What services are provided locally or privately?
- Who has the right to levy taxes?
- For what?
- On what or whom?
- Can taxes be paid in kind, or do certain things require money?
- Who provides support services for the head of state?
- What are they called: King's Counselors, Cabinet Ministers, Secretary of State, Good Ol' Girls?
- Are they hereditary offices, civil servants, appointees, military, elected?
- Is the relative power of a country or ruler usually measured by the size of its army, the number and ability of its wizards, or the amount of money/trade flowing through it?
- Who is considered a citizen, with the rights and privileges thereof?
- What are those rights and privileges (voting, protection from thieves, the right to a hearing in Rome) and what responsibilities go along with them (jury duty, providing funds or knights for the lord's army)?
- Are there certain classes of people (wizards, foreigners, children, peasants, women) who have fewer legal rights or less recourse than full citizens?



- Why?
- Are they considered mentally or morally deficient, a danger to the state, or is there some other rationale?
- What are the easiest/most common ways to advance in status — amass more money, marry well, get the ruler's eye, etc.?
- How much resistance is there to someone advancing in social status?
- Who will take over running the government if the current head of state is incapacitated?
- How is this determined?
- Is there an heir apparent (either actual or political)?
- What happens if the heir is a minor?
- Who gives orders?
- How are they picked?
- Who is responsible for protecting the head of state?
- His personal guard, the Secret Service, an elite group affiliated with the regular military?
- What safeguards have they got against assassins, poisoning, direct assault, magical attack?
- Who can give orders (to military, to tax collectors, to servants, to ordinary folks on the street)?
- How are such people chosen?
- Who is responsible for coinage: the ruler, local barons, someone else (merchant guilds)?
- Are there generally acceptable standards?
- How easy/common is counterfeiting?
- Is there an organized system of education?
- If so, who provides it: government, churches, private persons?
- How is it supported?
- Who can call up men for an army, and how?
- Does the ruler ask the nobility for men, who in turn draft their peasants, or can the ruler go straight to the bottom?
- How much formal spying and intelligence gathering is normally done by governments?
- The military?
- Merchant guilds and wealthy tradesmen?
- Are there actual organizations, or is spying done by diplomats and/or freelance agents?
- How effective is it currently?
- Do relations between countries depend mainly on the relations between the heads of state, or can two rulers hate each other's guts without being able to just declare war and drag their countries into it?
- Are there times when people are expected to fast, or feast (e.g., before solstice, after the birth of a child, during Lent or Ramadan, after the death of a ruler, etc.)?

- Are there occasions when the ruler is expected to provide a celebration or spectacle for the people to enjoy, (e.g., the Roman gladiatorial games)?
- How much influence do “special interest groups” such as merchants, wizards, or various religions, have on court politics?
- How do they exercise their influence — indirectly (by talking nobility or council members into taking their sides) or directly (by bribery, coercion, having their own representatives on the council)?
- Are there any shaky political alliances between disparate groups?
- Why were they formed?
- How long is it likely to be before they fall apart?
- When they do, what will the effects be?
- What ancient rivalries and hatreds still affect current attitudes and political positions (examples: Scottish and Welsh separatist groups; Catholics vs. Protestants vs. Muslims; dwarves vs. elves; Hatfields vs. McCoys)?

## Power

### Razors for Distinguishing

- What is the source of power?
- What groups have power and who are the players?
- What groups have the most political power?

## Type of Government

### Razors for Distinguishing

- What is the basic style of government: feudal, aristocratic, oligarchy, absolute ruler, democracy, what?
- Who are the rulers?
- How are the rulers chosen?
- How is power passed on to the next leaders?
- What is the basic style of rule
- Who will take over running the moeity if the current ruler is incapacitated?
- How is this determined?
- Is there an heir apparent (either actual or political)?
- What happens if the heir is a minor?
- Who gives orders?
- How are they picked?
- Who is responsible for protecting the ruler?

- What safeguards have they got against assassins, poisoning, direct assault, magical attack?
- What impact on the above does Magic or Magic Users have?

### THE GREAT COMPACT

Merovan feudalism is a hierarchical system of governance, landholding, and social organization. Merova is rooted in mutual obligations and relationships between different social classes, with the king at the top flowing downward through the Dukes and the Marches down to the lower vassals. Here's a breakdown of its structure and key features.

The King is at the apex of the system. The king holds all the land in the realm and distributes it to loyal followers (nobles) to hold in exchange for their service. The king provides overall governance, protection, and the right to occupy and farm the land through his nobles. He is the ultimate authority and arbiter. The current king is Kelwyn Derian Lusignan

The Vassals Principal (Dukes and Marches). These are the most powerful nobles who hold the land directly from the king, known as "Demesne"<sup>1</sup>. The Vassals Principal are obligated to the King to provide military service of Knights and Men-at-Arms. Participate in the king's court and provide counsel. The Vassals Principal act as local arms and voices of the King over their territories, administering justice and overseeing the land.

