

THE ORIGIN OF TREE WORSHIP

Issue 1

Being an Occasional WFRP Gazetteer by Tim Eccles

INTRODUCTION

Greetings citizens of the Empire, the world's greatest nation. Well, despite the recent publication of Marienburg, I suspect most campaigns are still based in around the Empire, and so what follows is an assortment of ideas that I hope you might find useful for playing Empire-based WFRP. Actually, whilst these are taken from my own Empire campaign, they are fairly universal as concepts throughout the whole Old World. The aim of this Gazetteer is to publish various ideas that have been lying on my various surfaces at home, or on my hard drive. I could have stuck them in the WFRP Archive, or submitted them to someone's Homepage, but I am old-fashioned enough to think that the printed word looks better. That does not mean that some of the work in these ad-hoc outpourings won't ever make it there or into another form of media.

This Gazetteer is free to anyone e-mailing me at mohock@msn.com asking for one. I am not relinquishing my claim to ownership of this work, and I certainly do not want anyone to steal it as their own, but I am putting it out for people to use. Therefore, use it as you will, but if you quote or copy chunks of it, please acknowledge the source. It is simple politeness, if nothing else, but the gods of Law are ever vigilant. In this issue, I have concentrated upon background and milieu. I am not providing any statistics, nor am I offering ways to incorporate the ideas into the existing rules or Old World institutions. I leave that to individual GMs, but will probably produce some issues that are more immediate in the future. Finally, as in future issues, it is unlikely that I am going to spend a lot of time on the format or presentation. I am simply looking for something that I can churn out quickly and cheaply, and that allows me to get on with doing what I enjoy - writing about WFRP.

FROM THE NEW ALTDORF DICTIONARY OF THE EMPEROR'S REIKSPIEL

Moon-man: a madman, particularly one affected by the waxing of Morrslieb. Plural sometimes used as *Moonie*. Many of the insane become even more irrational as the chaos moon rises in power, though the term can be applied to chaotics who also seem to become more powerful, or at least more open, with the increased influence of the red moon. The verb *to moon* is sometimes applied to those who, usually through intoxication, temporarily engage in madness.

AN IMPERIAL CITIZEN'S VIEW ON LIFE

Probably the major bugbear in modern life is taxation. We think we pay too much tax, and we tend to vote according to tax promises. However, through taxation we receive not only services, but also a sense of ownership and commitment that would be unknown in the Old World. Democracy and the levy to pay for public services provide a sense of ownership and community. I own, in a sense, all my country's public buildings, roads and other infrastructure. If I am ill, I have free medical care. If I am made unemployed, my family won't starve. If my house catches fire, the fire brigade will arrive. I can walk down my clean, lit and repaired streets without having to worry about violence.

These are advantages that a typical Old World citizen could only dream of. How does this colour everyday attitudes? What does an Old Worlder think when they look out of their window, assuming they have one? Do they feel a sense of "ownership" the way that I do? No. An Old Worlder must see the world as a hostile, alien place in which they scramble to find a niche where they will be able to live in peace, provided they abase themselves before their "natural" superiors and work themselves to their physiological limits - and beyond. Certainly chaos is enough to worry the Old World, but to most life itself is enough of a hardship. Play it that way.

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

It is necessary to be extremely careful with terminology when analysing the medical profession within The Empire. WFRP offers a number of relevant careers with healing expertise: cleric (particularly of Shallya), druidic priest, herbalist, pharmacist, and physician. However, terms such as doctor and surgeon are barely mentioned, and are not offered as specific careers. Within the world of medicine, I think there are two basic careers, the *physician* and the *surgeon*, and what follows below is a discussion of their cultural and institutional characteristics. There is an important cultural distinction throughout the Old World between the 'physician' and the 'surgeon-barber'.

Physicians practice *medicine*, a theoretical body of knowledge involving an understanding of the body, its humours and its ailments, based upon classical theories of the body and health. They deal with ailments, disease, maladies and the like. Physicians attend university or are priests. The following is the existing model of physiology within the Old World.

