



Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay

Information Booklet

INTRODUCTION

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay is typically a slop-around-in-the-gutter type of fantasy, where every brass pfennig, every arrow or bolt, and every blow struck counts. It is, on the whole, a grimmer, bloodier, grittier affair than D&D.

Magic (or magick) is significantly rare. It is not a world where every sixth person is a magic-user and neither are there bucket-loads of magical (or magickal) items just lying around. Sorcerers, as a general rule, make up about 1% of the entire population of the Old World. Most Old Worlders are solid, practical folk with little patience for such things as sorcery and magick and other things that cannot be seen or touched, and as you will come to see, as a result of (mis)-information given by the various religions at large in the Old World, many of the common folk, and even some of the more educated people, are actually a little wary of magick, if not downright terrified of it.

The Empire is the setting of your character's adventures, a country comparable to central and eastern Europe of the mid-to-late Middle Ages, the Renaissance, hence the German-sounding names of the characters and places.

YOUR HOMELAND - THE EMPIRE

Largest and most powerful of all the countries of the Old World, The Empire is your homeland, a vast land, made up of numerous principedoms, duchies, leagues and city-states. Its history goes back some two-and-a-half thousand years, to the earliest days of Human development. Its founder was the legendary warrior Sigmar Heldenhammer, "Hammer of the Goblins," who united the warring Human tribes and, in alliance with the Old World Dwarves, drove the Goblin hordes from the Old World, back into the Dark Lands beyond the World's Edge Mountains. Later, the legends tell, he was accepted into the ranks of the gods, and now his Church is the most powerful of all The Empire's religions. Indeed, the Church's high priest, the Grand Theogonist, is the Emperor's closest advisor. The current Emperor, Karl-Franz I, was elected (by those few provincial rulers known as Electors) ten years ago, and was crowned in Altdorf by the Grand Theogonist. He is still a young man and the people have great hopes that, under his benevolent leadership, The Empire is poised on the brink of a new golden age.

A GUIDE TO ADVENTURING IN THE EMPIRE

The Empire is a huge country, filled with a multitude of people, places and creatures. Many of these people are

simple peasants; others are artisans and traders who can sell you equipment, serve you in inns, and so on. A few are wealthy adventurers or nobles, with little time for commoners such as yourselves. Nevertheless, you need to talk to people and win their friendship if your career is not to be a short one. But beware! The cosmopolitan cities of The Empire attract the dregs as well as the cream of society. There will be thieves who may pick your pockets and bandits who may waylay you on the road. On the other hand, if you always treat everyone as a potential enemy, you may miss useful contacts who could supply vital pieces of information.

Perhaps the most significant feature of The Empire is its vast forests. These are well-known as dark, dangerous places, home to all kinds of perils: strange and evil creatures, renegades, bandits and the followers of perverse cults of the Great Lords of Chaos. Only the foolish or suicidal would enter them without good reason. Settlements are few, small and widely-scattered and travel is a risky business even for those who stick to the roads, and would be even more dangerous were it not for the well-defended coaching inns which secure the roads at regular intervals. Regular patrols of Roadwardens do their best to protect travellers from bandits and the like, but they are hard-pressed, busy folk who cannot be everywhere at once. They have enough on their hands without having to worry about formal trials for every wrong-doer. Consequently, justice is often dispensed summarily and on the spot.

CALENDAR

Scholars report that the Known World takes 400 days to travel around its sun (a much larger and hotter star than our own) and is orbited by two moons. The larger of these - known in The Empire as Mannslieb (or "Beloved of Manann") - has a cycle of 25 days from full to full, and looks not unlike the moon of our world. The other - named Mórrslieb (or "Beloved of Mórr") - is erratic, appearing now closer, now further away than its partner.

There are two main legends concerning the origins and nature of Mórrslieb. According to the first, it was once a gateway in the sky, through which daemons came to prey upon the people of the Known World. Mórr inflicted a great and terrible death upon them and fashioned the second moon out of the wreckage, so that mortals would never forget how the god had saved them. The second legend maintains that when Chaos first broke through into the Known World, a great block of warpstone was hurled high into the sky, where it now circles endlessly, spreading Chaos on the lands over which it passes. This legend is believed mainly by followers of Chaos who hold festivals

when Mórrsliab is full. The truth remains a mystery.