The Magie Principal (Grand Magicien and Grand Sorcier). These are the most powerful nobles who hold the land directly from the king, known as "demesne"<sup>2</sup>. The Vassals Principal are obligated to the King to provide military service of Knights and Men-at-Arms. Participate in the king's court and provide counsel. The Vassals Principal act as local arms and voices of the King over their territories, administering justice and overseeing the land.

Vassal Armes (Knights and Sergeant Principal) The Vassals Principal hold their land divided their land among loyal vassals in exchange for further military service. Knights who owe mounted service of themselves and some men-at-arms. Sargeants Main who owe training service (Knights and men-at-arms) Obligations to the Vassals Principal: Serve as warriors for their lords in times of conflict. Provide loyalty and support in governance and administration. Privileges: In return, knights and nobles received protection and income from the land they managed (often through the labor of peasants).

Vassal Magie (Magicien and Sorcier) The Magie Principal hold their ..TBD..

The merchants and such owe their serviuces via..TBD..

a. Land as the Basis of Power All land technically belonged to the king, who distributed it in exchange for services. Land was divided into manors, each controlled by a lord who governed the local population. b. Mutual Obligations Feudalism was built on the principle of reciprocity: Lords provided land, protection, and justice, while vassals and peasants provided labor, military service, or loyalty. c. Castles and Military Control Norman feudal lords constructed castles to assert their dominance over the land, maintain military power, and protect against rebellion or invasion. Castles also served as administrative centers for the local area. d. Feudal Justice Lords exercised judicial authority within their domains, holding courts to resolve disputes, enforce laws, and collect fines. e. Hereditary Nature Titles and land were usually passed down through inheritance, solidifying the power of noble families over generations.

The Great Compact.. with the Hairochan

The Land Compact.. with the Native Borne

### Dukes of Merova

- Amis . Quincy

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<sup>1</sup>Day-Meen

<sup>2</sup>Day-Meen

- Amond. Lynn
- Beauchamp . Salem
- Beaufort . Gloucester
- Beaumont . Northhampton
- Boudreaux . Pittsfield
- Challis. Springfield
- Champlain. Lawrence
- Chauncey. Newburyport
- Courtenay. Haverhill
- D'Arcy. Amherst
- D'Burgh. Leominster
- D'Norris. Nashua NH
- Devereux. Manchester NH
- D'Gascur . Brattleboro VT
- D'Quincey. N. Adams
- Duchene. Warwick
- Estelle Exeter, NH
- Fortescue. Providence
- Fortmayne. Worcester
- Freemantle. Framingham
- Gascoyne. Greenfield
- Gaston. Warwick
- Granville. Taunton
- Harcourt. Newport
- Keynes. Hartford CT
- Lavigne. New Haven, CT
- Levere. Westerley RI
- Mallory. Portsmouth NH
- Mandeville. Keene NH
- Mayeux. New London CT
- Moran. Vineyard
- Rochelle. Pawtucket

- Sant Clair. Fall River
- Sant John. Waterbury
- Sant Leger. Norwich CT
- Sudamore. Newton
- Taillefer. Middleton CT
- Vasey. Billerica
- Vavasour. Revere

### **The Marches of Merova**

- Golden Badger . Aka or blaireau
- Blood Hawk. Aka faucon de sang
- White Horse. Aka cheval blanc
- Red Stallion. Aka rouge Etalon
- Stone Dagger. Aka Pierre Dague
- Wolverine . Aka carcajou
- Death Wolf . Aka mort loup
- Demon Boar . Aka Sanglier démon
- Cat of the Mountain . Aka Chat de la montagne
- Shadow Eyes . Aka Yeux ombre
- Silver Spear . Aka Argent Lance
- Fox . Aka renard
- Mongoose . Aka mangouste
- Saber . Aka sabre
- Terror Cat . Aka chat terreur
- Giant Bear . Aka géant ours
- Sea Dragon . Aka dragon de mer
- River Terror . Aka Terreur du fleuve

## **Executive Power**

### **Razors for Distinguishing**

- Who or what is the recognized head of your government?
- King, President, Council of Regents, Office of Bureaucratic Muckety-Mucks, High Priestess, Supreme Warchief, guy with the biggest stick, guy with the biggest brain?
- Is the executive office a figurehead office, or one with real power?