Element	Humour	Organs	Disposition(s)
Fire	blood	heart	passionate, excitable, hot-tempered
Air	tears/sweat*	eyes/ears	flighty, unpredictable, moody
Water	bile	liver	gloomy, lethargic, bitter
Earth	urine*	bowels	constant, persistent, steadfast
Metal**	lymph	bones	practical, serious, rigid
Ether	auris***	soul	thoughtful, creative, cerebral

*Old World physicians and natural philosophers often conceive of these humours as being greater than just a single bodily fluid: tears and sweat are considered to be the same 'humour' as saliva; 'urine' is understood more broadly to refer also to digestive fluids and semen.

**The idea of metal as an element has arrived only relatively recently from Cathay, and whilst has apparently had little affect on the use of magic, has caused some re-appraisal of medical theories.

***Auris is the humour found in the body associated with the mind and the soul. It is the medium whereby the soul interacts with the body. The element of ether is not widely acknowledged, and certain religious philosophers have equated the element to the chaotic warp. For this reason, few in the medical profession will openly admit to accepting the idea, but certain practitioners are known to have had success. The best known to WFRP players will be Luigi Pavarotti.

It should be noted that medicine is particularly conservative. Physicians are safe if they remain loyal to traditional methods. Empirical fact is considered inferior to philosophical speculation.

By contrast, barber-surgeons practice *surgery*, a practical 'hands-on' activity - a craft or trade rather than an intellectual field like medicine. This distinction is an old one and is rooted in the etymology of the very word, *chirurgion*, which is derived from the Classical "cheirourgos", or 'work done with the hand'. Executioners and torturers are often made into surgeons as they have a better understanding of the body than doctors of medicine.

When one goes to the barber, one has a shave, a haircut, may be bled, and have boils lanced. His tools are knives, razors, scissors, and the like. The surgeon is often also called *the butcher* for he is most commonly found on the battlefield doing quick and

dirty surgery. He amputates what he cannot save, and is interested only in saving lives in the immediacy; his concerns are not with the longer term or rehabilitation. His concerns include most of the serious critical hits involving smashing or shattering of parts of the skeleton. In a pinch, a butcher or huntsman can fill in when there is no surgeon available.

Essentially the surgeon knows enough of the circulatory system to tie off an artery and remove the crushed part; a regular occurrence with bladed weapons - and a familiar sight in the *Critical Effects* table! Arrows leave a shaft with which the surgeon can push the head through, or pull it cleanly out. Shot wounds are much nastier, since firearms are still relatively new, and surgeons unused to treating the wounds.

Surgeons may also be physicians, but more likely the surgeon is not part of the physician guild. He is a man with knowledge of animal butchery, and a few years experience on or near battlefields. Midwives, witches, Shallyan priests/priestesses and physicians can manage lancing boils, and minor surgery. Occasionally a physician will stand in attendance to oversee the work as the surgeons get their hands bloody. Internal injuries to organs are almost always fatal without divine or magical intervention.

Nurses are either sisters in holy orders (it is often part of the training of the Cult of Shallya) or poor women who need the work. Nursing is hard, physical drudgery.

Within the cities and large towns of the Old World, there are also businesses where barbers cut customer's hair for a fee, and offer a number of varied styles. The barber simply offers a haircut and/or shave, and is unlikely to also be a surgeon. This service is offered variously in a specific shop, in bath-houses, or in the marketplace.

TEMPLARS OF VERENA

In a world beset by Chaos, incompetence, bigotry, class discrimination and corruption, the concept of justice is a much-maligned ideal. However, there is one group that battle to maintain the ideal, and that cause fear in the perpetrators of injustice at all levels of society. The group in question, are the Templars of Verena.

The Templars of Verena are the ultimate defenders of justice, since they are the manifestation of Verena within the Empire and the Old World. Whilst all upholders of law and justice recognise Verena, the Templars ensure that the correct strictures are followed. The Templars of Verena police the justice system, from the lowest watchman to the highest magistrate.