The seasons are important to adventurers. Nobody is going to want to trek into the mountains at the beginning of Kaldzeit. Adventuring, like waging war, is best left to late spring, summer and autumn. Winter in the Empire is cold and inhospitable, and most people - adventurers included - would prefer to stay within reach of a warm hearth and a dry bed...people do not, however, always get what they want!

MONTHS AND FESTIVALS

There are as many calendars in the Known World as there are races and countries but the one you will be referring to is standard throughout The Empire. The Imperial Calendar divides the year into 12 months of 32 or 33 days, with six days that fall between the months and are not numbered. Four of these six are festivals connected to seasonal events - the summer and winter solstices and the spring and autumn equinoxes - while the other two mark the occasions when both moons are full. These last are greatly feared and even the most hardened cynics stay out of the eerie light cast by the moons on Hexensnacht ("Witching Night") and Geheimnisnacht ("Night of Mystery").

The months and holy days are listed below along with their respective translations:

Month	Translation
<i>Hexenstag</i>	<i>Witching Day</i>
Nachexen	After-Witching
Jahrdrung	Year-Turn
<i>Mitterfruhl</i>	<i>Spring equinox</i>
Pflugzeit	Ploughtide
Sigmarzeit	Sigmartide
Sommerzeit	Summertide
<i>Sonnstill</i>	<i>Summer solstice</i>
Vorgeheim	Fore-Mystery
<i>Geheimnstag</i>	<i>Day of Mystery</i>
Nachgeheim	After-Mystery
Erntezeit	Harvest-tide
<i>Mittherbst</i>	<i>Autumn equinox</i>
Brauzeit	Brewmonth
Kaldezeit	Chillmonth
Ulriczeit	Ulrictide
<i>Mondstille</i>	<i>Winter solstice</i>
Vorhexen	Fore-Witching

Within the Empire, major festivals and feast-days do not fall on a day of the week. Imagine it as: Monday, Tuesday, Midsummer day, Wednesday, Thursday... This gives the festivals an extra emphasis, making them stand apart from the rest of the week. Festivals and feast-days are not normal days, they are important events in the religions and beliefs of the Old World, and they are far more than a excuse for a day off. Anyone who expects to find people conducting normal business on a festival-day is going to be disappointed.

There are other feast-days in the calendar, but most of them are only observed in certain areas or by certain groups of people. A day sacred to Verena will be observed by scholars, scribes, lawyers and any profession linked to

learning or justice, for example. Towns and cities will have special holidays in memory of local heroes or major days in the area's history, such as the ending of the siege, a famous victory, the overthrowing of a tyrant or the anniversary of the birth or death of a well-loved ruler.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

There are eight days in the Imperial week, whose names probably date back to pre-Empire times. The days are listed below along with their respective translations:

Day	Translation
Wellentag	Workday
Aubentag	Levyday
Markttag	Marketday
Backertag	Bakeday
Bezahltag	Taxday
Konigstag	Kingday
Angestag	Startweek
Festag	Holiday

The reasons for such names are now largely forgotten and, while a market is still generally held on Markttag wherever you are in The Empire, Holidays vary according to the deity of the local temples and shrines. Of the eight days of the week, Festag is technically a day of rest, reserved for worship. Shops should be shut and no work or trade be done. However, this varies from area to area, depending on the harshness of the local ruler and the amount of hold that priests and temples have over the local community.

THE BELIEFS OF COMMON FOLK

Altdorf: You have heard it said that Altdorf is the capital city, the principal city of The Empire. The Emperor lives there in a huge palace and they say that the streets are paved with gold. It is also rumoured that there are lots of people living there, even more than in your home town or village!

Magick: To say that you are somewhat wary of magick is a bit of an understatement. You have been brought up to believe that, unless it comes from the gods, magick is an evil thing and does more harm than good. You have met no sorcerers to date and that, you suppose, is a good thing. Throughout your childhood, you were told of an evil sorcerer who lived in a tower in the forest near your home who used to eat children who were bad.

The Gods: The Gods are to be given the proper respect, including those of other cities, cultures and even those gods that are proscribed within The Empire, such as Khaíne – the Dread Lord of Murder. All gods, no matter how foul and evil, are powerful forces and to show disrespect to them is to court disaster, not only for yourself, but for everyone around you. Everything that happens and everything that exists is seen as divine activity or subject to divine intervention. Nothing happens just by coincidence.