- How does your leader delegate power?
- To whom does your leader willingly listen and from whom does he willingly take advice? Why?
- To whom does your leader unwillingly listen, and from whom does he unwillingly take advice? Why?
- If your leader is a figurehead, who holds the real power?
- How did that person or group get real power?
- How does he or the group hold it?
- Who opposes your leader? Why?
- How deep does the power of your head of government go?
- Is he responsible for the gathering and ordering of armies?
- The making of laws?
- The dispensing of justice to individuals?
- Can he go into individual homes and claim property or people?
- Is he above the law, or must he, too, obey it?

## Legislative Power

### Razors for Distinguishing

- Who makes the laws in your culture?
- How did this person or group get the job?
- How do they deal with old laws?
- Do they have a guiding principle around which they must form their laws (a constitution, a religious book, a historic epic poem, a collection of antiquated laws)?
- Are there areas or subjects about which they may not make laws (religion, sex, pregnancy and childbirth, composition of additives to coffee, availability of booze)?
- Are the laws required to represent everyone, or do separate laws apply to separate people?

## Judicial Power

### Razors for Distinguishing

- What sort of justice system prevails in your culture?
- Who judges presumed criminals?
- Are there checks and balances—a mandated government or private representative for the accused, a jury of peers?
- Or is guilt presumed with the judge holding the role of judge and jury, and the accused forced to speak for himself and prove his own case?
- How are sentences given?

- Is there a code with fixed sentences for certain crimes?
- Are there restrictions in the form of sentencing, or can the judge require the convicted criminal to run in circles naked in the town square because he thinks it would be funny?
- Who carries out sentences?
- Is there a prison system, a series of work farms, a mandatory slavery system, automatic execution?
- Are there guards, bailiffs, slave markets, overseers?
- Is the family of a criminal subject to the same punishment as the criminal?
- Can, for example, an entire family be sold into slavery to pay off one man's unpaid debts? Can an entire extended family be executed because of a "contagion" theory of criminality, where anyone who is related to a criminal is guilty of being a criminal, too

## Surreptitious Power

### Razors for Distinguishing

- What surreptitious power-holders does your culture have?
- How do they work?
- Who can be members?
- What are their goals?
- Are they government insiders, or do they influence the government through secret manipulation from outside, or are their goals unrelated to their own government and their interests turned elsewhere?
- Are they basically good—people working to overthrow corruption and slavery and a regime filled with torture and injustice?
- Are they basically evil—working to acquire ever more power at the expense of people already less powerful?

**ZZZ**

### Razors for Distinguishing

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# Chapter 9. Merovan Clothing

## Razors for Distinguishing

- What do people wear?
- How expensive is it?
- Can the material be produced locally, or must some or all of it be imported?
- Are weapons a standard part of dress for any/all segments of society?
- Are certain clothes customary for certain occupations — e.g., military uniforms, judges robes/wigs, sports teams uniforms, etc.?
- How much variation is allowed — could a scholar wear a day-glow green robe as long as the cut is right, or would that be too much?
- Is it color or style that is most important?
- Are the dyes for certain colors — purple, indigo, etc. — rare, making cloth of that color more expensive and/or reserved for nobility or other high-status people?
- Are there sumptuary laws, defining who can wear what?
- What are the penalties?
- Who decides when changes are needed?
- How often are they adjusted?
- Are there fashions/fads in things besides clothes — styles of carriages, furniture, etc.?
- Are there fashions/fads in magic — are herbal spells “in” this year and ritual spells “out,” or vice versa?
- How many changes of clothes can a normal person afford?
- A noble person?
- A peasant?
- What is the current fashion in clothes?
- Hats?
- Jewelry?
- Shoes?
- Do such fashions differ for humans/non-humans?
- Between city and country?
- What materials are appropriate to the climate?
- What materials must be imported, and are therefore for expensive upper-class clothes only?
- What things are considered tacky and vulgar, and what things are stylish?
- What types of decorations and accessories are common?



- What colors and combinations of colors are thought to look well or to clash?
- Do opinions on this vary from race to race?
- What physical types and characteristics are currently fashionable — tan vs. pale skin, the “consumptive look” vs. robust good health, fat vs. thin, blonde vs. brunette, muscles vs. “dead poet”, etc.?
- How do non-human fashions reflect their physiology?
- Do dragons dress for dinner?
- Do mermaids have a nudity taboo?

## Merovan

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# Chapter 10. Merovan Art and Aesthetics

Forms of creative expression, including art, music, literature, dance, and architecture. Reflects the culture's sense of beauty, symbolism, and storytelling.