AUDITORS: The general and mundane work of ensuring justice within the justice system is done by audit. Auditors scour public accounts, investigate judgements and generally follow the bureaucratic trail of evidence to ensure no wrong-doing.

GUARDIANS: Guardians are the most visible guardians of justice. It is their duty to physically guard the structures and servants of justice. They can thus be found patrolling courthouses, as bodyguards to investigating auditors and as where situations demand special security precautions.

AGENTS OF JUSTICE: Whilst justice must be seen to be done, it must also be done by stealth in certain cases. The special agents must be both skilled bureaucratic investigators and capable fighters for they often operate under cover and must be self-reliant.

TALES FROM THE KISLEVIAN FRONT

They left in the night. I knew this expedition to the borders of the Wastes was ill-fated. Why would any sane noble wish to settle this far north, or have anything that needed defending by us out here. I may be a mercenary, but I have brains and I should have used them. Orders, or no, I am heading south. Not that I have much chance, now that they have gone. I wouldn't care, but the only chaos bands we saw, we slew easily. And then this. And I saw it with my own eyes. The food crates, and the pots, simply grew legs, and walked off.

HOW TO RUN A POST-EIF EMPIRE

In my view it is important to understand the new order of things in the Empire under Heinrich. This, of course, is my view for my campaign, and yours may differ. Essentially, Heinrich is a good ruler, aware of the massive inequality and poverty in the Empire, and is seeking to offer his subjects a better standard of living. Not only does he genuinely want to help his subjects, but proposed concessions on employment, wages and working conditions are likely to forestall civil unrest and remove some causes for turning to Chaos. He believes that hope will do as much to attack chaos as the sword: Heinrich X's first imperial pledge was to be "tough on chaos; tough on the causes of chaos".

Heinrich is also stuck with a highly militarised Empire, and a lot of very recent bad blood. Whilst some of the soldiers that fought at Wolfenburg and elsewhere will be from the Imperial Army and the personal bodyguards (household retinues) of the nobility, many will have been urban militias and other feudal levies. Most might return home, but some may decide that they prefer the easy life of a soldier and turn to the mercenary life - which will likely become brigandage fairly quickly. Worse still, are both the true mercenary companies, and those groups of troops raised by the less patriotic for their own personal ends. This means that there will be a large number of organised troops loitering around the Empire, and a sizeable number of irregulars who are now armed and dangerous. It is worth noting that the single campaign season in which EiF takes place makes it unlikely that many external mercenaries will have had time to terminate their existing contracts, and travel through the passes and up the Reik. Therefore, most mercenaries will be domestic. Of course, some may have been planning for this for some time, and have been ready. Peace might not suit them ...

It seems likely that Heinrich will use many of these groups in purges of the various forests within the Empire. Because of the civil war, and the breakdown in law and order, many outlaws and chaotics have become much more brazen, and need dealing with. A cleansing of the forests will also make trade easier and cheaper, helping the Empire get back on its feet and start to pay off the accumulated debt from the war.

ON THE ROAD WITH FLEMIN CRABTREE

Cooking: don't. Just because we are halflings, don't let them assume you will be the cook. At the same time, if you ever want to have edible food, then you might end up having to do the job. Make it quite clear that washing up is not the cook's job, and that someone else can carry the pans. On the other hand, carry your own supplies for when you leave the saps to deal with the band of 200 greenskins, and keep your own pan nice and clean for your own use. And carry those foul Kislevian herbs around to flavour their part of the stew. Be careful to keep that innocent look to mask your giggles, though.

THE END

That's All Folks. Let me know what you think, if you use it, and if you see any reviews or references to it. The next issue will be whenever it is written, but I will announce it in Le Grimoire, Warpstone and the WFRP Mailing List. Timothy Eccles © 1999. All Trademarks and other copyrights acknowledged. My thanks to Andy Holt for his help in writing this. May Solkan, the ever vigilant, watch over us all.