Aristocracy: You have been brought up to believe that your people (the common folk of The Empire) and the Aristocracy (the noble born folk of The Empire) dwell in different worlds. Those of noble birth have little – if any – idea of how hard life is for those of lower status than themselves. However, that said, you have also been told that you should give the proper respect to those of noble

birth, giving way to your betters and/or doffing your hat to them.

Dwarfs: Other races exist in your world. Of those that you have encountered, the Dwarfs are on the whole a grim, humourless folk, well-renowned for being greedy, unfriendly, short-tempered, and more than a little unsociable. Their love of the drink – the stronger, the better, it would seem – is as legendary as their ability to produce items of excellent craftsmanship. They are short, burly and generally very hairy and very ugly beings.

Halflings: On the other hand, the Halflings are an extremely friendly and easy-going folk who love food and making merry and enjoy the company of others immensely. Easily recognisable, they are small and slight of frame, but with rather rotund features and pot bellies. Their feet tend to be large and hairy, and they prefer to go about barefoot.

Elves: You have heard that Elves are a strange and mysterious folk who dwell in the depths of the forests of The Empire. It is said that they dislike Humankind and loathe Dwarfkind; that they can disappear from sight at a whim, being more likely ghosts and spirits than living beings; and that they are terribly fair to look upon, their looks able to charm the sense from a person. Altogether, they are a folk to be avoided.

Daemons: Daemons are the stuff of nightmares and stories told to naughty children. They do not exist in the Real World and anyone who thinks they do is a fool and should be locked away in the nearest Watch-house!

Great Lords of Chaos: Likewise are the Great Lords of Chaos, who count Tzeentch (the Changer of Ways), Nurgle (the Lord of Pestilence and Decay), Khorne (the Blood God) and Slaanesh (the Lord of Pleasure) amongst their number. Their names are whispered in the darker places of the world – if ever mentioned at all – and only the deranged would even consider offering up worship to them. You know very little – if anything – about them and would prefer to live out the rest of your life in complete and utter ignorance of such matters.

Mutants and Beastmen: These creatures are something you have heard travellers speak of with a hint of fear in their voices. They are said to be evil creatures, perversions of that which is natural and good, oftentimes frightening to behold and wholly inhuman. You are somewhat skeptical about their actual existence – after all, everyone knows what tall tales travellers and adventurers can tell!

Gods of Law: To counter the effects of the Great Lords of Chaos, there are the Gods of Law, who count Alluminas, Arianka, and Solkan amongst their numbers. The Gods of Law desire permanence and stability, an end to all change and development. They are worshipped by only a few individuals and though worshipping the Gods of Law is not proscribed, it is not popular either. Again, you know very little – if anything – about any of them and would prefer to live out the rest of your life in complete and utter ignorance of such matters.

RELIGION IN THE OLD WORLD

Citizens of the Old World venerate a number of deities, their religion being pantheistic in a similar way to that of the

Ancient Greeks and Romans of our own world.

POPULAR ATTITUDES

To most Old Worlders, everything that happens and everything that exists is seen as divine activity or subject to divine intervention. Nothing happens just by coincidence. To improve their chances of worldly success, they believe it is essential to give the gods proper respect. This extends to all the gods, including those of other cities, cultures and even those gods that are proscribed within the Old World, such as Khaïne, the Dread Lord of Murder. All gods, no matter how foul and evil, are powerful forces and to show disrespect to them is courting disaster, not only for yourself but for everyone around you. People who are openly disrespectful to the gods are often lynched.

YOUR CHARACTER AND THE GODS

As stated above, all characters are expected to show respect for all the gods of the Old World. Typically, however, one god is chosen as a patron to which devotion is given to some extent or another, while praying and offering sacrifices when the favour of one of the other gods is desired. Sometimes, a character may have two or more patron gods.

THE CHIEF GODS OF THE OLD WORLD

Manann controls the tides and the currents and is as unpredictable and changeable as the sea itself. Manann is worshipped throughout the northern coastal areas of the Old World, chiefly by those who depend on the sea - sailors, fishermen and the like. The Priesthood of Manann wears robes of a dark greenish-blue or a bluish-grey, sometimes trimmed with a wave pattern in blue on white.