## Razors for Distinguishing

- What are the standards of beauty for people?
- Paintings and sculpture?
- Clothes and furniture?
- How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?
- How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?
- What is the status of the arts (dance, music, theater, etc.) in this society?
- Are artists revered or mistrusted?
- Are they considered noble or immoral?
- Who supports the arts?
- Which arts are most highly valued and why?
- Are there permanent theaters or concert halls for the performing arts?
- If so, who owns and runs them?
- Are they profitable?
- Are there also traveling troupes of players/musicians/dancers?
- How do their performances differ?
- Can magic be used in the arts, and if so, how — paint that glows, pictures that move, flutes that play themselves, etc.?
- How do “normal” artists feel about this?
- Is there a separate branch of purely magical art, such as illusion?
- Have paper-making and the printing press been invented, or are books and scrolls rare, expensive, handwritten items?
- What things are considered appropriate subjects for representational arts such as painting and sculpture?
- Which are not?
- (Examples: some cultures/religions forbid the painting or sculpture of the human figure, and have abstract art; some have limited painters to doing only “uplifting” religious works, etc.)

- Are there non-human races who tend to be naturally talented painters, dancers, etc.?
- How does this affect human practitioners of these arts?
- Are certain races/cultures considered better at some arts than other races/cultures?
- Where do the best dancers, painters, musicians, actors, etc. come from?
- What are the standards of beauty for people?
- Paintings and sculpture?
- Clothes and furniture?
- How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?
- How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?
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- How do they differ from the standards in your culture (example: a country which considers fatness a highly desirable beauty trait)?
- How do standard of beauty reflect the physical traits of the various races (examples: dwarves might consider excessive height unattractive; werewolves might be attracted by long teeth or a particular scent)?
- What are the mediums of the graphic arts?
- What dances do the people do?
- What types of music are there?
- What themes are present in art, music, dance?
- What is the source of these themes?

## **Art**

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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## **Music**

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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## **Dance**

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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## **ZZZ**

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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# Chapter 11. Merovan Religion and Spirituality

Beliefs about the divine, the sacred, and humanity's place in the universe. Includes organized religions and informal spiritual practices.

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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## Deities

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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## ZZZ

**Razors for Distinguishing**

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# Chapter 12. Merovan Food and Cuisine

The types of food a culture prepares, how it is cooked, and its significance in social or ceremonial contexts. Example: Mediterranean cultures are known for olive oil and seafood, while Japanese cuisine emphasizes rice and fish.

## Razors for Distinguishing

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**ZZZ**

## Razors for Distinguishing

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# Chapter 13. Merovan Technology and Materials

Tools, technology, and objects a culture creates and uses. Example: Clothing styles, architecture, transportation, and tools reflect cultural adaptation to the environment.

## Razors for Distinguishing

- Metal technology ?
- Power technology?
- Magic technology?

**ZZZ**

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# Chapter 14. Economics and Trade

How resources are produced, distributed, and consumed. Examples: Subsistence farming, industrial economies, or global trade networks.

## Razors for Distinguishing

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**ZZZ**



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# Chapter 15. Merovan Military

## Razors for Distinguishing

- What sort of military does your culture have?
- To whom or what does it swear allegiance?
- Does it have a history of coup attempts, or successful coups?
- Is it permanent in nature, or is it something that gathers during threats?
- What sort of training does it get?
- What sort of hierarchy does it have?
- Is military membership voluntary or involuntary?
- Are there benefits to belonging to the military, such as citizenship at the end of service (as in Rome), or healthcare and housing, or regular meals?
- Are the families of military members cared for in any way?
- What are the dangers of military membership?
- Does the surrounding population approve of the military, or are parts or all of it anti-military?
- Does the military have definite outside threats to deal with?
- Is the culture or country at war?
- Is it threatened by invasion?
- Is it threatened by war?
- Does the military have a positive peacetime role?

**ZZZ**

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# Chapter 16. Esoterica

Use of Psionics, Spirit, Magic etc.. .

## **Razors for Distinguishing**

- How do people relate to Esoterica?.
- How do people relate to Esoteric Practitioners.

**ZZZ**

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# Book of Merova

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# World of Tanah Glossary

## Torgan Roads

Torgan roads are found everywhere on the continent. Ranging from 2 meters wide to 24 meters wide in a few places. The roads are built with layered construction. Like Roman viaducts, they are often accompanied by aqueducts carrying water, and interspersed with different features, such as widened plazas and fountains. The roads are usually edged with walls that vary from half a meter tall on the smaller roads to 2 m tall on the larger ones. Often the roads rise up on elevated structures consisting of a series of arches, spans, or piers designed to carry a road over a valley, lowland, or other obstacles like rivers and wetlands. The roads are built with a slight arch or camber to allow water to run off into ditches on either side, preventing flooding and erosion. Deep side ditches collect and direct rainwater away from the road with culverts and drainage pipes were built under the road when needed.

## Trivium (plural triva)

A trivium is a widened plaza, usually found on a Torgan road usually containing some combination of stone benches, walled stalls, and fountains. Often a combination of meeting place and open market for Torgan cities.