Mórr is the god of death and ruler of the Underworld. All dead souls belong to Mórr and he makes sure that they are guided safely to his dark realm. He is not an everyday god but is worshipped mainly by the bereaved, who offer up prayers and sacrifices in the hope that their departed will reach his kingdom safely and prosper there. Mórr is also the god of dreams since the land of dreams is close to the realm of death. Mórr is worshipped throughout the Old World and is most popular in the south. The Priesthood of Mórr wears plain, hooded robes without symbol or adornment and usually in black.

Myrmidia is the patron goddess of soldiers and strategists. Where Ulric (cf.) stands for strength of combat and the fury of battle, Myrmidia stands for the art and science of war. Although Myrmidia is worshipped throughout the Old World by those Warriors who do not follow Ulric, she is most popular in the southern reaches of the Old World, especially Tilea and Estalia. The Priesthood of Myrmidia wears a blue cowl over white robes with red edging and with the symbol of the goddess either sewn over the left breast or worn as a cloak-clasp.

The Old Faith is followed by druids. The origins of the Old Faith are shrouded in the mists of prehistory and it is considerably older than the present-day gods of the Old World. In the Old World today, worship of the Old Faith is, on the whole, in decline. Where it does exist, principally in the northern and western reaches of the Old World, it seems strongest in rural areas.

Ranald, “Prince of Thieves,” is the Trickster god, a patron of rogues and gamblers. Ranald has four aspects: the Night Prowler, a patron of thieves and other rogues; the Deceiver, a patron of tricksters, charlatans and, by implication, illusionists; the Gamester, a patron of gambling and luck; and the Protector, who protects his followers from official interference, oppression and tyranny. Ranald is worshipped throughout the Old World, generally in larger towns and cities, where his followers are normally Rogues, gamblers and the lower classes. For obvious reasons, the Priesthood of Ranald does not wear any distinctive forms of clothing or symbols.

Shallya is the goddess of healing, mercy and compassion. Her Priests, most of whom are female, are known to be pacifists. It is customary for citizens of the Old World to make a sacrifice to Shallya each year on the anniversary of their birth. Shallya is worshipped throughout the Old World by folk from all walks of life. The Priesthood of Shallya wears white robes, often hooded, with the symbol of a heart embroidered in gold thread over the left breast.

Sigmar Heldenhammer is the legendary founder and patron of The Empire who, according to legend, unified The Empire against the Goblin Hordes some twenty-five centuries ago and was later welcomed into the Halls of the Gods. The Priesthood of Sigmar wears white robes edged in red and decorated with one of the god’s symbols.

Taal, the god of nature and wild places, governs the natural forces beyond mortal control. He is the power behind the wind and the rain and the force which drives waterfalls and rapids, avalanches and landslides. He is also the lord of the beasts and master of the forests and mountains. All wild areas of the Old World come under his control. Taal is worshipped mainly in the northern and eastern parts of the Old World, and especially in The Empire, by Rangers and others who depend on the natural world, such as farmers, hunters and trappers. The Priesthood of Taal wears robes of grey, dark brown or drab green - the colours of nature - decorated with one or more of the god’s symbols.

Ulric is the god of battle and destruction, the patron of wolves and the spirit of winter. His Priests are well-known for their dour and self-contained nature and by-and-large they leave alone and are left alone. They are also known for their self-reliance and martial prowess. Although Ulric is worshipped throughout the Old World, especially by Warriors, he is mainly venerated in the north of The Empire. The Priesthood of Ulric wears black robes trimmed with wolfskin and with a white wolf’shead emblem across the breast.

Verena is the goddess of wisdom, reason and justice, and seems especially popular amongst the learned and studious. In her aspect as the goddess of justice, she is known to be concerned with fairness rather than the letter of the law, opposing tyranny and oppression as much as crime. Her Priesthood are valued as arbitrators and go-betweens because of their reputation for trustworthiness and neutrality. Verena is worshipped throughout the Old World, especially in university towns and cities. The Priesthood of Verena wears robes of white, the absence of colour indicating the neutrality and the lack of bias for which the Cult is renowned.

Credits

The information contained in this *information booklet* was put together by me, Sam Stockdale, drawn from various sources and from my experience as a WFRP GM. Hope those who read this find it as useful as I have in getting across at least some of the spirit of the game.

The most excellent image of the Chaos Moon is the work of M.A.T.T.

The *booklet* was transformed into an Adobe Acrobat readable format by my brother-in-law, Matt Wilson (second-best mate and long-suffering player in my games).